

The Cultivation of a Christian Conscience

Introduction: Paul speaks of the conscience in *Acts 26:9-11*, *1 Timothy 4:1-2*, *Titus 1:15*. These passages of scripture and these illustrations demonstrate that the conscience cannot always be treated as if it is the voice of God within.

I) **The content of the conscience.**

- A) Result of the education we have and decisions we have made.
 - 1) The teaching received from parents, be it good or bad, forms a part of one's conscience.
 - 2) The customs of the community.
 - 3) The thoughts, habits, ideals of one's peer group.
 - 4) By the books we read, TV programs and films we watch.
- B) One's conscience is not an inerrant guide.

II) **The authority of the conscience.**

- A) While it is wise to follow the dictates of one's conscience.
 - 1) Not to do so creates a guilty conscience
 - 2) To do so deprives oneself of a better conscience.
- B) A violated conscience will cause one to lose a sense of God's presence.
- C) When it is filled with the mind of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we are hearing the voice of God.

III) **Guidelines of the Christian conscience.**

- A) Effects of different courses of conduct.
 - 1) What effect will it have on me short/long term?
 - 2) What effect will it have on others?
 - 3) What effect will it have on the cause of Christ?
- B) Four tests on the moral decisions we face.
 - 1) Do we keep it a secret? If so, it is doubtful.
 - 2) The test of publicity? Would we be willing for the public to learn of our decision at this point?
 - 3) The test of universality? Would the entire community be uplifted if each person arrived at the same decision?
 - 4) The test of prayer.

IV) **Cultivating the Christian conscience.**

- A) The conscience must be educated -*Romans 12:1-2*.
- B) Subject to the will of God.
- C) Walk in the Spirit -*Galatians 5:16*.
- D) Studying the Word of God.

Conclusion: Recognize a guilty conscience as God's call to a nobler life.