

# A Consideration of the Conscience

The conscience is that part of our being that passes moral judgments on our thoughts and actions.

Key Verses: Rom 2:15 (NASB) in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,  
Rom 2:16 (NASB) on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

It is the conscience that convicts us of wrong doing.

Theme: A consideration of the 5 conditions of the conscience of which the Bible speaks.

I. The Bible speaks of a pure conscience.

1 Tim 3:8 (KJV) Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

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

A. A “pure conscience” is one that is free from guilt and self-condemnation. It is a conscience that knows nothing against itself. This conscience pronounces one’s self innocent of wrong doing.

1 Cor 4:4 (NASB) For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

B. This conscience can also be described as a “clear” conscience.

1 Tim 3:9 (NIV) They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

1 Tim 3:9 (NASB) but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

C. This conscience , or any other conscience, is not infallible.

1 Cor 4:3 (NASB) But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine

myself.

1 Cor 4:4 (NASB) For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

- D. We should always seek to live so as to have a pure conscience.

Acts 24:16 (NIV) So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

1 Tim 1:5 (NASB) But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

- E. A “pure” or “clear” conscience is a great blessing.

Rom 9:1 (NIV) I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit--

2 Cor 1:12 (NASB) For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.

2 Tim 1:3 (NASB) I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day

- II. The Bible speaks of a “good” conscience.

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

Heb 13:18 (NASB) Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.

- A. A “good” conscience is one that is operating well. It is a conscience that can be relied upon to make “good” or “appropriate” value judgments.

1 Pet 3:16 (NASB) and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

1 Pet 3:17 (NASB) For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

- B. It is a conscience that truly desires to do what is right.

1 Tim 1:18 (NIV) Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight,

1 Tim 1:19 (NIV) holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.

III. The Bible speaks of a “weak” conscience.

1 Cor 8:6 (NIV) yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

1 Cor 8:7 (NIV) But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

A. The weak conscience is easily influenced by the actions and convictions of others.

1 Cor 8:8 (NIV) But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

1 Cor 8:9 (NIV) Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

1 Cor 8:10 (NIV) For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols?

B. The weak conscience is easily defiled.

1. Defiled - That which is made impure, or dirty.

2. This would stand in contrast to a “pure” or “clean” conscience that knows nothing against itself.

3. The “weak” conscience becomes “dirty” when a person does something that they are not thoroughly convinced that it is the right thing for him\her to do.

C. We should be mindful of how our attitudes and actions affect those who have a weak conscience.

1 Cor 8:11 (NIV) So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge.

1 Cor 8:12 (NIV) When you sin against your brothers in this way and

wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

1 Cor 8:13 (NIV) Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

IV. The Bible speaks of an “evil” conscience.

Heb 10:22 (NASB) let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Heb 10:22 (KJV) 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.

Heb 10:22 (NIV) let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

It is a guilty conscience that results from having done evil.

It can also mean a bad, or worthless conscience rendering false positives.

A. Thus an “evil” conscience could stand opposite of a pure confidence.

Heb 10:22 (NIV) let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

B. Or, it could stand opposite to a “good” conscience.

Heb 10:22 (NIV) let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

V. The fifth conscience is a “seared” conscience.

1 Tim 4:1 (NASB) But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

1 Tim 4:2 (NASB) by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

A. The branding iron is a mark of ownership.

1. The seared iron marks the individual as owned by Satan.

1 Tim 4:2 (NASB) by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron.

2. These are hypocrites who constantly go against their conscience.

B. These are individuals who are promoting a false godliness. They find fault with practices that they are not truly convicted of, and we should not be convicted of them either.

1 Tim 4:3 (NASB) men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

C. This conscience does not promote faith but rather leads one away from the true faith.

1 Tim 4:4 (NASB) For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude;

1 Tim 4:5 (NASB) for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

D. We should be working to create in ourselves and others a “good” conscience.

1 Tim 4:6 (NASB) In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

VI. How are to develop our consciences?

A. We should confess our sins so as to have a clear conscience.

Heb 10:19 (NASB) Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

Heb 10:20 (NASB) by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

Heb 10:21 (NASB) and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

Heb 10:22 (NASB) let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- B. We should exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to have a “pure” conscience.

Titus 1:15 (NASB) To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

Heb 9:9 (NIV) This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.

- C. We are to rely upon the Holy Spirit to create within us a cleansed conscience (one that is not defiled.)

Heb 9:14 (NIV) How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

- D. We are to pray for the moral strength to follow our convictions (consciences). Thus our consciences will not be “weak”.

Heb 13:18 (NIV) Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

- E. We are to avail ourselves of the word of God which will teach us and provide us with “good” consciences that accurately discern our hearts.

Heb 4:12 (NIV) For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.