

GOD

Living Life Without Condemnation

God, our loving heavenly Father, truly wants the best for us. There are so many great promises in His Word that reveal to us what He has made available to us. We are complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10), and we can believe to have a healthy body and a sound mind:

II Timothy

1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

God wants the best for us so that we can be our best for Him as we claim His promises. As we renew our minds, putting God's Word on in our minds and acting accordingly, we can enjoy the great benefits of the more abundant life mentioned in John 10:10. This includes having our prayers answered: God is our sufficiency (II Corinthians 3:5) and God promises to supply all our need (Philippians 4:19).

In order for us to have our prayers answered and to receive God's great blessings, though, we need to have confidence, or trust, that we can boldly go to God and He will take care of us. We can have this confidence only if we aren't condemning ourselves. We see this in I John Chapter 3:

I John

3:20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.

3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

The Greek word translated "condemn" in these verses is *kataginōskō*, from *ginōskō*, to know experientially, and *kata*, against. Bullinger's *Critical Lexicon and Concordance* describes this word as: "to know or note against anyone to his disadvantage, hence, to think ill of, to condemn". It's the same word translated "blamed" in Galatians 2:11 where Paul confronted Peter "because he was to be blamed".

If our heart, the innermost part of our personal being, is condemning or blaming us, we literally "experientially know" things against us as we dwell on things we've done wrong in the past. We can then end up thinking that we "aren't good enough" to receive God's blessings, so we might not really expect results when (or even if) we pray. Verse 20 tells us that if our heart condemns us, "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." In other words, because God is so much greater than our heart which is condemning us, we need to get our mind back up out of that condemnation and back into God's Word. Leave the past behind and put the Word on in our minds.

We need to remember that God has, by His great grace, made us righteous and justified in His sight. Only then can we have that confidence, or trust, toward God that is mentioned in verse 21. And, when we have confidence, here translated from the Greek word for boldness, we can go to our heavenly Father knowing that He will answer our prayers. Hebrews 4:6 tells us: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” We boldly go to God, and because of His great grace He will take care of us.

Verse 22 then tells us “whatsoever we ask, we receive (*lambanō* – receive into manifestation) of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” We keep God’s commandments as we put His Word on in our minds and act accordingly.

So, we see that when we aren’t condemning ourselves, dwelling on past mistakes, we can boldly go to God and get our prayers answered and all our needs met as we enjoy the more abundant life.

Why shouldn’t we condemn ourselves? We shouldn’t condemn ourselves because God is not condemning us. We see this in Romans, Chapter 8 verse 1:

Romans

8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. (the rest of the verse is not found in 6 of the 7 Critical Greek Manuscripts or in the Aramaic, so should be omitted)*

The word “condemnation” in this verse is from the Greek word *katakrima*, a totally different Greek word from the one we saw used for “condemn” in I John. Again, *kata* means “against”, but *krima*, usually translated “judgment” or “condemnation”, literally means “judgment pronounced”. So, in Romans 8:1, “condemnation” literally means “judgment pronounced against”. We could read this verse: “There is therefore now no judgment pronounced against them which are in Christ Jesus.”

God is not pronouncing any judgment against us. Look at verses 31 through 34:

- 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?
8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?
8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth (*read: God that justifieth? Answer: NO!*)
8:34 Who is he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (*read: Christ who died...? Answer: NO!*)

So, if God is not pronouncing any judgment against us whatsoever, why would we want to dwell on our past mistakes, allowing our hearts to “condemn” or bring up knowledge against

ourselves which would keep us from boldly going to our heavenly Father and having our prayers answered?

- 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.
8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Why is there no condemnation, or judgment pronounced against us? Verse 2 says that we are freed from “the law of sin and death”, the Old Testament Law operating in the five-senses category, by the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, which made it available for us to be born again of God’s spirit and have spiritual life. Verse 3 speaks of these accomplishments, as Jesus Christ who was sent “for sin” (as a sacrifice for sin) “condemned sin in the flesh”. The word “condemned” here is *katakrinō*, the verb form of our word for “condemnation” in verse 1. Jesus Christ by his accomplishments condemned, or made judgment against, sin (so judgment was not made against us). Then verse 4 says that as we “walk not after (according to) the flesh (five senses), but after (according to) the spirit (our gift of holy spirit), then “the righteousness of the law” is “fulfilled in us”.

