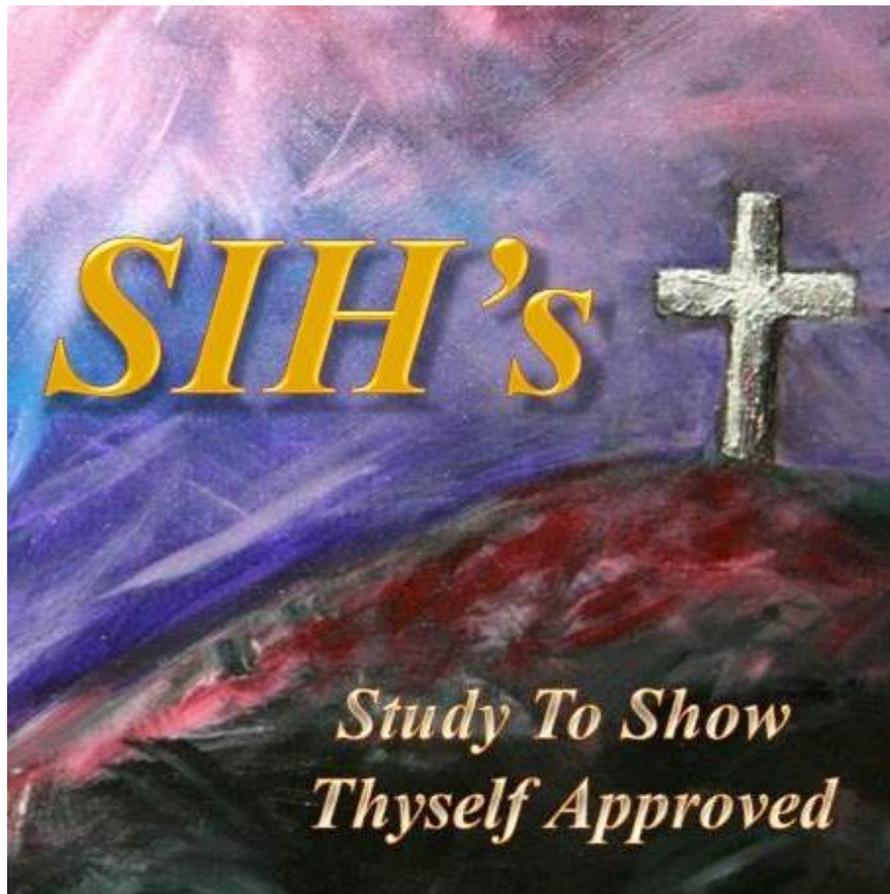


Settled In Heaven's

The Human Conscience

The Natural Witness We Have Within Us



Robert Barkman

Copyright 2013

**Settled In Heaven Ministries
Robert R Barkman**

All Rights Reserved

This publication may be freely distributed without charge to the recipient along with this acknowledgment. Distribution for the monetary gain of the distributor is prohibited without prior consent from Robert Barkman

Table of Contents

“What Is Our Conscience?”	2
“OT Existence Of Our Conscience”	5
“NT Existence Of Our Conscience”	9
“The Origin And Conviction Of Our Conscience”	12
“The Gateways Of Our Mind”	17
“The Workings Of Our Conscience”	21
“God’s Purposes For Our Conscience”	25
“The Four Types Of Consciences: A Good Conscience”	31
“The Four Types Of Consciences: A Strong Conscience”	35
“The Four Types Of Consciences: A Weak Conscience”	43
“The Four Types Of Consciences: An Evil Conscience”	52
“Civil Disobedience”	62
“Summary Of Our Study”	67

The Human Conscience Series:

“What Is Our Conscience?”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

The human conscience is perhaps the greatest NATURAL gift that was given to man to aid in his service to Almighty God. If the conscience is working properly, it can give assurance of a right path that is being taken, or it can clearly warn of a wrong path that is being followed.

But, likewise, in the case of a broken conscience, the effects can be devastating to the one to whom it is speaking. It will call evil good and good evil; it will profess that darkness is light and light is darkness; it will bring about only pain and confusion to the one that is following its bidding.

The importance of a healthy, properly working conscience cannot be overestimated.

So what is our conscience? How does it work? How can we keep it functioning as it should? In this series we will be trying to answer these, and many other questions, concerning our conscience, the wonderful God-given gift to each and every one of us.

THE SCRIPTURES:

John 8:9

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.

1Cor 8:7

7) Howbeit [*there is*] not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat [*it*] as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

THE STUDY:

How is the human conscience defined in the Scriptures:

In the OT

In the Old Testament KJV the word “conscience” is never used.

In the NT

In the NT the word "Conscience" is the English translation of the Greek word *suneidesis*. This word is made up of two Greek words that are fused together...

1. The first Grk word is "sun" which means "together", "combined" or "to be held within"
2. The second Grk word is "eidesis" which means "perception", "awareness" or "understanding"

In English

In English the word "conscience" is based upon a fusion of words as well...

1. The first word is "con" meaning "with", "alongside" or "joined". This is similar to the Grk word "sun".
2. The second word is "science" which means "perceived knowledge" whose meaning is close to that of "eidesis"

As we combine these basic ideas we can see that our conscience is "the witness (or awareness) of the perceived knowledge that is within us." There are two important aspects to this definition I would like to emphasize...

1. Our conscience is a "witness" that abides within us. It is constantly testifying to us. It speaks to us inwardly with a type of testimony that is described as being "convicted" in John 8:9... **"And they which heard [it], being convicted by [their own] conscience, went out one by one,..."** We must be careful and realize that conviction by our conscience is not the same as conviction by the Holy Spirit of God. We will be looking at the differences between these at a later date.

2. The content of this "witness" of the conscience is "perceived knowledge". In other words, it is what WE BELIEVE is true. Not necessarily what is actually true. This principle is brought into clear view for us in 1Cor 8:7...

"Howbeit [there is] not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat [it] as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled." In

this section of Scripture we find that the conscience is malfunctioning due to the possession of false knowledge. These Christians were lacking truthful knowledge concerning the true nature of meat that had been sacrificed to idols. Because of this, they believed error. Once they had placed they began to trust this untrue knowledge, their conscience became a defiled witness within them.

How did that occur? The conviction of their conscience now contained the error that they had come to accept as truth. What was the remedy for this situation? They needed to be taught the truths of God's Word and then accept this teaching as the truth. In this way their conscience could be cleansed of the error and it would begin to function as it should.

Let me give you one other example to emphasize this point... If we consistently told our young child that it was a sin to wear a red tie to church, he would come to believe that is the truth. Because of this, when he wore a red tie to church he would feel the pangs of guilt and shame. It wouldn't matter whether or not

wearing a red tie was actually a sin, the point is... because he believed it was a sin his conscience would act as if it was truth.

My guess is that every one of us has experienced this type of issue during the course of our lifetime. Either we held to some untruth and were convicted by our conscience, only to find out we were wrong in our belief; or, we did not know a truth so our conscience did not convict us, only to learn this truth later, which caused our conscience begin its convicting ministry.

So please remember this very basic, yet important truth.... Our conscience does not function based upon the truth... it functions based upon WHAT WE BELIEVE IS THE TRUTH. We will be referring to this principle time and again throughout the rest of our studies on the conscience.

THE SUMMARY:

In this first installment of our series, we have seen that when we speak of our "conscience", we are describing the gracious gift given to us by God that is the natural witness to perceived truth that lies within us.

This witness of the conscience can be described as "conviction", although it differs from the conviction of the Holy Spirit of God.

It is a witness of the perceived truth, in other words, it speaks to us based upon what we have been taught and then accept as truth. As such, it is possible to malfunction based upon our receipt of false teaching and can be restored to health by us rejecting the error and replacing the error with the truths of God.

May the Lord bless us as we seek His truth.

The Human Conscience Series:

“OT Existence Of Our Conscience”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

There are many aspects to the working of the human conscience that is within us. One of the ways to come to an understanding of the functions of the conscience is by looking at descriptions of the conscience's effects in the lives of Biblical characters.

In our study for today, we will be looking at many pictures of the conscience working in the lives of Old Testament characters.

THE SCRIPTURES:

Gen 3:8 (KJV)

8) And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Gen 20:5-6 (KJV)

5) Said he not unto me, She [*is*] my sister? and she, even she herself said, He [*is*] my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

6) And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

Gen 42:21 (KJV)

21) And they said one to another, We [*are*] verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

1Sam 24:5 & 10 (KJV)

5) And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

10) Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and [*some*] bade [*me*] kill thee: but [*mine eye*] spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he [*is*] the LORD'S anointed.

1Sam 25:31 (KJV)

31) That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

Job 27:6 (KJV)

6) My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach [me] so long as I live.

Ps 16:7 (KJV)

7) I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

Prov 28:1 (KJV)

1) The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Eccl 10:20 (KJV)

20) Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

THE STUDY:

The conscience described in the OT Scriptures...

1. Gen 20:5,6 - ... *"she herself said, He [is] my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands ... Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her."*

The Hebrew phrase "integrity of my heart" carries with it the idea of "completeness or perfectness of will and desires"....

This shows us that **the conscience pushes us towards perfection in choices and deeds.**

2. 1Sam 24:5, 10 - *"And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him,..., And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people."*

The phrase "heart smote him" comes from the Hebrew meaning "to strike upon the desires, will and goals"... By this phrase we learn that when we sin **our conscience strikes in harmony with our desire to please God, warning us of our failures.**

3. 1 Sam 25:31 – *"That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart..."*

Here, the phrase "offense of heart" is a translation of a Hebrew phrase that means "to cause to fall, or to bring to ruin, our desires, will and goals"...

Here we learn that **our properly working conscience helps us to avoid ruin to our goals and desires.**

4. Job 27:6 - *"...my heart shall not reproach [me] so long as I live."*

The phrase "my heart shall not reproach me" comes from the Hebrew translated "my inner being will be bring shame upon me"...

From this phrase, we can learn that **a properly functioning conscience will produce feelings of shame and embarrassment when we rebel against the Lord's will.**

5. Psa 16:7 - *"I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons."*

Here, the phrase "my reins instruct me" can be translated "my inner being teaches, chastens and corrects me."...

Here we are told that **our conscience gives us continuing instructions and corrections based upon the counsel of the Lord to regulate our choices and actions.**

6. Eccl 10:20 – *"Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter."*

The Hebrew phrase translated "in thy thought" carries with it the idea of "to receive with your senses"....

