

Acts of Jesus, Lesson 49: A Clear Conscience

Do you have a clear conscience? Paul did **Acts 23:1**

- ✓ Paul makes mention of a clear conscience on several occasions during his writings:
 - Twice while giving defense of his ministry here, **Acts 24:15-16**.
 - Once again in his second letter to Timothy, **2 Timothy 1:3**.
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1. Because it shows up here in our text and because it is fairly large topic in our Bibles, we need to spend some time understanding it and how it works and the importance it plays in our lives.

First, we need to strike a balance:

- 1) Having a clear conscience and not violating your conscience are very important.
 - 2) But we must be careful not to overrate it: **"Let your conscience be your guide"** is not completely advisable either.
 - ✓ Our consciences are only as good as the ones who are in charge of them.
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2. First of all, let's understand how our consciences work.

- ✓ The construction of the word gives us a good clue as to how a conscience works.
 - ✓ This is the exception where the Greek word and English have a similar construction: Both mean literally **"with knowledge"** (con=with, science= knowledge)
 - ✓ If my conscience guides me, I am making moral decision based on what I know to be right and wrong.
 - ✓ But what if I'm ignorant?, or what if I've forgotten?, or what if I'm so used ignoring my conscience that it no longer works?
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Here in lies the problem, my conscience is only as informed as I've let it be.

- 1) Likened to a window that let's in the light to help you see, but what if you've let it get dirty through sin?
 - ✓ We may be able to say with Paul, "I have a clear conscience", but it may not mean a blessed thing.
 - 2) Likened to a sundial which is great as long as use the sun to read it by, but if you read it by flashlight you can make it say whatever you want to.
 - 3) Likened to a watch—watch keeps good time as long as it set on the right time to begin with.
 - ✓ Having a clear conscience is important just like being on time is important, but what if your watch is set wrong???
 - 4) Likened to a smoke alarm= great as long as you don't unplug it or let the batteries run out.
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3. Having understood how a conscience works, let's come to grips with the Bible says it is and can be.

- ✓ Can be evil, **Hebrews 10:22, Titus 1:15, I Timothy 4:20, and Isaiah 5:20.**
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4. Paul persecuted the church, imprisoned many and had others killed and yet he could say "I have a clear conscience"

- ✓ Clear conscience comes only from Christ, **Hebrews 10:22.**
 - ✓ If your B.C. life is bothering you, you need to accept the grace of God, **1 John 3:19-20.**
 - ✓ A clear conscience is made possible through Jesus and is maintained through obedience.
 - ✓ **2 Corinthians 1:12** – Our conscience should testify against when we do wrong.
 - ✓ The Holy Spirit speaks through our conscience helping us walk in the light.
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Beware of ignoring your alarm system!!

- ✓ Because when the alarm goes off and you ignore it, you'll make it harder to hear the next time.
- ✓ **Hebrews 3:13** → But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Beware of helping others violate their conscience for the same reason.

- ✓ **Romans 14:14-15** → If you teach a person to violate their conscience it will be easier for them to violate it in other areas.

1 John 1:9 → Really the only part of us that needs to be cleansed is our conscience.
