

The Conscience...

9 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. (John 8:9 KJV).

1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. (Acts 23:1, KJV).

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. (Acts 24:16, KJV).

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) (Romans 2:15, KJV).

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. (Romans 13:5, KJV).

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. (Romans 14:23, KJV).

4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. (1Corinthians 4:4, KJV).

4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. (1Corinthians 4:4, NAS).

4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. (1 Corinthians 4:4, NIV).

7 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. (1Corinthians 8:7, 10, 12, KJV).

25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:

26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:

29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? (1 Corinthians 10:25-29, KJV).

12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. (2 Corinthians 1:12, KJV).

2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (2Corinthians 4:2, KJV).

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: (1Timothy 1:5, 19, KJV).

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. (1Timothy 2:8, KJV).

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. (1Timothy 3:9, KJV).

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; (1Timothy 4:2, KJV).

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; (2Timothy 1:3, KJV).

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9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:9, 14 KJV).

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:2, 22, KJV).

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. (Hebrews 13:18, KJV).

19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. (1Peter 2:19, KJV).

16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. (1Peter 3:16, KJV).

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: (1Peter 3:21, KJV).

Miscellaneous Notes on the Conscience:

The conscience (Greek: *suneidesis*) is that faculty God put within a part of our minds that makes us feel good when we do what we think is right and makes us feel bad when we do something we think is wrong. Our conscience is infallible---it always works and tells us how we feel about something unless we continually go against our conscience and "sear" it, making it unresponsive, thereby defiling it.

Our conscience does not determine truth for that is not its function---only God and His word determines truth. We **react** to the truth in direct relation to what we have been taught up to that point in time. It does not mean that what we are doing is right, but only what we think is right. In other words, our conscience is our own unique personal response.

The scriptures given are certainly not all on the subject, but a fair sampling. We learn from them that we should not violate our conscience or cause someone else to violate theirs. Even if something is right to do, but we personally feel it is wrong, then we sin if we violate our conscience and do it even though it is a right thing to do. Our "feelings" do not alter truth.

Denominational false teachings on the subjects of grace, faith and the Holy Spirit have scared us off of speaking much about the subjects for fear we will be instantly judged by others' excesses and we always feel compelled to put in qualifying phrases when discussing the subjects. The same is true with our conscience. Years ago (some may still claim it) the denominations, in speaking of salvation, used to say, "Let your conscience be your guide." Christians countered with adding a tag line to it with the phrase "as far as it has been taught". The phrase was picked up and preached all over the brotherhood. I can remember when it began to be the stock answer. The phrase or thought is not really in the scriptures. What does the phrase really say? How do we know if we have been taught "enough"? Are we assigning properties to the conscience it wasn't designed to have, like determining (instead of responding to) truth? If we haven't been "taught enough" are we supposed to go against our conscience? If we start going against our conscience, we begin the process of "searing" our conscience and that is condemned in the Bible. Actually the conscience really is not what is taught or educated, but our minds (intelligence) and that built in instinct called our conscience responds accordingly.

It appears to me the scriptures teach that we should always follow our conscience, do what we think is right. It will not make us always right, only more study of the scriptures will do that---and we're all at different spiritual stages of development, with different backgrounds and experiences. Although he had been responsible for killing Christians, Paul still maintained that he had lived before the Lord in "all good conscience to this day". We are to strive to keep a "clear conscience" and that entails letting our conscience be our guide meaning we have to do what we feel is right. There appears to never be a time to go against our conscience. If there is a time to go against our conscience, where do the scriptures say when it is???

Two things are infallible---God's word and our God given conscience. We must follow them both. As we grow in God's word (none of us knows everything about everything and never will) our conscience will respond accordingly.