



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.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING RID OF CONDEMNATION

Recently I listened to a sermon by Joseph Prince where he said, "The root cause of your problem is condemnation." This is the deepest root, according to him. Thinking about our lives we understand it would not work to focus on changing the leaves, as long as the problem is in the root. Let us ask God for help to get rid of all condemnation in our lives. This comes by a revelation of what Jesus has done for us and who He is in our lives. We don't fight off condemnation, but rather bring in the truth of forgiveness, righteousness and unconditional love. When the Truth sets you free you are free indeed.

In this issue we present a couple of teaching articles that both address this topic, from different angles. We pray that God will open His Word and bring a floodlight of revelation as you study the teachings.

We would also like to take the opportunity and welcome the new readers of GGN. Be aware that the web site has a good number of articles in it's archive, as well as a question and answer section. We have also received some theological questions that will be answered in future teaching articles.

Feel free to contact us with your testimonies; we would love to hear from you.



Mary Felde  
Editor



## GUILT OR INNOCENCE: WHICH ONE AFFECTS YOUR DECISIONS?

BY EVAN BEECHAM

When we have an awareness of guilt and not innocence, it may lead to wrong decisions in our lives. Let's have a look at God's love and peace for us and how this will affect the direction in our lives.

Remember to make this a guilt-free, no-condemnation day. When we allow guilt in, then that guilt takes on a life of its own, forming our decisions we make; taking us from His rest back to our works. We live by faith (what Jesus has done to deliver us completely) not by sight, (which is being persuaded by circumstances and what we see, relying on what we can do in our own effort). Accept your 100% pure INNOCENCE today, because you ARE innocent. You are not guilty; your decisions are right when they are based on your innocence! Circumstance may scream differently, but truth trumps circumstance! You will be so much better off because of your decision to believe the truth of the gospel! Be

careful not to listen to the voice of FEAR and GUILT - those two voices create problems, not solve them. Look to the answer. He loves you. Meditate on His love, for ONLY His love removes ALL fear in our hearts.

### Be careful not to listen to the voice of FEAR and GUILT.

The other day I let guilt creep in and I clearly saw the decision I made was based on guilt and not God's love or peace. Wow, that can change the direction of our ship in a hurry. Always innocence and peace, and no guilt ever!!

### The Woman at the well

Let us look at the woman of Samaria

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## **Like it or not, God's love is UNCONDITIONAL or without obligation.**

who Jesus met at the well (John 4). The woman had come to the well in the middle of the day when it was hot. She didn't want to go there in the morning when it was cool and nice as she knew she would then meet other women. She didn't want to hear them slander her about her life and all her husbands. She didn't want to feel their eyes condemning her. She chose the hot part of the day to avoid the condemnation. Her decisions were based on guilt.

But what happened when she met Jesus at the well? What did Jesus do? He loved her and never condemned her, and she was set free by HIS LOVE! Jesus said, "I did not come to condemn (as the religious zealots do) the world, but to SAVE the world." Like it or not, God's love is UNCONDITIONAL or without obligation, and when this woman walks, where is Christ? He is hidden in her, in God, when she walks. He is with her.

What happened to her consciousness of guilt and condemnation? It was all gone! She didn't care about what people slandered her about anymore. She went right into the city telling the people about Jesus. She experienced Jesus and His love. He gave her the strength to walk out to freedom, to make her decisions based on innocence.

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**Guilt brings life to the wrong decisions, and innocence brings life to the right decisions.**

### **Knowing Who You are in Christ**

Our everyday decisions are given life by what we believe! Guilt brings life to the wrong decisions, and innocence brings life to the right decisions. The

word agape, which describes the God kind of love, is also defined, "as a shepherd leads His sheep to REST." Knowing who you are in Christ as a result of His finished work of the cross, unveils His love for you, without condition or obligation; thus making you free. A person knowing this is freer than his very accusers. Yes, he has been led to that perfect place of Rest by His love! He and his Father are sitting together with their feet up on the ottoman in his Father's favorite resting place - the temple of his heart, as He declares him victory. Now that is amazing grace from an amazing Father, and the finished work of an amazing Son, delivered to us by an amazing Holy Spirit!! Wow, His love takes my breath away!!

Guilt or innocence? Do you see the importance of knowing who you are in Christ? I know I mentioned those religious zealots many times - they are the ones who think they know what is best for you based on the law. They mix law and grace, and then try to intimidate you with their rules. They are easy to spot and will tell you they believe in grace BUT, you have to follow this rule or command, pray hard, among other things to please God, and get God to accept you. Eph 1:6 says you are accepted in the beloved. When? When Jesus paid the price and finished the work. No amount of efforts, works, rules or commands will bring God's acceptance, because you are always and forever accepted. God is always pleased with you "just as you are!" Now that is a greater relief than Roloids!

We love because He first loved us. Under the "law" we were told to "love The Lord God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength." Is this possible 24/7? Nope, you can't do it. After the cross, grace says in 1 John 4:10, "In this is love, NOT

that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (satisfying sacrifice) for our sins." The legalist tries to earn God's love and acceptance which means he MUST perform through works and self-efforts. The grace person rests (Heb 4) in the truth that Jesus did it all at the cross, and there is nothing left for them to do - no works or efforts to perform; just rest in Him.

