

# Three Marks of New Covenant Life

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of living by the Spirit rather than the letter in the New Covenant life.*

**Duration:** 59:16

**Scripture:** Numbers 15:32-36, Matthew 5:19, Matthew 12:1-8, John 5:1-18, 2 Corinthians 3:6-7, 2 Corinthians 3:9

**Topics:** "New Covenant"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not turning back and instead, pressing forward to win the battle and conquer new territories. He encourages the audience to open their hearts to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to bring about transformation in their lives. The speaker challenges the audience to examine their priorities and not spend excessive amounts of money on themselves, but rather give to God and His work. He also highlights the urgency of reaching out to those who are perishing in their sins and not sitting idly by. The speaker emphasizes that God's blessing is seen in our transformation to become more like Jesus and urges the audience to be immediate in their reactions to temptation and evil, as a mark of a life led by the Spirit.

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## Transcript

Let's turn to 2nd Corinthians, Chapter 3. 2nd Corinthians, Chapter 3. There are some chapters in the New Testament that are almost devoted to highlighting the contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. One of them is Hebrews, Chapter 8, and the other is 2nd Corinthians, Chapter 3. And there are three words here, three contrasts, three contrasting words that I wanted to speak about. He speaks about the Old Covenant and the New Covenant in the first few verses.

And then he calls that ministry a ministry, verse 6, of the letter. And the New Covenant is a ministry of the Spirit. Then he calls it, in verse 7, a ministry of death.

And of course the opposite of that is a ministry of life. And then thirdly, he calls it a ministry, verse 9, of condemnation. Whereas the New Covenant is a ministry of righteousness.

So, if we look at these three words, or these three phrases, the letter or the spirit, the death or life, and condemnation or righteousness, we can have a check-up for ourselves. We don't want to check up anybody else, but we can have a check-up ourselves to see which of these covenants we are living under. There are many Christians who concentrate on the letter.

There are worldly Christians who concentrate on the letter, and there are legalistic Christians who concentrate on the letter. Now, we've always thought that legalists are opposite of the worldly people. I mean, if a legalist, we think, concentrates on the letter, and the worldly person doesn't bother, it's not true.

There are legalists, and there are worldly Christians, and they're both carnal. The spiritual person, he doesn't concentrate on the letter, he concentrates on the spirit. Now, this was not true in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, they had to go by the letter. You know, God gave them all types of rules. If you read particularly Leviticus, it's so complicated that no matter how many times I read it, I can't remember it.

And that's why God appointed a whole tribe called the tribe of Levi to devote themselves to the study of the Old Testament so that they could tell people what the law was in a particular situation. But in the New Covenant, it's not like that. You need to understand this, because if you don't understand it, we will become either legalists or worldly, depending on what your tendency is, or what your current tendency is.

There were people who were legalists ten years ago who are worldly today. They haven't become spiritual. They were according to the letter then, they're according to the letter today, but they don't see the difference because they think we're not legalists now.

We are more freed, yes, we're freed from legalism to become worldly. Both according to the letter. What do I mean? A legalist will say, Hey, it says so and so in this particular verse.

Why aren't you doing that? He's very careful to take one word, one letter, and check up, make sure that other people are obeying the letter of the law. And there are many like that. In fact, there are whole denominations that are built on following some particular letter.

There are denominations in Christianity that baptize only in the name of Jesus. That's quite amazing because Jesus clearly commanded to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But then they say in the Acts of the Apostles, it says they baptize in the name of Jesus.

And so they say the name, oh, therefore, it's like, you know, A equals B, B equals C. Therefore, A equals C. In algebra, you learn that. So, if A equals B and B equals C, then A must equal to C. So they say, well, if it says they baptize in the name of Jesus Christ, and Jesus had baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit must be Lord Jesus Christ. And since there are three names there, the Lord must be the Father, Jesus must be the Son, and Christ must be anointed the Holy Spirit.

Pretty clever, isn't it? Very mathematical, very much according to the letter, and totally wrong. This is the result of going according to the letter. Then there are people who say we must baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit means you dip the person three times.

