

## Conviction vs. Condemnation

*“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*

So many people struggle with the effects of shame and guilt. The definition of condemnation literally means “to pronounce unfit for use.” Do you want to continually live your life with that “yucky” feeling in the pit of your stomach?

How does it happen? Condemnation happens when people live life according to the standards of the world around them. The Bible calls this state “walking after the flesh.” A person compares their behavior to others- they are better or worse than “so-and-so.” This way of thinking extends to their spiritual lives, as well. They are dirty worms and of no use to God. It is a tragic cycle where the person is in a prison with only occasional glimpses of time when condemnation is absent...unfortunately this usually happens we distract ourselves by trying to keep our minds off our issues, drowning our sorrows, turning up the volume- anything to distract us from the pain.

What does God say about this? Is there a remedy? Where is the hope?

The Lord addresses this problem by sending his Son Jesus to die on the cross for us while we were in a sinful “condemned” state. The good news doesn’t stop there, though. After a person believes and receives this good news, God sends His Holy Spirit into the hearts of the believer and a marvelous thing happens. The Holy Spirit convicts the heart.

What is conviction? It is a verdict applied to the heart coupled with the remedy. It works like this- the Holy Spirit tells our heart that a certain behavior, thought, or action is wrong. The Bible, God’s Word, is the standard for all of us. The Holy Spirit then shows the way of restoration, reconciliation, and freedom. This way is repentance. As we apologize for missing the mark and reflect on God’s standards, an amazing thing happens- change!

Transformation happens from the inside out. No longer does the person remain forever in the dark quicksand of condemnation. They depart from this to the bright land of forgiveness, healing, and hope. This process continues as the Holy Spirit convicts and works on other areas of our lives.

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” *John 3:17*