

## Dealing with the Conscience

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 1:19, 5; Acts 24:16; 23:1; 1 John 1:7, 9

- I. The conscience is the leading part of our human spirit—Rom. 9:1; 8:16; Psa. 34:18:**
- A. The conscience enables us to know both what God justifies and what He condemns, what He delights in and what He hates.
  - B. The conscience represents God in ruling over us; the conscience rules not only to uphold the existence of the individual, but also to hold together all the relationships of man in the universe.
- II. It is important to deal with our conscience in order to stay living:**
- A. Uneasy feelings in our conscience indicate to us that we have a problem with God, that the fellowship of life is cut off; these feelings of the conscience can be divided into three categories:
    - 1. First, the feeling toward sin; if we sin before God or before man, the conscience will immediately have the feeling of condemnation.
    - 2. Second, the feeling toward the world; if we love other matters or are occupied with anything outside of God, the conscience will also give us a feeling of condemnation.
    - 3. Third, the feeling concerning anything apart from sin and the world; there are certain matters that are neither sinful nor of the world, yet cause our conscience to lose the feeling of peace.
  - B. In order to restore the fellowship to enjoy life again, we must deal with our conscience until it is void of offense—Acts 24:16:
  - C. The way to deal with the conscience is to repent and confess until the fellowship of life with the issue of peace is restored—1 John 1:7, 9:
    - 1. Whenever we have a feeling of offense in our conscience, we must immediately go before the Lord to confess our sin and claim the cleansing of the Lord's precious blood.
    - 2. Sometimes there is also the need to go before man and deal with the matter.
- III. Dealing with the conscience is very much related to the growth of life; if we desire to have growth in life, it is necessary that we deal with the conscience.**

### Excerpts from the Ministry:

#### THE POSITION AND FUNCTION OF THE CONSCIENCE

The position of the conscience is in the human spirit. The human spirit has three parts: fellowship, intuition, and conscience. Although this is not clearly stated in the Bible, we can ascertain this fact by our experience. In our spirit there is a part called the fellowship, the function of which is to fellowship with God. Another part, the intuition, functions to sense God and know His will directly. Finally, the last part, the conscience, enables us to discern between right and wrong, good and evil.

There were progressive changes in revealing the three functions of the human spirit. Before the fall, the function of the conscience was not yet revealed. Therefore, at that time there were only two functions in the human spirit, fellowship and intuition. After the fall, when man hid from the presence of God (Gen. 3:8), his fellowship with God was frustrated and his intuition became dull,

but his conscience began to function. His newly activated conscience enabled him to sense and differentiate between right and wrong, good and evil, in every phase of his life. Directly after the fall, although the fellowship and intuition of the spirit became withered and insensitive, the conscience became activated. Unfortunately, when man sunk deeper into sin, even the feeling of the conscience was cast aside. At this point, man's conscience became seared as by a hot iron (1 Tim. 4:2), so that even when he indulged in licentiousness and lusts he hardly had any feeling at all (Eph. 4:19). Thus, the functions of his spirit were completely lost.

When we are saved and regenerated, the Holy Spirit enters into us and quickens our spirit, giving us a new spirit (Ezek. 36:26). At this time, the three functions of our spirit are recovered. We can freely fellowship with God, directly know His will, and keenly differentiate between right and wrong. Therefore, the functions of the spirit today are not the same as they were after the fall, neither are they similar to their condition before the fall. Today all three functions are present at the same time; moreover, all are strong and keen.

