

Life With a Pure Conscience 2 Corinthians 1:8-14

Introduction:

- Have you ever done something that you were afraid to admit, so you chose to lie about it and cover it up, hoping no one would find out?
- Many times when people are under attack or feel threatened, they turn to deceitful living hoping to avoid appearing wrong.
- For example, look at King David. He was looked upon and regarded as a great man of God, and God's chosen king of Israel. There was one little problem with David - after committing adultery, which no one but Bathsheba and he knew about, David's conscience ate at him. He tried to get rid of it, but finally had to turn to God, after committing more sinful acts, in hopes of covering up the adultery.
- For the Christian, a guilty conscience leads to a miserable life, living in fear that the truth will be found out, covering up guilty feelings with dishonesty, bringing more guilt.
- The apostle Paul had many enemies. His boldness made a lot of people mad. Everywhere he went preaching the gospel, others were in conflict with him over it, even to the point that they tried to lie about his character.
- Paul took living with a clear conscience seriously. In Acts 24:16, he says, *"And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."*
- To have a clear conscience, it will take some effort on your part.
- It is so much easier to live the Christian life when you are able to live it with a clean and clear conscience! Paul says, *"For our rejoicing is this!"* It was the testimony of their conscience. Every believer should know how to possess a pure conscience, and experience the joy that accompanies it!
- From our text this morning, the apostle Paul shares three things that lead to the pure conscience that he was able to possess.

How can you have a clear conscience both before God and man?

1. You must base your life and faith on what is simple.
 - As people, we always seem to try to make things bigger and better by making them more complex!
 - There is a place for improving ways of doing things and becoming more efficient. But, when you sacrifice simplicity and make things more complex, you are forgetting the basic principle of keeping things simple.
 - For example, look at cars today. The Model T Ford was far more simple than today's Ford Mustang. Sure, they don't compare on the stat sheet, but they both served the same purpose. However, one could have far more things go wrong than the other. The Mustang has more parts to break and a computer system to crash!
 - Paul says in verse 12 that one of the factors of having maintained a clear conscience in this life was to live with simplicity.

- For the Christian, simplicity is found in Christ!
- What simplicity was Paul speaking about? We see it in 2 Corinthians 11:3.
- Satan brought deception (beguiled) to confuse what was simple into looking complex.
- Christ came to the earth, lived a perfect life, died on the cross as a payment for man's sin, and proved the victory over sin by rising from the grave and ascending to heaven, body, spirit, and soul.
- There is nothing else to be done other than accepting God's offer that was made possible through Christ's life, death, and resurrection!
- Today, there are religious groups filled with people who have made the gospel of Jesus Christ complex and corrupt. Why? Because they refused to believe that salvation could be found so easily.
- They complicate the gospel with rituals and works, thinking that a right relationship with God must be earned or maintained through a list of accomplishments.
- Just as Satan beguiled Adam and Eve in the Garden, Satan beguiles people today with corrupted, complex teaching.
- In Romans 16:18-19, Paul speaks of how one's hearts can be deceived, and moved away from what is simple.
- *"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the **simple**. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and **simple** concerning evil."* **Romans 16:18-19**
- One day Christ will return and call up to Him all those who have trusted in Him. This simple truth should lead Christians to focus their lives on one thing - where they are heading and who they will see! **Titus 2:13**
- People can allow their lives to become complicated as they seek after power, status, and worldly desires. These only bring complications through debt, failure, and abandonment!
- A man who lives in simplicity lives with contentment, looking for Christ's return!
1 Timothy 6:6

2. You must strive to be clear and honest before others.

- Paul says in verse 12, *"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in... godly sincerity... we have had our conversation in the world..."*
- Paul was at peace with both teaching the truth, and living the truth.
- As a Christian, you must desire to teach the sincere Word of God, and also live in sincerity before others.
- Your reputation as a Christian before others directly reflects who Christ is to others. This is why having an honest reputation before others is so important.
- The Bible says that Christians are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. This means that they are representatives of Christ. A believer must act on Christ's behalf, as well as convey His thoughts before others. **Titus 2:7**

- Paul’s conscience was clear. It enabled him to be used of God, knowing he was not corrupting what God was conveying. **2 Corinthians 2:17**
 - In order to teach others truth and honesty, they must be taught from His Word.
 - In order to live before others with honesty, there are two things that must happen in your relationships, both with God and others.
 - a. Accept that you will make mistakes.
 - We all make mistakes, the only difference between people living honestly and dishonestly is if, and how they admit their mistakes.
 - As a young boy, I remember times when I broke something at my grandparents and would try to fix it so that my cousin would get blamed for it.
 - My conscience would tell me I was wrong and I was at fault. This left me carrying the weight of my actions instead of coming out and accepting the responsibility, and having a clear conscience.
 - With God, when you know you have left the desires of His heart to seek your own, just remember the first point of simplicity and turn back to God, accepting your mistake.
 - b. Fix the things that you have broken.
 - When you make a mistake and break something physically, or hurt someone’s feelings, the honest person will make right what he did wrong.
 - By doing this, there is no guilt left on your conscience and you are able to move on.
 - With God, you must learn from your mistake and set up boundaries to prevent you from breaking fellowship with God again.
3. You must seek to follow godly wisdom and counsel.
- I love what Paul writes next, “*not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God.*”
 - You can choose to live by your own experiences, or by the experiences and advice of godly people. **Philippians 4:9**
 - God has given you His perfect Word and the accounts of hundreds of lives that detail their every mistake and consequences, as well as any righteous choice and its consequences.
 - Paul says in Romans 15:4 that the things that were written before, in the time before Paul, have significance today. They are there for learning.
 - It is always best to learn from someone else’s mistakes. Why do something stupid if someone else has already done it? Seek advice from those who are older in the Lord.
 - Satan is working to impart worldly wisdom upon every person who will listen, and most will. However, this wisdom is only for self-gratification, pride, and not to benefit others or glorify God, always resulting in a guilty conscience.
 - Do you want to avoid disaster in your life? Do you agree that wisdom will help you avoid disaster? Does a road sign that says “Cliff Ahead” or “Falling Rocks” help you avoid

disaster? The Bible contains God's direction for your life and will help you avoid disaster. Satan will try to remove it from your life if he can.

- Proverbs is full of great advice that supports the need of godly wisdom.

Proverb 11:14, 12:15, 19:20, 19:21

- You need to depend every day on the Bible and the wisdom that God gives through the Bible.

Conclusion:

- A guilty conscience can bring a person physical illness and mental failure. The best mind to have is the guilt-free mind of Christ! **Philippians 2:5**