

MY HELPER #18  
THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MY CONSCIENCE

John 8<sup>9</sup> And they which heard *it*, **being convicted by *their own conscience***, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. KJV

By conscience, we mean that which always refers to right and wrong. **Conscience never deals with theories.** Conscience always deals with right and wrong, and the relation of the individual to that which is right or wrong.

**Conscience is the alarm clock of the soul.**

**I. OUR CONSCIENCE WAS FORMED BY GOD AS A VOICE FOR WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG.**

A. All people are born with a conscience.  
Conscience did not exist the **fall of Adam**.  
It is when Adam and Eve hid from God in the garden that they manifest a conscience. **From that point on even without being taught a moral law, people are** born with a sense of what is right and wrong.

**B. Conscience is one of two proofs that God exist.**

1. An external witness- **Creation**- Rom. 1:20
2. An internal witness- **Conscience**- Rom. 2:15

You don't have to read a written law to know that stealing, killing, and lying are wrong.

**Romans 2:** <sup>14</sup> (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, <sup>15</sup> since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their

consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) NIV

**C. Conscience does not make you do right or wrong.**

**III.** Like a compass points to magnetic north, we are born with a moral conscience that points to right and wrong. Your conscience doesn't make you do right, or wrong, it just **lets you know when you are about to do wrong.**

**D. Conscience makes you suffer when you do wrong.**

**III.** Conscience is like the yellow line on a two lane highway. When there is a yellow line, you know that it's not safe to pass the car in front of you. The yellow line doesn't keep you from passing that car; it just tells you that you shouldn't.

**II. CONSCIENCE CAN BE DEFORMED BY REPEATEDLY IGNORING ITS WARNING.**

When a person continually ignores the dictates of his conscience, the conscience can become faulty.

**III.** You can take a perfectly good compass that is pointing north, and you can hold a magnet next to the compass, and the needle will rotate and no longer be a reliable guide. The same thing happens to your conscience when you expose it to repeated sin—it no longer is reliable guide. Your conscience doesn't become ruined instantly, it happens gradually.

**A. Moral guidance is **distorted****

Titus 1:15-16 To those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions, they deny him.

The first thing that happens is your sense of right and wrong becomes distorted.

Have you ever told a lie? The first time you told a lie, you felt badly about it. But the next time you told it, the lie came a little easier. We have all known people who were so good at lying, they could look you right in the eye and lie without any sign of moral compunction or remorse. They have convinced themselves that telling a little lie is actually not so bad.

Ill. In 2001, George O’Leary was hired as head football coach for Notre Dame, the job he had always dreamed about having. Five days later, he was fired when it was discovered he lied about his background. **He claimed to have received a Masters degree and to have lettered in football three years at New Hampshire. He had neither. Early in his coaching career he fabricated these lies and as the years passed he found it easier and easier to repeat the claims, until someone at Notre Dame checked!**

#### **B. Moral guidance is deadened**

The reason you can’t just let your conscience be your guide is because not only can your conscience become distorted and dull, it can actually become deadened. A person can commit sin so often over a period of time, his conscience can basically die. The Bible makes this possibility clear in I Timothy 4:1-2, “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, **whose consciences have been seared (Greek: kauteriazō) as with a hot iron.**”

Someone once said, “ the worst sin is consciousness of no sin!”

Ill. You wonder how the **Nazi prison guards** could participate in the wholesale slaughter of Jewish prisoners during WWII? Their **consciences had become so deadened** some of them thought they

were doing the world a favor by killing Jews.

III. Serial killer **Ted Bundy** could smile and carry on a life that seemed outwardly normal when he brutally killed at least **36 women**. Psychiatrists have a term for them: **psychopaths**.

You don't have to be a criminal psychopath to have your conscience deadened. **I've known men who claimed to be Christians who could carry on an adulterous relationship and say they didn't feel any guilt about it.** Some people have **cheated on their income tax for so long they have convinced themselves there is nothing wrong with it.** The main reason you should never live by your feelings is because, like your conscience, your feelings can be dead wrong.

