

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 28)

Introduction:

1. According to James 1:27, "pure and undefiled religion before God" includes "keeping ourselves unspotted from the world."
2. Thankfully, God has provided instructions in His Word that will help us in this regard.
3. In this lesson we are concentrating on "having a good conscience" (1 Timothy 1:5).
4. 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 abstain from what is wrong.
 - 1) Joseph illustrated this principle when he refused to commit adultery (Genesis 39:8).
 - 2) He knew it was "wickedness" and 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).
5. Let us first point out 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
 - A. We must have a good conscience toward God.
 1. The blood of Christ "purges" the conscience (Hebrews 9:14), and this is accomplished when we are baptized (1 Peter 3:21).
 2. We learn from 1 John 1:7, 9 how to keep a good conscience before God.
 3. (1 Peter 2:19-21) A good conscience toward God will help us when our faith is tried.
 - B. We must have a good conscience toward men.
 1. This is accomplished by keeping the second commandment (Matthew 22:39) and the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12).
 2. (1 Corinthians 10:23-33) We must be concerned about other people and the impact of our actions on them.

Conclusion: Having a good conscience will greatly help us in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world so we can practice pure and undefiled religion before God.