

Serving God With A Pure Conscience

2 Timothy 1:3

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Paul Spoke Of His Pure Conscience

- In his defense before the council – Acts 23:1
- In his defense before Felix – Acts 24:15-16
- In his last epistle to Timothy – 2 Timothy 1:3

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The Role Our Conscience Plays Is Often Misunderstood...

- Some assume it is to be the final authority for what you do. **Proverbs 14:12;** cf. **Colossians 3:17; Matthew 21:23ff**
- "Let your conscience be your guide" is the motto for many.
- **Yet, your conscience can sometimes lead you astray!**

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The Value of a Good Conscience Is Perhaps Often Overlooked...

- Some do not listen to their conscience when they should. cf. 1 Corinthians 8:7
- Some think nothing of the consequences of violating their conscience. cf. 1 Corinthians 8:8-13
- **Yet, ignoring your conscience can lead to sin, unbelief, and apostasy!**

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The Conscience Defined

- "...that process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad, commending the good, condemning the bad, and so prompting to do the former, and to avoid the latter." – (W.E. Vine – Dictionary of N.T. Words)

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The Conscience Defined

- Note: Conscience is a process of thought that distinguishes, i.e. makes moral judgments.
- Conscience must be properly taught. cf. Hebrews 5:11-14
 - Knowledge: Hebrews 5:12
 - Experience: Hebrews 5:13
- Properly trained conscience will appreciate and understand what is true & reject what is false.

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The Conscience May Not Always Be A Reliable Guide...

- Paul had served God with a good conscience throughout his life – Acts 23:1
- Even at a time when he was persecuting Christians! – cf. Acts 26:9-11

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The Conscience May Not Always Be A Reliable Guide...

Important questions:

1. Is what we **consider** morally good or bad **actually** good or bad?
2. Are our judgments based upon God's absolute truths, or our own think so? (cf. Proverbs 14:12)
3. Has our conscience been properly set?

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Good Conscience Commanded

- 1 Timothy 1:5 – “But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned.”
- 1 Timothy 3:9 – “holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.”

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The Conscience Developed

How A Pure Conscience Is Made Possible...

- We are all sinners, so how can we possibly have a pure conscience? – cf. **Romans 3:23**; **Isaiah 59:1-2**
- A clean conscience is made possible **through Jesus' blood** cf. **Romans 3:23-26**
 - Old Testament sacrifices and ordinances were insufficient – **Hebrews 9:6-10**; cf. **10:1-4**
 - The blood of Jesus can cleanse one's conscience – **Hebrews 9:11-14**; cf. **1 Peter 3:21**

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Baptism And "The Answer Of A Good Conscience" 1 Peter 3:21 (NKJV)

- “...the craving for a conscience right with God” (Goodspeed)
- “...the prayer for a clean conscience before God” (Moffat)
- “...the request unto God for a good conscience” (Rotherham)
- “...an appeal to God for a clear conscience” (RSV)
- “...an appeal to God for a good conscience” (NASV)
- “...the interrogation of a good conscience toward God” (ASV)

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Consistent With The Purpose Of Baptism

- Baptism was **"for the remission of sins,"** to have one's sins **"washed away"** (by the blood of Christ) – cf. **Acts 2:38**; **22:16**
- Therefore, people in N.T. times who realized they were sinners were anxious to be baptized as soon as possible
 - Acts 2 Jews on Pentecost
 - Acts 8:12 Samaritans
 - Acts 8:35-38 Eunuch
 - Acts 16:33-34 Jailer

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Consistent With The Purpose Of Baptism

To have our conscience "*cleansed*" by the blood of Christ – (cf. Hebrews 9:14 ASV)

- One is baptized so their sins can be washed away. (Acts 22:16)
- They can rise to a new life through the same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead. (Romans 6:3-4)

Thus, **in baptism** we make an appeal for a good conscience, trusting that the blood of Jesus will wash away our sins – cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16

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How A Pure Conscience Is Maintained

A Good Conscience Is Maintained By Obedience To God's Will.

- Note that failure to do what we know is right is sinful – James 4:17
- Failure to abstain from what we know is wrong is also sinful – 1 John 3:4
- **Right conduct with godly sincerity** makes for a good conscience – cf. 2 Corinthians 1:12 ; cf. 2 Corinthians 7:10-11

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The Conscience Destroyed

Much Harm Can Be Done To The Conscience.

- We can **violate** our conscience, which is sinful – Romans 14:22-23
- We can **defile** our conscience, leading to **unbelief** – Titus 1:15
- We can **sear** our conscience, leading to **apostasy** – 1 Timothy 4:1-2

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The Conscience Destroyed

Ignoring Or Violating The Conscience Is Dangerous

- A **guilty** conscience can soon lead to a **hardened** conscience.
 - cf. Once our conscience is hardened regarding attendance - cf. Hebrews 10:25 ... it is more likely to become hardened against doing what is right in other areas.
- A **hardened** conscience can lead to a heart of **unbelief** – cf. Hebrews 3:12
 - The deceitfulness of sin hardens one's heart.
 - A hard heart can begin to question what one once believed.

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Brethren, can we say...

- *"Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honorably in all things."* Hebrews 13:18
- *"I thank God, whom I serve ... with a pure conscience ..."* – 2 Timothy 1:3

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If not, and our conscience has not yet become so hardened that we will not heed, then we need to...

- Come to **God's Son** for the cleansing of our conscience through His blood
 - Come to **God's Word** for the proper understanding of what is actually right and wrong
 - Come to **God's Family** through frequent assembling to exhort us to do what is good
- **If we reject faith and a good conscience, then the FAITH suffers shipwreck in our lives!**

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Note Paul's confidence.

2 Timothy 4:7

- That was because he strove to have a good conscience – **Acts 24:16**
- That was because he lived by faith – **Galatians 2:20**

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Conclusion:

- Are you fighting the good fight?
- Are you keeping the faith?
- Or have you suffered shipwreck by rejecting faith and a good conscience?

- If so, then come back to the Shepherd of our souls!

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