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### Understanding the Human Conscience

W. O. Vaught

*Ouachita Baptist University*

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## UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE

A STUDY OF TIMOTHY  
NUMBER 5  
I TIMOTHY 1:5-7

Dr. W. O. Vaught  
Immanuel Baptist Church  
Little Rock, Arkansas

I Timothy 1:5-7 "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned; from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

Verse 1 "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, according to the command from God our Saviour, even Christ Jesus our confidence."

Verse 2 "To Timothy, reliable student in doctrine, grace, mercy, and prosperity from God The Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."

Verse 3 "Since I ordered you to remain behind at Ephesus while I went on to Macedonia, in order that you might exercise command over certain ones."

Verse 4 "Not to teach heretical doctrine or become occupied with myths and endless genealogies, which category of things because of useless speculation rather than the dispensation of God (the church age) which comes by means of doctrine."

Verse 5 "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

"But the objective of preaching is love from a pure heart (or pure right lobe)...and this is as far as we had studied.

"And of a good conscience" is the next phrase we are to study. This comes from kai and ek suneidesis. This word suneidesis comes from oida meaning "to know." The something by which we know is a norm or standard. These norms and standards we call conscience, and becomes the basis for determining certain things in life. In this way, we determine whether something is good or bad, right or wrong, moral or immoral. The standards built into the conscience determine whether something is true or false. All normal people have certain standards determined by seeing, or hearing or feeling or tasting. These standards reside in the soul. Therefore, you come to a decision time and your conscience says yes or no. All of these things are computerized in your soul. This giant computer which says yes or no is in your conscience, called here in this verse suneidesis. So, this phrase says "from a good conscience." The word agathos is the word that refers to absolute good. Doctrine does not set up standards of tasting, smelling, seeing, or hearing. The sensory system sets up its own standards. Doctrine governs certain standards which refer to the various phases of the Christian world. If you have established norms or standards in your soul that conflict with what is right, then doctrinal standards always supercede lesser things.

### THE DOCTRINE OF CONSCIENCE

#### I. DEFINITION

The conscience is the sum total of the norms and standards that

you possess, whether they are right or wrong, whether they are good or bad. They are your very own norms and standards and they belong to your very own conscience. Doctrine and the learning of doctrine will correct many of your erroneous norms and standards. One of the advantages of being a mature believer is to have good norms and standards about everything. A good conscience is a conscience where Bible Doctrine establishes all the norms and standards. So, your conscience is that part of your soul, that part of your right lobe, where you have your norms and standards.

II. THE CONSCIENCE IS LOCATED IN THE RIGHT LOBE - THE THINKING PART OF THE SOUL

Romans 2:15 "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."

Titus 1:15 "Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

III. THE CONSCIENCE ESTABLISHES NORMS FOR BOTH HUMAN AND DIVINE RELATIONSHIPS

Acts 24:16 "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."

IV. THE CONSCIENCE CONVICTS OF SIN

In the conscience, is where you are convicted of wrong doing. The conscience issues a warning to you. If it were not for your conscience, you would not know what sins you are to confess.

John 8:9 "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst."

V. THE CONSCIENCE ESTABLISHES NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR BOTH MORALITY AND THE LAWS OF ESTABLISHMENT

We saw this above in Romans 2:15. When wrong norms and standards are grounded in the mind, the believer has to learn true doctrine and in time, these false standards will be replaced with right standards.

VI. FALSE NORMS AND STANDARDS IN THE CONSCIENCE PRODUCE LEGALISM AND SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

I Corinthians 8:7 "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge; for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."

VII. THE LAW OF LIBERTY AND CERTAIN OTHER SUCH SUPERCEDING LAWS ARE RELATED TO THE FUNCTION OF THE CONSCIENCE

I Corinthians 10:24-29 "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other; for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?"

You yourself are free to do certain things, but because of the law of love or expediency, you do not do certain things because you do not want to offend your weaker Christian brother.

VIII. THE CONSCIENCE IS THE BASIS OF PATRIOTISM

Romans 13:4-5 "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

IX. HUMAN HAPPINESS IN THE FIELD OF LEGITIMATE THINGS IS BASED ON COMPLIANCE WITH ONE'S OWN CONSCIENCE

II Corinthians 1:12 "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."

X. NORMS AND STANDARDS RESIDE IN THE CONSCIENCE FOR THE COMMUNICATION OF DOCTRINE

II Corinthians 4:2 "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." This avoids intellectual dishonesty and snobbery.

