

“Your True Worth Through God’s Eyes”
Session 4: The Blame Trap
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I. The Blame Trap

False Beliefs:

Those who fail (including myself) are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished

FEAR OF PUNISHMENT:

- Fears what God might do to them
- After failure, worries about God’s response
- When seeing someone in a difficult situation, wonders what they did to deserve it.
- When something goes wrong, thinks that God might be punishing them.
- Hard on self when there is a failure
- Blames others when they fail
- Gets angry when someone who is immoral or dishonest prospers
- Compelled to tell others when they see them doing wrong
- Tends to focus on the faults and failures of others

Beliefs about God:

- God seems harsh
- Feels unworthy of God’s love – perhaps feels they deserve to be rejected.
- Holds back in worship (if not outwardly, then inwardly)
- Stresses holiness of God – His unapproachable nature.
- Considers the fear of God a high value in their spiritual life.

Effects of this trap:

- Self – Induced Punishment
- Punishment of Others

- Bitterness
- Passivity
- Fears of all sorts

This trap primarily stems from a misguided understanding of Guilt and Conviction

Romans 8:1 (NLT)

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

Guilt is the condition of being separated from God and deserving condemnation for sin

The ultimate consequence of guilt is separation and condemnation. Essentially what the Bible describes as Hell.

Therefore **guilt and its consequences do not apply to Christians**. We are acquitted and absolved from guilt, free from our sentence of spiritual death.

Christians are freed from Guilt, but still subject to Conviction...

II. God's Answer - Propitiation (satisfying a condition)

By his death on the cross, Jesus satisfied God's wrath; therefore I am deeply loved by God.

1 John 4:9-11 (NASB)

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Romans 8:1-4 (NASB)

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Q: But what about other natural consequences of our actions?

Exodus 34:6-7 (NIV)

He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

Ezekiel 18:23 (NIV)

Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

Leviticus 5:14 - 6:7 – The guilt offering.

Deals with unintentional sin (verse 5:15), ignorant sin (5:17), and willful sin (6:2-4)

All handled in a similar way...

"They must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day they present their guilt offering."

"In this way the priest will make atonement for them before the Lord, and they will be forgiven for any of the things they did that made them guilty."

New Testament example: *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. Luke 19:8-9*

Conviction – means God directs and encourages our spiritual progress by revealing our sins in contrast to the holiness and purity of Christ.

It deals with our behavior, not our status before God. The motivation is love, correction and protection.

Basic Focus:

Guilt focuses on the state of being condemned

Conviction focuses on behavior

Primary Concern:

Guilt deals with the sinner's loss of self-esteem and a wounded self-pride

Conviction deals with the loss of our moment by moment communication with God

Primary Fear

Guilt produces fear of punishment

Conviction produces a fear of the destructiveness of the act itself

Agent:

The agent of guilt is Satan

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4

"The accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. Revelation 12:10

The agent of conviction is the Holy Spirit

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:13 (NIV)

And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. John 16:8 (NASB)

Behavioral Results:

Guilt leads to depression and more sin or rebellion

Conviction leads to repentance, a change of mind, the turning from sin to Christ

Interpersonal result:

Guilt brings alienation, a feeling of shame that drives one away from the person who has been wronged

Conviction brings restoration, a desire to remedy the harm done to others

Personal Results:

Guilt ends in depression, bitterness, and self-pity

Conviction ends in comfort and the realization of forgiveness.

Zephaniah 3:7

I said to the city, 'Surely you will fear me and accept correction!' Then her dwelling would not be cut off, nor all my punishments come upon her.

Zephaniah 3:14-15

Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm.

For your reflection time on your own

A. How does fear of punishment influence your life?

B. What significant truth from God's word helps you with the fear of punishment?

C. In your confession of your sin, have you also asked "Is there anything I need to return? Anyone I need to repay? Or anyone I need to apologize to?"

D. Where do you need to grow in your understanding of conviction?

Coming up....

October 14th - The Shame Trap

The audio and notes for this and previous sessions of this series are available at www.sequimcommunitychurch.org in the Sunday Seminar section