



Episode 4-5: Understanding the Conscience

Resources:

Books

[Conscience: What It Is, How to Train It, and Loving Those Who Differ - Andrew Naselli](#)

[That Little Voice in Your Head - Andrew Naselli](#)

[Pilgrim's Progress - John Bunyan](#)

[The Ology - Marty Machowski](#)

Websites

[Masters of Arts in Biblical Counseling - Faith Bible Seminary](#)

Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Janet: Well, welcome back. I am here. My name is Janet. I'm with my lovely co-host, Jocelyn.

Jocelyn: Hi, friends.

Janet: And today we have a special guest that is special to our family that I'm excited to introduce to you. Dr. Andy Naselli is with us and he's written a book on the conscience. But before we start talking about the information from that book, Andy, I really wanted for you to just tell us a little bit about who you are. We've known you, I just realized, I didn't realize till you just said a couple minutes ago for 12 years. I didn't realize it had been that long. But we've watched their kids grow and that's been fun. But tell us a little bit about your background on what you're doing now.

Andy: Sure. My name's Andy Naselli. My wife Jenny and I live in Minneapolis, where we have four daughters.

Janet: I'm sorry.



Andy: Yeah, we're there for the ministry and.

Janet: Not the weather.

Andy: The weather's not that bad.

Jocelyn: And the great culture,

Andy: Well, we have a good church culture. Anyway, so I'm one of the pastors of The North Church. Just this year we became The North Church. For the previous 20 years, we were The North Campus of Bethlehem Baptist Church.

Janet: Yes.

Andy: Which John Piper, pastored for over 30 years. So that was one church, three campuses, and now it's three distinct churches.

Jocelyn: Oh, interesting.

Andy: Bethlehem is only downtown now. So I'm one of the pastors of The North Church and my full-time vocation is as a professor of our church's school called, Bethlehem College and Seminary. I've taught there 10 years. I'm professor of Systematic Theology and New Testament. I also teach Ethics mostly to seminary students. I love it. Been doing that 10 years and then I've been here actually longer than that. Do you remember Rob Decker when he was alive? so he was a professor for Rob Green.

Janet: Right.

Andy: And I was friends with Rod Decker and when Rod Decker was getting sick with cancer, he couldn't come here anymore, so he recommended me. That's how I met you guys.

Jocelyn: Oh, interesting.

Janet: I didn't know how you ended up coming the first time.

Andy: Yeah, that was the connection. So I've been coming regularly. So they have cohorts at Faith Bible Seminary for three years and for each three year cohort, I teach five courses. Greek Greetings, Systematic Theology, I, II, and III, and Ethics.

Jocelyn: Wow. You're down here a lot.

Andy: So I do come quite a bit. So I've been in this home many times. We're in the Aucoin home right now.



Jocelyn: Cool. So you're married. Tell us about your kids.

Andy: Yeah. Oldest is 15 and then 12, 11 and six, four girls. They love reading and sewing and crocheting and piano playing, and they're, as far as we can tell, they all love the Lord at this point.

Janet: What a blessing.

Andy: It's a delight. We love it. And we're hitting that stage where boys are on the radar. So it's coming.

Janet: Good times.

Jocelyn: Good. All right. So you wrote a book called, *Conscience: What It Is, How to Train It, and Loving Those Who Differ*. and you wrote the children's book, *That Little Voice in Your Head*. So why don't you tell us why did you write them, and out of all of the topics that you could have written about, why did you choose to write about the conscience?

Andy: Yeah, it's funny, I've written or edited almost 25 books now. And people think of me as the conscience guy. This is one.

Jocelyn: The one and only.

Andy: So evidently this book hit a nerve and I'm really glad.

Jocelyn: It did. Yes.

Andy: So the genesis of this is my friend, JD Crowley, who's a longtime missionary in Cambodia. He and I were both speaking at a conference in Wisconsin at a school called, Northland. It doesn't exist anymore. And he was speaking in the conscience and I had been thinking a lot about it, and we just got to talking and realized we were both really interested in it. So he was coming at it as a cross-cultural missionary who came back from Cambodia. And the story he tells is he would put his feet up on a coffee table in a social gathering, and then someone would step over his legs. And in his mind he'd think you boorish, you know.

Janet: Rude.

Jocelyn: Brute.

