

Sharp Conscience

by James Stalker

A tender conscience is essential for character refinement, guiding individuals towards making moral choices that lead to dignity and purity.

Scripture: Proverbs 4:23, Romans 2:15, Romans 14:23, 1 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 10:22, Hebrews 13:18

Topics: "Conscience And Obedience", "Spiritual Hardness"

Description

James Stalker delves into the concept of a seared conscience as described in 1 Timothy 4:2, highlighting how repeated disobedience can lead to a numbing of the conscience, allowing individuals to commit heinous acts without remorse. He emphasizes the importance of obedience to conscience, which sharpens it and refines character, contrasting the outcomes of a hardened versus a tender conscience on the soul and body.

Transcript

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron"

(1 Tim. 4:2).

The Scripture speaks of some whose consciences are seared as with a hot iron. As a hot iron, touching the fingertips, would harden the skin, so that the fine sense of touch located there could not act, so may the conscience be seared in such a way that it does not prompt to do the right or inflict pain when the wrong is done. It is appalling to what lengths this moral insensibility may go. You will see a young man, after a few years of the sins of the city, breaking his mother's heart and bringing his father's grey hairs down with sorrow to the grave, apparently without a qualm. The hardened debauchee will ruin a fair life and introduce shame and desolation into a honored home, and then go among his companions and boast of it. But we may all see now and then the beginnings of this hardening process in ourselves. Acts which at first we touch with shame and fear we do at last without any inward pain. The conscience is ceasing to perform its functions, and atrophy is setting in.

What produces such a state? It is disobedience. If the conscience is constantly called upon to condemn the same sin, which is constantly repeated, it gradually ceases to perform the useless function. If its warnings are neglected, they become less and less distinct, and at last cease altogether. On the contrary, obedience to conscience sharpens it, and makes it a more and more perfect instrument. There are virgin souls which blush in secret at the most transient thought of sins in which others wallow without remorse.

There are men who wince, as high-blooded horses do at the touch of the whip, at the first sound in their hearing of words which in other companies form the staple of conversation. The conscience may be trained to tremble at the least approach of dishonor, as the needle of a perfect compass indicates the least turn of the ship. This is the path to all fineness of character. It gradually elevates the whole man, stamping the aspect of dignity and purity even on the external appearance. A hardened conscience coarsens and brutalises soul and body, but a tender conscience refines both.

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