

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GUILT

Various Scriptures

INTRODUCTION

Genesis 3 lays out the origin of the conscience and how ignoring it has disastrous consequences on mankind's relationship with God, other people, and one's self. As an instinctual faculty of man's immaterial heart, the purpose of the conscience is to judge how one's thoughts, intentions, words, and attitudes conform to a set of moral standards regarding right and wrong.

It is important to note that the conscience does not function legislatively, but judicially. It assumes the presence of another valid set of standards. Said another way, it is not the law-book in the court room, but it is the judge. It does not furnish the law, but it bears witness with the law furnished by other sources.

But, what sources serve as the standards against which the conscience evaluates one's behavior?

THIS WEEK:

This week, we want to explore the four sources the conscience uses to distinguish between right and wrong. We want to answer the question: What four sources of authority does the conscience use to determine if we are guilty or not guilty before God?

OBSERVATION *What does it SAY?*

Discover key details of the passage by reading it and then answering the following questions:

1. What does Romans 1:19-20 say people know intrinsically about God?
2. The first source of authority that governs the conscience is found in Romans 2:14-15. What does it say a person is judged by in this passage?
3. What second source of authority does Romans 9:1 say speaks to a person's conscience?

4. The third source of authority the conscience uses to invoke either a guilty or clear conscience is the God's ordained authorities God has placed over one's life. There are four of them— read each passage below and list them:
 - a. God ordained authority #1 (Rom 13:1-7, Titus 3:1, 1 Pet 2:13-14, 17):
 - b. God ordained authority #2 (Eph 5:22-24, Col 3:18, Titus 2:5, 1 Pet 3:1-6):
 - c. God ordained authority #3 (Eph 6:1-3, Col 3:20, Prov 1:8, 6:20):
 - d. God ordained authority #4 (1 Thess 5:12, Heb 13:17):
5. From 1 Cor 8:1-13 and 10:23-31 and in Rom 14:1-23, describe the fourth source of authority that informs one's conscience before God:

INTERPRETATION *What does it MEAN?*

Use the Bible to interpret the Bible. Look up the cross references and use them to interpret the passage under study:

6. What does Matthew 22:37-40 and 1 Tim. 1:5 describe as the standard by which God judges one's one's thoughts, intentions, words, and attitudes— whether they be Jew or Gentile?
7. Describe the multiple ways Hebrews 4:12 speaks to the authority that the word of God has over a person's conscience:
8. In what ways does Romans 13:1-5 describe the way rebellion to authority affects one's conscience?

9. Read and elaborate on how Romans 14:5-10 explains how a believer's commitment to their own individual convictions will be examined when they face the judgment seat of Christ:

APPLICATION *Why does it MATTER?*

Now that you have discerned what the passage means, how does it apply to your life?

10. In what ways could the recognition of a universal moral law inherent in every person impact the way you parent? How about the way you evangelize?
11. What one or two doctrines found in the Bible that you think are the most dangerous to one's conscience to ignore? Why?
12. What God ordained authority do you personally find/have found to be the most difficult to submit to? What have been the relational consequences with God? How about with others?
13. What personal standards (standards that you hold yourself to though not explicitly prohibited in Scripture) do you subscribe to that may not be a "sin" for others, but is a "sin" for you if you engaged in them?

TAKE AWAY *How does this change me?*

14. What does this passage reveal about God?
15. What does this passage reveal about humanity?
16. What is the Holy Spirit revealing in this passage about your life?

Have your kids do the word find puzzle on the next page or read to them Ephesians 6:1-3. Use the following questions to have a discussion about how God wants kids to trust him by obeying their parents.

1. What does it mean to "obey your parents"? (Hint: Think about doing what your mom and dad ask you to do.)
2. Can you find the part in the Bible where it says, "Children, obey your parents"? (Hint: Look in the book of Ephesians, chapter 6, verses 1-2.)
3. How many reasons does the Bible give for obeying your parents in these verses? (Hint: There are two reasons mentioned.)
4. The Bible says, "Honor your father and mother." What do you think it means to honor them? (Hint: Honoring means showing them respect and love.)
5. Jesus once obeyed his parents even when he was a child. Can you think of a story from the Bible where Jesus obeyed his parents? (Hint: You can find this story in Luke chapter 2.)
6. How do you think obeying your parents can show that you love and trust God? (Hint: Obeying your parents is one way to follow God's commandments.)
7. Can you think of a time when you found it difficult to obey your parents? What did you do? (Hint: Maybe you can remember a time when you didn't want to do what your parents asked.)
8. What are some ways you can obey and honor your parents every day? (Hint: You can listen to them, help them with chores, and speak kindly to them.)

Take some time to listen to your child's answer and then lead them in a prayer that calls upon God to help the them yield to him and depend on his strength to be obedient.

WORD FIND

Ephesians 6:1-3

E	R	C	M	C	C	O	B	E	Y
C	F	H	O	N	O	R	E	N	D
C	U	T	T	C	M	I	C	R	I
Y	M	G	H	T	M	G	A	B	C
L	I	F	E	F	A	H	U	F	L
O	P	A	R	E	N	T	S	C	O
N	C	H	I	L	D	R	E	N	R
G	N	P	R	O	M	I	S	E	D
I	F	A	T	H	E	R	C	A	U
S	D	L	L	A	N	D	B	N	B
C	F	I	R	S	T	L	A	D	G

Children, obey your **parents** in the **Lord, because** this is **right. Honor** your **father** and **mother**, which is the **first commandment** with a **promise**, so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land.