In other words, it is revealing that **the conscience's teachings can be "sensed" through our feelings of confidence, shame, or being troubled and unsure.**

The conscience at work in the OT Scriptures:

1. Gen 3:8 – *"And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden."*

It was due to their conscience that Adam and Eve hid from the Lord after eating the forbidden fruit. **Our conscience helps us to understand when we have sinned against God, our communion with Him is broken and our need of repentance.**

2. Gen 42:21 – *"And they said one to another, We [are] verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."*

It was their conscience that caused the brothers of Joseph to feel guilt concerning the mistreatment of Joseph when they had placed him in the pit and sold him to the Egyptians (Gen 37:1-36).

Our conscience shows us when we sin against others and the results of those sins in our lives.

3. Prov 28:1 – “*The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.*”

It is a wicked man’s conscience that causes him to feel threatened and mistakenly expect harm to fall upon him. While the conscience gives the righteous assurance and peace knowing his heart is right with God and the Lord is with him every step of the way.

The human conscience works on the mind of the guilty causing unfounded anxiety and fear while supplying the righteous confidence and boldness in the face of danger.

THE SUMMARY:

We have looked at the Old Testament descriptions of the workings of the human conscience. We have seen that the conscience was clearly at work in the lives of both the wicked and the righteous of the Old Testament. The workings of the conscience is varied and numerous but, when working properly leads us to the things of God and to put down the acts of rebellion that we commit.

In the next section of our study, we will be looking at the New Testament descriptions for the workings of the human conscience that is within us all.

May the Lord bless you as you seek His truth.

The Human Conscience Series:

“NT Existence Of Our Conscience”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

There are many aspects to the working of the human conscience that is within us. One of the ways to come to an understanding of the functions of the conscience is by looking at descriptions of the conscience's effects in the lives of Biblical characters.

Our study for today will be very similar to our previous study. For today, instead of looking at Old Testament verses, we will be looking at New Testament verses that describe the conscience's effects on individuals. Please note, as in our prior study, although the word “conscience” is not used, the work of the conscience is clearly seen in each of these Scriptures.

THE SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 27:3-5 (KJV)

- 3) Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,
4) Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What [*is that*] to us? see thou [*to that*].
5) And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.**

Mark 6:14-16 (KJV)

- 14) And king Herod heard [*of him*]; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.
15) Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.
16) But when Herod heard [*thereof*], he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.**

1 Corinthians 4:4 (KJV)

- 4) For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.**

1 John 3:19-21 (KJV)

- 19) And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.
20) For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.
21) Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, [*then*] have we confidence toward God.**

THE STUDY:

The work of the conscience described in the NT Scriptures...

1. Matthew 27:3-5 - ... *"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, ... departed, and went and hanged himself."*

The phrase "when he saw he was condemned" is translated from a Greek phrase with a common meaning of "when he perceived that judgment was awaiting him".....

This shows us that **the conscience reveals guilt and impending judgment.**

2. Mark 6:14-16 - ... *"But when Herod heard [thereof], he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead."*

This is very similar to Proverbs 28:1 – "The wicked flee when no man pursueth"...

In both of these texts, we can see **a result of the conscience at work is paranoia on behalf of the one being convicted of wrongdoing.**

3. 1 Corinthians 4:4 ... *"For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord."*

"I know nothing by myself" is another way of saying "There is no perception within myself". Paul was telling us that his conscience was not convicting him of unfaithfulness in the ministry. However, because it can malfunction, his greatest concern was if he was looked upon as faithful by Christ.

Although the conscience can be a great asset in discerning our condition before the Lord, it can malfunction and its testimony can lead us astray.

4. 1 John 3:19-21 ... *"And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 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."*

The phrases "assure our hearts", "heart condemn us", and "heart condemn us not" are all describing the work of the conscience within us. "To assure" describes actions that cause the conscience to testify of innocence and purity; "to condemn us" describes the conscience testifying of guilt and coming judgment; while "condemn us not" is when the conscience is silent on an issue, resulting in presumed innocence.

The conscience not only testifies of guilt, but also testifies of innocence, or at times can imply innocence through silence.

THE SUMMARY:

This completes our study of the various texts in the Bible that describe the existence of the conscience without containing the word "conscience". In these two sections, we have learned the following about the workings of the conscience that lies with us"

The conscience:

1. Gen 20:5,6 - **pushes us towards perfection in choices and deeds.**
2. 1Sam 24:5, 10 - **works with our desire to please God, warning us of our failures.**
3. 1 Sam 25:31 – **helps us to avoid ruin to our goals and desires.**

4. Job 27:6 - **produces feelings of shame when we rebel against the Lord's will.**
5. Psa 16:7 - **gives us continuing instructions and corrections to regulate our choices/actions**
6. Eccl 10:20 - **teaches us through feelings of confidence, shame, or uncertainty**
7. Gen 3:8 - **reveals when we have sinned, communion is broken, and repentance is needed**
8. Gen 42:21 - **shows us when we sin against others and the results of those sins in our lives.**
9. Prov 28:1 - **causes unfounded anxiety/fear for the guilty while supplying confidence/boldness to the righteous.**
10. Matthew 27:3-5 - **reveals guilt and impending judgment.**
11. Mark 6:14-16 - **causes paranoia on behalf of the one being convicted of wrongdoing.**
12. 1 Corinthians 4:4 - **can be a great asset, or it can malfunction and lead us astray.**
13. 1 John 3:19-21 - **testifies of guilt, also of innocence, or can imply innocence by silence**

May the Lord bless us as we seek His truth.

“The Origin And Conviction Of Our Conscience”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

In the past few lessons we have seen the the Biblical meaning of the word “conscience”; the existence of the human conscience in both the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures and examples of some of the many varied ways it influences man.

Now, let’s take a few moments to learn more about the origin of the human conscience and it’s convicting powers...

THE SCRIPTURES:

(Genesis 1:27)

So God created man in his [*own*] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

(Psalms 51:4)

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done [*this*] evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, [*and*] be clear when thou judgest.

(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.

(John 16:7-11)

(7) Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

(8) And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

(9) Of sin, because they believe not on me;

(10) Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

(11) Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

(Acts 3:18-19)

(18) But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

(19) Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

(Acts 16:14-15)

(14) And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard [us]: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

(15) And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought [us], saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide [there]. And she constrained us.

(Romans 2:14-15)

(14) For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

(15) Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and [their] thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

(Romans 9:1)

1) I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

(2 Corinthians 1:12)

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

(2 Corinthians 7:9-11)

(9) Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

(10) For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

(11) For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, [what] clearing of yourselves, yea, [what] indignation, yea, [what] fear, yea, [what] vehement desire, yea, [what] zeal, yea, [what] revenge! In all [things] ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

THE STUDY:

The Origin of the Human Conscience

The conscience was given to man by God...

1. *"So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."*(Genesis 1:27)

Please notice that God created (formed, shaped) man in His image (likeness, a shadow). One aspect of mankind being created in the likeness of God is the ability to discern moral right from wrong.

Animals can understand that a certain action will result in their punishment, but they cannot discern the morality of an action. Man, however, was given the ability to not only link an action to its consequences, but they can also understand that their sin has broken the commands of God and that their actions have displeased God...

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done [this] evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, [and] be clear when thou judgest." (Psalms 51:4)

Here, we see that **our conscience was given to us by God** giving us moral discernment which is one aspect of being made in His image.

2. *"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and [their] thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;"* (Romans 2:14-15)

In this set of verses, we can see that Gentiles who had never been taught the Word of God, were still capable of recognizing sin and the need to live moral lives. By doing this, they *"shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness,"*

In other words, God has written His law in their mind and desires. Through the testimony of their conscience, the law in their mind and desires are validated and emphasized. This is much like a witness at a legal proceeding verifying the evidence and giving it more weight in the eyes of the jurors.

Who did the writing of the law upon the heart of man? It is the Lord of course. **It is the Lord that equipped man with the conscience, and uses it as a tool** to confirm and bring to the forefront His standard of morality...

"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." (2 Corinthians 1:12)

These verses help us to come to an understanding of the definition of our conscience....

The Conscience Conviction vs. Holy Spirit Conviction

There is a clear difference between conscience conviction apart from the Holy Spirit and conscience conviction in conjunction with the Holy Spirit...

1. *"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."* (John 8:9)

This is a clear example of conviction that is the result of the conscience of man APART without the intervention of the Holy Spirit. **It results in shame and acknowledgment of sin, but does not result in repentance nor a changed life.**

2. *"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard [us]: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought [us], saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide [there]. And she constrained us."* (Acts 16:14-15)

This is an example of a woman who had been convicted by the Holy Spirit, through the use of her conscience resulting in her heart being "opened"; turning from her sin to submission to Christ "she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul" and "she was baptized". **In this example, we can see a true repentance for sin taking place which led to a changed life of obedience to Christ.**

3. *"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, [what] clearing of yourselves, yea, [what] indignation, yea, [what] fear, yea, [what] vehement desire, yea, [what] zeal, yea, [what] revenge! In all [things] ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."*
(2 Corinthians 7:9-11)

The sorrow that results from the conviction of the conscience APART from the Holy Spirit is described here as "the sorrow of the world". Conviction which proceeds from the Holy Spirit through the use of the conscience is described as "Godly sorrow". Note the basic differences:

Conscience conviction without the Holy Spirit's workings results in:

- a. sorrow without Godly intervention - "ye were made sorry" and "sorrow of the world"
- b. eternal spiritual death - "worketh death".

Conscience used as a tool by the Holy Spirit to convict and convince results in:

- a. sorrow that results in turning from the sin to service to God – "sorrowed to repentance"
- b. sorrow that is a gift of God's grace – "sorry after a Godly manner" and "sorrowed after a Godly sort"
- c. sorrow that results in repentance and salvation – "sorrow worketh repentance to salvation"
- d. sorrow for sin that is permanent – "not to be repented of"
- e. sorrow that results in Godliness as top priority – "what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, [what] clearing of yourselves, yea, [what] indignation, yea, [what] fear, yea, [what] vehement desire, yea, [what] zeal, yea, [what] revenge!"

