

Cleansing of the Conscience

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace Church located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

What is the conscience? Every person has a conscience, which is developed by training, culture, information, education, experience, and choices. The conscience includes the norms and standards that we have decided to live by, based upon our opinions toward truth.

The Christian's conscience is controlled by the Holy Spirit. But the state of the conscience of many Americans, sadly, is exhibited in many areas, such as acts of abortion, promiscuity, homosexuality, rebellion, and drug and alcohol abuse. All of these things violate the godly conscience.

In this booklet, we will look at how we can operate with a cleansed conscience, one that is purged by the blood of Christ and governed by the Word of God. This kind of conscience is insulated from the attacks of the devil and his world system, allowing the Christian to operate in the world from a heavenly position of victory.

Chapter One
A CONSCIENCE FORMED
FOR VICTORY

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy [Spirit]” (2 Peter 1:19-21).

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Timothy 1:5).

“And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1).

Christians who are Spirit-filled (Romans

8:11)—those who have the Word of God in their hearts (Romans 2:14-15)—have consciences based on the mind of God. This means they have norms and standards that reveal the character and characteristics of God. The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit are the basis for what they think and what they do in the practical issues and responsibilities of life.

This is a “good conscience” (Acts 23:1, 1 Timothy 1:5). It is a conscience that operates in love and with a special kind of faith. It is a pure conscience. This kind of conscience puts away the filth of the flesh (1 Peter 3:21). When people reject us and speak wrongfully of us, this conscience remains godly because of the truth that sets it apart through the Word of God.

Godly Consciences Put Away

Paul wrote of Hymenaeus and Alexander as examples of some who “put away” the godly conscience. Some people take Christianity as a matter of convenience. In their estimation, it is not a serious matter. They do not make commitments. They live in it when they feel like living in it. Christians who do this are in serious trouble, says God Almighty. Hymenaeus and Alexander were “delivered unto Satan, that they may

learn not to blaspheme" (1 Timothy 1:20).

God has told us to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to Him. This is our reasonable service. We are to have consciences that are void of offense toward God and void of offense toward men.

The human conscience is formed by what we have received in our upbringing in terms of information, education, and cultural training. Added to that are our experiences, which are the result of the choices we make with the opportunities we have. From that, we adopt norms and standards for our choices in life.

The Christian conscience, however, has a different basis because of the Finished Work. In Romans 9:1, it is the Holy Spirit: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy [Spirit]." In Romans 2:14-15, it is the Word of God. In John 6:63, it is the Word *and* the Spirit. Therefore, godly norms and standards are established by God's grace, love, purity, holiness, and righteousness, which become the basis for making decisions.

Chapter Two

A CONSCIENCE THAT OBEYS THE CALL

A father read many stories of missionaries to his young son. As the boy heard them, he told his dad, "When I grow up, I want to go on the mission field too." He prayed for missionaries, and when he grew up he went to Africa.

The sun scorched his skin. He was injured by a lion and lost sight in one of his eyes. Circumstances became so bad that he sent his wife home to England for a time. When he went home after his father died, his wife hardly recognized him.

Still, he kept saying, "I have to go back, I must go back. I love the people in Africa."

He and his wife returned to Africa. Eventually, he buried his wife on the foreign field, and then he became sick. When someone stole his medication, he became even more ill. That missionary prayed, "God, I told You that I would go

anywhere if You would go with me. Now I do not have the medication that will keep me alive. Please help!”

A journalist named Henry Stanley set out to find this man for an interview and offered to bring his medication. After a very long and difficult journey, when he found the missionary, Mr. Stanley confessed that he was an atheist and had no personal interest other than to write his story and to deliver the much-needed medicine.

God had answered the missionary’s prayer, and the atheist journalist later said that this man’s life was so true to the Word of God and the Bible that he became gloriously saved.

In spite of the medicine, however, the missionary grew weaker and weaker. Still, he continued to pray for the people he was sent to. He was on his knees in the position of prayer as he took his last breath.

Motivated by the Great Commandment

This man was David Livingstone, and he had a conscience that told him unsaved people were lost. He had a conscience that said it takes salvation by Christ to be saved. He had a conscience that said we are motivated by God’s love, under any circumstance and condition, to obey

His great commission. He had a conscience that told him that spreading the love of God was a great commandment through the Holy Spirit of God. The Spirit and the Word flooded this man's conscience. He was void of offense toward God and void of offense toward men.

The apostle Paul said he served God with a pure heart and a godly conscience (1 Timothy 1:5). It is a beautiful thing to have a conscience free from lust, greed, materialism, lying, and self-exaltation. It is great to have a conscience free from the worldliness, the lawlessness, and the carelessness of wrong choices. This conscience has in it the most beautiful love and faith in the world toward God, and it then expresses love to people as it serves them by faith (Galatians 5:6).

