

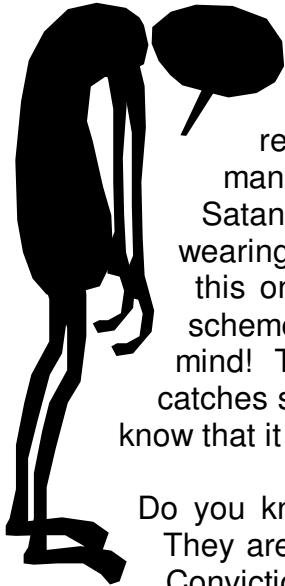
STUDIES IN TEMPTATION

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Submitted to Dr. Abramson as a mentoring research assignment, Fiji, 1997-98

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Lesson Six

I Feel So Bad About What I Did!



I have heard many people say, "We give the devil too much credit!" I do agree with that statement to an extent, but I also think we sometimes do not give the devil enough attention. We think he is really stupid and has no thinking ability. Yet, there is something that many people come under and most of them do not realize that it is from Satan. Now, you must understand that he does not come up to you wearing a bright red suit and holding a pitchfork, saying, "I am going to put this on you, so hold still." He comes subtly. The reason that the devil's schemes are so effective is because we usually think they are from our own mind! There is one particular wicked and ingenious scheme of the devil that catches so many of us unaware. It is called condemnation! What, did you not know that it was from the devil? Well, it is!

Do you know what the difference is between condemnation and conviction? They are not the same, but both can feel the same. What is the difference? Conviction gives you a way out but condemnation does not. Conviction allows you to get free of your past and condemnation continues to remind you of all the wrong that you did in your past! God is the one that convicts and Satan condemns. God's desire is to see you move on in Him and Satan's desire is that you either fall back or go nowhere.

(Romans 8:1 NKJV) *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."*

This verse says that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk according to the spirit, not the flesh! It does not stop with "...those who are in Christ Jesus." When you repent of your sin, you are forgiven of it and Jesus will not condemn you. You should not let the devil condemn you either.

**Many people waste so much time feeling sorry for
what they did, that they become stuck where they are!**

The only reason that God brings conviction on you is so that you will repent. As soon as you do, the conviction stops. Why? Because you are forgiven of it. Condemnation, on the other hand, will continue to tell you that you need to repent again and again and feel bad about what you did. **Condemnation will never let up unless you put a stop to it!**

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(1 John 1:9 NKJV) *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Some people like this translation better:

(1 John 1:9 NLT [New Losers Translation]) *"If we continue to confess the same sin over and over and over again, Jesus **might be** faithful and able to forgive us our sins and **maybe** cleanse us from some unrighteousness."*

The word "confess" in the Greek is not continual! This means that it is a one-time thing! If you sin, you only need to ask God to forgive you one time and then have faith that it is forgiven. The Bible says that Jesus is faithful and just TO FORGIVE our sins and to cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness! What does all mean? All is all, everything, nothing excluded! If you really understand this verse, you will see that there is no reason at all for you to allow condemnation to get a hold of you. I have had a personal experience with this. I had allowed condemnation to get a hold on me about something I did, and I would pray for God's forgiveness every prayer meeting and every time I spoke to God. I must have asked for forgiveness a million times – FOR THE SAME SIN! What I did not realize is that God forgave me the first time that I asked Him to do so.

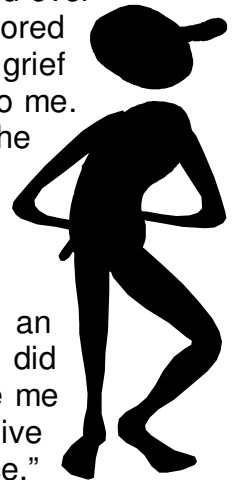
The condemnation I had caused me to become stagnant to the movement of God in my life and for a time I was not able to grow.

