

Lord, Free My Heart from Condemnation

Key Scripture:

“There is therefore now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1

Portion for the Journey

Have you ever felt overcome by a horrible sense of guilt and hopelessness for your spiritual condition? Have you felt the sting of negative words spoken by others that threw you into a deep pit of condemnation? The dictionary defines “condemnation” as the sense of very strong disapproval; reproof, censure, criticism, strictures, denunciation, vilification. One of the words for condemnation used in the New Testament carries the idea of being accused of a crime or having a sentence pronounced against one in a private trial. It includes the action of condemning someone to a punishment; placing them under a sentence.

Accusations and condemnation: Accusations and condemnation are words that have judged a person and call for judgment. There is no pity or grace in words of accusation or condemnation. These words can come against us from others, from the devil or from our own thoughts. When we speak words of accusation or condemnation we are aligning ourselves with the devil. One of the enemy’s attacks on God’s people is to bring charges of accusation against them so they will become discouraged and feel condemned. These accusations may be true or false, it does not matter to the “Accuser of the Brethren” who accuses men before God day and night. Satan seeks to find and exploit our flaws. (See Luke 6:7; Neh. 6:7)

Satan’s name means “adversary” and he is constantly seeking to bring charges against God’s elect. Satan seeks to find someone to agree with his accusations. The Word makes it clear that a person can only be condemned by the testimony of two or more witnesses. God’s law required a minimum of two witnesses who had to be sure enough of their testimony to cast the first stones at a person. In a stoning, the victim was stripped naked and his hands were bound, then he was paraded out of town. He was placed on a scaffold about 9 feet high. The first witness pushed him off the scaffold and the second witness dropped a large stone on his head or chest. Then bystanders pelted the dying man with stones. No mourning was permitted for the dead man. While we no longer have public stoning, it is still possible to speak words that have the same effect on others spiritually and emotionally. When the woman was caught in adultery, the law required that the woman be stoned to death. The crowd brought her to Jesus hoping to get Jesus to take part in the accusations against her. We now see the significance of His challenge to the crowd, “he who is without sin throw the first stone.” Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6,7; 19:15-20; Matt. 18:16-20; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Rev. 12:10-11

When we are accused. We need to stand in the Truth of God’s Word.

- We humbly proclaim that God is our only judge. We do not need to fear man or seek to please them. We need to ask the LORD to renew our minds and transform our thinking regarding our Father as the Judge. We can only understand His ways as Judge when we know that His character of love, mercy and grace is always present in His dealings with His children. When we trust Jesus and repent of our sins, we have no fear of God's wrath. Isaiah 33:22 says, "For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King, it is he who will save us." In the Hebrew the word for "judge" and "salvation" are often used synonymously. Judge and justice are also used synonymously. The word for "judge" is used to describe the heroes and defenders of God's people. When God judges, He disciplines us for our good. Rom. 26:8-10; Heb. 12:10
- Know that as a believer, there is no condemnation in Jesus. Roman 8:1 Jesus He bore the penalty for our sin on the cross and made it possible for all sinners to be saved by repentance. He has made it clear He does not seek to judge us. (John 12:47) Zechariah 3:1-7 has a beautiful picture of Satan standing in God's throne room to accuse Joshua the High Priest.
- Run to Jesus, our advocate and defender against the accusations of the enemy. Advocate (Strong's 3875) is 'parakletos' and this word means 'someone called to one's side, one called to one's aid, to plead another's cause before a judge, counsel for the defense. Jesus is an intercessor who stands at God's right hand and pleads our cause. 1 John 2:1; Job 16:19
- Move in a different spirit from our accusers. Bless them and pray for them. We are to be imitators of Jesus Who has commanded not to judge others. We are called to judge or discern between good and evil, but forbidden from pronouncing an outcome or a punishment as consequence for their actions. Instead, He desires that we would intercede and stand in the gap. God desires that we would intercede and pray for those who are in sin, to seek their redemption.
- Do not believe the words of accusation. We must stand in faith and believe God's promises to sanctify His people and to complete the work He has started in each of us. We stand against the spirit of condemnation by stand on the Truth of God's Word. Matt. 7:1-2; Luke 6:37 (AMP); Luke 12:58; Luke 19:22 (ASV); John 3:17 AMP; John 5:22; John 8:15; Isa. 54:15-17; Ps. 76:8-9
- We should not lose heart when we are accused! Jesus says we are blessed when we are reviled and accused for His sake. Matt. 5:11-12
- We do not need to defend ourselves against our accusers, but instead, as Jesus did before His accusers, trust ourselves to our Father. Matt. 27:12; 1 Peter 3:16-18; 1 Pet.2:23

We need to guard our hearts from allowing condemnation to take root. God desires truth in our innermost being. If we hold onto condemnation, we are allowing the enemy's strategies to succeed and take root. Condemnation brings a deep sense in your heart that contains aspects of the following thoughts and feelings. All are contrary to God's plans for you, which is to give you life abundantly, a future and a hope.