And if you belong to one of those who are dipped only once, you go to their church, you've got to be dipped three times. There are so many rules like this in Christendom. There are churches where they won't let you break bread, even if you're born again, if you're not baptized in water.

At the same time, they'll say baptism is not necessary for salvation. We agree you're a child of God, but you can't break bread with us, even though you're a very spiritual man. But this carnal fellow who got baptized in water, he can break bread with us.

There are tremendous dangers when we go according to the letter. Now, there are equal dangers the other way. You know, a person can react against that and say, oh well, baptism is not necessary for salvation, so why do I need to get baptized? I mean, those things are all not essential.

So when you go along that line, you have a bunch of Christians who can all join together, even though they disagree on so many things, it's almost as though Jesus never taught all those things. And they also go according to the letter in the sense that if you tell them it's not good for a Christian to smoke cigarettes, they'll say, where does that say in the word of God? See, they're going by the letter. They are thoroughly worldly people.

They're also going by the letter because they say, where does it say you can't have a television in your home, or you can't watch a movie, or you can't smoke cigarettes, or you can't dance in a ballroom dancing. There's no limit. You know, there are a whole lot of people, in fact, in a lot of question-answer sessions that I have been in, particularly with young people, most questions, or a lot of questions from worldly people, are questions of worldly people who are asking questions according to the letter.

Can we wear this? Can we not wear this? Can we do this? Can we go here? Can we do that? Where does it say in the word? And if it's not said in the word, why can't we do it? Well, there are thousands of things which are not said in the word. It doesn't say in the word that you must have a bath every day. What do you get from that? There are all types of things.

You can get into very silly positions if you... God's word, Jesus said, if you want to understand it, you must understand it according to the spirit. Jesus was a great person to emphasize the spirit. I'll give you an example, a very good example of this.

Do you know what Jesus himself said? We know that Jesus preached only what he practiced. And we also know that he practiced what he preached. And he said in Matthew chapter 5 very clearly, whoever, Matthew 5 verse 39, the last part, whoever slaps you on one cheek, on the right cheek, turn the other to him.

What are you supposed to do? Whoever slaps you on one cheek, turn the other cheek to him. What did Jesus do when somebody slapped him? He said, I don't remember exactly what it is, where it is, but when he was standing before the high priest and they slapped him, he said, well, if I've done what's right, why do you slap me? Let me see, where is that? Yeah, verse 67. They spat on his face and they beat him with their fists and others slapped him and said, prophesy to us, you Christ, who is the one who hit you? Another passage, this is Matthew 27 verse 67.

And in a parallel passage it says, if I've spoken right, why do you slap me? He did not turn the other cheek and say, okay, hit this side also now. So he did not practice what he preached, right? And people who go by the letter will stumble there. Jesus followed the spirit of that.

The spirit of that is that I don't go fighting back with people. I have a spirit of not wanting to get my own back. You know, in Matthew 5 verse 39 he was saying, don't resist an evil person but whoever slaps you.

That means the whole principle there is not mechanically turning the left cheek when somebody slaps you on the right but the principle is, I don't resist him. Now, a person who doesn't understand the principle will go by the letter. And that's just one example.

We know that Jesus was one who said in Matthew 5 there is not a Matthew 5 verse verse 17 Don't think that I've come to abolish the law. I didn't come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Because not even the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the law until all is accomplished.

Whoever therefore cancels one of the least of these commandments Now this is one of the great verses of legalism. Whoever cancels one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. Now the question is did Jesus fulfill the law according to the letter? We know that he did work on the Sabbath day and that's what the Pharisees criticized him for.

Because their definition of work was you can't pluck grain and you can't heal it. Of course, plucking grain is work. There's no doubt about it.

And healing a man and telling him to carry his bed on the Sabbath day John chapter 5 that's work. Do you know that in the Old Testament is it number 16 or somewhere where it says a man went out to pick up sticks not to light a fire just to pick it up to light a fire the next day. Because you're not supposed to light a fire on the Sabbath day.

