

Wednesday in the Word
Digging Deeper
January 26, 2022
Motivation to Action

1 John 3:18-24 KJVS

[18] My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. [19] And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. [20] For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. [21] Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. [22] And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. [23] And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. [24] And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Heart or conscience? What's the difference? You all know the expression "darned if you do, darned if you don't" A careful read of tonight's passage, especially verses 20 and 21, might actually give us the new and improved version of this negative statement. "Blessed if you do, blessed if you don't" Here's the analysis; in verse 20 we look to the Greek. 'Heart' = kardia = the thoughts or feelings through the mind. 'Condemn us' = kataginōskō = to note against, to find fault with, to blame or condemn. It seems our own thoughts and feelings can beat us down and cause us to find fault with our Christian walk, specifically in the context of showing love through action. We tend to doubt whether we are heartily representing Christ in our relationships. God is greater than our heart and the Holy Spirit quickly turns us to Christ, reminding us that we are forgiven and renewed. Romans 8:1. If we are condemning ourselves we are agreeing with God that we are sinners deserving hell but if we are in His Spirit we also agree with Him that we are saved. Verse 21 flips the script. If we as Spirit filled believers do not condemn ourselves it is because of the witness within. We can stand boldly before God resting in Jesus finished work. Hebrews 4:16. Such incredible mercy comes from no one else. We are still sinners but now our motives are considered more than our actions. We must love in action (verse 18) but now true love motivates us to action. In speaking on the ordination of elders and contrasting believers with deceivers, Titus makes an interesting observation.

Titus 1:15 KJVS

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

This word 'conscience' in the Greek is *suneidēsis* = co-perception that is moral consciousness: - conscience. The soul, as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending one, condemning the other. The pure here speaks of born again believers who walk in the Spirit. It addresses our point of view. All things are pure because we have learned to see through the eyes of Christ. We understand and discern good and evil. Unbelievers have a defiled conscience and can only see through the eyes of sinful flesh. We can sincerely please God with our motives. Verse 22. We can now love purely in Christ. Verse 23. The unsaved do not have this wonderful new option. The thoughts and feelings of the heart are now weighed against the moral balance of the conscience. This is why, when we seek to live right lives in the eyes of God, we are opposed by the world. The choices we make and the positions we take are guided by the Holy Spirit (verse 24) Who has cleansed our mind and heart and these stand in opposition to the ways of the world. Our love is manifested in action. Verse 18. Their brand of humanistic "love" is made known in combating God, His Son, His people and His will. All this drives the division we see so prominently displayed in our culture today. Verses 4-17. Hearts change. Actions change. The unsaved can perform good deeds and even for the right reasons. Pray that they are drifting toward God as He draws them. John 6:44. If on the other hand, those good works stroke their pride then their best intentions become soured. 1 Timothy 4:1-3. Don't be looking around to see who might be falling away. Rather, look within and check your motives. My little children, endeavor to live pure lives, motivated by the smile on your Savior's Face and where conscience condemns you, make the corrections He guides you to.