

Stop Beating Yourself Up

Submitted by Dr. Anthony Brown

John 8:11 (NIV)

“No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

"I am my own worst enemy." Anyone ever found themselves making that statement - audibly or silently from the inside? In that moment you feel as though one of your strongest challenges is YOU. That thought came to my mind when I found myself "rolling some of my shortcomings through my head." At that moment, I needed to give myself a dose of self-love. That's my challenge to the person reading this devotion, stop beating yourself up -- we can often be our own worst enemy.

This text is lifted from the frequently shared biblical story when a woman is brought to Jesus, by the Pharisees, after being caught in the act of a capital offense: adultery. There is no question about whether she committed the act, so she is morally guilty. The law explicitly outlawed adultery and assigned it the death penalty, so she is legally guilty. Jesus has the unquestionable authority to punish her for her sin, but He takes a different approach, making the Pharisees aware of how they were misreading the law. Specifically, regarding who would cast the first stone and the fact that both guilty parties should have been present for judgement.

But what captures my attention are Jesus' words of peace. He doesn't say don't worry about what you did but what He does say is, even though He has the right to do it, is that "He does not condemn her." His challenge to her was to go and sin no more. And here's our hope, if Jesus (these are my words) refused to "beat her up;" there was no need for her to "beat herself up." She should simply walk in God's love and grace.

Here's a question. How hard are you ON YOU? Many of us "beat ourselves up" about our trivial mistakes, our inability to measure-up against our friends or colleagues, or our regrets for things that did not turn out the way we wanted them to. But this is not healthy. You deserve LOVE and GRACE, and you deserve that love from YOURSELF. Jesus loved you so much that He sent his son to die for you and there is nothing you can do to revoke that love. If He has that depth of love for you, you can give yourself some love, grace, mercy, and patience. In this text Jesus draws a line in the sand, and challenges those who were condemning the woman to examine their stories and bare their shortcomings for judgement. This leveled the playing field. I want to suggest Jesus' next challenge was getting the woman to forgive (or LOVE) herself and that's why the scripture speaks PEACE. Jesus says "I don't condemn you." Whatever you're beating yourself up about today, and the reality is it's often, "STOP IT" and give yourself a dose of self-love. Just confess it and go sin no more. Jesus LOVES YOU!