The word “righteousness” in verse 4 is from the Greek word *dikaiōma*, more literally meaning “a righteous ordinance” or “a decree of acquittal”. Rather than condemnation, the accomplishments of Jesus Christ made it available for God to pronounce a decree of acquittal for us, making us righteous in His sight. And, we are righteous, not under condemnation, now (as it says in verse 1: “*There is* therefore now no condemnation...”).

To help us better appreciate how, because of the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, God was able to make us righteous rather than pronounce any judgment against us, let’s consider the word “therefore” in verse 1:

- 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

The word “therefore” refers back to something stated before that would explain why there is now no condemnation. We know that chapters 6 and 7 of Romans are a parenthesis explaining what was stated at the conclusion of Chapter 5. So, the word “therefore” in Chapter 8 verse 1 must refer back to the great truths of that Chapter. Let’s begin in verse 1:

- 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith (*believing*), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
5:2 By (*through*) whom also we have access (“*by faith*” is not in the text) into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

When we confessed Jesus as Lord and believed in our hearts that God raised him from the dead (Romans 10:9), we were justified, and so we have peace with God and have access to God's grace as well as the hope of Christ's Return.

- 5:8 But God commendeth (*favorably introduced*) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (*as our substitute for sin*).
- 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.
- 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Verse 13 then begins a parenthesis (through verse 17) that expands on this sin that led to the reign of death. Let's pick up in verse 15:

- 5:15 But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift (charisma, *act of God's grace*). For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.
- 5:16 And not as *it was* by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift (charisma – *act of God's grace*) is of many offences unto justification.

The word "condemnation" in verse 16 is from the Greek word *katakrima*, the same word used in 8:1, meaning "judgment pronounced against". The word "justification" here is from the word *dikaiōma*, the same word we say in 8:4 translated "righteousness" and meaning "a righteous ordinance" or "a decree of acquittal". So, the gift God gave us is not by the "one that sinned", which would have brought judgment against us, but was a result of God by His grace issuing a decree of acquittal (here translated "justification").

- 5:17 For if by one man's offence (*or, by one offence*) death reigned by one; much more they which receive (*lambanō – receive into manifestation*) abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Here we see that the accomplishments of Jesus Christ made it available for God by His grace to give us the gift of righteousness, one of our rights as sons and daughters of God. This verse ends the parenthesis referring back to verse 12; and we now focus on the contrast between the consequences of the sin by one and what the accomplishments of Jesus Christ made available:

- 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

The first part of this verse is a bit clearer directly from the Stephens Text from which the King James Version was translated: "So then as by means of one offence came toward all men to condemnation..." We see again the word condemnation, *katakrima*: because of one offence, judgment was pronounced against all men. But then we see the contrast in the rest of the verse, which is better rendered in the Companion Bible: "...even so by means of one

righteous act also the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.” The “one righteous act”, made available by the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, is God’s pronouncement of a decree of acquittal for us (the Greek word is *dikaiōma*).

Because of God’s pronouncing His decree of acquittal, instead of condemnation, we receive “justification of life”. Here we see the figure of speech “Genitive of Origin” where “justification of life” is better understood as “justification which gives life”. Because God justified us, we have life.

Let’s read the remainder of Chapter 5:

- 5:19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
- 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded (*increased*), grace did much more abound (*super-abounded*).
- 5:21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, we see that because of God’s super-abounding grace, the accomplishments of Jesus Christ made it available for God to pronounce a decree of acquittal on our behalf, freeing us forever from the bondage of sin and its consequences. If we now skip the parenthesis of chapters 6 and 7 and read directly from 5:21 to 8:1, we can better understand why there is no condemnation to us. God acquitted us and made us righteous, so He is not pronouncing any judgment against us. Let’s look one last time at Chapter 8 verse 1:

8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

There is no judgment against us: we are righteous in God’s sight. Knowing this, we have no reason to ever condemn ourselves by dwelling on past mistakes. Instead, we put God’s Word in our minds and act accordingly, knowing that as we boldly go to Him our prayers will be answered and He will take care of us.

- Dr. Rick Batt