



GGN is a teaching resource for ministers and churches all over the world. We advocate the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ - Jesus alone, grace alone, faith alone. Our purpose is twofold: to help the Church rediscover Jesus and to take this message to the world.

## A HEART AT REST

1 John 3:19 says, "And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure (set at rest) our hearts before Him."

Isaiah 32:17 says, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever."

There may be many reasons why our hearts are at unrest. It may come from guilt, condemnation, hurts or perfectionism, among others. These are areas that the three teaching articles we present to you touch in various ways.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will minister to you as you study the articles. God desires us to have our hearts at rest before Him, and this is what he has made available for each one of us!

Let us lay aside every weight, and rest in the assurance that we are fully accepted in Christ and unconditionally loved by our Friend and Creator.



## A Little Leaven

By Evans Beecham

**Are you struggling with self-condemnation? Or are you feeling guilty in some area of your life? Discover how these things will affect your life, and what Jesus has done to set you free!**

**I**n what area of your life are you the hardest on yourself, or put it this way: What are you condemning yourself about today?

Who do we think we are? This is an important question for us to ponder. When we miss the mark, are we constantly telling ourselves things like, "How could I be so stupid?" "I never get it right," "It just doesn't work for me." These are all self-accusing, or self-condemning comments - comments that add leaven in the dough. "A little

leaven (a slight inclination to error, or a few false teachers) leavens the whole lump [it perverts the whole conception of faith or misleads the whole church]" (Galatians 5:9 AMP). Ultimately, we end up believing a LIE about ourselves! A lie that will keep us bound. A lie that sounds humble to the religious, but is actually pride leading to a performance-based Christianity trying to please God by our performance: - "If I do this for Him, then God will do this for me." All of our so-called blessings and our trying to please God by our efforts are just works-based



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## Every time we condemn ourselves we are calling unclean what God calls clean

righteousness which voids our faith (Romans 4:14). We must quit trying to earn by our self efforts what God has freely given us in Christ.

### How God sees us

When we condemn ourselves, we are wrestling with God's word concerning who He says we are vs. who we "think we are." We may think we are filthy, unworthy, unholy, and somehow, we, through leaven, even convince ourselves that this is humble, completely missing, or ignoring Jesus finished work of the cross. Friends, this may be shocking news for some, but that is not at all how God sees us! Jesus made us clean, worthy, holy, and righteous by his blood! Don't call "unclean" what Jesus has made clean (Acts 10:28). Every time we condemn ourselves we are calling unclean what God calls clean; meaning that we are doubting God's very word that He has spoken concerning us. Think about this for a moment: When we believe something about ourselves which is contrary to what God believes about us, then we are doubting God.

Wow, let that sink in for a moment. Self-condemnation causes us to doubt what God has said about us. When we condemn ourselves, we are now at odds with what God says about us and that, my friend, is doubting God. Romans 8:1 says "There is therefore, now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Are you a Christian? Then you're forever in Christ!

### Mixing law with grace

Leaven (yeast) is mixing a little law with grace. If we're condemning ourselves or feeling guilty in some area of our life, then that little bit of leaven will leaven the whole lump causing unrest in our lives. Jesus commenced by saying primarily to His disciples, "Be on your guard against the leaven (ferment) of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy [producing unrest and violent agitation]" (Luke 12:1 AMP). In other words, that area of condemnation and guilt will work its way throughout the dough, and bring us back to a work-based Christianity relying on our self

efforts to try to offer a sacrifice to God for that which we feel guilty about. We will look for something to do for God to appease Him and our conscience. That is where many people frustrate the grace of God in their lives, putting themselves back under the law, voiding their faith (Galatians 2:21). The law is do, do more - you haven't done enough. Under the law, there is no rest because we are driven to do more, implying that the "finished work" is neither perfect nor complete. The law is about "I" and our efforts, vain as they are. Grace is done. Grace

When we believe something about ourselves which is contrary to what God believes about us, then we are doubting God


is about Jesus and His finished work. Leaven produces fermentation, which according to the dictionary is "a state of agitation, or turbulent change, unrest." Notice that when you are at rest, in the perfection of redemption through the finished work of the cross, this leaven begins to agitate you and cause unrest in your life. The leaven is mixing law with grace to bring you back under the law, making you think that you have to **do something** in order to receive what God has freely given you.