The conviction that is brought upon us through our conscience alone is useful showing us our sin and, by implication, our need of salvation. However, it is only through the conviction of the Holy Spirit of God opening our sin hardened heart, turning us from our sin to our Lord and Savior that we can experience a Godly sorrow and true salvation in Him.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John 16:7-11)

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost," (Romans 9:1)

THE SUMMARY:

May we thank the Lord for the wonderful gift of the conscience that He has given to us. By His grace, may He, in the person of the Holy Spirit, use our conscience to convict us of our sin, open our sin hardened hearts,

draw us to Himself, recognizing Him as our Lord and Savior, and grace us with Godly sorrow, repentance and faith.

In doing so, we will receive salvation from our sins, become new creatures in Christ and receive a continual display of His grace in our lives, beginning now and stretching throughout eternity...

"But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" (Acts 3:18-19)

May the Lord bless us as we seek His truth.

“The Gateways Of Our Mind”

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

(Prov 28:1)

In this section we will be looking at the process involved in the receipt, approval and proclamation of truth in our being.

THE SCRIPTURES:

Jer 13:23

(23) Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

Rom 2:15

(15) Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Rom 10:13-18

13) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15) And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17) So then faith [*cometh*] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18) But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

1Co 8:7

(7) Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

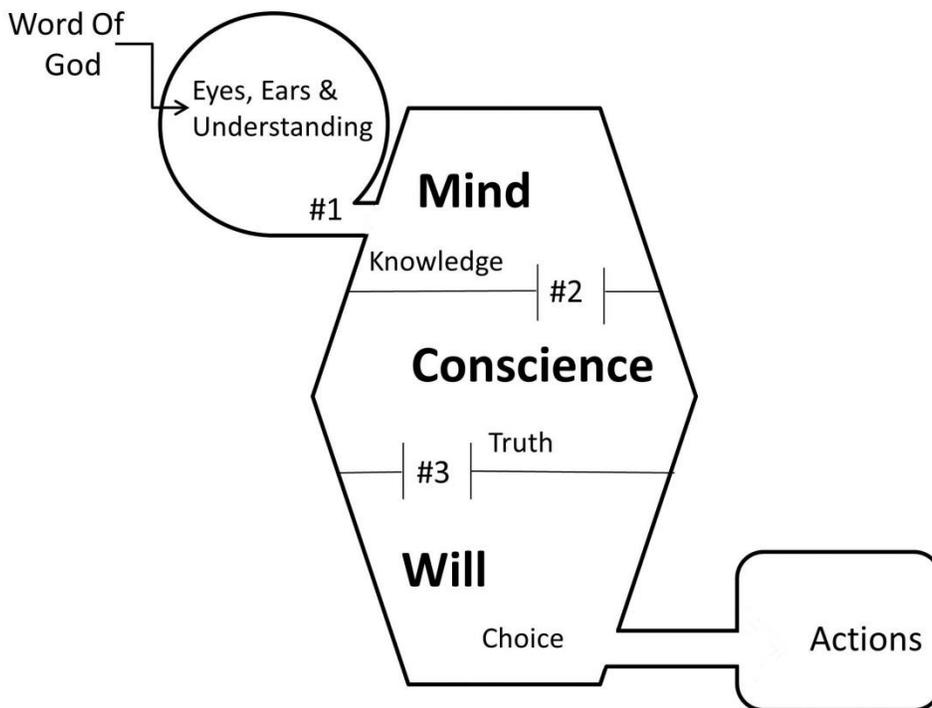
1Co 14:12-17

(12) Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

- (13) Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. (14) For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.
- (15) What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.
- (16) Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?
- (17) For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

THE STUDY:

The Gateways Of The Mind
 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. (Pro 4:23)



Key to above chart:

#1 – The Gateway Of Understanding

Gives Access To The **MIND**

It is through this gateway that teaching is **RECEIVED** (becomes knowledge in the mind)

1Co 14:12-17

"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified."

For God's people to receive be taught the truths of God, they must understand these truths (following their receipt of them through hearing, reading, or seeing them on display in the lives of others)

In our example above, we find that Paul was clearly explaining to the speakers of truth that they must teach these truths in a language that could be understood by the listeners. If they did not proclaim the truths of God in an understandable way these truths could not enter the minds of the listeners and therefore, be of benefit to them.

#2 – The Gateway Of Belief

Gives Access To The **CONSCIENCE**

It is through this gateway that teaching is **APPROVED** (accepted as truth and begins to effect the conscience)

Rom 10:13-18

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

1Co 8:7

"Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."

Once the truth is received in the mind, faith in these truths must to exercised before they will affect the human conscience. It is only after the Word is believed that it will enter into the conscience. For example, if a person does not believe that lying is sinful, their conscience will not convict him when he speaks a lie.

#3 – The Gateway Of Conviction

Gives Access To The **WILL**

It is through this gateway that teaching is **APPLIED** (begins to influence the choices we make in life)

Rom 2:15

"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"

Following the receipt and belief of the truth conviction will then follow if the truth is violated in one's life. At the time of belief, the truth of God is now implanted in the conscience which begins it's work of conviction. This conviction of the conscience can affect the choices (will) that one makes, thereby changing the actions of the one being convicted.

Keep in mind, when it is only the conscience that is convicting the individual, an outward reformation of that person's life can take place. Their outward actions may change but they are yet in their sins, unregenerate and awaiting God's judgment. However, combined with the workings of the Holy Spirit of God, this conviction can lead to regeneration, the bestowal of a new nature within which leads to a converted lifestyle of service to Christ. (see lesson on "The Origin and Conviction of the Conscience)

THE SUMMARY:

The key to the understanding the nature and characteristics of sin is found through the receipt of truth into the mind.

The key to the recognition of sin in our life is the receipt of the truth of God into our conscience.

The key to the outward change of reformation of our actions is the conviction of the conscience working upon the will. The key to an inward change of regeneration which will then change our outward life is found in the Holy Spirit's use of the conscience to convict and lead us to Christ as our Savior and our Lord.

May the Lord bless us as we seek His truth.

“The Workings Of Our Conscience”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

Within the pages of Scripture we find the operation of the conscience explained through the use of three different examples derived from the world around us. Let's take a few moments to learn more about the workings of the human conscience from the Word of God...

THE SCRIPTURES:

And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. (2 Samuel 24:10)

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness! (Matthew 6:22-23)

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and [their] thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) (Romans 2:14-15)

THE STUDY:

Our Conscience Acts Like A Messenger Within Us

In Biblical times, a King would write the laws of the land over which he ruled... then he would send his messengers to the times in his kingdom taking a written copy of the newly written law with them. They would enter the town, announce the details of the new law and then post them for all to see.

This role of the messenger equates with the role of our conscience that lies within us. Our conscience does not write the laws of God, nor does it enforce those laws, it simply announces the existence of the law and reminds us when we are breaking those laws. The conscience, when working properly, is one of God's messengers to reveal His law to mankind.

Paul explains the human conscious acting as a messenger of God, by looking at the lives of the Gentiles (Romans 2:14-15)...

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law,

How can it be that the Gentiles who had never received knowledge of His laws from a human, outside source, were keeping some aspects of the law of God?

these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

Paul recognized that, if they had never received the law of God from an external human source, they must possess some principles of the law within themselves.

Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts,

These principles are instilled in the mind of every man. God gives to every man the necessary amount of knowledge to hold all mankind responsible for the sin they commit. This is done as an act of divine grace, using the revelation that comes through the act and existence of creation, without the receipt of God's law from any separate human source.

"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;" (Romans 2:12)

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed [it] unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Romans 1:18-21)

their conscience also bearing witness,

Once the natural law of God enters the mind of man, the conscience then takes that knowledge and announces that law to man. It testifies to the laws' existence and acts as a constant reminder to man when they violate those laws.

and [their] thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Once the conscience testifies of the laws existence and violation, the mind then must, either, accept responsibility for the infraction and take the appropriate action to deal with the sin; or else, refuse to accept responsibility for the action and find an excuse to cover the transgression.

All of this takes place due to the natural law given to every man and the conscience's role as messenger confirming and repeating the law's existence to all mankind.

Our Conscience Acts Like An Eye Within Us

We are all familiar with the workings of our physical eyes. It is through our eyes that we can receive light and we are given knowledge of the surroundings around us.

But we can take this understanding a step farther. Our eyes do not let ALL the light and ALL of our surroundings to us. Our eyes can only reveal to us what they are pointed towards. If our eyes are looking at what lies ahead of us, we have no knowledge of what lies behind.

This is the lesson of Matthew 6:22-23...

The light of the body is the eye:

The eye is the organ through which the body receives knowledge of light that is present. The eye isn't the light but it testifies and reveals the light that already exists.

if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

If the eye is whole, functioning properly, looking into the light, the existence of the light is clearly revealed and dominates our sight.

But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.

However, if the eye is diseased, not working as it should, it will be avoiding light, and looking into the dark areas that exist. It is this darkness that will then fill the body.

If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness!

If the eye only looks into darkness, never being pointed to the light, the body is totally consumed with darkness, experiencing a total lack of light.

When applied to our conscience the lesson is a very simple one. The function of the conscience is limited to the standard to which it is pointed. In other words, when we fill our minds with the light of truth, the conscience works properly and testifies to the truth to us. However, when our conscience is not healthy, it is only pointed at the darkness of error, our conscience testifies to us in error.

A very specific example of this principle is found in the followers of Molech, who sacrificed their children to their false god. How could they do such a thing? They had been brought up from babies believing a set of false truths about Molech and the need to sacrifice their children. The actions of their conscience was based on these horrible false teachings, therefore their conscience did not affect them as they sacrificed their children, but would have made them feel guilty if they had not been willing to offer their children. How sad, how blind! Much like the people of Isaiah's day....

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20)

Our Conscience Acts Like A Shepherd's Rod Within Us

The Shepherd's rod was used exclusively by the shepherd to care for the sheep. It was used as a club to drive off attacking enemies, it was used to gently discipline the wayfaring sheep, directing them back to the flock.

The conscience acts in a similar way, protecting the individual from sin, while directing to the path that should be taken.

And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people.

Here we see David's conscience working as a disciplinary rod bringing to David's attention that he had sinfully chosen to number the people of Israel. David has departed from the path that he should have been traveling and his conscience reminded him that his action was sinful, while also persuading him to repent of this sin and turn back to the path he was meant to travel upon.

