

**Introduction:**

1. There's a saying "If you ignore teeth, they'll go away ". Describe an example of when you covered up or ignored a problem, and it came back to bite you.
2. What's a custom in your family that there's no real need for, but you like doing and don't feel any need to change, because you've always done it that way?

**Understanding:**

3. Read Romans 2:15 and 1 Tim 4:1-2. What is the condition of the conscience in the Romans verse? How is it different in the 1 Timothy passage? How does this reinforce for you the warning that we heard in Hebrews 3 "do not harden your hearts"?
4. It is tempting to deny that there is any sin in our lives. But it's actually good for us to be aware of the sin in our lives. Why?
5. In verse 8 the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. Only the High Priest was allowed into the Most Holy Place—which is where the presence of God was. As long as this temple system was functioning, ordinary people had no direct access to God. But now read John 14:6. How does this turn the old way of doing things on its head? What are the huge benefits to us?
6. Martin Luther was plagued by a conscience that continually had to confess and confess and then think up even more things to confess. But then Romans 1:17 came alive for him. How does the faith described here connect to today's sermon? What are some of the ways it frees you?
7. Verse 10 talks about external regulations. That's not the only place scripture warns on this –read Mark 7:4-8 where Jesus warns the Pharisees. How is this also a warning to us when we start to focus on outer performance and compliance in our Christian lives?
8. In verse 12 Jesus did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place – once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. Read 1 John 1: 7. Does this take sin lightly or seriously? Explain. What are the implications for our own lives?
9. A college couple were feeling guilty about some choices they were making in their relationship so they visited a campus counselor. However, the counselor told them that their concerns "reflected an outdated morality" and they should get over their guilt. In the light of today's teaching, what could you say about the state of the consciences of the couple, and of the counselor? And what would you say to the couple?

**Application:**

10. In what way do you try to "work off" your sins with a "penance" mentality? This is absolutely antithetical to the gospel. Why? Because it devalues what Jesus did at the cross. It says, "Jesus' death wasn't actually enough to cover my sins; I need to add some of my own stuff." Ask God to show you where you do this, and bring it to the cross and receive forgiveness.
11. Are you struggling with your conscience? It's because you're human. Don't tape over it; don't put a Band-Aid on it. Go to the cross, admit your sin, receive his grace. (See 1 John 1:9) Make confession a habit and you'll have the joy of a clear conscience.
12. When your conscience is clear, because of God's forgiveness, you passionately want to forgive other people. Is the Lord bringing someone to mind? You know what you need to do.