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## **God is always pleased with you "just as you are!"**

Understanding this performance-based Christianity (law) versus rest-based Christianity (grace) is the crucial difference between guilt or innocence-based decisions. Why? Because the law or performance requirements always scream "you didn't do enough." No matter how long you study, pray, or how many times you attend church, you will always (because it is the design of the law), feel inadequate like you haven't done enough. You are always driven to do more to be pleasing to God. That my friend is bondage!

On the other hand, grace tells you to enter His rest. Why? Because Jesus did it all and there is nothing left for you to do but receive His love and blessings resulting in the "FINISHED" work.

### **Walking Away From Heavy Abuse**

Let us take another example how guilt or innocence affects our decisions. Let's say a woman has an abusive non-Christian husband. Both she and the children suffer constantly. Because of the abuse the woman leaves her husband and religious zealots now begin to heap guilt upon her, throwing scriptures at her, saying, "You must reconcile, you must forgive!" So out of guilt the woman returns home to reconcile (at least on her part). But for what? More abuse, and

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## Grace says you are forgiven, and you didn't even have to ask for it!

intensified as well. We can see that the legalistic, religious people were equally abusive to her because they ignored God's love and grace.

Now, however, what would be the situation if this same woman would be led by her innocence instead of guilt? She knows that God never ever created anyone to be abused or controlled by another human being. She knows God loves her unconditionally and has made her forever righteous in Christ, and she knows that no religious people can rob her of her innocence. When legalistic people attack her because she walked away from her abusive husband, she remains in peace because she knows that she lives by faith (the persuasion of God's word in her heart that she is unconditionally loved, innocent, and yes, holy) and not by sight, guilt and fear. She knows that no abusive husband or religious ex-friends can stop the hand of a loving, mighty, protective Father from saving her and her children. She is now free to be led by God and not by guilt.

(Please be aware that this article is not an article on marriage in general. Marriages may be completely restored if both are willing to yield to God and be transformed by him. However, decisions should not be made out of guilt, fear, condemnation and pressure, but rather based on God's leading and the assurance that we are righteous.)

## Repentance

The law of performance will ALWAYS make you feel guilty, and grace will ALWAYS assure you of your acceptance and innocence. All sins and shortcomings were forgiven and forever removed at the cross never to be brought up again. Grace says you are forgiven, and you didn't even have

to ask for it! Are you saying that I don't even have to repent? In the sense that you're asking - yes. But let me explain.

The word repent/repentance was actually added, changing the actual Greek word "*Metanoia*" to English "repentance." There is a huge difference between the two. In the introduction of the Mirror Translation Bible by Francois du Toit, he states the following: "For many years deliberate as well as oblivious errors in translations were repeated and have empowered the religious institution of the day to influence, manipulate and even abuse masses of people."

Consider the word *metanoia*, consisting of two components, *meta*, together with, *nous* (mind), suggesting a radical mind shift. This word has been translated regularly as repentance, an Old English word borrowed from the Latin, which means penance. This gross deception led to the perverted doctrines of indulgences where naïve, ignorant people were led to believe that they needed to purchase favor from an angry God! Most cathedrals as well as many ministries were funded with guilt money!

English translations do little to help us understand what repentance truly is. Until Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation, the word *metanoia* was commonly used. For instance, Tertullian wrote in 198 A.D., "In Greek, *metanoia* is not a confession of sins but a change of mind." But despite this the Latin fathers began to translate the word as "do penance" following the Roman Catholic teaching on doing penance in order to win God's favor. In 1430, Lorenzo Valla, a Catholic theologian, began a critical study of Jerome's Latin Vulgate and Valla pointed out many mistakes that Jerome had made. Sadly, the Vulgate-only crowd of Valla's day forced him to renounce many of the

needed changes that he noted in the Vulgate including the poor translation of *metanoia*."

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## A Change of Mind

If you don't know that you are forgiven, or think that you must "repent" to be forgiven, then you will live under the constant weight of guilt and your decisions in life will be made driven by guilt, instead of innocence. This process will put you in the performance mode, trying to purchase, through your efforts, favor from God. This way of living will put you on a downward spiral full of "hardships, labors and annoyances" which, by the way, is the definition of evil in much of the New Testament.

Metanoia on the other hand speaks of a change of mind. Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand or radically change your (mind) way of thinking for the kingdom of God is at hand. It is radically different from the religious way of thinking. Romans 2:4 "...the goodness of God leads you to repentance" (a radical change of mind). God's goodness will cause you to see how good He really is, and how much He loves you, causing your mind to radically change concerning your former twisted thoughts about God. It will also bring you to the place of understanding that the sin problem

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**God's goodness will cause you to see how good He really is, and how much He loves you, causing your mind to radically change concerning your former twisted thoughts about God.**

**The guilt was forever removed, and you were given the very innocence of God.**

was removed, and you are forever forgiven, period!

