

Romans 3 Articles

How does my conscience differ from the guidance of the Holy Spirit? **ROM. 2:14 15**

The conscience functions something like a computer. A computer is programmed to respond in specific ways to specific information. Also, it responds to information based on the commands it has been programmed to follow.

When I click my word processing application, my computer knows to open my word processor. For the most part, computers are simply responders.

The conscience is a responder as well. It responds to certain input just as it has been programmed. Paul described it like this: “For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them” (Rom. 2:14, 15).

God has programmed His moral code into the heart of every man and woman. We are born with it. When a person’s actions or thoughts violate that code, the conscience responds by sending a “NO” message to the brain. On the other hand, when the act or thought goes along with the preprogrammed moral code, the conscience says “GO.”

Notice, Paul says our thoughts sometimes point out the legitimacy of certain actions. When that happens, if the actions line up with the law of God written in our hearts, the conscience gives us the go-ahead.

When you became a Christian, a change began to occur in your conscience. The basic moral code that everyone has at birth started to get overhauled. The Spirit of truth took up residency in your heart. Then, whether you were aware of it or not, He immediately set about to reprogram your conscience. Whereas before you had a general sense of right and wrong, the Holy Spirit began renewing your mind to more specific and complete truths (1 Cor. 2:10–13).

You participate in this renewal process every time you read your Bible, attend worship, memorize a verse, or pray. The Holy Spirit uses all this input to reprogram the database through which your conscience evaluates every opportunity, thought, invitation, word, and deed.

As this process continues, your conscience tunes in with the moral code of the Holy Spirit—a code reflecting the moral and ethical standards of God. This process sensitizes you not only to God’s moral standards but also to the will of God.¹

¹ Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (Ro 2:14–15). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.