

A Good Conscience

Acts 24:1-27 God created man to be directed by the Spirit. When He breathed into Adam, he became a living soul. The image of God was indelibly imprinted in Adam's being. The breath of God was the very Spirit of God infusing into the flesh body of Adam. That spirit sometimes is referred to as the core of our being. The soul part of man is his mind, will and emotions.

Conscience was not formed until Adam and Eve partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Until the Fall, man had total oneness with God and unbroken fellowship with Him. There was no need of conscience before the Fall because man was totally led by the Spirit of God within him. When Adam and Eve sinned, they died spiritually and could no longer be led by the Spirit of God. They then had to be led by their consciences.

Every person born since the Fall is born with a conscience (something inside of them that tells them what is good and what is evil). As I observe one of my grandchildren, who is just a toddler, I am intrigued with the fact she seems to instinctively know when she has done something wrong. Conscience is a good thing because the whole world would be without restraint if people did not have a conscience.

God's desire is that we all have good, clear consciences free from guilt and shame. He provided that possibility for us all when Jesus bore our shame and guilt on the cross. People lose sleep at night because they have a guilty conscience. They know they have done something wrong, but they are not willing to reveal it and confess it to others and to God.

Paul makes a statement in today's reading that should be the goal of every Christian. He says, "This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men" (v. 16).

The only way to reach this goal is to confess our sins one to another and to God. If we offend anyone in word or deed, we must ask their forgiveness. Being honest about our sin with God and man is the only way to have a clear conscience void of offense. Those who have been born again by the Spirit of God can now be led by the Spirit of God once again, and they can enjoy eternal fellowship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit can show us if we need to confess anything that is blocking our fellowship with God and causing us to feel guilty.

Lord, is there a sin I need to confess? I want my conscience to always remain clear without guilt or shame. Thank You, Lord, for making that possible for me by Your death on the cross. Help me to live a life void of offense to God or to man.

**READ: 1 Chronicles 2:18-4:4; Acts 24:1-27; Psalm 4:1-8;
Proverbs 18:16-18**