

## **Bible Summary-Acts 23:1**

### Clear Conscience

Paul states in court that he has a clear conscience. At first glance, this is surprising because he had overseen the murder of Stephen in Acts 7 and imprisoned men, women and children in Acts 9. What does this mean? The conscience does not establish the standard; it executes the standard. A clear conscience simply means you have done what you thought you should do, however, there is way that seems right to a man but the end is destruction (Proverbs 16:25). The question becomes, “how do we have a conscience with the right standard?” There are three main ways the conscience can operate for believers and each has a different theology of God. First, the overactive conscience that believes everything is sin. This conscience is driven by a theology that God is harsh. Second, the unplugged conscience that believes nothing is sin and God is a happy god. And third, the flourishing conscience that is guarded by the holiness of God.

Scriptures: Acts 23:1, 24:16; Proverbs 16:25; 1 Corinthians 4:3-4; Matthew 25:20-30

## **Bible Questions & Application**

(These are meant to aid in facilitating conversation.  
There is no obligation to run through **every** listed question.)

1. How did Sunday’s teaching challenge your thinking?
2. The conscience doesn’t set the standard; instead it executes the standard.
  - a. Does that definition of the conscience surprise you? If so, why?
  - b. What is the input for your moral compass? (historically and/or currently)
3. What we believe about God informs our conscience and the way we live.
  - a. In general, how do you tend to view God? Harsh, happy or holy?
  - b. How did you come to view God in this way?
4. Matt said, “people with an overactive conscience lack joy”. Would people describe you as a joyful person?
5. Why would Matt say that true love is a pairing of confrontation and care?
6. It’s not possible to have a true relationship with someone who only tells you what you want to hear.
  - a. Share about a time God confronted you.
  - b. Are you receptive to God’s confrontation?
  - c. In your friendships, are you receptive to being confronted?
7. How can we cultivate a flourishing conscience? (key ideas: holiness, joy, responsibility, God’s goodness and generosity)