But he went to pick up sticks and on the Sabbath day they brought him to Moses Moses said well I don't know what to do let me ask God God said kill him. Stole him to death. But here's another guy in John chapter 5 who's carrying a bed not just sticks a whole bed on the Sabbath day and they came to him and said who in the world told you to carry this bed? He said the person who healed me told me to get up and take my bed and walk.

And that was Jesus. Now what's heavier to carry some sticks or to carry a bed? Jesus didn't go by the letter. There was an Old Testament law I think it's in Deuteronomy 23 which says the hire of a prostitute must never be brought into the house of God.

That means a prostitute has got no right to pay her tithe.

But we read of one prostitute who not only took her tithe but took all the money she saved and bought a bottle of perfume with it and poured it we read in Luke chapter 7 Luke chapter 7 in the house of Simeon or Simon the Pharisee she stood and poured out the perfume there we read in verse 37 and anointed his Jesus' feet with her hair see they didn't sit at tables it would be very difficult to anoint somebody's feet like the way we eat today you know we all sit with our legs under the table how could anybody anoint our feet unless they crawl under the table but in those days as far as I understand they didn't sit at tables they used to lean back with their legs behind them everybody sitting around and leaning down and the feet were behind and it was very easy for someone to wash your feet

or wipe your feet and that's what this woman did but she did it with the hire of a harlot which is forbidden yeah Jesus is the house of God he was the tabernacle of God on earth and here was this woman bringing this Jesus said she's forgiven much said to the woman your faith has saved you go in peace but Simon the Pharisee couldn't understand that he knew the letters the scripture very well he said no no no no no this man can't be a prophet if he lets this woman go the same thing with the woman caught in adultery the law of Moses is very clear that the woman must be killed and see how very wonderfully Jesus got out of it by saying okay go ahead and kill her but whoever is without sin throw the first stone and the interesting thing is there was one person there without sin who could throw

the stone it's not that there was nobody there was one person that was Jesus himself he could have picked up a stone and thrown it to her and said I'm going to fulfill Moses law sorry about it Moses law is very clear but he never did it he said has no one condemned you woman no one neither do I condemn you now if you go strictly by the law of Moses Jesus didn't fulfill it Jesus showed us that it's the spirit he said God didn't make the Sabbath on the 6th day and then said hey we got to get somebody to keep the Sabbath let's make man on the 7th day no he said man was made on the 6th day and then God made a Sabbath for man everything God made was for man the laws were made for man not to make life miserable for man but to make life better and if we understand that we will never use God's

word as a stick to beat other people with or to judge other people or condemn them neither will we go to the other extreme like the worldly people and for everything's sake when does it say that in the word when does it say I can't do this when does it say I can't do that well if you're in the Old Testament you could ask the Levites when does it say that and if it's not in the word you could do it but in the New Testament there are thousands of things which we don't do as Christians which are not written in God's word why don't we do it because the spirit does not permit me you know that's how you're supposed to live in the Old Testament because they didn't have the Holy Spirit you know the difference that comes in our life when we have the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit tells us Jesus said

don't live by the letter don't always look for a verse can I do that or can't do that that's a very low level to live in in the beginning when we are babies I suppose you've got to live like that because you know all children are under the law we don't treat our little children as under grace we punish them we promise rewards for them that's the method of the law and when we are spiritual babies that's how we are but God wants us to grow up where our decisions are made not on the basis of some letter here or there but what does the spirit prompt me what does the spirit prompt me to do and we don't have to you know when you go according to the letter one characteristic of the letter is everybody is the same all over Israel everybody kept the Sabbath day same time all over the country they

all if God's word says they got to dress in a particular way they'd all dress in the same way there was no change every priest had to dress the same way and the law is concerning food there was a law that in the Old Testament that you can't eat pork nobody in Israel ate pork it was uniform throughout but in the New Testament it's not like that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking the kingdom of God is not clothing or how we dress or what we eat or whatever house you live in and yet you know people who are go according to the letter can look at a person's house and say why does he live in a grand house like that and I would ask them which verse is that when you go according to the spirit you don't judge people you judge yourself and you don't judge yourself by what's written in

