

Living The Good Life, Part 5

- John has the unique perspective among the gospel writers of more than a half-century of “Spirit-filled living.” He portrays the teachings, ministry, actions and reactions of Jesus in a way that shows us how to “walk in the Spirit.” When John includes a story, he does so to teach a very definite spiritual truth. We need to pay special attention to the words and actions of Jesus in this gospel – they are “snapshots” of what a Spirit-filled man looks like!
- **John 8:3-11** And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being **convicted** by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man **condemned** thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I **condemn** thee: go, and sin no more.
- **VIDEO CLIP (?)**
- What was wrong with this scene?
 - The Jewish leaders were not trying to preserve holiness, they were trying to catch Jesus (the friend of sinners) between compassion and the Law. (They had tried unsuccessfully already – John 5:39-47, 6:32, 7:40)
 - The law required that BOTH guilty parties be stoned, not just the woman. (Lev. 20:10, Deut. 22:22) Where was the man involved?
 - By ancient law, the accusers had to cast the first stones. (Deut. 17:7) They already knew what to do; why bother Jesus about it?
- The Bible tells us that instead of passing judgment on the woman, Jesus passed judgment on the judges!
- He stooped down and began to write on the ground; just what we do not know, but we do know some other times this same hand wrote!

- On tables of stone, God wrote His law of righteousness
 - **Exodus 31:18** And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.
 - On a palace wall, God wrote His law of reckoning
 - **Daniel 5:5** In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.
 - On the ground, God wrote His law of redemption
 - **John 8:6** This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.
 - On the hearts of men, God writes His law of regeneration
 - **Hebrews 10:16-17** This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.
 - We don't know what Jesus wrote, but we do know that his words convicted the Pharisees. They slunk away from older to younger – probably because the older had a longer time to develop “hardening of the attitudes” and felt more guilty!
 - After her accusers left, Jesus completely released this woman from condemnation. His words were few, but they had heavy implications.
 - Forgiveness is free but not cheap – for Jesus to forgive this woman meant that He had to one day die for her sins!
 - TWO PRINCIPLES ARE OPERATING IN THIS STORY – CONDEMNATION AND CONVICTION.
- ### CONDEMNATION
- **John 3:17** For God sent not his Son into the world to **condemn** the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

- **Proverbs 17:15** He that justifieth the wicked, and he that **condemneth** the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.
- **Romans 14:22** Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that **condemneth** not himself in that thing which he alloweth.
- **1 John 3:20-21** For if our heart **condemn** us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart **condemn** us not, then have we confidence toward God.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CONDEMNATION?

- It comes from Satan, from others, or from ourselves.
- It pushes us away from God.
- It always leaves us feeling that there is no solution.
- It puts us in bondage to our fears and feelings.

CONVICTION

- **John 8:9** And they which heard it, being **CONVICTED** by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.
- This verse is the only place in the KJV that the word “convicted” is used (“elegcho” also translated “convinced, rebuked, reprov’d”)
- **John 16:8** And when he is come, he will **reprove** the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:
- **2 Timothy 4:2** Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove**, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.
- **Hebrews 12:5** And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art **rebuked** of him:
- **Revelation 3:19** As many as I love, I **rebuke** and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CONVICTION?

- It comes from God.
- It draws us closer to God.
- It always leaves us feeling that there is a way out.
- It allows us to walk in the freedom of the Spirit.
- There is nothing wrong with the Law of God! It was given to reveal sin (Rom. 3:20) and we must be convicted by it before we can be cleansed by God’s grace. Law and grace do not compete with each other; they complement each other. Nobody was ever saved by keeping the Law, but nobody was ever saved by grace who was not FIRST indicted by the Law! There must be conviction before there can be conversion.
- **But conviction is a far cry from condemnation!** The devil wants to dredge up all your past mistakes and keep you so focused on them that you can’t experience God’s forgiveness. He also would like to use us to continually condemn each other so that we can’t experience freedom in the church – and he often succeeds!
- **Romans 8:1-2** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
- **There is also another extreme!** Some people reject anything that makes them feel uncomfortable as “condemnation” when it is really “conviction.” What they don’t realize is that you must have one or the other operating in your life at all times! If you want to get rid of condemnation, you have to allow God’s conviction in your life.
- **How can I distinguish between condemnation and conviction?**
 - Examine the source
 - Examine the feeling
 - Examine the result
- John’s fifth snapshot of a Spirit-filled man: He knows the difference between conviction and condemnation!