

# Accept Justification And Mature Spiritually

Condemnation, wounding and spiritual pollution.

These are three major enemies that oppose personal growth to spiritual maturity.

All three are used by Satan to stunt our spiritual growth, but I feel that condemnation is the number one enemy.

**Revelation 12:9-10** [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or **Satan, who leads the whole world astray.** He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For **the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.**”*

Satan’s major weapon against Christians is to accuse them constantly of past and present, real or imagined sins and weaknesses.

**All too often guilt and shame plague us and blight any spontaneous joy and peace of mind.**

We all have real or imagined skeletons in our life’s cupboard that constantly threaten to fall out and become exposed to our friends, workmates or relatives.

Many years ago Arthur Conan Doyle, the author and explorer, sent twelve telegrams to leading public figures with the same short unsigned message, *“flee for all is discovered.”* Within twenty-four hours all twelve had fled the country!

**Guilt has an indelible quality and does not rub off easily.**

How do we remove guilt and its debilitating power over us?

When guilt is removed we take away the foothold that Satan has in us and make room for the Holy Spirit to dwell within our lives.

A deeper understanding of the Biblical words *“justification”* and *“condemnation”* will help us to loosen Satan’s foothold.

**Justification** – an easy way to remember the meaning of this word is *“just as if I had never sinned.”*

Through justification God provides us with a clean slate, a fresh start, as God casts all our sins behind His back, never to remember them again.

**Isaiah 43:25** [NIV] *“I, even I, am he who **blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.**”*

Forgiven and forgotten.

**Psalms 85:2** [NIV] *“You **forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins.** Selah”*

Forgiven and covered up, out of sight.

**Colossians 2:11-13** [NIV] *“In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having*

*been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. **When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,...***

Even our deep rooted cancer-like sins were cut out, the sinful nature destroyed and new life given to us.

**Romans 4:4-6, 23-25** [NIV] *“Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom **God credits righteousness apart from works:**” ... “The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom **God will credit righteousness – for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.**”*

Paul speaks of the righteous of Christ as being now “reckoned” [logizomai] to our account. The Greeks use this word in the commercial sense of “crediting”.

Not only does the accepted blood of Christ acquit me of all sin, declaring me “not guilty” but it gives me credited righteousness, **not** earned but received as a gift.

**We now have a credit balance of righteousness to live on.**

This is like going to our bank to ask for a statement of our account to see if we have enough to meet our bills.

To our amazement and delight we find that a large sum of money has been credited to our account of which we knew nothing.

The cashier assures us that there is no mistake – it really is ours.

**Romans 5:2** [NIV] *“...through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we **now stand.** And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”*

In our spiritual life we can feel the same way when we grasp the truth that **in Jesus Christ we live constantly with a credit balance.**

Justification is like being stuck under a waterfall of grace, that keeps pouring over us, blessings and refreshment.

**Romans 8:1-2** [NIV] *“Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”*

**Condemnation** [katakrima] A judgement against an adverse sentence.

This word is **not** used in criminal law as justification [dikaiosis] is used but in civil law.

An example of this is when you purchase a house, the solicitor will do a legal search.

This is to ensure there is no legal drawbacks or loopholes, such as unpaid ground tithes or tenure responsibilities attached to the property like “a dead hand from the past”.

In the same way, because of Jesus Christ’s blood sacrifice on the cross, there is no “dead hand from the past”, no legal restrictions on us.

The tenure is secured for the Holy Spirit to dwell in our life upon invitation.

In spite of this clear Biblical proof that we are to live totally free from guilt, many Christians still feel pangs of guilt from the past. We feel forgiven but not free.

On the basis of scripture we may feel mentally and theologically that we are forgiven, but emotionally and spiritually many remain in bondage to the past by guilt.

### **How do we overcome this bondage with our sinful past?**

#### **Confess our sins.**

**1 John 1:9** [NIV] *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

#### **Un-confessed sins are un-forgiven sins that hold us in bondage.**

**James 5:16** [NIV] *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”*

When we confess our sins to a brother or sister we are bringing them into the light.

It was once said *“sin leaves the body via the mouth”*.

