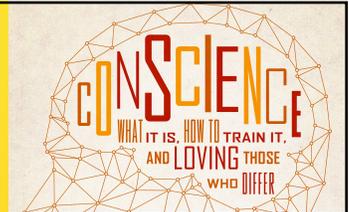


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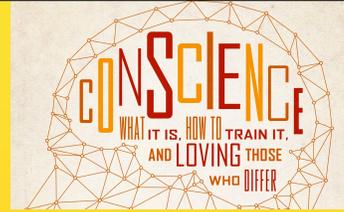
## What we hope to Accomplish



1. Clean consciences
2. Vibrant unity
3. Fruitful mission

2

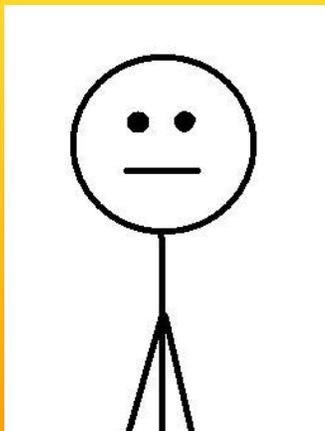
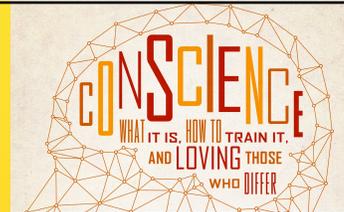
## Where We're Headed



1. Understanding the Conscience: What is this thing? (3/7)
2. Rescuing the Conscience: Is mine clean? (3/14)
3. RC Sproul Lecture: (3/21)
4. Calibrating the Conscience: Is it always right? (3/28)
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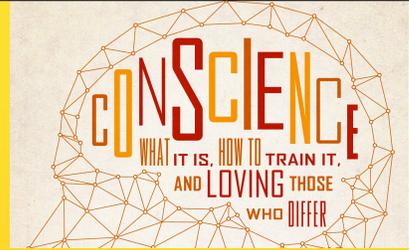
3

## A Tale of Two Consciences



4

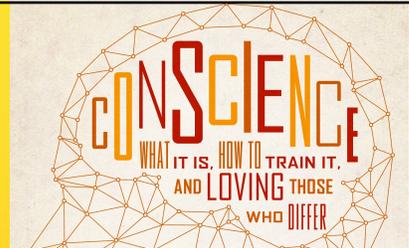
## Initial Observations



1. Our conscience reflects being image-bearers of God.
2. Our conscience *feels* like an independent judge.
3. No two people have the same conscience.
4. No one's conscience perfectly matches God's will

5

## How Do We Define Conscience From the New Testament?

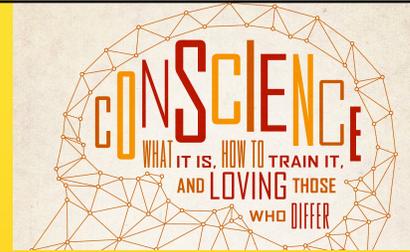


### Conscience (συνείδησις) occurs:

- 2x in Acts
- 20x in Paul's letters
- 5x in Hebrews
- 3x in 1 Peter

6

## How Do We Define Conscience From the New Testament?



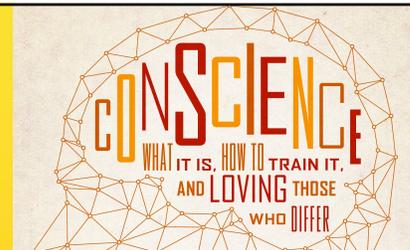
1. What the Conscience *can be*
2. What the Conscience *can do* as a result

7

## What the Conscience *Can Be*

### Positively...

- **Good** in the sense of blameless, clear, clean, pure.
  - Acts 23:1 "... Paul said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in **all good conscience** up to this day."
  - Acts 24:16 "So I always take pains to have a **clear conscience** toward both God and man."
  - 1 Timothy 1:19 "...holding faith and a **good conscience**."
  - 1 Timothy 3:9 "They must hold the mystery of the faith with a **clear conscience**."
  - (See also 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 13:18; 1 Pet. 3:16, 21)

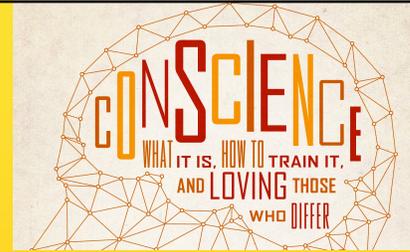


8

## What the Conscience *Can Be*

### Positively...

- **Cleansed**, that is, cleared, perfected, purified, washed, sprinkled clean
- Heb. 9:9,14 "...how much more will the blood of Christ... **purify our conscience** from dead works to serve the living God"
- Heb. 10:22 "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts **sprinkled clean from an evil conscience**"



