

Guilt Trip

by J. Michael Feazell

Going on a guilt trip? It's all the rage, you know. Everybody's doing it. No date restrictions.

Availability unlimited. People of all ages are welcome. But there are a few hidden costs.

Among other things, guilt trips cost you your stomach lining, your sleep, your sense of humor, your ability to have fun, your productivity and any realistic sense of who you really are and what your purpose really is.

But we stand in line for tickets anyway, as though it's our chief call and duty to live all our days on board the *S.S. Guilty Conscience*.

Religion and the Gospel

You might think that religion is the solution to guilt, but truth be told, religion and guilt are really sweethearts. Wherever you find one, the other will usually be buzzing nearby like a fat, annoying housefly.

That's because religion is designed to give people a list of things to do to stay on good terms with whatever deity they profess to worship.

But no one has ever kept their particular list of rules well enough to be absolutely sure their deity isn't one day going to hurl a nasty curse their way.

Sad to say, most of us are experts at turning the gospel into religion, and we spend more time going on guilt trips (or sending others on guilt trips) than resting with our Lord of grace.

The gospel, thank God, is not religion. It's the *end* of religion. It's good news—the good news that God loves you so much that he sent his Son to bear the curse of your sinfulness and be raised from the dead so you can be forever at peace with him. Hebrews 10:19-22 says:

“Therefore...since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy

Place by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience....”

You don't need religion to be at peace with God—you just need to trust your Savior. You don't have to pack your guilt trip suitcase with plenty of fear, doubt, worry and anxiety.

You don't have to wonder whether God really loves you, or really forgives you, or really has saved you.

Instead, you can decide to believe the good news. You can trust Jesus. □