Jesus' obedience made us righteous (innocent, guilt free), not our efforts. Romans 5:18. Mirror translation: "The conclusion is clear: it took just one offense to condemn mankind; one act of righteousness declares the same mankind innocent." Phillips translation: "We see then, that as one act of sin exposed the whole race of men to condemnation, so one act of perfect righteousness presents all men freely acquitted in the sight of God!"

### Only believe what Jesus has done

Let's not disagree with what Jesus has





condemnation and guilt will work its way throughout the dough, and bring us back to a work-based Christianity

done for us. He made us righteous, innocent, fully acquitted, with no need for guilt. We need to only believe what He has done for us. What an awesome loving God, **leading us to His rest by His love!** There is no rest or peace in guilt and condemnation. In His acquittal of all charges against us, we're innocent. **Wow, now we can really rest!**

Whatever it is that you feel guilty about, and are condemning yourself over, (it could be in your marriage, something you have done in the past; it doesn't matter.) is the little leaven. It will affect (agitate) your grace walk, producing unrest, instead of enjoying the rest and peace we have in Christ. We know the debt was fully paid by Jesus; there is nothing for you to do, just receive His superabundance of grace and gift of righteousness, and reign in life. God loves us, and He removed the condemnation. He was condemned so we could be acquitted. He took our guilt, so we could be innocent.

Galatians 5:9-10 Mirror Translation: "9 It is impossible to hide the effect of the smallest amount of yeast;

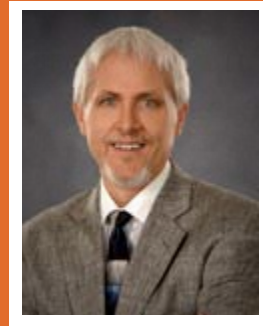
the process of fermentation is immediately triggered. (A little bit of legalism corrupts a person's whole life.) 10 In spite of the interference of those "law-church" people, I remain convinced about our like-mindedness in the Lord. It does not matter what high profile position anyone may occupy, do not let their title disturb you! The very law they promote will be their judgment! (The fermentation process is unavoidable when you host a legalistic mind-set.)"

God sent Jesus to the cross because He loves us unconditionally and with great intensity. Receive His love today, and agree with what God has said about you: You're innocent! Don't put yourself in a place where mixture is being taught; feed on the pure grace of the finished work. **In this grace, you will find true rest!**

Remember this: The thief comes with only one agenda - to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). What is he after? Your identity of who you are in Christ, causing you to question what Jesus has done for you at Calvary. The accuser,

using condemnation, is trying to get you to think you have to earn through the merit system what is already yours. In Luke 15:31 the father says "... all that I have is yours." The accuser is trying to get you to receive the law-grace mixture questioning the pure grace and goodness of God. Christ's redemption is perfect and complete. Believe it, receive it and bear fruit (Mark 4:20). Reign in life today!

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# FORGIVE and FORGET

by STEVE  
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Does the Bible really require us to forget the wrong things others have done to us? Let's take a closer look at the difference between to forget and to remember no more.

What about this matter of forgiving and forgetting? Are we really required to forget the wrong things others have done to us? That's not what the Bible teaches. Not even God does that. You may have raised your eyebrow in doubt about that statement, but it's true. The Bible doesn't say that He forgets our sins. It says that He doesn't remember them. Although many may think the two are the same thing, they aren't.

He will separate our sins from us forever. He doesn't forget but he does remember them no more

To forget means just that. It means we have no ability to bring to mind the forgotten thing. How could we possibly do that with some of the terrible hurts we've suffered in

life? It's not possible. What we can do though is to not remember. As I've said, there's a big difference.

## Re-member

What does it mean to remember? Look at the word itself. It is comprised of two words: "re" and "member." "Re" is a prefix that means, "to return to a previous condition" or "the repetition of a previous action." The word "member" means, "one of a group; one that belongs, a part of the body." So the accurate and literal meaning of the word "remember" is to return something to a previous condition by making it belong to or join again. If I cut off my finger, the doctor may be able to re-member it if I get to him with it in time.

