

## 2 Corinthians 1:12 - 20 (NASB)

<sup>12</sup>For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.

<sup>13</sup>For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end;

<sup>14</sup>just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

<sup>15</sup>In this confidence I intended at first to come to you, so that you might twice receive a blessing;

<sup>16</sup>that is, to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you to be helped on my journey to Judea.

<sup>17</sup>Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no *at the same time*?

<sup>18</sup>But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no.

<sup>19</sup>For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him.

<sup>20</sup>For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.

### Definitions:

- Our English word *conscience* comes from two Latin words: *com*, meaning “with,” and *scire*, meaning “to know.” Conscience is that inner faculty that “knows with” our spirit and approves when we do right, but accuses when we do wrong. Conscience is not the Law of God, but it bears witness to that Law. It is the window that lets in the light; and if the window gets dirty because we disobey, then the light becomes dimmer and dimmer (Read Matt. 6:22-23; Rom. 2:14-16).
- The conscience is the soul reflecting on itself; both the Greek word *suneidesis* (**conscience**) and the English word “conscience” have the idea of knowing oneself. According to Romans 2:14, even those without God’s written law have an innate moral sense of right and wrong: “For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves.”
- The conscience either affirms right behavior or condemns sinful behavior.
- Paul used the word *conscience* twenty-three times in his letters and spoken ministry as given in Acts. “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). When a person has a good conscience, he has integrity, not duplicity; and he can be trusted.

## The conscience, however, is not infallible. It is neither the voice of God, nor His moral law!

- The conscience is not to be equated with the voice of God or even the moral law, rather it is a human faculty which adjudicates upon human action by the light of the highest standard a person perceives. Read 1 Cor. 4:2-5
- Since the conscience holds people to their highest perceived standard, believers need to set that standard to the highest level by submitting to all of God's Word. As we continually fill our minds with the truths of Scripture our consciences will then call us to live according to that law. 1 Tim. 1:19
- The conscience functions like a skylight, not like a lamp; it does not produce its own light, but merely lets moral light in. Because of that, the Bible teaches the importance of keeping a clear or good conscience. "The goal of our instruction," Paul wrote to Timothy, "is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5).

### Straight Talk

1. A Christian's words should be clean and decent. Paul refers in 1:17 to a worldly manner of decision making. When people decide as people of the world do, they speak out of both sides of their mouth—saying one thing and doing another.
2. Christians are to be in the world but not "of the world" (John 17:14-16). The "world" is the system of values that completely ignores biblical wisdom. We Christians are tempted to think as worldly people do because we live in the world.
3. When we purposely resist the world's influence and evaluate our motives and goals by God's Word, we can be certain about our choices and plans. The confidence that Paul knew is the confidence that God wants us to have as we face our future and commit to responsibilities within his church. Christian leaders must communicate their intentions and follow through on what they say.

#### MONDAY MORNING MOMENT: **ACTION STEP**

*"OUR CONSCIENCE WILL EITHER ACCUSE US OR EXCUSE US.....BASED ON OUR BIBLICAL MATURITY"*

#### **ROMANS 2:14 - 16 (NLT)**

<sup>14</sup>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.

<sup>15</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>AND THIS IS THE MESSAGE I PROCLAIM—THAT THE DAY IS COMING WHEN GOD, THROUGH CHRIST JESUS, WILL JUDGE EVERYONE'S SECRET LIFE.