



MIND THE GAP

The Gift and Witness of Conscience

Marks of a Christian Series

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Our Great God

33Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! 34"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?" 35"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" 36For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.

Our "Therefore" Response

1**Therefore**, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will. 3For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Our "Therefore" Living

9Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. 11Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. 12Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. **[Romans 11:33-12:3; and Romans 12:9-21]**

They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness (Rom 2:15)

Diagnosing Our Condition (We are marred by . . .)

- Misbent minds (Eph 4:22-24) - put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your mind; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
- Inclination to passions of ignorance (1 Pt 1:13, 14) - Therefore, prepare your minds for action. . . do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.
- Hardened hearts and darkened minds (Eph 4:17-19)
- God deficient lives that go with the crowd (Rom 1:23, 28; 12:2)

The Gift of Conscience

One Definition - - the God-given faculty that evaluates our action to accuse or excuse us of sin. To come forward as one's own witness—to provide an abiding mindfulness for our own moral conduct and for casting a vote on behalf of acts and attitudes which are good, right and virtuous. The red light on the dashboard of our lives.

Scripture Speaks of Conscience—

- Good conscience (Acts 23:1)
- Clear conscience (1 Tim 1:5, 19; Acts 24:16; 1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3; Heb 13:18)

Caveat—

Not absolutely trustworthy but must be tested by scripture (Jn 8:7-9; Rom 2:15-16; 9:1; Titus 1:12-15)
– Can be defiled by ignoring Holy Spirit.

- Guilty conscience (Heb 10:22)
- Corrupted conscience (Titus 1:15)
- Weak conscience (1 Cor 8:7, 10, 12)
- Seared conscience (1 Tim 4:2)

A Clear and Clean Conscience (We are to be marked by . . .)

Possible not by activity, gifts or sacrifice but by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:9, 14)

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Examen of Conscience (Witness of Conscience)

Thank you Lord – I am totally dependent on you. I give you thanks and praise for the gift of this day . . .

Help me, O Holy God – I need your guidance to increase my awareness of the events of my day, to shape and to transform my living so I walk in a manner worthy of the calling I have received in Christ. I want to know and do the good, perfect and pleasing will of God. Thy will be done in and through my life. I love you and thank you for your presence in my life today.

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely (1-4). Search me, O God and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (23, 24) [Psalm 139] Be near then O God as I think back over the events, stories and interactions of today - accompany me in my reflections [Select 3 or 4 different questions from below each day then—Ask in prayer . . .]

Lord, today have I:

- Been sincere in my love today? (9)
- Clung to what is good (hating evil)? (9)
- Devoted myself to brotherly love? (10)
- Honoured others above myself? (10)]
- Served the Lord with fervour & much zeal? (11)
- Lived with joy in my hope? (12)
- Been patient in affliction? (12)
- Been faithful in prayer? (12)
- Shared with the needy? (13)
- Practiced hospitality? (13)
- Blessed those who have persecuted me? (14)
- Rejoiced with rejoicers & mourned with mourners? (15)
- Done what is right in the eyes of others? (15)
- Lived in harmony with the people in my life? (16)
- Readily associated with those of lower position, without conceit in my heart? (16)
- Strived as far as it depends on me, to live at peace with everyone? (16)
- Resisted repaying evil for evil & leaving vengeance to God? (17, 19)
- Fed my hungry enemies & brought refreshment to quench their thirst? (18, 19)
- Given attention to overcoming evil with good? (21) [from Romans 12]

And Now . . .

FATHER IN HEAVEN you know every secret of my heart---all that I fear, all that I hope, and all of which I am ashamed---in this moment of confession. I have looked into my own heart and mind, through the events of this day, have mercy upon me. Forgive me and make me clean inside, that in all I do tomorrow I may behave in keeping with Your good, pleasing, and perfect will. Compel me to seek to be transformed by the renewing of my mind. Mark me with Your image and likeness I pray.

Lord God, be with me through the night and into tomorrow O Lord – continue to fill me with hope and a firm belief in Your love, Your renewing work and power in my life. Thank You that Your mercies are new each morning. I entrust myself to Your care.

God's Heart Desire for You: His Invitation

*Say you love Me,
Tell me that you love Me,
Say that I am the one that you'll come running to,
To hold you through the rain.
Say you love Me and there is no one else above Me.
Open up your heart to Me, I'll always be – all you'll ever need.
Say you love Me! [Naturally 7]*

**Romans 9:1 So I strive always to keep my conscience
clear before God and man (see Luke 2:52)**

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