

Holding onto a Good Conscience in an Evil World

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There are three main types of conscience.

Seared

Misguided

Weak

Warning, Danger, Hazard; these are all warnings that are put on signs for us to heed. They are there to protect us. These signs are seen on electricity pylons, plastic bags, cigarettes, sharp bends in the roads, etc.

Taking an example of hidden hazards and more visible dangers.

Some cliffs in Cornwall have danger signs at their edges warning of invisible overhangs. While the top looks secure and safe the underneath has caved away, hence giving a false illusion of safety - hence the need for the more visible warnings.

However going to the Hydra water falls in Yorkshire, being 100 feet high with the water roaring down, the danger is so obvious that a safety sign becomes unnecessary. People will keep away from the danger.

The above example is clear for ones own physical safety, but how should we decide upon what is morally right and wrong, to give us an insight on judging how clear and effective our warning signs are for our spiritual safety?

For morality, do we rely on outside laws or our internal laws?

Believers in The Secular Law - must have every example and possible outcome written down clearly.

Believers in disposition - understand that outcomes should be based upon intuitive inward common sense, a good conscience.

We should ask ourselves –

Which is right?

Should it be solid laws or conscience?

Does it matter?

What is the difference?

The word “conscience” comes from the Greek and means “with-to-know”. It infers that we should look at ourselves and bear witness to our own actions.

Rom. 2v14-15 When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires of is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

All people have a moral outlook on the way they, our other people should behave. Even if they do not use the Biblical Laws (perhaps because the society is not aware of it), for example the Greeks, they still had a moral sense of what was right and wrong.

Most moral and personal decisions should be based upon law or the conscience.

Taking the two extremes for comparison - the Greeks and Romans compared with the Pharisees.

The Greeks and Romans had philosophers who looked to common-sense for their daily decision making.

The Pharisees however, separated themselves from everyone else, and in order to effect this they built up many thousands of laws to protect themselves from every potential situation. So that they could never be accused of doing anything seriously wrong.

To help in understanding their reasoning then this simile may help:-

Think of a large field. In this field there are ten lethal holes in it. The Ten Commandments (part of the Law of Moses), put a fence just around the edge of each hole. They said 'Danger do not go beyond this fence - you will die'.

The Pharisees reasoned thus:-

If we put more fences around the outside of these original ten fences then we will be even safer - because we will be kept even further away from danger!

This reasoning multiplied until there were so many fences around other fences, that there was very little field in which to live in!

No one could move because of all the fences!

Life had become very much like that in the time of Jesus.

Matt. 23v23 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

Here Jesus was saying that the pious Pharisees gave a 1/10 of everything, even to the extraordinary limit of counting the very last pea and bean.

They were scrupulous in these insignificant things but allowed more important things to slip.

They split the laws into light and heavy Laws. By sorting out the peas and beans of the light laws, they missed the heavy ones that treated fellow man with truth and justice. This culminated with the greatest crime on Earth - the murder of Jesus Christ.

These examples show that both extremes did not work - both collapsed.

Jesus' Two New Rules take over (Mark.12v30-31).

Christians should guard against someone telling them exactly how they should behave in a situation.

But we do have centre pillars on which everything is built upon. These would be:-

Not to have any other god than Almighty God, not to murder, or commit adultery, etc. –

Essentially these would be the Ten Commandments.

However there are other things that are not quite so weighty, laziness, marrying a non-Christian, drunkenness, etc.

Heb. 13v17 Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your life/souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.

These originally applied to God alone, but after the coming of Jesus it is taken up with the 144,000 faithful spiritual leaders on this earth during this 2000 year Gospel Age period.

In congregational matters this would include the smooth running by working together peaceably.

True Christianity would be positioned between the two extremes given at the very beginning of this essay. The True Christian should rely upon a good working conscience to warn before things got too serious. It would also be instructive even after the event.

This conscience would act like an early warning smoke alarm, alert you so that something could be done to rectify the situation immediately.

Like a smoke alarm, the conscience should be periodically tested to ensure that it is still operating correctly.

As indicated at the beginning the conscience can suffer from three things which will make it ineffective:-

1. Seared

Constant exposure to damaging things will then make the conscience unable to make the correct decisions.

Taking one example being the constant touching of hot things with one's fingers. The end result would be that the skin will become very hard and insensitive to heat upon 'the touch'.

1Tim. 4v1-2 Now the spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared,

Essentially beware of false teachers who are insensitive to Goodness.

Titus 1v15 To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted.

These people have defiled and dirty minds (though outwardly they may be wonderful people loved by many).

This sounds a contradiction! However it depends upon which standard the assessment is made Yahweh's Standard or The World's Standard – remember charmers sound so nice with their silver tongue, but inside are detestable to Yahweh!

