

SOUTHWEST LIFE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

“Healing the Guilty Conscience” – 3-25-07”

OPEN: What did you think about the story of “TJ” in this morning’s sermon?

- Could anyone relate to it in any way? How?
- What comes first, the “cleansing of the guilty conscience” or the “getting our lives right”?
- Is it an either-or question, or can it happen either way? Explain/discuss this.

DIG: Read 1 John 3:19-22.

- Vs. 19 – Do you think there is supposed to be any connection between “*knowing that we belong to the truth*” and “*setting our hearts at rest in his presence*”?
 - Both the mind (“*knowing we belong*”) and the heart (“*at rest*”) are being addressed here. How is it possible to only have one of these conditions but not the other?
 - Discuss this quote: “The longest journey of a person’s life is 12 inches...moving truth from his head to his heart.”
- Vs. 20 – What might it mean to have “*our hearts condemn us*”?
 - Discuss the distinction between “godly sorrow that leads to repentance and life” vs. “guilt that leads to despair and death”.
 - If a person’s heart “condemns them”, even though they follow Christ, what comfort should one have from the statement, “*For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything*”?
 - If a person’s heart does not condemn them, but they do not follow Christ, what warning should one glean from the statement, “*For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything*”?
- Vs. 21-22 – Discuss the two promises of God (listed below) that we get if we get to the spiritually appropriate, Biblical, guilt-free place described here as a state where “*our hearts do not condemn us*”.
 - “*we have confidence before God*” – Do you? If so, how did you get there? If not, what stands in your way (or, like TJ was asked, “what did you do that was so bad that you are exempt from Christ’s promise”)
 - “*and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.*”
 - How does a guilty conscience keep us from “receiving” what we ask God for?
 - How much of your life is consciously spent “*obeying his commands and doing what pleases God*”?

DISCUSS: What truth do you “know in your mind” that you wish you could “feel in your heart”?

PRAY: Pray that when the Southwest church members offer “salvation” to the world, that we include the offer of “healing for your heart in this life” in addition to the “knowledge you need to be saved”.