And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done:

David's repentance resulted from the intervention of his conscience. His repentance included:

1. acknowledgment of the sin that he committed
2. acknowledgment of his responsibility in the commission of that sin

and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. (2 Samuel 24:10)

3. acknowledgment of the need for forgiveness
4. acknowledgment that his sin was committed against the Lord and therefore,
5. acknowledgement that forgiveness must come from the Lord
6. acknowledgement of the true regret and sorrow that he felt

THE SUMMARY:

The conscience is a wonderful tool given by God's grace to help the lost see their need of salvation and then, in the life of the Christian to keep us on track as we seek to serve our Lord and Savior. Through its three ministries (messenger, eye, rod) the conscience is a very effect tool that can be used of God to reveal the true spiritual condition of individuals and the spiritual need that is in their life.

The role of the Holy Spirit in using our conscience to show men their spiritual condition will be covered in another lesson.

May the Lord bless us as we seek His truth.

“God’s Purposes For Our Conscience”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

The Lord, by His grace, has given to us the wonderful gift of our conscience, that is meant to benefit us in all aspects of our lives. What are some of the specific reasons that God had in mind when He gave us our conscience? Let’s take a few moments to examine God’s purposes for our conscience...

THE SCRIPTURES:

16) And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and [toward] men. (Acts 24:16)

3) For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4) For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5) Wherefore [ye] must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6) For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. (Romans 13:3-6)

4) As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol [is] nothing in the world, and that [there is] none other God but one. 5) For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) 6) But to us [there is but] one God, the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [are] all things, and we by him. 7) Howbeit [there is] not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat [it] as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. 8) But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

9) But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. 10) For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; 11) And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12) But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. 13) Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. (1 Corinthians 8:4-13)

2) But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (2 Corinthians 4:2)

10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [*done*] in [*his*] body, according to that he hath done, whether [*it be*] good or bad. 11) Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. (2 Corinthians 5:10-11)

5) Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and [*of*] a good conscience, and [*of*] faith unfeigned: (1 Timothy 1:5)

(18) This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; 19) Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: (1 Timothy 1:18-19)

9) Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. (1 Timothy 3:9)

12) For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which [*be*] the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13) For every one that useth milk [*is*] unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14) But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [*even*] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14)

19) For this [*is*] thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. (1 Peter 2:19)

15) But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [*be*] ready always to [*give*] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 16) Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

18) My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19) And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 20) For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21) Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, [*then*] have we confidence toward God. 22) And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. (1 John 3:18-22)

THE STUDY:

Seven great purposes for our conscience...

#1 - Our Conscience Was Given To Guide Our Conduct

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and [*toward*] men. (Acts 24:16)

Paul explains that he "exercises" (consistently strives) to live his life so that his conscience can be clear toward God and others.

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (2 Corinthians 4:2)

Paul was putting off a lifestyle of sinful deceit and corruption so that his life may clearly reveal the truth of God. In doing so, he was placing his life as an example of Godly living that would be affect the conscience of those who were watching him.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [*done*] in [*his*] body, according to that he hath done, whether [*it be*] good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. (2 Corinthians 5:10-11)

Paul and his companions, with the realization of the coming judgment of all men's works, God's holiness, and the existence of Divine wrath; strived to persuade others of their need of Christ.

Paul knew that their efforts to win others to Christ were clearly seen by God. He hoped that their efforts were recognized as acts of service to God by others as well. How would those watching Paul's life know that Paul was being faithful to God? It would be through the testimony of the conscience of the watchers.

#2 - Our Conscience Was Given To Strengthen Us For Service

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and [of] a good conscience, and [of] faith unfeigned: (1 Timothy 1:5)

Paul gives us a quick summary of 3 main areas of Godly service.... Self-sacrificial love for God and others, Obedient lifestyle that incurs no guilt from our conscience, Genuine trust in Christ and His Word.

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: (1 Timothy 1:18-19)

Paul, as he hands pastoral responsibilities to Timothy, explains that fighting the "good fight" involves carefully retaining sincere belief in Christ (and the doctrinal truths found in His Word), along with living a life that does not offend his conscience. Those who have ignored these two principles end up in shipwreck, their testimony ruined and their service brought to an end.

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. (1 Timothy 3:9)

Paul reminds Timothy of the need to genuinely, authentically hold to the truth. A sincere trust in the truth will become the basis of the functioning of our conscience, causing it to function purely (without sinful influences).

#3 - Our Conscience Was Given To Enhance Our Fellowship

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol [is] nothing in the world, and that [there is] none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us [there is but] one God, the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [are] all things, and we by him. Howbeit [there is] not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat [it] as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. (1 Corinthians 8:4-13)

In these verses, Paul teaches us that, when our conscience functions properly, it will help us to recognize truth and error that weaker Christians (those with weaker consciences) do not understand. This helps the stronger Christians to make wise choices to avoid being stumbling blocks to the weaker Christians spiritual growth.

#4 - Our Conscience Was Given To Encourage Our Witnessing

For this [is] thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. (1 Peter 2:19)

When a man chooses to be faithful to the Lord, although that faithfulness brings upon himself abuse and mistreatment, he should thank God for that grace. It enhances his testimony by proving his dedication to have a pure conscience in the sight of God no matter what the cost.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

We should strive for Godly desires combined with preparedness to share the truth of Christ to anyone who asks. These Godly motives and actions will bring peace and a freedom from a guilty conscience in the face of the false accusations of the lost.

#5 - Our Conscience Was Given To Aid Our Prayers

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 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. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. (1 John 3:18-22)

Christians should always seek to serve the Lord sincerely with no hint of hypocrisy or showmanship.

When our conscience speaks clearly of our innocence, we can have confidence that we are doing what is pleasing towards God. If our imperfect conscience tells us we are guilty of hypocrisy, how much more does a perfect God recognize we are being hypocritical; remember, he knows us better than we know ourselves.

If we have a clear conscience concerning our sincerity, it is proof that we want to do His will above all. If this is so, when we pray we can be confident we sincerely desire for His will to be done. Therefore, when we pray to God we can be assured that our prayers will be answered because His will is always performed in answer to our prayers.

#6 - Our Conscience Was Given To Be Godly Citizens of Our Country

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore [ye] must needs be subject, not only for

wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. (Romans 13:3-6)

The Lord has established the civil governments to uphold and encourage good works while condemning and punishing evil. If we are living Godly lives, when a government functions as it should there is no need to fear. It is only when we disobey God that we should fear government as they are the sword of God's judgment on earth. We are to be subject to human government to avoid the judgment that arises from the government, as well as to avoid our consciences guilty knowing that we are pleasing God as well.

#7 - Our Conscience Was Given To Build Our Character

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which [*be*] the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk [*is*] unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [*even*] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14)

A properly working conscience is a useful tool for building the Christian's character. Our conscience helps us to recognize good and evil which, when followed, brings about Christian growth. A younger Christian who actively learns God's Word which forms the basis of their conscience's workings, are laying a foundation for their growth. Then, when they consistently follow the leadings of their conscience they exercise their conscience strengthening it and making it work more effectively.

THE SUMMARY:

The conscience is a wonderful tool given to the Christian by God's grace which aids in seven aspects of service to our Lord and Savior:

- #1 - To Guide Our Conduct
- #2 - To Strengthen Us For Service
- #3 - To Enhance Our Fellowship
- #4 - To Encourage Our Witnessing
- #5 - To Aid Our Prayers
- #6 - To Be Godly Citizens of Our Country
- #7 - To Build Our Character

Let's never take a conscience for granted. Let's always remember to build up our conscience by learning and believing the truth and consistently following the leadership of our conscience as we serve our Lord.

May the Lord bless us as we seek His truth.

“The Four Types Of Consciences: A Good Conscience”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

The Scriptures help us to understand that there are four different types of consciences that exist within man:

1. A Good Conscience
2. A Strong Conscience
3. A Weak Conscience
4. An Evil Conscience

Along with identifying these types of consciences, we also find teachings concerning the identifying marks of these consciences and how to maintain, or develop, the types of conscience that the Lord is pleased with. May the Lord bless us as we embark a voyage to study each type of these consciences by looking at a “Good” conscience...

THE SCRIPTURES:

Mat 6:22-23 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. (23) But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Act 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

1Ti 1:3-6 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, (4) Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. (5) Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: (6) From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

1Ti 1:18-19 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; (19) Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

Heb 5:13-14 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. **(14)** But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Heb 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

1Pe 3:14-17 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; **(15)** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: **(16)** Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. **(17)** For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

THE STUDY:

The Characteristics Of A Good Conscience:

#1 – A Good Conscience fulfills it's God-given roles

It keeps us on our God-given course of life...

1Ti 1:3-6 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, **(4)** Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. **(5)** Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: **(6)** From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

Paul instructs young pastor, Timothy, of the need to teach God's Word while setting aside the teachings and practices of man. Why? Because God's Word alone edifies (builds up, strengthens) the faith of God's people. This is the ultimate goal of those who teach the Word. To present truth that will strengthen God's people, encourage them to show genuine love for others and possess a sincere faith within. Sad to say, there are some teachers of the Word who have turned aside to vain proclamations of untruths, thereby defeating the very Godly purpose they have been given.

It leads us to consistent victories over temptation...

1Ti 1:18-19 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; **(19)** Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

Paul hands to Timothy the responsibility to fight the "good fight of faith". Timothy was to do this by guarding and holding close faith and a good conscience, both of which are absolutely necessary to have an effective

testimony for Christ. Some have left their faith and conscience behind, and in doing so, have suffered a ruined testimony and have become ineffective witnesses for Christ.

It produces an honest lifestyle...

Heb 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

The writer of Hebrews asks for the prayers of others. The proof of the sincerity of their request is the fact they desired to live honest lives, which was proof of a properly functioning conscience.

It pushes us to witness of Christ and His goodness to others...

1Pe 3:14-17 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; (15) But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: (16) Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. (17) For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

When we are mistreated due to our service to Christ, we are to be happy and not fearful. We can know we are doing what the Lord would have us to do and therefore, He will bless us and use us as He sees fit. During these times of troubles we are to set the Lord as number one in our life and be prepared to speak when others ask of about our faith. This will lead to a pure conscience, which will encourage us to overlook the fault-finders and realize that they must answer for their abuse, while we will be guiltless before the Lord. This is a lifestyle that is pleasing to God.

