

FREEDOM FROM REGRET

- *The Greek word for conscience means, “be aware of, conscience” and it comes from the root meaning, “to know with; perceive together; co-perception” because the conscience is that inner voice that is to testify to us if what we are doing is right or wrong.*
- *The Greek word for conscience is used 32 times in the New Testament.*
- *The New Testament speaks of different types of consciences.*
- *There is a defiled conscience which has become stained with sin so that what we once knew was wrong we no longer consider wrong. (Titus 1:15)*
- *There is a weak conscience where we consider something sin when it is not sin such as someone who feels condemned if they eat a bacon and tomato sandwich. (1 Corinthians 8:7-12)*
- *There is a seared conscience where a person can do evil and have no feeling of regret or shame. Those with a seared conscience can be classified as psychopaths. (1 Timothy 4:2)*
- *There is a bad conscience where a person feels the weight of their sins and failures and lives under a cloud of condemnation. (Hebrews 10:22)*
- *However, the New Testament also speaks about a good conscience that has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus so we can serve God without shame or regret. (Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:5; 19; Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 13:18; 1 Peter 3:16, 21)*
- *The Hebrew word conscience is derived from the word compass.*
- *The Hebrew word for compass means that which points North.*
- *The Hebrew words for “North”; “compass”; “hide or treasure”; and “conscience” all come from the same Hebrew root word.*

Psalm 48:1–2 (NKJV)

¹Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised In the city of our God, In His holy mountain.

²Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, The city of the great King.

Job 37:22 (NKJV)

²²He comes from the north as golden splendor; With God is awesome majesty.

- *The Old Testament equates the North with both a place of mystery and a place associated with God.*
- *Therefore we can see that God created our conscience to be that inner voice that reveals the secrets of our hearts and is like a compass which always points to true north – the ways of God.*
- *However, as we see from Scripture, sin and neglect can damage our conscience so that it no longer operates correctly. Instead of our conscience leading us to God it leads us astray either because it is defiled and it no longer recognizes sin or because the enemy uses it to heap condemnation upon us so instead of running to God for forgiveness we run from Him in order to hide.*

Genesis 3:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?”

¹⁰So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

- *An example of how sin causes us to have a bad conscience is seen in Genesis 3.*
- *Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to hide from God because they became conscious of their sins and transgressions.*
- *The moral compass that God gave man which was always meant to point to God and His perfect ways had become damaged by sin and now pointed away from God.*
- *Adam and Eve’s bad conscience now produced shame and guilt and therefore in response to their fear of judgment and because they misunderstood God’s heart of love and mercy, they fled from His presence.*
- *There is one more interesting thing about the Hebrew word for conscience – it is never used once in the entire Old Testament!*
- *The New Testament is filled with many references using the word conscience but the Old Testament remains strangely silent.*
- *However, there is a clear reason why the word conscience is not even used once in the entire Old Testament.*

Hebrews 10:1–4 (NKJV)

¹For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

²For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

³But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

⁴For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

- *The Mosaic covenant was never meant to provide the remedy for sin because the law was “a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things.”*
- *In fact it clearly states that “these same sacrifices” cannot “make those who approach perfect” in other words the offerers of these sacrifices still had spiritual blemishes and that is why they continually year by year offered up these same sacrifices.*
- *If the sacrifices under the Mosaic Law could have purify the worshippers then they would have ceased to offer up those very same sacrifices yearly because they “would have had no more consciousness of sins.”*
- *However, instead of the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law providing a clear conscience it actually resulted in the opposite effect for “in those sacrifices is a reminder of sins every year.”*
- *The purpose of the Mosaic Law was not to remedy sin or bring about redemption but actually to make the people aware of their need for redemption and to point to the New Covenant and the Messiah that would come and make the perfect sacrifice for “He takes away the first that He may establish the second” so that “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” we would be sanctified. (Hebrews 10:9–10)*
- *A startling fact about the sacrifices under the Mosaic Law is that “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”*
- *If the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins then what was the purpose or benefit to the worshippers to make those sacrifices for their sins?*

Leviticus 4:20 (NKJV)

²⁰And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

- *The blood of bulls and goats was not able to take away or wash away sins but it was able to atone for or cover the sins so that the worshippers were no longer under judgment and wrath.*
- *The Hebrew word for “atonement” means simply to cover over.*

