

## A Note to Our Commenters

Scripture: Matthew 18:8–9

Code: B120806

Throughout John MacArthur's ongoing blog series *Purity and Conscience*, we've heard from several commenters who are weighed down by guilt over their sin. They're burdened by wicked behavior in their past or impure habits they still can't seem to break.

While our comments section isn't the place to deal with specific cases, we do want to offer some encouragement to readers struggling to bear up under the weight of a heavy conscience. Frankly, that's a situation most believers can relate to at one time or another.

First of all, consider that how you deal with the promptings of your conscience is a reflection of your view of God. Carrying around guilt over sins long-ago addressed in your past could be evidence that you're not fully trusting in the Lord's provision for those sins. It's not a question of forgiving yourself, and how you *feel* isn't a trustworthy measure of your spiritual condition. You've got to rest in God's ability to remove your sin "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12) and clothe you in Christ's righteousness. You need to examine your own heart—is your view of God too small, or is your view of sin too big?

On the other hand, if your conscience is nagging you about an ongoing sinful pattern you can't seem to break, then you need to repent of not truly *repenting*. Dealing with sin half-heartedly is essentially disguised rebellion, and it's a sure way to train yourself to ignore your conscience altogether. You run a real risk of dulling and searing your conscience if you keep engaging in repetitive cycles of temptation, sin, and partial repentance.

Don't trifle with your conscience. As John said, it's not complicated—you simply need to *stop sinning*. Cancel your cable subscription, remove your Internet connection, end a relationship, change jobs, or move across the country—make whatever radical changes it takes to break your habits before you ruin your sensitivity to sin and cripple your spiritual growth (Matthew 18:8-9).

Of course, a pleading conscience might be an indication of a much larger spiritual issue. Constant, honest, biblical self-examination is a vital part of every believer's life—we need to regularly evaluate how we measure up to God's righteous standard (2 Corinthians 13:5). A nagging conscience could indicate that you are still dead in your sins, and therefore, still in need of a Savior.

If you have questions about your true spiritual condition, we highly recommend you take them seriously and do some biblical self-examination. John MacArthur has helped many people with those kinds of questions in two powerful sermon series—[\*Salvation Survey: Saved or Self-Deceived\*](#) and [\*Examine Yourself: How to Be Sure You Are a Christian\*](#). Just follow the links to study the Scripture with him; you'll get your questions answered directly from the Bible.

If you're a Christian burdened with a heavy conscience, we want to encourage you to find spiritual help through accountability and discipleship in your local church. Airing your concerns in a digital

forum like this might temporarily ease your guilt, but dealing directly and thoroughly with your sin is the only way to truly clear your conscience. Don't remain anonymous, remote, and isolated; go to your pastor, an elder, or a spiritually mature Christian and get some help.

That said, we do sincerely love our commenters. The contributions you've made since we relaunched the GTY blog have been helpful and insightful, both for us and for other readers. Keep them coming.

Jeremiah Johnson

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2024 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<https://www.gty.org/about#copyright>).