



Freedom from Condemnation—Part 1

This article is from David Ferguson of the Intimacy Therapy Network.

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1).

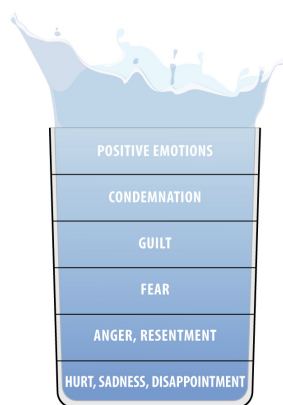


INTRODUCTION

In the realm of human experience, we may experience “positive” emotions—*“I feel happy, affirmed, contented, hopeful,”* and we may find ourselves coping with painful emotions—*“I feel embarrassed, used, neglected, frustrated.”* Emotions, if properly and biblically dealt with, serve as an important function in maintaining our emotional health and spiritual walk. For instance, living in a fallen world filled with tribulation, we will at times experience anger; when we have offended someone else, we should feel guilty. However, God never intended for us to harbor anger and guilt in our hearts. They are to be resolved through forgiveness (anger, Ephesians 4:31) and confession (guilt, 1 John 1:9; James 5:16).

But one heart-wrenching, spiritually debilitating experience that God never wants His children to endure, and one emotion that the human soul should never tolerate, is **condemnation**.

With regard to the Intimacy Therapy Network framework, condemnation and its many “faces” like shame, embarrassment, and unworthiness is one of five primary emotions including hurt, anger, fear, and guilt (see *emotional cup* illustration).



The Emotional Cup



Condemnation might sound like...

"I can't do anything right."

"I'll never be as good as other people."

"I'm a terrible person."

"I'm not important to anyone."

"I'm responsible for all the hurt and pain in my family."

"It's all my fault."

"I'm not worthy of receiving your love."

UNDERSTANDING CONDEMNATION

Condemnation is defined as "to judge as unfit, to pronounce sentence, punishment, or judgment." In the life of a believer, this sense of judgment and worthlessness is not from God. *There is no condemnation because Christ took the sentence, punishment, and judgment for our sin* (see Romans 8:1–3).

In contrast, to self-condemning lies, God would say to us,

- *"Your soul is more valuable than everything that is in the world"* (Luke 9:25).
- *"I loved and valued you so much that I gave My Son for you"* (John 3:16).
- *"I have accepted you, just as you are"* (Romans 5:8; 15:7).
- *"You are of great value to Me"* (Matthew 6:25–34).

Many people suffer under the burden of condemnation. It clings to their soul like barnacles on the side of a ship. It is part of the thief's strategy to "kill, steal, and destroy" the abundant life that God has promised us (John 10:10).

In this multi-part series, we'll be discussing condemnation—what it is, where it comes from, symptoms of those who feel condemned, and how to gain freedom. Our hope is that as truth is revealed, we will be set free from personal feelings of condemnation; we will be careful not to minister condemnation to others, and we will become lovingly involved in helping our loved ones be set free. Let's begin by exploring the sources of condemnation.

SOURCES OF CONDEMNATION

Condemnation comes from Satan, others, and ourselves. Conviction comes from the Holy Spirit.

- *Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10), ministers condemnation—"You've sinned again—the same sin you confessed yesterday. You're having a problem in this area because there's something really wrong with you. God is getting tired of hearing your confessions. Just admit it, you're a failure."*
- *Other people can minister condemnation to us by speaking hurtful lies, "You'll never amount to anything", "Why can't you do anything right?" or subtle phrases such as, "Just let me do it." "Your brother does a much better job than you do."*



- *“Self-talk” can also get us into trouble. For instance, perhaps you’ve been looking forward to having lunch with a friend you haven’t seen in several weeks. He calls the morning of your luncheon appointment and leaves a message on your voice mail, “Something’s come up, I won’t be able to meet you for lunch today. We’ll get together soon.” A rather innocent phone message. Self-condemnation can take this harmless message from a friend and quickly spin it out of control. “He probably just didn’t want to take the time to eat lunch with me...He probably doesn’t like me...I’m not sure if anyone likes me...I’m not sure I’m likable...I’m not worth anyone liking me.”*

In contrast to condemnation, true guilt and conviction come from our conscience and the Holy Spirit, *“When He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment”* (John 16:8). But condemnation does not come from God: *“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him”* (John 3:17).



W-9. Living abundantly “in the present” as His Word brings healing to hurt and anger, guilt, fear, and condemnation—which are heart hindrances to life abundant

Truth, when experienced, empowers transformation.

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

God wants us to live abundantly “in the present” as His Word brings healing to hurt, anger, guilt, fear, and condemnation, which are heart hindrances to abundant life.

Hearing Jesus in the present is critical to following Him. His voice is not unclear or uncertain, but often, it’s our hearing that is impaired. To follow Him faithfully requires freedom to hear.

Be still before the Lord and offer the same prayer that David prayed as you seek to put away the things that might hinder you from hearing God:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23–24).

■ Search me, O Lord, for **unresolved emotions** that keep me from hearing You. Free me from any guilt or condemnation, any anger or bitterness, any fear or anxiety. Free me to live each moment “in the present” with You. Speak now Your servant listens. I especially stand against messages of condemnation because they are NOT from You.



- Search me, O Lord, for **sins that hinder me** from hearing You. Free me from all moral filth, evil, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.

Free me to have a cleansed heart and mind. Speak now, Your servant listens. I need to put away...

- Search me, O Lord, for **childish things that distract me** from hearing You.

Free me from rationalizing my behavior and blaming others, from idle chatter and self-focus. Free me to practice personal responsibility before You and others. Speak now, Your servant listens. I need to put away...

- Search me O Lord for **self-initiative that prevents me** from hearing You. Free me from my thoughts, my ways, my ideas, and my goals.

May I instead embrace Your thoughts, Yours ways, Your ideas, and Your goals. Speak now, Your servant listens. I need to put away...

Pause and wait before the Lord. Listen as He reveals what needs to be put away. Now yield to Him even though you may not fully know all that will be necessary:

"Lord I sense the need to put away _____ from my life. Even before fully knowing all that may be required, I yield to You. I long to hear You as I live life in present abundance. Remove this from my life, so that I can more freely hear what You reveal to me. In Jesus' name, Amen."

