

# CONQUERING CONDEMNATION

A **MANNAHOUSE** RESOURCE



# INTRODUCTION

Condemnation is a common condition which we all inevitably encounter. But **it is a particularly troublesome problem for many Christians.** It's easy to understand why a sinful and rebellious world experiences condemnation. But it is often quite difficult to comprehend why Christians experience it. This is especially true when we consider the fact that we have been cleansed, forgiven, and reconciled to God.

In this counseling booklet, we will present a concise study on the subject of condemnation. **We will offer some liberating keys for overcoming this problem area in our lives.**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| <b>Title</b>                                    | <b>Pages</b> |
|---|--------------|
| What Is Condemnation? . . . . .                 | 3            |
| Condemnation Versus Conviction . . . . .        | 4            |
| The Effects Of Condemnation . . . . .           | 5            |
| Who Is Under Condemnation? . . . . .            | 6            |
| Is Condemnation Meant For Christians? . . . . . | 7-8          |
| What Is The Source Of Condemnation? . . . . .   | 9-10         |
| Why Do We Experience Condemnation? . . . . .    | 11-16        |
| Is There A Solution For Condemnation? . . . . . | 17           |
| How Should We Respond? . . . . .                | 18-25        |
| Conclusion . . . . .                            | 26           |

## WHAT IS CONDEMNATION?

Condemnation is not easily defined. Capturing the essential meaning of this term can present us with a difficult challenge.

Simply stated, **condemnation carries the thought of a judgment against wrongdoing.** In a strict legal sense, it conveys the thought of a verdict executed against a transgressor. **It includes the thought of irreversible punishment.** It is a hard, judicial sentence which, by its very nature, demands punishment and wrath against the offender.

## CONDEMNATION VERSUS CONVICTION

There are distinct differences between condemnation and conviction. **Condemnation carries an air of finality and doom. It offers absolutely no hope or help for the offender.** It is a harsh, irrevocable judgment which ignores the mercy and grace of God and focuses solely upon the aspects of punishment and reprisal. It is a futile, dead-end situation for the transgressor.

**Conviction, on the other hand, is merciful. It leads the offender to repentance.** While condemnation is harsh and destructive, conviction is compassionate and constructive. It leads the wrong-doer to recovery and restoration. Though God lovingly convicts us, He never condemns us when we are judged: "*The Lord will not... condemn him when he is judged*" (Psalms 37:33).

## THE EFFECTS OF CONDEMNATION

Though we may have difficulty defining condemnation, we are all acquainted with its effects. Condemnation manifests itself in some familiar ways.

One of the most common symptoms is a **feeling of oppression and bondage**. It is an extremely oppressive burden which “beats down” those who struggle under its weight. **It is often accompanied by a nagging sense of guilt.**

It produces frustration, fear, insecurity, despair, defeat, and discouragement. **It torments us with intense feelings of hopelessness and inferiority.** It robs us of our joy and undermines our peace and confidence in Christ.

## WHO IS UNDER CONDEMNATION?

*“ . . . through one man’s offense (Adam) judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation” (Romans 5:18).*

**The entire human race has been subjected to the righteous condemnation of God.** The sins of mankind have brought the world under the divine judgment of God (Romans 1:18). The only exceptions are those who have surrendered to Christ:

**“He who believes in Him is NOT CONDEMNED; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the CONDEMNATION, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”** (John 3:18, 19).

## IS CONDEMNATION MEANT FOR CHRISTIANS?

**\*Absolutely not!** *"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"* (Romans 8:1).

God is not the author of our condemnation. It is not His will that we suffer condemnation in any form. Christ has provided complete deliverance for the following reasons:

**1. We Are Not Under the Law but Grace** - We are no longer under the penalty and curse of the Law. We are no longer under the "*ministry of condemnation*" (II Cor. 3:9). **Christ fulfilled the demands of the Law** through His sacrificial death. He satisfied God's justice, **so we are no longer under condemnation but under God's loving grace.**



**2. We Are Justified** — We have been forgiven and made righteous in Christ. We are now justified and in right standing with God. **“It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns?”** (Rom. 8:33, 34).

