

CONNECTED

with Pastor Jacquie

In The Beginning Genesis: Lesson Twenty-Eight

Sunday School

January 18, 2026

What is the antidote to guilt?

Twenty years is a long time. Perhaps the brothers of Joseph thought that the passage of time would remove their guilt. When they stand before Joseph who is in Egyptian dress and speaking through an interpreter, they have no idea who he really is. It apparently never crosses their mind that this might be their long-lost brother because to them he was not “long-lost,” he was dead. Now they are going to have to face up to what they have done. We find the first antidote after they spent three days in an Egyptian prison.

1. Confession of Sin. In Genesis 42:21 we find that during the three days they spent in prison; the Holy Spirit jostled their memory so they would connect what happened in the past (casting their brother into a pit) with their current situation (in prison in Egypt). They remembered his screams from the pit. While they ate their meal, no doubt laughing and joking, they could hear their brother crying out for help. His screams were engraved in their memory so that two decades later, it all comes back to them. Though painful, this was absolutely necessary. The Holy Spirit has connected their past sin with their present suffering. The first antidote to deal with guilt is always to stop blaming others and start saying, “I was wrong.”

2. Recognition of God’s Hand. The second antidote is to see the hand of God in our lives. In Genesis 42:28 we find the brothers mention God’s name for the first time. In all the evil they did in the past, God was pushed to the edge so they wouldn’t have to think about him. Now, at last, they have to admit the truth. God’s Spirit never left them alone, even during the long years in Canaan when they thought Joseph was dead. We can never escape the sense of guilt. Eventually, it will catch up to us (if God is merciful). It has been twenty years, but God eventually brought them to a place of confronting their sin.

A guilty conscience must not be ignored. A guilty conscience is the result of unresolved guilt and unresolved guilt manifests itself in misery.

How does God begin to awaken a guilty conscience? He does it exactly as Joseph does here, by forcing us little by little to face the consequences of the past. Penance is NOT a solution. The brothers faithfully served their father for the past 22 years. They had not harmed Benjamin. They had learned to get along, as evidenced by their willingness to obey Jacob's command to go to Egypt to buy food and do so without arguing. But they were still plagued by guilt! The cure for a guilty conscience is not to forget but to repent.

The only answer for a guilty conscience is Jesus. Only Jesus can remove the guilt and replace it with peace.

APPLICATION QUESTION:

Are you struggling with guilt? Are you needlessly miserable by your past failings? Come to Jesus, confess your sin, and find deliverance.

QUOTE:

It's Satan's delight to tell me that once he's got me, he will keep me. But at that moment I can go back to God. And I know that if I confess my sins, God is faithful and just to forgive me. —Alan Redpath

PRAYER:

Lord, I pray that if there is any unconfessed sin in my life, help me not to hide it, but uncover it in your presence by confession and find relief from the burden of guilt. Thank You for Your sacrifice on the cross which makes forgiveness possible. Amen.

Read Genesis 42