



# No More Paying for Your Mistakes

by Marie Armenia

I'm hiding something from my husband. It's just a matter of time until my shameful secret will surface and he'll innocently ask, "Honey, do you know where my green shirt is?"

I'll have to admit, "I hid it in my closet because I ruined it in the wash." I will have my flimsy excuses. None of them will explain why I didn't notice his 100 percent silk shirt being tossed into the washing machine and then into the hot dryer to be ruined beyond repair. Then I—the shameful shirt-shrinker—will tell him I'm sorry and promise to buy him a replacement because my policy in life is to pay for my mistakes. That's what nice people do. We pay for our mistakes.

## Afterlife Insurance Policy

This policy of trying to pay for my own mistakes caused me some major misunderstanding in the "Making Things Right With God" department. I didn't want the Creator of the Universe to

have a negative attitude toward me. Who does? So I lived my life relying on what could best be described as a "My Terms Afterlife Insurance Policy." I'd be a good person, pay for my mistakes when I could, and hopefully the good would outweigh the bad, thus entitling me to a nice eternal retirement.

It wasn't until I actually read God's terms—the Bible—that I realized I was spiritually bankrupt and had no hope of paying for my mistakes. My first response was to have a supreme attitude with the Supreme Authority. *I'm only human. I make mistakes. What does He expect? What does God want from me?* Evidently, He wants my mistakes.

## All Sins Count Against Us

You'd think my husband was ridiculous if he wanted to divorce me for shrinking a shirt. The punishment should fit the crime. I figured it worked that way with God: small sins, small punishment. But God makes

no such distinction.<sup>1</sup> Evidently God cares about those small little sins: my prideful attitude;<sup>2</sup> the bad feelings I have toward others, the lusts I don't control, the anger I hide in my heart, the forgiveness I don't offer to others. Could these teensy, weensy things matter to God? Yup, they do.

It's not just mistakes causing the rift between God and me. It is my sinful state of being.<sup>3</sup> *I am, therefore I sin* should be the motto of the mortal. Because of sin—any size, big or small—my soul is ruined beyond repair. Sure I can buy someone a new shirt, but my eternal error is going to require me to acquire a new soul. Where do I buy one? How much does it cost? Even if I can give up bad habits, I cannot resurrect my soul. Only God Himself can restore our souls.<sup>4</sup>

## Nowhere to Hide

It was silly of me to hide the shirt I'd ruined because I knew eventually my husband would go looking for what was his. It seems to be human nature to hide our mistakes. God's "Original Blueprint for Human Beings" was for us to be uninhibited, unafraid and unashamed.<sup>5</sup> The First Big Mistake caused Adam and Eve—and us—to hide from one another and from a loving God. He called out to them, and they hid because they were ashamed.<sup>6</sup>

It's the same today. He's still calling out to us. We're still hiding. Who told us we could hide from God? We cannot.<sup>7</sup> Every sin is exposed. Every hiding place is seen.<sup>8</sup> We keep hiding, and He keeps seeking.<sup>9</sup>

## Forgive and Forget

Unfortunately for my husband, there was no recovery for his laundry. The original shirt stayed shrunk. Shrank? Shrank? Well, you get the idea. It was ruined and useless, so I threw it away. Thankfully, God doesn't throw away ruined people, because we'd all be in the Great Garbage Heap in the Sky if that were His attitude.

God's love toward us is so amazing that although we are spiritually ruined beyond repair, He doesn't want to replace us. He wants to restore us. Ruined people—murderers, liars, adulterers, thieves, haters, liars, lusters—can be restored and become new and innocent in God's eyes. It's another m-word—mercy—God having pity on us because we are so helpless. He knew we could never pay for our mistakes, so He paid for them Himself. He sent His Son Jesus to pay the price for our sin—death—and wiped our slate clean of the mistakes we've all made.

"If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness."<sup>10</sup> There is no mistake greater than His mercy. Except of course, the mistake of not asking God to have it on you.

**BIBLICAL REFERENCES:** <sup>1)</sup> Proverbs 16:2  
<sup>2)</sup> Proverbs 16:5 <sup>3)</sup> Isaiah 59:2 <sup>4)</sup> Psalm 23:3  
<sup>5)</sup> Genesis 2:25 <sup>6)</sup> Genesis 3:10 <sup>7)</sup> Psalm 69:5  
<sup>8)</sup> Psalm 139:1-12 <sup>9)</sup> Luke 19:10 <sup>10)</sup> Psalm 130:30

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