

How to Overcome the Spirit of Condemnation

I have a friend who is a gifted worship leader, a loving husband and an affectionate father. He's funny, smart, passionate about his faith and wholeheartedly committed to his church. People who know him say he's a model Christian.

But underneath this joyful exterior he hides a lot of pain. He struggles with depression, and then he condemns himself because, as he says, "Christians are supposed be happy." When emotional heaviness drags him to a low point, he knows how to put on his convincing church face. Nobody knows the dark thoughts that torment him.

My friend isn't unique in this struggle. Countless Christians I know engage in a daily battle with the enemy of their souls. Satan is described in Scripture as "the father of lies" (John 8:44), and the "accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:10). He wags his bony finger of condemnation and tries to deny us access to the Lord's love and mercy.

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You'll never find victory in the Christian life if you don't confront and renounce Satan's accusations. If the devil has been replaying his lies in your head, you must hit the eject button now. The spirit of condemnation will always hurl outrageous lies at you like these listed below:

"Jesus can't use me because of my weakness." The devil is always ready to remind you that you are stupid, ugly, prone to depression or addiction, unwanted, inferior or broken beyond repair. And yet the people God used in the Bible were far from perfect. Every Christian has flaws. God made us weak so we would find our strength in Him. If you were perfect, you

wouldn't need a Savior.

"I should give up because I constantly struggle with sin."

Some Christian men I know feel disqualified because they haven't totally overcome their addiction to porn. They feel bad for being tempted, and then if they stumble, they feel defeated for weeks. This can lead to discouragement and despair—and then they lose all hope of overcoming the habit. The secret to victory is not sweating and straining to resist; you must meditate on the love of God and allow His grace to enable you to override sin's power.

"God's promises are for other people, not me." Do you feel God's goodness always bypasses you? You may have an orphan spirit. Many Christians don't believe the heavenly Father loves and accepts them. They may have been rejected by their parents, or lacked parental affirmation. Life's pain can block our ability to see God as the loving Father He actually is. If you have given your life to Christ, the Father has adopted you, He delights in you and He has given you full inheritance rights. His promises are yours to claim!

"God is always mad at me." Many believers base their relationship with God on performance. The devil loves this legalistic mindset because it prevents us from experiencing God's grace. The Father doesn't love you for what you do; He loves you because you are His child. Psalm 103 says God is "compassionate and gracious" and "slow to anger" (v. 8); it also says He has removed our sins "as far as the east is from the west" (v. 12). You will enjoy true intimacy with Jesus when you allow this truth to soak your soul.

"My past mistakes have disqualified me." I met a Christian man recently who loves God with all His heart, yet he sits in the

back of his church every week feeling inferior because he committed adultery four decades ago. His wife forgave him, and he repented for his sin, but he assumes he wears a scarlet letter around his neck and that he has been banished to a spiritual wasteland. That's a lie! If you have repented for your sin, God has forgiven and forgotten it! Nothing can separate you from God's love—not abortion, divorce or any unspeakable mistake you regret.

"I have committed the unpardonable sin." I've counseled troubled Christians who read Matthew 12:31-32 and decided that they had blasphemed the Holy Spirit and therefore could not be saved. This is a ridiculous notion, because a person who committed the unpardonable sin mentioned in that passage wouldn't care if they had blasphemed. If you are worried that you did this, then you haven't! Your heart is turned toward God and you want to please Him. That alone is evidence of His grace working in you.

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Romans 8:1 is one of the most liberating verses in the Bible. It declares: "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." This promise is for you! Jesus took your punishment and removed all guilt from your record. And His blood is more powerful than any lie Satan can throw at you.

You are now qualified—not because of any of your good works, but simply because of Jesus' amazing gift of salvation. Your past is irrelevant. You don't have to work to win God's love. When the Father looks at you, He doesn't see your past sins or present struggles; He sees a robe of righteousness. Renounce the devil's lies and receive God's indescribable, unfathomable, unconditional love.

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