- Shame
- Desolation
- Doomed to punishment
- A cloud of God's disapproval
- Living under a sentence of utter rejection by God

- Being unfit for use or service in God's Kingdom
- Unworthy to receive anything from God
- You have been judged and found wanting
- Being hopeless and cast off
- Being faulty or incomplete
- Trapped in feelings of guilt and alienation from God

If these feelings describe the spiritual condition of your heart, Beloved, there is a way to find perfect freedom and acceptance! Jesus does not want us to be trapped in this condition! He wants to save us— from our sins, from our old nature and to give us a new life in Him. *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* Romans 8:1 (KJV)

To merely say, "There is no condemnation..." is to misquote this verse. The second half of the verse makes it clear there is no condemnation for those who walk after the Spirit. Those who live to please the flesh are not included in this promise. Without Jesus we have no hope at all. But thanks be to God! If we believe in Him and make Him Lord, He has declared us not guilty and has offered us freedom from sin and power to do His will. The Holy Spirit gives us life and shows us how to walk in the Spirit.

Where do these thoughts of condemnation come from?

1. **There is an eternal condemnation or damnation** (Heb. 6:2) that is reserved for those who have rejected Jesus' offer of salvation. The Word clearly states that we will incur God's condemnation if we do not believe the truth so that Jesus becomes our Savior. (Rom. 5:15-16) Jesus is "the way, the truth and the life" and there is no hope unless we choose to receive the salvation that Jesus is offering. Jesus wants us to live by faith in Him, by His power to cleanse, and by the promise of His grace and freedom from judgment. See Hebrews 7:25; Rom. 8:6-8; John 3:17-18; 2 Thes. 2:12; John 12:48; Mark 12:40; Matt. 23:14 (NKJ); Nahum 1:3; Mark 16:16.
2. **Our own conscience may condemn us.** We are to guard our own conduct, walk by the Spirit of God and be sensitive to our own consciences, as energized by the Holy Spirit. When we continue to walk in sin and do not confess and repent when the LORD shows us our sins, we will find that our conscience will speak words of condemnation in our hearts. The wages of sin is death, so there is no way to be freed from the sense of condemnation unless we receive the cleansing from Jesus' shed blood. Cleansing comes when we experience true repentance which is acknowledging our sin and then allowing God to change our heart and mind to walk in His ways. This is different from a worldly sorrow which may leave us with feelings of condemnation but will not free us from our sins. See Romans 2:15; 2 Corinthians 7:10-11
3. **When we judge others, we bring condemnation down upon ourselves.** *“THEREFORE YOU have no excuse or defense or justification, O man, whoever you are who judges and condemns another. For in posing as judge and passing sentence on another, you condemn yourself, because you who judge are habitually practicing the very same things [that you censure and denounce]. [But] we know that the judgment (adverse verdict, sentence) of God falls justly and in accordance with truth upon those who practice such things.”* Romans 2:1-2 (AMP)

Ask God to show you if you have taken the place of the accuser of the brethren in the lives of any others. It is so easy to take on an accusatory tone toward another's behavior or attitude! Remember, we will be judged by the same measure we use to judge others. If we play the role of the accuser of other believers, then we bring condemnation down upon our own heads. Ask the Lord to show you any times that you have failed to react rightly to another's sin, either real or imagined. As a believer, God does not want us to "judge" or "condemn" others, but in humility to pray for them and seek God's help for them to become free. Have we gossiped over another's sin, taken some measure of pleasure in the fall or discipline of another, or looked upon their plight with an air of superiority or pride? Have we reacted in judgment rather than forgiveness when someone sins against us? Ask the LORD to show you the sin of being an accuser of the brethren and to cleanse you from this sin. See Romans 2:1-2; Matt. 5:22-24; Matt. 7:3; Matt. 18:15,21-35; Luke 17:3; 2 Tim. 2:24-26

God's way would be to intercede for our brothers and sisters who are in sin. To cover their sin with the blood of Jesus and ask God to bring them to repentance. An excellent picture of the role of the believer when encountering the sins of another person is seen in this glimpse into Noah's life. Genesis 9:20-27 describes an episode after the ark landed, when Noah planted a vineyard and became drunk. It is said that he "uncovered himself in his tent." This might have meant that he was physically naked or spiritually vulnerable. Ham saw his father's nakedness and went out and told his two brothers. The word used here for "saw" in the Hebrew meant 'to gaze upon with satisfaction' and then he went and told his two brothers about their father's condition. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon their shoulders and walked backward into the tent, so as not to gaze upon their father's nakedness. The word for "garment" used here is the same word used when God took garments of skin and covered Adam and Eve after they had sinned. This is significant for it speaks of a death that took place to cover their nakedness. Jesus' blood was shed for those who are sinners and we can pray for them to be covered by the shed blood of Jesus.

