

CONSCIENCE—AN INVISIBLE PURSUER

TEXT: (Proverbs 28:1, NIV)

¹ The wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

INTRODUCTION

1. “Timothy, my son, here are my instructions for you, based on the prophetic words spoken about you earlier. May they help you fight well in the Lord’s battles. Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked” (I Timothy 1:18-19, NLT).
2. “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron” (I Timothy 4:1-2, NIV).

I. HOW TO KEEP YOUR CONSCIENCE HEALTHY

A. Exercise

1. “I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men” (Acts 26:16, KJV).
2. “I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man” (Acts 26:16, NIV).
3. “I always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and all people” (Acts 26:16, NLT).
4. “I always do my best to have a clear conscience in the sight of God and people” (Acts 26:16, GW).

B. The Word of God

1. “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8, KJV).
2. “Don’t get off track, either left or right, so as to make sure you get to where you’re going. And don’t for a minute let this Book of The Revelation be out of mind. Ponder and meditate on it day and night, making sure you practice everything written in it. Then you’ll get where you’re going; then you’ll succeed. Haven’t I commanded you? Strength! Courage! Don’t be timid; don’t get discouraged. God, your God, is with you every step you take” (Joshua 1:7-9, MSG).
3. “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89, KJV).

C. Conviction by the Holy Spirit

1. “I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit” (Romans 9:1, NIV).
2. “The integrity of the upright guides them” (Proverbs 11:3, NIV).
of integrity.

II. PURSUED BY YOUR CONSCIENCE

1. “The wicked flee though no one pursues” (Proverbs 28:1, NIV).

A. A Convicted Conscience

1. “Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one” (John 8:9, NKJV).

B. A Defiled Conscience

- 1 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23, KJV).
2. “Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us” (Romans 12:3, NLT).
3. “Even Gentiles, who do not have God’s written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. They demonstrate that God’s law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right” (Romans 2:14-15, NLT).
4. “To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled” (Titus 1:15, NIV).

C. A Seared Conscience

1. “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron” (I Timothy 4:1-2, NIV).
2. “They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed” (Ephesians 4:18-19, NIV).
3. “For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness” (II Thesalonians 2:11-12, NIV).

III. THE RIGHTEOUS—BOLD AS A LION

1. “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:13-17, NIV).
2. “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13, NIV).
3. "This is what the ancients were commended for" (Hebrews 11:2, NIV).

A. Abel—Sacrifice

1. "By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead" (Hebrews 11:4, NIV).

2. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2, KJV).

B. Enoch—Testimony

1. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5, KJV).

C. Noah—Reverence

1. "By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith" (Hebrews 11:7, NIV).

D. Abraham—Obedience

1. "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8, NIV).
2. "And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called God's friend" (James 2:23, NIV).

E. Moses' Parents—Courage

1. "By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict" (Hebrews 11:23, NIV).

CONCLUSION

1. "When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'" (Acts 2:37, NIV).