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. Thankfuly, 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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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 _______ 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 stings. 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.