

Myth number seven Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide

1 Corinthians 4:3-4

“I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.”

Conscience is our, Yellow Light, early warning system, that works best with the proper information but it is a bad Green Light.

The Conscience is not a Thermometer it is a Thermostat

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The Jiminy Cricket Code of Ethics Relies on Guilt T/F

I have let my conscience be my guide = after all isn't that why God gave me one?

Mmmm not really.

The hardest aspect of being a teacher – whether you are teaching your children, a class of people or yourself a new discipline – is getting past the “if I have no guilt then I must be OK” syndrome.

The conscience operates on absence of guilt.

If there is no guilt then there is nothing wrong. The problem is that we set the thermostat and when it kicks on we say ooh that is a bit warm maybe we should cool it on that particular thing. Or if it does not kick on because we have it set for 90 degrees of passion for pornography, cheating on tests, lying to parents or spouse, or stealing from our boss and even though the thermometer is showing too much activity in these dangerous areas we feel fine because our thermostat tells us we are fine.

Have you ever set your alarm for a particular time – had the alarm go off at that time only to find the meeting or test was actually set for an hour earlier. You can't complain that you got up at the right time according to your clock because it was not the right time for the important engagement. I have missed international flights because I set my clock for the time I thought we were to leave only to discover I had the wrong time. Explaining to the airline that I had the wrong info did not waive my responsibility to pay a penalty for missing my flight.

Because the conscience is our thermostat it does not tell us when we are violating God's moral law but when we are violating our own moral law.

And that leads to a real seesaw approach to morality. One minute we are up on movies and then we are down on movies. One minute we are up on mini skirts and the next we are down on them. One minute we are up on alcohol and the next we are down on it. In fact different churches will want you to set your thermostat at their standard for morality, sometimes, without any regard for what the scriptures say.

The deeper problem with this approach is that we are too likely to have several thermostat settings – one for each area of our life. When at home our profanity thermostat may be set very low but when with buddies it gets set high. So when we are around the wife and kids and out of frustration we choose profanity instead of clarity we feel guilty and may even say, “Daddy is really sorry he shouldn't have said that.” The same

frustration in the work place may elicit a string of epithets without so much as a, “Well maybe I could have said that better.” In fact we feel no guilt at all.

I know some men who have chosen to use profanity at home as well as with buddies because they don’t want to be hypocrites – I suggest they reverse the thinking and not be hypocrites by not using profanity in either place. However, I hasten to add, profanity is not a God issue – using God’s name (which includes Jesus Christ) is almost always blasphemy and always violates the Second commandment.

Our conscience/thermostat is part of a fallen vessel.

Romans 7:14; 18&19; 22&23

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Becoming a follower of Jesus gives us the power to overcome our fallen nature but it is a constant effort. To make matters worse our sin nature doesn’t just show u as a desire t live selfishly and do wrong things. It also shows up in the way we think. It clouds everything, including our understanding of spiritual truth and God’s leading.

Our Conscience/Thermostat Can Get Stuck

Hebrews 10:26&27

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

We may not get stuck on everything in our lives but just one area:

The business person who no longer give a second thought to breaking hteir word (or even the law) to make a deal work or close a deal while passing out their business cards with a little fish on it.

The functional drunks and recreational drug users who defend their right to “relax” as long as it doesn’t hurt anybody-oblivious to the pain to their family being slowly destroyed.

There are the Christian men and women who claim purity is unrealistic and restrictions against living premarital sex or living together as just “old school.”

The married men and women who think nothing of leaving their spouses at home while they go out to party with buddies because everyone else does it, I can do this because what he or she doesn’t know wont hurt them.

Their conscience is not bothering them because it is stuck, frozen, and trying to talk them into changing makes not a dent because their heart is frozen.

So what good is the conscience? It seems so undependable.

Setting Our Conscience/Thermostat

Setting #1 God

1 Corinthians 4:6

“Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.”

Setting #2 Family

2 Timothy 1:5

“I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.”

Setting #3 Church

Philippians 3:17

“Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.”

MY NEXT STEP TODAY IS TO...

Memorize 1 Corinthians 4:3-4.

Accept the Lordship of Jesus and give my life to Him today.

Reset my conscience by focusing on learning from::

God _____; My Family _____; My Church _____.

Give God the area of my life which is ruled by **my** conscience

_____.