the in some sentence we judge ourselves by what the spirit says see think of this great shall I call it a controversy or argument and discussion there is among a lot of Christians about whether sisters should wear ornaments or whether sisters should cover their heads in a meeting now there are two choices you can go by the letter or you can go by the spirit you can take a verse and go by the letter and a lot of churches that do that but Jesus came to teach us the spirit when you read words like that you've got to understand the spirit of it what does the spirit of Christ within me say to do that or not do that and I decide for myself and you decide for yourself and if you are following the prompting of the Holy Spirit to take an action it will produce fruit in your life to sanctification

you will become a more spiritual person and if I obey the prompting of the spirit in my life over a period of time I will become a more spiritual person see every step of obedience will definitely make us more

spiritual not if you follow the letter but if you follow the spirit see a lot of people who follow the letter are often judging other people how can they do that when I don't do that and their whole life becomes miserable I'm a very happy man because I don't do many things I don't judge anybody else who does those things I wouldn't even judge a person who had a Christmas tree in his house or had a star outside his house on Christmas day it wouldn't disturb me one bit and if he invited me to a house and told me to take a gift from that Christmas tree I'd take it and say thank you and

go home I would have no problem at all but I wouldn't have it myself because I have a conviction on it so one mark of your being a legalist is that you take a stand for something which you think you find in scripture and then you're always judging other people why aren't they doing it, why aren't they doing it, why aren't they doing it I remember once one brother who this is in the early days in one of our other churches he said told me about that person was watching television and the other person was and I said brother I think you better get television yourself you seem to be in terrific unrest over this matter if you're in the spirit you're not in unrest you cannot be in unrest the spirit of the Lord brings peace and rest you can very easily find out whether you live according to the

letter or according to the spirit so that doesn't mean that we do what we like that's the other alternative where you don't live according to the letter you don't live according to the Holy Spirit you just do what you like you live according to your reason that's what a lot of people do what's wrong with doing this what's wrong with wearing this what's wrong with going there I say nothing but if you ask me why don't I do it I say because the spirit doesn't prompt me that I can glorify God by doing that or by wearing that or by going there that's the reason why I do it not because of some letter here no it's because the Holy Spirit doesn't prompt me to say that's what Jesus would do and so I don't do it but at the same time I don't judge other people because I say that's their business

it's between them and God so remember that everything we do the Bible says whatever you do 1 Corinthians 10:31 we must do for the glory of God whether we eat or drink so any decision that you take to go somewhere to eat something to wear something I mean if it is for the glory of God it will bless you if it's not if you go by reason, what's wrong with this you're living according to the letter you must make a decision at least today that you will not live by the letter anymore but you live by the Spirit now don't think that living by the Spirit is going to bring you to a lower level of the Christian life it's going to bring you to a much higher level in your heart now you may think that the person who wears white clothes all the time is more spiritual than the person who wears colored

clothes that's a crazy idea which people who live according to the letter have because it's nowhere in the Bible that it says that and I think if we are sensible I understand that Jesus would have dressed just like everybody else dressed and that's all we are to do, that's the spirit of it it's not a question of whether Jesus wore white or whether he had long hair or whether he had a beard, that's not what I go about he dressed and conducted himself just like most other people around him so that he wouldn't look odd and if you dress in a particular way that you don't look odd you are following Jesus it's true but if that is your motive but if your motive is to dress a little more simply to show you are very spiritual or to dress more godly to show that you are somebody special that's

going by the letter that's living according to the world, legalist or worldly so keep that in mind, the letter or the spirit is the one big contrast between law and the new covenant what's the second word the second word we saw was death and life in 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians 3 it speaks about a ministry of death he says the letter kills but the spirit gives life the old covenant obedience under the old covenant was a matter of

keeping certain rules and regulations it made people very gloomy death you know you could say that I haven't done it on the outside but it brought spiritual death on the inside for example there was no law in the old testament which said that you can't hate anybody there was no law in the ten commandments I mean hatred is such a bad thing you and I know that but