#2 - A Good Conscience testifies of truth of His Word

It's operations are based upon the light of God's Word...

Mat 6:22-23 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. (23) But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

When we receive the Word within us, our conscience uses it as the basis of its functioning, declaring the truth within us and causing our lives to be beacons of light to a lost and sin darkened world.

#3 - A Good Conscience is exercised

It is used on a consistent basis...

Act 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

Paul consistently, put forth consistent effort to live so that he might have a clear conscience in his dealings with God and other men.

It finds its strength and effectiveness in its regular use...

Heb 5:13-14 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. (14) But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Our conscience is like our muscles... It must be steadily used to keep it toned and working properly. Keeping our conscience working properly leads us to spiritual growth and maturity; which is shown by the ability to properly discern between good and evil.

Do We Have A Good Conscience?:

#1 – Do we find ourselves obeying the Word of God as a lifestyle? (1 Tim 1:3-6; 1 Tim 1:18-19)

#2 – Are we sincere in what we do? (Heb 13:18)

#3 – Are we faithful, even when we are faced with opposition to our service? (1 Peter 3:14-17)

#4 – When convicted do we immediately correct the situation? (Acts 24:16, Heb 5:13-14)

If we can answer “yes” to the above questions, we can rest assured that we possess a good, properly functioning conscience within us.

THE SUMMARY:

In this study we have seen...

The Characteristics Of A Good Conscience:

#1 – it fulfills its God-given roles

It keeps us on our God-given course of life...

It leads us to consistent victories over temptation...

It produces an honest lifestyle...

It pushes us to witness of Christ and His goodness to others...

#2 – it testifies of truth of His Word

It's operations are based upon the light of God's Word...

#3 – it is exercised

It is used on a consistent basis...

It finds its strength and effectiveness in its regular use...

The Marks Of A Good Conscience:

#1 – Do we find ourselves obeying the Word of God as a lifestyle?

#2 – Are we sincere in what we do?

#3 – Are we faithful, even when we are faced with opposition to our service?

#4 – When convicted do we immediately correct the situation?

May the Lord bless us as we seek His truth.

“The Four Types Of Consciences: A Strong Conscience”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

The Scriptures help us to understand that there are four different types of consciences that exist within man:

1. A Good Conscience
2. A Strong Conscience
3. A Weak Conscience
4. An Evil Conscience

Along with identifying these types of consciences, we also find teachings concerning the identifying marks of these consciences and how to maintain, or develop, the types of conscience that the Lord is pleased with. In this section of our study we will be looking at a “Strong” conscience...

THE SCRIPTURES:

Joh 7:14-17 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. (15) And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (16) Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

Rom 14:1-23 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. (2) For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. (3) Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. (4) Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. (5) One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. (6) He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. (7) For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. (8) For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. (9) For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. (10) But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

(11) For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (12) So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (13) Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. (14) I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. (15) But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. (16) Let not then your good be evil spoken of: (17) For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (18) For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. (19) Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. (20) For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. (21) It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. (22) Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. (23) And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Rom 15:1-7 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (2) Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. (3) For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. (4) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (5) Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: (6) That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (7) Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Ephesians 4:13-16 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14) That we [*henceforth*] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [*and*] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [*even*] Christ: 16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

1Timothy 6:17-19 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18) That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19) Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

THE STUDY:

The Characteristics Of A Strong Conscience:

#1 – A Strong Conscience Recognizes and Applies The Truth

(John 7:14-17)

And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

Following Jesus displaying a great knowledge of the teaching of the Old Testament, the Jews then ponder how He could have received such knowledge.

An individual with a strong conscience consistently fulfills God's will for His life...

If any man will do his will,

A strong conscience discerns between Godly and human teachings...

he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

For the conscience to lead us to do God's will, it first must be able to discern between the teachings of God and the false teachings of man. A strong conscience has the ability to recognize the teachings of God and then lead an individual to submit to those teachings as a lifestyle.

#2 - A Strong Conscience Sacrificially Helps Those Who Are Weaker In The Faith

(Romans 14:1-23, Romans 15:1-7, Ephesians 4:13-16)

(Romans 14:1-23)

An individual with a strong conscience does not argue over that which is uncertain...

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

An individual with a strong conscience accepts other's differences...

(2) For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

(3) Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. (4) Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. (5) One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. (6) He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord

he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. (7) For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

Those of a strong conscience recognize that, due to their spiritual weakness, others may sincerely believe that which is not true. They recognize the need to slowly work with the weak, gradually building them up in the truths of God, instead of finding fault and being critical of that which the weak sincerely believe is true.

An individual with a strong conscience recognizes their accountability before God...

(8) For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. (9) For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. (10) But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (11) For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (12) So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Those of a strong conscience recognize they will be held accountable for their workings with the weak. They also recognize, apart from the grace of God, they would be spiritually weak as well.

An individual with a strong conscience does not hinder the growth of the spiritually weak...

(13) Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

An individual with a strong conscience willingly abstains from exercising his liberty for the sake of the weak...

(14) I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. (15) But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. (16) Let not then your good be evil spoken of: (17) For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (18) For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men... All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. (21) It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. (22) Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. (23) And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Many times the strong are called upon to abstain from a liberty God has given to them, so as to not to cause a lost individual to sin against the dictates of their weak conscience. Willful sinning against one's conscience is a greater sin than following the dictates of a weak conscience, which does not recognize a liberty given through the grace of God.

An individual with a strong conscience seeks things that they agree upon with the weak and things which build up the weak...

(19) Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. (20) For meat destroy not the work of God.

When the saved attempt to build up the weak they should not always be concentrating on the things that separate them but they should also recognize and fellowship over the many things of which they are in agreement.

(Rom 15:1-7)

An individual with a strong conscience sacrifices for the benefit of the weak...

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

(2) Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. (3) For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. (4) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Those who are strong are to follow the example that Christ has set by giving of themselves so that others may benefit from the graces God has given to the strong. All of God's blessings that are given to us are given to share with and be a blessing to others. Those of a strong conscience recognize that grave responsibility.

An individual with a strong conscience works for unity with the weak for the glory of God...

(5) Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: (6) That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (7) Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

If saved, those who are weak share with the strong the goal of wanting to glorify God in their lives. Using this principle as a motivating, unifying force, it will aid in the growth of the weak and the willingness to sacrifice on the part of the strong.

If we summarize the above, we can see that those with a strong conscience recognize, understand and seek to build up those weaker in the faith. This is done through a variety of self-sacrificial acts, always remembering the goodness of God and their accountability before Him.

(Ephesians 4:13-16)

An individual with a strong conscience will speak the truth in love for the benefit of the weak...

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14) That we [*henceforth*] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [*and*] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [*even*] Christ: 16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Until we reach perfection in eternity, all men should be willing to work for the good of those who are weaker, and submit to the teachings of those who are stronger in the faith. No one is so weak they cannot help others, nor is anyone so strong they do not need the help of others.

#3 - A Strong Conscience Witnesses Of The Grace Of God

1 Timothy 6:17-19

An individual with a strong conscience will be willing to speak to those of greater wealth, honor and position of authority...

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God,

An individual with a strong conscience recognizes and appreciates the blessings of God.

who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

An individual with a strong conscience witnesses of the necessity of stewardship, the promise of rewards, and the blessings of eternity

18) That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19) Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Some of the areas of a strong witness include: the goodness and blessings of God, our responsibility to recognize and use those blessings properly, coming rewards for faithfulness in service, and the offer of eternal life to those who are lost.

(Note: why does it APPEAR as if the Lord is teaching that eternal life only comes after good works of willingness to give of personal wealth for the benefit of others?)

1. When a person understands the principle of self-sacrifice for the needy, it is the first step to understanding the great sacrifice that Christ has made for us (the truly spiritually needy ones). If a person cannot grasp what it means to give of their wealth for the benefit of those who are lacking, they can never come to an understanding of Christ's sacrifice for us.
2. A person who is not willing to give of their wealth for others, based upon the command of Christ, cannot be saved. It is only when we no longer are relying upon our wealth for our future security and are willing to give up all to follow Christ, that we can be saved...

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the

disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:17-25)

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” (Matthew 16:24-27)

Do We Have A Strong Conscience?:

#1 Are we consistently fulfilling God’s will for our life? John 7:14-17

#2 Can we easily discern between Godly teaching and the teaching of man? John 7:14-17

#3 Do we abstain from arguing over the questionable things of God? Romans 14:1-23

#5 Do we accept the differences of others? Romans 14:1-23

#6 Do we recognize our accountability before God? Romans 14:1-23

#7 Do we do our best to avoid hinder the growth of the spiritually weak? Romans 14:1-23

#8 Are we willing to abstain from a spiritual liberty for the good of those who are weak? Romans 14:1-23

#9 Do we search of areas of agreement with those who are weak? Romans 14:1-23

#10 Are we willing to make personal sacrifices for the benefit of the weak? Romans 15:1-7

#11 Do we consistently work for unity with the weak based upon the shared goal of God’s glory? Romans 15:1-7

#12 Are we willing to speak the truth in love for the benefit of the weak? Ephesians 4:13-16

#13 Are we willing to stand boldly and witness to those of greater wealth, honor and position of authority? 1Timothy 6:17-19

#14 Do we recognize and appreciates the blessings of God in our life and the lives of others? 1Timothy 6:17-19

#15 Does our witness include the necessity of stewardship, the promise of rewards, and the blessings of eternity? 1Timothy 6:17-19

If we can answer “yes” to the above questions, we can rest assured that we possess a good, properly functioning conscience within us.

THE SUMMARY:

In this study we have seen...

The Characteristics Of A Strong Conscience:

#1 – A Strong Conscience Recognizes and Applies The Truth

An individual with a strong conscience consistently fulfills God's will for His life...

A strong conscience discerns between Godly and human teachings...

#2 - A Strong Conscience Sacrificially Helps Those Who Are Weaker In The Faith

An individual with a strong conscience does not argue over that which is uncertain...

An individual with a strong conscience accepts other's differences...

An individual with a strong conscience recognizes their accountability before God...

An individual with a strong conscience does not hinder the growth of the spiritually weak...

An individual with a strong conscience willingly abstains from exercising his liberty for the sake of the weak...

An individual with a strong conscience seeks things that they agree upon with the weak and things which build up the weak...

An individual with a strong conscience sacrifices for the benefit of the weak...

An individual with a strong conscience works for unity with the weak for the glory of God...