Satan is called the "Accuser of the Brethren." The Word gives us a picture of him standing before God to bring accusations against God's anointed ones. (See Revelations-12:10-11; Job 1) He is like a prosecuting attorney seeking to expose our sin and see us condemned for our crimes. The enemy uses condemnation to cut us off from the flow of God's grace. The terrible results of Satan's condemnation takes root when we have a distorted view of God, His Word, and our identity in Him. Satan is not above lying to us and speaking words of rejection and failure into our hearts in complete disagreement with God's view of us! He hopes to convince us and then get us to agree with him so that, by agreeing, we become a second accuser against ourselves. He will constantly speak words of condemnation into our ears unless we learn how to silence him. We can choose to listen and believe him or we can choose, instead, to agree with the Word of God which tells us that we are cleansed and forgiven from our sins when we confess them to the LORD. Jesus is our defender. He is the One who pleads our case before the LORD based upon His finished work on the cross. He paid the penalty for our sins! See Isa. 50:9

A beautiful picture is given in Zechariah 3, of the sinner standing in God's throne room. "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. ²The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" ³ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. ⁴ He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him." Again he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes." ⁵ Then I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord was standing by. ⁶ And the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, ⁷ "Thus says the Lord

of hosts, 'If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here. Zech. 3:1-7 (NASB); See also Ps. 37:33

Getting Free From Condemnation

1. **Be certain of your salvation through Jesus Christ.** If your feelings of condemnation are because you have never given your life to Jesus or because you have cherished sin in your life, it is essential that we turn to the LORD as our first step to freedom! Jesus repeatedly showed His unwillingness to judge or condemn (John 8:1-11; Rom. 8:33-34). No one who takes refuge in Him will be condemned. (Ps. 34:22). The Word proclaims that all who call upon the name of the LORD will be saved. (Acts 2:21). Those who come to Him will not be cast out. (John 6:37). He did not come to condemn the world, but to bring salvation. (John 3:17). The classic example is the woman caught in the act of adultery. (John 8:11). Jesus refused to join her accusers and instead offered His salvation. Vital to Jesus' willingness not to condemn is the change of heart which would change the person's behavior and attitude toward their sins. "Go and sin no more." (John 5:14; 8:11). When we commit our life to Him, He is the one who will change our hearts through His grace. On our own, none of us is capable of walking in His way. We need to live by faith in His promises to complete His good and perfect work in our lives through grace. We need to take captive every thought to the obedience to Christ and make sure that our attitudes and opinions of ourselves line up with His Word for those who are new creations in Christ! In Jesus, we can be freed from all feelings of condemnation and to find freedom from guilt and shame. Jesus said, "I did not come to condemn the world but to save the world." John 12:47; see also 1 Cor.11:31-32; Rom.10:9; John 3:16; 1 John 1:9; Heb. 7:25
2. **Discern between the lies of the enemy and the voice of the Lord.** If you have accepted Jesus as Savior and still experience a sense of failure and condemnation you must stand against these thoughts. Many times those whose hearts seek the LORD and desire holiness most diligently will be the most attacked by feelings of condemnation. Initially, the voice of the enemy may be confused with conviction of the Holy Spirit. There are some very distinct differences between the Spirit's voice of conviction and a sense of condemnation. If we learn to recognize the differences, we can stand against condemnation when Satan tries to convince us we are never going to be saved from our sin nature and desires. Condemnation can take a very spiritual and holy tone. Yet as we examine the results each produce in our life we can learn to discern and reject the voice of condemnation.

