

Guilt, Sadness, Pity, Etc. – Ok, But What Kind?

Carrissa Pannuzzo, LPC, LMFT

Guilt, sadness, pity, and other difficult emotions are part of life. We all feel them now and again. But, these emotions don't look the same on and aren't experienced the same by everyone. Some people seem to have a low afternoon, day, maybe week, and then seem to bounce back. Others, on the other hand, seem to have a low period and then stay in it. Maybe they even extend it, grow it, or, dare we say, seem to enjoy it. If we're honest we've all likely done this, even if it was a just for a little while. Maybe there is something about the pity party or depression that feels good or powerful or...? It's a strange thought but not uncommon.

We all have a choice. In 2 Corinthians 7:10 it says, "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." Those of us who feel the guilt, sadness, and pity to the nth degree, who seem to extend the pain, as referred to above, *may* be choosing worldly sorrow. Those people who bounce back are likely choosing godly sorrow.

This verse defines worldly sorrow as an emotion that leads to death. Wallowing in, rehearsing, feeding this type of sorrow has poor results. Guilt can result in self-harm - physical, psychological, relational, and more. Sadness, when not cared for properly, can grow into a depression that defines us and keeps us from living. Pity can make us unattractive and annoying to others, cutting us off from the things we need (accountability and encouragement). Godly sorrow, though, makes us strong and attractive. Grace under fire is a beautiful thing. As the verse says, it leads to repentance – a changed, new life – and leaves no regrets. Imagine a life with no regrets! Godly sorrow takes ownership for its part and does not take on what doesn't belong to it.

Use this verse for perspective. Next time a negative emotion comes along and takes up residence ask: is this godly or worldly? And then decide what consequences are desired: repentance and no regret, or death? The choice is ours.

Compliments of Practical Family Living, Inc.

P.O. Box 1676, Appleton, WI 54912 (920) 720-8920

You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute our articles in any format provided that you credit the author, no modifications are made, you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, and you include Practical Family Living's web-site address (<http://www.pfl.org>) on the copied resource. Quotations from any article are also permitted with credit to the author and citing the web-site. Any use of other materials on this web-site, including reproduction, modification, distribution or republication, without the prior written consent of Practical Family Living, Inc., is strictly prohibited.