Chapter Three

THE CONSCIENCE CANNOT BE ESCAPED

“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

“And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

“And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:43-48).

This passage isn't speaking of literally cutting off hands and plucking out eyes. It means we are to isolate and forsake areas in which we fail and sin. But this passage is also speaking about the torments of hell as they relate to the conscience. In hell, a man's conscience cannot die. According to the most reliable Bible scholars, the "worm" refers to the conscience. Jesus kept repeating, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" because He wants men everywhere to be saved by grace. He wants people to get their marriages straightened out, to get their families straight, and to make commitments that are eternal to God.

This is such an important lesson. When the rich man died without Christ in Luke 16, he was in hell and, being in torment, lifted up his eyes. He said, "Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (verses 23-24). His conscience was tormented. He finally realized that he had just lived by a conscience of convenience without godly convictions, but now it was too late. For all of eternity he will be tormented by the truth of rejecting Christ as Savior.

Avoid the Conscience of Convenience

We can develop a conscience of convenience by relying on material provisions. We can have a conscience of compromise in which we know the truth but do not walk in it—and that is sin (James 4:17).

On the other hand, we can have a conscience that is filled with loving conviction. That is what the Word of God does in us.

Jesus was born into the world at a terrible time, a time when the world was in upheaval in every realm. He came with tidings of great joy (Luke 2:10). He was *Emmanuel*, “God with man,” coming to save us from our sins (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). Thank God that as Christians, we do not have to go into hell. The false prophets and the beast will be cast into hell (Revelation 19:20). One thousand years later, Satan will be cast into hell where the beast and the false prophets are still alive (Revelation 20:10). Those cast in one thousand years before were still alive—their consciences tormenting them with guilt and shame and unfulfilled desires for all of eternity.

Perfect Consciences

Thank God, as we go to heaven, and as we love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:29-30), we develop a perfect conscience. Revelation 22:11 explains that in eternity the unjust will remain unjust, the filthy will remain filthy, but the righteous will be righteous for all eternity. The pure will still be pure. We will go to heaven by grace because God cannot impute sin to us: Jesus Christ paid for all of our sins.

For all eternity, we will have absolutely pure consciences. We will have the conscience of perfection, the conscience of God's glory, the conscience of loving each other in God, the conscience of serving and worshipping God, and the conscience that will never be defiled. Now, however, in 1 Corinthians 8:12, another person's weak conscience can be easily defiled by our wrong choices. And if I defile a person with a weak conscience, I defile Christ. Therefore, we are to renounce dishonesty and deceitfulness in our own lives as we manifest the truth, Paul said, "commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2).

Everything is determined by the conscience. We can have a compromised conscience by only partially living by God's truth and deceive ourselves because we talk ourselves into the wrong information. We can believe something that isn't true and have a defiled conscience conditioned by our own interpretations.

God wants us to be set apart in His Word, because His Word is truth. He is saying to us, "Have a pure, godly conscience as the determination for your norms and standards for thinking, for deciding, for communicating, and for behaving through My precious love that is freely given to you through the Holy Spirit."

I have never sensed such a crucial hour in the history of the world. We have an opportunity to enter into a life of being Spirit-filled and to have the Word of God flowing in us as we obey from our hearts. We have the privilege of praying as we have never prayed, loving as we have never loved, giving Christ to others as never before. We have this great privilege of going forward as witnesses as we have never gone before—with joy as our strength (Nehemiah 8:10) and with amazing peace (Isaiah 26:3).

We have the privilege to have a life without condemnation, without guilt complexes, and

without shame. We have the privilege to be Christians who are Spirit-filled, walking in the grace of God, and loving every moment in the abundant life of John 10:10.

Chapter Four

THE POWER OF THE BLOOD

Every single word of God is pure (Proverbs 30:5). Anyone who adds a single thing to the Scriptures will be found to be a liar. This is why Deuteronomy 4:2, 11:16-22, and 12:32, and Matthew 5:18-19 warn us: Don't add to God's words, and don't diminish them, whatever you do. Don't add, don't diminish, and don't privately interpret. The Word is to be received with meekness as we put away all superfluity of naughtiness. Then the Word becomes "engrafted" and is able to deliver our souls (see James 1:21).

Remember, the conscience is what makes us unique, and it is based on the way we process information. In Acts 23:1 and 1 Timothy 3:9, the Greek word for conscience is *suneidesis*, formed from the verb *oida*, or "frozen in"—to perceive and examine with the eyes of our mind and based on our experiences. It refers to knowledge

and information received during early childhood training, the effects of the culture where we were raised, and the education we received. It influences our ability to make choices based on personal experiences, which lead the conscience.

