

The background features a large, abstract circular pattern on the left side, composed of many concentric, slightly irregular blue and teal rings that create a tunnel-like effect. In the center of this tunnel, there is a small, bright, colorful nebula or galaxy core with orange, red, and yellow hues. The right side of the image is a soft, out-of-focus background of a colorful nebula or galaxy, with shades of blue, purple, and orange.

Worldview Thinking

Revisiting the Fundamental Orientations of Our Minds and Hearts



Welcome!

“Solitude shows us the way to let our behavior be shaped not by the compulsions of the world but by our new mind, the mind of Christ. Silence prevents us from being suffocated by our wordy world and teaches us to speak the Word of God. Finally, unceasing prayer gives solitude and silence their real meaning. In unceasing prayer, we descend with the mind into the heart. Thus we enter through our heart into the heart of God, who embraces all history with his eternally creative and recreative love.”

- Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*

Introduction

Over the course of the past ten weeks, we have acknowledged that worldview thinking is a vast and complex subject. The two objects of human inquiry are, concisely, God and His creation. There are no others. The one, the universe, is finite and material, while the other, the triune God, is infinite and incorporeal. Because of the immeasurable majesty and glory of God and the staggering beauty and immensity of the universe, the most appropriate responses we can have are awesome wonder, humility, and adoring worship. The astronomer gazes into space, astounded by the billions of galaxies and stars. The mother stares in silent wonder at her beautiful, newborn baby. And the engineer marvels at the order and preciseness of mathematics and physics.

Introduction

While these responses correspond to objective reality and truth, worldview thinking incessantly confronts us with a fundamental question, the one which underlies each of these emotions: “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Whatever the answer, it must be admitted that before we can go about the business of knowing specific things, “we must know what knowing is” (Frame). This, as we have discussed, is the field of epistemology. Once we understand the basics of epistemology and analogical thinking, we begin to see the extensiveness of knowledge. Os Guinness reminds us that “there is more to knowing than knowing will ever know.” Even so, “the God who is there” invites us to come, to look, to reason, to feel, to know.



Introduction

Our discussions on epistemology and the “ways of knowing,” led us to consider how we as image-bearers can know God, and to make sense of our world and our place in it. The self-disclosing God has answered these questions. He has given us *general revelation* (the facts of creation), *His Word* (the Scriptures), and the *Holy Spirit* (the third person of the Trinity) to guide us on our journey through life. In addition to these, He has also provided us with resources ***in ourselves*** to help us understand “the two environments in which every man must live: the ***external world*** with its form and complexity; and the ***internal world*** of the man’s own characteristics as a human being.” Today, we will continue to pursue the **role of the heart, our internal world.**



The Role of the Heart in Worldview Formation

“Worldview as a fundamental orientation of the heart. This notion would be easier to grasp if the word *heart* bore in today’s world the weight it bears in Scripture. As David Naugle has so well pointed out, the biblical concept of the heart is far richer than our common parlance would have it. Today we think of the heart as the seat of the emotions (especially tender, sympathetic emotions) and perhaps the will. But it rarely includes the mind. The biblical concept, however, includes the notions of wisdom (Prov. 2:10), emotion (Ex. 4:14; John 14:1), desire and will (I Chron. 29:18), spirituality (Acts 8:21), and intellect (Rom. 1:21). In short, and in biblical terms, the heart is ‘the central defining element of the human person.’ That is, a worldview is situated in the self – the central operating chamber of every human being. It is from this heart that all one’s thoughts and actions proceed” (James Sire).



St. Augustine

“Men go abroad to wonder at the heights of mountains, the huge waves of the sea, the broad flow of the rivers, the extent of the ocean, and the courses of the stars, and omit to wonder at themselves.”



“For you formed my inward parts, you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.”

