

The Joy of a Clean Conscience – Class #7

Adult Equipping – June 27th, 2021

Overview

1. What is the conscience and why is it important?
2. How does the gospel allow me to live with a clean conscience before God?
3. How do I tune or calibrate my conscience?
4. How does Scripture help me to navigate differences of opinion regarding matters of conscience?

Reflection

Finishing Last Week’s Discussion and Romans 14

Chart on Conscience Conflicts from 1 Cor. 8 and Rom. 14 *

<i>Strong</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>
<i>Licentious</i>	<i>Confident to Eat Meat</i>	<i>Fully persuaded yet welcoming, not looking down on the weak</i>	<i>Flexible in disputable matters to edify others and advance gospel</i>	<i>Fully persuaded yet welcoming rather than judging those who are strong</i>	<i>Lack confidence to Eat Meat</i>	<i>Legalistic</i>
<i>Eats Meat</i>	<i>Eats Meat</i>	<i>Eats Meat</i>	<i>Flexible</i>	<i>Won't eat meat</i>	<i>Won't eat meat</i>	<i>Won't eat meat</i>
<i>I have freedom not only to eat meat but to go to idol parties</i>	<i>Freedom to eat what I want, those who don't are uneducated and wrong</i>	<i>Freedom to eat what I want, but I welcome those who disagree.</i>	<i>I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some</i>	<i>I abstain from eating meat for the glory of God, but I welcome those who disagree.</i>	<i>It's sinful to eat meat, and Christians who do so are being unfaithful to God.</i>	<i>You must follow the OT dietary restriction practices if you want to be a Christian.</i>
<i>Heresy</i>	<i>Arrogance</i>	<i>Love</i>	<i>Love</i>	<i>Love</i>	<i>Judgmentalism</i>	<i>Heresy</i>
<i>Distorts gospel by lawless subtraction</i>	<i>Diminishes the Gospel</i>	<i>Reveals the Gospel</i>	<i>Magnifies the Gospel</i>	<i>Reveals the Gospel</i>	<i>Diminishes the Gospel</i>	<i>Distorts gospel by legalistic addition</i>

*Chart from Andy Naselli and J.D. Crowley's, *Conscience: What it is, How to train it, and Loving those who differ*

Q: How does joy relate to the conscience issue? *The Joy of a Clean Conscience*

Creator / Creation – Created for Joy (Rom. 2:15, 14:22)

- *The conscience is a dynamic, God-given capacity to distinguish right from wrong so that we might respond accordingly.*

Sin – Joy hindered by guilt (Eph. 4:17-19, Rom. 2:15)

Christ – Joy Made Possible through New Covenant Cleansing (Heb. 10:22)

Repentance – Gateway to Joy (Ps. 32)

Sanctification – Experiencing New Covenant Realities (Rom. 14:17, 1 Cor. 10:23-24)

Return of Christ – Joy in Judgment and Forever (Acts 24:14-16)

Closing Discussion & Prayer

Q: What is one thing that you'll take away from this class and apply in your life?

Summary: The Joy of a Clean Conscience Class – Spring 2021

1. What is the conscience and why is it important?

The conscience is a dynamic, God-given capacity to distinguish right from wrong so that we might respond accordingly.

- #1. An informed conscience enjoys God's gifts as He intended (1 Tim. 4:1-5)*
- #2. There are spiritual consequences for how we maintain it (1 Tim. 1:18-19, Rom. 14:22-23)*
- #3. Christ's redemption includes the joy of a cleansed conscience. (Heb. 9-10)*
- #4. By ignoring conscience we can damage those in the church and by listening to it we can be a fruitful leader (1 Cor. 8:11-13, 1 Tim. 3:9)*