there's no law in the ten commandments which say you shouldn't hate anybody isn't that interesting that god forgot to put it there he didn't forget it he knew that nobody could keep it what's the use of giving a law which nobody can keep I mean if you have qualifying in the kindergarten sports race you say well we're going to have a hundred meters race and only those will qualify who run 100 meters in 11 seconds or something which child is going to qualify nobody will qualify it's crazy to tell people in the old testament you shouldn't hate anybody hatred is death you couldn't do it because they didn't have the spirit it's just the spirit brings life so that's another way by which we know whether we are under the old covenant that we have a lot of things inside outside against people but

we don't show it on the outside that is one of the clearest marks that you are under law even if you have heard about the new covenant in CFC for 30 years I'm sorry to disappoint you but that's where you are and that's where you've been living for 30 years and that's why your life is so miserable but as a person who's got life he gets rid of it immediately he doesn't get rid of only the things that other people can see he gets rid of things because they harm him I mean if a thorn gets into my foot I'm not bothered whether you see it or not what does it matter to me whether you see it or not it's hurting me and I'm going to pull it out and if I hate somebody it's like a thorn inside me why do I care whether you see it or not see that's you've heard me use the illustration of sin being

like leprosy in the old testament there were laws concerning leprosy and cleansing from leprosy in Leviticus 14 it's a clear picture of cleansing from sin you read Leviticus 14 sometimes a very interesting chapter how the leper would have to put the blood on his ear, thumb and foot from head to foot, cleansed by the blood and then this oil symbolizing being anointed by the holy spirit and the oil being poured on his head symbolizing the baptism in the holy spirit very interesting, a leper was a picture of a sinner in the old testament and leprosy is throughout the old testament is a picture of sin and do you know what is one of the primary characteristics of leprosy that is one of the primary characteristics of sin also the loss of sensation you don't feel things in fact that's how they

test for leprosy now our feeling is such that even if you if somebody touches the with a feather you feel it, a feather our skin is so sensitive that's how it should be but when a person with leprosy loses sensation in his feet there are actual cases of rats coming and biting off their toes at night they don't know about it a poor man with leprosy just doesn't know about it, he wakes up in the morning and he finds blood all over and one toe missing, because he had no sensation the rat didn't do that in one second, it ate and ate and ate and ate and the leper is blissfully asleep because he didn't feel anything do you feel sorry for him?

I feel more sorry for the Christians who got things that the devil is eating away in their life and they don't feel anything they are losing things more serious than a toe but they don't feel it because death because they have not been careful about the inner life a man under the old covenant lives in death because he is careless about his inner life a man who responds to the spirit is careful about his inner life because his spirit you know prompts him to hey pull that thorn out get rid of that wrong attitude and he obeys and he comes to life so if you we are checking up on ourselves now, remember we are not checking on anybody else so if you are the type of person who is always responding to the spirit immediately hey I have got to pull that out and that's a wrong attitude to that

person that was a little good of me to say that word to that person let me apologize to that person when you go and apologize to somebody for a rude word that you spoke you are pulling something out a thorn you said something right there is a spirit of death and a spirit of life you know you can do the right thing with the spirit of death or you can do it with the spirit of life when people come to me and say thank you for something or write to me and say thank you for something it's very easy I am sure you can find that out too whether that person is doing it because he heard in the meeting he must be thankful law number 897 be thankful thank you very much or whether the person has got a spirit of gratitude, it's very easy to find out and I have seen a lot of people who keep the letter

they want to do it right on the outside but they haven't got it right in their hard attitude to that person on the inside you kept the letter but it's dead they go together the letter kills well, when I see that I say ok thank you but I always wonder when will this poor chap get light that he hasn't obeyed God at all he just kept a letter which said express your thanks to people have you done that? do you do that? you see if we don't get light on these things we're living under an old covenant for many years I sought the Lord to see what is the mark of God's blessing upon a person's life you know, a lot of people say today the mark of God's blessing is that he makes you prosperous or he makes you healthy or children get good jobs or some stupid thing like that because if that was the mark