The Bible doesn't say God forgets our sins. People sometimes talk about the "Sea of Forgetfulness"

many have heard mentioned at times, but that phrase is not in the Bible. The idea was taken from Scripture and it is found in Micah 7:19 where it says: "He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." That's probably where the idea of a "Sea of Forgetfulness" comes from, but note that's not what the Bible says. It says He will separate our sins from us forever. He doesn't forget but he does remember them no more. In other words, He will forever refuse to join our sins to us or our past guilt to Himself. He will not remember them!

To illustrate the literal use of the word in a positive way, think about what Jesus said at the Last Supper to His disciples. When they partook the meal together, He told them, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying,



“This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:24-25, emphasis added).

What did He mean by that? He meant, “As often as you partake of this communion meal in the future, do it in a way that you are appropriating the reality of your connection to me.” He wasn't telling believers that when we take communion, we are to think in our minds and pretend that we are there watching His crucifixion. He is telling us to re-member, to affirm by faith that we are inseparably joined to Him and we affirm that reality again and again when we partake of the elements. Again, we are affirming and yes, even experiencing, our union with Him on the cross, in His burial and now in His resurrection life.

So our Father does not remember our sin anymore. Being omniscient

means He knows everything so He hasn't given up His omniscience and forgotten our sins. He simply refuses to ever “member them” to us or to Himself again.

That's what we are to do when it comes to forgiveness toward others. Do we forgive? Yes, but not because we must. We do it because we have been forgiven and now have the ability and the desire to forgive those who have hurt us.

Do we forget? No, but neither do we “remember.” We release those who have hurt us from all obligation they have toward us and we refuse to join the offense to us again. Don't beat yourself up because you haven't literally forgotten about it. We may never forget, but as we walk in ongoing forgiveness the event itself will have less and less emotional impact on us when we think about it. We will come to a place where, although we haven't

forgotten, we don't feel the pain of the situation anymore because we have been healed.

Do we forget? No, but neither do we “remember.”



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# STUDY CORNER

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# Learning to Live with Imperfection

By Steve McVey

When we do things that are not perfect, we easily condemn ourselves. But does God expect to find perfection in everything we do?

We all have an ideal in mind concerning the things we do in life. We have been taught to be conscientious about what we do and to strive for excellence. There is certainly nothing wrong with that philosophy of living. It is admirable and serves as a good baseline for everything we do.

Even God doesn't look at your lifestyle and expect to find perfection in everything you do

There is, however, a dividing line between being conscientious and being a perfectionist about what we do. A person can be conscientious and recognize a job well done without it having to be perfect. Perfectionists always see the shortcomings in a finished task, even if they are insignificant enough that nobody else would even notice.

## Adjust your ideal

Sometimes there is a need for a person to adjust her ideal to a level that is more realistic in terms of the capability she actually possesses. Things can be good,

even excellent, without being perfect. Learning to live with less than perfect is important for peace of mind because nobody ever achieves perfection.

Even God doesn't look at your lifestyle and expect to find perfection in everything you do. The Psalmist wrote, "For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust" (Psalm 103:14). To put it another way: God knows that you are only human. Do you know that or do you place expectations on yourself to be superhuman and then feel frustrated when you see that you aren't?

A grace walker is one who finds fulfillment in having done her best, given the limitations that life imposes on her. When God had finished creating, He looked at what He had done and said, "It is good." He wants you to be able to say the same about what you do. In fact, to be able to say so is a godly quality.

Does it really matter if some things go undone or are postponed? Is it

worth sacrificing peace of mind, emotional stability, and being physically exhausted in order to accomplish it all? Does it really matter that much when put into the perspective of the big picture? These are questions that merit serious consideration.

Learning to live with results that are less than perfect may be an acquired skill that the Holy Spirit wants to teach you. The next time you look at a finished job and are tempted to nitpick and judge it through the lens of perfectionism, don't be surprised if you hear Him say, "Let it go. It is good." When you hear that still, small voice, listen and do it. In the long run, you will discover the grace of fulfillment instead of the guilt of self-imposed laws that condemn you over what you've done.

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(This article is an excerpt from Steve McVey's new book, *Wives Walking In Grace*, to be published in 2013 by Harvest House Publishers)