



## A Good Conscience

Many people are burdened by shame and \_\_\_\_\_. What would you do to \_\_\_\_\_ a good conscience? When we follow God's \_\_\_\_\_ He blesses us spiritually with peace, joy, and a good conscience. Salvation, forgiveness of sins, eternal life, hope, and peace all come through God's blessing of \_\_\_\_\_. When we \_\_\_\_\_ the truth of God, God purifies our souls and puts us on the right track (1 Peter 1:22).

Paul charged Timothy, "This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may \_\_\_\_\_ the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience" (1 Timothy 1:18-19). There are few \_\_\_\_\_ in life more heart-warming than realizing that you have done the right thing. Guilt brings shame, but righteousness gives one inner \_\_\_\_\_ with God and himself. A good conscience allows a person to \_\_\_\_\_ peacefully, while a guilty conscience burdens a person with regret and fear.

I've often heard people say, "If I could just go back and do things \_\_\_\_\_, I wouldn't have done that awful thing." They \_\_\_\_\_ words they spoke, harm they caused, and choices they made. People can't change the past, but they can find a \_\_\_\_\_ to the evils in their past through the grace and forgiveness of God. They can be born again and crucify their old man of \_\_\_\_\_. They can have a \_\_\_\_\_ life filled with grace and peace rather than sin and regret. What would you give to have a good conscience? Are your \_\_\_\_\_ mistakes burdening you? When people have unresolved sin in their lives, they begin to feel \_\_\_\_\_ in their own eyes. They're like the prodigal son who didn't feel \_\_\_\_\_ to be his father's son. Thankfully, God gives us the \_\_\_\_\_!

### **Our scripture reading today comes from Hebrews 10: 22-25.**

A Christian lady described an incident when she was only \_\_\_\_\_ years old. She was at her grandfather's house all dressed up in a white dress with new gloves, \_\_\_\_\_ as she could be. Her granddaddy told her she could go into the kitchen and get herself a special \_\_\_\_\_. Next to the cookies was a \_\_\_\_\_ of quarters. Sure that no one was looking, she \_\_\_\_\_ a quarter. When she returned with her cookie, her granddaddy asked her to \_\_\_\_\_ him her gloves. She held out only her left hand and he said, "Show me the \_\_\_\_\_ hand." When she reluctantly did so and revealed the quarter, she immediately \_\_\_\_\_ disappointment in her grandpa's eyes. He paused a moment and then he "hugged me up" and said, "Darlin', you can have anything in the world that I have, but it breaks my heart that you would ever \_\_\_\_\_ it." Some 50 years later this story of how her granddaddy gave her the \_\_\_\_\_ of conscience still brought tears to her eyes. Few things have as large an impact on shaping the \_\_\_\_\_ of a child as the sting of lovingly administered shame. It helps to \_\_\_\_\_ right from wrong and gives a powerful emotional dimension to issues of ethics and character.

Titus 1:15-16 describes the \_\_\_\_\_ between a good conscience and a defiled one. "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, \_\_\_\_\_ is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they \_\_\_\_\_ Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed."

Many people \_\_\_\_\_ as if all guilt is a terrible thing. It's not! I would worry far more about someone who feels \_\_\_\_\_ guilt or shame. I realize that some have \_\_\_\_\_ others with shame, but I'm not arguing for abuse. I'm arguing for a heart that \_\_\_\_\_ shame when it is truly guilty. Sadly, some feel

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**Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.**

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\_\_\_\_\_ shame for their sins. Jeremiah described people in his day, “‘Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore they shall fall among those who \_\_\_\_\_; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown,’ says the LORD” (Jeremiah 6:15). When people are callous to their sins and feel no shame, they also have little use for \_\_\_\_\_ behavior.