Condemnation will glue you to your spot and not let you loose. All I could ever think about was how I had let God down and sinned against Him. I ignored the fact that He promised to forgive me. I let myself be overcome with grief and bitterness towards myself. Finally, I realized what was happening to me. I broke loose of that bondage and accepted God's forgiveness. The problem had been that I did not even let God forgive me. **I was rejecting His word and turning my back on what He promised to do!**

Something that helped me to realize what I was doing came from an experience that I had with a man that I greatly respect. One day I did something that really let him down. I had already asked him to forgive me and he said that he did. The next time that we talked, I asked him to forgive me again and he told me these exact words, "You only have to say it once." This is what brought about the change in me. I often wonder how many times God says the same thing to His children.

(Psalms 103:12 NKJV) *"As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."*

Let me ask you a question. If you are in the east, how many days does it take to walk to the west? What if you were driving or flying? How long would it take you to get to the west? The answer is, "The rest of your life". You can never get to



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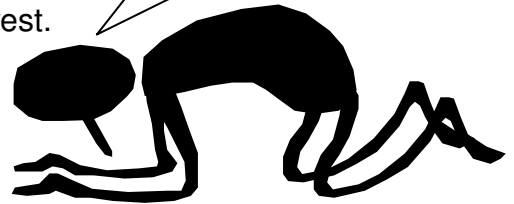
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the west. If you go from Georgia on the eastern side of the United States of America to California on the other side of The USA, does that mean that you have gone as far west as you can go? No, you can never go to the end of the west. There will always be more west to go to! Now, let us look at this verse more closely. God has removed OUR transgressions from US as far as the east is from the west.

God put them somewhere that you will never be able to get them again! Why do you think that God put them so far away from us? It does not say that He put them that far away from Him, but from us! The reason is, God will never pick the sin up and remind us about it again.

However, many of us tend to try and get to the west so that we can pick that sin up again and repent just one more time to be sure that it is forgiven! You need to be controlled by what the Word of God says and not what your feelings tell you. Condemnation works on your feelings!



Condemnation will put you in a rut and cause you to look at yourself in a negative way. Condemnation always focuses on failures. What many people do not realize is that your failures can become stairways to success! If you learn from your failures and do not get negative about them, you will see that they can be used to your advantage. Satan always overplays his hand. He will give you so much that you will have more than enough to use against him *IF* you do not give condemnation any place in your life!

I began to look at myself as a failure and a nobody. I would think, "How can God ever use me when I am like this?" That was true. God can never use a person who is buried so deep in condemnation that he or she cannot see God moving. Condemnation will remove your eyes from God and put them on everything and anything else in your life that will cause you more grief. Condemnation is like quicksand. If you get one leg stuck in that stuff, you can still pull yourself out of it. If you get both feet in there, you just might still be able to get out, but if you run and do a triple summersault dive into the stuff, buddy, your going to go all the way down! None of us will do that into quicksand, but we never think twice about getting into condemnation. It can be just as dangerous to you!

Condemnation Will Rob You Of Three Things

1. It Robs Your Trust In God

1 John 1:9 said that Jesus is faithful and just to forgive you of your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. By accepting condemnation, you choose not to believe that. If you really believed it, you would trust that you were forgiven the first time you asked. As this mindset continues, you will eventually doubt His love for you, even though it is clearly stated in John 3:16. If you doubt

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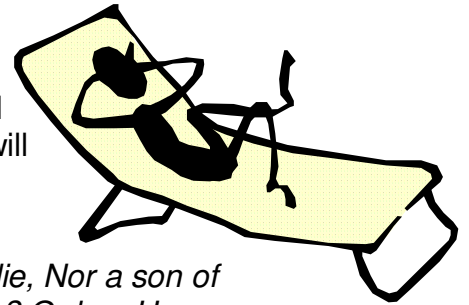
that He loves you, you are going to doubt that He will do anything for you. Why should He forgive your sins? You feel hopelessly obligated to continue asking for forgiveness.