### III. YOUR CONSCIENCE MUST BE **TRANSFORMED** BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Mark Twain** wrote: "An uneasy conscience is a hair in the mouth. I would trade mine for the small-pox and seven kinds of consumption, and be glad of the chance." (Samuel Clemens, Notebook, 1904)

#### **What do you do when you have a guilty conscience?**

The Bible answers that question in **Hebrews 10:22**: "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience."

The Bible teaches **a guilty conscience is a dirty conscience.** When your conscience becomes dirty, it affects the way you look at others.

III. **Once there was an old woman who sat in her home and watched her neighbors with a critical eye.** She commented to her family who visited that her neighbor's car was always dirty. She

complained that the neighbor's children wore dirty clothes, and that the neighbor's house was so dirty it needed a new coat of paint. One day she was repeating her criticism to her daughter of how dirty her neighbors were. The daughter got up and walked over to her mother's window and discovered the window itself was filthy. When she cleaned one of the windows for her mother, it was clear the neighbor's house, car, and clothes were clean—**the problem was her mother's dirty windows.** That's what a dirty conscience can do; it not only affects the way we look at ourselves, it affects the way we look at others.

The Holy Spirit can do two important things for a deformed, dirty conscience:

A. Our conscience must be **cleansed by His blood**

The Bible teaches that there is only one thing that can clean a dirty conscience—the Blood of Jesus Christ. The Bible says, **“How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God. (Hebrews 9:14)**

**1Jo. 1<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. KJV**

It is accepting by faith that you have been cleansed by His blood.

B. Your conscience must be **corrected by His Word**

I once read a story of a man who worked in a small town factory. One of his jobs was to blow the factory whistle every day at 7, 12 and 4. Every morning on the way to work, he stopped and set his pocket watch by a large clock sitting in the window of a local jewelry store. Then he would know when to blow the whistle.

After doing this for years, he happened to visit the jewelry store on the weekend. He asked the owner how the clock in the shop window kept such perfect time. The owner said, “Oh, I set that clock every day by the factory whistle.”

**Your conscience is like a clock:** If you set it to the wrong time, it will keep the wrong time, and it will be unreliable. But if you set it to the right time, it should be dependable. When you become a Christian, you “set” your conscience to the Bible—Word of God. God’s Word always points you to Jesus and He becomes your standard for right and wrong.

When you become a follower of Jesus Christ, **your determination of right and wrong is no longer dependent on your conscience** because you **know you can’t let your conscience be your guide.**

You don’t decide what is right or wrong by how you feel, because **you have learned feelings can be unreliable.**

**Your standard for morality is NOT what the majority of other people think,** because most people think it is okay to tell a lie every now and then.

As followers of Jesus, we must be constantly and continually recalibrating our consciences to the Word of God.

C. The Holy Spirit helps us develop a good conscience through **Spirit led self-discipline.**

Acts 24<sup>16</sup> So **I strive always to keep my conscience clear** before God and man. NIV

Romans 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, **my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit**—NIV

Ask the Lord to help you follow the example of Paul's self-discipline in keeping your conscience pure toward God and people.

Our goal is to be like Paul.

Acts 23 <sup>1</sup> And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. KJV

## CONCLUSION

The Bible will guide you into an understanding of what is right and wrong, and it can also guide you into heaven. I recently read a true story about a teenage girl in Columbia who was given a Spanish New Testament. She read the New Testament until one day her father caught her reading it... and told her not to read it any more because it was full of lies and fantasy. But the girl kept on reading until one day her father came home unexpectedly found her with the New Testament grabbed it from her hands and shoved it into his briefcase. The father went off to work where he was a mining engineer. Several hours later there was a muffled explosion then the sound of sirens. There had been a cave-in at the mine. The father was trapped in the mine along with 30 other workers. The rescue workers took 5 days to finally reach the men, but it was too late. All 31 men died including the father of this little girl. Curiously, workers found the man clutching the New Testament between his praying hands. When they opened the front cover they found a note: "To my daughter Keep reading this New Testament, it is true and right, and I will see you one day in heaven." Then they turned to the back page where the father had signed the commitment card after having said the sinner's prayer. But that was not the end of the story. Turning the page there were signed the names of the other 30 workers. Let your conscience be your guide? Heaven forbid! Let God's Word illuminated by God's Spirit be your guide!