**3. We Are at Peace with God** — *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Rom. 5:1). **Since we are no longer hostile to God, we are no longer under His divine condemnation and wrath.** We are reconciled to God and at peace with Him.

**4. We Are Righteous in Christ** — *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”* (II Cor. 5:21). Since **we are no longer unrighteous transgressors**, we are not subject to the condemnation of God.

## WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF CONDEMNATION?

There are two predominant sources of unrighteous condemnation which afflict us:

1. **SATAN**: He is the greatest source of condemnation. He is called **"the accuser of our brethren"** (Rev. 12:10, KJV). He constantly badgers Christians with accusations, criticism, and condemnation. He attacks our minds with the "fiery darts" of condemnation in order to wear us down and bring us into mental bondage.

**Since Satan abides under the constant condemnation of God, he seeks to share his condemnation with us.** He tries to undermine our testimony of righteousness by destroying us with condemnation. He knows that as long as our witness remains, it stands as an open judgment against him.

2. **SELF:** *“For if our heart condemn us . . . ”* (1 John 3:20). Though we may not realize it, we are often guilty of compounding the condemnation of Satan by inflicting incredible amounts of self-condemnation upon ourselves.

We often give Satan the day off and work overtime condemning ourselves. **Some people are very hard on themselves.** They possess little patience or tolerance for their shortcomings and imperfections. Consequently, when they don’t “measure up” to their own expectations or standards, they retaliate by tormenting themselves with condemnation. **Though God no longer condemns us, many spend their lives in a perpetual state of self-condemnation.**

## WHY DO WE EXPERIENCE. CONDEMNATION?

On the following pages, we will review the reasons why Christians needlessly allow themselves to fall under the condemnation of Satan and self:

### 1. POOR SELF-ESTEEM

Many people possess little or no self-esteem. They often feel “good-for-nothing”, and suffer from a deep sense of inferiority and worthlessness. Low self-esteem is particularly susceptible to condemnation.

Our present self-image is often the result of past conditioning. **If we grew up in an overbearing, critical, or judgmental environment, we may lack a genuine sense of approval, acceptance, or self-worth.** This condition can often contribute to poor self-esteem and an attitude which is self-deprecating and self-condemning.

## 2. AN IMPROPER VIEW OF GOD

Many Christians possess a distorted concept of the way God relates to us. They don't see Him as a loving Father, but as a stern, exacting judge.

It's hard for some to accept the reality that God truly loves us and accepts us. **Many Christians have a deep-seated notion that God disapproves of them.** They secretly feel that He is a critical Father with impossible demands, who is impossible to please.

This negative perspective only reinforces the potential for condemnation, and allows Satan to beat us down with the feeling that God doesn't really like us or accept us.

### 3. WHEN WE FAIL

***“For a righteous man may fall seven times . . .”*** (Prov. 24:16). In the process of growing unto perfection, we may occasionally fall short. If we react improperly, we can fall into self-condemnation.

We often respond to our weaknesses, shortcomings, and inadequacies by condemning ourselves. **Our past mistakes can create a sense of failure and frustration which leads to self-criticism and condemnation.**

Not only do we have a tendency to beat ourselves down when we fall short, but Satan is only too willing to take advantage of our failures. He loves to ridicule, criticize, and belittle us in order to produce a spirit of defeat and condemnation.

## 4. SELF-PUNISHMENT

Christians can sometimes fall into the deceitful trap of self-punishment. **When we make mistakes or commit sins, we may attempt to make atonement in our own strength.** We can try to alleviate the guilt by paying for our errors through the self-inflicted pain of condemnation.

**Rather than accepting the cleansing forgiveness which Christ alone can provide, we foolishly afflict ourselves with penance.** We torment ourselves mentally and emotionally until we feel that we have suffered sufficiently.

This kind of condemnation is a subtle form of self-works. It is a destructive and sinful tendency toward self-justification which ignores God's grace, and overlooks His cleansing power. It is a common source of self-condemnation.

