



Lesson 002 – Sack of Cement

******This week: Five strategies men use to deal with guilt and shame***

- **Day 1: Strategy #1: Pretend the sack doesn't exist**
 - They refuse to pick it up. "I'm not a sinner" they say to themselves.
 - Blame others for the chaos they've caused or contributed to
 - This is the way of the narcissist. It's always someone else's fault.
 - **Read Daniel 4:4-37**
 - Daniel pointed out King Nebuchadnezzar's sack.
 - He tells him what to do in verse 27: pick up the sack and repent.
 - What does the king do? (verse 30). What happens next? (verse 33)
 - What happens when he finally turns to God and picks up the sack (verse 34)?
 - Action: Pray verse 37 aloud, substituting your name for Nebuchadnezzar's.
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- **Day 2: Strategy #2: Play the comparison game**
 - Yes, I sin. But my sins aren't as bad as most other guys'. It's just a tea bag.
 - **Read: Luke 18: 9-14**
 - The Pharisee does not pick up his own sack. Instead, he compares his sack to other people's sacks: robbers, evildoers, adulterers, and tax collectors.
 - Do you play this game? Excuse your sin since you're basically a good guy? Because you're not as bad as your worthless brother-in-law? Because you're not a murderer? You're not Adolph Hitler? Etc.
 - Action: Pray, "Jesus, MY sin put you up on the cross. Not some other guy's sin. My sin. I'm sorry. Please forgive me and take my sins away.

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- **Day 3: Strategy #3: Carry the sack forever.**
 - This what many people think Christianity is about: making people feel guilty
 - Many religions use guilt or threat of hellfire to control their members
 - Even longtime Christians have a tendency to hear the first part of the Gospel (pick up the sack) but not the second (place it in the wheelbarrow)
 - **Read Romans 8:1-4**
 - According to verse one, how much condemnation remains for those of us who are in Christ Jesus? A lot, a little bit, or none?
 - Action: Put this message on a sticky note on your mirror or refrigerator: *My sins are completely forgiven. The wheelbarrow has departed.*
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- **Day 4: Strategy #4: Place the sack into the wheelbarrow**
 - Let's read our key verse again: 1 John 1:8-9:
 - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
 - You can't confess sins if you don't realize you're sinning.
 - You can't pick up a sack you can't see.
 - Action: Pray Psalm 139:23-24:
 - *Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*
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- **Day 5: Strategy #5: Hiding from those we've hurt**
 - Now that you've asked forgiveness from God, here comes the hard part: asking forgiveness from people we've hurt.
 - Jesus made it a priority for us – even more important than supporting the church:
 - *Matthew 5:23–24 (ESV): So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*
 - Notice this verse does not specify who was right or wrong. Establishing blame isn't the point – reconciliation is.
- Action: Begin approaching the person with whom you need to be reconciled. This may take a while. Expect to be rejected at first. Keep calm. Don't justify yourself. Take the blows, just as Jesus did on the cross. And pray every step of the way.