

# Remembering Our Why...

*Restoring our conscience and passion to please God*

The longer you do something the easier it becomes to forget the original reason why you started doing it in the first place. This can happen to us with Christianity. The longer you've been in church the easier it becomes to forget why you decided to do this in the first place. Eventually habit can replace heart, self can take the place of sacrifice, and convictions can devolve into mere principles.

I've seen this erosion begin to take place in my own life. I remember as a young Christian staring out the window while at work wishing and wanting to spend every waking hour in Bible studies helping others to get to know God and have their lives changed radically like mine did. This passion led me to jumping at the opportunity to lead in God's Kingdom. However, more than a decade and a half later as life and responsibilities have grown I've seen my passion for God giving way to habits for church. I've needed the help of friends to awaken my conscience from a state of religiosity. I was losing my way and needed to remember my why.

The church in Ephesus fought this similar battle. They were commended for a number of great qualities for which they lived their lives but they had lost their love and heart for God. They needed to remember their "why" and restore their passion for God.

## The Church in Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-3 Voice

*Write down My words, and send them to the messenger of **the church in Ephesus**. "These are the words of the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks and moves among the golden lampstands: [2] "I know your deeds, your tireless labor, and your patient endurance. I know you do not tolerate those who do evil. Furthermore, you have diligently tested those who claim to be emissaries, and you have found that they are not true witnesses. You have correctly found them to be false. [3] I know you are patiently enduring and holding firm on behalf of My name. You have not become faint.*

- The church was known for some great attributes:
  - Their deeds and tireless labor
  - They were commended for holding on in the face of difficulty. They endured patiently.

Revelation 2:4-5 Voice

*“However, I have this against you: **you have abandoned your first love**. [5] **Do you remember** what it was like before you fell? It’s time to rethink and change your ways; go back to how you first acted. However, if you do not return, I will come quickly and personally remove your lampstand from its place.*

- The challenge that the church in Ephesus faced was that at some point they had lost their love for God and the Kingdom.
- God told them they needed to do 2 things:
  - Remember
  - Go back to how they first acted
- **Do you remember?**
  - Do you remember why you do what you do?
    - Why you go to church?
    - Why you became a Christian?

*The two most important days of your life are the day you were born and the day you discover why you were born.*

– Mark Twain

1 Timothy 1:5 NIV

*The goal of this command is **love**, which comes from a **pure heart** and a **good conscience** and a **sincere faith**.*

- Restoring our love requires three things: a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.
- Of those three things, the easiest for me to ignore is the importance of having a good conscience.
- Having a good conscience will revive your faith and renew the purity of your heart.
- Before we can discuss how the Bible teaches us to restore our conscience we must first identify the state of our conscience.

## **A Religious Conscience**

Jeremiah 12:2 CSB

*You planted them, and they have taken root. They have grown and produced fruit. You are ever on their lips, but **far from their conscience**.*

- For our purposes, we will define religiosity as having God on our lips, but not on our conscience. By outward action you can play the part of Christianity but inside is a different story.
- A religious conscience makes you only concerned with how you appear in the eyes of others in church, but have no idea or care about God.

- Your conscience is not sensitive to God.

## A Silenced Conscience

1 Timothy 1:19 Voice

*...Some have tried to **silence their consciences**, wrecking their lives and ruining their faiths.*

- Often times we try to quiet our conscience. We get tired of being burdened by it. We get tired of caring, tired of worrying, and tired of feeling.
- According to this verse, the result is that our lives are wrecked and our faith is shot.
- Without faith we can't love (Galatians 5:6).
- It's easy to blame the challenges in our lives on circumstances or on others, but how often do we consider the state of our conscience for where our lives are at?

## A Corrupted Conscience

Titus 1:15-16 NIV

*To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and **consciences are corrupted**. [16] They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*

- To "corrupt" is to taint the purity of something. When it comes to our conscience this means we think there's an acceptable amount of compromise.
- I've seen myself do this a number of times. I change the definition of what sin is from what the Bible says so that I can justify not needing to talk about it and continue do it.
- This leads to having a corrupted and compromised conscience that no longer sees things clearly.
- The result is a state of confusion: your heart carries around the burden and guilt of a violated conscience, but your mind feels justified and innocent and therefore you continue to stay living in that condition.

