



A Clear Conscience

A clear conscience is listed in Scripture
as one of our most essential weapons for
successful spiritual achievement.
(I Timothy 1:18, 19)





DISCERNING WISDOM THROUGH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

NATURAL INCLINATIONS THAT LEAD TO GUILT	PRINCIPLES OF WISDOM THAT LEAD TO FREEDOM OF GUILT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concluding that I was only partially wrong and that the one I offended was mostly at <u>fault</u>	WISDOM IS realizing that what I consider a <u>small</u> offense is a "huge beam" in the eyes of the one I offended
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Unwilling</u> to forsake the actions in my life that I know are wrong	WISDOM IS recognizing that only by confessing my sins will I receive the <u>power</u> to forsake them
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assuming that since I wronged people <u>before</u> I became a Christian I don't need to gain their forgiveness because God has forgiven me of all my sins	WISDOM IS knowing that when God cleanses me of my sin my fellowship with Him is established, but to restore fellowship with those I have offended I must also <u>ask</u> them for forgiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling that I am being too <u>sensitive</u> especially since other people do things a whole lot worse	WISDOM IS assuming that the ones I have offended are even more sensitive than I am and will <u>amplify</u> my offenses the longer I let them go
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explaining why I made the mistakes I did so that they will understand that my <u>intentions</u> were really good	WISDOM IS acknowledging that my heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked and that to acknowledge this is to agree with God and remove the tension of <u>rationalization</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requesting forgiveness with the <u>words</u> "I'm sorry I hurt you" or "I apologize"	WISDOM IS demonstrating genuine repentance and humility by acknowledging "I was <u>wrong</u> , will you forgive me?"

* One of the most important prerequisites for personal happiness is a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man. The fear of knowing that someone can point an accusing finger at us is a preoccupation that forces us to see things from our point of view rather than God's in order to justify our actions and minimize our guilt.



SCRIPTURES RELATED TO A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

1. A clear conscience should be at a constant goal in the life of a Christian.
Acts 24:16; II Cor. 1:12
2. A clear conscience is a mark of an obedience growing believer.
Heb. 5:13-14
3. After faith, a clear conscience is essential in being able to be victorious in spiritual warfare.
I Tim. 1:18-19
4. Having a clear conscience is imperative in being an effective witness.
I Peter 3:16
5. Health and physical appearance are affected by the lack of a clear conscience.
Ps. 32:1-4
6. God desires that the sins from the past be purged through a clear conscience.
Heb. 9:14



2. LIST THEIR OFFENSES TOWARD YOU

Most people never clear their conscience because the other person is partly or mostly to blame. It is essential to list all the offenses of those who have wronged you.

NAME or INITIAL	OFFENSES



3. LIST YOUR OFFENSES TOWARD THEM

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have you stolen from them? | <input type="checkbox"/> Have you exhibited pride? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have you displayed anger? | <input type="checkbox"/> Have you resisted their authority? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have you been ungrateful? | <input type="checkbox"/> Have you slandered or gossiped? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have you been untruthful? | <input type="checkbox"/> Have you been lazy or slothful? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have you been unfair? | <input type="checkbox"/> Have you lowered their standard? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have you withheld genuine love? | <input type="checkbox"/> Could they condemn your moral standards? |

Those Whom I Have Offended	My Basic Offense Toward Them	The Clearest Working to Ask For Forgiveness	Best Means	
			Phone	Visit
Father	Rejecting authority and being ungrateful	"I have come to realize that I was wrong in rejecting your authority and being ungrateful for all you have done. I am calling to ask, will you forgive me?"	x	



C. AFTER ASKING FORGIVENESS

- ☐ Am I prepared to respond in the right way even though they don't forgive me?
- ☐ How can I sincerely thank them if they do forgive me?
- ☐ Am I prepared for no change in them?
- ☐ Could I ask them to reveal further blind spots in my life?

3. CAREFULLY CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORDING

* When the prodigal son purposed to return home and ask for his father's forgiveness, he carefully worked out what he was going to say, and when he met his father, he repeated what he had planned to say, word for word. (Luke 15:17-19 and 21)

We must think through the words we are going to use in asking for forgiveness, and we must be sure they reflect the following insights and attitudes:

A. YOUR WORDS MUST IDENTIFY THE BASIC OFFENSE

Many people ask for forgiveness and never receive it because they do not see how they have deeply hurt the one from whom they are asking forgiveness. To help you identify the basic offense, put yourself in the other person's place and relive the offense—through his eyes and feelings. Think of all the harm and hurt and disappointment your offense has caused him. Let your offenses break your heart. Neither God nor men despise a broken heart. (Psalm 51:17. See also James 4:8, 10)

The basic offense usually involves an underlying attitude such as ungratefulness, disrespect, dishonesty, self-centeredness, pride, laziness, etc. Specific actions will result from these basic attitudes.

For example, a son may be habitually lazy and ungrateful. One day his mother or father may "erupt" over a certain chore which he neglected to finish. It will do little good for him to only ask forgiveness for not finishing the chore. In fact, if he does ask for their forgiveness regarding only this, they probably won't be inclined to forgive him since his wrong attitudes of laziness and ingratitude must first be confessed and corrected.



B. YOUR WORDS MUST REFLECT FULL REPENTANCE AND SINCERE HUMILITY

Just as soon as you propose to acknowledge where you have been wrong and ask forgiveness, you can be sure that pride will attempt to come to your "rescue." Pride tries to assure you that you weren't really so bad and that they were wrong too.