**1 John 1:7** [NIV] *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

Because Christ is always in the light, we have to walk in the light to bring our sins to Him, where they evaporate in His presence.

The price in humility and openness is high with such confessions, but the spiritual pay-off of guilt-free peace of mind is well worth the pain.

#### **Understand the difference of conviction or condemnation.**

These are two very different words which are often wrongly interpreted.

For some 45 minutes I had been on the stage taking part in a public meeting when I noticed a stain on my trousers from the top of the thigh to the knee. You can imagine my reaction. I considered if I should get up out of my chair and leave the platform and my embarrassment. As I moved I noticed the stain also moved. Looking up I realised I had been sitting under a red spotlight that was throwing a dark shadow on my leg. Phew! Satan, our enemy, is very good at throwing shadows and whispering his favourite words *“unclean”, “stained”* or *“guilty”* all in condemnation.

**Revelation 12:10** [NIV] *“Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. **For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.**”*

Satan the accuser of God’s people.

**Zechariah 3:1** [NIV] *“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.”*

The conviction of the Holy Spirit and the accusing condemnation of Satan differ dramatically.

**Ephesians 4:30** [NIV] *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

Read this verse in context and we find very specific actions which will grieve the Holy Spirit.

**1 Thessalonians 5:19** [King James] *“Quench not the Spirit.”*

Again we find specific attitudes or actions that will quench the Holy Spirit, make Him inactive in our lives.

Satan’s condemnation is non-specific, he uses words like *“you are a failure”*, *“you are stupid”* or *“you are evil”*; such words destroy not course-correct people.

**Luke 15:20** [NIV] *“So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”*

**God the Father corrects us with His arm around us.**

The prodigal son, smelling of the pig-sty, is embraced and drawn into the father’s heart and home.

Conversely, Satan always uses the *“whip”* of condemnation to drive us into darkness and isolation in order to destroy us.

**Understand the difference between repentance and remorse.**

**2 Corinthians 7:10** [NIV] *“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”*

True repentance releases joy in our hearts and in Heaven.

Remorse is self-righteous for it considers that *“I’m really better than that, so I will never forgive myself for this expression of weakness.”*

Such an attitude is rank arrogance and pride, and is a dangerous sin.

**Biblical repentance has at least six sides to it.**

## **1 Turning**

**1 Thessalonians 1:9** [NIV] *“...for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,”*

The change of direction in their lives was evidence of true repentance.

## **2 Changing**

The Greek word repent is *“metanoeo”* literally *“to perceive afterwards”* indicating a change of mind. We now seek to please God and not ourselves.

**Romans 12:2** [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

True repentance is a re-making of our mind, completely different priorities.

**Philippians 2:5** [NIV] *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:”*

A completely new mind, that approaches all things from the perspective of what Jesus Christ says or does.

### 3 Sorrowing

**2 Corinthians 7:10** [NIV] *“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”*

One who has godly sorrow will *“weep without a witness”* while worldly sorrow *“weeps only for dramatic effect before others.”*

**Luke 18:10-14** [NIV] *“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ **But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’** I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

The tax collector in this parable is a good example of godly sorrow, while the Pharisee did not even think he had anything in his life to be sorry about.

**We can be sorry without repenting but we cannot repent without being sorry.**

### 4 Confessing

**1 John 1:9** [NIV] *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

**Un-confessed sins are not forgiven, real confession comes hard to most of us.**

There is the story of the boy who wanted to go for a swim in the river but his mother refused his request saying it was too cold.

An hour later the boy returned with his hair wet.

*“Have you been swimming in the river?”* questioned the mother.

*“No”* came the reply *“I fell in.”*

*“Then how is it your clothes are all dry?”* the mother replied.

*“I had a feeling I was going to fall in so I took them off”* came the innocent reply!

### 5 Forsaking

**The true repentant is the person who has the same opportunity to commit the same sin in the same circumstances, and doesn’t.**

**Proverbs 28:13** [Amplified Bible] *“He who covers his transgressions will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes his sins shall obtain mercy.”*

Forsaking the bondage of sins that were a way of life before conversion may be impossible by our own strength.