- Ps. 139:13-14



Specific Aspects of Our Likeness to God

Rational Attributes

The Laws of Logic

Moral Aptitudes

Capacity for Self-Transcendence

Volitional Aptitudes

Spirituality

Immortality

Language



Emotional Attributes

Dominion Over the Earth

Self-Consciousness

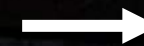
Sexual Differentiation

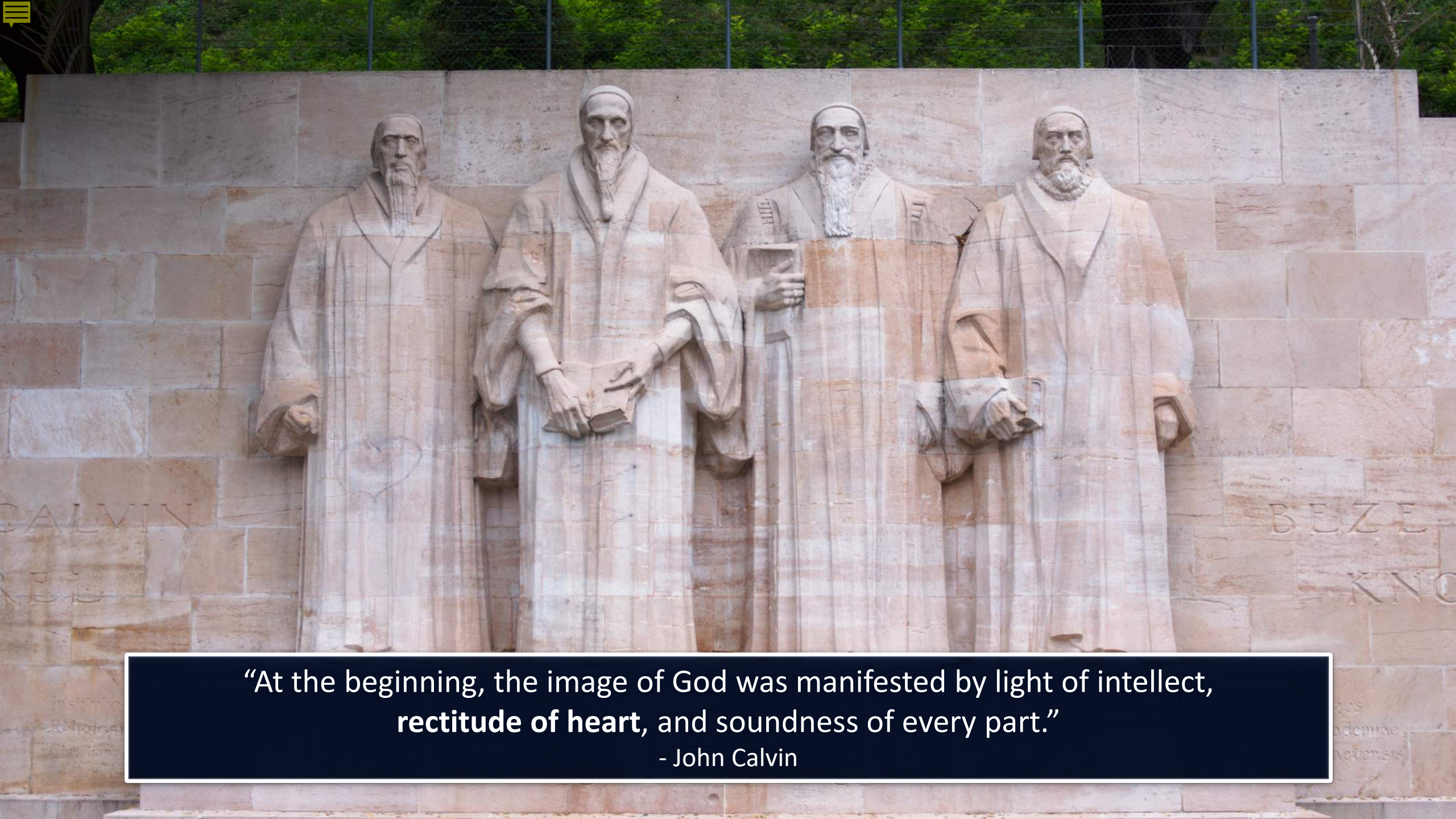
Accountability to God

Relational Aspects

Creativity

Note this aspect of our likeness to God





“At the beginning, the image of God was manifested by light of intellect,
rectitude of heart, and soundness of every part.”

- John Calvin



What Is the Heart?

1. **John Calvin:** “The proper seat of the image is in the soul....The primary seat of the divine image is in the mind and heart, or in the soul and its powers.”
2. **John Frame:** “The heart is the center of the personality, the person himself in his most basic character. The heart is the center of our being, the inner disposition that governs our thoughts, volition, attitudes, speech, and moral knowledge.”
3. **Gerhard Van Groningen:** “The heart is the core of personality from which flow the thoughts, desires, motivations, influences, and decisions.”



What Is the Heart?

4. **Knox Chamblin:** The heart is “the whole of the inner being of man in contrast to his external side”....It “stands for the whole of the inner being in both its corporeal and incorporeal dimensions.”
5. **John Owen:** “The heart in Scripture is variously used, sometimes for the mind and understanding, sometime for the will, sometimes for the affections, sometimes for the conscience, sometimes for the whole soul. Generally, it denotes the whole soul of man and all the faculties of it, not absolutely, but as they are all one principle of moral operations, as they all concur in our doing of good and evil.”