## 5. THE CONDEMNATION OF OTHERS

We occasionally encounter relationships which produce a subtle feeling of condemnation in our life. These relationships can involve casual associations, friends, and even loved ones.

**People sometimes relate to us in a legalistic manner.** Some individuals are extremely judgmental. They carry a critical, intolerant attitude towards others. They are excessively demanding, and impose unreasonable expectations upon those around them.

**Their relationships with others is based on performance.** They cannot tolerate those who fail to “measure up” to their strict standards. When people fall short, they retaliate by inflicting a judgmental spirit of condemnation upon them.



## 6. UNRESOLVED GUILTS FROM THE PAST

Many people suffer from longstanding guilt feelings from the past. These unresolved feelings are often an underlying cause of condemnation.

**Some individuals are haunted with memories of the sins they committed before they were saved.** They have not fully accepted God's cleansing and forgiveness, so they find it difficult to forgive themselves, or forget the mistakes of yesterday. The consequence is often self-condemnation.

Satan also capitalizes upon these deep-seated memories by tormenting us with guilt and condemnation. He delights in reminding us of our past failures. Some of the more common areas of unresolved guilt are: **divorces, broken relationships, abortions, sexual sins, harmful acts against others, and past backslidings.**

## IS THERE A SOLUTION TO CONDEMNATION?

**\*Yes!** Since God is not willing that we suffer from condemnation, He provides the necessary counsel and direction through His Word to combat this problem.

The scriptures declare that, “. . . **if our heart condemns us, GOD IS GREATER THAN OUR HEART**, and knows all things” (1 John 3:20).

We have assurances through the Word that God is greater than any problem we may encounter. He is able to supply the necessary guidance and insight, in spite of the condemnation we are experiencing. If we will give proper attention to His counsel, rather than the faulty counsel of our own hearts, we will find a release from condemnation.

## HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO CONDEMNATION?

There are several vital keys for overcoming condemnation. We will examine them on the following pages. However, the most important step is to challenge the “lie of condemnation.”

### 1. CHALLENGE THE LIE

The first step is to take immediate, decisive action. We must strike at the root of the problem. **We must forcefully reject the deceitful lie that condemnation is acceptable for God’s people.**

We must recognize that this is a lie from the father of lies (John 8:44). As long as we accept this falsehood and entertain this deception, we will subject ourselves to further condemnation.

## 2. WE MUST STAND ON GOD'S WORD

"If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God" (1 John 3:21). We must **set our confidence and trust upon the reality of God's Word** in order to gain deliverance from condemnation.

**We must challenge the spirit of condemnation with truth.** We must wash our minds with the cleansing power of scripture. The scriptures clearly state that, "*He who believes in Him IS NOT CONDEMNED*" (John 3:18). This statement is emphatic.

**We must discipline our thought life with the absolute reality of God's Word.** "*There is THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION...*" (Romans 8:1). If we will stand firmly upon this truth, we will be liberated from the spirit of condemnation.

### 3. WE MUST CORRECT A WRONG SELF-IMAGE

As we have stated, a poor self-image can be a significant contributing factor to condemnation. Our past experiences can adversely affect our present attitudes.

We must recognize that “*in Christ*” our past has been washed away. We are now “*new creations*” in Christ (II Cor. 5:17). Therefore, **we must reject the corrupt feelings of inadequacy, worthlessness, and inferiority which result in self-condemnation.**

We must embrace the reality of who we now are in Christ. We are no longer unacceptable, but “*accepted in the Beloved*” (Eph. 1:6). We are “*sons and daughters*” of God (II Cor. 6:18). We possess dignity, honor and destiny (Rom. 8:29). We’ve been made useful, profitable, and valuable to God (I Cor. 12:15- 27). **Godly self-esteem is a powerful remedy for self-condemnation.**

## 4. RENEW OUR CONCEPT OF GOD

As we have stated, much of our condemnation can be traced back to a distorted and inaccurate view of how God relates to us.