of God's blessing we have to admit that God's blessed millions of atheists and non-Christians thousand times more than he's blessed the poor Christians in the villages of Tamil Nadu that's a crazy stupid understanding preached by television evangelists who've never been to the villages of South India we can live in a world of delusion when we live in a city and earn pots of money and have never seen how other believers live in abject poverty we can spin all types of theories in our head and they'll be all wrong no, the mark of God's blessing is that we become more like Jesus there is no greater blessing God can give me than to make me more like Christ and in order to do that he has to give me light on the areas of my life where I'm unlike Christ not according to the letter but according

to the spirit there was no death in Jesus, it was all life and when I see something in my life which hey, that was not that word I spoke was not according to the spirit of Christ that comment I made or the way I did that or it could be selfishness maybe we are thoughtless when we sit at the dining table and other people around the table and we're not thoughtful about their needs we only think about how we can stuff ourselves nothing sinful but it can be unchrist-like, do you know there are a lot of things which the world does not consider sinful, can be pretty unchrist-like but a person who is living according to the spirit, the spirit will tell him inside hey, that's not proper, there's no verse anywhere but it's not according to the spirit of life you know what it says in Romans 8 verse

2 the law of the spirit which is equal to life in Christ Jesus it's a great verse the law of Moses was ten commandments but the law of the spirit Romans 8 2 is life in Christ Jesus it's not a law, it's not rules it's a life that prompts me it's like, you know the man with leprosy on his feet and a thorn pokes him, he doesn't even know it and do you know that people with leprosy, one of the things they have to be taught is every night before you go to bed, look at your feet to see if any thorns or nails have got inside and if any thorns or nails have got inside your foot, my brother pull them out do we have to give such instructions to anybody here? sit at night and check up whether any thorns got into your foot during the day no because if a thorn got into your foot in the morning, you'd

pull it out within one minute you wouldn't even walk five minutes with a thorn in your foot, you don't need a law law saying when you go to bed at night please check your feet, you don't need that law because

you've got life in your foot that poor man doesn't have life in his foot, he's got death in his foot, so he needs a law he needs a law another law which says don't put your hand on a hot plate that's another law but you don't need a law which says don't put your foot hand on a hot plate because you've got life in your hands where there is life, there's no need of a law you don't need a law which says don't put spoiled food into your mouth because you've got life in your palate, in your taste buds but a person who's lost all taste has got to be told be careful about what you eat

because that food may be spoiled and your taste buds are all gone, you won't even know it's spoiled but if you get bad food into your tongue what do you do, you spit it out immediately it's life life is immediate, spontaneous you touch a hot plate, you react immediately you don't even think about it it's immediate, we can't say a living person will never touch a hot plate but he reacts immediately we can't say a Christian will never be tempted to lust but his reaction is immediate he turns his head away I mean if a person keeps on looking at it for 5 minutes and then turns away, it's like a man who puts his hand on a hot plate for 5 minutes and then, oh, I'm supposed to take it off okay, that guy's got leprosy he's in debt a person who's got life is immediate, life's reaction is always

immediate, you see a snake, you react immediately, you see something evil a reaction is immediate that's the mark of life, the spirit brings life you don't need laws that's why the bible says, if you're led by the spirit you're not under the law wonderful version, Galatians 5 it's like saying, if you've got sensation in your feet, you don't need the law brother which says, check up your feet at night there are Christians who got the very good habit before they go to bed at night just like the lepers to check what did I do something wrong this day start from the morning did I shout at my wife did I shout at somebody did I yell at somebody on the road did I cheat someone these are the lepers it's good, I'm not saying it's bad it's good to pull out the thorns and the nails from your foot

before you go to bed, because it'll be worse but a person who's got life doesn't do that at night as soon as he does something wrong, life says, hey don't wait till the night to pull out the thorns immediately you thought you were very spiritual because you repented every night before you go to bed aha that's the lepers if you had life, you would do it immediately you would apologize as soon as you're aware that's wrong you'd pull out the thorn because there's life the more sensation you have the more you feel pain the less sensation you have the less you feel so it all depends on whether you concentrate on the inner life or not but you allow the spirit to make you sensitive to anything un-Christ-like in your behavior, conduct and when you do something which you hear in the church like

