

Helping Your Counselee to Confess But Not Obsess Over Their Sin

Overcoming Low-Grade Condemnation

**I. Start By Examining
and Strengthening
Their Spiritual “Core”**

Ephesians 6:14-15

“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.”

- I have peace with God now
- I know I'm a child of God
- I know that I have no shame, no condemnation, and no record of my sin that will ever be brought against me...
- Because all of my sins – past, present, and future – have been nailed to the cross they no longer define me, haunt me, or condemn me before a holy God!

Romans 5:1-2

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
2 Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into **this grace in which we stand...**”

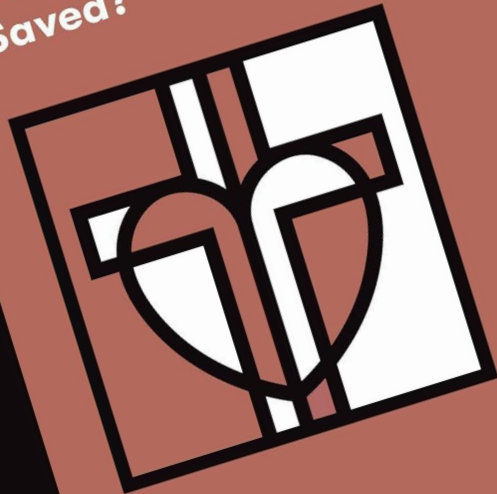
Colossians 3:3-4

“For you have died, and
**your life is hidden
with Christ in God.**

⁴ When Christ who is your life appears,
then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

IX 9Marks

How Can I Be Sure I'm Saved?



**Jeremy
Pierre**

Church Questions

II. Help Them to Distinguish Between Conviction and Condemnation

A. The Spirit's Conviction of Sin Is One of the Best Indicators of Being Born Again

“The Bible nowhere teaches that once we have been savingly united with Christ, we will find grievous sins to be a thing of the past. On the contrary, it is our regenerate state that has more deeply sensitized us to the impropriety of our sins. **Our sins feel far more sinful after we have become believers than before.** And it’s not only our felt perception of our sinfulness; we do indeed continue to sin after becoming believers. Sometimes we sin big sins.”

Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*, p. 90-91

Romans 5:20

“Where sin increased,
grace abounded
all the more.”

“As long as I am stricken with the guilt of my sins, I will be captive to them, and will often find myself re-committing the very sins about which I feel most guilty. The Devil is well aware of this fact; **he knows that if he can keep me tormented by sin’s guilt, he can dominate me with sin’s power.**

The gospel, however, stays sin at this root point and thereby nullifies sin’s power over me. The forgiveness of God, made known to me through the gospel, **liberates me from sin’s power because it liberates me first from its guilt;** and preaching such forgiveness to myself is a practical way of putting the gospel into operation as a nullifier of sin’s power in my life.”

