

## 1 PETER 3

<sup>8</sup> Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous; <sup>9</sup> not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. <sup>10</sup> For, PSALM 34:12-19

“He who would love life and see good days,  
let him refrain his tongue from evil,  
and his lips from speaking deceit.

<sup>11</sup> Let him turn away from evil and do good;  
let him seek peace and pursue it. (*third option*)

<sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord *are* on the righteous,  
and His ears *are open* to their prayers;  
but the face of the Lord *is* against those who do evil.”

<sup>13</sup> And who *is* he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, *you are* blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.”

<sup>15</sup> But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,  
and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone  
who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you,  
with meekness and fear; <sup>16</sup> **having a good  
conscience, that when they defame you as  
evildoers, those who revile your good  
conduct in Christ may be ashamed.** <sup>17</sup> For  
*it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing  
good than for doing evil.

<sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just  
for the unjust, that He might bring us to God,  
being put to death in the flesh but made alive by  
the Spirit,...

## THE PRIORITY OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE

**conscience:** Internal or self-knowledge, or judgment  
of right and wrong; or the faculty, power or principle within us,  
which decides on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our own  
actions and affections, and instantly approves or condemns  
them.

### OUR CONSCIENCE CAN BE - WEAK

**1 CORINTHIANS 8:12** ...when you thus sin against the  
brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against  
Christ.

### DEFILED

**TITUS 1:15-16** To the pure all things are pure, but to those  
who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even  
their mind and conscience are defiled. <sup>16</sup> They profess to  
know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable,  
disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

### SEARED

**1 TIMOTHY 4:1-2** Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter  
times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving  
spirits and doctrines of demons, <sup>2</sup> speaking lies in hypocrisy,  
having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,...

### PURE

**1 TIMOTHY 3:9** ...holding the mystery of the faith with a pure  
conscience.

**2 TIMOTHY 1:3a** I thank God, whom I serve with a pure  
conscience,...

## CLEANSED

**HEBREWS 9:14** ...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve...?

**HEBREWS 10:22a** ...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience....

## GOOD

**1 TIMOTHY 1:19** ...having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,...

**HEBREWS 13:18b** ....we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably.

**1 PETER 3:16** ...having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

**BBE** ...Being conscious that you have done no wrong;...

**CJB** ...keeping your conscience clear,...

**MSG** ...Keep a clear conscience before God....

**NIRV** Live so that you don't have to feel you've done anything wrong..

**WNT** ...keeping your consciences free from guilt,...

## WHY IS HAVING A GOOD CONSCIENCE A PRIORITY?

Our lives can be powerful, when free of guilt and fear.

The defamation of our character is a real possibility.

Reviling our good conduct can happen in these times.

Hostilities toward us could be beginning to increase.

.....when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good....

## HOSTILITY TOWARD BELIEVERS MAY INCREASE BECAUSE OF -

Churches receiving government loans without repaying.

Christians bearing false witness by not checking the facts.

Believers, beyond taking a stand, becoming name callers.

Church-goers who refuse to obey our Godly instructions.

Religious folks who do not value having a good conscience.

## HOW TO HAVE A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

- Repent from every form of disobedience.
- Receive God's loving forgiveness by faith.
- Recommit your life to our Lord Jesus daily.
- Refine all your filters and intake channels.
- Request The Lord's divine guidance often.
- Remember to do whatever He shows you.
- Reconsider priorities that may not be His.
- Repay all that you owe
- Reduce every single list of grievances.
- Reconcile with foes when possible.
- Reconnect with accountability.
- Repeat - repeat – repeat -.

## CBS NEWS: More than 12,000 Catholic churches in the U.S. applied for PPP loans and 9,000 got them .

As suffering small businesses around the country clamor for much-needed loans from the federal Paycheck Protection Program, news of prominent national chains receiving millions of dollars sparked an outcry among owners of smaller businesses who have been shut out. Now, many will likely be surprised to learn that over 12,000 of the 17,000 Catholic churches in the U.S. also applied for those coveted PPP loans.

Pat Markey, the executive director of the Diocesan Fiscal Management Conference, estimates that around 6,000 Catholic parishes had their applications for federal funding approved in the first round of PPP and around 3,000 have received loans so far in the second round. And Catholic churches were not the only religious institutions seeking PPP funds.

A new survey by LifeWay Research found that 40% of Protestant churches in the U.S. also applied for government assistance offered either through the CARES Act or the Small Business Administration, and 23% of those church's pastors reported that their applications were accepted — meaning that 59% of Protestant churches that applied for assistance were approved.

The larger the church, the more likely it was to have applied for federal aid. Half of the pastors at churches that average 200 or more attendees said

their church applied for a loan, compared to only a third of churches that average fewer than 50 attendees.

Essentially, the requirements for PPP loans are the same whether a business or organization is secular or not. Churches are automatically granted nonprofit status. So, as long as a house of worship employs less than 501 persons, it can now request a federal loan for an amount 2.5 times its average monthly payroll. Those loans, plus their 1% interest, will be forgiven by the government as long as 75% of the funds are used to cover payroll expenses in the eight weeks after the house of worship receives the funds. The remaining 25% can be used to pay rent, utilities, insurance and other operating costs.

Jon Costas, a former Republican mayor of Valparaiso, Indiana, wrote in Christianity Today last month, "There are socio-economic and social justice issues here that must be considered by suburban churches who may drain grant money away from those who need it more. I believe the decision to apply for and receive PPP funds is one of the most important issues the church will face in this decade. It will set a precedent for the future and may, in time, hinder the mission of the church when the strings attached to government funds are not consistent with Scripture."