learn to be thankful ok, ah brother, thank you, sister, thank you you ask yourself, was that from my heart or was I just keeping a letter if you ask these questions you'll get light on yourself otherwise your attitude to someone can never change and you can follow the letter I know there are many people in CFC who hear something good here and then go and do it and they think they're spiritual not a million miles from spirituality then the third word we saw in 2nd Corinthians 3 was condemnation and righteousness see, anything that makes you feel condemned definitely, that's the law if you heard a message that made you feel condemned, either the person preaching it was preaching under the law or you understood it in the spirit of the law, one of the two either from the pulpit it came in the

spirit of the law, or the pulpit it came in the spirit of Christ, but you received it in the spirit of the law you know the new testament, the words of Jesus are written in the spirit of Christ, but there are people who take even the words of Jesus and make a law out of it so why can't I get into condemnation and bring other people into condemnation, so you can have the most spiritual preacher, Jesus preaching the most

spiritual message and some guy gets into condemnation because he's got the spirit of the law in him but if you find, if you keep this rule before you, anything that brings me into condemnation is of the law I'll give you some examples of it, because you may not realize it you know, when you're prompted to do something by making you feel guilty that's one of the classic

techniques of preachers and in the days when I didn't have light and I was a legalist myself I did it myself, I'm ashamed of it, I wouldn't do it now we all grow up or should grow up for example why do you spend so much money on yourself and give nothing to God oh dear, I better give something to God why? you suddenly felt, because you got a message, somebody hit you hard and said, why in the world are you spending so much money on yourself and not giving anything to God and you felt guilty, I tell you, God doesn't want your money he doesn't want you to do something out of a sense of guilt or thousands are perishing in North India why are you just sitting there on your chairs I better where in the world do you see Jesus talking like that do you know the number of missionaries who have

gone out into many places because they were prompted by guilt, why are you sitting there doing nothing when so many people are perishing in their sins this is making people feel guilty and making them act, it's a very powerful technique, you know most people are like sheep and they are weak and you can get a powerful soul, power preacher who can make people feel guilty about this and guilty about that and guilty about the other thing why aren't you coming to help in CFC okay, next they will all be there or at least 20% will be there because they felt guilty why aren't you coming for the prayer meeting I better go for the prayer meeting not because they have got any interest in prayer or believe that God answers prayer, they felt guilty when they heard that message condemnation is the

ministry of condemnation if you don't do this, God will punish you and we get scared and do it it's all condemnation Jesus never said like that he never preached like that he showed the way of life he said blessed are the poor in spirit there is the kingdom of heaven he didn't say come on, be poor in spirit otherwise you will miss the kingdom, it wasn't like that there was a completely different spirit compared to the old testament thou shalt, thou shalt not don't do this, do this, if you do this you will die if you do this you will be punished you will be killed, you will be stoned no, it was so different and the more we, how shall we get this spirit the contrast of condemnation the ministry of condemnation is verse 9 the opposite of that is the ministry of righteousness now even

righteousness a lot of people don't understand it there is a righteousness of the law Paul said I don't want it no thank you it's like rotten food when I've got good fresh food here why do I want the rotten food, he said I don't want that I want the righteousness that comes from God and that comes by the Holy Spirit by life in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus anything that makes you feel you are good for nothing you are useless whether your father told you that or your mother told you that or some preacher told you that it is a lie even if you are not converted you are not worthless because God created you and you've got some hope of becoming a child of God God is interested in you even if you have made a mess of your life you are not worthless all

animals and creatures those are worthless that's why you can kill lambs and cows and sheep and chicken and all and eat them, they are worthless you are not like that you are worth something what about a person who has made a mess of his life can we kill him and eat him because he is good for nothing no he is valuable you can't kill him and eat him unconverted people can we kill them and eat them they are valuable before God God loved those unconverted people so much that he gave his son to die for them you mean to say they are not valuable which cow or horse did God send his son to die for remember that

human beings are valuable and don't let anyone ever tell you that you are good for nothing you are useless and you will never amount to anything it's all a lot of rubbish don't ever tell

