

Stop Listening to the Voice 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 is a lot of pain. He struggles with depression, and then he condemns himself because Christians are, in his words, "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 is not unique in this struggle. Countless Christians I know engage in a daily battle with the enemy of their souls. And Satan is relentless in his attacks. He 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.

You will never find victory in the Christian life if you don't expose, confront and renounce Satan's groundless accusations. If the devil has been replaying his lies in your head, you must hit the "EJECT" button now! The spirit of condemnation always makes these outrageous statements listed below:

1. Jesus can't use you if you have a weakness. The devil is always ready to remind you that you are fat, unattractive, prone to depression or addiction, sexually broken, traumatized or fearful. But guess what? 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.

2. You should give up if you constantly struggle with sin.

Many Christian men I know feel spiritually 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; instead we must meditate on the love of God and allow His Spirit to rise up inside of us to override sin's power. If you are struggling, do not give up! The Spirit will help you!

3. God's promises are for other people, not you. 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 He is. But 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!

4. God is always mad at you. Many believers base their relationship with God on performance. If they read their Bibles and pray every day, they feel they are on God's "good side"; if they miss their morning devotions they assume He is upset. The devil loves this legalistic mindset because it prevents us from experiencing God's grace. You must come to understand that the Father does not love you for what you do; He loves you because you are His child. He is slow to anger and full of lovingkindness. When you allow this truth to soak your soul, you will enjoy true intimacy with Jesus.

5. Your past mistakes disqualified you. 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 35 years 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, sexual sin or any other unspeakable mistake you regret.

6. You have committed the unpardonable sin. I've counseled several 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 this 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.

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 have been qualified. 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 believe God's promise. He loves you with an indescribable, unfathomable, unconditional love.

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