

Discerning the Difference Between Holy Spirit Conviction and Demonic Condemnation

In order to bind our flesh, thoughts, feelings and confusion when hearing directions in our mind; we need to define the difference between Holy Spirit conviction and condemnation which comes from the enemy or our flesh. If you search inside yourself, you can feel your spirit man.

When the Holy Spirit starts to manifest you can feel an overwhelming joy or it can be similar to when we feel the presence of the Lord upon us.

The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin or when we are heading in the wrong direction. When the Holy Spirit convicts us, we might feel slightly grieved or disappointed. When He is convicting you, pay attention!

Be aware of what the Spirit of the Lord is trying to teach you. Be open to receiving His correction and what He is showing you that you need to repent of and change in your life. The word repent means to turn around. When the Holy Spirit convicts us, we need to turn around, change the way we did something or the direction we are thinking of proceeding.

When the Holy Spirit corrects or convicts us, I like to describe it as the “get in–get out” theory. He is going to correct and discipline us and show us what we did wrong. He is going to get in and get out. He is not going to badger us or nag at us about the same thing. He is going to show us the mistake, lay it upon our heart to repent and ask for forgiveness and then He is going to expect us to move on. He will keep convicting us until we do something about it.

However, He won't make us feel depressed, guilty or ashamed like the enemy will. As we grow in our walk with the Lord we will be able to more quickly identify when it is conviction from the Holy Spirit or condemnation from the enemy.

When we receive condemnation from the enemy, it is different. He wants us to stew on what we did wrong and let it build up inside us. He is hoping we will take on the emotions of guilt, regret, blame and shame. He wants these emotions to plant a seed inside us; telling us that we are no good, that we will do it again and nobody is going to forgive us for our mistakes.

These are a few of the lies that the "father of lies" will plant in our mind. The key to our victory is to remember they are just lies. Don't take the lies in; rebuke them (take authority over them) and refuse to think anything else then what the Word of God says about you.

The enemy is going to attempt to twist and turn our thoughts. He wants to make it hard for us to accept the forgiveness that Christ offers. He wants us to be mad at all the people involved. He will try to plant thoughts in our mind that we should be mad at God because, *A good God could have prevented it from happening.*

He is going to repeat old lies to us and have us go to an emotional place we don't care to visit again. He wants us to wallow in our self-pity. He will take the low self-esteem that we may have struggled with in the past and will attack us again with those feelings of self worth and doubt. Don't listen; don't take it in. We are more than conquerors, bought with the blood of Christ, wanted and accepted by the Father. Meditate on the Scriptures and fill your mind with those thoughts and truths!

An easy way to discern between Holy Spirit conviction and condemnation from the enemy is that the Holy Spirit does it

quickly. He comes in and disciplines, convicts, correct and then loves on us. Once it is over, we might think about it for a few minutes and then we move on. It's done, it's handled, we feel released, and we have given it back to the Lord, never to pick it up again!

The enemy wants us to stew on our situation and stay mad at the person or ourselves. Before we lived as Christians extending the grace He gave to us to others when we would get mad at someone it would take us three days to get over it. I think the enemy still uses that today. When we let guilt, regret, blame and shame in, it still takes us three days to get over it. When the enemy condemns us it usually takes three days to make a turn around.

How did you react in the past when you received bad news or had a situation that did not have the outcome you expected? Did it take you three days to blow it off? He will steal your time by getting you depressed, so you sit on the couch and do nothing. We need to take time to get in the Word and overcome our thoughts, fears and condemnation! We should be binding our minds to the mind of Christ; instead of allowing unnecessary thoughts to come into our minds. The next time you can't blow something off, ask yourself, "Is this Holy Spirit conviction which only lasts a few minutes or enemy condemnation which lasts three days?"

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:13).

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. God desires to give us good things if we ask" (Matt. 7:7).

God will give us good things if we ask. His Word states He will. We need to put ourselves in a position of hearing from God. God may be silent for a period of time while seeking Him

for an answer. When God makes us wait for the answer it doesn't mean He is ignoring us. We need to be careful when waiting to hear from the Lord. It is in the waiting, that the enemy will use that time to counterfeit in a wrong answer. The enemy will use our lack of patience, control and the things that make us act out of God's timing to get us out of God's will.

God's timing is perfect and in the waiting is when we grow and learn. In waiting we develop perseverance and learn how to stay on the path that He has set before us. When we are seeking an answer, we don't know why God makes us wait. Is it for our benefit such as; cleaning some junk out of our trunk or defining us to more effectively hear the voice of the Lord.

We might have to wait on someone to do something, so our answer can come to pass. It doesn't matter what we are waiting for or how long we are waiting, as long as, we are continually pressing in to get the direction God wants for us.

We need to make sure when God is silent we don't take on our old behavior patterns, thoughts and habits. We need to wait silently for God. Don't try to analyze and come up with your own answer. There is growth in waiting, intimacy in waiting and learning in the waiting. Guard your mind, thoughts and heart during the waiting. Then when you hear the answer there will be no flesh involved.

When the Holy Spirit is giving you conviction or a word of knowledge, it won't leave you until you act on it. The same word will keep coming to you. It is like a basic computer program that we used to write years ago. The program tells us what to do line by line, but we always have a "go to" line in the program. Therefore, no matter what we do, or in this case, what we try to avoid, He is always going to bring us back to the original instruction.

We can try to ignore it, but the Holy Spirit is going to keep

bringing it to us until the conviction becomes so uncomfortable that we must act on it. As soon as we act on it, we feel released by the Spirit of the Lord and know we have been obedient to what He has called us to do.

How do we know if it was your flesh? If it was your flesh you could have ignored it. Think about the times you thought you were suppose to apologize to someone and didn't. What about the time you "felt" you should call a friend and didn't? Many of you have been taught when you have a problem to "stuff" your feelings. These are examples of how our flesh can control our actions. When it is our flesh, we can ignore our feelings or what it makes sense to do in the natural. It is an emotional response that we can push aside.

God has given His people free will. He is a gentleman and doesn't force us to do anything, sometimes causing us to take an alternative route to what He wants. Suppose God sent your friend to witness to you and your friend was disobedient and didn't do it. Do you think He is going to sit there and give up on you or use someone else?

There are probably many instances that God had to use someone else to do something. What if the first person didn't hear clearly, didn't act on what they were supposed to, was scared to do it or wasn't sure if it was the voice of the Lord or their own feelings?

Our God is a God of second chances. Let's be obedient to act on what direction the Lord gives us. There will be times we make mistakes, act in our flesh, miss a God appointment or allow the enemy to condemn us. Thank God He gives us a lot of grace to get through those times when we make mistakes.

Spend some time in prayer. Reflect and think, "Are there times I was convicted versus condemned? How can I learn to hear the voice of the Lord faster?" Discern the next time you get a direction and ask yourself, "Where did it come from?" I pray

you will notice the difference between your flesh, Satan or God and conviction and condemnation. May the Holy Spirit increase your discernment!

Kathy DeGraw *is the president and founder of DeGraw Ministries.*