

Good Conscience and A Sincere Faith.

Last month I was reflecting on my experience during the July multi-family camp. I was connecting it to 1 Timothy 1:5, “The goal of this command is love which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” I had written about a pure heart which seemed like enough for one newsletter. This newsletter will focus on a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Love that comes from a good conscience. Webster defines conscience as “the sense of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one's own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling of obligation to do right or be good “. Wow! If we do good out of a guilty conscience, I am convinced that there is a strong element of shame involved. Simply put, shame causes us to have to do enough good things to make up for all the bad things we do. Can we ever do enough good? I truly doubt that. Because of the work Jesus did on the cross, believers have access to God's grace. Romans 6:14 “ For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.” Love initiates. God loved us first. His love some from a good conscience. He cannot love any other way because he is God. Like our children, we don't know how to love ourselves or others. His desire is for us to love even the unlovable, just like he did. God did not do this out of guilt, but out of love. That is the model we are called to follow. How do we get to a place of good conscience? I know that I fall short of that daily. My faith tells me that is why I need a Savior. That is why Jesus died on the cross. Hebrews 9:14 says “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” God's gift is that we are able to purify our conscience through the blood of Jesus Christ. Wow! That makes the definition of conscience doable. Hebrews 5:14 “But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” God sent the Holy Spirit to speak to us about right and wrong.

Love that comes from a sincere faith. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith. ”Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Faith is not easy. Being sure of what we cannot see? How do we do that? I believe that the “solid food” referred to in Hebrews 5:14 comes from the Word of God. Standing on God's principles and having his word in our heart builds our faith. Romans 10:17 “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” A sincere faith walk is not about appearance. It is about a genuine walk. It is so easy to be hypocritical. We have all put on our “game face” and pretended that everything is okay. We do this in all areas of our lives. It gets us by for a while. Sometimes, it gets us by for a long period of time. It always catches up with us. Sooner or later we always reap what we sow. Again, I refer to King David. He had a great faith and sincerely sought the heart of God. He was also a man with many blemishes. What made his walk and faith sincere was that he did not hide anything. Like David, we have to go before God and confess our sins. Psalms 142:1, 6. ¹ I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. ⁶ Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; . . ”.

The goal is love. 1 John 4:7-8 “dear friend, let us love one another, for love comes to God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” The stress model is love based life style. It guides us in

developing safe emotional relationships with our children and others. The Bible is a love based approach to life. It is very easy in our daily routine to lose our focus. There are many, many distractions. And yes, you I will fall short of the mark. Remember that relationships and love are not events, they are processes. Loving our children and others can bring many challenges. Challenges cause us to want other people to change. We need to be courageous and look inside ourselves whenever we think someone else needs to change. Challenges create fear. Fear takes us out of a love state. Fear takes us out of a faith walk. During challenging times we must ask ourselves the following question. I much do I truly believe 1 Corinthians 13:8? "Love never fails." Remember that love is not a commodity. Love is always available. We need to reach out in faith and open ourselves to the endless supply of love from God. Psalm 136:2 "Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever."

I hope that you were encouraged as well is challenged by these two articles. I know as I edited them, I was challenged.

In Christ,

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