

Conscience

Scripture: "I thank God whom I serve with a pure conscience" (2 Tim. 1:3, NKJV)

Jiminy Cricket sang to Pinocchio, "Always let your conscience be your guide." Disney isn't exactly divine authority, so let's see if this is good advice.

Conscience: the mental faculty which judges between right and wrong. Properly functioning, it convicts us for doing what we believe is wrong, while commending us for doing what we believe is right (Rom. 2:15).

So, then, should you "let your conscience be your guide"? Yes! That's why God gave you a conscience. How foolish you would be to deliberately violate your conscience!

But wait! Even when persecuting Christians, Paul had a good conscience (Acts 23:1). He truly believed his actions against Christ were right (Acts 26:9-11). He was letting his conscience guide him, yet he was sinning.

However, the problem wasn't his conscience; it was his faulty information base. Paul sincerely (but erroneously) thought Jesus was a false prophet deserving of death, so His followers should be punished too. Paul's conscience was working just fine; when he learned the truth about Jesus, his conscience continued to operate properly. He became as avid a supporter of Jesus and the Gospel as he had previously been an opponent. His conscience hadn't changed, but in the information his conscience used to judge between right and wrong changed.

Unfortunately, people can desensitize their conscience. Paul called it having the conscience "*seared with a hot iron*" (1 Tim. 4:2). As a severe burn may destroy nerves, making an area insensitive to pain, so the conscience may become de-sensitized so that one no longer cares about right and wrong.

Your conscience is your guide. Make certain your information is right (God's word). And guard against desensitizing your conscience!

Hymn: "Have Thine Own Way"

Prayer: Father, help us to have sensitive hearts that urge us to do right and shun sin. In Jesus' name, Amen.