

How to Have a Clear Conscience with God

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This short handout is based on the teaching of Acts 23:2-8, on December 1, 2024, by Pastor Kevin Lea. This study can be listened to or watched at this link: <https://calvarypo.org/sermons/how-to-have-a-clear-conscience-with-god-acts-232-8/>

Acts 23:1 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, **I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.**"

Acts 24:16 This being so, **I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.**

1 Cor 4:4 **For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.**

In these three verses, we see that the Apostle Paul was living in obedience to God's word to the extent that he knew of nothing in his life that showed a lack of love towards God or man. Therefore if we want to have a clear conscience before God as Paul did, we should:

Step #1 – Strive to have no offenses toward God or man

The Ten Commandments are a good self test:

- Are you cheating on God - 1st and 2nd commandments?**
- Are you using God's name in vain?**
- Are you setting aside a day to worship God?**
- Are you children living at home sneaking behind your parents back?**
- Are you hateful/murderous towards others?**
- Are you cheating on your spouse or future spouse in porn etc.?**
- Are you stealing from others, not giving your employer 8 for 8?**
- Are you lying about others in gossip or slander (bearing false witness)?**
- Are you coveting your neighbor's stuff (not being thankful for what you have)?**

If the answer to any of these is yes, then:

Step #2 – Confess your sins to God and receive his forgiveness.

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Step #3 – Do not live in condemnation when you do sin.

Rom 8:1 There is therefore **now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me **free from the law of sin and death**. 3 For what the law

could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Remember that for the true believer in Jesus, there is no condemnation when we fall into sin against God. The devil will whisper condemnation in our spiritual ear, but the Holy Spirit only brings conviction, not condemnation. The conviction can even be in the form of a bad conscience which God uses to change our actions to conform to His ways, to bring us to confession and repentance. When repentance is accomplished, the bad conscience goes away.

But how do we turn away from sin and repent?

Step #4 - Present your life as a living sacrifice to God

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

In order to turn away from sin, we have to renew our minds and be willing to die (sacrifice) our own fleshly sinful desires in order to rather obey God.

But how do we renew our minds?

Step #5 - Embrace the power of the Word of God to renew our mind and give us victory over the flesh.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is **living and powerful**, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Ps 119:11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

It is impossible to live an obedient life without reading and meditating on God's word. Memorize scriptures that pertain to your area of fleshly weakness. Then, when you are tempted, the power of God's word that is renewing your mind will give you victory over your old fleshly ways.

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness **the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls.

The Holy Spirit is grieved when we act contrary to the implanted word of God that is renewing our minds. His grieving inside of us is manifested in our conscience, making us convicted of the sins we are committing. When we sense this grieving of the Holy Spirit it is important that we go back to **Step #2**.

As a final thought, the best way to avoid the deceitful lusts of the flesh, and thus keep a clear conscience, is to rob your flesh of the time it would use to pursue sin.

Step #6 – Walk in the Spirit so that you don't have time to fulfill the lusts of the flesh

Gal 5:16 I say then: **Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.** 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit [*through the power of the word of God*], you are not under the law.

When you come home from work, do you pick up your Bible (Spirit) or the remote/gaming console/smart phone/beer/hard stuff (flesh). Remember, you are at war and that the fruits of victory are only achieved by discipline, presenting your bodies as a living sacrifice. Just like working out at the gym, it is hard to do, but it bears fruit in the end. The more of the word of God is implanted in your mind, the more you will feel a power over sin and even notice a weakening of the temptation to serve the flesh, to the point that it no longer has any power over you.

Gal 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Gal 5:22-25 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Gal 6:7-9 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.