(Proverbs 3:5 NKJV) *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;"*

God gives you some very good counsel here. He tells you to trust in Him and not in your own understanding. In the world, you have to continually beg people to forgive you. You do not only ask them once, but they require that you ask them many times. This is not so with God. He only expects you to ask Him once. Your own understanding will say:

"Since I have to ask mere humans to forgive me many times, then I have to ask a perfect and holy God to forgive me many more times!"

This is not true! God is the one that keeps His word! His first name is Faithful, His middle name is Faithful and His last name is Faithful! God is the most trustworthy and faithful person that you will ever know. If He says that He will forgive you, He will. God does not lie! Relax in the promise!



(Numbers 23:19 NKJV) *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"*

If God told you that He would forgive you and put your sin as far away from you as is possible, He will do it. If He says that He will cleanse you from all of your unrighteousness, He will do it! The next step is for you to believe Him!

Condemnation hits at the very core of your trust. It causes you to doubt the one that you should trust the most. Maintain your trust in God. Have faith in Him because it is impossible to please Him if you do not (see Hebrews 11:6). He will never fail you!

2. It Robs Your Trust In Yourself

I know what you are thinking right now. You are thinking of Proverbs 3:5 and not leaning on your own understanding. This is different. The Bible speaks very highly of you and of me. It teaches that we are to have a good self-image. What if a person who had the appearance that he had just been through a war, and lost it, came up to you and said, "You could be just like me." What would you think? I would say, "NO WAY DUDE!" This is just what many Christians do today. They come up to a person and tell them about all the trials and difficulties they have had and then ask the person to receive Jesus. They do not portray a

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victorious person. They reveal someone who is defeated. That is not what God has called you to be. What did He say about you?

(Deuteronomy 28:13 NKJV) *"And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them."*

(Romans 8:37 NKJV) *"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."*

(Isaiah 54:17 NKJV) *"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD."*

(Philippians 4:13 NKJV) *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

(2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV) *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."*

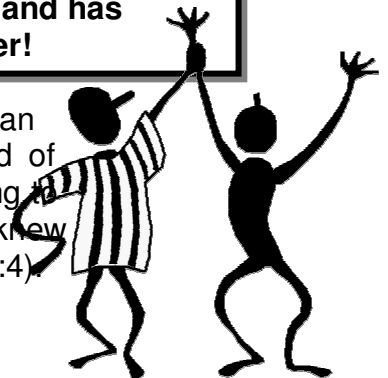
These are just some of the things that the Bible tells you that you are. You must realize that you are a champion and a winner because you serve the head Champion and Winner! God has not called you to be a wimp and to always be in defeat. **Isaiah 54:17 is not something that wimpy people do!** It is what champions do! God expects you to have the right view of yourself and trust in Him to use you. If you have no trust in yourself, then you will not allow God to work in and through you!

(Romans 12:3 NKJV) *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."*

Trusting and believing in yourself does not mean that you rise up in pride. You need to realize that it is not you doing anything, but it is Christ working through you. Be careful that you do not think that you are the greatest.

Trust that an all-powerful God is willing to work through you and has made provisions for you to be a champion and a winner!

God says that He has adopted you as His child and you have an inheritance. You are a child of the King of kings and the Lord of lords...**Can you hear me shouting?** If that does not do something to you, then I do not know what will. You are important and God knew about you before the foundation of the world (see Ephesians 1:4). **You are special to Him and He has a plan for you to fulfill!**



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Do not let condemnation tell you that you are a loser and defeated. The only way that you can become a loser is to give into that thought. Remind yourself and the devil that you are a child of God and that you are more than a champion! **You can do all that God has called you to do through Christ who strengthens you!**

3. It Robs Your Life

This sounds severe. It may sound that way, but it is the truth. If you are at the bottom of a pool of quicksand, will that rob your life? You had better believe it will! Now I am not talking about condemnation robbing your living life, although it can do that. I will discuss it later on. I am talking about it robbing you of a successful life and joyful life.



