

Being Responsive and Obedient To Your Conscience

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Thirdly, if we are praying this prayer that we might grow in graciousness; in grace, we are praying that we might progress in conscientiousness. That is, in responsiveness and obedience to our own consciences. Because God has placed that monitor in our minds, and it reproves us when we do wrong, and it encourages us when we do right. Well, how is it with your conscience and you tonight? How are things between you and that monitor; that voice of God? You know there are many consciences, and in Thomas Boston's words, they're too persnickety. They condemn what God's Word doesn't condemn. We must educate that conscience. Does the Bible condemn blood transfusions, for example? And there are other consciences and they let anything pass. They let pass what God's Word condemns. They are less sensitive than they should be. They are much too broad; much too open. So, we must always bring our conscience under the light of the Word of God.

You know the Puritan illustration then of the sundial? And the sundial will work if it's at the right angle, and in regards to the light of the sun. But on a bright moonlight night, you can go out to your garden and you can look at a sundial, and there will be a shadow - a moon shadow. And it will give you the totally wrong reading. Because it's not a moondial, it's a sundial. And so there is the conscience of the cannibal. And there is the conscience of the abortionist. And they are not living in accord with what the Word of God who created the conscience gives to us.

Now, let's suppose that you have an enlightened conscience. Let's suppose that you have the full light of God's Word on your conscience then. Are you carefully obeying it when you are emotionally disinclined? When you're lying on the floor in despondency and sulking and unhappy because your worst fears are being realized? When you're in the depth of depression and self-pity, and there's a duty that you have to attend to? It's a duty. It's very unpleasant. It's very demanding. Do you do what your conscience tells you that you should do? Do you have the maturity to stand on your emotions and reject them in the face of their reluctance and aversion to attend to what God commands us? There's no greater peril in the Christian life than to make our emotions the touchstone of our duties.

And time and again, we have to pick ourselves up off the floor of discouragement, and say I have a duty, and I know this is right, and I'm going to do it. Or again, let me ask you, are you conscientious about small things? Because there most of all, Christians are tested. We don't have huge sacrifices to make, but every day, there are many little duties that you know have to be done. And we have to pay careful attention to matters of detail, because our Lord, He commends people who are faithful in little things. And so often, we are losing the battle in little things. It might seem to you not a big issue to be in prayer meeting on a Wednesday night there. It might not seem a big issue to be in Sunday nights of church. A small thing. It might seem just a little thing to ignore writing a letter to someone to say thanks for all your kindness to me. Certain things. But we must make conscience, then, if we are going to grow in graciousness, our conscience - we respect it. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.