



From the Pastor's heart

The strength of conviction

**STRONG
CONVICTIONS
PRECEDE GREAT
ACTIONS.**

*2Ti 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am **persuaded** that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

Having been persuaded, Apostle Paul sets out on a journey in life few would attempt even out of conviction. It is true that God convicts people of sin and of Godly persuasions but men must accept such conviction if it is to be of any value. The conscience is the seat of conviction. *Joh 8:9 And they which heard it, being **convicted by their own conscience**, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.* Here is a classic example of conscience being convicted to the extent that a life was saved out of it. Since the conscience must be touched by an external act or word the senses become a doorway to the conscience through which understanding reaches the spirit and soul of man. For example; the Bible teaches us that in order for the gospel to be heard, one must be sent to speak. This means, men cannot easily be convicted of their situation in life till the gospel is preached and is able to reach their conscience through the sense of hearing. Since hearing in this case has to do with the spiritual state of man, the conscience is touched and one's state of spiritual being is revealed enough for the person to make a decision.

Having a conscience does not mean one will be convicted nor is it a guarantee that they will accept the conviction enough to do something about it. Many are convicted of the truth but still fail to apply it in their lives. This is the state of humanity after having believed the lie of satan. Such people, when exposed by their conscience use self justification to smother the conviction. If you are convicted of sin or of Godly things, one must cast aside all temptation to flee from that conviction. One must embrace it as the grace of God being extended toward them to bring them to an understanding of walking righteously with God. Apostle Paul is a clear example of this as explained to us in the encounter he had with Jesus on the road to Damascus. After the conviction of his sin, he turned his heart to God with great conviction of the truth. *Act 9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: Act 9:4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?** Act 9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.** Act 9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, **Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.....** Act 9:20 **And straightway he preached Christ** in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.*

Conviction is not a bad thing. It is good because it means that as long as there is conviction happening in a person, there is hope. The moment conviction is stopped, next to no hope is the end scenario. *1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;* What does this mean in real terms? Such people are unable to receive anymore conviction and so their souls can never be redeemed. They become reprobates. What are reprobates? They are people who have lost all reachability with the gospel of salvation because of seared consciences. This is the danger of a seared conscience. The meaning of reprobate is as follows: *unapproved, that is, rejected; by implication worthless* (literally or morally): - castaway, rejected, reprobate.

When Jesus came to die for us, He did so because He wanted to cleanse our consciences. His blood was the cleansing agent. Why was this so important? It is so because the conscience decides if a person is free of condemnation before his God or not. *Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, **purge your conscience** from dead works to serve the living God?* The dead works comes from dead people who have no life of Christ in them. We were all once like that till we received Jesus as our Saviour. Yet, many after that have become dead because they have not maintained their consciences before God and have slipped away in their relationship with God become dead once again. This happened to Israel and God called them "dead bones". After receiving the word of salvation, we need to maintain our conscience through the word of conviction that is brought by the Holy Spirit. In the event we do not allow even the Holy Spirit to lead us in conviction, we are truly lost after

having come to Christ. *Heb 10:26* For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, *Heb 10:27* But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. *Heb 10:28* He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: *Heb 10:29* Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? There are many such verses in the Bible which are clear about retribution for sin committed wilfully after salvation. It is not to be taken lightly. Our consciences are like antennas that can pick up on our right or wrong paths through the conviction of the Holy Spirit so, we should pay attention when it is pricked.

On another level of conviction, we have a situation with the conviction that has to do with the world which we need to know about in order to minister to unsaved people. *Joh 16:7* Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. *Joh 16:8* And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: *Joh 16:9* Of sin, because they believe not on me;

Joh 16:10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; *Joh 16:11* Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. It is our job to preach the gospel and the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement. We don't have to convict them of that. However, the Church is another matter altogether. Without conviction of sin and Godliness in the Church, we are nothing more than self righteous people with a façade of righteousness. The conviction of sin and Godliness in the Church is for the furtherance of the gospel. The gospel is preached in the Church for reasons of edification, works of ministry and the perfecting of saints. This can never take place without strength of conviction.

It is to this strength of conviction we journey. We must be persuaded like Apostle Paul of the things of God that has to do with God's will. Sometimes, His will may be quite beyond our grasp of understanding like the cross of Jesus. Unless Jesus was persuaded about the faithfulness of God to bring Him out of the pit of hell, He would not have gone to the cross. Likewise, many Christians will not go the next level in their faith if they do not have the conviction to do so. It is a hard thing when we do not understand the will of God for our lives. Many find it hard to accept the will of God because they are not convinced in the first place of the goodness of God. I remember a time when I was ministered to by God in Singapore during a very difficult time in my life. My heart was hurting badly through various broken down relationships with people and other circumstances in life that had to do with my future and success in secular life. I blamed God for all that had happened on the basis that even though bad things had happened, He could have fixed it. Since nothing had happened to better my life, I was sure that God was not good. Mind you, my complaint was not recent but obviously had come to surface through those kind of thoughts that I had over a long period of what I had considered about God.

It was then that God began to minister to me about the fact that He was a good God. When He ministered to me, He ministered as Father God rather than Jesus or the Holy Spirit. This made all the difference because I had always endeared myself to Him as my Father. Through the process of His ministry that took about three weeks, I was left with the conclusion that God was good and that He could do no wrong. This changed my attitude in life and also brought me into the understanding of His goodness. Though things had not changed much in a perceivable way, **the strength of conviction** had found its resting place in my heart. After that, it was a matter of subsequent encounters through life that caused that seed to take root in my heart and I became rooted and grounded in His love and faithfulness.

I cannot say that I understand all this conclusively but I can certainly live a life of conviction and trust against all odds that, He is God and He is good and all powerful. There is no greater conviction that one can have in life. The strength of conviction is born out of trials and forged in fire to refine that conviction to make it a weapon that cannot be put down by the convicted person or taken away by the devil. It is here to stay and cannot be removed under any circumstance or by anybody.

Let us come to that place of understanding that, we are in no position to defer or refuse conviction. It is solid food for people who can mature with each conviction we receive of both the goodness of God and sin. The Holy Spirit is our friend and not condemner. He holds the light of the word over our hearts for us to see and make a decision for the better. **Heb 4.12:16**

Lots of love
Pastor Noble
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