The picture which the scriptures paint is vastly different than the one we often discolor. He is not a harsh judge just waiting for us to make the slightest mistake so He can punish us with condemnation. **He is not a religious tyrant, an exacting ruler, or a disapproving Father.**

**He is the loving Father** who so loves us that He “gave *His only begotten son*” for us (John 3:16). **He accepts us, approves of us, and embraces us** with the same heartfelt love as the father in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24).

## 5. WE MUST PROPERLY ACCEPT OUR IMPERFECTIONS

The familiar bumper sticker reads, “Christians aren’t perfect – just forgiven.” However, many Christians have a hard time accepting this truth. Instead of graciously accepting the reality that we will inevitably make mistakes, they punish themselves with self-criticism and condemnation.

**As we grow unto perfection, we are going to occasionally fall short.** Even Paul stated that he had not yet reached perfection (Phil. 3:12-15). The Bible states that “A *righteous man may fall seven times and rise again*” (Prov. 24:16). Though a righteous man sometimes falls, he gets up.

**If we do occasionally “slip-up”, we must not allow ourselves to wallow in self-pity or dwell upon defeat and self-condemnation.** We must rise up in faith, brush ourselves off, and continue on to perfection in God’s forgiveness and grace.

## 6. WE MUST PROPERLY RESPOND TO THOSE WHO CONDEMN US

We can do this in the following ways:

1. **We must recognize that there is no justified condemnation for Christians** who are walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh (Rom. 8:1). The scriptures challenge any source of condemnation against our life: “*Who is he who condemns?*” (Rom. 8:34).
2. **We must respond to those who condemn us in a Christ-like way.** Jesus endured the ultimate condemnation of all: “*And THEY ALL CONDEMNED HIM to be worthy of death*” (Mark 14:64). But He did not retaliate with hatred or vengeance. He responded in love and forgiveness. He set the example that we might not be “*overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good*” (Rom. 12:21).



## 7. WE MUST BURY THE PAST

“ . . . but *ONE* thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind** and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal...” (Phil. 3:13, 14).

**We must bury the negative thoughts and guilts of the past.** God no longer remembers our former sins, so we must not dwell upon them either. “*Their sins and iniquities will I REMEMBER NO MORE*” (Heb. 10:17, KJV).

We must “**lay aside every weight**, and the sin which so easily ensnares us . . . ” (Heb. 12:1). **This includes the burden of guilt and the haunting memories of yesterday.** We must accept the reality that “*old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*” (II Cor. 5:17).

## 8. DEAL WITH UNRESOLVED SIN(S)

If we fail to deal with our sins, whether publicly or privately, we may gradually pay the price in condemnation.

**A reluctance to co-operate with the convicting power of the Holy Ghost can create inner tensions and guilt which produces increasing condemnation.**

The Scriptures teach us that *“There is now no condemnation to those . . . who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit”* (Rom. 8:1). **If we are walking after the flesh and failing to confess our sins and seek Christ’s cleansing, the sense of conviction will eventually turn into a feeling of condemnation.**

## CONCLUSION

We have briefly examined the causes and cures for condemnation. We should carefully review the scriptural responses which apply to our personal situation, and make a determined commitment to follow them:

- 1. Challenge the lie of condemnation.**
- 2. We must stand on God's Word.**
- 3. We must correct a wrong self-image.**
- 4. We must renew our personal concept of God.**
- 5. We must properly accept our imperfections.**
- 6. We must properly respond to those who condemn us.**
- 7. We must bury the past.**
- 8. We must deal with an unresolved sin(s).**

**For a brief overview of the main points covered in this booklet, please re-read the boldly printed words on each page.**



# CAMPUS LOCATIONS

## PORTLAND CAMPUS

9200 NE Fremont St  
Portland, Oregon 97220

## TIGARD CAMPUS

12244 SW Garden Pl  
Tigard, Oregon 97223

## MILL PLAIN CAMPUS

14311 SE Mill Plain Boulevard  
Vancouver, Washington 98684

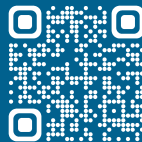
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