

Doctrine of the Conscience

1. It is possible to feel guilty about some matters where no guilt is present.
 - *1 Cor 10:25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:*
2. While others may give wrong meaning to social practices there need be no sin in the soul if the same situation can be done to the glory of God.
 - *1 Cor 10:27 27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.*
3. If the participation in a specific event will violate the conscience of someone else or give offense it is better to demonstrate social grace and refrain from giving offense.
 - *1 Cor 10:28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:*
 - *1 Cor 10:29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?*
 - *2 Cor 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.*
4. Every believer is called upon to renounce secret sins, questionable practices, and a deceitful handling of *Scripture* that would justify the unthinkable. The purpose for such a renewed conduct is to be able to have a good conscience in the sight of God.
 - *2 Cor 4:2 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.*
5. With a good conscience the heart will want to engage in good deeds towards others.
 - *1 Tim 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:*
6. It is not easy to hold onto a good conscience for there are many enemies of the soul seeking its downfall and destruction.
 - *1 Tim 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:*

7. One of the grand objectives in the Christian's life is to have a pure conscience so that belief and behavior match.

- *1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*

8. It is possible for the conscience to become insensitive to the point it is likened to being seared with a hot iron. Nothing touches the conscience when it becomes this hardened.

- *1 Tim 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

Neither fearful threats of exposure, nor faithful warnings of ultimate damnation, neither the tragic consequences of others or the wretchedness of public shame and exposure will stop the soul from sinning when the conscience is seared and the heart is hardened.

9. Paul was able to maintain a good conscience before God following salvation.

- *2 Tim 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;*

10. Some of the most tragic words in the Bible are these: "*and conscience is defiled.*" The conscience is defiled because there is no longer anything considered holy or sacred.

- ❑ Unbelief defiles sacred time—it no longer exists
- ❑ Unbelief defiles sex—marriage is no longer the place for intimacy
- ❑ Unbelief defiles life—for life is easily destroyed almost before it begins
- ❑ Unbelief defiles the Moral Law—it is no longer binding (Rom. 13:8,9).

- *Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*

11. Because sin has defiled the conscience redemption is necessary. But what can cleanse the conscience? Good works? Animal sacrifices? No. Only the blood of Christ applied to the soul by faith.

- *Heb 9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;*
- *Heb 9:14 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?*

- *Heb 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*
12. God offers to give men access to His heart with full assurance of faith and clean hearts.
- *Heb 10:22 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.*
13. Believers must pray for one another to have a good conscience.
- *Heb 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.*
14. It is commendable when a Christian endures wrong actions and attitudes because his conscience is turned towards God.
- *1 Pet 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.*
14. By having a good conscience sinners can be put to shame.
- *1 Pet 3:16 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.*
15. Gospel obedience produces a good and clear conscience before God.
- *1 Pet 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Doctrine of the Conscience

1. The word for conscience is *suneidesis*, which literally means "a knowing with" (sun, with, oida, to know). *suneidesis* is a co-knowledge with oneself.
2. The conscience refers to the moral sensitivity to be accountable, to fulfill an obligation, to keep a commitment. The Bible recognizes that the conscience can either be good, defiled, or seared (John 8:9; Rom. 2:15; 1 Cor. 8:7; 10:28; 2 Tim. 1:3; 1 Tim. 3:9). With the conscience we come to know what is right and what is wrong based upon a sense of innate justice.
3. Every person has a conscience, which is developed according to personality, society, and religious instruction.
4. When the Law of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments, is violated, there is a sense of guiltiness before God. The guilt is healthy because individuals are kept sensitive to sin. Confession of guilt is elicited and righteousness is sought.
 - *Hebrews 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*
5. The Law of God can be violated apart from any personal knowledge of Holy Scripture as per Rom. 2:15 as the conscience distinguishes between what is morally good and bad. While societies differ according to custom and law, there are certain things that are universally recognized as wrong such as murder, stealing, lying, and adultery.
 - *Romans 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;)*
6. In the conscience the peace of God can be discerned and find confirmation with the Holy Spirit.
 - *Romans 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,*
7. When a Christian lives with integrity, there is a consciousness or awareness of that fact in the conscience.
 - *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.*

8. The way to live with integrity is to do what is right because conscience requires it.
 - *Romans 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*
9. Christians are not to question or violate the integrity of the conscience of others in doubtful matters.
 - *1 Corinthians 10:28-29 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: 29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?*
10. The Christian is to live so as to commend himself to every man's conscience.
 - *2 Corinthians 4:2 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 5:11 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.*
11. It is possible to have a conscience which is not strong enough to discern between what is lawful and what is unlawful.
 - *1 Corinthians 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.*
 - *1 Corinthians 8:10 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;*
 - *1 Corinthians 8:12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.*
12. The presence of God prevails the life of the believer through the conscience.
 - *1 Peter 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.*
13. The sacrifices of old could never cleanse or perfect the conscience.
 - *Hebrews 9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;*

14. The conscience is described in many ways:

- a good conscience

Acts 23:1 *1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.*

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

1 Timothy 1:19 *Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:*

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

1 Peter 3:16 *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 3:21 *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:*

- a clear conscience

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

- a weak conscience

1 Corinthians 8:8 *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.*

Titus 1:15 *Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*

- a pure conscience

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

2 Timothy 1:3 *I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;*

- a seared conscience

1 Timothy 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

- a purged conscience

Hebrews 9:14 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?

- a guilt conscience

Hebrews 10:22 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.