2. How does the gospel allow me to live with a clean conscience before God?

- #1. God has revealed His character through creation and His Law through conscience and Scripture. Humans reject this revelation. (Rom. 1:18-21, 28, 32; 2:12-16; Eph. 4:18-20)*
- #2. All human beings don't meet God's moral standard and are therefore guilty. The conscience is God's gracious, diagnostic tool but does not clean our consciences. (Mt. 7:15-20; Rom. 3:9, 19; 4:15; 7:7; Gal. 3:21-22; Heb. 9:6-10, 10:1-4; Jms 4:17)*
- #3. Spiritually Telling Responses - Repentance or Denial. (2 Cor. 7:8-9; ie. Judas and Peter)*
- #4. Christ's sacrifice removes the barrier between us and God and cleanses our conscience. This is an objective and experiential reality. (Heb. 9:11-14, 10:15-25)*

3. How do I tune or calibrate my conscience?

There is a calibration spectrum and standard (Bible). (Spectrum: 1 Tim. 1:19, 4:2; Titus 1:15; Heb. 10:22; 1 Cor. 8:7, 10; Standard: Acts 10/Gal. 2:11-14; Rom. 12:2, 14:5-7; Heb. 5:11-14)

- #1. The conviction or affirmation of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 9:1)*
- #2. Scripture (Heb. 4:12, 2 Tim. 3:16, Rom. 7:22-24, 1 Cor. 10:23-26)*
- #3. Experience (Consequences / Rewards)*
- #4. Church and Others (1 Cor. 8:1-6, 10:23-28)*

4. How does Scripture help me to navigate differences of opinion regarding matters of conscience?

Questions to ask ourselves in calibrating our conscience and in navigating conscience conflicts:

SCRIPTURE

1. *How does Scripture speak to this issue?¹*
2. *What Scriptural priority, relevance and proportion does it have?²*

¹ 1 Cor. 8:4-6, 10:26

² Mt. 4:1-11, 23:23-24; 1 Cor. 15:3-5; Phil. 3:15; Rom. 14:1

- a. *Priority = theological triage: essential for gospel, urgent for church life, important but not worth separating over, unimportant*
- b. *Relevance = not all Scripture is relevant to every issue, context is key*
- c. *Proportion = amount of Scriptural support informs level of conviction*

WISDOM

- 3. *Have I listened humbly and carefully to...³*
 - a. *those I respect (alive and dead)?*
 - b. *the best explanation of both sides of the issue?*
 - c. *those who I initially disagree with?*
- 4. *Have I spent time in honest prayer before God regarding this issue?⁴*
- 5. *Am I fully persuaded that it is right and profitable? Would I be sinning or subjecting myself to temptation by doing it?⁵*

GOD

- 6. *Which side of this issue would honor God, imitate Jesus, and further the cause of the gospel most?⁶*

OTHERS

- 7. *Which response would help build others up and put others first in this situation?⁷*
- 8. *Are my actions tempting others to violate their consciences before God?⁸*
- 9. *Am I in a relational position to influence “the weak” in regard to this issue? What is my attitude towards them (compassionate, judgmental, arrogant)?⁹*
- 10. *What would help the church to be united in the truth and growing in maturity?¹⁰*

³ Eph. 4:29-31; Jms 1:19-21, Prov. 10:19, 12:15, 13:1, 15:32, 17:4, 27-28, 18:2,13,17

⁴ Acts 23:1, 24:16; 2 Cor. 1:12, 4:2; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 10:22

⁵ 1 Cor. 6:12; Rom. 14:5, 14, 23

⁶ 1 Cor. 9:12, 23, 10:31; Rom. 15:3, 7; 2 Cor. 5:11; 1 Peter 3:16

⁷ 1 Cor. 8:1-3, 7-13, 9:19-23, 10:23-24, 32; Rom. 14:19, 15:2

⁸ Rom. 14:13-21; 1 Cor. 8:7-13

⁹ Rom. 14:1-12, 15:1, 7

¹⁰ Eph. 2:17-22, 4:1-7, 22-24, 29-32; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19, 3:9; Heb. 13:18