### **A Better Covenant**

Let me make one more point about our innocence before I wrap this up. In Heb 10:1-3: "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year." Under the law there was a **yearly** reminder of sins. **Yearly, not daily**, not minute by minute but yearly. I want you to see this because we have a better covenant than a yearly reminder of sin! If there were a perfect sacrifice for sins, then the worshipers would have no more consciousness of sins according to verse 2. Verse 9 and 10 says "...He takes away the first (covenant of law) that He may establish the second (covenant of grace). By that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE OR ALL." The perfect sacrifice, Jesus, removed the sin and therefore the sin-consciousness

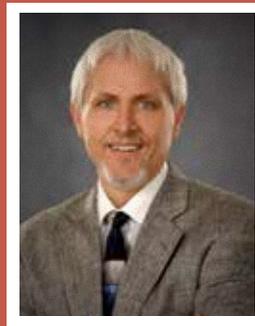
thus giving us our righteousness (innocence)- consciousness. The guilt was removed with the sin and we became the righteousness of God. Righteousness means innocent, guiltless, and faultless! The guilt was forever removed, and you were given the very innocence of God. Because of this innocence, you have peace. Let the peace of God guide your every decision in life.

### **The Holy Spirit**

I mentioned that under the law they had a yearly reminder of sin. I also mentioned that we have a better, even a perfect covenant, now. However, religion tells us that the Holy Spirit will convict you of your every sin, moment by moment. Friends, if that were true, then our covenant would not be as good as the old, because they had a yearly reminder, and now religion says we have a moment by moment reminder. That is a lie. The Holy Spirit does not convict you of sin - rather He convinces you of righteousness. Let's examine the verse religion uses and see for ourselves. John 16:9-11, "About sin, because **they** do not believe in Me (**they** is the "world" - He was speaking to the disciples); About righteousness, because I go to My Father, and **you** will see Me no longer (**you** tells us He is talking to the believer, the disciples, saying the Holy Spirit will convince **you** of your righteousness, or innocence); About judgment,

**The Holy Spirit does not convict you of sin - rather He convinces you of righteousness.**

because the ruler of this world (Satan) is judged and condemned and sentence already is passed upon him. (Here He is addressing the accuser, Satan)." That changes everything when we read the verses in context. The accuser accuses, and the Holy Spirit loves you and convinces you of your righteousness! Meditate on that awhile. You are innocent - Jesus judged you "not guilty!" Don't let guilt lead in your decisions ever again. Let His innocence and peace rule in your heart and enjoy the super- abundant life Jesus came to give you! Now does it make sense how you can reign in life through one Christ Jesus?



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# **FORGIVEN**

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## **BY STEVE MCVEY**

**Have you made mistakes that cause you to think God may be disappointed with you?  
How great to know that God's love has taken care of both sins and foolishness.**

**L**egalism is a cruel tyrant. It incites us to sin and then condemns us once we've given in and done it. It causes us to believe that, now that we've blown it, God is going to be upset with us because of what we've done.

**As absurd as it sounds, God isn't interested in what you've done in the past.**

### **Giants in the Bible**

When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, he wrongly assumed His God would be angry. But instead, God came looking for Him to take His regular evening walk. When Abraham sent his wife, Sarah, into Pharaoh's tent to protect his own life by allowing her to have a physical relationship with another man, God told Pharaoh that he was on dangerous ground and that he'd better get her out of there right now. The next words out of God's mouth to Abraham were to reassure him of the covenant He had made with him. Not a word about his sin.

When Elijah was depressed, afraid, angry, and prayed to die, God sent an angel to feed him so that he might regain his strength. No shame or blame. After Peter denied Jesus, our Lord made sure when He arose to mention Peter by name and said to make sure he knew Jesus was alive. No reference to what Peter had done.

These were giants in the Bible – giants who made horrific choices. In each instance, the love of God swallows up their sins and foolishness in one great gush of grace. It seems absurd. What have you done that causes you to think God may be disappointed or perturbed toward you? Whatever it is, you need to set it aside because that's what He has done. As absurd as it sounds, God isn't interested in what you've done in the past. He lives with you in the now and wants you to live in this moment of grace and accept His forgiveness.

Jesus showed us our Father's heart when He had the father of the prodigal son throw him a party when he returned home without so much as a mention of what the boy had done. That's your God.

### **Accept His Acceptance**

Refuse to accept His acceptance and you'll lock yourself inside a prison of your own making. Accept His acceptance and you'll run in the joyful freedom only known by those who know their sins never appear on God's radar – never.

You've messed up? Welcome to the world of great children of God. It happened. So put it aside now. Don't insult the finished work of Jesus on the cross by insisting on trying to

share in dealing with it through your own gnawing guilt and spiritually suicidal self-consciousness. You are forgiven. You are free. You are one with the One who keeps no record of wrongs and promises to never remember them again.

**Accept His acceptance and you'll run in the joyful freedom only known by those who know their sins never appear on God's radar – never.**

So dance. Run. Laugh. Play. Celebrate. That's what the Father, Son and Spirit are doing and He asks you to join in right now. Your sins are forgiven and will never be brought up again. That news is why it's called "the gospel."



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