But when the willingness is present in our new life we will eventually, through God’s mercy, receive the strength to break the bondage and forsake our sins.

## 6 Restoring

**Luke 19:8-9** [NIV] *“But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount. Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.”*

The restoration that Zacchaeus promised in public brought an instant joyful response from Jesus.

Restoration is not always possible but the willingness must be there in our attitude.

God may choose to test this willingness in something specific that He wants us to put right.

The payment of a debt, the restoration of a broken relationship or the confession of a crime.

### **We need to understand the difference between temptation and sin.**

Despite the frequency with which it has been said that **temptation is not sin**, many people are devastated when they meet with temptation thinking they have already sinned.

**Hebrews 4:15** [NIV] *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has **been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.**”*

We all accept the fact that Jesus Christ did not sin, our salvation depends on this fact.

Yet scripture testifies that Christ was tempted in every way, He felt their tug but He never yielded.

Satan will place in our minds the temptation, our bodies may have the appetite to yield to a fleshly temptation but unless we make the decision to savour and engage in the temptation we have not sinned.

### **There are practical things we can do to avoid yielding to a temptation.**

- 1 As soon as we are consciously aware of what you are thinking, immediately focus on something else.
- 2 Resist the desire to “*pray about the temptation*” as this will simply focus your attention on it again.
- 3 Seek to walk constantly in the light.

**1 John 1:7** [NIV] *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.**”*

This will avail us of a constant cleansing by the blood of Christ.

We “*walk in the light*” by regular setting aside part of each day for prayer and study of God’s Word.

We also have a responsibility to avoid certain TV programmes, literature, films and situations which we know will stir our physical appetites and open our minds to Satan’s temptations.

### **We need to know the difference between true and false guilt.**

#### **False expiatory guilt.**

When we feel guilty for the sins of a near relative or loved one.

For example the child who feels they are responsible for their parents' divorce.

The boy who feels he is somehow linked to his sister's illness or death.

The adopted child who struggles with the feeling of rejection.

The parents who feel personally responsible for their child succumbing to drugs.

### **False hereditary guilt.**

This can be the transfer of subconscious memories, sewn by our ancestral past; this includes race, social status and environment.

**Exodus 20:5** [NIV] *"You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,"*

The mechanics of this statement can only partially be understood, but freedom is possible as we affirm that Jesus has become a curse for us.

**Galatians 3:13** [NIV] *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

All past sins are covered by Christ's blood, and we can pray with confidence that any legacy of cursing be taken away.

### **False depressive guilt.**

A greatly exaggerated sense of guilt is a feature of depression, the result of negative thought patterns.

A general negative view of ourselves, or negative interpretations of the experiences we have, linked with a negative view of the future.

All this is the result of self-centredness and relief can be sought by seeking the welfare of others.

**Philippians 2:1-4** [NIV] *"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."*

When our mind is directed towards the needs of others our own negative thoughts will evaporate.

### **False neurotic guilt.**

People who are given to perfectionism and over-conscientiousness that has become a compulsive behaviour often feel they have under-performed and are therefore subject to feeling of guilt.

Such people need to understand that our acceptance before God is not on the basis of our performance.

**Romans 5:6, 8, 10** [NIV] *"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." ... "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." ... "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"*

God's Love for us is based on grace not performance; we are called sons not slaves, friends not now enemies of God.

### **False transferred guilt.**

This differs from “*expiatory guilt*”, paying the penalty for another based on a false sense of responsibility.

Transferred guilt is based on a sense of shame.

We feel guilty that our father was an alcoholic.

We feel implicated by the suicide of a sister or brother.

We feel ashamed that poverty characterised our childhood, or that a member of our family has a prison record.

**Isaiah 54:5** [NIV] “*For your Maker is your husband – the LORD Almighty is his name – the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.*”

**Isaiah 52:1** [NIV] “*Awake, awake, O Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Put on your garments of splendour, O Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again.*”

Instead of being cloaked with shame, God wants us to put on “*garments of splendour*” for the Good News is that the Lamb of God who stood on the earth, now sits on the throne of God having taken away the sins of the world, yours and mine.

**Romans 8:1-2** [NIV] “*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*”

**No condemnation, no guilt.**