

DOES YOUR HEART CONDEMN YOU?

(Scripture: 1 John 3:19-21)

Introduction:

GPS technology is an amazing technology! We could just mindlessly drive, and it tells us where to go and how to reach our destination from point A to point B effortlessly! We could even program it to go only on highways, or toll free roads, or road with less traffic, or the fastest route.

It makes us wonder how it operates so accurately. It actually derives its location matrix from 3 or more satellites. Similarly, today, God will show us how our moral GPS compass works through the following verses!

1 John 3:19-21

And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

Here John introduces one of the satellites of our moral compass system, the heart! Proverbs says who can understand the heart? When our heart is at peace, and it focuses on walking in the truth always, we can stand before Him guiltless, and our fellowship will always be in the light. On the other hand, if our heart starts getting restless, and the peace disappears, we may have to examine our ways sincerely. We may be doing something wrong! Our heart is the moral compass. It must be sensitized, so it can provide the warning signals and the bleeps when we go off the lanes of God's Word.

We are aligned with truth always if our heart functions properly and points to truth. Let us read the next few verses also to get the full thrust of this message.

1 John 3:20, 21

20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

The first sentence is a little ambiguous. What does John mean "if our heart condemns us, our God is greater than our heart?"

Does it mean –

- if our heart is troubled over sin, how much more God's heart will be troubled? Or,
- if our heart condemns us because of our sins, our God is greater than our heart to stabilize it because He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and He is able to cleanse us through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord? Or,

- if He watches everything, and you cannot hide your sin in your heart like David did, and you must confess, and come before Him as David did after he was proven guilty? Or,
- if our heart condemns, we should not be trying to suppress that feeling and ignore it, or try to marginalize, and push it away, and deviate our attention. Our God who created such sensitive heart is greater, and He can show us the real problems and help us fix those areas!

It could mean any one of above interpretations!

A clean heart is wrought by God knowing all things. Note the words, “**if our heart condemn us.**” Everyone’s heart condemns him sometime or the other. We all know what it is to sense wrong and condemnation. God has made our hearts sensitive so they will sense wrong doing. So we may correct our behavior and not destroy ourselves. God is greater than our hearts and he knows all things. This means two things.

1. First God knows everything about us. He knows when we are good and when we are bad. He knows everything that we do and more. God even knows our thoughts. He knows when we have done wrong. He knows every little thing we feel or think. He even knows what we would have done under different circumstances. There is nothing, absolutely nothing that is hid from God. No cover of darkness, no closed doors, no secret is unknown to God. He knows every ounce of heaviness, and guilt, and condemnation we feel.
2. God knows how to assure our hearts and how to give us confidence toward Him. God knows how to deliver us from the sense of guilt and condemnation. He knows how to remove such condemnation from our hearts. How does He remove it? By loving us dearly! By loving us so much to give His only begotten Son as our atonement. Therefore there is no condemnation or guilt for those who love Lord Jesus! Jesus Christ removes the guilt and condemnation; He actually forgives, and cleanses us from all sins.

Satan cannot condemn us anymore! It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also make the intercession for us!
(Romans 8:34)

If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God!

- Can you tell if your heart condemns you or not?
- Can you feel or hear your heart concerning your moral actions?

But we have to be careful. **A born again believer’s heart is not the same as an unbeliever’s heart!**

A psychopathic serial killer may not feel his heart's condemnation. His heart may have been warped with morbid sins, and he may not hear the heart at all! On the other hand, for a believer a first time robbery, a first time assault, a first time sexual encounter, a first time lie, can make our heart pound like a bird's heart, when the bird is held in our hand.

So the first question we may have to ask ourselves - is our heart really sensitized, is it really aligned according to the Word of God or is it just socially, or culturally conditioned? Fornication before marriage is no big deal in western society. Petting and casual affairs may not bother their hearts very much. In Muslim countries, a man may marry a 9 year old girl. But in a civilized society, it is called a child molestation. Sometimes **our heart is conditioned by our societal conditions, and expectations.** A cannibal could eat a missionary without any guilt at all! Our values and attitudes may be conditioned upon our tradition and culture.

Does your heart condemn you when you do something wrong? If not, is it a faulty human computer? Is it really sensitized? Or over sensitized? We all had faulty heart because we were all sinners, and we did not obey our conscience. Our hearts were darkened and seared by sin. How can we sensitize such a faulty heart?

First of all, the heart needs to be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Second, it must be baptized in the Spirit of God and secured and shrouded in the Spirit of God. The old spiritual heart is to be crucified, and a new heart is to be born inside of us! In order to sensitize it further, we must feed this heart with the milk and meat of the Word. We must focus on the life and death of Jesus Christ and follow His footsteps. We sensitize our hearts by obeying all the laws, including the civil laws. Last but not least, we must always abide in the Spirit.

We can sensitize it also by following the historical path of righteous living by faith which Abraham showed us! We are also surrounded by the clouds of witnesses, past, present, and future, and we could just follow their footsteps!

Jeremiah 6:16.

Stand by the roads, and look, ask for the ancient path, where the good road is, and walk in it, and find rest for your souls!

The church also plays a key role in pointing to the righteous path week after week. As sheep, we stand together with each other and try to keep our hearts in check! So we have absolutely no excuse at all!

So there are so many check points to make sure that our heart is aligned correctly according to the will of God! We must connect with the satellite of heart, satellite of the Word of God, satellite of the Holy Spirit, and the satellite of the historical tradition and culture. If our heart is aligned correctly, and if our heart does not condemn us, we will walk in the light always! Let us make sure that our heart is sensitized through all these variables.

Catholic Church wrestled with this theology of conscience. But they had to tip toe carefully to define every part of that theology. It was indeed a slippery slope for them!

John MacArthur describes conscience as “a built-in warning system that signals us when something we have done is wrong. The ‘conscience’ is to our souls what ‘pain’ sensors are to our bodies: it inflicts distress, in the form of guilt, whenever we violate what our hearts tell us is right.”

We cannot trust our heart’s conscience all the time.

Conscience is a trustworthy guide only when it is controlled and ruled by the Spirit of God.

The apostle Paul spoke of those who were “seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron” (2 Timothy 4:2), and those who “because of the hardness of their heart (have) become callous.” (Ephesians 4:18-19) Both metaphors—the seared conscience and the hardened, calloused heart—describe the same condition, heart that is dead to righteousness. It is hard to quicken such dead heart. That is why the quickening of a dead heart is the greatest miracle of all. It is greater than the actual resurrection of our dead bodies!

Church is a good place for calibration. With saints let us find the width, the length, the depth, and the height of the love of God and fill our heart with such love and make our heart holy.

Conclusion:

We are in need of a new heart. We receive it when we are born of the Spirit.

Our heart needs to be aligned constantly through the Word, the Spirit, and the fellowship of the church. (Keep monitoring the alignment just like you monitor your car tires for alignment).

Heed to your heart when it condemns.

Examine carefully the root cause of that disturbance. Take appropriate action.

Do not ignore when God tries to enter your heart, and repair your problems.

If you hear God’s voice today, do not harden your heart. Let Him in so that he can mend your hearts.

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