

## PROVE GOD'S WILL (Two Conditions)

1. **Romans 12:1** Present your bodies . . . **alive** . . . a **living sacrifice**
2. **Romans 12:2** Be transformed . . . by the **renewing** of . . . your mind

**NOTE:** To prove God's will requires two conditions: 1) **alive** (God's Zoe life) . . . **living sacrifice** 2) **renewing** . . . of your mind

3. **Ephesians 4:21** If you heard Him and have been taught by Him . . . as the truth . . . is in Jesus; that you (v. 22) put off your **former conduct** , the **old man** and be (v.23) . . . **renewed** . . . in the . . . spirit of your mind

**NOTE:** In the past we have been taught from the word in Romans (Paul's gospel) concerning presenting our . . . **bodies** . . . as a **living sacrifice**. The second thing . . . renewing of our **minds**. Renewing our mind does not mean a change of subject matters . . . from historical matters, current events and etc., nor bible truths – the law and old testament and new testament. Renewing does not mean a change of subject matters . . . but a change of the mind. The very mind must be renewed – **not subjects in the mind**.

Our minds are renewed by . . . having the mind of Christ. We **have** (1 Corinthians 2:16) . . . the mind of Christ. The anointing (1 John 2:27) . . . abides in us . . . and the anointing teaches us all things.

. . . To have life and renewing our mind **does not** come by searching the scriptures. The Lord said (John 5:39), "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you (v. 10) will not come to Me that you may have life." We must enter by the narrow gate (Matthew 7:13); for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because (V. 14) narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (John 12:25) **We must lose it**.

**NOTE: Ephesians 1:22-23** The church . . . **which is His body, the fullness of** . . . Him . . . His **body** . . . His **life** . . . His **mind**. **The new man** (Ephesians 4:24) . . . **One** (Ephesians 2:15) . . . **new man**.

## Conscience

1. **Romans 9:1** My conscience also bearing witness in the Holy Spirit
2. **1 Timothy 3:9** Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience
3. **Acts 24:16** I myself always strive to have a good conscience towards God and men

Besides the functions of intuition and communion, our spirit performs still another important task-that of correcting and reprimanding so as to render us uneasy when we fall short of the glory of God. This ability we call conscience. As the holiness of God condemns evil and justifies good, so a believer's conscience reproves sin and approves righteousness. Conscience is where God expresses His holiness. If we desire to follow the spirit (and since we never reach a stage of infallibility), we must heed what our inward monitor tells us regarding both inclination and overt action. For its works would be decidedly incomplete if it were only *after* we have committed error that conscience should rise up to reprove us. But we realize that even before we take any step-while we are still considering our way-our conscience together with our intuition will protest immediately and make us uneasy at any thought or inclination which is displeasing to the Holy Spirit. If we were more disposed today to mind the voice of conscience we would not be as defeated as we are.

## Conscience and Salvation

While we were sinners our spirit was thoroughly dead; our conscience was therefore dead as well and unable to function normally. This does not mean the conscience of a sinner stops working altogether. It does continue to operate, though in a state of coma. Whenever it comes out of this coma it does nothing but condemn the sinner. It has no strength to lead men to God. Dead as it is to Him, God nonetheless desires the conscience to perform some feeble work in the heart of man. Hence in man's dead spirit conscience appears to do a little more work than the other functions of the spirit. The death of intuition and of communion seems to be a greater one than that of conscience. There is of course a reason for the variation. As soon as Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil his intuition and communion died completely towards God, but his power of distinguishing good and evil (which is the function of conscience) was increased. Even today, while the intuition and communion of a sinner are altogether dead to God, his conscience retains something of its movement. This does not imply that man's conscience is alive; for according to the Biblical meaning of aliveness only that which has the life of God is reckoned as living. Anything void of God's life is considered dead. Since the conscience of a sinner does

not embrace the life of God it is accounted dead, though it may appear to be active according to man's feeling. Such activity of the conscience augments the anguish of a sinner.

In initiating His work of salvation the first step of the Holy Spirit is to awaken this comatous conscience. He uses the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai to shake and enlighten this darkened conscience so as to convince the sinner of his violation of God's law and of his inability to answer God's righteous demand and additionally to convict him as one who is condemned and who deserves nothing but perdition. If one's conscience is willing to confess whatever sins have been committed, including the sin of unbelief, it will be sorrowful in a godly way, earnestly desiring the mercy of God. The tax-collector in our Lord's parable who went up to the temple to pray illustrates such a work of the Holy Spirit. It is what the Lord Jesus meant in his statement: "When (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment" (John 16:8). Should a man's conscience be closed to the conviction, however, then he can never be saved.