God's Perfect Knowledge of Our Hearts

- **Solomon's Prayer:** "Then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways (for you, you only, know the hearts of all the children of mankind)..." (1 Kgs. 8:39).
- **David's Charge to Solomon:** "And you, Solomon, my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought" (1 Chron. 28:9).
- "If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God discover this? For he knows the secrets of the heart" (Ps. 44:21).

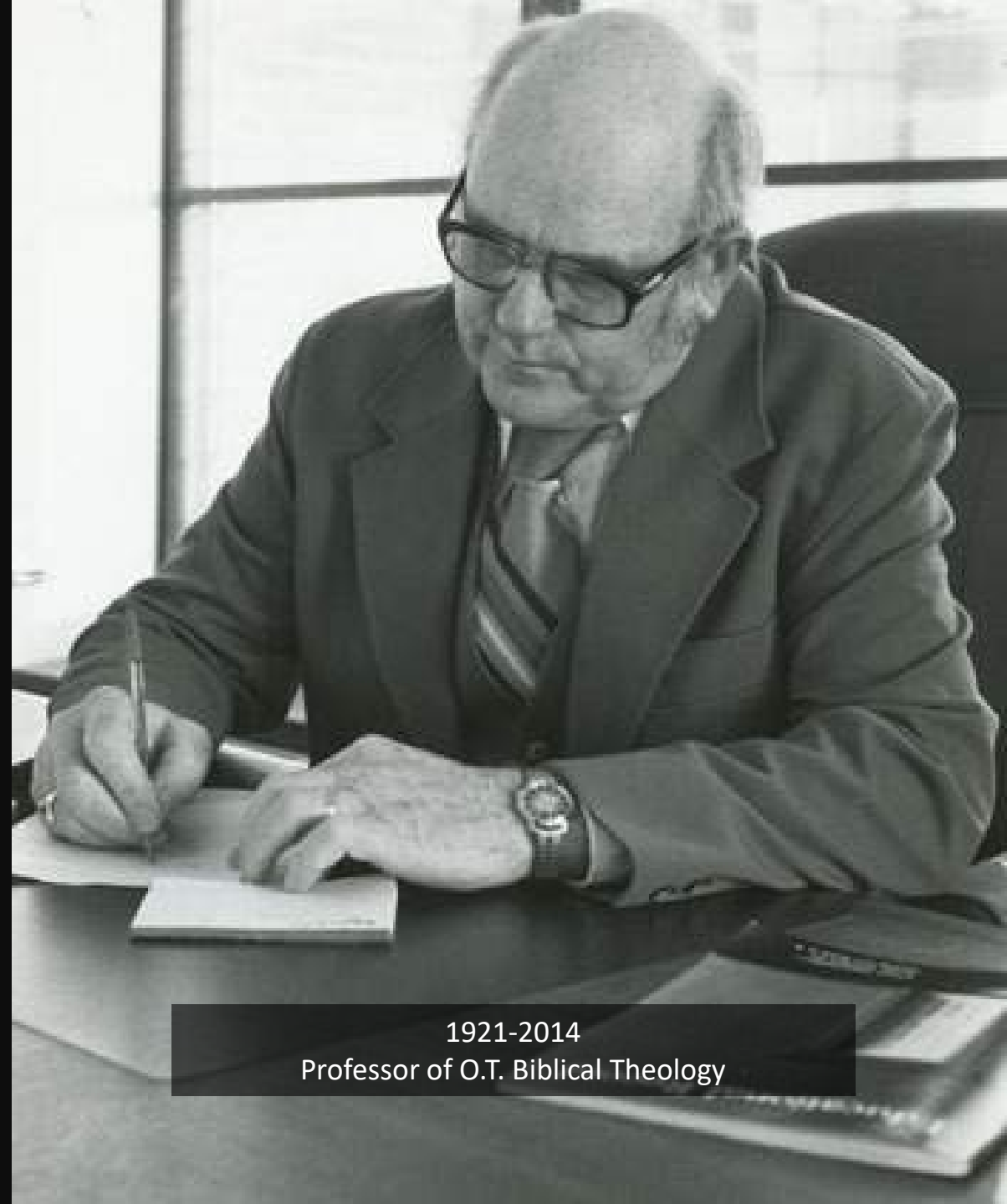
God's Perfect Knowledge of Our Hearts

- **The Lord Speaks to Samuel:** “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).
- **Samuel to Saul:** “You have acted foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you” (1 Sam. 13:13-14).

What Does the Heart Do?

“The heart serves as the central focus for one’s relationship with God, fellow humans, and all aspects of the cosmos. It is the heart that determines whether one will acknowledge and obey the three creational mandates, the spiritual, social, and cultural. It is in the heart that the basic and final resolves are made concerning believing, loving, obeying, and serving Yahweh as one’s covenantal Redeemer and Master.”

