

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life for week ending 03/16/03.
The Angelic Conflict. Part 17. The Doctrine of Guilt.
Philippians 2:13

We are now studying the **Doctrine of Guilt** as a part of the doctrine of **The Satanic Game Plan**, and the means used by the kingdom of darkness to lead believers astray.

Point 1: Definition and Description. Guilt has three meanings:

1. The **fact** of being responsible for an offense or wrongdoing.
2. In legal terms, **culpability** for a crime or a breach of regulations.
3. Remorseful **awareness** of having done something wrong.

We also saw that guilt can be an *objective reality* or a *subjective experience*. The objective reality is the *fact* of being responsible for an offense or wrongdoing. Here guilt is the historical fact that a certain sin, act, or crime was committed by a certain individual. Subjectively, guilt can be experienced by the individual that has not lived up to his own expectations; it can be a feeling of responsibility or remorse for a real or imagined offense.

In its historical aspect, the guilt of sin committed will never be changed. It can not be transferred to any other person. However, the second aspect of guilt, which is an *obligation to law*, may be discharged by punishment endured, or transferred to another who, *as a substitute*, suffers the penalty for the guilty person. This is a great analogy to the Cross where our Lord Jesus Christ endured our guilt as a substitute for us. Sin makes the Pharisee and tax collector, the priest and prostitute, exactly alike, spiritually bankrupt as they stand before God. We owe God an enormous debt, far greater than we could possibly repay. Therefore, how wonderful it is to embrace that inexhaustible, immutable, and perfect salvation which the Cross of Christ affords!

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Col 2:13-14 *And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*

By the justification received through faith in Jesus Christ, even the historical aspect of guilt is relieved beyond comprehension for those who believe. Not only is there peace with God, but He will remember no more our sins and guilt, which He has dealt with completely in the Person of His Son.

Isa 53:5 *But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.*

The second form of guilt is a very destructive force in the life of any believer; it destroys our confidence and happiness, and causes us to lose sight of the grace of God. There are three directions of manipulation that can result in the life of any believer under the guilt complex of sins:

1. Manipulation of *yourself* (your own guilt trip).
2. Being manipulated *by someone else* through guilt.
3. Being converted to legalism, and becoming a *manipulator of others*, a crusader for legalistic guilt.

Point 2: Discerning True Guilt from False Guilt.

Phi 2:13 *For it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [motivation] and to work [execution] above and beyond His good pleasure.*

Whether you realize it or not, God the Holy Spirit is working within you. Without His ministry, you never have any positive changes in your life, and you will never grow. God is at work within us even when we are not filled with the Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is not controlling your soul, He also has the ministry of *conviction* to point out the changes that are necessary in your life.

We must learn to recognize the difference between true conviction and *condemnation*.

Rom 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Rom 4:7-8 *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”*

One is a true (legitimate) guilt, whereas the other is a false (deceitful) guilt. Conviction is God revealing something to you so it can be corrected, as in **2Co 7:8-10**, *“For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”* Condemnation is the kingdom of darkness accusing you of being unworthy to receive blessing from God, as in **Rev 12:10b**, *“For the **accuser of our brethren** has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.”* False guilt (condemnation) magnifies our sins and failures and pushes us into a subtle works program in order to make up for those sins and failures. True guilt (conviction) will always free us and give us rest, whereas false guilt will separate us from the Lord.

There are twelve factors we have noted that bring out the difference between true guilt and false guilt:

1. The tool.
2. The agent.
3. The issue (subject matter).
4. The focus.
5. The objective.
6. The orientation (approach).
7. The direction.
8. The tone.
9. The analogy.
10. The remedy.
11. The future.
12. The end state.

We have completed our study of the first six principles.

1. The **tool** used for conviction is the *Word of God*. The tools that are used for condemnation are *accusations and slander*.

2. The **agent** for conviction is usually *God's man*, the pastor-teacher, but can also be another positive believer friend. The agent for condemnation will be your *enemies*.

Jer 35:15 *"Also I have sent to you all My servants the prophets, sending them again and again, saying: 'Turn now every man from his evil way, and amend your deeds, and do not go after other gods to worship them, then you shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your forefathers; but you have not inclined your ear or listened to Me.'"*

Pro 27:6 *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.*

3. The **issue** and concern (subject matter) in conviction is the *condition of the sinner*, i.e., rescuing you. ("You need to know this. This is what God's word has to say.") It is all about your well-being. It is meant to shed light on the fact, followed by the Cross. The fact will be the *single area* of your life that needs to change.

Mat 9:12-13 *But when He heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

The issue and concern in condemnation is a *claim against the sinner*. It is the injury itself, requiring a debt to be paid. ("You owe me.") It is someone else's agenda. An obvious example of this is the Pharisees' condemnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and their inconsistent accusations.

Mar 14:55-59 *Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death; and they were not finding any. For many*

were giving false testimony against Him, and yet their testimony was not consistent. And some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, saying, “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’” And not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.

Condemnation obscures the truth of the Cross, claiming that there is more penalty required—culpability followed by penalty regarding *multiple offenses*.

4. The singular **focus** of the episode of conviction is *God*. The focus of condemnation continues to be *sin and the sinner*.

Mat 16:23 *But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”*

5. The **objective** of conviction is *freedom*. The objective of condemnation is *slavery*.

Gal 2:4 *But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.*

Gal 5:1 *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

Joh 8:31-36 *Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You shall become free’?” Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.”*

6. The **orientation**, or approach, of conviction is that it is said *directly to you*, and you only. The orientation of condemnation is that it is said *to others about you*.

Mat 18:15 *“And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”*

As grace-oriented believers, we need to understand that God may be at work within us through gracious criticism and conviction. We must learn to identify true guilt and false guilt—Holy Spirit conviction versus the condemnation of man.

Heb 10:17 *“And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*

For a more detailed study, order last week’s tapes, 1849 to 1852.