

DEVELOPING TRANSPARENCY

Transparency

Definition -

An inner joy + peace of spirit which results from having made all personal wrongs right with those whom a person has offended.

1. When we apply God's solution

1. all men have consciences, sensitive to universal truths. Rom. 2: 14, 15"
2. Sensitive to God's nature. Rom. 1: 18-20
3. Disobedience produces guilt
4. Man seeks to hide guilt
5. A man can see his conscience. 1 Tim. 4: 2

dealing with guilt

1. List in order of importance, the things which I wished had not happened.

note:

any apology which reflects pride or blame toward the other person will result in additional "walls"

steps to correct"

1.

- A. Things I wish had never happened
- B. People who dislike me
- C. Times my life has failed to be the

example of a Christian to others.
D. Dishonest or disobedient

3. Go back to each one with an attitude of contrition

4. Avoid wrong approaches

5. Take total responsibility for the wrongs

THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

- There are two weapons essential for spiritual battle, our faith and a clear conscience! Paul warns that neglect of these will result in personal defeat.

☐ *"I . . . SENT YOU OUT TO BATTLE FOR THE RIGHT ARMED ONLY WITH YOUR FAITH AND A CLEAR CONSCIENCE. Some alas have laid these simple weapons contemptuously aside, and as far as their faith is concerned, have run their ships on the rocks."
I Timothy 1:18,19(Phillips)*

MY CHRISTIAN LIFE DIDN'T WORK!

I had been in the ministry for several years, really trying to help people and get them to commit their lives to Jesus Christ. In spite of the fact that there were some positive responses, my own life seemed to be decaying on the inside. My attitude was always critical toward others and quite condemning toward my wife. The more I spoke, the less convinced I was that Jesus Christ had the answers to my problems.

I DIDN'T WANT TO BE A PHONEY.

Disillusioned with the hypocrisy, I entertained ideas of quitting the ministry. "Sooner or later," I thought, "others are going to discover it isn't working for me, so why not be honest with myself and get out now?"

THERE WERE ANSWERS MISSING IN SOME VITAL AREAS.

In personal conferences with teens I became acutely aware of my inability to help them in certain areas, especially the areas of morals, stealing, and resentments toward certain types of people. I prayed earnestly to the Lord for help and wisdom, but never felt I was getting the answers.

I REACTED VIOLENTLY INSIDE WHEN I HEARD THE WORD
CONSCIENCE!

I attended the first seminar Bill Gothard conducted at Wheaton College. Bill and I had shared many insights together in the previous years and I had brought several friends to the seminar. I thought I knew everything he was going to talk about, so I was looking forward to two easy hours of Graduate credit. Then Bill began speaking on the importance of a clear conscience! My previous schooling had given me the subconscious idea that the conscience was a dangerous subject, not to be tampered with!

HE'S WRONG!

Inwardly I reacted, "If he thinks he's going to get on the inside of me and dig up my past, he's crazy!" It seemed like there were hundreds of people I had wronged. I would have to spend my lifetime apologizing. Then he began to share illustrations of the freedom gained each time he had made a wrong right. By the end of the lecture I was excited! I could visualize the freedom I would have if I would go back and ask forgiveness of those I had wronged!

WHAT I THOUGHT WAS PERMANENT DEFEAT WAS TURNED INTO
SPONTANEOUS JOY!

As I drove away from the seminar, I decided I should make a list of those whom I had wronged, starting with the most important things that bothered me. It was not hard to begin because a couple of situations were constantly on my mind. When I finished, there were only eight things. "That can't be right," I thought. There must be more!" I carefully thought back but couldn't add to the list. I realized that these few areas of guilt had been crisscrossing my mind in so many ways that I thought there were hundreds. were hundreds.

EACH OFFENSE MADE RIGHT RESULTED IN A NEW INWARD FREEDOM!

I went back to those I had offended. Soon new avenues of ministry were opening to me. I could help the fellow with his stealing; there were new insights to share in clearing up the thought life and a new beginning in my marriage!

• *"And ye shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you
free. If the Son therefore
shall make you free, ye shall
be free indeed."*

John 8: 32,36

SCRIPTURES RELATED TO

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE:

- OUR MINISTRY CAN BE STRAIGHT FORWARD.

● "HAVING RENOUNCED THE HIDDEN THINGS OF DISHONESTY, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully" "This is the ministry God has given us and nothing can daunt us. We use no hocus-pocus, no clever tricks, no dishonest manipulation of the Word of God. We speak the plain truth and so commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."
II Cor. 4:1,2 (K.J. & Phillips)

- IT IS A KEY TO CONFIDENCE IN APPROACHING GOD WITH OUR PETITIONS.

● "So by virtue of the blood of Jesus you may now have confidence to enter into the Holy of Holies by a fresh and living way!...Let us draw near with TRUE HEARTS AND FULLEST CONFIDENCE KNOWING THAT OUR CONSCIENCE HAS BEEN PURIFIED by the sprinkling of His Blood." Heb. 10:19,22 (Phillips)

- THE CONSCIENCE CAN BE CLEANSED FROM DEAD WORKS.

