



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – September 11, 2011

Heart to Heart...

“...and keep a good conscience so that in the things in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.” (I Peter 3:16) A good conscience is a must for those in Christ Jesus! When God’s word speaks of a good conscience, it is a sense of well-being that produces a stability and confidence. A guilty conscience creates discomfort, dissatisfaction and aware of every misstep which leads to many frustrations. It makes one more easily agitated and can lead to suspicion of others. A guilty conscience has knowledge of one’s deficiencies and can easily create fear. Have you ever done something you knew was wrong and when something comes up about a similar situation you get overly sensitive or defensive?

Too many are running their lives on guilt not keeping a good conscience. When the conscience is defiled, a person’s faith cannot move forward. They will eventually drown in their misery or their conscience will sear to where they feel little pain and become cold-hearted and insensitive. Bad attitudes and complaints generally develop out of this. The hardening of the heart is part of the whole process. Once the conscience is seared, deceit comes more easily and sin can be followed with little sensitivity while the road of doom lay ahead. Genesis 3:7-11 is a good illustration of all the above.

She was 18 years of age. She allowed her boyfriend to talk her into immoral relations. He pushed on her and ranted on her until she finally gave up her moral behavior for immoral. No one else knew. When she would be around certain ones or in a Bible class, her guilt was great and she had difficulty looking people in the eyes. When certain things would be said, she was overcome with anxiety as she thought others knew. She felt defiled, hurt, miserable and wrong! Her conscience was crying out, *“Guilty!”* and it was taking her down a path away from the Lord quickly. If she doesn’t make the proper moves with all her heart, it would have devastating effects on her life.

Many times people choose to ignore their conscience when they know they have done something wrong. That’s when all the games begin. The faking, the inner turmoil, your self-esteem, deception and lying to yourself (or others) which will take one away from the Lord if it is not dealt with properly. Titus 1:15 speaks to this. When one has a defiled conscience you have three choices: (1) *Ignore!* If one ignores their conscience when they are guilty, you must ignore the will of God. The searing process begins (I Timothy 4:2). Misery is at the door step. (2) *Justify!* One can look to ease their guilt by justifying their actions or finding fault in someone else they deem as a greater failure. Most that ignore or justify have little compassion on others that do wrong. They seem to sit watching for another to make a mistake. In justifying your actions, it becomes easy to blame someone for your own choices in failure. (3) *Face It!* Being honest and coming face to face with God openly, no pretending, no blaming but a humble heart seeking His forgiveness through the death of Jesus will find favor in the eyes of the Lord (Hebrews 9:13-14). There is the answer. The blood of Jesus is to cleanse the conscience and the only cleansing agent. Faith in the blood of Jesus will clean your conscience and bring about a godly confidence. Think about it!!!

Brent