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Morning Service

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## **The Assurance of a Functional Conscience Part II**

We are learning one of the predominate sign of salvation is a properly functioning conscience. A conscience trained by God will lead us away from sinful situations and people and draw us towards people and practices that will aid us in our ongoing sanctification. Conscience is a matter of the heart, when we speak of conscience we are talking about what is in your heart, and what is coming out of your heart. James reminded that the words we use can show what's in our hearts and John is telling us in these passages that our actions will also show what's in our hearts.

Today we will discuss the blessings of having a condemning heart. This type of thinking goes against the thinking of modern psychology, which teaches us that feeling guilt or remorse for our bad actions is detrimental to good mental health. By opting this view, we are seeking to squelch the inner voice God has given us, the inner voice that makes us feel remorse for our disobedience and drives us closer to God.

How can one tell if they are listening or ignoring this voice? John tells us very succinctly. Look back, and search for the fruits. Do our past actions agree with our beliefs on self conduct? What is the main driver of our actions, self love, or selfless love for others? With what and with whom do we associate ourselves with? Do we have a 'church group' and a 'work group' and never the two shall meet?

We can answer these questions with confidence once we realize the value of a condemning heart, a heart trained by God, telling us how to live a righteous life.

As you listen to this message consider the following.

- What kind of love to I have for the brethren, one of Cain, or Able?
- Is my love based on self centered gain?
- Am I trading temporal pleasures for Godly obedience?
- John wrote 'by this'...what evidence do I have to show that I seek to be Godly?
- Do my statements really match what's in my heart?
- Do I pray for me to change? Or my circumstances?
- Where is my assurance that my prayers will be answered?
- Do I honestly want God to install a condemning heart in me? If not, then why not?

## Scripture References

**1 John 3:1-24** See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (2) Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. (3) And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (4) Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. (5) You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. (6) No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. (7) Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; (8) the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. (9) No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (10) By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. (11) For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; (12) not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. (13) Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. (14) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. (15) Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (16) We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (17) But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? (18) Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. (19) We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him (20) in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. (21) Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; (22) and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. (23) This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. (24) The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

**1 John 4:10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

**Romans 2:12-16** For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; (13) for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. (14) For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, (15) in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, (16) on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

**Psalms 139:1-24 For the choir director. A Psalm of David.** O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*. (2) You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. (3) You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. (4) Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all. (5) You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. (6) *Such* knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is *too* high, I cannot attain to it. (7) Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your

presence? (8) If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. (9) If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, (10) Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. (11) If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night," (12) Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike *to You*. (13) For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. (14) I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. (15) My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, *And* skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; (16) Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained *for me*, When as yet there was not one of them. (17) How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! (18) If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You. (19) O that You would slay the wicked, O God; Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed. (20) For they speak against You wickedly, And Your enemies take *Your name* in vain. (21) Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? (22) I hate them with the utmost hatred; They have become my enemies. (23) Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; (24) And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.

**1 Peter 3:7** You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

We are glad you have chosen to listen to this sermon and pray that it gives you strength, the want for obedience, and a desire to have God's abundant Grace mortify sin in your life. If you have any questions or comments please email [chuck\\_ezell@yahoo.com](mailto:chuck_ezell@yahoo.com).