● "How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, PURGE YOUR CONSCIENCE FROM DEAD WORKS to serve the living God?"
Hebrews 9:14

- IT IS REQUISITE FOR SERVICE FOR GOD.

● "I thank God, the God of my forefathers whom I SERVE WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE,"
II Tim. 1:3 (Phillips)

- IT IS A MEANS TO PRODUCING GENUINE LOVE.

● "The ultimate aim of the Christian ministry, after all, is to produce the LOVE which springs from A PURE HEART, A GOOD CONSCIENCE, and a GENUINE FAITH. Some seem to have forgotten this and have lost themselves in endless words." I Tim. 1:5,6a (Phillips)

- IT IS A PREREQUISITE FOR EFFECTIVELY SHARING OUR FAITH WITH OTHERS.

● "Be ready at any time to give a quiet and reverent answer to any man who wants a reason for the hope that you have within you. MAKE SURE YOUR CONSCIENCE IS PERFECTLY CLEAR, so that if men should speak slanderously of you as rogues they may come to feel ashamed of themselves for libeling your good Christian behavior." I Peter 3:15,16 (Phillips)

WHAT IS THE CONSCIENCE?

The conscience is the faculty within the spirit of a man which is sensitive to innate truth. This is clearly emphasized in Scripture. The basic qualities of God's nature are innate truth. Below are related Scriptures:

- ALL MEN HAVE CONSCIENCES SENSITIVE TO UNIVERSAL TRUTHS.

● "When the Gentiles who have no knowledge of the law (basic principles of God) act in accordance with it by the LIGHT OF NATURE, they show that they have a law IN THEMSELVES, for they demonstrate the effect of a law operating in their own hearts. THEIR OWN CONSCIENCES endorse the existence of such a law, for there is something which condemns or excuses their actions."
Romans 2:14,15 (Phillips)

- SENSITIVITY TO GOD'S NATURE IS UNIVERSAL.

● "For the wrath of God is REVEALED from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who HOLD THE TRUTH in unrighteousness; because that WHICH MAY BE KNOWN OF GOD IS MANIFEST IN THEM: for God hath showed it unto them. . . . even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" Rom. 1:18-20

● JESUS CHRIST IS THE LIGHT IN A PERSON.

● "That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9

● FAITH IS THE PRINCIPLE UPON WHICH THE SPIRIT OF A MAN OPERATES. The psycholological sphere operates on the principle of logic and the physical upon the principle of the senses.

● DISOBEDIENCE PRODUCES GUILT.

A spiritual problem can only be solved as an individual assumes his personal responsibility to God. The One who made us has set forth specific principles that were never intended to be violated. When these principles are violated, guilt results in the person's conscience. Even if he has rationalized or justified his actions in his mind, guilt will be produced in his conscience.

● A MAN CAN SEAR HIS CONSCIENCE.

A person who persists in his disobedience and refuses to heed his conscience will instinctively seek to "deadens" his conscience, to silence it, so he will not be continually distressed and annoyed by it. He resents its warnings before a deed is committed and its annoying restlessness afterwards. Scripture calls this "searing" the conscience.

● "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." I Tim. 4:2

● A PERSON MAY "SEAR" HIS CONSCIENCE IN VARIOUS WAYS:

1. ESCAPE - attempting to overthrow God's standards and hide from reality through drinking, sex perversion, drugs and sleep, etc.
2. COMPENSATION - seeking to balance his guilt with an overconcern for social or religious activity.
3. PREOCCUPATION - concentrating on his work to such an extent that he really feels successful, especially if his work is interesting and fascinating. He gives his mind no rest. He's afraid to allow his mind to be idle lest his guilt cause further conviction and unrest.
4. SELF DECEPTION - retionalizing and justifying his behavior. A person cannot live with guilt. Once the guilt has been "justified" he will condemn and blame others for his failures. He will convince himself that his way of reasoning is "right." He will give much attention to minor details and neglect the weightier matters of honesty, righteousness and judgment.

● A PERSON MUST DEAL WITH GUILT.

A person cannot ignore guilt. Either he will come to God, acknowledge his wrong and gain forgiveness; or he will seek to hide or rationalize his behavior.

When a man purposes to follow God's ways in dealing with guilt, rationalizations and fears that it won't turn out right will be hurled at him by Satan to keep him from victory and a meaningful relationship with God. II Tim. 2:21-26; II Cor 2:10-11

A STEP OF FAITH

(^u In spite of the rationalizations, it is important to realize that WHEN WE APPLY GOD'S SOLUTIONS WE WILL ALWAYS GET GOD'S RESPONSE!)

● WHEN A PERSON HAS SINNED AGAINST GOD, HE CONFESSES HIS SIN TO GOD.

● "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
I John 1:9

● WHEN A PERSON OFFENDS ANOTHER PERSON HE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THE WRONG TO THE PERSON HE OFFENDED AND ASK HIS FORGIVENESS.

● "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; (Why? because you have wronged him.) Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."
Matt. 5:23,24

The Apostle Paul emphasized this when he said,

● "And herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offense, toward GOD AND TOWARD MEN." Acts 24:16

DEFINITION:

A clear conscience is the inner joy and peace of spirit which results from having made all personal wrongs right with those whom a person has offended.

