

CONDEMNATION - VICTORY OR DEFEAT?

Part Two

We were taught in Part One that CONDEMNATION is a word that we are all acquainted with and often have difficulty defining although the symptoms manifests itself in very familiar ways. We also talked about the Truth of God as to a Christian not having to labor under the bondage of condemnation. We are to stand in God's truth! So let's explore deeper the believer's truth; freedom from condemnation.

CONDEMNATION IS NOT OF GOD

Romans 8:1-2, *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

Romans chapter 8 is a powerful chapter and one that believers should study and be well versed in, as the apostle Paul presents the system of operation that the Holy Spirit carries out in the lives of the believer, and breaking the dominion of the old law (principle) of sin and death. We see that through the redemptive work of Christ, that our salvation is by faith alone, and we are free from God's banishing judgment. Therefore, we are not under the law but under God's loving grace.

This is such an important chapter to study as Paul presents two ways of life—to walk according to the flesh or walk according to the Spirit. It is one or the other; no “Mr. In-betweens!” If we chose to walk in the flesh nature, we follow the sinful desires of one's old life. If we chose to walk in the Spirit, we will follow the desires of the Holy Spirit, to live our lives that are pleasing to God. Verses 5-6 very clearly address this truth. *For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

God has not left us to stumble around in the dark, but has made it very clear the way we are to walk in our life's journey. He has also provided the help we need to accomplish the job through the Holy Spirit. As believers, we should live according to the Spirit which involves holiness in actions, words and in our thoughts throughout the day. We are to keep our minds renewed with the mind of Christ and our thoughts held captive to the obedience of Christ, as we walk them out in our actions and deeds.

NO CONDEMNATION TO THOSE IN CHRIST JESUS!

When we yield to the flesh nature, for the most part, we immediately know it. Then we have a choice to make. Continuing the way we are walking or to repent and turn back to the Spirit nature. Paul tells us in verse 9 that though Christians are in the Spirit, he also warns that they can from time to time live

“according to the flesh” (v.13). It is the believer’s choice! But remember that the Holy Spirit is on our side. He will do all we allow Him to do, to help us overcome the flesh nature and walk in the Spirit. We see then that it is through the process of sanctification that we learn to grow and walk in holiness. We are to actively work at it. Keep our minds and hearts clean and pure as we put to death any sin that would try to creep in. We must also remember that it is only by the Holy Spirit’s power that we can succeed.

I taught my children this song 40 years ago when they were misbehaving and then we would pray. I’m now singing it to my great grandchildren. *The devil is a sly old fox, if I could catch him, I’d put him in a box. I lock the door and throw away the key for all the mean tricks he’s played on me. I’m glad I have salvation, I’m glad I have salvation, I’m glad I have salvation ‘cause the Lord loves me!*

From the little children to the elderly, we will encounter the powers of darkness and have battles to fight. Satan never gives up on trying to tear down believers (no matter the age) and cause them to fall. I am glad that I have choices! I am thankful for the Holy Spirit that dwells within me, as He helps me make the right and wisest choices to keep me in right standing with my God. I read that all Christians have the Holy Spirit within them. Anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit within is not a Christian. I like that statement! It resonates within my spirit! I believe it!

Verse 14, *For as many are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* Therefore, we see that throughout this chapter Paul is encouraging us to put to death the deeds of the flesh, and be led by the Spirit of God. As we give the Holy Spirit permission to lead us and stay in submission to His leading, we will more fully come into true obedience to God and be conformed to His holy standards. It is learning to be sensitive to the “promptings” of the Spirit of God at all times. The Holy Spirit will never give us promptings that would encourage us to act contrary to Scripture. We are told to hide God’s Word in our heart. I believe that as I do so and when I need that Word to minister to self or others, it is the Holy Spirit that draws it forth and even shows me how to use it effectively for the Kingdom of God. He has a powerful job and He does it well!

Now we know that the two predominant sources of unrighteous condemnation which afflict us are Satan and self. We also know that God no longer condemns us; still, many spend their lives in a perpetual state of self-condemnation. There are many reasons that believers fall into the trap of self-condemnation, but I felt that the Lord wanted me to stay with the Romans chapter 8 teaching.

1 John 3:21, *If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.* This follows in line with the teaching as we talked about the mind and heart of the believer being led by the Holy Spirit and walking in the Spirit nature. Therefore, we must set our confidence and trust upon the reality of God’s Word to keep our lives free of condemnation. *He who believes in Him is not condemned* (John 3:18).

As we discipline our thought life in subjection to the Holy Spirit, *There is THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION to those who are in Christ Jesus*

Verses 37-39, *Yet in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, no things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

More than conquerors! These words describe one who is super victorious, who wins more than an ordinary victory, but who is overpowering in achieving abundant victory. What a powerful sentence and full of truth for the believer to stand upon. I cannot think of a more fitting way to close the chapter, for these three verses describe God's Everlasting Love. It is comforting and encouraging to know that we are never in this life separated from Christ's love.