

God's Emergency Warning System

Scripture: Romans 2:15

Code: B120706

I'm thankful for warning systems. The dashboard lights in my car, smoke detectors in my home, even the little bumps in the road that let me know when I'm crossing over into another lane. If there's any device or object that's able to warn me of danger or impending catastrophe, I want it working for me.

In the Lord's perfect design, each of us has two built-in warning systems working to keep us from danger and harm. The first is *pain*. Most of us think of pain as a bad thing, but actually it's a gift from God. You know something is physically wrong when your body hurts. But more than just that, pain is God's way of protecting you from *destroying yourself*.

The best illustration of how pain protects us is Hansen's Disease, or what is often called leprosy. Long ago people believed that leprosy ate away a person's extremities, ate his fingers, his nose and ears, his chin, his toes, feet, and legs. It was only in the 1800s that biologists discovered that leprosy doesn't consume the body at all.

Instead, it destroys your nerves and your sense of touch. And without the ability to feel the pressure or pain, you literally wear off your nose, your ears, your chin, and your forehead. You scratch your head and put big gouges in it without ever feeling the damage you're doing. You're totally oblivious to pain—you cut your finger and don't realize it, and infection sets in and *that* starts to eat away at you. Without the basic ability to feel pain, you're able to do incredible damage to your body, and you're open to all kinds of other physical dangers. Without that built-in warning system, you slowly destroy yourself. Pain *protects* you.

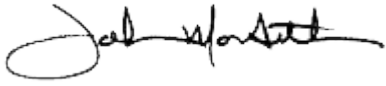
From a spiritual perspective, your other built-in warning system—your *conscience*—does the same thing. Just as searing pain warns you of physical danger to your body, your conscience screams at you about a violation of a moral law.

But your conscience *alone* can't save you. It's only a mechanism—a warning device. And unless it has been guarded and trained, it won't be able to alert you to spiritual danger. A malnourished, confused, and twisted conscience won't be able to protect you—in fact, it could actually lead you to sin and corruption.

Your conscience won't function properly unless it has been informed by reality and trained like a muscle. It needs to be developed and protected and sharpened.

If you're going to live the pure, holy life the Lord has commanded you to live, you need a conscience tuned to His perfect standard. And then you need to listen to it carefully and heed its warnings.

In the days ahead, we'll look at the vital importance of nurturing and training your conscience, how to keep it soft, sharp, and clear, and the dangers of deceiving or ignoring God's warning system.



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