STEPS TO

GAINING A CLEAR CONSCIENCE:

1. PURPOSE TO CLEAR UP ALL OFFENSES AT ANY COST.

Satan will do everything in his power to hinder you from gaining a clear conscience. You must recognize any rationalizations as an attempt of Satan to keep you from gaining a clear conscience.

2. LIST OFFENSES IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE.

The following questions will help in recalling the memory:

LIST:

☐ ARE THERE SOME THINGS WHICH HAVE HAPPENED IN MY PAST WHICH, EVERY TIME I RECALL, I WISH HAD NEVER HAPPENED?

☐ ARE THERE PEOPLE I KNOW WHO DISLIKE ME? IS IT BECAUSE OF SOME OFFENSE I HAVE COMMITTED AGAINST THEM?

☐ ARE THERE THOSE TOWARD WHOM MY LIFE HAS FAILED TO BE THE EXAMPLE OF A CHRISTIAN? (ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF MORALS)

☐ ARE THERE THOSE TO WHOSE AUTHORITY I HAVE FAILED TO RESPOND?

3. PURPOSE TO GO BACK TO EACH ONE WITH AN ATTITUDE OF CONTRITENESS.

It is essential, when you ask for forgiveness, that you reflect an attitude which assumes full responsibility for your wrongs! You may be 10% wrong and the other person 90% wrong; in gaining a clear conscience you are only concerned with your 10% of the wrong.

James expresses the attitude of brokenness one needs to sense and express in order to assume full responsibility for his own offenses toward another.

● "Be humble then before God. But resist the devil and you'll find he'll run away from you. Come close to God and he will come close to you. Realize that you have sinned and get your hands clean again. Realize that you have been disloyal and get your hearts made true once more. As you come close to God you should be deeply sorry, you should be grieved, you should even be in tears. Your laughter will have to become mourning, your high spirits will have to become heartfelt dejection. You will have to feel very small in the sight of God before he will set you on your feet once more."

James 4:7-10 (Phillips)

(This same attitude of humility toward the one you offended will assure him of your sincerity.)

- ANY FORMS OF APOLOGY WHICH REFLECT PRIDE OR BLAME TOWARD THE OTHER PERSON WILL RESULT IN ADDITIONAL "WALLS" BETWEEN ONE ANOTHER.

Such wrong approaches as "I was wrong but you were too," "I'm sorry," or "If I've been wrong, please forgive me" will reflect pride or blame and not be accepted by the one to whom they are spoken.

RIGHT APPROACH:

The two hardest sentences in the English language are:

I WAS WRONG IN _____ (Name the basic offense).
WILL YOU PLEASE FORGIVE ME?

● THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES AND CAUTIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BEFORE ASKING FORGIVENESS:

1. SELECT A PROPER TIME AND PLACE.

Privacy should be available; the time, convenient for the other person.

2. EVALUATE:

(a) Do I first need to forgive the other person of any offenses toward me so my attitude toward him will be one of love, regardless of how he responds to me?

NOTE: Oftentimes a person thinks he should go back to an individual toward whom he has felt resentment or bitterness. THIS IS WRONG! Resentments and bitterness are overcome by sincerely forgiving the person for his offense (See "Insights into Forgiveness" in Responding to Irritations and Offenses.), not by going back. A person only asks forgiveness for actual (external) offenses he has committed against the other person.

(b) In order to realize and visualize how my wrongs offended the other person, have I relived my offenses toward him as though they were committed toward me?

(c) Have I identified the basic offense rather than the details of the offense?

NOTE: Scripture warns not to speak about personal or intimate details of sins.

• "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." Eph. 5:12

(d) Do I have an ulterior motive such as trying to get him to change or getting rid of some of the blame against myself?

3. CONFESSION SHOULD BE EXPRESSED ONLY TO THOSE YOU HAVE OFFENDED.

For example, if a person has gossiped about another person and the person about whom he gossiped does not know about the gossip, he should not go to that person. He should go to the ones with whom he was gossiping. On the other hand, if the person being gossiped about should learn of the gossip, then confession should be made to him as well.

4. THE OTHER PERSON MAY NOT FORGIVE YOU.

When this happens, it is important to remember that you have dealt with your guilt but the other has not dealt with his. It will be essential to respond in love regardless of the other person's response. (See Responding to Irritations and Offenses; also Chain of Command in Marriage.)

5. IF IT IS A SITUATION OF IMMORALITY, avoid a personal confrontation or writing letters whenever possible. A brief and to the point phone call will be more effective. It reduces the temptation of rekindling old emotions and also protects you. A letter could get into the hands of someone who might not understand or who might misuse it.

6. WHEN THERE ARE SPECIAL SITUATIONS AND YOU DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND HOW TO GO BACK AND MAKE THE OFFENSE RIGHT, DON'T TRY TO DO IT UNTIL YOU HAVE HAD ADEQUATE COUNSEL AND ADVICE.

But beware of those who refute or belittle the necessity of gaining a clear conscience!