The Holy Spirit illuminates a sinner's conscience with the light of God's law so as to convict him of sin; the same Spirit also enlightens man's conscience with the light of the gospel so as to save him. If a sinner, upon being convicted of his sin and hearing the gospel of God's grace, is willing to accept the gospel and by faith take it, he will see how the precious blood of the Lord Jesus answers all the accusations of his conscience. Doubtless there is sin, but the blood of the Lord Jesus has been shed. What ground is left for accusation since sin's penalty has been fully paid? The blood of the Lord has atoned for all the sins of a believer; hence there is no more condemnation in the conscience. "If the worshipers had once been cleansed, they would no longer have any consciousness of sin" (Hebrews 10:2). We may stand before God without fear and trembling because the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on our conscience (Hebrews 9:14). Our salvation is confirmed by the fact that the precious blood has quieted this voice of condemnation.

Since the terrifying light of the law and the merciful light of the gospel both shine upon it, dare we overlook man's conscience in the preaching of the Word? Is our aim in preaching merely to make people understand in their mind, be moved in their emotion, and decide with their will without in the slightest touching their conscience? The Holy Spirit cannot do the work of regeneration through the precious blood if one's conscience has not been convicted of sin. We must stress the precious blood and the conscience proportionally. Some strongly insist on the latter but overlook the former; consequently sinners try hard to repent and to do good, hoping in this way to propitiate God's wrath with their own merits. Others emphasize the precious blood but neglect conscience. This results in a mental acceptance of the blood and a rootless "faith" because their conscience has not been reached by the Holy Spirit. Thus these two must be presented

equally. Whoever is aware of an evil conscience will accept the full meaning of the precious blood.

### **Conscience and Communion**

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14). In order to commune with God and to serve Him one first must have his conscience cleansed by the precious blood. As a believer’s conscience is cleansed he is regenerated. According to the Scriptures the cleansing by the blood and the regeneration of the spirit occur simultaneously. Here we are informed that before one can serve God he must receive a new life and have his intuition quickened through the cleansing of the conscience by the blood. A conscience so cleansed makes it possible for the intuition of the spirit to serve God. Conscience and intuition are inseparable.

“Let us *draw near* with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22). We do not draw near to God physically as did the people in the Old Testament period, for our sanctuary is in heaven; nor do we draw near soulically with our thoughts and feelings since these organs can never commune with God. The regenerated spirit alone can approach Him. Believers worship God in their quickened intuition. The verse above affirms that a sprinkled conscience is the basis for communion with God intuitively. A conscience tinged with offense is under constant accusation. That naturally will affect the intuition, so closely knit to the conscience, and discourage its approach to God, even paralyzing its normal function. How infinitely necessary to have “a true heart in full assurance of faith” in a believer’s communion with God. When conscience is unclear one’s approach to Him becomes forced and is not true because he cannot fully believe that God is for him and has nothing against him. Such fear and doubt undermine the normal function of intuition, depriving it of the liberty to fellowship freely with God. The Christian must not have the slightest accusation in his conscience; he must be assured that his every sin is entirely atoned by the blood of the Lord and that now there is no charge against Him (Romans 8:33-34). A single offense on the conscience may suppress and suspend the normal function of intuition in communing with God, for as soon as a believer is conscious of sin his spirit gathers all its powers to eliminate that particular sin and leaves no more strength to ascend heavenward.

### **A Believer’s Conscience**

A believer’s conscience is quickened when his spirit is regenerated. The precious blood of the Lord Jesus purifies his conscience and accordingly gives it an acute sense

that it should obey the will of the Holy Spirit. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in man and the work of conscience in man are intimately related and mutually joined. If a child of God desires to be filled with the Spirit, to be sanctified, and to lead a life wholly after God's will, he must adhere to the voice of conscience. Should he not grant it its rightful place, he shall fall inescapably into walking after the flesh. To be faithful to one's conscience is the first step toward sanctification. Following its voice is a sign of true spirituality. If a Christian fails to let it do its work he is barred from entering the spiritual realm. Even if he regards himself (and is so regarded by others) as spiritual, his "spirituality" nevertheless lacks foundation. If sin and other matters contrary to God's will and unbecoming to saints are not restrained as dictated by its voice, then whatever has been superimposed through spiritual theory shall ultimately collapse because there is no genuine foundation.