An individual with a strong conscience will speak the truth in love for the benefit of the weak...

#3 - A Strong Conscience Witnesses Of The Grace Of God

An individual with a strong conscience will be willing to speak to those of greater wealth, honor and position of authority...

An individual with a strong conscience recognizes and appreciates the blessings of God.

An individual with a strong conscience witnesses of the necessity of stewardship, the promise of rewards, and the blessings of eternity

May the Lord bless us as we seek His truth.

“The Four Types Of Consciences: A Weak Conscience”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

The Scriptures help us to understand that there are four different types of consciences that exist within man:

1. A Good Conscience
2. A Strong Conscience
3. A Weak Conscience
4. An Evil Conscience

Along with identifying these types of consciences, we also find teachings concerning the identifying marks of these consciences and how to maintain, or develop, the types of conscience that the Lord is pleased with. In this section of our study we will be looking at a “Weak” conscience...

THE SCRIPTURES:

Rom 14:1-23 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. (2) For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. (3) Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. (4) Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. (5) One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. (6) He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. (7) For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. (8) For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. (9) For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. (10) But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (11) For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (12) So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (13) Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. (14) I know, and am persuaded by

the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. (15) But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. (16) Let not then your good be evil spoken of: (17) For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (18) For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. (19) Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. (20) For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. (21) It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. (22) Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. (23) And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Rom 15:1-7 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (2) Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. (3) For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. (4) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (5) Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: (6) That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (7) Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

1Co 8:7-12 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. (8) But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. (9) But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. (10) For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; (11) And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? (12) But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

Eph 4:14-15 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Col 2:8-22 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (9) For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (11) In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: (12) Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation

of God, who hath raised him from the dead. (13) And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (14) Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (15) And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (16) Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: (17) Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. (18) Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, (19) And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. (20) Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (21) (Touch not; taste not; handle not; (22) Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Heb 5:12-14 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. (13) For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. (14) But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

THE STUDY:

The Characteristics Of A Weak Conscience:

#1 – It Is A Conscience Lacking Truth Possessed By A Saved Person (Possibly Attending Church)

(1 Corinthians 8:7)

1Co 8:7-12 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. (8) But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

They are saved people who are lacking the truths of God's Word. Because of this their conscience is functioning on a base that lacks a full understanding of the Word.

(Romans 14:1)

Rom 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye,

Although they possess a weak conscience, they can still be "in the faith".

#2 – Makes Hasty Judgments About Doubtful Things

(Romans 14:1)

but not to doubtful disputations.

One who is weak in the faith argues and makes judgments on doubtful things. They make judgments that are not based on a "thus saith the Lord", but are based upon a lack of Biblical knowledge.

#3 – Very Critical Of Others

(Romans 14:2-4)

(2) For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. (3) Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. (4) Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth... Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind... (10) But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (11) For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (12) So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Paul teaches us several truths about those who are quick to judge over doubtful things... Paul uses the issue of eating meat offered to idols. He emphasizes that in these issues:

1. we are to allow freedom for each individual to make up their own mind.
2. we are to refrain from judging others about these doubtful teachings.
3. we are to remember that each one of us are held accountable and will personally answer to the Lord for what we do in our own lives.

Based upon the above three points, it makes it plain that any judgements that are made should be done by those who are spiritually mature, from a heart of love and a desire to help those who are being judged.

#4 – It Is Unstable, Stumbles Easily

(Romans 14:13)

(13) Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. (14) I know, and am persuaded by

the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

Those who have weak consciences, due to a lack of a firm Biblical foundation, find themselves easily stumbling being misled by ungodly examples, or unscriptural teachings. Many times, they will be hindered in their Christian walk as they follow those who will lead them away from the path that the Lord would have for them to take.

#5 – It Is Easily Wounded Or Offended

(Romans 14:15-16, 1Corinthians 8:12)

(15) But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. (16) Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

Those who are weak will be easily wounded and offended. Because of this, great charity and care should be used when working with these individuals. By mishandling the situation, those who are trying to help can actually makes matters worse.

(9) But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. (10) For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; (11) And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? (12) But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

Also, in many cases, those who are stronger in the faith must limit the exercise of their won personal liberties for the sake of those who are weaker. In the case above, although eating meat offered to idols is a liberty that strong Christians possess, Paul teaches that the exercise of this liberty should be withheld for the good of those who could misinterpret our actions.

#6 – It Has Confused Priorities

(Romans 14:17)

(17) For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (18) For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. (19) Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. (20) For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. (21) It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. (22) Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. (23) And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Due to the lack of Biblical foundation for the judgments their conscience makes, the weak continually doubt themselves and unsure of the appropriate course that should be taken. Their priorities become confused with

them not knowing that these doubtful issues are not to be their number one priority in life. Instead, their first priority is to have a close walk with the Lord and doing everything in a spirit of trust and joy in Christ.

#7 – It Is Legalistic (Imposing Man’s Rules Upon Others)

(Colossians 2:8, 20-22)

Col 2:8-22 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (9) For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (11) In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: (12) Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. (13) And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (14) Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (15) And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (16) Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: (17) Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. (18) Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, (19) And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. (20) Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (21) (Touch not; taste not; handle not; (22) Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Those whose conscience is weak has a tendency to impose the regulations of man upon themselves and others. Instead of being able to discern God’s desires for our lives, they find themselves attempting to enforce the legalistic laws of man mistaking them for the laws of God.

Paul describes these human regulations as “philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”. He then goes further by stating “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?”

#8 – It Is Weak Due To Lack of Exercise

(Hebrews 5:12-14)

Heb 5:12-14 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. (13) For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. (14) But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

For those who are spiritually weak, we find another aspect of their weakness involves not exercising their conscience as they should. Instead of following it's urgings, they turn from the revelation of their conscience and ignore it. This hinders the work of their conscience, deadening it, causing them to have difficulty in discerning between good and evil.

The Cure For A Weak Conscience:

#1 – Speaking The Truth In Love

(Ephesians 4:14-15)

Eph 4:14-15 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

By those who are strong kindly speaking the truth to the weak, motivated from a heart of love and desire to help them grow, the weak can be taught resulting in their spiritual maturity.

#2 – Received and Nurtured By Mature Christians

(Romans 14:1)

Rom 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

We are to bring to hold close to ourselves those who are weak. They are to be nurtured and gently cared for by mature Christians who are well equipped to meet their needs through the gracious intervention of Christ.

#3 – Edification

(Romans 14:13-23)

Rom 14:13-23 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way... (19) Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another... (21) It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. (22) Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. (23) And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

The two great needs of the weak Christian is "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another". Through the intervention of those who are mature, peace can be brought into those who find themselves weak in the faith. Through the proper teaching and examples, those who are weak can grow in the faith and become very useful vessels in the service of Christ.

#4 – Sacrifices Made For Them (Take Great Care In Speaking And Working With Them)

(Romans 15:1)

Rom 15:1-3 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (2) Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. (3) For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

This includes loving self-sacrifice on the part of the strong. Some of those sacrifices may include:

1. helping to support the weak in areas where they are spiritually weak and sickly.
2. teaching and setting the example so that they may be built up in the faith.
3. exposing themselves to ridicule and criticism for giving their attention to the weak.

Do We Have A Weak Conscience?

#1 – Are You Not Receiving Teaching From The Word On A Regular Basis?

#2 – Do You Have A Tendency To Make Hasty Judgments About Things That Are Not Clearly Taught In The Word Of God?

#3 – Do You Find Yourself To Be Very Critical Of Others?

#4 – Are You Easily Hindered In Your Spiritual Walk?

#5 – Do You Have A Hard Time Taking Criticism From Others?

#6 – Do You Have Trouble Setting Godly Priorities?

#7 – Do You Find Yourself Imposing Man's Rules Upon Others?

#8 – Do You Ignore the Conviction of Your Conscience By Acting Against It?

THE SUMMARY:

In this study we have seen...

The Characteristics Of A Weak Conscience:

- #1 – It Is A Conscience Lacking Truth Possessed By A Saved Person (Possibly Attending Church)
- #2 – Makes Hasty Judgments About Doubtful Things
- #3 – Very Critical Of Others
- #4 – It Is Unstable, Stumbles Easily
- #5 – It Is Easily Wounded Or Offended
- #6 – It Has Confused Priorities
- #7 – It Is Legalistic (Imposing Man's Rules Upon Others)
- #8 – It Is Weak Due To Lack of Exercise

The Cure For A Weak Conscience:

- #1 – Speaking The Truth In Love
- #2 – Received and Nurtured By Mature Christians
- #3 – Edification
- #4 – Sacrifices Made For Them (Take Great Care In Speaking And Working With Them)

“The Four Types Of Consciences: An Evil Conscience”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

The Scriptures help us to understand that there are four different types of consciences that exist within man:

1. A Good Conscience
2. A Strong Conscience
3. A Weak Conscience
4. An Evil Conscience

Along with identifying these types of consciences, we also find teachings concerning the identifying marks of these consciences and how to maintain, or develop, the types of conscience that the Lord is pleased with. In this section of our study we will be looking at an “Evil” conscience...

THE SCRIPTURES:

7) Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8) Make me to hear joy and gladness; [that] the bones [which] thou hast broken may rejoice. 9) Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10) Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11) Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12) Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me [with thy] free spirit. 13) [Then] will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. (Psalms 51:7-13)

8) The wisdom of the prudent [is] to understand his way: but the folly of fools [is] deceit. 9) Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous [there is] favour. (Proverbs 14:8-9)

20) Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21) Woe unto [*them that are*] wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (Isaiah 5:20-21)

1) Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because [*there is*] no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. 2) By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. 3) Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. 4) Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people [*are*] as they that strive with the priest. 5) Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother. (Hosea 4:1-5)

5) Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6) And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in [*their*] hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7) Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (Matthew 4:5-7)

22) The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23) But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [*is*] that darkness! 24) No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:22-24)

1) There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2) The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

(John 3:1-2)

28) And even as they did not like to retain God in [*their*] knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29) Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30) Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31) Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32) Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. (Romans 1:28-32)

8) For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though [*it were*] but for a season. 9) Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10) For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11) For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, [*what*] clearing of yourselves, yea,

[what] indignation, yea, [what] fear, yea, [what] vehement desire, yea, [what] zeal, yea, [what] revenge! In all [things] ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. (2 Corinthians 7:8-11)

18) (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19) Whose end [is] destruction, whose God [is their] belly, and [whose] glory [is] in their shame, who mind earthly things.) (Philippians 3:18-19)

6) Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8) Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things. 9) Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. (Philippians 4:6-9)

1) Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3) Forbidding to marry, [and commanding] to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4) For every creature of God [is] good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5) For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:1-5)

11) But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us]. 13) For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14) How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:11-14)

19) Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20) By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21) And [having] an high priest over the house of God; 22) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23) Let us hold fast the profession of [our] faith without wavering; (for he [is] faithful that promised;) 24) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: (Hebrews 10:19-24)

5) This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6) If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:5-10)

1) Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. 4) Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. (1 John 3:1-4)

THE STUDY:

The Characteristics Of An Evil Conscience:

#1 – It will call Evil, Good and Good, Evil

(Isaiah 5:20-21)

20) Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21) Woe unto [them that are] wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

An evil conscience is twisted, unable to recognize the true nature of good and evil. It relies upon fallen human reasoning and appearance, apart from God's Word, to make its judgments.