## A Seared Conscience

1 Timothy 4:1-3 NIV

*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. [2] Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose **consciences have been seared** as with a hot iron. [3] They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.*

- A seared conscience is one that is completely dead. It's calloused over so that we cannot feel anything.
- When our conscience is seared, our lives become hypocritical. Rather than making Christianity attractive we make it unappealing.
- When your conscience is seared you can't inspire others... all you do is forbid and order people to do things.
- With other Christians, with your kids, or with your spouse, do you inspire or can you only forbid and order?

Ephesians 4:18-19 NIV

*[18] 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. [19] Having **lost all sensitivity**, they have **given themselves over to sensuality** so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

- When you no longer have a sensitive conscience you live for sensuality.
- You become distant from God and replace love with lust.
- You no longer love people, but love a feeling. Pharisees replace their love for people with a love for self and feeling good. They loved being important, respected, and honored. (Luke 20:46)
- To recognize this, you must look beyond the actions of what you do to the motives... Do you do what you do to impact the lives of others or do you do it to soak up the attention of "being a good person?"

## How do I Revive my Conscience?

### 1- Remove the Stains on your Conscience

Proverbs 5:22 TPT

*Beware that your sins don't overtake you and the **scars of your own conscience** become the ropes that tie you up.*

- Sometimes we fall into the trap thinking that time will heal all wounds. Although in some case this is true, it is not with our conscience. No amount of time passed will clear your conscience. You can bury it, silence it, and sear your conscience, but you can't clear it simply by letting time pass. Those scars remain unless you learn to remove the stain.

Psalms 51:1 TPT

*...Forgive the full extent of my rebellious ways, and erase this **deep stain on my conscience**.*

- Another trap we can fall into is thinking that if we do enough good we can outweigh the bad or guilt in our lives.
- This is simply not true. You can't remove guilt by overcoming it with doing good.
- This begins with honesty and transparency about what has been burdening your conscience.
- Then, you have to let the Bible guide you back to awareness. Let God speak through the Bible to tell you what you should have a conscience about, even if you no longer feel bad about certain areas of your life (1 Corinthians 4:4).

### 2- Resensitize your Conscience

Revelation 11:7 MSG

*...for these two prophets **pricked the conscience** of all the people on earth, made it impossible for them to enjoy their sins.*

- You cannot clear your conscience on your own (Jeremiah 17:9).
- It takes sitting down with friends to resensitize your conscience.
- We need friends who will ask questions to draw out our hearts and motives to help us identify how our conscience have been damaged.
- We need friends whose responses to our sins help us feel the appropriate attitude towards the sins in our lives.

1 Samuel 24:4-5 GNT

*They said to him, "This is your chance! The LORD has told you that he would put your enemy in your power and you could do to him whatever you wanted to." David crept over and cut off a piece of Saul's robe without Saul's knowing it. [5] But then **David's conscience began to hurt.***

- When we allow friends through the Bible to help us re-sensitize our conscience we begin to feel again.
- To have a conscience that is hurt is not a bad thing, it's a good thing. This means our conscience is sensitive again.

### **3- Restore your Why**

1 Peter 3:21 NASB

*Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*

- Remembering our why is remembering Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection.
- Is your conscience sensitive to the cross? Do you have gratitude, inspiration, and passion towards the cross?
- This consciousness of the cross is not supposed to be just at baptism but throughout our lives as disciples. It is supposed to be the generating force behind why we love, why we sacrifice, why we serve, and why we change lives (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Psalm 16:7-9 GNT

*I praise the LORD, because he guides me, and in the night **my conscience** warns me. [8] I am always aware of the LORD's presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me. [9] And so I am thankful and glad, and I feel completely secure.*

- When we remove the stains, re-sensitize our conscience, and remember our why we restore the intimacy and closeness in our relationship with God.
- We enter and sense his presence again. A sacred place where we have gratitude, joy, and security.