

Having a Good Conscience

(1 Timothy 1:5)

Introduction:

1. In 1 Timothy 1:5, three subjects are mentioned that are very important to the Lord: "*charity [love] out of a pure heart,*" "*faith unfeigned,*" and "*a good conscience.*"
2. In our lesson we are concentrating on "having a good conscience."
3. Conscience: the inner part of us that determines whether something is right or wrong.
 - a. 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).
 - 2) He refused because he knew this was "*wickedness,*" and he knew it was a "*sin against God*" (vs.9).
 - b. A properly trained conscience will also motivate us to seek forgiveness when we make mistakes (Acts 2:37-38; 8:22, 24).
4. The actions of many people illustrate why we need to study this subject.
5. Let us begin by showing that . . .

Discussion:

- I. 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, . . .
- II. 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. (Acts 9:18) This is exactly what he did.
 - F. The conscience is not necessarily a safe guide to follow -- it must be properly trained according to God's will.
- III. THE BIBLE TEACHES US TO HAVE A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD AND MEN (Acts 24:16)
- A. We must have a good conscience toward God.
 - 1. The Bible teaches us how this is 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. The Bible also teaches us how this is accomplished.
 - 2. We must be concerned about other people and the impact of our actions on them (1 Corinthians 10:23-33).

Conclusion:

- 1. "Having a good conscience" is very important to the Lord.
- 2. Let us follow His plan for having clear consciences before Him and our fellow man.