(Romans 1:28-32)

28) And even as they did not like to retain God in [their] knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29) Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30) Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31) Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32) Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

The type of mind that cannot properly discern between good and evil is described as a "reprobate" mind. In other words, it is a mind that is worthless and rejected by the Lord. The reprobate mind causes the life to be filled with acts of sinfulness and a rejection and ignoring of the principles of God's Word.

#2 – It calls Shame, Glory and Glory, Shame

(Philippians 3:18-19)

18) (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [*that they are*] the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19) Whose end [*is*] destruction, whose God [*is their*] belly, and [*whose*] glory [*is*] in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

An evil conscience finds a reason for boasting in doing shameful things. It proudly proclaims it's works of wickedness while shying away from doing that which is pleasing to God.

#3 – It is a Conscience that is Nourished By Darkness

(Matthew 6:22-24)

22) The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23) But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [*is*] that darkness! 24) No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

When feeding upon darkness, the conscience is spiritually blind and unable to make judgments in the light of God's Word. The end result are choices motivated to please the sinful flesh and made in opposition to the desires of God.

#4 – It Is A Conscience that is Burned and Scarred Until No Longer Effective

(I Timothy 4:1-5)

1) Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3) Forbidding to marry, [*and commanding*] to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4) For every creature of God [*is*] good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5) For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

It is possible for the conscience to become "seared" and scarred resulting in it becoming less sensitive to evil. Over time this scarring can become so severe, that it's influence and effectiveness can be rendered useless.

How does this take place?

(Proverbs 14:8-9)

8) The wisdom of the prudent [*is*] to understand his way: but the folly of fools [*is*] deceit. 9) Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous [*there is*] favour.

By not taking sin seriously....

(Hosea 4:1-5)

1) Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because [*there is*] no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. 2) By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. 3) Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. 4) Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people [*are*] as they that strive with the priest. 5) Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

Failure to reverence God by respecting God's holiness and justice....

(1 John 1:5-10)

5) This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6) If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [*our*] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

By ignoring and covering our sin instead of forsaking it...

Every time that the urgings of the conscience are ignored it "scars" the conscience causing it to be slightly less sensitive to evil. If this ignoring of the conscience continues, over time its influence and effectiveness is diminished. Finally the conscience becomes evil and no longer an effective tool to discern evil and make lifestyle choices.

The Cure For An Evil Conscience:

#1 – Confess and Repent Sin

(Psalms 51:7-13)

7) Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8) Make me to hear joy and gladness; [that] the bones [which] thou hast broken may rejoice. 9) Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10) Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11) Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12) Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me [with thy] free spirit. 13) [Then] will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

The acknowledgment and forsaking of sin is a key element to restoration from an evil conscience. This should be done motivated by a desire to have a closer relationship with the Lord and to share the truths of God's Word with others, leading them to Christ.

#2 – Rely On The Lord To Cleanse The Conscience

(Hebrews 9:11-14)

11) But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us]. 13) For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14) How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

It is only as an act of divine grace that we can receive a cleansed, renewed conscience. Our attempts at self-reformation and self-purification are of no value in this situation. It will only be a spirit of humility and reliance upon the work of Christ on the cross that that allows us to receive the purification of the conscience resulting in service to the Lord.

#3 – Draw Near To God Through Prayer and The Word

(Hebrews 10:19-24)

19) Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20) By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21) And [having] an high priest over the house of God; 22) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23) Let us hold fast the profession of [our] faith without wavering; (for

he [*is*] faithful that promised; 24) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

In this text God's Word is pictured as flowing water that can cleanse the conscience from the effects of sin. This takes place following the work of Christ giving us access to His presence, followed by the application of the Word to our lives resulting in a purification of the conscience and cleansing of our lives. Motivated by appreciation for this gracious cleansing, we are to speak of our faith to others, live holy lives of obedience to Christ, and seek to encourage others to love and serve the Lord.

#4 – Feed Conscience With Right Diet

6) Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8) Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [*are*] honest, whatsoever things [*are*] just, whatsoever things [*are*] pure, whatsoever things [*are*] lovely, whatsoever things [*are*] of good report; if [*there be*] any virtue, and if [*there be*] any praise, think on these things. 9) Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. (Philippians 4:6-9)

Keep in mind, one of the great causes of an evil conscience is feeding upon error and rejecting the truth of God's Word. Here, we find that a remedy for that situation is to feed on the Word of God and then meditate upon that which is found therein. By doing this, we are laying a foundation of truth through which the conscience can now function.

Do We Have An Evil Conscience?

#1 – Do We Play With Sin?

(Proverbs 14:8-9)

8) The wisdom of the prudent [*is*] to understand his way: but the folly of fools [*is*] deceit. 9) Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous [*there is*] favour.

An evil conscience will minimize the harmfulness of sin and encourage the commission of sin in the life.

#2 – Is Our Repentance of a Godly Sort or Is It Simply Sorrow Of The World?

(2 Corinthians 7:8-11)

8) For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though [*it were*] but for a season. 9) Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10) For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11) For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, [*what*] clearing of yourselves, yea, [*what*] indignation, yea, [*what*] fear, yea, [*what*] vehement desire, yea, [*what*] zeal, yea, [*what*] revenge! In all [*things*] ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. A godly sorrow for sin is motivated by an intense desire to please the Lord and glorify His name. It is being sorry because we have sinned against God. It is self-sacrificial by nature.

The sorrow of the world is a sorrow motivated by sorrow that we were caught in our sin and now must face punishment for that which we have done. It is selfish by nature.

#3 – Do We Measure Sin As “Big” and “Little”?

(1 John 3:4)

4) Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

All sin is a transgression of God’s law and goes against the very nature of God. Any sin that is committed goes against the desires of God and will have lasting spiritual results.

#4 – Are We More Concerned About Our Reputation Than Our Character?

(John 3:1-2)

1) There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2) The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Nicodemus was so concerned about “what others would say”, that he approached Christ in the nighttime, hoping to not be seen by others. Although he was pleased God by coming to Christ, he chose to hide his trip knowing others would be fault-finding and critical of his actions.

#5 – Do We Argue With The Truth?

(Matthew 4:5-7)

5) Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6) And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in [*their*] hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7) Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Here, we can see Satan misapplying God's Word using it as a temptation to sin. How sad to think that the Word of God, that which was meant to lead us to righteousness, can be used to argue the need to perform acts of wickedness. This is exactly what each of us can do if we twist the meanings of God's Word to justify the sins that we commit in our lives.

#6 – Do we believe we are living a perfect, sinless life on earth? Are we blinded to the sin that we commit?

14) For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15) For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that [it is] good. 17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but [how] to perform that which is good I find not. 19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

(Romans 7:14-25)

THE SUMMARY:

In this study we have seen...

The Characteristics Of An Evil Conscience:

- #1 – It will call Evil, Good and Good, Evil
- #2 – It calls Shame, Glory and Glory, Shame
- #3 – It is a Conscience that is Nourished By Darkness
- #4 – It Is A Conscience that is Burned and Scarred Until No Longer Effective

The Cure For An Evil Conscience:

- #1 – Confess and Repent Sin
- #2 – Rely On The Lord To Cleanse The Conscience
- #3 – Draw Near To God Through Prayer and The Word
- #4 – Feed Conscience With Right Diet

Do We Have An Evil Conscience?

- #1 – Do We Play With Sin?
- #2 – Is Our Repentance of a Godly Sort or Is It Simply Sorrow Of The World?
- #3 – Do We Measure Sin As "Big" and "Little"?
- #4 – Are We More Concerned About Our Reputation Than Our Character?
- #5 – Do We Argue With The Truth?

“Civil Disobedience”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

It is a very dangerous thing to oppose a body which has God-given authority (ie the family, the church, the government).

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation... (Romans 13:1-2)

THE SCRIPTURES:

19) But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20) For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

**21) So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all [*men*] glorified God for that which was done.
(Acts 4:19-21)**

29) Then Peter and the [*other*] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

(Acts 5:29)

1) Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3) For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4) For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [*execute*] wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5) Wherefore [*ye*] must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

6) For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7) Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute [*is due*]; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. 8) Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 9) For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if [*there be*] any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10) Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling of the law. 11) And that, knowing the time, that now [it is] high time to awake out of sleep: for now [is] our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof]. (Romans 13:1-14)

THE STUDY:

Why are we to obey civil governments? (All texts from Romans 13:)

1. To Avoid God's Wrath

1) Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3) For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4) For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil.

The human governments were established by the Lord to punish evildoers and avenge the abused. When the governments are fulfilling their God-given responsibilities, we need to support and submit ourselves to its laws.

2. For Our Conscience's Sake

5) Wherefore [ye] must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6) For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7) Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute [is due]; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

We are to follow the dictates of our conscience, and monetarily support human governments, knowing that they exist for our good and the glory and honor of our Lord. They are the Lord's minister, we are to be supportive of their ministry.

3. For Love's Sake

8) Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 9) For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if [there be] any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 10) Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling of the law.

Motivated by love for our fellow man, we are to be supportive of the human government that is fighting to stop abuse and harm coming to those we love. This is done by the government upholding the moral laws of God and punishing those who choose to selfishly abuse others.

4. For Jesus's Sake

11) And that, knowing the time, that now [it is] high time to awake out of sleep: for now [is] our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof].

Submitting ourselves to our government will enhance our public testimony. Submission to governments who are upholding His commands will result in us living holy lives that will glorify Him and set a good example for others to follow.