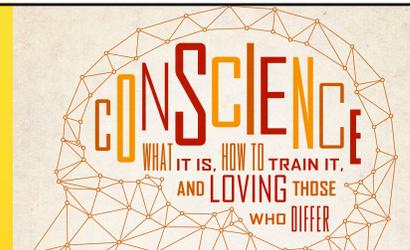
- "Good/clear"

9

## What the Conscience *Can Be*

### Negatively...

- **Evil/Guilty**
- Heb. 10:22 "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from **an evil conscience**"



- "Good/clear"
- "Cleansed/Purified"

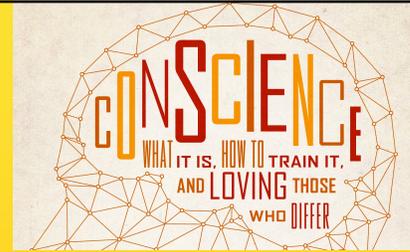
10

## What the Conscience *Can Be*

### Negatively...

- **Weak**

- 1 Cor. 8:7 "But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and **their conscience, being weak**, is defiled."
- V. 10 "For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if **his conscience is weak**, to eat food offered to idols?"
- V. 12 "Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding **their conscience when it is weak**, you sin against Christ."



- "Good/clear"
- "Cleansed/Purified"
- "Guilty"

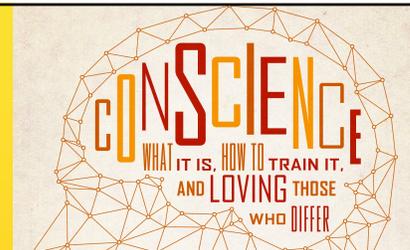
11

## What the Conscience *Can Be*

### Negatively...

- **Wounded**

- 1 Cor. 8:12 "Thus, sinning against your brothers and **wounding their conscience** when it is weak, you sin against Christ."



- "Good/clear"
- "Cleansed/Purified"
- "Guilty"
- "Weak"

12

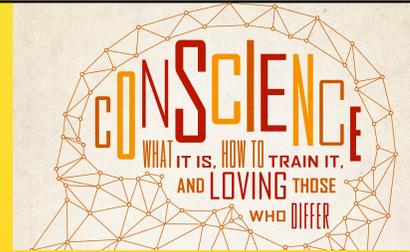
## What the Conscience *Can Be*

### Negatively...

- **Defiled**

- 1 Cor. 8:7 “But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and **their conscience, being weak, is defiled.**”
- Titus 1:15 “To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and **their consciences are defiled**”

- “Good/clear”
- “Cleansed/Purified”
- “Guilty”
- “Weak”
- “Wounded”



13

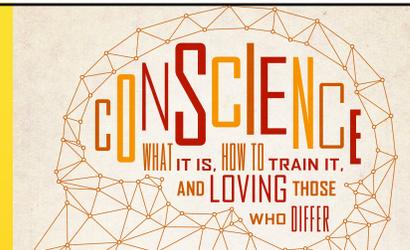
## What the Conscience *Can Be*

### Negatively...

- **Seared as with a hot iron**

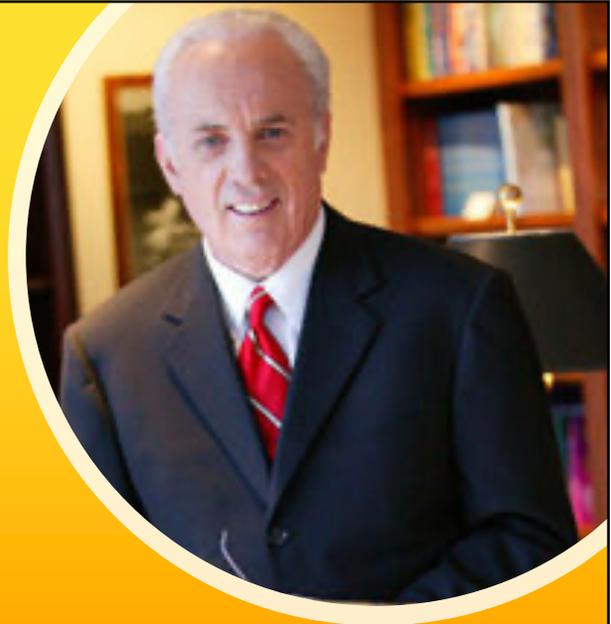
- 1 Timothy 4:2 “...through the insincerity of liars **whose consciences are seared**”

- “Good/clear”
- “Cleansed/Purified”
- “Guilty”
- “Weak”
- “Wounded”
- “Defiled”



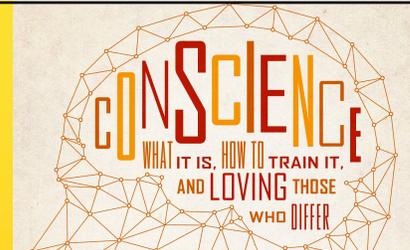
14

“A weak conscience is not the same as a seared conscience. A seared conscience becomes inactive, silent, rarely accusing, insensitive to sin. But the weakened conscience usually is hypersensitive and overactive about issues that are not sins. Ironically, a weak conscience is more likely to accuse than a strong conscience. Scripture calls this a weak conscience because it is too easily wounded. People with weak consciences tend to fret about things that should provoke no guilt in a mature Christian who knows God’s truth.”