Other people may just have dirty minds by always taking the double meaning of a simple innocent word or phrase that may be said at the work place.

Now the concept of sin is out of fashion! Standards have slipped within and throughout society over the last few decades and more and more laws are brought in as bandages over the real problem being moral decay.

We see this in every measurable quantity that we choose to use!

An extreme example of this would be Victorian books never described food in a 'scrumptious' way. It was felt then that if it were then people would become gluttons! Inductively it was reasoned that gluttonous behaviour would lead to fat people and all fat people were bad people! Those who loved food would become greedy!

It has changed now – we just say what we please to sell product.

Another thing that has changed is the lyrics and style of music over the last fifty years.

Topics would include kissing, twisting, sex, drugs, violence and prostitution as being a good thing!

2. Misguided

If something is fed faulty information then how can it make sensible and rational decisions?

It can only base its 'decision making' upon the information presented!

Let us take an example to explain this:

The Bible mentions that the Christian should be monogamous. If a person was a member of a tribe who practised polygamy, how would that person know that polygamy was wrong?

3. Weak

If we are strong-minded and secure in the faith/fidelity assurance then we must be careful that we do not oppress weak-minded people.

Rom. 14v1 As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions.

Treat people who are 'over scrupulous in their own faith' as being weak. They may need to be like this because they are weak in understanding - however we should still accept them as they are, and not weaken them further through their own uncertainty.

This example was that Jewish upbringing was such that some meats were acceptable and others were not. If these new Christians (ex-Jews) still had reservations about some meats then they should be entitled to keep to these old laws even though the new Christian Law was that everything from God was Good. Hence we who are strong in the faith/fidelity/assurance should not weaken the faith of these new Christians by imposing upon them something that is not very important.

Luke 18v19 And Jesus said to him: 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God (= *Yahweh*) alone.

There is only one standard from God and it is Good!

This standard **never** changes and is the one us as True Christians must follow.

God will equip man to provide every work.

We should not be like the Jewish people who then had a book that had an answer for every obvious situation, because the law cannot cater for every non-obvious situation! This is where the conscience should now take over.

Essentially there can be three headings:-

1. Fundamental Truth.
2. Principal.
3. Law.

1. The Fundamental Truth is an indisputable fact (= an absolute reference).
2. Principal is something on which to base our answers, and would be a settled guideline for a fundamental Truth.
3. Laws are formed on accepted principals.

We can say that principals always apply, but laws sometimes apply.

A useful example of this would be a box carrying a Glass Chandelier. On the outside of this box would be written certain bits of information to assist in the safe carriage of the Glass Chandelier through a delivery system.

Fundamental Truth	Principal	Law
Glass Chandelier	Fragile Will break	This way up Do not drop Do not tread Do not crush

When the object reaches the destination these laws will pass away because they are no longer required.

The general principals should be adhered to when New Laws are passed - when the Chandelier should be cleaned.

The Fundamental Truth will always be indisputable wherever the chandelier is placed.

Likewise:-

The Fundamental Truth is that Almighty God is Holy (*separate from this present world of sin*).

The Principal is that True Christians should be Holy (*separate from this present world of sin*).

The laws are to assist us to be Holy (*separate from this present world of sin*).

We should examine our life style, our bodies, our home and work activities, reason upon the principals and laws given in The Bible and see how they match up with each other. In this way we will not have either weak or misguided consciences.

Once we have a good Biblical conscience, then we should act when our good conscience tells us, so that it should not become seared.

Are all good consciences the same?
Are all Christian consciences the same?

Only you can answer that one!

If your conscience says:- Do not do it! - Then do **not** do it!

You must be honest with your conscience for it to work correctly.

Heb. 13v18 Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honourably in all things.

We all have different attitudes to the same event. For example if the National Anthem is played do you:-

Stand up and sing.
Stand up and not sing.
Stay sitting and sing.
Stay sitting and not sing.

We need to determine God's thinking and view on things and then follow His view as best as we possibly can.

This can only be achieved by studying The Bible yourself, but sadly there are so many 'misguided', 'seared reasoning' religious leaders who pretend to help but in reality are destroying your understanding – so keep away from them.

You only know and can audit what they speak about, only when you personally have a good grasp of what The Bible truly means – because this gives an inner 6th sense to immediately spot the falsehoods as they come out of these religious leaders' mouths.

We must also ensure that we give **no** cause for fellow Christian to stumble in their reasoning on minor matters.

Rom. 14v3 Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgement on him who eats; for God has welcomed him.

The benefits that we obtain will be:-

Piece of mind.
Feel God's favour.
The right to feel God's friend.
Avoid the world's pitfalls and dangers!

1Tim. 1v4-6 nor to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith; whereas the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith.

Our ultimate aim is to provide principled love, genuine faith/fidelity/assurance and a good conscience.