

Section II

Leaving Guilt Behind: Condemnation versus Conviction

The next three sections of this study will be focusing on tools that Satan, our enemy, uses to keep us in the midst of guilt and ultimately blocking us from reaching our goal of glorifying God with our lives. These sections are entitled *Condemnation versus Conviction; The Power of Thought; and Strongholds*. It is my hope that these sections will open our eyes more to the ways of our enemy bringing us closer to Jesus, our only strength to defend against Satan.

Many believers have condemning thoughts and some believers even think it is God telling them these things. Nothing is further from the truth!! God never tells us that we are a failure or a loser. In fact, Jesus told us the exact opposite that He came not to condemn the world but to save it (John 12:47).

Before we begin the indepth discussion on this section, it is important for us to realize that we are talking about conviction and condemnation in a subjective manner. Objectively, we can use our judicial system to bring out the point that all are condemned. When a person commits a crime and through trial is found guilty they are convicted of that crime. After the conviction, the judge hands out a sentence which condemns them and brings forth punishment. We are all condemned because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). However, as believers we have accepted Jesus' salvation for our sins. Jesus has already paid the price for our punishment and, therefore, there is no condemnation for believers.

Satan, however, being the liar and deceiver that he is, wants us to discredit the blood of Christ. Therefore, he wants us to focus on the condemnation of our sins. That is why he places condemning thoughts in our minds. Therefore, subjectively, we talk about Satan being the one who brings condemnation, but in fact condemnation for sin overall belongs to God, since He is the judge. As believers in God's hands, we know we can rest peaceably because our sins have been forgiven through the blood of Christ and we are no longer condemned for our sins. Praise the Lord for sending His Son Jesus Christ because through His salvation our punishment is paid and through God's love, mercy and grace we do not have condemnation!!

With this being stated, we will move forward with subjectively looking at these terms as conviction continuing to the time of confession and condemnation being the tool that Satan uses to stifle a believer *after* they have confessed their sins.

What is condemnation?

Condemnation comes from Satan and is meant to tear you down. Condemnation continually points out what a failure you are, and how badly you've messed up. It shows you the problem, but avoids the solution. Revelation 12:10 tell us that the devil accuses God's children day and night. When we confess our sins and ask God to forgive us, He does (1 John 1:9) but the enemy continues to accuse us and condemn us. We must trust what God's Word says over our feelings.

Write out John 3:17 here:

Think of a sin right now that Satan is using as a way to bring forth condemning thoughts, write John 3:17 on an index card and post it in a common area so you can be reminded of the truth.

What is Conviction?

Conviction is known in the Bible as Godly sorrow. God's Word tells us that Godly sorrow is what leads us to repentance. While condemnation tells you, "You are a failure! Look at what you have done!" conviction tells you, "Come to Me . . . and I will lift your burden by forgiving you and setting you free of the weight sin brings!"

Not only is God willing to forgive us of our sins, but He longs to do so. Read Isaiah 30:18 and list here what the Lord longs for and waits to do.

Those who respond to this longing of the Lord by longing for Him will be _____.

God's Holy Spirit is in each and every believer. He is our Comforter when the enemy attacks. Our response to His longing to comfort us is crucial in receiving that comfort. The Holy Spirit will convict us of our sins to bring us closer in our walk with Christ. After He convicts us and we respond with repentance then He begins the role of comforting us by assuring us with peace. This peace is a blessing that we can only take hold of if we stay within the arms of Jesus by capturing the thoughts Satan puts in our minds. We will talk more about this in the next section – *The Power of Thoughts*.

Looking deeper . . .

Read Romans 8:1-4. Who does it say does not have condemnation?

Why do they not have condemnation?

From what does the power of the Spirit free us?

Why was the law of Moses weak?

What did God do because of this weakness?

What does verse 4 say is the reason God did this?

God saw that the law of Moses was weak and so He sent His son to die on the cross for our sins. The weakness of the law is replaced by the marvelous love of God. Because God loved us enough to send His only Son, we now have no condemnation; and through acceptance of that salvation, we have been sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13). Praise God for His Spirit who convicts us, but doesn't leave us there. He continues to comfort us through the assurance that we have no condemnation for Christ has paid our price.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I cannot praise You enough for sending Your Son Jesus. Through the blood He shed for me I can rise up and use Your strength to fight Satan with the truth that I am forgiven, therefore, I have no condemnation. Strengthen me with the wisdom to know when Your Spirit is convicting me of sin that is keeping me from a closer relationship with You. Draw me towards repentance and comfort me with Your reassurance. Blessed it is to be called a child of Yours! Amen.