

Condemned or Free: How Will You Live?

No matter how you say it, using nice terms, derogatory words or clinical diagnoses, we all have weaknesses, issues or baggage. That's why marketing and advertising strategies are so successful.

Commercials point out our problems, sometimes with humorous exaggeration. Then they tell us, actually sell us, what we "need" to fill the hole so we can feel adequate, satisfied or healed in each area of struggle.

We are all born with an accurate sense of our extreme inadequacy. Why is that? It's because we are separated from God and desperately need Him. In fact, we are designed to need Him. But our sin separates us from God and will condemn us unless we accept Christ's death and resurrection, which will set us captives free.

Unfortunately, many of us carry the constant burden of condemnation, even after accepting Christ's victory over our sin. We develop a false standard that embellishes feelings of insecurity and inadequacy that we harbor in our core. This way of thinking keeps our heads down, the smiles off our faces and our lights dim. Does this describe you or people you know?

These feelings come from a lifetime of arrows that have been launched at us. Some come from those closest to us ... words, glances of disapproval and judgment from parents, friends, spouses or kids. They declare we are not good enough, smart enough, strong enough or pretty enough.

Know that all those arrows originate from our ultimate and only true enemy, Satan. He's the guy handing out the arrows. He wants to capitalize on that original feeling of spiritual bankruptcy. His goal is that we believe it will always hang

around our neck and choke us. Satan is the one who wants us to be in a constant state of condemnation. Jesus came to testify to the truth and set us free to reconcile with God.

Remember that those who shoot the arrows are full of arrows themselves. We have all been archers. Remember, hurt people will hurt people. They aren't your real enemy. They are usable pawns in the spiritual war.

But instead of being brainwashed pawns, you, I and all those who are in Christ Jesus can be free of condemnation from this moment forward. Scripture tells us clearly, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1, NIV).

Today, watch your words and actions. Don't let Satan use you as a puppet to launch arrows at others. Guard your thoughts and words. Look to encourage and comfort first, then gently correct.

If you are feeling condemned follow these steps: 1) Repent by confessing your wrong doing or wrong thinking; 2) Accept God's forgiveness; 3) Stop thinking you need to add something to God's grace or Jesus' death for your forgiveness; and 4) Examine the baggage that brainwashes you in this area of struggle. Receive all His grace and forgiveness.

Believe that our heavenly Father accepts you, a prodigal child. Rejoice that He can truly make you whole. Believe this good news and carry this message to others who suffer from inadequacy and condemnation. Whether you live as a condemned person or you live as a FREE person is your decision, so choose well.

Prayer

"Dear Father God, I believe You have freed me from all condemnation through the death of Your Son on the cross for my sins. And while I do believe, I still struggle with feelings

of condemnation ... sometimes for no apparent reason. But I know my past baggage rears its ugly head in subliminal ways. Open my eyes to issues I need to work on. Help me to apply Your instruction to them. Father, I come to You with an open heart and with a thankful spirit. I ask that You help me experience the full freedom You have made possible for me. Thank You, Lord. I know that I need Your Spirit to help me, but I am unsure of how to engage His assistance. Show me the way, Lord. In the name of the adequate and purifying blood of Jesus; and all God's children say-AMEN."

The Truth

"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 8:1-2, NIV**).

"He (the devil) was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (**John 8:44**).

"And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate" (**Luke 15:20-24, ESV**).

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