



Freedom from Lament

Adapted from “Freedom from Condemnation” series by Brett Allen.

One man shared this story with The Forgiveness Project:

After spending some \$4,000 on my habit, meeting up with two anonymous women, and wasting hundreds of hours in fruitless pursuit of possibilities, my amatory chimera crumbled in my hands.

I will never forget the look on my wife’s face. She didn’t know who I was anymore, like I had been wearing a mask our whole marriage. In a desperate attempt to save my relationship, I entered a 12-step program for lust addiction, but I was sicker than I realized, and underestimated what recovery required.

After a year of moderate success, based mainly on fear of reprisal, I slipped again, perusing a personals

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site for possibilities, and I got caught. Believing that I had done much more than simply surf a few sites, my wife responded quickly by moving out. A couple of weeks later she read me the reasons why she was divorcing me.

The next day I left for a monastery a few hours away- with my life in my hands, I had to find God or die trying. While I was there, I felt led to do a few things: quit my job (which I had loved), fast for forty days to try and gain some clarity, and throw myself headlong into recovery, no matter what the cost. I spent a year working at a grocery store, going to church whenever the doors were open, volunteering my extra time to help others, and praying and meditating for sometimes hours a day.

I didn't get my wife back, but I got something better, my soul and some inner peace. When she left me, I thought my life was over, and I still cry from time to time, but I have forgiven her for giving up on me, premature though it may have been, for I know I looked hopeless. I am learning to forgive myself too, though at times that is the hardest part of all; I know

that God doesn't judge me, so how can I? Now I am back at my old job, moving forward with my life, and trying to continue to live differently from the person I have been, sharing my story with others, and trying to pass on the message of healing and forgiveness that I have experienced. I am convinced that forgiveness is the key, a divine key that can turn ashes into beauty. There is always hope; no one is a lost cause.¹

We cannot overemphasize the power of God's Spirit in the life of a believer. Every man needs the power of the Spirit of God at work in his life. The reason men need this is because so many things try to trip us up and pull us back into an old lifestyle. We cannot combat the attacks if we do not allow God's Spirit to work within us.

¹ "Clifford's Addiction." www.theforgivenessproject.com

COURAGE Level Questions

Exercise #1: Read and outline Romans 8:1-39 (ESV).

C1: What are your observations from those verses?

Exercise #2: Prior to Romans 8 (ESV), Paul mentions the Holy Spirit in Romans only one time. Re-read Romans 8:1-39 (ESV).

C2: How many times is the Holy Spirit mentioned?

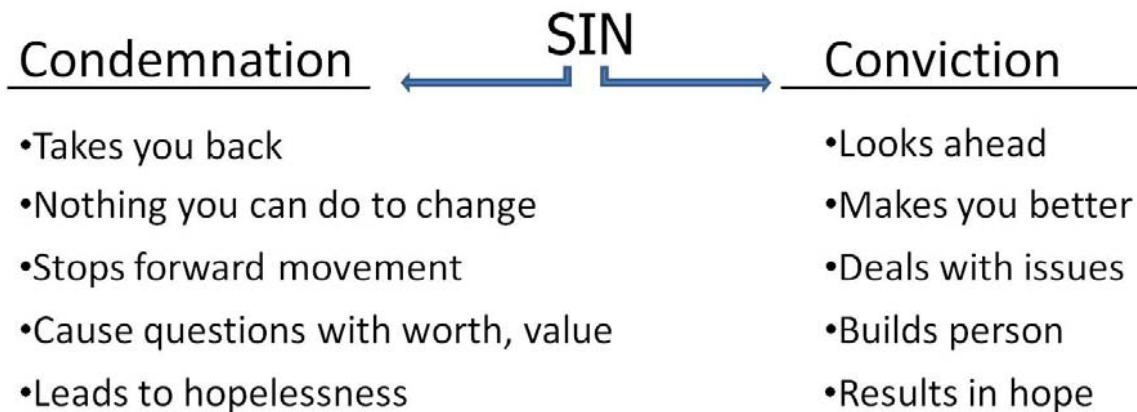
C3: Why is Paul teaching that believers need the power of God's Spirit working in their lives?

C4: Have you ever tried to defeat a sin in your life through your own will power alone? Describe what happened.

STRENGTH Level Questions

Exercise #1: When a person sins, Paul describes a couple of options they have in Romans 7:14-25 (ESV). Look at the diagram below.

Romans 7:14-25



S1: On which side of the chart do you spend most of your time?

S2: If you choose the *condemnation* side, how can you move to the conviction side? If you are on the conviction side, how can you stay on the conviction side?

Exercise #2: The power of God's Spirit in the life of a believer cannot be overemphasized. Read and answer the following.

Romans 8:1–4 (ESV)

S3: From these verses, what are believers free from?

Exercise #3: On a scale of 1-4 with 1 being *very well* and 4 being *not very well*, rate yourself on how well you live without condemnation.

My rating:

Now, write out a plan to improve.

Exercise #4: The Spirit of God is needed in order to walk in freedom. Read Romans 8:1–17 (ESV).

S4: From these verses, write out nine things Paul mentions regarding the Spirit of God.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

ENDURANCE Level Questions

Exercise #1: Read and answer the following.

Romans 8:1 (ESV)

E1: What does this verse mean to you?

E2: From Romans 8:1 (ESV), what do the words “Those who are in Christ Jesus” mean to you?

Exercise #2: On a scale of 1-4 with 1 being *very well* and 4 being *not very well*, rate yourself on how well you are “In Christ Jesus” every day.

My rating:

Now, write out a plan to improve.

Exercise #3: Read and answer the following.

Romans 8:2–4 (ESV)

E3: From these verses, what are two things “the law of Spirit of life” means?

1.

2.

E4: What are two ways the Spirit gives life so a believer can escape condemnation?

Exercise #4: Read and answer the following.

Romans 8:3 (ESV)

E5: From this verse, Christ condemned sin in the flesh by what three acts?

1.

2.

3.