

Guidelines for Having a Good Conscience
(Acts 24:16)

Introduction:

1. Paul's statement recorded in Acts 24:16 was made before Governor Felix.
2. As Paul spoke before Felix, he talked about having "*a conscience void of offence.*"
 - a. He wanted to have a good conscience "*toward God, and toward men.*"
 - b. He wanted to have a good conscience "*always.*"
 - c. He "exercised himself" to always have a good conscience toward God and men.
3. Having a good conscience is not accomplished by accident -- it requires constant attention and effort [exercise] on our part.
4. In our lesson we are considering 3 important "guidelines for having a good conscience."

Discussion:

I. FIRST, WE MUST LOVE GOD

- A. Loving God is "*the first and great commandment*" (Matthew 22:35-38).
- B. God is to be loved "with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind."
- C. Those who love God:
 1. will keep His commandments (1 John 5:3)
 2. will love His Word (Psalm 119:97).
- D. By hiding God's Word in our hearts we will avoid sin (Psalm 119:11).
 1. We will do those things that God wants us to do.
 2. We will abstain from those things that God wants us to avoid.
- E. To always have a conscience void of offense toward God, we must exercise ourselves by loving God.

II. SECOND, WE MUST LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS

- A. Loving our neighbors is "the second commandment" (Matthew 22:39).
- B. We are to love our neighbors "as ourselves."
- C. By loving our neighbors as ourselves:
 1. we will practice the Golden Rule by treating others as we wish to be treated (Matthew 7:12)
 2. we will fulfill our responsibilities toward our fellow man.
 - a. Romans 13:8-10
 - b. Galatians 5:13-15
 - c. James 2:8-9
- D. To always have a conscience void of offence toward our fellow man, we must exercise ourselves by loving our neighbors.

III. THIRD, WE MUST DO ALL IN WORD OR DEED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

- A. This principle is revealed in Colossians 3:17.
- B. We are to say and do those things that Christ has authorized us to say and do.
- C. This includes our responsibilities to God and our fellow man.
- D. We learn what Christ authorizes us to say and do by "letting His Word dwell in us richly in all wisdom" (Colossians 3:16).
- E. To always have a conscience void of offence toward God and our fellow man, we must exercise ourselves by doing all in word or deed in the name of the Lord.

Conclusion:

1. Let us adopt Paul's plan for having a good conscience that he mentioned in Acts 24:16.
2. Let us exercise ourselves to always have a good conscience toward God and our fellow man by:
 - a. loving God with all the heart, soul, and mind
 - b. loving our neighbors as ourselves
 - c. doing all in word or deed in the name of the Lord.