

# Conviction versus Condemnation

Healing Streams, Savannah, GA. All scriptures are from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

**Conviction versus condemnation.** Learn to discern! How can you tell the difference between conviction by the Holy Spirit versus condemnation by the enemy? Conviction shows us the problem, separates us from it and shows us the way out—all the while letting us know that we are loved and accepted anyway. Condemnation binds us to the problem, makes no separation between us and the sin and shows us no way out—all the while threatening us with judgment and displeasure. It is the way of the world and it's deadly; conviction is the Way of the Lord—it's life-giving!

I now rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that you were made sorry to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly way... For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation, which brings no regret. But the sorrow of the world works death. 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 WEB

## Conviction by the Spirit

Always points to true guilt  
Knows grace exists  
Leads to contrition (sorry you sinned)  
Targets your sin (that was wrong)  
Explains, reasons, corrects  
Illuminates your path  
Purpose is to correct and guide  
Specific wrong is clarified  
Brings repentance  
Feels light and right  
May not be ready to repent,  
but you agree with Truth.

## Condemnation by the enemy

Often heaps on false guilt  
No grace exists  
Leads to feeling worthless, inept (a sorry sinner)  
Attacks your person (you are bad)  
Accuses, condemns, reprimands  
Darkens your understanding  
Purpose is to reprimand and discourage  
Fog of general wrongness sinks in  
Spreads confusion  
Feels heavy and wrong  
May be willing to confess to anything,  
but you still can't get free.

**Repenting of true sins** brings restoration and freedom from true guilt:

*Confess the sin* (requires faith in Christ's shed blood) and *receive God's mercy*.

**Resisting the accusation** of false guilt produces freedom from condemnation:

*Confess the Truth* (requires courage to live what you believe) and *resist the devil*.

See the difference? That's discernment! Still need freedom? Take the Hebrews 4:16 "elevator" to the top: go boldly to the throne of grace, get the mercy you need to reestablish your heart, then stand against the accuser.

**False guilt:** Conviction brings with it the Holy Spirit's power to repent in matters of true guilt, but no matter how much you attempt to repent of false guilt, you cannot "receive forgiveness" for that which in God's sight is no sin. To walk in the light as He is in the light, means that the accusations of false guilt must be seen for what they are (lies or half truths coming from accusing spirits) and resisted by faith in the truth as you believe God has shown you truth (the courage of one's convictions).

**True guilt:** However, sometimes condemnation comes not from false guilt, but from situations of true guilt where we cannot forgive ourselves and therefore cannot really believe in or receive God's forgiveness. Freedom will come as we learn to forgive ourselves as God does. Learn to respond to the conviction and cast off condemnation.



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**Stages of progressive faith in the truth you discern**

- 1) **Confess the truth** (God's truth) that you believe, even if you don't feel like it is true.
- 2) Simply know that the truth you believe is true. **Rest in knowing it.** (Jesus said you will know the truth and the truth will set you free—He didn't say you will feel the truth.)
- 3) Then, as you relax into just knowing the truth you will eventually begin to feel its lifting power helping you to believe with your whole heart.

**Feelings follow knowing. Knowing follows believing.**

Be still, and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10