Condemnation	Conviction by the Holy Spirit
Satan is the accuser of the brethren Rev. 12:10; Zech. 3:1-7; Job 1:6-12	Jesus came not to condemn the world but to save the world John 12:47; Rom. 8:1; 8:33-39
Condemnation comes from the enemy who hates our souls and wants to destroy us 1 Peter 5:8; John 10:10	Conviction comes from God loves us and seeks restoration of relationship and give us an abundant life Isa. 30:18; John 10:10
Condemnation tells us we are a hopeless loser who will always live in shame and guilt Rom. 7:24	Conviction assures us that we are valued, forgiven and freed from sin and the failings of our past. Rom 7:25
Condemnation pridefully focuses on "self" and the flesh in which there is no hope for "goodness." Ps. 39:1-3	Conviction focuses our hearts in humility upon our Savior to help us. Ps. 10:17; Ps. 25:9

Condemnation separates us from God	Conviction draws us towards God our Savior
Condemnation is spoken in the darkness	Conviction comes in the Light John 3:20-21
Condemnation often exaggerates our flaws and failures, overstating our guilt to lead us into despair, self-pity and victim thinking.	Conviction comes to our heart as we learn the truth and standards of righteousness through God's Word. His Word sets us free!
Condemnation results in a distorted view of God and His character	Conviction opens our eyes to see God's character of love and forgiveness and grace
Condemnation deceives us from seeing the true purpose of trials and focuses on the darkness and shame	Conviction opens the eyes of our understanding and help us to see God's goodness in our trials
Condemnation seeks to win sympathy and make excuses or blames others	Conviction leads one to accept responsibility for one's sins and seek God's help to change
Condemnation makes you feel hopeless and leaves you sick at heart. Worldly sorrow cannot produce righteousness.	Conviction produces godly sorrow and leads you to repentance Rom. 8:1
Condemnation shows you problems, flaws and faults but offers no solutions	Conviction shows you the answer and way of freedom through relationship with Jesus
Condemnation puts burden of guilt on you and shows no way out	Conviction moves burden to guilt to Jesus on the cross, whose blood frees you Rom 2:4
Condemnation leaves an open unhealed wound	Conviction results in healing and restoration
Condemnation is usually very generalized and describes the kind of person we are rather than specific things we can change.	Holy Spirit conviction points to specific sin and leads us to confess and receive cleansing
Condemnation leads to us berating ourselves and making excuses rather than changing	Conviction shows us positive actions by which to change and how to do so constructively.
Condemnation often convinces us we are a flawed and weak person held prisoner to the weaknesses and failures of our flesh	Conviction shows us that our true identity is in Jesus Christ and that we are a new creation in Him
Condemnation will keep you mired more deeply into sin because you give up and let sin run its course.	Conviction leads to confession and cleansing from sin, allowing us to walk in holiness and the newness of life! 1 John 1:9
Condemnation convinces us of God's disapproval and rejection	Conviction convinces us of God's forgiveness and cleansing as He wipes away our sin
Condemnation holds us back with certainty of our inadequacy	Conviction frees us to attempt the impossible
Condemnation keeps us mired in hopelessness	Conviction results in a change of heart and direction
Condemnation convinces that you have missed God's grace there is no salvation for you	Conviction restores us to the joy of our salvation and freedom
Condemnation side tracks us and keeps us looking back at our past failures	Conviction offers us the promise of freedom from our past, and offers a future and hope, a new day. Lam. 3:23
Condemnation repeatedly reminds us of past sins and the wickedness of our flesh.	When we respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit by confessing and repenting of our sins, He forgives and cleanses us. Our sins are not only forgiven, they are removed from us as far as the east is from the west. Ps. 103:12

3. **Keep short accounts with God.** Do not let sin pile up and fester in your heart. Invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart and convict you of sin on a daily basis. When you do discover you have sinned, run to the LORD immediately to confess and repent and receive His forgiveness and cleansing. Psalm 139:23,24; Ps. 51; 1 Cor. 2:10-12; Ps. 19:12, Jer. 17:9
4. **Readily acknowledge that you are a sinner** and that in your flesh there is nothing good! Recognize that you are no longer living under the power of that flesh. Stand on the truth that you are a new creation and the old things are passed away. Rely upon the fact that God has supplied everything we need to be accepted in the beloved. Proclaim the power of Jesus' shed blood and the finished work of the cross in your life. 1 John 1:8-9
5. **We must be alert to the fact that we are in a battle** and Satan's favorite strategy is to plant thoughts in our minds contrary to our true relationship with the LORD and His power to transform us into His likeness. God's Word is our most powerful weapon against Satan's schemes. Meditation on the Word will help us to recognize the lies of the enemy. As we meditate upon the verses that relate to our identity in Christ, the Word also has the power to renew our minds and change our old patterns of thinking. When thoughts of condemnation enter our minds, we need to examine them carefully and discern whether they line up with the Word of God concerning His grace and power to change us into His likeness. The Word tells us to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and this will enable us to reject condemnation and choose Words of life and truth to fill our hearts. 2 Cor. 10:3-5

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
old things have passed away;
behold, all things have become new.”
2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)*

What is the Lord Speaking to your heart?

What is your response to the Lord?