



A CONSCIENCE THAT CONDEMNS

Our conscience is like a moral thermostat. It malfunctions when it becomes desensitized or hypersensitive.

-You can ask forgiveness over and over again for a sin when you no longer are committing that sin

-You ruminate about past sins and failures

-You struggle with unfounded feelings of inadequacy or incompetence

"This, then, is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us; we have confidence before God and receive from Him anything we ask, because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him. And this is the command: to believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as He commanded us." 1 John 3:19ff

John uses the word know 25 times in this short epistle. He wants us to know for sure.

-Over time, a person with a "broken thermostat will lose a sense of God's love and of "mastery" over his emotions and circumstances.

1. A condemning heart does not necessarily mean that a person has not asked for forgiveness.
2. An overly sensitive conscience is often the result of harshness, shame, or browbeating from others.
3. The evangelical culture can be a breeding ground for an overly sensitive conscience
4. Many low-fat foods have on the label "GUILT-FREE." The label on many Christians is "GUILT." This is because ethical responsibility has replaced the gospel.

HOW DO YOU SILENCE A GUILTY CONSCIENCE?

1. Self-Examination. Look at 1 John 3:19. Do we exhibit acts of love that would have been unnatural for us in our pre-conversion days? The standard is not perfection but growth and progress.

2. Focus on God. "For God is greater than our hearts and He knows everything (1 John 3:20b). There is a contrast between the heart/conscience and God. The conscience is imperfect and selective. God's love is greater than our moral failures (Psalm 86:13; Hosea 11:8,9; Titus 2:13)

-God's love is greater than the things we think about ourselves

-God's love is greater than our feelings about ourselves

-God's love is greater than our shortcomings

3. Set three goals

(1) View yourself and your behavior Biblically. Is this a 1 John 1:9 or a 1 John 3:20

Application?

(2) Focus on God's faithfulness/ not your failure

(3) Continue to grow in love toward others