


A PRELUDE TO *BIBLICAL* EVANGELISM



A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots growing over stone ruins. The tree's trunk is massive and textured, with roots spreading out across the ground and over the stone structures. The background shows more stone ruins and lush green foliage. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment.

THE FRUIT OF
THE RIGHTEOUS IS A
TREE OF LIFE,
AND HE WHO IS WISE
WINS SOULS.

PROVERBS 11:30 NASB

**PRINCIPLES
FOR
BIBLICAL
EVANGELISM
FOUND IN
JOHN 4, “THE
WOMAN AT
THE WELL.”**

TAKE

- TAKE THE INITIATIVE! JN. 4:6-9

OFFER

- OFFER GOD’S MERCY! JN. 4:10-14

IDENTIFY

- IDENTIFY SPIRITUAL NEEDS! JN. 4:9-10

CONFRONT

- CONFRONT SIN JN! 4:16-18

REJECT

- REJECT FALSE WORSHIP! JN. 4:19-24

REVEAL

- REVEAL CHRIST! JN. 4:25-26

CLEARING YOUR CONSCIENCE

- It can be easy to forget how destructive **SIN** is—not just in terms of eternity, but in our everyday lives. We’ve seen plenty of examples of how unaddressed sin routinely *destroys families, friendships, and careers*. But it also has devastating internal results, like robbing you of your joy and assurance, stifling your spiritual growth, and distancing you from the fellowship of God’s people. **IT ALSO POLLUTES AND RUINS YOUR CONSCIENCE.**
- It is possible to virtually nullify the conscience through repeated abuse. **PAUL** spoke of people whose consciences were so convoluted and corrupted that their *“glory is in their shame”* (Phil. 3:19; cf. Rom. 1:32). Both the **MIND** and the **CONSCIENCE** can become so defiled that they cease making distinctions between what is **PURE** and what is **IMPURE** (Titus 1:15).

- After so much violation, the **conscience** finally falls silent. Morally, those with defiled consciences are left flying blind. The warning signals may be gone, but the danger certainly is not; in fact, the danger is greater than ever.
- Furthermore, even the most defiled conscience will not remain silent forever. When we stand in judgment, every person's conscience will side with God, the righteous Judge. ***The worst sin-hardened evildoer will discover before the throne of God that he has a conscience which testifies against him.***
- ***IT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S HIGH AND HOLY DUTY TO GUARD THE PURITY OF HIS REGENERATED CONSCIENCE. PAUL*** had much to say about this. Note how he spoke of the **conscience** in the following verses.
- ***“Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, ‘Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day’” (Acts 23:1).***

- ***“IN VIEW OF THIS, I ALSO DO MY BEST TO MAINTAIN ALWAYS A BLAMELESS CONSCIENCE BOTH BEFORE GOD AND BEFORE MEN” (ACTS 24:16).***
- ***“THE GOAL OF OUR INSTRUCTION IS LOVE FROM A PURE HEART AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE AND A SINCERE FAITH” (1 TIM. 1:5).***
- ***“FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, KEEPING FAITH AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE” (1 TIM. 1:18-19).***
- ***“I SERVE [GOD] WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE THE WAY MY FOREFATHERS DID” (2 TIM. 1:3).***
- ***ONE OF THE BASIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACONS, PAUL TOLD TIMOTHY, IS “HOLDING TO THE MYSTERY OF THE FAITH WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE” (1 TIM. 3:9).***

- A **PURE CONSCIENCE** is essential not only for what it does for oneself, but for what it says to others. A **SOUND CONSCIENCE** is the heart of a strong testimony for Christ. **PAUL** frequently pointed to his conscience as a witness: *“For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you”* (2 Cor. 1:12). *“We have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God”* (2 Cor. 4:2).
- **PETER** also wrote about the value of a pure conscience. *“Keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame”* (1 Pet. 3:16).

- A **CLEAR, POTENT CONSCIENCE** is a vital part of your spiritual growth and your witness to others. To work properly, it cannot be hindered or corrupted by unchecked sin and unaddressed guilt.
- A **WORKING CONSCIENCE** is one that's free from the burden of unchecked sin and unaddressed guilt. It's not weighed down by impurity or dulled by neglect. In a word, **IT'S CLEAR.**
- But how can we keep our consciences clear? How do we properly respond to guilt feelings in a way that keeps our consciences **SOFT, SHARP,** and **STRONG**? Here are some simple, practical principles to keep in mind.



- **CONFESS AND FORSAKE KNOWN SIN**. Examine your **GUILT** feelings in light of Scripture. Deal with the sin God's Word reveals. (Prov. 28:13) says, "**He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.**" (1 Jn. 1) speaks of confession of sin as an ongoing characteristic of the Christian life: "**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**" (1 John 1:9).
- We should certainly **CONFESS** to those we have wronged: "**Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed**" (James 5:16). But above all, we should **CONFESS** to the One whom sin offends most. As **DAVID** wrote, "**I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; and You forgave the guilt of my sin**" (Psalm 32:5).

- **ASK FORGIVENESS** and be reconciled to anyone you have wronged. Jesus instructed us, *“Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering”* (Matt. 5:23-24). *“If you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions”* (Matt. 6:14-15).
- **MAKE RESTITUTION**. God told Moses: *“Speak to the sons of Israel, ‘When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the Lord, and that person is guilty,*


then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong, and add to it one-fifth of it, and give it to him whom he has wronged” (Num. 5:6-7).

- **THE PRINCIPLE BEHIND THIS LAW IS *BINDING ON BELIEVERS* LIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ERA AS WELL (PHILEMON 19; LUKE 19:8).**

- ***EDUCATE YOUR CONSCIENCE.*** As we’ve discussed previously, a weak, easily grieved conscience results from a lack of *spiritual knowledge* (1 Cor. 8:7). If your conscience is *too easily wounded*, don’t violate it; to do so is sin (1 Cor. 8:12). Instead, ***IMMERSE IT IN GOD’S WORD SO IT CAN BEGIN TO FUNCTION WITH RELIABLE DATA.***

- ***DON’T TOLERATE A GRIEVED CONSCIENCE.*** Paul said he did his best ***“to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men”*** (Acts 24:16).

- **SOME PEOPLE** put off dealing with their guilt, thinking their conscience will clear itself in time. It won't. **PROCRASTINATION** allows the guilt feelings to fester. That in turn generates **depression, anxiety**, and other **emotional problems**.
- **GUILT FEELINGS** may persist long after the offense is forgotten, often spilling over to other areas of our lives. That's one reason people often feel guilty and are not sure why. Such confused guilt may be a symptom that something is terribly wrong spiritually. **PAUL** may have had that in mind when he wrote, **"To those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled"** (Titus 1:15).
- **DEALING WITH A WOUNDED CONSCIENCE** immediately by heart-searching prayer before God **is the only way to keep it clear and sensitive**. **PUTTING OFF DEALING WITH GUILT INEVITABLY COMPOUNDS THE PROBLEMS**.

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- **LINGERING, UNADDRESSED SIN IS CANCER TO THE BELIEVER.** It cripples your spiritual growth and stifles your usefulness. Once your conscience has identified sin in your life, you need to move quickly to deal with it biblically and thoroughly.
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