

The New Covenant Part Iii ('States' of the Conscience)

by Robert Wurtz II

A purged conscience is essential for coming to the throne of grace and serving the living God.

Scripture: Romans 1:28, Romans 14:13, Romans 14:21, Romans 14:23, Galatians 5:13, 1 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 2:15, Hebrews 9:9

Topics: "Christian Conscience", "Moral Freedom"

Description

Robert Wurtz II preaches about the different types of conscience - the guilty conscience, the evil conscience, the good conscience, and the weak conscience. He emphasizes the importance of having a conscience purged by the blood of Christ and aligned with God's laws to make moral decisions. Wurtz also discusses the dangers of legalism and liberty in the Christian life, cautioning against using freedom as an excuse for sin or causing others to stumble.

Transcript

The GUILTY conscience is a primary obstacle to us coming to the throne of grace or to do His service (Hebrews 9:9). The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sins- nor did it have the power to PURGE the conscience of its guilt. For this cause of a guilty conscience- people under the Law lived their whole lives in fear of death (Hebrews 2:15). However, we read in Hebrews 9:14... 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... and again 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 10:22).

Of an EVIL conscience there are several kinds. When our conscience has lost its sense of right and wrong to one degree or another this could be called a polluted or defiled conscience. This comes about from false criteria with which the conscience judges. The mechanism may work, but the 'laws' written in the heart may have been non-biblical teachings that should have been 'cast down' as they exalted themselves against the knowledge of God. The conscience is "evil" when it gives either none or a false testimony as to past or present actions. Likewise, when reflecting upon our own sin and wickedness, our conscience feels no pain, it is EVIL, and said to be seared or hardened (1 Timothy 4:2). This is caused by our deliberate quenching of it when the Spirit of God would seek to bring correction to our life. A "dull" spot develops in the area that the conscience is continually quenched or seared. It is also EVIL when, during the

commission of sin(s), it remains silent.

A GOOD conscience is one that has been purged by the blood of Christ and is utilizing the laws of God written upon our hearts BY GOD as a reference point for its moral decisions. Everyone is born with certain "default" laws upon our hearts in so much as to render every human being who ever lived as guilty before God for their sins (Romans 1:28). Moreover, the process of writing the laws upon our hearts is demonstrated to the circumcision by Paul concerning the Gentiles. As it is written... For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 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. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. (Romans 2:14-16). So we see then that the rulings of our conscience will be front and center even in the judgment.

A WEAK conscience is one in which there are residual rules and regulations of men that have nothing to do with God, but yet are present in the heart and are used by the conscience to make ruling for good or evil. This is seen in great detail in Romans 14. As it is written... Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand (NIV).

This is true in all sorts of disputable matters. The issue is, does the person have a pure biblical justification in their conscience for what they are doing. If so then they are acting in faith. If a person believes that what they are about to do is sin- it is sin unto them (Romans 14:23). Why, because they cannot do it in a pure conscience.

This is not to say that God has a different set of rules for everyone because He does not. The issue has to do with our growth and having been built up in the knowledge of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). It takes time for God to erase things like "old wives fables" and "legalistic laws" and add HIS LAW in their place. There are also times when we may be vulnerable to certain sins and the Holy Spirit will CONVICT us to stay away from the things that make us fall.

We have a lot of traditions as did the Pharisee's that make the Word of God of no effect (Matthew 15:3). And that because a lot of "taste not, touch not, and handle not," teachings exist that have cropped up in the last 200 years. As it is written... Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations -- "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," which all concern things which perish with the using -- according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh (Colossians 2:22,23 NKJV). Change comes when we prayerfully spend time in God's Word seeking to know the truth of God.

Many people believe a lot of legalistic things that they have been taught or has been passed down from their families that are unbiblical; God will correct these wrongs in our conscience as the Holy Spirit (our teacher) leads us into all truth. And when this happens we may feel at liberty to do certain things that we once viewed as sin or we may feel convicted to stop doing something we once thought alright; however,

we must use great caution here as not to be using liberty as an occasion to the flesh or legalism as a means of our Christian expression. Some people get 'revived' or 'on-fire' and become very critical in an unhelpful way. This is different than feeling a sorrow for the spiritual state of the Church, etc.' which is normal behavior of a true believer when things are unChristlike. License and legalism are the two enemies of the true Christian life.

On Liberty:

As it is written... For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another (Galatians 5:13). It is possible to do things that other Christians view as sin and cause them to stumble in the faith. As it is also written... Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died (Romans 14:13-15). So then the summation of these things is found in Romans 14:21-23... It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin (NKJV).

The end of the commandment is to love God with all our soul, mind, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. If we are not attaining to this end we need to reevaluate what we are doing in our relationship with God.

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