God gave us a conscience, that \_\_\_\_\_ in our hearts, and it’s for our blessing. The conscience is a moral governor that \_\_\_\_\_ and judges wrong and \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness. Guilt stings us for what is evil and warns us to \_\_\_\_\_. Every thinking person should be \_\_\_\_\_ for the conscience as one of God’s gifts. We are moral beings, because God is moral and made us to be.

Many \_\_\_\_\_ their guilt and make their hearts callous. First Timothy 4:2 speaks of “liars \_\_\_\_\_ in their own conscience as with a branding iron.” Others don’t see the seriousness of sin. Sin is \_\_\_\_\_ for them as a “mistake,” or “poor judgment,” or “the result of wrong influences,” or even “a valid choice of lifestyle.” Man’s responsibility then is explained away. Words such as “sin”, and “judgment”, and even “hell” are considered \_\_\_\_\_ and are rapidly being dropped from the vocabulary of modern man. Sadly, some \_\_\_\_\_ no longer speak against sin.

Sin, however, is not imaginary or \_\_\_\_\_. It’s \_\_\_\_\_. Its consequences are so great that Christ had to come and die to \_\_\_\_\_ us from them. If we allow \_\_\_\_\_ to overcome us we’ll lose our souls and separate ourselves from the God who made us. All sin is more than offensive to God; it’s rebellion and must be \_\_\_\_\_. Isaiah 59:2 says, “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”

People who realize the seriousness of sin, grieve over it, and want to \_\_\_\_\_ it, and they repent. Paul rebuked the church at Corinth, and they \_\_\_\_\_. He describes this event, “For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I \_\_\_\_\_, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a \_\_\_\_\_ grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that \_\_\_\_\_ to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces \_\_\_\_\_” (2 Corinthians 7:8-10).

God takes \_\_\_\_\_ of those who grieve over their sins. David said, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite \_\_\_\_\_, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:17). David revealed, “The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are \_\_\_\_\_ in spirit” (Psalm 34:18). James admonishes us, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your \_\_\_\_\_, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you” (James 4:8-10). How long has it been since you were pierced to the heart or wept over your sin?

Scripture describes \_\_\_\_\_ the conscience functions. Every person has within his heart this \_\_\_\_\_ voice and governor. Even people who do not \_\_\_\_\_ there is right and wrong have it! Romans 2:14-16 says, “For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by \_\_\_\_\_ do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is \_\_\_\_\_ on their hearts, while their conscience also bears \_\_\_\_\_, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.” When people do what is \_\_\_\_\_ their consciences accuse them and sting. When people do what is \_\_\_\_\_ their consciences excuse them. A guilty conscience causes grief, but a good conscience provides peace.

We should make it our aim to \_\_\_\_\_ God, so that we can be at \_\_\_\_\_ with God and with ourselves. Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all \_\_\_\_\_ conscience up to this day”

(Acts 23:1). He said this even though he was once the \_\_\_\_\_ of sinners. When he persecuted the church he was deceived, doing what was wrong while \_\_\_\_\_ it was right. Yes, the conscience is a moral function of the heart; but it can be deceived by \_\_\_\_\_ values. It can believe it's doing what is right, when in reality it's sinning. We must never \_\_\_\_\_ in our hearts what God calls sinful.

God said, "The \_\_\_\_\_ is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD, the \_\_\_\_\_ heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his \_\_\_\_\_, According to the results of his \_\_\_\_\_" (Jeremiah 17:9-10). People \_\_\_\_\_ to themselves about their sins, but the Lord knows. People find others to help them find ways to \_\_\_\_\_ sin, but the Lord knows. I read recently of a person who \_\_\_\_\_ for a lifetime for a way to justify committing a sin. Believing the lie that one can live in sin and still please God this person \_\_\_\_\_ the sin and abandoned being pure. Polluting the heart with sinful \_\_\_\_\_ and false reasoning will lead people into sin and away from God's blessing.