When you allow condemnation to settle in you, it will always cause depression. You will feel so low that you could see the underside of a roach. Depression is also very dangerous, many times has its roots in condemnation. You feel so bad about what you did that you are not able to be happy. Your mind keeps reverting back to what you did and you continue to go over again and again why you should not have done it. I know the feeling because I have been there. I have been so depressed that I felt God was a million miles away and I was tied up and could not reach out to Him. It is a terrible feeling.

(Proverbs 15:13 NKJV) *"A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."*

Have you ever seen someone that is all smiles? It does not matter what is wrong or how they have been treated, but they are always happy. I see people like that and many times, I wish that I were that way too. The good thing about that kind of person is that if you get around them, it will begin to rub off on you. It seems to be contagious. If you have a merry heart people will be able to see it on you and you will affect others in a positive way. Your happiness will rub off on those who are down. However, if you are sorrowful, your spirit will become broken. You will no longer be able to laugh or have a good time. Even getting around the people with a merry heart will do you no good because your spirit is broken. What does it mean to have a broken spirit?

In the olden days there were men called "cowboys." These people used to go out in the prairies and capture a wild horse. The name "wild horse" suited it well because that is what it was. The cowboy would capture a horse then take it to his ranch and slowly but surely work with it until the horse got accustomed to him. After a little while the cowboy would start introducing a saddle and bridle to the horse. Eventually the horse let the saddle be put on him and the bridle

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placed on his head. The cowboy would let the horse get a feel for it and then one day he would climb on the horse. Now, you must remember that this horse has never been ridden before. It has a strong will and a strong spirit. As the cowboy climbs up on the horse it begins to jump and buck and try to throw the man off of its back. Eventually the horse's "spirit will be broken." He will no longer buck or try to get the cowboy off its back, but instead he obeys and is trained. From then on, any man can get on him and he will not fight. His spirit was broken and power was gained over him. The horse saw that it was useless to fight. He gave up and in doing so, he gave up his freedom. He lost the free life that he once had and became the property of the cowboy.

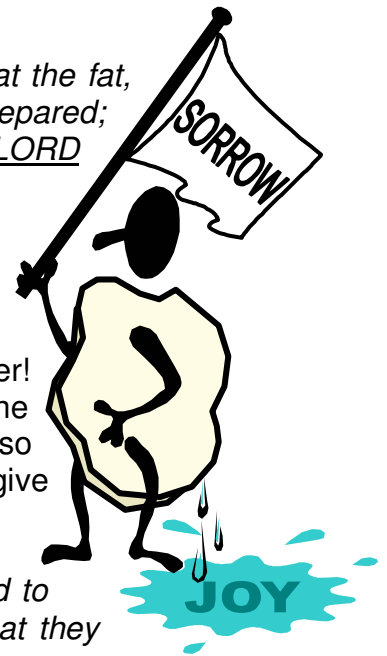
To have a broken spirit means that you do not put up a fight any more. You just give up and allow yourself to be used as desired. You loose your freedom and become the property of sorrow. Sorrow will break your spirit. Condemnation strengthens sorrow and will try to hold you and make you its property as long as you let it.

(Nehemiah 8:10 NKJV) *"Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our LORD. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."*

(Proverbs 17:22 NKJV) *"A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones."*

Sorrow will soak up your joy like a big, dry sponge with water! Condemnation makes you depressed and that is the opposite of the joy of the Lord. Condemnation will try to rob your life by making it so miserable that you cannot enjoy it. Jesus said that He came to give life and to give it MORE abundantly!

(John 10:10 NKJV) *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*



Never let condemnation get a hold on you because it will do all that it can to see you get a broken spirit, and rob you of your joy! **Maintain your joy and hold fast to the promise that God has given you...YOU ARE FORGIVEN!** Do not let condemnation control your spiritual growth but press into God.

Not only will condemnation rob you of a successful and happy life, but it will also kill you, if you let it. There is a man that I look at quite often in the Bible. His lifestyle shows me things that I do not need to do. The man is Judas Iscariot. I am going to make a contrast between him and Peter by using something that both of them did. Let us begin with Peter.

