

# Seared Conscience

by Ernest O'Neill

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*Our conscience, as a personal homing device, continues to register God's intentions for us, even when it's been seared through repeated ignoring.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:27, John 16:7, Ephesians 2:3, Colossians 2:16, 1 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 9:14

**Topics:** "Conscience", "Spiritual Corruption"

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## Description

Ernest O'Neill discusses the gyro-compass within each of us, representing our original purpose and connection to our creator. Despite our corruption and distance from God, our conscience serves as a homing device guiding us back to Him. Conscience, a reflection of God's nature, has been maintained by Him to lead us back if we choose. However, many have prioritized worldly desires over conscience, leading to a dilution of moral standards and a searing of conscience through repeated ignorance.

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## Transcript

We're talking about a gyro-compass that each of us has within us. However corrupt you may have become through the years, this compass continues to register the direction for which you were originally created. It is your maker's stamp of origin -- a personal homing device that constantly exerts an inner pull upon you throughout your life. Conscience is partly an inner consciousness or knowledge of your creator and his intentions for you. It mirrors his nature and the beings that he treasures.

### Why Do Consciences Differ?

However, as we human beings have lived independent of God's wishes through the centuries, that mysterious part of our personalities -- our spirits -- has atrophied. Though your spirit still gives you a sense that there must be a god, that you are unique, and that you are not made to go out like a light, it has sunk into a kind of coma or death-like sleep. The conscience-part of our spirits is the part that is more alive than the rest: God has graciously maintained this consciousness of his wishes so that we may find our way back to Him if we choose.

Nevertheless, most of us have relegated conscience to a secondary position and have lived "following the desires of body and mind" (Ephesians 2:3). Even though our conscience continues to urge us to live up to the best that we know, we have diluted that "best" with the corrupted moral standards of our minds. Although the nature of our creator is unselfish and our conscience urges us towards unselfishness to all, our corrupted minds dilute such a universal beneficence to unselfishness to our family or our tribe or our

nation. This slavery to mental standards rather than conscience reaches an extreme form when cannibals appear to experience no guilt when they eat people. The same kind of deterioration is evident in organised crime where killing is excused as "just business".

### The Searing of Conscience

It's important, however, to see that conscience is part of the indestructible image of God within us. Along with the commission and urge to "subdue the world" and exercise authority over chaos, conscience continues to bleep its signals to our consciousness even if they seem like the weakening rays from a dying star. By repeatedly ignoring conscience, we can "sear" it (1 Timothy 4:2) so that its sensitivity grows less and less, but conscience itself persists in existence through the creator's activity. However seared it becomes, it can still be found deep within you as long as you live on the earth.

### Conscience versus Good Works

If you want to find your way back to God -- if you want to find out why you personally are here -- then the first step is to attend to the signals your conscience is sending. These will differ from the signals you receive through your mind

and memory. Mental signals are full of men's methods and standards (Colossians 2:16-23) whereas your conscience attests to your maker's personal plans for you. Usually you have to distinguish the guidance of your conscience from its seared corruptions and your mind's "moral" and "self-improvement" ideas. This requires faith that God can enable you to discern the directives of your conscience (Hebrews 9:14). But it also requires your faith in his method of sensitising your seared conscience!

### Re-Sensitising Conscience

As your conscience belongs to that mysterious part of your personality called your "spirit", it's obvious that its correction can be made only by your maker's own spirit. This is what Jesus of Nazareth promised his disciples in John 16:7,8 - "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement."

If you make an honest attempt to listen to your conscience rather than people, God's own Spirit will begin to work with you to distinguish and strengthen your conscience's registration of God's wishes. As you do this, two further great factors will be brought into play to move you into dynamic, fresh life again. We'll deal with these in the next article.

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