XI. THE EXERCISE OF FAITH IN DAILY LIVING BUILDS UP DIVINE STANDARDS IN THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE

I Timothy 1:5 "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned;"  
I Timothy 1:19 "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck."  
I Timothy 3:9 "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

XII. CONSCIENCE CAN BE DISTORTED OR DESTROYED BY NEGATIVE VOLITION TOWARD DOCTRINE

I Timothy 4:1-2 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."

XIII. CONSCIENCE ESTABLISHES NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR SERVING GOD

II Timothy 1:3 "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;"  
Hebrews 9:14 "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

XIV. A CONSCIENCE FILLED WITH DOCTRINE FORMS THE BASIS FOR ENDURING SUFFERING, MALTREATMENT, MISUNDERSTANDINGS

I Peter 2:19 "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully."  
I Peter 3:16 "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."  
 Your conscience is a great protection to help you from making

unnecessary ego trips. This is sign of immaturity. When you develop good firm standards in your conscience, then you are protected from many evils and many false things. Your manners reside in your conscience.

The next phrase in this great verse is "And of faith unfeigned." This comes from kai and ek anupokritos and pistis. The word anupokritos refers to an actor speaking from behind a mask. So, it means "And from doctrine without hypocrisy." Doctrine without hypocrisy means to use doctrine without depending on it as an excuse to sin. Some people just wait to hear a preacher teach something and they warp it and change it and rush out to commit some sin. This is using doctrine with hypocrisy. Some people want to use doctrine so they can sin as they please with an easy conscience. Doctrine without hypocrisy is doctrine beyond the sophomore stage. The word sophomore comes from two greek words, sophos (wise) and more (fool.) This is the way the Greeks described adolescence. A sophomore Bible student often just has enough doctrine to be dangerous and they use doctrine with hypocrisy. What doctrine really should do is to make you a slave to Jesus Christ. Some people use doctrine to get their own way and build a program contrary to God's plan. In this verse, we have studied "a pure heart" and "a good conscience" and "doctrine without hypocrisy." This is the true goal of every mature believer.

Verse 6 "From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling." The purpose of the ministry is to get believers to avoid false doctrine. We have hos "from which" and tis "some" and it is referring to some who have turned away from true doctrine. The word translated "swerved" is the aorist, active, participle of astocheeto, and it means to swerve, to deviate, to turn and go astray. A pastor who fails to teach doctrine always fails and swerves from his main purpose. No pastor can be apostate and teach true doctrine. No pastor can be arrogant and lead others into the truth. This participle means that reversionism can cause a pastor to swerve, to deviate from his main job. The main verb comes up next and it is "have turned aside" from the aorist, passive, indicative of ektrepō. The action of the participle always precedes the action of the main verb. So, this means "Having deviated, they have turned aside." When one is arrogant, stupid, and apostate it always results in turning aside from the main goal. It is called here "vain jangling." This is from eis and the accusative of metaiologia and it means "empty or ineffective teaching." This is indeed a verse for preachers. The life of an arrogant stupid preacher always ends up with vain teaching and empty talk.

Verse 7 "Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." Pastors who get into reversionism always get some false standards and they begin to teach these things. "Desiring" is the present, active, participle from thelo. This describes the picture of the pastor's mind. Some preachers do not believe in dispensations and they are too lazy to study and investigate these things and they downgrade anyone who does study and tries to explain all the doctrines in the Word of God. They just say "Those things are not important or relevant." Their stupidity causes them to be anti-dispensation. I AM PREPARED TO SAY AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS OF DILIGENT BIBLE STUDY THAT IF YOU DON'T BE-

LIEVE IN DISPENSATIONS, YOU CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND THE GREAT SWEEP OF BIBLE TRUTH.

We have the interesting word nomodidaskalos and it means "law teachers." The Judaizers had come to Ephesus, and though they were believers, they did not recognize any change in the dispensation and taught that the people were still living in the age of Israel. Therefore, they taught the keeping of the law as a way of salvation and spirituality. (Just like this man is doing now in the Church of Christ here in Little Rock and has spent eight Sunday morning talks on the radio trying to refute the truth of my sermon on "Salvation Is Forever.") This was a great problem in the early church. If you would just keep the law of Moses, according to these false teachers, you were doing all the Lord expected you to do. But once the church age began, to go back to the "law teachers" distorted the whole plan of God for the church age. The new age demanded the teaching of the "Mystery Doctrine" which had never been taught before. This is nothing less than church age doctrine.

This leads to a study of "The Doctrine of Dispensations" and we will look at that doctrine in our next study.