

The Value of a Good Conscience

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Introduction: We often neglect those things that are not obviously seen.

- A. While you can see a man, you cannot see his heart.
 - 1. What men cannot do God can! **(1 Sam 16:7)**
 - 2. This is precisely why God gives great warnings to us about keeping our hearts pure. **(Josh 22:5; 1 Kings 8:61, 9:4-5)**
 - 3. This is a very difficult task! We need to be very serious about it. **(Prov 4:23; Jer 17:9-10)**
- B. One of the functions of our hearts is the conscience.
 - 1. What is a conscience? "συνείδησις suneidesis {soon-i'-day-sis} ≠ AV - conscience 32; 32 ≠ 1) the consciousness of anything 2) the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending one, condemning the other.
 - 2. The conscience is a judge based upon previous training and experience. **(Rom 2:14-15)**
 - a. Often a good conscience will make you feel bad by just thinking of doing something!
 - b. A conscience can be trained in a wrong way. You may do bad and feel good or do that which is not sin and feel bad! **(Acts 23:1, 26:9; 1 Cor 8:7)**
 - c. A weak conscience is one that has been improperly trained.
 - 3. The conscience is a great gift from God that we must carefully protect!

I. The elements of a good conscience

- A. The first step is a consciousness of God. **(Rom 1:20-22, 28)**
 - 1. There is an innate moral element within man that seeks to please God.
 - 2. Every man who has ever lived has the opportunity to pursue this!
- B. We then must have the revelation of God in His word. **(Jn 16:8-13)**
 - 1. Here is where we have a true knowledge of what sin is. **(Rom 3:23)**
 - 2. How we respond to His word will determine the kind of conscience we will have!
- C. We then find the forgiveness of God! **(Heb 9:9, 14; 10:22)**
 - 1. This is the great blessing of those in Christ. When we are forgiven then we can let go of our guilt!
 - 2. We must daily seek this forgiveness.
- D. After obtaining a good conscience we must keep it. **(1 Tim 1:19)**

II. The power of a good conscience

- A. You can know that you have acted properly. **(Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 1:12)**
 - 1. There is a great strength in looking at others and knowing you have done what was best before them! **(Acts 23:1)**
 - 2. There are limitations to this confidence. We must always seek out to test our confidence by God's word. **(1 Cor 4:3-4)**
- B. You can be strong in adversity. **(1 Pt 2:19; 3:16)**
 - 1. What is the source of our strength in these times? We can know that God is with us! **(1 Pt 3:12-14)**

2. In times of grief we can take great comfort in knowing the great God whom we serve will not forsake us.
3. What about those who do not have a good conscience? Their religion is a terror and a burden to them. **(Prov 28:1)**

III. How to keep a good conscience

A. Be willing to do anything to keep it. (Acts 24:16)

1. The word "exercise" means: "take pains, labor, strive. Old word in Homer to work as raw materials, to adorn by art, then to drill. Our word ascetic comes from this root, one who seeks to gain piety by rules and severe hardship." - Robertson's Word Pictures.
2. Notice the time element: "always." A good conscience is often lost by the "small" compromises!
3. Please understand that the world and also weak Christians will not understand you! They will indeed think your behavior is strange. **(1 Pt 4:4)**

B. By always seeking to know the will of God. (1 Tim 1:5)

1. Too many of us become too busy for daily meditation upon God's word.
2. Are you willing to test all things by His word? **(1 Thess 5:21)**

C. By being urgent to seek forgiveness for our sins. (1 Jn 1:7-9)

1. We should also quickly seek the forgiveness of men as well. **(Mt 5:23-25)**
2. Let us always have the kind of tender heart that will admit wrong and repent!

D. By hating and avoiding all sin. (Heb 1:5)

1. How does a false teacher become the way that he is? **(1 Tim 4:1-2)**
2. This is why we must watch our influence with other Christians! **(1 Cor 8:7, 10-12)**
3. We must even work to consider the conscious of an unbeliever! **(1 Cor 10:25-29)**

E. By learning to worship.

1. What do you think of when approaching God in prayer? The Lord's supper? Singing? Bible Study?
2. Proper worship tests the heart! **(1 Cor 14:24-25)**
3. Many people try to stay busy and avoid their consciences. These people do not like to be alone with God! This is why a neglect of worship will lead to an indifferent hardness.

F. Consider our actions in maintaining a good conscience in these realms:

1. Our entertainment - TV, Movies, Internet...
2. Our clothing - School, Sports, Swimming...
3. Our Morality - Dating, Pornography, truthfulness...
4. When we look back upon our lives and see a trend downward, then we have failed to protect our hearts.

Conclusion: Do you want a good conscience?

A. Seek the forgiveness of God. (1 Pt 3:21)

B. Be willing to pay the price over time! Even a hard heart can become tender again!

C. There is however a point of no return! Be urgent today!