

# “...This Conscience Thing”

Dub McClish

Pro-life, anti-abortion members of Congress have proposed the “Protect Life Act” in an effort to preserve the choice of taxpayers and medical practitioners to refuse any promotion of abortion. House Minority Leader, Nancy Pelosi, described such choices as “savage” (an amazing irony!).

She further stated that the problem with those who oppose abortion is that “they have this conscience thing.” Her words, apparently meant as an insult to those who oppose abortion, are, in fact, true. Yes, we have “this conscience thing.” By implication, Rep. Pelosi admitted that she and her pro-death cohorts are **without conscience** when it comes to destroying human life in its most vulnerable stage.

The Pelosi statement calls attention to *conscience*. What is it?

- **Conscience translates a Greek word that means “to see together.”** Our English word means “to know with.” It refers to an internal response, pro or con, to one’s behavior.
- **Conscience is a behavior evaluator, not a behavior standard.** No one is born with an innate sense of right and wrong, good and evil, truth and error. If we instinctively knew such distinctions, moral and religious teaching would be unnecessary. The Bible would be superfluous.
- **Conscience reflects one’s moral/religious teaching and conviction.** It is therefore a creature of one’s education and conviction. It makes a person feel guilty when he violates his convictions. It makes one feel honorable when he behaves in accordance with his convictions. However, its responses regarding one’s behavior do not indicate the behavior’s rightness or wrongness, but only one’s **conviction** that a given act is right or wrong. The apostle Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, was taught – and sincerely believed – that Jesus Christ was a false prophet and that His church should be destroyed, which he set about doing with great zeal (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2). He had a “good conscience” concerning this persecution at the time he was doing it (Acts 23:1). When he reached the conviction that Jesus was God’s Son and his Savior, he thenceforth had a “good conscience” in his promotion of the Christ he had formerly persecuted.
- **Conscience can be abused.** One can “brand” or “sear” it so as to render it insensitive (1 Tim. 4:2). One can “defile” it (Tit. 1:15). It will eventually cease to warn and condemn if a person repeatedly ignores its warnings. He will then cease to be bothered with “this conscience thing” (a` la Rep. Pelosi).

The Bible is the only source of Truth concerning religion and morals. He is wise who lets it train his conscience.

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