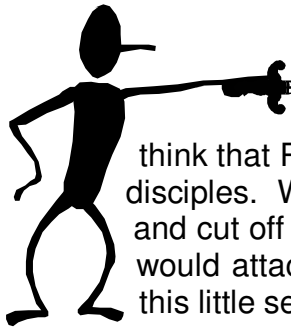
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(Matthew 26:69-75 NKJV) *"Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee.'" {70} But he denied it before them all, saying, 'I do not know what you are saying.'" {71} And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, 'This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.'" {72} But again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the Man!" {73} And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, 'Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.'" {74} Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. {75} And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.'" So he went out and wept bitterly.*



Peter had said earlier that he would be willing to go to prison and even die for Jesus (see Matthew 26:34). However, along comes a servant girl and Peter denies Him. Many people think that Peter was a wimp, but he stuck around longer than any of the other disciples. When the guards came to take Jesus away, Peter pulled his sword and cut off the high priest's servant's ear (see John 18:10). How many of you would attack when you are outnumbered? This is what Peter did, but when this little servant girl confronted him. He denied even knowing Jesus.

Now let us look at what Jesus said to Peter after the resurrection.

(John 21:15-17 NKJV) *"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.'" He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.'" {16} He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.'" He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.'" {17} He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.'" Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.'"*

I would like to take a little time here to explain this to you because it has a lot to do with Jesus' character and how Peter felt about himself.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him? I mean, Jesus is smart and it does not take Him three times to understand something. In the Greek language, there are four words for love. Each one expresses a different level of love. There is love between husband and wife and love between friends, etc. In this passage there are two types of love being used: "Agape" which is the God kind of love and it is unconditional, and "Phileo" which is friendly love and is conditional. Let us put the Greek words into this verse.

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(John 21:15-17 NKJV) *"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you agape Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I phileo You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." {16} He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you agape Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I phileo You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." {17} He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you phileo Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I phileo You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."*

Are you beginning to get the picture? Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him unconditionally, but Peter replied that he loved Him conditionally. The second time that Jesus asked Peter the question, I can just see Peter thinking, "I told him that I would die for him and then I go out and deny Him. How can I love Him unconditionally? I do not want to let Him down again." However, this did not affect Jesus' love towards Him. Jesus even gave him responsibilities. Jesus restored Peter even though Peter had denied Him and was now sitting here saying that his love was conditional. Then notice that Jesus lowered His requirement of Peter. He said, "Well Peter, you say that you cannot love me unconditionally, but will you love me conditionally?" That is why Peter was sad. Jesus knew that Peter would come to love Him unconditionally (see Luke 22:32) and history says that Peter was even crucified upside down as an expression of that love. Peter's love went from phileo to agape. Peter became a mighty voice for Jesus Christ.

Through Peter's attitude here, we know that he was suffering from condemnation. It tried to get a hold on him and Jesus knew that. Jesus showed that he was still accepted and not rejected. Peter released the condemnation and fulfilled the will of God for his life.

Now let us look at Judas Iscariot.

(Matthew 27:3-5 NKJV) *"Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, {4} saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" {5} Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

Judas let condemnation come on him so strongly that it caused him to take his life. Peter and Judas both denied Jesus but in different ways. I have always wondered what would have happened to Judas if he had repented. You must realize that condemnation does not allow you to really repent. You keep asking and asking for forgiveness, but you feel as though you are not forgiven. This is what condemnation does and if you let it get such a hold on you, it will kill you.



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Be like Peter and let God forgive you. Move on with Him as He enables you to fulfill the wonderful purpose He has called you to do.

Peter went on to be known as one of the greatest men who ever lived, but Judas is forever known as the betrayer. How do you want to be remembered?

Final Questions

1. Write down ten ways that you can recognize condemnation trying to get a place in you and how you can prevent it.
2. Can you find any other examples in the Bible of people that allowed condemnation to get a hold on them? How many of them got free from it?
3. Read Romans 8:1 and write a minimum of two hundred words about how you bring condemnation on yourself?

And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.