15

## What the Conscience *Can Do*

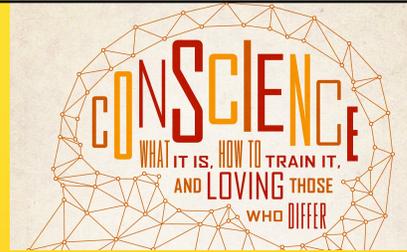


### • **Bear witness or confirm**

- Rom 2:15 “They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while **their conscience also bears witness**”
- Rom 9:1 “I am speaking the truth in Christ - I am not lying; **my consciences bears me witness** in the Holy Spirit...”
- 2 Cor 4:2 “but by the open statement of the truth we would **commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience** in the sight of God.”

16

## What the Conscience *Can Do*

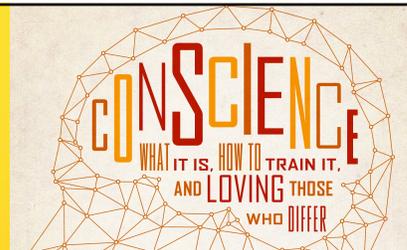


- **Judge / Determine others' freedoms**
  - 1 Cor. 10:29 "For why should **my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience.**"

- "Bear witness"

17

## What the Conscience *Can Do*

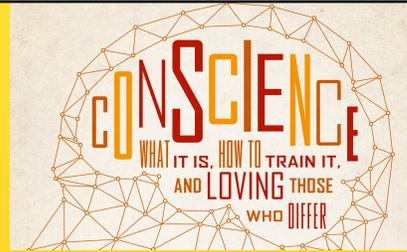


- **Lead one to act a certain way**
  - Rom 2:15 "...their conscience also bears witness, and **their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.**"
  - Rom 13:5 "Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also **for the sake of the conscience.**"
  - 1 Cor 10:25,28 "Eat whatever is sold in the market without **raising any question on the ground of conscience...** But if someone says to you, 'This has been offered in sacrifice,' then don't eat it... **for the sake of conscience.**"

- "Bear witness"
- "Judge"

18

## Defining the Conscience



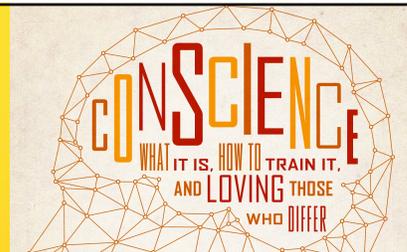
**“The Conscience is your self-awareness of what you believe is right and wrong.”**

- Conscience can change.
- Conscience produces different results for people based on different moral standards.
- Conscience functions as a guide, monitor, witness, and judge.



19

## Defining the Conscience

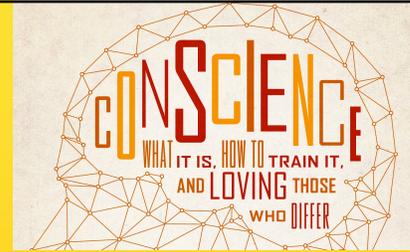


Function	Time	Negative	Positive
Guide	Looks forward	Warns you before you do “wrong.”	Urges you to do “right.”
Monitor, Witness, Judge	Looks backward	Accuses and condemns you when you do “wrong.”	Commends and defends you when you do “right.”



20

## Principles, At This Point



1. We should obey our conscience  
**when we think it's warning us correctly.**
  
2. God is the only Lord of conscience.

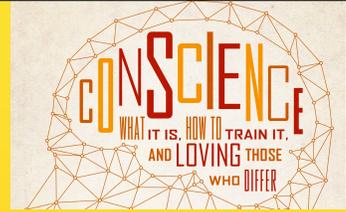
21

“Your conscience is not the lord of itself. You are not the Lord of your conscience. Your parents are not the lord of your conscience (though you do well to obey them when under their care). Your pastors are not the lord of your conscience (though they care for your soul, and you would be foolish to disregard their counsel). Fellow believers are not the lord of your conscience. God is the only Lord of conscience.”



22

## Where We're Headed



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23

24