There are times when we are to disobey governments for the sake of Christ...

(Acts 4:19-21)

19) But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20) For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. 21) So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all [men] glorified God for that which was done.

(Acts 5:29-32)

29) Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30) The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31) Him hath God exalted with his right hand [to be] a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32) And we are his witnesses of these things; and [so is] also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

In both the above texts, we find the early Christians choosing to continue to tell others about the Lord Jesus, in opposition to the government's attempts to stop their witness. Peter describes it as "We ought to obey God rather than man" in other words, "the proper thing to do is to submit to the desires of God and put them ahead of the desires of the government."

We have this same principle brought out in several other examples in the Bible:

1. Exodus 1: - The midwives chose to save the children of the Hebrews instead of murdering them as the government had commanded.
2. Daniel 1: - Daniel and the Hebrew children chose to not partake of the unlawful food given to them by the government
3. Daniel 6: - Daniel continued to set the proper example by praying in public in opposition to the command of the government.
4. Jeremiah 37:-38: - Jeremiah refused to rely upon a heathen nation, as dictated by the government, but chose to rely upon His God.
5. Acts 28: - Paul chose to continue His ministry in opposition to the governments command resulting in Him being imprisoned by Rome.
6. Rev 1:9 – John had been placed upon the isle of Patmos by Rome as a punishment for His continuing to minister for Christ.

Principles To Follow In Civil Disobedience (from Romans 13:)

1. We must be sure we have a consistent Godly testimony

13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof].

2. Our disobedience must be based upon CLEAR Biblical teachings

5) Wherefore [ye] must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

3. We must always be exhibiting love and concern for others during our disobedience

9) For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if [there be] any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 10) Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling of the law.

4. We must disobey with the goal to be a witness of the glory of God. This means we must behave as Christ would behave.

14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof].

5. We are to disobey only when all other avenues have been exhausted

18) If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

(Romans 12:18)

PLEASE REMEMBER, TO CONSCIENCIOUSLY OBJECT TO THE GOVERNMENT MEANS:

- 1. TO OBJECT TO SOMETHING BASED UPON THE DICTATES OF OUR CONSCIENCE**
- 2. TO OBJECT TO SOMETHING USING OUR CONSCIENCE TO GUIDE US WHILE WE ARE OBJECTING**

THE SUMMARY:

Why are we to obey civil governments? (All texts from Romans 13:)

1. To Avoid God's Wrath
2. For Our Conscience's Sake
3. For Love's Sake
4. For Jesus's Sake

There are times when we are to disobey governments for the sake of Christ...

1. Exodus 1: - The midwives chose to save the children of the Hebrews instead of murdering them as the government had commanded.
2. Daniel 1: - Daniel and the Hebrew children chose to not partake of the unlawful food given to them by the government
3. Daniel 6: - Daniel continued to set the proper example by praying in public in opposition to the command of the government.

4. Jeremiah 37:-38: - Jeremiah refused to rely upon a heathen nation, as dictated by the government, but chose to rely upon His God.
5. Acts 28: - Paul chose to continue His ministry in opposition to the governments command resulting in Him being emprisoned by Rome.
6. Rev 1:9 – John had been place upon the isle of Patmos by Rome as a punishment for His continuing to minister for Christ.

Principles To Follow In Civil Disobedience (from Romans 13:):...

1. We must be sure we have a consistent Godly testimony
2. Our disobedience must be based upon CLEAR Biblical teachings
3. We must always be exhibiting love and concern for others during our disobedience
4. We must disobey with the goal to be a witness of the glory of God. This means we must behave as Christ would behave.
5. We are to disobey only when all other avenues have been exhausted

“Summary Of Our Study”

**“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

(Prov 28:1)

As our study on the human conscience comes to an end. I would like us to take a few moments to review our study and look at a text from Proverbs 28:1.... **“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”** (Prov 28:1)

THE SCRIPTURES:

1) The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

(Proverbs 28:1 - KJV)

1) The lawless, fleeth when no man pursueth, but, the righteous, like a lion, are confident.

(Proverbs 28:1 - EBR)

THE STUDY:

What a grand way to end our study of the human conscience, we will now take a few moments to study our theme verse. A verse that is a great summary to our entire series...

Here, we see the work of the conscience in the life one who has been unfaithful to the Lord and following a path of sin....

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth:”

“Those who have broken the commands of the Lord will run to a hiding place when no man is hunting or persecuting them.” Why will this take place? Why is one a fugitive when one man is attempting to catch and harm him? He does this because of the powerful testimony of the conscience at work in his life.

We have all experienced guilt in our lives. It is a very powerful emotion that changes the way we perceive everything around us... a perfect example of the power of guilt is found in Leviticus 26:27-37. Here, the Lord is speaking to those who have willfully rebelled against His desires for the nation of Israel. They had chosen to replace the worship of Jehovah with the worship of false idols. Look at how He responds to their sinfulness...

27) And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;

Due to their willful rebellion against the Lord and the testimony of their conscience...

28) Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins...

The Lord would intervene in two ways:

First, He would take away many of the blessings that they no longer appreciated...

29) And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

30) And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

31) And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.

32) And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

33) And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

34) Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye [*be*] in your enemies' land; [*even*] then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.

35) As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

Secondly, He would place in their hearts a spirit of fear and paranoia, through the continuing testimony of their conscience....

36) And upon them that are left [*alive*] of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.

37) And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

“but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

In comparison, those who are diligent in following the promptings of their conscience, possess an inner spiritual confidence and strength that is founded upon their close relationship with their Lord. We have that principle shown to us in 1 John 3:19-22 ...

19) And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

By knowing that we have applied the truth of God to our lives, we can have confidence that we are one of His people.

20) For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

If our human fallen fleshly conscience is telling us that we have sin in our lives, how many more sins are seen by the Holy God who knows all things? If our conscience is telling us we have sin in our life, we can rest assured our sin does not stop there. There are probably many other sins we commit that are known by God but unknown to us at our current level of spiritual maturity.

21) Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, [*then*] have we confidence toward God.

22) And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

The blessing of having a clear conscience before God involves:

1. knowing we have a close relationship with Him, we are saved and putting Him first in our lives.

2. knowing that the same God that saved us, is the same God that promises to be with us, lead us, protect us and accompany us throughout our walk on earth. We can no with certainty He will bless us for our faithfulness to Him.
3. knowing that as we pray in His will, He will grant our requests as He works out what is best for our lives.

All of this becomes a reality to us as we see His gracious intervention exhibited in our lives through a changed life of obedience to Him. When we see obedience in our lives, we are also viewing His grace at work in our lives. Our lives of obedience is a great source of confidence that we are truly saved and in a close walk with Him.

Proverb 28:1 is a case study of the results of going against the urgings of our conscience and committing willful, rebellious sin in the life....

1. The Lord takes away material blessings
2. The Lord takes away spiritual blessings of confidence, bravery and reliance upon Him
3. The Lord allows them to become a defeated and powerless people that was bringing shame to the cause of their Lord.

And in comparison the results of following our conscience and living lives of service that glorify and honor Him...

1. We know the Lord will meet our every need as our loving heavenly Father.
2. We know the Lord will bless us spiritually granting us confidence, bravery and reliance upon Him.
3. We know the Lord will enable us to be powerful, victorious servants, glorifying Him in all areas of our lives.

After reading these texts, helping us to understand the benefits of following our conscience, and seeing the harmful results of ignoring the conscience's testimony in our lives, how can we not strive to follow our conscience every day? In doing so, we will be glorifying our Lord and living a blessed life of close communion with Him.

THE SUMMARY:

In our study of the human conscience we have seen:

Lesson One and Lesson Four

1. That the conscience is the gracious gift given by God that is a guide for our lives. The guiding of the conscience is based upon the perceived truth that we have within us. This emphasizes to us the importance of having a well-rounded knowledge of Scripture which can form the foundation of the working of our conscience.
2. The conviction of the conscience and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, although similar and related are, in actually, two separate types of conviction from the Lord.

We saw that conscience conviction without the Holy Spirit's workings results in: sorrow without Godly intervention and eternal spiritual death. Compare this to the conscience that is used as a tool by the Holy Spirit to convict and convince results in: sorrow that results in turning from the sin to service to God; sorrow that is a gift of God's grace; sorrow that results in repentance and salvation; sorrow for sin that is permanent; and sorrow that results in Godliness as a top priority of life.

Lesson Two

3. The conscience of man was active within men during the times of the Old Testament and times of the New Testament as well.

Lesson Three

4. The conscience works in many and varied ways but all its workings are aimed towards bringing us into alignment with the will of God for our lives.

Lesson Five

5. For the truth of God's Word to affect our lifestyle, the truth must be received in our mind and conscience and then applied to our will.

Lesson Six

6. The ministries of the conscience can be pictured by a messenger, an eye, and a rod. It is through its three ministries that we can come to understand our true spiritual condition and the spiritual needs of our lives

Lesson Seven

7. The conscience helps us in seven ways to better serve Christ... It guides our conduct; It strengthens us for service; it enhances our fellowship; it encourages our witnessing; it aids our prayerlife; it teaches us to be Godly citizens; it builds our character.

Lesson Eight through Eleven

8. There are four types of consciences described in the Bible: Good, Strong, Weak, and Evil.

9. We looked at the many differing characteristics, marks and keys to properly deal with each type in our life.

10. We are to strive to obtain a good and strong conscience; while constantly on guard against allowing our conscience to become weak, or evil.

11. One of the main keys to developing the desired type of conscience lies in our hearing, believing, and applying the truths of God's Word to our life. Also, the need to heed the urgings of the conscience and to live our lives according to its leadership is an important factor as well.

Lesson Twelve

12. We saw the importance of submitting to the God-given authorities that are over us. These included (family, church and government)

13. We saw several examples of those who chose to follow the Lord's will for their lives and in doing so, they rebelled against sinful desires of the government that was over them.

14. Finally, in the rare event we must disobey the government to make Christ our first priority we must: be sure we have a consistent Godly testimony; disobey only based upon CLEAR Biblical teachings; always be exhibiting love and concern for others during our disobedience; disobey with the goal to be a witness of the glory of God; behave as Christ would behave.

By God's grace let us all be aware of the importance and condition of our consciences. In doing so, let us all strive to maintain a good and strong conscience that will be a constant companion as we live our lives for Christ.