



SELF-FORGIVENESS

by Sarah Coleman

I am a serial negative-self-talker.

"What an idiot," I whisper in condescension to myself. "Such a loser."

I am not very kind to myself. Oh, I'm patient, compassionate and encouraging to others. I have all the tolerance in the world for others, but I'm brutal to myself.

I don't know where this habit came from - well, I do, but more on that later - but I have been verbally abusing myself for some time. For so long it is natural to slander myself without regard.

From whom did I learn this insidious habit? None other than Satan, the father of lies. He loves to insinuate names I should call myself when I founder. He loves to remind me of all the times I have failed. He loves to pile guilt and shame as high as the sky.

But as I said, he is the father of lies and the names he calls me (and insists I call myself) are false.

So why do I listen when I have a Father who tenderly whispers the opposite?

Nowhere in the Bible do I read of God's disappointment, impatience or hatred toward me. Instead, I read His sheer delight. It's time I listened to the one who speaks truth over my soul.

The names you call yourself matter.

“Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.” (James 3:2)

What sayest the tongue, so goest everything else. Your words matter. Words build or tear down, create or destroy. Like the old tube of toothpaste demonstration, once they are out, you can't take them back. They go forth and perform the purpose for which they were sent. Words create the future and harmful words create a damaged and broken future.

We all make mistakes, but if we control our words, we control everything else. You better believe they matter.

It's not how you or I were created.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.’” (>[Genesis 1:26a](#))

Fearfully. Wonderfully ([Psalm 139:14](#)). A masterpiece ([Ephesians 2:10](#)). Set apart ([Jeremiah 1:5](#)). In the image of God ([Genesis 1:27](#)).

That's how we were created.

Not an afterthought. Not a mutant. Not a mistake. Not worthless and certainly not an idiot. We are intelligent, emotional, and creative beings crafted with purpose and dignity.

God calls us a different name.

“But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvellous grace.” ([Galatation 1:15](#))

By grace He calls us chosen ([1 Peter 2:9](#)). He calls us loved ([Ephesians 1:4](#)). He calls us delight ([Isaiah 62:4](#)). The apple of His eye ([Psalm 17:8](#)). He loves us so He carved our names on the palm of His hand ([Isaiah 49:16](#)).

He calls me daughter ([2 Corinthians 6:17](#)). And no daughter of the King of kings has any place being labelled less than - even if by her own mouth.

So here is what you and I should do:

Be patient with yourself.

*“For you know that when your **faith** is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.”* ([James 1:3](#))

I know it is easier said than done, but you know all the patience and compassion I summon up for others, I'm learning to dish some of it toward myself. In testing times my patience grows.

Forgive yourself.

“Make allowance for faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive.” ([Colossians 3:13](#))

Of all the people I have had to forgive, I have been the most difficult. Unforgiveness toward myself is a cancer that will eat away at my heart. I have to forgive myself in order to move forward.

Change the way you think.

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” ([Romans 12:2](#))

The words I murmur under my breath started in the mind. For the negative words to stop I must believe what God says about me and allow God's transformative work to change the way I think.

Abolish negative self-talk.

“Sometimes it [the tongue] praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God.” ([James 3:9](#))

It just has to stop. The self-abuse has to stop. My voice should not curse one who has been made in the image of God.

“We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

My negative words are contrary to the Word of God and I have to cast them down and deny them air space. I must teach my mouth to obey Christ and only speak His opinion of me.

Father, today I ask forgiveness of all the negative and harmful words I have spoken about myself. I do not want to abuse myself in such a way again. Transform my thoughts and let me understand how marvelously you made me. Change my habits so I use my tongue to speak hope and favor upon my life.

In Jesus' name.

Amen