How to have a Conscience Void of Offence

Acts 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of **offence toward God, and toward men**. 2Peter 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. (Leave it in its setting) to take it out of contexts may get you into trouble; God’s Word is never given for our convenience but for our benefit, our salvation and our spiritual edification.

1Th 2:4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

Jer 9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

1Ti 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

* To have a Conscience Void of Offence you must pray in faith and please God.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

2Pe 1:5 ¶ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

Conscience is perfected through prayer.

Jude 1:20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Conscience must submit to the Word of God

Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

The back ground of the lesson: to exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God/man

Ac 23:1 ¶ And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

If our conscience cannot govern and discipline our own lives and please God, then it will certainly fail to help someone else. Our Conscience will reflect our character to others. Our Conscience will reflect our faith in God.

Some men have more conscience for their neighbors than for themselves. They are lenient toward their sins, but severe against the sins of others. David's sin against Uriah is a case in point.

A Good conscience is yielded to the will of God, and living and walking in the Spirit for the praise of the glory of God’s grace.

Acts 24:16 “And herein do I **exercise** myself” To elaborate, (train - strive)

There is an exercise needed. Exercise obeying truth to strengthen your conscience. There is conflict in our members. There is war to prepare and train for.

James 4:1 ¶ From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Romans 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 1Pe 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Ro 7:15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 1Co 10:32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Php 1:9 ¶ And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Ac 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

The first exercise in reversing false accusations is to keep on good terms with God through prayer and your own conscience.

Either your praying or you’re not. Either our conscience is working or it is not working Either your living honestly or your not.

Heb 13:18 ¶ Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

Prayer is Gods avenue to your soul Prayer is like breathing, it is what you do all the time, 1Th5:17 Pray without ceasing Conscience is God's representative in the soul. The conscience/a sentinel for the mind and heart 1Jo2:28;3:21;4:17; Heb9:14;10:22

Can you lie down to rest at night without an aroused conscience? We need a cleansed conscience We need to exercise to awaken our conscience

Eph 5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

1. Paul was defending his faith
   1. Paul was falsely accused
   2. Paul defended what he believed wisely, cautiously and with a conscience that was void of offence.

Acts 24:5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: 6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.

1. Paul was exalting Christ

Acts 24:24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

To control our offences we need to control our defenses, use Godly wisdom and be careful how we answer them.

* We must control our defense that we do not do more damage than good.
* We must be careful with our defense that we don’t offend someone.
* We need a spiritual defense, not a carnal defense.

How much do you desire a conscience void of offence?

Let us practice soft answers for the purpose of glorifying God and turning away the wrath of man.

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Faith helps you to act according to God’s Word rather than your feelings

* Never retaliate
* Never react
* No revenge

Dealing specifically with three words of the text.

1. Conscience
   1. It is a sense within a person that knows right from wrong and good from evil.
   2. Conscience is more than moral sense and reason, it is an emotional principle
      1. Some have neither morals nor good sense nor principle. (A lot of work is needed)
      2. It takes a revelation of grace and truth, (spiritual knowledge) (spiritual enlightment) through faith in Christ to obey right standards in order to make a good conscience.
   3. A pure conscience is made pure only by obeying the truth.
   4. A good conscience always sends alarm to your soul when truth is violated.
   5. A seared conscience sends no alarm to the soul. ITim.4:2
2. Void
   1. inoffensive, not leading into sin; without selfish interest, faultless, without attack
3. Offence
   1. Cause to stumble.
   2. To trip up.
   3. To beat upon.
4. A Conscience void of offence
   1. Toward God
      1. We are responsible to act by what we know, not by what we suppose and when we are falsely accused we must exercise our conscience to remain void of offence.
      2. Inward
         1. Revelation, illumination, for spiritual understanding, to the Glory of God’s Grace. Showforth His virtue Praise Perfection
   2. Toward men
      1. Rules and regulations setting forth the duties of man to man
      2. Outward

A continual practice. A diligent faith A continual practice of truth or right will help your conscience. A continual practice of something thought wrong will destroy your conscience.

Heb 8:5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

Honest work is the only kind of work a man can afford.