- *The Old Testament sacrifices never washed away sins but simply covered over them.*
- *The sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the blood of His sacrifice does not cover over or atone for our sins but actually washes away our sins so that they are totally removed and taken away and thus there is no more consciousness of sin.*
- *The difference between the atonement which the blood of bulls and goats provided and the removal or taking away of our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, can be seen in the illustration between sweeping dirt under the carpet or vacuuming the room and removing the dirt from the room.*
- *In the first case the dirt is still in the room but it is simply not visible while in the second case it is totally removed without a trace.*
- *Hebrews 9:9 and 9:14 provide a stark contrast between the blood of bulls and goats and the blood of Jesus that was shed for us at Calvary.*
- *The blood of bulls and goats were “symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience” and thus the worshippers were still conscious of their past sins and failures. (Hebrews 9:9)*
- *However, “the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God” so that we can serve God joyfully and freely and without any shame or regret because of our past sins and failures. (Hebrews 9:14)*
- *What I mean by freedom from regret is freedom so that we are no longer chained to our past sins and failures but are free to walk with the Lord in righteousness and truth.*
- *Freedom from regrets does not mean we are indifferent to the wrongs we have committed in the past but what it does mean is that we are no longer under the shadow of condemnation and they no longer control us nor dominate our thinking or our choices.*
- *Whatever we focus on will ultimately determine the direction we will go in.*
- *If we focus on our past failures we are bound to repeat those same mistakes.*

Hebrews 10:22 (NKJV)

²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- *The blood of Jesus has sprinkled our hearts from an evil conscience so that we can draw close to God without any shame or regrets knowing that our sins have not simply been covered over but totally removed.*
- *The difference, between the blood of bulls and goats and the blood of Jesus, helps us to understand why the word conscience is not found even once in the Old Testament while it is repeated numerous times in the New Testament.*
- *The Mosaic Covenant and the corresponding sacrifices provided no remedy to cleanse someone from a bad conscience while under the New Covenant and the blood of Jesus that was shed at Calvary, we can have a conscience that is free from guilt, shame and condemnation and therefore we can have a good and pure conscience.*
- *Therefore the Old Testament saints were still conscious of their sins, although they had been atoned for, and thus they simply had to ignore their conscience which would still try to remind them of their past sins and failures.*
- *The Old Testament saints looked forward with faith to the Messiah that would come and bring an end to their bad conscience so they could have a good conscience.*

1 Peter 1:10–11 (NKJV)

¹⁰Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,

¹¹searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

- *The Old Testament saints inquired and searched diligently and looked forward with great anticipation to the time when Jesus Christ would come and suffer for their sins.*
- *The prophets also longed to behold the glory that would follow the resurrection of Jesus Christ and then they would finally have a good conscience free from all their past regrets.*
- *Regrets are not simply continuing to feel shame or condemnation for past sins and failures but also living under the shadow of the continuing negative consequences of those past sins and failures.*
- *The Mosaic Law did not provide a remedy for the negative consequences of our sins and failures although it did provide atonement so that the worshipper would not be under the wrath and judgment of God.*

- *The first example in the Bible that makes a distinction between atonement, having our sins atoned for or covered, and being free from the regret and the negative consequences of sin is found in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve sinned.*

Genesis 3:21 (NKJV)

²¹Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

- *After Adam and Eve sinned, they were filled with shame and fear because they realized they had sinned and were naked and exposed to the wrath of God.*
- *After God confronted them, He, according to His mercy, covered their shame and nakedness with animal skins.*
- *God covering Adam and Eve's nakedness with animal skins could easily be understood to represent their sins being atoned for or covered.*
- *However, even though God covered their nakedness, they still had to deal with the ongoing negative consequences of their sins.*

Genesis 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

- *There were two initial negative consequences for Eve that she would have to live with for the rest of her life and which would caused her to live under the painful shadow of regret.*
- *"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children" – Many interpret this negative consequence referring to the actual pain of child birth but I believe that this sorrow and pain extends far beyond this.*
- *With great pain and sorrow Eve would bring forth children into this world knowing that because of her sinful choices every one of her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, in fact the whole human race, would be subject to pain, sickness, evil and ultimately death.*
- *The second negative consequence and regret that Eve would have to face is continual marital conflict, for what was meant to be a wonderful relationship between her and her husband would be wrought with conflict as she would try to dominate her husband (her desire would be for her husband) and as he would try to oppressor her (he would rule over her).*

- *Marriage was meant to be a relationship founded on love and mutual respect, Adam being the head to protect and lead her and she being by his side as his helpmate to serve God together.*
- *Likewise Adam would have to live with the regret that all the work that God had initially given him, which was meant to be a blessing and a source of joy, would instead be filled with toil and sweat and the constant battle with thorns and thistles – the adversities of life. (Genesis 3:17-19)*
- *David is an example of a man who had fallen into the grievous sin of adultery and then in a vain attempt to cover up his act of adultery, he, in cold blood, arranged for the murder of the woman's husband.*
- *It initially appeared that David had succeeded in covering up his sin of adultery by murdering the husband and marrying his wife, who was expecting a child due to the adulterous affair.*
- *However, about a year after this all took place and after the birth of the child, God sent Nathan the prophet to confront David.*

2 Samuel 12:1–14 (NKJV)

¹Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: “There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor.

