

Having a Good Conscience
(1 Timothy 1:5)

Introduction:

1. This verse mentions 3 important subjects:
 - a. *"charity [love] out of a pure heart"*
 - b. *"a good conscience"*
 - c. *"faith unfeigned."*
2. Recently on Wednesday evenings we studied:
 - a. Hebrews 11 [the faith chapter]
 - b. 1 Corinthians 13 [the love chapter].
3. This morning we are concentrating on passages that teach us what we need to know about "having a good conscience."

Discussion:

- I. LET US FIRST GIVE A DEFINITION OF "THE CONSCIENCE"
 - A. Conscience: the inner part of us that determines whether something is right or wrong.
 - B. A properly trained conscience will prompt a person to do what is right, and it will lead a person to abstain from what is wrong.
 1. Joseph illustrated this principle when he refused to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:8-9).
 2. He refused because he knew this was *"wickedness,"* and he knew it was a *"sin against God."*
 - C. A properly trained conscience will also motivate us to seek forgiveness when we make mistakes (Acts 2:37-38; 8:22, 24).
 - D. Now that we know what the conscience is, we need to point out that . . .
- II. THE BIBLE SPEAKS ABOUT VARIOUS TYPES OF CONSCIENCES
 - A. Positively, the Bible teaches that a person may have:
 1. *"a good conscience"* (1 Timothy 1:5)
 2. a *"pure conscience"* (1 Timothy 3:9).
 - B. Negatively, the Bible teaches that a person may have:
 1. a *"seared"* conscience (1 Timothy 4:1-3) [*"past feeling"* -- Ephesians 4:19]
 2. a *"defiled"* conscience (Titus 1:15)
 3. *"an evil conscience"* (Hebrews 10:22)
 4. a *"weak conscience"* (1 Corinthians 8:12).
 - C. Thankfully, God has made it possible for us to undergo a change of conscience.
 - D. In addition to teaching that there are various types of consciences, . . .
- III. THE BIBLE SHOWS THAT A PERSON MAY BE DECEIVED ABOUT THE CONDITION OF HIS CONSCIENCE [illustrated by Paul]
 - A. According to Acts 23:1, Paul had *"lived in all good conscience before God."*
 - B. Notice what he had done with a clear conscience (Acts 22:3-5).
 - C. His encounter with the Lord showed him he had been wrong (Acts 22:6-10).
 - D. Ananias told him what to do so his sins could be washed away (Acts 22:16).
 - E. This is exactly what he did (Acts 9:18).
 - F. The conscience is not necessarily a safe guide to follow -- it must be properly trained according to God's will.
- IV. THE BIBLE TEACHES US TO HAVE A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD AND MEN
 - A. We must have a good conscience toward God.
 1. How is this accomplished?
 - a. (Hebrews 9:14) *"The blood of Christ"* "purges" the conscience.
 - b. This is accomplished when we are baptized (1 Peter 3:21).
 2. To maintain a good conscience before God we must follow the instructions given in 1 John 1:7, 9.

3. (1 Peter 2:19-21) Having a good conscience toward God will help us when our faith is tried.
- B. We must have a good conscience toward men.
 1. How is this accomplished?
 2. We have to be concerned about other people and the impact of our actions on them (1 Corinthians 10:23-33).

Conclusion:

1. The passages we have covered emphasize the importance of "having a good conscience."
2. By way of application, :
 - a. If a person disobeys God and feels no remorse, what does this say about his conscience?
 - b. If a person tries to justify his behavior on the basis of what he has always done, what does this say about his conscience?
 - c. If a person does not care about what the Bible teaches, what does this say about his conscience?
 - d. If a person puts other things ahead of the Lord and His church and feels no remorse, what does this say about his conscience?
3. If your conscience needs to undergo a change, we encourage you to come to Christ for cleansing and renewal (Matthew 11:28-30).