- Dr. Gerhard Van Groningen



1921-2014
Professor of O.T. Biblical Theology

A night landscape photograph featuring a dark, starry sky with the Milky Way visible. Below the sky, a range of snow-capped mountains is silhouetted against a dark horizon. In the foreground, a calm body of water reflects the sky and the mountains. The overall scene is dark and serene, with a few small, bright stars visible in the sky.

How Do We Know What To Do?



The Law of God Is Written on Our Hearts

- “This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and **I will write it on their hearts**. And I will be their God and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31:33).
- “They show that **the work of the law is written on their hearts**, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them” (Rom. 2:15).
- “In Romans 2:15, Paul teaches that God has written His law on the human heart. The human conscience is informed by the revelation of God’s law, which He has implanted in the human heart” (R.C. Sproul).



The Law of God Is Written on Our Hearts

- God's law is written on every person's heart. His eternal and infallible truth is the foundation for all of our thought and morality.
- "The law of God is in his heart; his steps do not slip" (Ps. 37:31).
- "The authority of Scripture is sealed on the hearts of believers by the testimony of the Holy Spirit" (Calvin).
- "But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it" (Dt. 30:14).
- "A sense of Deity is inscribed on every heart" (Calvin).
- "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you" (Ps. 119:11).



What Is the Conscience?

- Conscience distinguishes between good and evil, responds to the judgment of God, and is an undoubted sign of an immortal spirit.
- “Conscience has often been described as an inner voice of God through which our mind either accuses or excuses us from sins. It includes two basic elements: (1) an inner awareness or consciousness of right and wrong and (2) a mental ability to apply laws, norms, and rules to concrete situations” (R.C. Sproul).
- “What is conscience if not shining the spotlight of your moral judgment back on yourself, your thoughts, and your actions....It is an imperfect-but-accurate-enough version of God’s will, as standard equipment in their [our] hearts” (Naselli and Crowley).

A Guilty Conscience

- “And afterward **David’s heart struck him** (his conscience), because he had cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. He said to his men, ‘The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord’s anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord’s anointed’” (I Sam. 24:5-6).
- “But **David’s heart struck him** (his conscience) after he had numbered the people. And David said to the Lord, ‘I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly’” (II Sam. 24:10).

God's Warning

- “If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the Lord your God, then the Lord will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, and sicknesses grievous and lasting. And he will bring upon you again all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. Every sickness also and every affliction that is not recorded in the book of this law, the Lord will bring upon you, until you are destroyed. Whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, you shall be left few in number, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God. And as the Lord took delight in doing you good and

God's Warning

multiplying you, so the Lord will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you. And you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to take possession of it” (Dt. 28:58-63). “And among these nations you shall find no respite, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot, but the Lord will give you there a trembling heart and failing eyes and a languishing soul” (28:65).

- **About Solomon:** “He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart” (I Kgs. 11:3).
- “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23).

A Heart for God

- “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Dt. 6:5).
- “My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God” (Ps. 84:2).
- “Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart” (Ps. 119:2).
- “You have said, ‘Seek my face.’ My heart says to you, ‘Your face, Lord, do I seek’” (Ps. 27:8).
- “Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord” (Ps. 27:14).

A Heart for God

- “Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and my mind” (Ps. 26:2).
- “The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him” (Ps. 28:7).
- “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Ps. 51:10).
- “A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Ps. 51:17).
- “The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart” (Ps. 19:8).

A Heart for God

- “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer” (Ps. 19:14).
- “And Hannah prayed and said, ‘My heart exults in the Lord, my strength is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation’” (I Sam. 2:1).
- Solomon “spread out his hands toward heaven, and said, ‘O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart’” (I Kgs. 8:22-23).



Questions for Reflection

1. Will you live in tune with God and continue to develop a truly covenantal relationship with Him in response to His overtures, promises, and demands?
2. Will you give yourself to a life of loving, knowing, believing, praising, obeying, and serving Yahweh?
3. Will you seek to look at the external world and the internal world not only through your intellect, but also through your heart? Will you patiently seek God's interpretation of the world in which you live and continually ask Him to create in you a clean heart so that you may think analogically and live obediently before Him in love?

A young boy wearing a straw hat and a blue checkered shirt is sitting on the ground, leaning against the trunk of a large, old tree. He is holding an open book and appears to be reading. The ground is covered with fallen yellow and orange leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The background shows a lush green forest with sunlight filtering through the trees.

Worldview Bibliography

43 Recommended Books

<https://tji.org/worldview-thinking.html>