²The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds.

³But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him.

⁴And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”

⁵So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!

⁶And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity.”

⁷Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.

⁸I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!

⁹Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.

¹⁰Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’

¹¹Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.

¹²For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.’ ”

¹³So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

¹⁴However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.”

- *In this passage of Scripture we see at least three principles; God’s judgment; God’s mercy and forgiveness; and the ongoing consequences of David’s sin.*
- *After a year, God sent Nathan the prophet to expose David’s sins of adultery and murder.*
- *Was God’s exposure of David’s sins an act of God’s judgment on David or an act of God’s mercy?*
- *God’s judgment on David is seen in that he allowed him to live a whole year with the weight of his sins, thinking he would have to go down to the grave with this terrible secret of what he had done.*

Psalm 32:1–3 (NKJV)

¹Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

²Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

³When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long.

- *“When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long” - David’s response to his sins being expose was one of both resignation and relief.*
- *When David acknowledged his sins he experienced the blessings of having his transgression forgiven and as Nathan proclaimed, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.*
- *David had first experience the judgment of God as he bore the weight of his sins for a full year, then David experienced God’s mercy as his sins were exposed and he was forgiven but now he had to face the consequences of his sins because his sins were not washed away but were simply atoned for – “Whose sin is covered”*
- *Even though David had confessed his sins and repented and God had forgiven him so that he would not die, David still had to live with a stained conscience for the rest of his life as well as with the negative consequences of his actions*

- ***“As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity.” - David had, unbeknownst to himself, pronounced judgment upon himself when he gave his verdict to Nathan regarding a man who was guilty of even a lesser crime than he himself.***
- ***God had forgiven David, so that he would not die, but he still would experience the consequences of his sins with his own words, “he shall restore fourfold.”***
- ***After David’s failure with Bathsheba, he was never the same; he was weighed down by regrets from his past failures which robbed him of some of the joy in his relationship with God and his generosity towards others.***
- ***In fact David’s last words to his son Solomon were not filled with instructions regarding God’s mercy, grace and truth.***
- ***Instead his words were vindictive and he instructed him to put to death David’s commander, Joab who had been disloyal to him, and to put to death Shimea who had cursed David when he was fleeing from his son Absalom. (1 Kings 2:5-9)***
- ***The shadow of the consequences of David’s sin hung over his life like a dark cloud.***
- ***Just as David had pronounced judgment that “he shall restore fourfold”, he not only had one son die as a consequence of his sins but actually four.***
- ***The first son that died was the one that was the result of his adulterous affair with Bathsheba and he died of natural causes and the only one of the four not to die a violent death.***
- ***The second son that was to die was Amnon. He raped his half sister Tamar.***
- ***When David heard about what Amnon did “he was very angry” but David never confronted Amnon, punished him nor even rebuked him in any way. (2 Samuel 13:21)***
- ***Because David neglected to deal with Amnon, Tamar’s brother Absalom took things into his own hands and murdered Amnon.***
- ***Thus Amnon’s death was a result of David not dealing with Amnon himself.***
- ***Why couldn’t David reprove Amnon and punish him accordingly?***
- ***Because David’s conscience was not free for he knew that he was guilty of worse by committing adultery.***

- *The consequence of David's sin of adultery was that he was not able to be the father he should have been to his son, either by example or by bringing correction.*
- *The third son that died was Absalom.*
- *He had murdered his half brother Amnon, but David neither confronted his son nor brought any measure of correction.*
- *Why couldn't David reprove Absalom or even confront him about what he did?*
- *Because David's conscience was not free for he knew that even though Absalom had killed his half brother for the wrong he had done to Tamar, David had killed a loyal and innocent man in order to try to conceal his own sin of adultery.*
- *The consequence of David not dealing with Amnon, nor dealing with Absalom, caused Absalom to totally disrespect his father with the result that he led an armed rebellion against his father resulting in his own death.*
- *David's response to the news that Absalom had been killed in battle while attempting to overthrow and kill his own father was, "O my son Absalom – my son, my son Absalom – if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!" (2 Samuel 18:33)*
- *David wept at his sons death because he knew he had failed to be the father that his son Absalom needed.*
- *The fourth son that died was Adonijah.*
- *God had chosen Solomon to be king but Adonijah had other plans for he decided, "I will be king." (1 Kings 1:5)*
- *When Adonijah's plot came to the attention of a very elderly and weak king David, he immediately set Solomon as king in his stead, thwarting Adonijah's plan, however, David failed to address Adonijah directly.*
- *By David not addressing Adonijah directly, resulted in him later on again plotting to become king, resulting in Solomon putting him to death.*
- *David had failed to be the father to Adonijah he should have been and to bring correction, for David himself knew he had rebelled against God's commandments and in self-will also took what did not belong to him - another man's wife*