Andy: Where are your manners? And he'd realize, oh, in Cambodia, or in Asian cultures, it's very rude to step over someone's legs. You pause and wait for them to put their legs down, then you pass by. But in America that it's not a thing. He had to realize what's up with my conscience? Why is? How does this work? That's what got his wheels turning. And for me it was a little different. I grew up in very culturally conservative cultures. Some would call themselves



fundamentalists which I'm not against fundamentalism. In some ways you might call me a fundamentalist with reference to theology. And as I was at school at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School working under DA Carson, and people would hear that I went to Bob Jones University. And they'd think, like, they'd say things that were not nice. And then I had had some friends at Bob Jones who would say some things about Trinity that were not nice. And so why is it that they seem to think they're each other are so bad? And you know, there are some significant differences and I understand that. But I started wondering, what is it about people's consciences that make them judgmental or more sensitive. And that got me thinking how to shepherd people in my sphere of influence through such issues. So that's what got me interested in the topic.

Jocelyn: So what year did you publish this? Do you remember?

Andy: Maybe 2015 or 16. I don't remember.

Jocelyn: I was thinking about, I think it was probably five or six years ago, or maybe seven years ago, we studied this in our ABFs. Our Adult Bible Fellowships. And we were all like, what? We're studying a book on the conscience. It changed our whole ABF every week we would study the next lesson. It would be just like blow, I remember the triangles, like when we looked at the triangles and the spiritual triage. Like I feel like my mind was blown to have categories to fit things into. That made our relationships with each other make much more sense so.

Andy: Well, kind of, I'm prophetic and I thought that there might be a time when the whole world would have a so-called pandemic and there would be maybe debates about masking and vaccines. So I thought...

Jocelyn: Within the church.

Andy: We're getting ready.

Janet: Let me just get that out there.

Jocelyn: First tier issues, baby.

Janet: So around here we love to define our terms. I know you kind of made it easy with your title. What is it? So would you define conscience for us? 'cause I think it's a vague term that we use to mean a lot of different things.

Andy: Yeah. This is a helpful mnemonic. So conscience consciousness. That's how I remember it, it's your consciousness or your, awareness. Of what you believe is right and wrong. And I say it like that because what you believe is right and wrong isn't the same as what is right and wrong.

Janet: Yes.



Andy: So every person has a consciousness of what he or she believes is right and wrong.

Jocelyn: So helpful and interesting. So how is our conscience different than our emotions? For instance, I appreciate the idea that we shouldn't violate our conscience. How is that different from I need to be true to myself. I don't wanna be a hypocrite and go against my feelings. I need to be really who I authentically am.

Andy: So when you say emotion, you guys are a professional biblical counselors, what do you mean by emotion?

Jocelyn: What do you mean by emotion?

Andy: Well, I just think of like the typical way people say, refer to emotion is like your natural, instinctive mindset based on your circumstances, your mood, how you're relating to other people. Is that what you mean by emotion?

Janet: Yeah. And I think like if you think about people that we would talk to, And they would say, I would feel like a hypocrite if I did that. And in their mind, that's violating their conscience 'cause they didn't feel right about it. so their emotion as far as I have to be true to how I feel versus I have to be true to my conscience, is that the same thing?

Andy: Oh, absolutely not.

Janet: Right. So.

Andy: Yeah. So you might not feel like obeying God in a certain point, or maybe you just haven't been trained to know what is right versus what is wrong. Your feelings are not a good indicator of what's right and wrong, nor necessarily is your conscience. But, so that's an, I mean, you're getting to that with your questions. But yeah, it would separate them and say that, your conscience is more your thought process. It's not necessarily your deep feelings. So your conscience is accusing you. It's saying good job, it's saying bad job. It's affirming you and accusing you. It's not like making you feel elated. And really it might make you feel condemned and there's a feeling, but that comes from the conscience. it's different than the conscience.

Jocelyn: So you're saying you could do something that you believe is right. You're conscious of it being right? Even though you don't feel like doing it at all and not be violating your true self, you could be doing what is right, no matter how you feel, and that is okay.

Andy: Yeah. Except the violating your true self language. I don't even know what that means. what do you mean by violating self?

Jocelyn: So, in the book you talk about like the critical need in our culture today to be authentic to who you really are.



Andy: Oh, oh, I'm critiquing that. Yeah. I wouldn't.

Janet: And so are we. Right. So saying, so for our listeners, We don't want them to hear. Well see, I can't violate my conscience. I have to be who I truly am. So how is what you are saying different from that?

