

“...This Conscience Thing”

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In 2015, Pro-life, anti-abortion members of Congress proposed the “Protect Life Act” in an effort “...to prohibit the provision of federal education funding to state or local educational agencies that make health services available to students through school-based health centers unless those centers certify that they will not provide students with abortions, abortion-related materials or referrals or directions to abortion services.” U.S. House of Representatives member, Nancy Pelosi, described such prohibition 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 the 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.
- **The 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, moral and religious teaching would be unnecessary. The Bible would be superfluous.
- **The 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 sought to do 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 (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.
- **The 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” (à la Rep. Pelosi).

The Bible is the only perfect source of Truth concerning religion and morals. One is wise who lets it train one’s conscience.

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