- *However, the story does not end here for there is one more son of David, the most important Son of David.*

Matthew 1:1 (NKJV)

¹The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

- *Jesus Christ, the Son of David, unlike the other sons of David, through His own sacrificial death brought an end to the negative consequences of David's sins and not only for David's sins but for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)*
- *"Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife" – The consequence of David's sin was that the sword would never depart from the House of David.*
- *Christ's wonderful redemptive work at Calvary does not just eliminate the negative consequences of our sins but He actually redeems them for His glory and our benefit.*

Luke 22:36–38 (NKJV)

³⁶Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

³⁷For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end."

³⁸So they said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

- *Jesus makes a strange request of His disciples just before He is about to be betrayed, "he who has no sword ... buy one."*
- *The sword shall never depart from the House of David and so before the religious leaders arrived to arrest Jesus and kill Him, he requested that there be a sword in his possession.*

Luke 22:49–51 (NKJV)

⁴⁹When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?"

⁵⁰And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

⁵¹But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him.

- *Why would Jesus want His disciples to have a sword?*

- *Peter's idea of the sword was to inflict wounds and death but Jesus was going to redeem the sword over the House of David by beginning with an act of healing, "and He touched his ear and healed him."*
- *Jesus brought closure to the curse that was over the House of David and redeemed the sword to be no longer a weapon of destruction but to bring healing and life.*

Revelation 1:14–16 (NKJV)

¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

¹⁵His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

¹⁶He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

- *Out of the mouth of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, comes a sharp two-edged sword and what is this sword? It is the Word of God that brings life, healing and freedom. (Hebrews 4:12)*

Galatians 3:13 (NKJV)

¹³Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),

- *When Jesus died for our sins, He not only died to bring total forgiveness but also to wash away our sins and even more to redeem us from the curse of our sins and failures.*
- *The curse is the negative consequences resulting from our sins and failures so Christ became accursed for us so that we don't have to live in bondage to our past.*
- *In the New Testament we received a new promise never seen in the Old Testament which is beautifully summed up in Romans 8:28-29, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."*
- *Our sins are instantly forgiven by God when we confess them. However, the redemption of the negative consequences of our sins is a process and is conditional on our willingness to work through the process.*
- *In Romans 8:28-29 Paul describes the process.*

- 1) *“all things work together for good” — This does not say that every situation we encounter is good, but God weaves together even the tragedies and painful experiences in our lives to form a beautiful tapestry. We don’t have to fear the difficulties of life. We can trust God to produce something beautiful from our trials.*
 - 2) *“to those who love God” — One of the conditions for us to see God redeem us from the negative consequences of sin and the painful events of life is that we must love God. Selfishness will hinder the restoration process. We need to love God and put Him first in our lives. This will give us faith and courage to go through the process of restoration with joy and confidence, because He is good.*
 - 3) *“who are the called according to His purpose” — Stubbornness and self-will hinder God from working in our lives. Embracing His will for our lives frees us from the grief of trying to make our plans reality. We can rest and allow Him to guide us. There is one thing I have learned—I don’t know what is best for me, but God does. Those things I think would be best for me sometimes hinder God’s purposes, and those things I think are bad for me, God uses to bring forth His glory in my life.*
 - 4) *“to be conformed to the image of His Son” — So what is this ultimate good? This good is the most fantastic thing—to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ through the life of Christ in our reborn spirits by the power of the Holy Spirit. What in the universe can compare to such an unimaginably wonderful outcome?!*
- *If the restoration process is so wonderful why do so many Christians live defeated lives under the cloud of their past mistakes? Many Christians ask God for forgiveness, but stop there. They never experience restoration, because they never go through the process of allowing God to bring healing and wholeness into their life and into the lives of those they’ve hurt.*
 - *Some Christians go to great lengths to avoid facing their failures and the consequences of their wrong actions and choices. Their avoidance causes them to be constantly confronted by the negative consequences of their choices, and instead of their life improving, it worsens. We see this cycle of repeated failure in many Christians’ lives.*
 - *The correct plan of action is to confess our sins and honestly face the consequences of our failures. Ask forgiveness from those we have wronged, make restitution where appropriate, and apologize where an apology is necessary. Only then will God bring freedom and healing by redeeming those negative consequences, and many times open a door of ministry to glorify His name.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- *Freedom from regret means to have a confidence that God will redeem our failures and sins so that we might become the righteousness of God not only in our reborn spirit but also in every area of our lives.*

