**A person holding his hand to his face

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**I Can't Forgive Myself** *by Kris Swiatocho*

**QUESTION**: Even though I grew up in what I thought was a Christian home where we all went to church together, I didn't realize that my dad wasn't a true believer. He would end up having an affair, ending my parents' marriage of 20 years. From this point on, my life was out of control. I felt he cheated on me and my brother. I felt our whole lives had been a lie. I didn't want anything to do with God anymore. From then on, not only was my relationship with God non-existing, but all other relationships were terrible too. I would even repeat my father's pattern of cheating. I cheated on numerous boyfriends and even my future spouse, ending in divorce after one year. What is wrong with me? I feel like if I died today, I would go to hell. I have asked God to forgive me for my horrible choices, but I have difficulty forgiving myself. I don't want to hurt anymore, and I don't want to hurt anyone else.

**ANSWER:** First, let me say how much I appreciate your letter. It takes courage to share the things you are telling us. I, like you, was raised with Christian values only to have my parents’ divorce too - which led to many broken and dysfunctional romantic relationships. I would make many wrong choices leading to hurt and embarrassment. But then I found the Lord and learned of his forgiveness for my sins. I was able to repent of my mistakes and of my bad choices, knowing he would be able to heal and restore me. Second, I got some counseling. I knew I had never really dwelt with my dad cheating on my mom and how it affected me. I didn't realize I was chasing men who were much like my father and non-committal. I would try to hurt them before they could hurt me. In our study, Intentional Relationships for Singles, Pastor Dan Houk and I address why our relationships fail. From family to work to romance. We talk about our identity, past, and the importance of being in church, around friends to help you walk with the Lord. I am not saying it's going to be easy to forgive yourself. The enemy loves to whisper and remind you of your past. This is when you remind him of his future, defeated in Jesus.

*Jeremiah 17: 4 Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise.*

While your actions are horrible, you are not horrible as a believer in Christ. You are a new creation, and you are beautiful. From personal experience, there are some things I have had a hard time letting go of. There are some things that I can't believe God would forgive me for. But please know, you are forgiven. He remembers them no more, and so should you.

### *Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*

Note: Forgiving ourselves is much more complicated than believing God would forgive us. We feel that if I don't forgive myself, I am taking on the punishment I deserve. But remember, that is what Christ did on the cross for you. To learn more about this topic, go to [www.IntentionalRelationshipSolutions.org](http://www.IntentionalRelationshipSolutions.org) and order your copy of Intentional Relationships for Singles' 12-week study.

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• [www.TheSinglesNetwork.org](http://www.TheSinglesNetwork.org)

• [www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org](http://www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org)

• [www.LaborDaySingles.org](http://www.LaborDaySingles.org)

• [www.IntentionalRelationshipSolutions.org](http://www.intentionalrelationshipsolutions.org/)