Milton Vincent, *The Gospel Primer*, p. 19

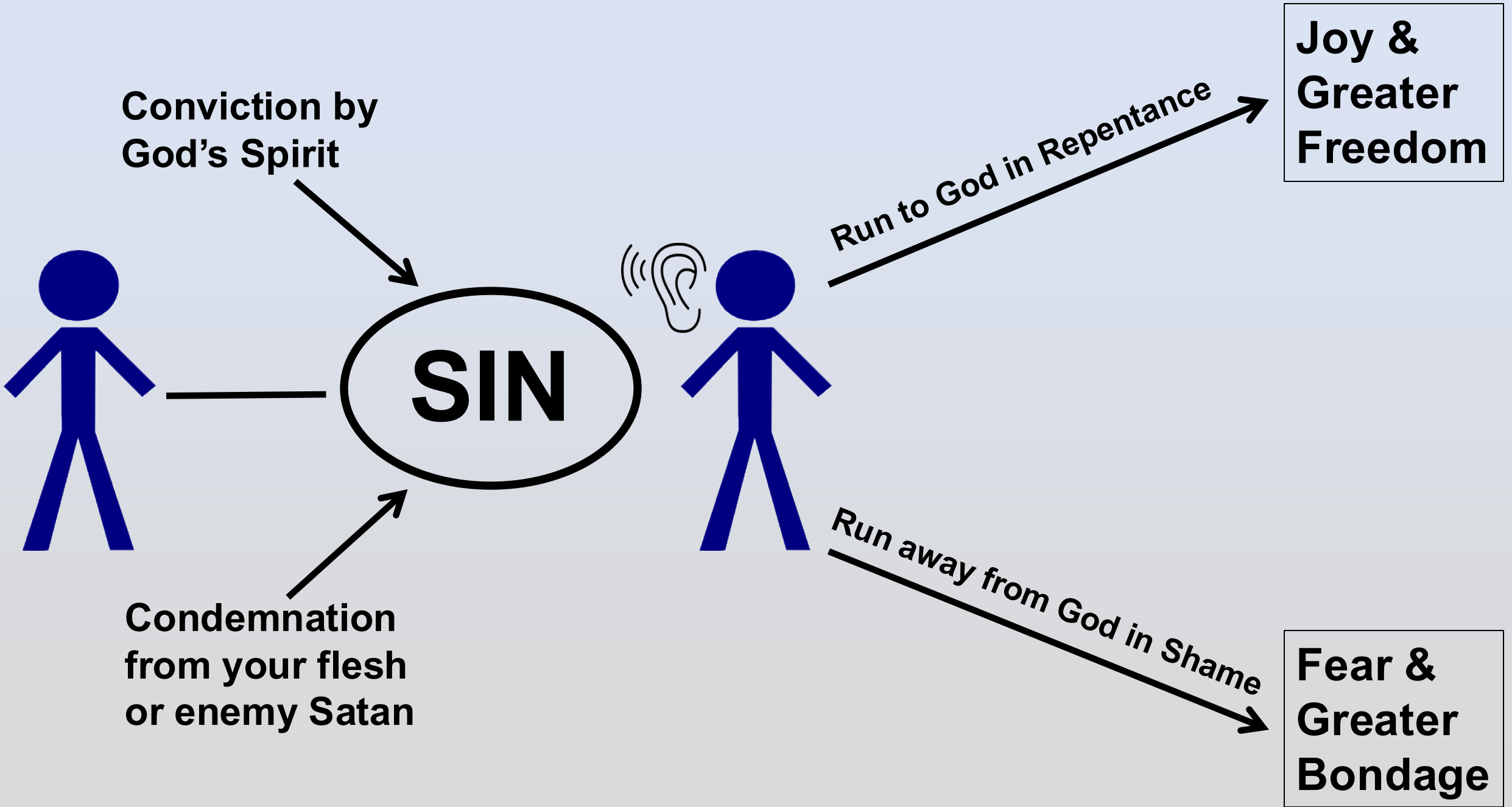
Milton Vincent



A
**Gospel
Primer**
for Christians

Learning to See the
Glories of God's Love

**B. The Spirit's Conviction
Was Designed to Drive
You Back to Your Savior**



Hebrews 4:14-16

“Since then we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then

with confidence

draw near

to the throne of grace,

that we may

receive mercy and find grace to help

in time of need.”

Throne of Grace

‘Help’ frapping

**cables that undergird a ship and keep it
from falling apart**

C. The Spirit's Conviction is Specific and Focused

Remember that the devil loves to impose a “cloud of unspecified guilt feeling... by which he lures us into despair.” Demand “details, please.”

**C.S. Lewis Letters to Mary, July 21, 1958,
in *Kilby Letters*, p. 74-75**

III. Help Them to Distinguish Between Stumbling and Wallowing

Romans 7:24-25

“Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!...”

“Sheep and swine both end up in the mire. Yet the essential difference in their two natures is quite visible from the reaction each has to its fallen condition. While sheep do stray and stumble into the mire, they quickly loathe the situation and struggle to get free. **They may be dirty, but they desire to be clean. They may be stuck, but they bleat for their shepherd to come and save them out of the muck.** But swine, in keeping with their nature, wallow in the muck, content to stay there all day...authentic Christians can and do fall under temptation and into the mire of sin...The apostle Paul prepares us for this: ‘Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness’ (Galatians 6:1).”

John Esnor, *The Great Work of the Gospel*, pp. 126-127

IV. Show Them Where to Fix Their Eyes

Hebrews 12:1-3

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² **looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ **Consider Him** who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”

**Take ten looks
at Christ
for every one look
at ourselves.**

“There are some Christians who are guilty of continually putting their souls on a plate and dissecting them...so that they stay depressed because **they stay so preoccupied with themselves instead of occupied with Christ...** There is only one way to get rid of self, and that is that you should become so absorbed in someone or something else that you have no time to think about yourself. Thank God, the Spirit of God makes that possible...But why are [so many Christians] morbidly preoccupied with themselves? **The answer is that they are not sufficiently occupied with Him.** It is our failure to know Him and His ways as we should know them – that is the real trouble. If we only spent more of our time looking at Him we should soon forget ourselves.”

SCRUPULOSITY

GOSPEL PEACE FOR
MORAL OBSESSION

PERFECTIONISM

PURSUING
EXCELLENCE
WITH WISDOM

31-DAY DEVOTIONALS FOR LIFE

LOU PRIOLO

"Astute, pastorally sensitive, and deeply searching"

— SINCLAIR FERGUSON



RELIEF FROM THE BURDEN OF INTROSPECTION

JARED MELLINGER

V. Show Them How to Turn Regret into Praise

1 Timothy 1:17

“To the King of the ages,
immortal, invisible, the only God,
be honor and glory forever and ever.
Amen.”

**“My memory is nearly gone,
but I remember two things:
that I am a
great sinner,
and Christ is a
great Savior!”**

John Newton, blind and on his deathbed at 82 yrs. old