We may divide the function of the conscience into three aspects. First, the conscience is the organ which enables us to differentiate between right and wrong, good and evil. Second, the conscience enables us to know both what God justifies and what He condemns (Rom. 2:15), what He delights in and what He hates. Thus, from this viewpoint, the conscience really enables us to know the will of God. Third, the conscience represents God in ruling over us. Just as a nation governs its people through the police force, so also God governs us through the conscience. This universe cannot exist unless it is controlled by numerous laws and principles established by God. Whoever defies these laws and principles will be condemned and judged accordingly. God has also established numerous principles and laws in His ruling over man; these principles and laws are being executed to a great extent by the conscience. God set up the conscience within fallen man that man might govern himself according to these principles and laws. If anyone acts contrary or is about to act contrary to these principles and laws of God, his conscience immediately condemns him and restrains him from going further astray and falling into corruption. The conscience rules not only to uphold the existence of the individual, but also to hold together all the relationships of man in the universe. Therefore, the major function of the conscience is to govern man. Actually, the purpose of the conscience in enabling man to discern right and wrong and to know what God justifies and what He condemns is also to represent God in ruling over man. (*The Experience of Life*, pp. 96-98)

### **DEALING WITH OUR CONSCIENCE TO STAY LIVING**

Though we may try to preserve our spirit, we may often become deadened or defiled. Our conscience, the most evident part of our spirit, will have some uneasy feelings. These feelings indicate to us that we have a problem with God, that the fellowship of life is cut off. We may even try to exercise our spirit, yet, we still would not have any release. In order to restore the fellowship to enjoy life again, we must deal with our conscience until it is void of offense (Acts 24:16). The way to deal with the conscience is to repent and confess (1 John 1:7-9), until the fellowship of life with the issue of peace is restored.

These feelings of the conscience can be divided into three categories: first is the feeling toward sin. If we sin before God or before man, the conscience will immediately have the feeling of condemnation. The second category is the feeling toward the world. If we love other matters or are occupied with anything outside of God, the conscience will also give us a feeling of condemnation. The third category is the feeling concerning anything apart from sin and the world. There are certain matters that are neither sinful nor of the world, yet they cause our conscience to lose the feeling of peace. For example, looseness and inaccuracy in our daily living are not sin nor of the

world, yet our conscience is disturbed by them. If someone scatters clothing and other articles around, leaving the room in a state of disorder, his conscience will rebuke him.

The three categories of the feelings of the conscience are the result of our offenses—we have either offended God or sinned against man in our intention, motive, word, and action. Therefore, these feelings can be considered as feelings of offense. The feeling of offense itself is a serious damage to our spiritual condition. When one's conscience has this feeling of offense, his fellowship with God is hindered and thus his entire spiritual condition is lowered. Therefore, whenever a Christian has the feeling of offense in his conscience, he must immediately go before the Lord to confess his sin according to this feeling and claim the cleansing of His precious blood. Sometimes there is also the need to go before man and deal with the matter. Then the feeling of offense will vanish, and the conscience will be void of offense. Therefore, dealing with the conscience, on the one hand, is to cause our conscience to become keen and rich in feeling, and, on the other hand to cause our conscience to be secure, at peace, and void of offense.

The blood of the Lord is our only weapon to overcome Satan's accusation and attack. Revelation 12:10-11 tells us that Satan accuses us day and night before God, but that we can overcome him by the blood of the Lamb. First John 1:7, 9 tells us that if we confess our sins, God will forgive our sins, and the blood of the Lord will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Therefore, every time we confess according to the feeling of the conscience, we should be freed from condemnation. We should have the sensation of life and peace. If the condemnation lingers on, we simply declare to Satan that he must leave us, because God has already forgiven us according to His word. Hallelujah! God is righteous and just, He forgives and cleanses as soon as we confess. As we are saying "O Lord, forgive me," He has already forgiven us.

After we are saved, the feeling of the conscience increases as the life grows. To the extent our life grows, the feeling of our conscience increases. The more we advance in the growth of life, the richer and keener will be the feeling of our conscience. The growth of life affects the feeling of our conscience, and the feeling of our conscience aids the growth of life. These two, in a mutual cause and effect relationship, forward us onward in the path of life. (*Lesson Book, Level Four: Life—Knowing and Experiencing Life*, pp. 66-67)

#### **References and Further Reading:**

1. *The Experience of Life*, ch. 6.
2. *Lesson Book, Level Four: Life—Knowing and Experiencing Life*, ch. 9.
3. *The Economy of God*, ch. 8.
4. *Basic Principles of the Experience of Life*, ch. 13.