

Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide

10 Dumb Things Smart Christians Believe, Part 7
July 16th, 2017

The people, who really need help but are almost impossible to help, have enormous problems created by their **OWN** foolish or evil behavior – but they adamantly insist **NONE** of it was their fault, because they have done nothing wrong

The “Jiminy Cricket” code of ethics: Trust your **CONSCIENCE** above all else as long as your conscience is clear, and you have a sense of inner peace about your decision

Many when faced with a tough moral dilemma assume “x” must be ok if we have **PEACE** about our decision or action (no guilt); otherwise, our conscience would let us know something was **WRONG**

We think of our conscience as being a spiritual **THERMOMETER** when it’s really a spiritual **THERMOSTAT**

Our conscience is a spiritual thermostat set to the standards we **CHOOSE**

Our conscience doesn’t tell us if we’re violating **GOD’S** standards; it tells us when we’re violating **OUR** standards

Our conscience is also **EASY** to “reset”

Think of things you once thought were **WRONG** but now don’t produce the slightest twinge of **GUILT**

Bottom line: Our conscience is far too pliable to be counted on as an **ABSOLUTE** authority

Reasons Why Our Conscience Can’t Be Trusted

1 Corinthians 4:3-4 (NLT) “As for me, it matters very little how I might be evaluated by you or by any human authority. I don’t even trust my own judgment on this point. My conscience is clear, but that doesn’t prove I’m right. It is the Lord Himself who will examine me and decide.”

• **Our Sin Nature and Blind Spots**

Since Adam’s fall, we’ve all been born with a “sin **NATURE**”

Psalm 51:5 (NLT) “For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.”

Matthew 15:19 (NIV) “For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”

Jeremiah 17:9 (NLT) “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?”

Becoming a follower of Christ provides us with the power to **OVERCOME** our sin nature, but it doesn’t **ERADICATE** it

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT) “The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure.”

The great missionary Paul struggled with his own sins & had to wage a constant battle with the same powerful enemy **WITHIN** that we do

Romans 7:15 & 18 (NLT) “I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate... And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t.”

Acts 15:36-40 (NLT) “³⁶After some time Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let’s go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing.’ ³⁷Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. ³⁸But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work. ³⁹Their disagreement was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus. ⁴⁰Paul chose Silas, and as he left, the believers entrusted him to the Lord’s gracious care.”

- **Bad Software**

Since our conscience is no more trustworthy than the standard it's attached to, we can end up feeling very **GOOD** about some very **BAD** things

Majority doesn't equal **MORALITY**

Romans 12:2 (NLT) "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think."

- **A Callused Heart**

Once our conscience loses its **SENSITIVITY**, it's not good for much

If you feel guilty doing something but keep at it, most likely the guilt **GOES AWAY** for good and leaves us with a **CLEAR** conscience

That doesn't mean our actions are **RIGHT** or **PRAISEWORTHY**

Proverbs 14:12 (NAS) "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

So, What Is Our Conscience Good For?

When rightly understood and functioning properly, our conscience is a valuable **EARLY WARNING** device

It informs us when we're about to violate **OUR OWN** moral standards

We also have the ability to constantly realign our conscience to **SCRIPTURE** if we so choose

The more accurately we do so, the greater our ability to **RECOGNIZE** and **AVOID** the deceptive lures of sin

Psalm 119:9-11 (NIV) "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your word. I seek You with all my heart; do not let me stray from Your commands. I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You."

When our conscience flashes yellow or red, it is time to slow down and check the Scriptures **BEFORE PROCEEDING**

My Next Step Today Is:

- Instead of letting my conscience be my guide, I will let God's Word be my guide in life
- I am interested in being baptized this summer – either Aug. 6th, Aug 20th (Beach Baptism), or Sept 24th
- I am interested in taking "Financial Peace University" beginning Tuesday, Aug. 1st at 6:30 pm (*flyer available*)
- I am interested in joining the "Starting Point" class beginning Thursday, July 27th at 6:30 pm

Next week: Join us as we explore Dumb Mistake #8: God Brings Good Luck. Bring a friend!

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