Man needs to follow the true pattern, the pattern demands a man to make all things true.

It calls for "all things," every item squared by the specifications, every part honest.

Shoddy ideal makes a shoddy character, and shoddy character will do shoddy work

Conscience is the best carpenter. The character of the man comes out in the house he builds. His work is a judgment throne. We impart of what we are in the heart in what we do.

1. A Conscience to guide us in many areas

There are areas to work on.

A conscience toward Spiritual things A conscience toward Moral things A conscience toward Physical things A conscience toward Social things

To live/level professing Christians/have to go against your conscience & backslide A true follower of Christ is to follow Christ close. Work on a certain basis and practice certain practices

Romans 14:23 whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Ja 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. Proverbs 24:9 The thought of foolishness is sin

Do we have to have a certain feeling to do something?

Men are adjusting to the age we are living in, rather than follow the truth and exercise our conscience with righteousness, godliness and godlikeness. (What they call an adjustment is a compromise)

1. A Pure Conscience

1Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

We need a pure mind to speak well and demonstrate and display only the truth to help others.

3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

2Timothy 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers **with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers** night and day;

Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. Heb 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

1. An important work for the conscience is to discern good and evil

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

1. To feed God’s people the Truth through the Spirit.
2. To cause perfection

1Cor. 10:23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.

25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:

26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

confidant – very best friend, is for you and into you

constituent - voter, stand for what you stand for

comrade – acquaintance, buddy, chum, against what you are against

**CONSCIENCE**

*2Co 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.*

*co-perception, moral consciousness:--conscience.*

*To see completely; to understand or become aware, and to be conscious or (clandestinely) informed of:--consider, know, be privy, be ware of. (Clandestinely)----In secret, private stealthily or cautious.*

1. *It is the will of God that every man depends on the* ***Grace of God*** *for a good conscience.*

The believer is to walk overflowing with **rejoicing**. Christ Jesus the Lord has done so much for the believer—so much that flows on and on, never ceasing, not even for one moment of any day. Therefore, the believer is to learn to walk in an unbroken spirit of **rejoicing—a rejoicing** that overflows in praise to the Lord moment by moment throughout the day throughout your life.

*Ps 107:22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and* ***declare his works with rejoicing.***

*Heb 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

*1Ti 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;*

*Ac 13:36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:*

*Ps 69:30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.*

*Eph 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

*Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,* ***singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.***

1. *By being thankful and rejoicing and causing people to be thankful and rejoice, God is glorified and it makes way in people’s heart for the gospel*

*2Cor. 9:11 Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. 12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; 13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; 14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the* ***exceeding grace of God in you****. 15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*

1. *What an opportunity we have this season.*
   * 1. *holidays*
     2. *Not ashamed to keep Christ in Christmas.*
     3. *Not hindered because of the abundance you receive from the Grace of God.*
2. *In Simplicity aplothv <haplotes>*

*singleness, sincerity (without dissimulation or self-seeking), or generosity (copious bestowal):--bountifulness,*

*Straightforwardness --- abundantly*

1.  Paul lived a life of simplicity (aplothv <haplotes>), which means singleness of mind, a mind set upon God and being unmoved. It is the opposite of duplicity, of a dual mind and conduct. It means not being distracted or turned aside, not being double minded. It means setting one's life upon God and staying there. It means determining to follow God in all the simplicity or singleness of mind made possible by His Grace and doing it by the Grace of God in abundance.

1. *And Godly Sincerity eilikrineia <heilikrineia>*

*( divine ) Clearness purity*

*2Pe 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

*2Co 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

1. Paul lived a life of "godly sincerity" (*eilikrineia too theou*) which means purity. It is the unadulterated, the pure that has been shaken and rolled through a seive. It means the unadulterated, the pure that shows up unstained and untainted when examined in the sunlight. Paul is saying that he is pure, unstained, untainted, unadulterated in his conduct and behavior. This word is used only one other time by Paul in **1 Cor. 5:8.**

1Co 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1. Not with Fleshly Wisdom

sarkikov sarkikos, sar-kee-kos' ***Fleshly***  pertaining to flesh, bodily, temporal, or animal, unregenerate:--carnal

sofia sophia, sof-ee'-ah ***Wisdom*** Understanding Knowledge Perception (higher or lower, worldly or spiritual)

*2Co 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 1Pe 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*

1.  Paul lived by the grace of God, not in fleshly wisdom. By "fleshly wisdom" is meant the human, natural, corrupt wisdom of men. It is the natural reasoning of the human mind. Paul is saying that he did not use his own reasonings...

