

# You and Your Conscience

Acts 23:1

## Introduction:

- A. “Let your conscience be your guide” – Popular advice for ethical and religious decisions.
- B. Is it always safe to follow your conscience?
- C. Is it ever safe to ignore your conscience?
- D. Let us notice some *assumptions* that you must not make concerning your conscience.

## Discussion:

### I. Do Not Assume That Your Conscience Is the Voice of God.

- A. Voice of God comes from without. (Heb. 1:1-2; 2:1-5; Eph. 3:1-5; Rom. 10:6-8, 14-17).
- B. Conscience is a God-given inner sense that urges you to do what you believe to be right and condemns you when you do not.<sup>1</sup>
- C. There are good and bad consciences – all cannot be God’s voice.
  - 1. Good and pure (1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9)
  - 2. Seared and defiled (1 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:15).

### II. Do Not Assume That Your Conscience Is Always Right.

- A. Paul was always conscientious – but not always right. (Acts 23:1)
  - 1. Conscientious as a Pharisee and persecutor of Christ (Acts 26:9; 1 Tim. 1:13).
  - 2. Conscientious as a Christian and preacher of Christ (2 Tim. 1:3).
- B. Many are conscientious – but honestly mistaken.
  - 1. Need to be open to teaching and study. (Cf. Acts 17:11).
  - 2. Need keep conscience set to correct standard – like a clock or calibrated instrument.
  - 3. Without objective standard every man becomes a law unto himself.

### III. Do Not Assume That Your Conscience Can Ever Be Safely Ignored.

- A. One cannot violate his conscience without sinning.
  - 1. Not even in matters not inherently wrong (Rom. 14:14, 20-23; 1 Cor 10:23-33).
  - 2. Makes one a sinner if for not other reason (Rom 2:12-16).
- B. One must always listen to his conscience to avoid damaging it.(cf. 1 Tim. 4:2).
  - 1. Bible knowledge must guide us, but need a good conscience to push us live by it.
  - 2. A seared conscience feels no guilt, no urge to correct, no real desire to do right.

## Conclusion:

- A. One can be conscientious and not be right, but cannot be right and not conscientious.
- B. Search the scriptures, find out what is right, then always conscientiously obey.

---

<sup>1</sup> That process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad, commending the good, condemning the bad, and so prompting to do the former, and avoid the latter (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)