In Romans 9:1, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our conscience. Doctrine is written on our hearts and in our consciences by the work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 2:15). This is the personal provision God has given us to have a Spirit-filled heart. We then rejoice and we bear witness to the Gospel with godly simplicity and godly sincerity—not with fleshly wisdom, but through the grace of God (see 2 Corinthians 1:12).

The grace of God is the reason we are able to function freely in this world. The more we receive grace, the more abundantly we will express it toward others in our “conversation,” which is our manner of living. What is it that supremely dominates and motivates our norms and standards? It is the grace of God.

The Answer for Sin Questions

“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?" (Hebrews 9:14).

Through the eternal Spirit, Jesus offered Himself to God without spot. "Purge"—*katharizo* in the Greek—means to free and cleanse from any defilement of sin and from any impurity, put it out of the way, and get rid of it. The Spirit takes the conscience, purges it, and makes it a conscience filled with divine conviction so that we can walk in divine integrity: "Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide" (Psalm 26:1).

Hebrews 10:2 speaks of true worshippers who "once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." This is the most beautiful thing about a purged conscience. It means if you have been abused, you are no longer conscious of it. Why? You have been purged from the conscience of abuse. If you have committed adultery and repented and forsaken it through rebound, isolation, and restoration (see Philippians 3:13-14), your conscience has literally been purged so that you no longer have to see yourself as guilty in any way of committing that sin. Once we have been purged, we have no more consciousness of our sin.

In John 8, the Pharisees became convicted in their consciences after they had accused the woman taken in adultery. Jesus forgave her and said, "Hath no man condemned thee?"

"No man, Lord," she said.

"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:1-11).

We must understand that the purging of the conscience only comes through the blood of Christ. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

Applying the Blood to the Conscience

The Blood of Christ literally had to be shed for the remission of our sins—this is made clear fifty-five times in the Bible. But there are also more than three hundred and fifty references to the spiritual application of the Blood. God takes the spiritual application of His precious Blood, goes in and purges our consciences in the eyes of the Lord Jesus and in the eyes of the Holy Spirit. He takes away the defilement, takes away sin's shame, takes away its guilt and condemnation.

For this reason, Hebrews 10:22 says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of

faith, having hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." This speaks of the application of the Word and the Holy Spirit through the renewal of our minds and the concentration and consecration of the body (Romans 12:1-2).

We have such a privilege to enter into a godly conscience in every area of our lives. Oh, that we would just receive godly information! Oh, that we would just receive godly knowledge. And, oh, that we would make godly choices and have godly experiences. A cleansed conscience produces all of that. Purged and cleansed, a child of God names his sin as soon as he falls, gets back up in repentance, and immediately walks in the Spirit so that he does not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

Consider the Word of God and its infallibility concerning the conscience. When my conscience is purged, then my self-consciousness is occupied with God's norms and standards. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. It is wonderful to be self-conscious when it is a consciousness of God's provision.

When God says "I can," it is through His power; when He says, "I will" it is through His love. God can because He is all-powerful; God

will because He loves us.

Let us go forward with a Christian conscience, occupied with God-consciousness. Let us get on our knees before God, exercising our faith in the promises that come alive. Let us get up, obey God, and trust Him for the things that are so available to us through the integrity of His compassion. Just go forward and believe God for a special touch, whether it involves sickness, healing, marital reconciliation—whatever it might be between you and God in your heart.

Trust the living God, for it is impossible for Him to lie (Hebrews 6:18). He cannot lie (Titus 1:2), because He is not a man that He can lie (Numbers 23:19). By faith we can trust Him completely—spirit, soul, and body.

CONCLUSION

When the word “tenth” (or “tithes”) is used in the Bible, it refers to first-fruits. Give God the first and the best, not your leftovers. Don’t fall into a careless, subtle deception. Let’s do away with sublimation and foolishness. God is able to make all grace abound toward us so that we will have all sufficiency for all things (2 Corinthians 9:8).

Jesus Christ deserves that we put Him first. You can trust God to live up to His promise in Matthew 6:33: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Pray and believe God for wonderful emotional, physical, and spiritual healings. Once the conscience is cleansed, people can be released from habits that have plagued them for years. Jesus Christ, the Conqueror, the One who conquered death, is living inside of us. The One who came forth from the grave is in us. The One

who defeated the devil once and for all is right inside of us. Let's not ignore Him. He must not be seen as just a familiar guest.

Let's believe the God who cannot lie. Allow Him to release His resurrection power in us—the same power that raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11). Then, let the power of our ascended Lord bring cleansing and forgiveness to our consciences as we simply receive His promises and believe.