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| •  to set his mind upon God  •  to make new year resolutions  •  to discipline his body | •  to change his life  •  to govern his behavior  •  to control his conduct |

What Paul did was set his mind upon the grace of God. By grace is meant the glorious favor of God in saving us and in showing us how to live 11 Pt.1:2-10. God's grace has not only given us the written Word of God to tell us how to live; it has given us the living Word of God, His very own Son to live and walk as a Man upon the earth. God's grace has given us Jesus Christ to demonstrate and show us exactly how God wants us to live. Jesus Christ shows us how to live with a pure conscience. Jesus Christ Himself is the gift of God, the grace of God to the world. God has favored the world by giving His very own Son to the world. John 3:16; II Cor.6:16

The conscience works with the understanding and reasoning but not in place of them.

The conscience can be strengthened by obeying the truth or weakened by disobeying the truth.

Before the will decides the conscience protests

Before the deed is done the conscience warns

A good conscience enforces its penalties afterward.

When wrong is contemplated there is a great conflict between a weak conscience and a disobedient will, and when such is the case conscience does its principal work beforehand. Thwarted in the conflict, it has little to say afterward. This is why some can commit great sins and suffer little in soul for them. This is why some men can live a shameless life in comparative ease and pronounce condemnation upon the actions of others.

After the will has decided, the deed is done; conscience does its work; approves or disapproves

Conscience warns us as a friend before it punishes us as a judge.

Obedience to the Word of God will perfect the conscience. Results are attained immediately and the process is continued by grace through faith.

Three factors must be prominent in the individual:

1. Desire to know. ... Yet while young, Paul "served God with a pure conscience." (2 Timothy 1:3.) ... Paul sought the true light, and, finding it, walked in it. Light is given to him who seeks light and follows immediately.
2. Obedience. "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine." (John 7:17.)
3. Loyalty to its constraining principles. There must be faithfulness and reverence to all its holy pleadings. The sense of obligation must be honored and obeyed. Every prompting must receive hearty response and cooperation, if the soul moves toward God and anchors.

The supremacy and sovereignty of conscience: Conscience stands as a sentinel, a watchman, upon the walls of the citadel, crying out when the foe sin approaches. There is no truer friend than this faithful guard. Sin is the enemy to all our happiness. ItŠ takes away hope, destroys character, and robs of peace. Conscience defends from the encroachments of sin in any form whatever.

The function of conscience is that of judge. It sits, as it were, upon the seat of authority in the soul's judgment hall, and pleads for righteousness, justice, love and mercy. ... In conscience the consciousness of God cannot be gotten rid of. ...

Conscience may be dethroned, but it will never surrender its God-given authority. It will never be divested of its solemn powers. Every secret of the imagination, every thought of the heart, every desire of the soul must pass under its scrutiny. Passion may consume, desire may absorb, emotion may plead, reason may ridicule, but over and above all the raging of wild madness will be heard the voice of God in the soul, condemning the wrong and commending the right. In the hour of least expediency, up will spring this stern judge with terrible denunciations and horrible lacerations. ...

Conscience demands a personal God. ... The conscience of humanity has recognized and acknowledged that in Christ and in His teaching, and in His life, is the final revelation of good. Faith, therefore, in Christ becomes a moral obligation. ... The blood of Christ cleanses us and qualifies us to serve the living God. The demands of conscience being satisfied through the atonement made by this eternal sacrifice for sin, therefore we are justified through faith and shall not any more come into condemnation if we walk in the truth.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

1Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

Mt 7:15 ¶ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Ro 16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Eph 4:19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Jude 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 ¶ To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Jer 7:11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD.

Mat. 21:13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Mark 11:17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Luke 19:46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

John 2:16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.