

Power From on High

Series: Power From On High

Text: Acts 23:1

Title: The Power of the Conscience

Date: Feb. 8, 2026

Part 2

Lesson: 123

Acts 23:1 Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.”

What is the conscience and how does it work?

Romans 2:14–15 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

Cain's sacrifice created anger and depression

Genesis 4:6–7 Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 “If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”

Four conditions of the conscience:

1. It can become defiled. (Titus 1:15)

A defiled conscience is contaminated by sin and no longer judges rightly.

2. It can be seared. (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

A seared conscience is dull and desensitized.

3. It can be weak.

The weak conscience is under-taught and overly scrupulous.

4. It can be purified.

The purified conscience has been cleansed and aligned with God's truth.

Is your conscience getting more or less sensitive?

1. Have habitual sins lost their sting?

2. Do you confess and repent less than you used to?

3. Are you less sensitive to moral standards?

4. Are you less resistant to correction?

5. Has the voice of Scripture become silent?

What kinds of influence shape our conscience?

1. _____

Romans 9:1–2 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

2. _____ and home

3. _____ and _____

1 Corinthians 15:33 Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”

4. _____ & _____

How could Paul say he always lived with a good conscience even though he persecuted Christians?

- Paul was not claiming perfection.
- His entire moral framework was shaped by false, pharisaic theology.
- Those presuppositions formed the standards by which his conscience judged right and wrong.

Paul's thinking before he was saved.

Acts 26:9 "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

It's possible Jesus was talking about Paul.

John 16:2-3 "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is **offering service to God**. 3 "These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.

Paul's thinking after he was saved.

1 Timothy 1:13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.

Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;

People can act with a good and clear conscience without guilt, but still be _____.

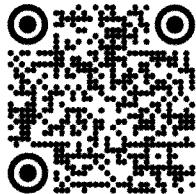
There is a frightening possibility that our conscience, if shaped by _____ standards, can give us peace instead of warning, confidence instead of correction, and reassurance instead of truth.

Implication

Guard our conscience with all _____ before sin turns its cry into silence.

Discussion Guide

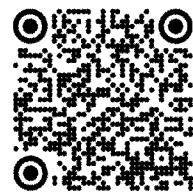
1. What daily influence (Scripture, family, peers, culture/social media) is most actively shaping your conscience right now?
2. What does it mean to have a good or clear conscience? Remember Paul always had a clear conscience even before his conversion.
3. Like Paul before his conversion, have you ever felt a “clear conscience” while doing something God later showed you was wrong?
4. How is culture or social media normalizing sin for today’s believer?
5. How will you guard against a “Dawson/Downey” conscience, that is sincere but sincerely wrong?



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ANSWERS: Scripture, Family, School, peers, Culture, social media, wrong, ungodly, vigilance