Are we being desensitized by the present \_\_\_\_\_ world? Do things that once \_\_\_\_\_ us now pass us by with little notice? Have our \_\_\_\_\_ ethics slackened? What are we \_\_\_\_\_ on our televisions and computers? How much violence and sex did we watch last \_\_\_\_\_? How many murders? Has all the exposure we've had to \_\_\_\_\_ words and acts caused our consciences to become calloused? Hebrews 3:12-13 warns us, "Take \_\_\_\_\_, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to \_\_\_\_\_ away from the living God. But \_\_\_\_\_ one another every day, as long as it's called 'today,' that none of you may be \_\_\_\_\_ by the deceitfulness of sin."

The world has \_\_\_\_\_ been worldly; we shouldn't be surprised. They've always tried to justify sin. They sin and in time don't \_\_\_\_\_ at all. Knowing what is wrong they laugh and flaunt their participation in evil. They harden their hearts by wallowing in the sin until the sin no longer \_\_\_\_\_ to them. Then they get \_\_\_\_\_ when others are bothered by the sin which no longer bothers them! Sinful people want everyone else to \_\_\_\_\_ them in their sin.

Our ungodly world despises anyone who \_\_\_\_\_ sin for what it is. Jesus described it this way, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men \_\_\_\_\_ the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil \_\_\_\_\_ the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed" (John 3:19-20). This difference between Light and darkness is why the Christian must keep himself \_\_\_\_\_ from sin and worldliness.

Second Corinthians 6:14-18 speaks to believers, "Do not be \_\_\_\_\_ together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in \_\_\_\_\_ with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be \_\_\_\_\_,' says the Lord. 'And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I'll be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' Says the Lord Almighty."

Second Corinthians 7:1 continues, "Therefore, having these \_\_\_\_\_, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God." We must \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves of evil hearts and evil lives, and make it our \_\_\_\_\_ to imitate Christ because we do fear the wrath of God against evil. The evil in this world will do everything it can to make us \_\_\_\_\_ loving God. Unless we separate ourselves from worldly \_\_\_\_\_ they will separate us from God! We cannot \_\_\_\_\_ this world, but we don't have to have that worldly way become our ways. Let's live for the Lord and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. Christians are not ruined by living in the world but by the world living in them.

We must \_\_\_\_\_ for purity and holiness in our lives. Psalm 24:3-5 says, “Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a \_\_\_\_\_ heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is \_\_\_\_\_ and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive a \_\_\_\_\_ from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.” The Lord Jesus simply said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall \_\_\_\_\_ God” (Matthew 5:8). Paul told Timothy, “Now \_\_\_\_\_ from youthful lusts, and \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22). First Peter 1:15 says, “like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in \_\_\_\_\_ your behavior.” Of all the blessings that God gives few are as precious as forgiveness and a good conscience. Do you have a good conscience?

The apostle Paul said, “So I always take pains to have a \_\_\_\_\_ conscience toward both God and man” (Acts 24:16). Paul describes what that means, “But may it never be that I would boast, except in the \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14). One cannot \_\_\_\_\_ faith from conscience. When you believe in Jesus Christ, and believing in Him means believing what He \_\_\_\_\_, you realize your conscience follows your faith. When you \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord’s morals or His teaching, your heart and your conscience knows it and will tell you so! When you live for the Lord, your conscience will also tell you so!

First John 3:2-3 says, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be \_\_\_\_\_ Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this \_\_\_\_\_ fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” We need to make it our \_\_\_\_\_ not to sin at all; that’s a tall order! No one is \_\_\_\_\_. First John 1:8 says, “If we say that we have no sin, we’re deceiving ourselves and the \_\_\_\_\_ is not in us.” This doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t make every \_\_\_\_\_ to purify our lives. Do you?

The blood of Jesus is what forgives sins. When we place our faith in Christ, repent and turn away from our sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and are baptized into Christ, God forgives our sins (Acts 2:38). Won’t you obey the Lord?

Why not focus your heart today on worshiping God at church. Everyone needs a church family. There’s probably a church of Christ in your area. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one.