Conscience testifies as to whether we are clear towards God and towards men and as to whether our thoughts, words and deeds follow the will of God and are not in any way rebellious to Christ. As Christians advance spiritually the witness of conscience and the witness of the Holy Spirit seem to close ranks. This is because conscience, being fully under the control of the Holy Spirit, daily grows more sensitive until it is attuned perfectly to the voice of the Spirit. The Latter is thereby able to speak to believers through their consciences. The Apostle's word that "my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 9:1) carries within it this meaning.

If our inward monitor judges us to be wrong we must in fact be wrong. When it condemns, let us repent immediately. We must never attempt to cover our sin or bribe our conscience. "Whenever our hearts condemn us" can we be less condemned by God, since "God is greater than our hearts" (1 John 3:20)? Whatever conscience condemns *is* condemned by God. Can the holiness of God pursue a lower standard than our conscience? If conscience insists we are wrong, we must be wrong indeed.

What should we do when we are wrong? Cease proceeding to do the incorrect thing if we have not yet done it; repent, confess, and claim the cleansing of the precious blood if we have done it already. It is to be regretted that so many Christians today do not follow these rules. Immediately after the reproof of their inner voice, they lay plans to quench its protest. They usually employ two methods. One is to argue with it, trying to marshal reasons for their action. They suppose that anything reasonable must be God's will and will be condoned by the conscience. What they do not understand is that conscience never argues or reasons. It discerns God's will through intuition and condemns everything which is not according to Him. Conscience speaks for God's will, not for reason. Christians ought not walk by reason but by God's will as disclosed in their intuition. Whenever they disobey any movement there, conscience raises its voice to condemn. Explanation may satisfy the mind but never conscience. As long as the issue condemned is not removed it shall not cease condemning. During the initial stage of a Christian's walk conscience only bears witness to right and wrong; as spiritual life

grows, it bears witness as well to what is of God and what is not of God. Although many things appear good to human eyes, they are nonetheless condemned by conscience because they do not originate with God's revelation but are initiated instead by the Christians themselves.

The other method is to ease conscience with many other works. To solve the dilemma of refusing to obey their inner voice of accusation on the one hand but continuing to be afraid of its condemnation on the other, believers resort to many good works. They replace God's will with laudable deeds. They have not obeyed God, yet they insist that what they now do is just as good as what He has revealed—perhaps even better, broader in scope, more profitable, greater in influence. They highly esteem such works; God, however, deems them of no spiritual account whatsoever. He looks neither at the aggregate of fat nor at the number of burnt offerings but solely at the sum of obedience to Him. Nothing, regardless how commendable the intention, can move God's heart if the revelation in the spirit has been neglected. Doubling the consecration will not silence the accusing monitor; its voice must be followed; that and nothing else can ever please God. Conscience simply demands our obedience; it does not require us to serve God in any spectacular way.

Let us therefore not deceive ourselves. In walking according to the spirit we shall hear the directions of conscience. Do not try to escape any inward reproach; rather, be attentive to its voice. By constantly walking in the spirit we are constrained to humble ourselves and to heed the correction of conscience. Children of God should not make a general confession by acknowledging their innumerable sins in a vague manner, because such confession does not provide conscience opportunity to do its perfect work. They ought to allow the Holy Spirit through their conscience to point out their sins one by one. Humbly and quietly and obediently they should permit their conscience to reprove and condemn them of every individual sin. Christians must accept its reproach and be willing, according to the mind of the Spirit, to eliminate everything which is contrary to God. Are you reticent to let conscience probe your life? Dare you let it explore your real condition? Will you allow it to parade before you one after another all the things in your life as they are beheld by God? Will you grant conscience the right to dissect every one of your sins? In case you dare not, in case you are not willing to be so examined, then does not such drawing back prove that there remain many elements in your life which have not been judged and committed to the cross as they ought to have been: that there are still matters in which you have not wholly obeyed God nor fully followed the spirit: that some issues continue to hinder you from having perfect fellowship with God?

The Spiritual Man by Watchman Nee