

# Certain Doom

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Destroying the conscience brings sure spiritual destruction. Those who play fast and loose with this essential part of spiritual life bring inevitable death on themselves.

Of itself, the conscience is not a sure guide. Paul lived in all good conscience while practicing savage persecution (Acts 23:1). To function properly, the conscience must have right information. Only then is it a true guide.

God commanded you and me to keep our conscience healthy. 1 Timothy 1:19 says that, when a man thrusts away his conscience, he makes shipwreck of his faith. The conscience is what holds him to the faith, causes him to react honorably, & keeps him morally upright. But, when a man gets the consent of his mind to do things he knows are wrong, his spiritual life becomes a disaster. God commands a good conscience (1 Peter 3:15-16).

No one starts out to corrupt his conscience. It just happens. It atrophies when we pay no attention to it. In 1 Corinthians 8:7, Paul says that the conscience can become defiled. Verse 12 says it can be injured or wounded, “pummeled.”

When Paul said (Romans 14:23) “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” he meant that whatever cannot be done with the approval of conscience is sinful to do even if right in itself.

Titus 1:15 says that one’s conscience can become defiled. 1 Timothy 4:2 teaches that the conscience can become seared as with a hot iron. It becomes callous, hardened unresponsive, ineffective.

This is worse than an uninformed conscience. At least an unlearned man can be taught. He can learn, if he has a good conscience, and can conform his life to God’s wishes. He can find the right way, and his conscience will hold him to it.

But, a man who stultifies his conscience destroys his spiritual life. He disables and debauches that which regulates spiritual life. Paul compares this condition to the battered wreckage of a ship. When it happens, faith can never be reassembled. When a man thrusts away his conscience, he makes shipwreck of his faith.

Take for an example the man or woman who sins on the assumption that he can repent later and get forgiveness. He violates his conscience and does things he knows to be wrong, little imagining that before he knows it, he will have no conscience against sin.

He will not recognize any clear distinction between righteousness and rebellion. He has condemned himself. He supposes that his conscience is like his heart or stomach, always there to do its job when called upon. But, the conscience, if hardened, will not call him out of ungodliness. It will not impel him to save himself from hell.

Or as another example, consider the man who is disaffected with his religious life and he decides he will stay away from the worship and study periods of the church until he “gets things worked out.” He is like a man dying from malnutrition who gets the bright idea that he can solve his problem by going on a diet. What he needs is more spiritual food. He knows that. He has been taught as much from the Bible itself (1 Peter 2:2). But, study and worship and praising God have all become unpleasant to him, and so he devises this way of “solving” the problem. He is committing spiritual suicide.

A fairly common example is the Christian who decides he wants to visit a church that practices unscriptural things. He has been taught better. He knows before he begins to visit, that the church is involved in church sponsored entertainment, in the building of gymnasiums, camps, and the like, that they have organized the churches in ways that are unscriptural and wrong. But, he goes “to investigate” this church. It is amazing how bad such a person’s eyesight becomes. He never “sees” church kitchens, gymnasiums or any of the rest of it. The fact is, he has compromised his conscience, ignored it, and has not been very honest either with himself or with others in describing his reasons for “visiting” and “investigating” that church. It reminds me of the three monkeys holding their hands over their eyes, mouth and ears. The caption reads, “see no evil; hear no evil; speak no evil.” If you cover your eyes, you surely won’t see it. Such people don’t fool anybody but themselves