your children that even if they do things wrong a hundred times forgive them, be patient with them, correct them correct them, correct them but don't ever tell them that they are good for nothing they are useless or they will never make it or they will never encourage them encourage them, if they don't get good marks in school keep encouraging them saying you can make it, you can make it and don't ever if you are a parent, don't ever compare your children with one another and say this one is good and that one is bad that's not for you to judge God will judge I've been in homes where mothers and fathers will say Brother Zach, our children are all good but this fellow not much hope for him and I always say well I think I've got more hope for him because I read in the Bible that God picks up

the underdog and God picks up the prodigal son and God picks up the murderer called Paul as chief of sinners God picked me and others God's ways are not your ways I mean the other person may get more marks in school and get a better job, but you may find ultimately in heaven this guy may be way ahead of him and the younger will serve the elder that's God's way, from Old Testament right through I praise God for that He has chosen the weak and the foolish and those whom the world considers nothing, to bring to naught all those whom the world considers very important that's what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 so that no flesh can boast in his presence so don't let anyone make you feel condemned, that is an old covenant ministry, a preaching that makes you feel, oh you're good for

nothing you'll never amount to anything why haven't you come up to this level well, little by little he's changing me, I'm not the same as I was last year and it's slow going, but I know it's taking place, something's happening so remember this, the new covenant is a ministry of encouragement God is called the God of encouragement in the New Testament God of encouragement and if we are following this God we will become like him we will never say things to discourage people always to encourage people condemnation you know self condemnation discouragement oh I failed a thousand times it doesn't matter, God can still help you while there's life there's hope, so remember this anything that brings condemnation or discouragement is of the old covenant the old covenant, they were all gloomy and

long faced and sad they were just feeling condemned all the time and that's why I say a Christian should never be long faced and gloomy in a bad mood depressed, I don't believe that I believe a Christian should always be cheerful and happy in his heart I mean, there may be a lot of pressures he's going through a lot of things he can't understand and maybe a lot of difficulties at home but he says, Lord, that's not everything it says rejoice in the Lord not in your circumstances if it said rejoice in your circumstances always, that would be impossible impossible for me but it doesn't say rejoice in your circumstances always some of our circumstances are not too good but rejoice in the Lord always he never changes circumstances change don't rejoice in your feelings feelings come and

feelings go and feelings are deceiving we don't rejoice in our circumstances we don't rejoice in our feelings because all these things fluctuate we don't rejoice because we've got good people around us or a good church some of those good people may turn to be bad people after some time but we rejoice in the Lord always because he never changes never this is the new covenant life this is what righteousness is righteousness is the life of Christ no condemnation at all no matter what happens around me no matter how many times I fail I don't want to fail but maybe I do I'm not going to get discouraged now you try living this life and say Holy Spirit of God I want to live this life I heard of tonight I want to be a blessing wherever I go and earnestly say Lord I'll never want to go back to

that old life again no burn the bridges behind you you cross a river and you burn that bridge saying no I can't go back I have to go forward that's how we're supposed to live we're not going to go back it's like I heard of one of these Spanish admirals way back in the 1400s or something this queen sent him to conquer the Americas or what they thought was India and they went there and landed and when he landed he set fire to all the boats on which they came from Spain you can't go back unless you win here win the battle here and conquer this country and then you'll have then you can get the timber and make boats and go back if you don't win, that's too bad but as long as the boats are there, you can always run back and go back home, there is no going back there's no turning back I've got

to win, I've got to enter this new covenant yeah, let's pray let's just bow our heads for a moment and say Lord I want to believe there's hope for me I can be a different person from what I have been I believe I can be changed I believe that your spirit can change me I want to open my being Lord to your Holy Spirit I want the Holy Spirit to come and flood my heart there's no other way you can't produce it by determination it doesn't say determination produces life the spirit gives life so don't think that some determination or decision you take is going to make it but if you open yourself to the Holy Spirit and keep on opening I want to encourage you in the coming days keep your heart open and hungry for the power of the Holy Spirit that will change your life and seek God more and more

for the power of the Holy Spirit, whenever you've got a little time let that cry go out from your heart Lord fill me with your spirit bring me to a new level of life in the spirit Thank you Father, in Jesus name Amen

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