Andy: So let's say someone thinks, I need to change my sex with surgery to be true to myself.

Janet: Yes, that's right. To be authentic.

Andy: Well, no, that's like if someone says, let's try to pick a topic that we can all agree on. I think most people can that bulimia and anorexia are harmful to a person. If someone says, I need to do that to be true to myself. The answer is not, oh, yes, I affirm you in your bulimia. Here, let me buy you a big spoon. No, it's, I love you enough to tell you if you do that, it's gonna hurt you.

Jocelyn: It's dangerous. Yeah.

Andy: Don't do that. that is not being true to yourself. That's being foolish.

Janet: Yeah. Yeah. But I think it's good for the people listening. 'cause it may sound like, this is kind of silly, but we hear those kinds of comments and I can remember talking to someone who told me I cannot be loving to my husband when I don't feel like it. 'cause I would be a hypocrite and I don't wanna be a hypocrite, which is another way of saying it's like it would be going against my conscience or who I am. I know that's not true, but I want to make sure our listeners understand.

Jocelyn: It's where people really live.

Janet: That's right. Those are the things we hear. So we're saying, are you saying that?

Andy: No.

Janet: Knowing that you're not, what a succinct answer. Okay. There no.

Andy: Next.

Janet: How do we respond when we do feel condemned by our conscience?

Andy: My favorite, place in literature to go is John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. I think I mentioned that in the book. So there's a scene. Do you guys know the story? Christian is encountering Apollyon who represents Satan. And Apollyon accuses Christian of a series of wicked things, basically saying, you've been proud, you've not honored the king. You forgot the scroll. This list of things. And he gets to the end. Christian responds by saying, And this is



remarkable. He says, basically, you're right, it's actually worse than that, but my king, whom I serve is merciful and forgiving. He goes right to the gospel. So when you're tempted to despair, rather than say, actually no, I'm a really good person. Yeah. It's recognize.

Janet: I'm at least better than I was.

Andy: I am sinful. And praise the Lord for the gospel. And that God is a merciful God. So when you go there Then this dovetails with my favorite song. I often call it my favorite songs. So my family remembers play this at my funeral, when Satan tempts me to despair that line, it's the second verse of "Before the Throne of God Above". When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within end upward, I look and see him there who made an end to all my sin because the sinless savior died. My sinful soul is counted free. For God the just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me. That's what you do when you're tempted to despair, you don't wallow in your guilt. You don't think you're better than you are. You go to the cross.

Janet: I love that. I love that because it's our conscience that's condemning us, but the answer is not us. Either way. Either realizing, oh, I'm not that bad. Or, I'm so bad, how can I, it's getting our mind away from us and onto the cross, which then hopefully frees me to look at whatever my conscience is condemning me about accurately. And see, is that true? If it is, the gospel has an answer for that. If it's not, I don't need to sit and think something that's not what God says is true. But either way, I don't have to be afraid of that condemning.

Jocelyn: So why don't you tell us what are the different categories that a conscience can fall into?

Andy: Yeah. The word conscience comes from the Greek word, *suneidesis*, and it occurs roughly 29 or 30 times in the New Testament. And the adjectives that go with that word include good and righteous or cleansed. That's the good kind. And then there's a not good kind that's weak, or wounded, and it gets the worse than that. There's, an evil conscience, bad conscience, and even, and the worst, I think is a seared conscience. So all non-Christians have a bad conscience to some degree. It's not a good conscience, it's not a cleansed conscience. And some Christians have a weak conscience and in some areas have a bad conscience and some unbelievers have a seared conscience. And you could argue some believers in some areas have a seared conscience. Now, metaphor seared, it's like an iron. When you burn the material and it's, oh, it's irreversible damage. That's the metaphor. But I don't think it means that God can't unsear it. But it's just showing that that the person's conscience doesn't function. I think of, I forget the guy's name. He was a notorious serial murderer who talked about anyway.

Janet: Was it Bundy?

Andy: Bundy, that guy. There was an interview that James Dobson did with him, or basically talked about looking at horrific images and feeling nothing. Like it takes a lot.



Jocelyn: Like a dead, dead conscience.

Andy: Yeah. It's just dead. That's terrifying. And...

Jocelyn: So every person has a conscience. You don't only have a conscience when you get saved. So all humans would have.

Andy: All people. Angels do. Yeah.

Jocelyn: Have a conscience. So, to summarize, what are the different categories that a Christian could have with their conscience?

Andy: Well, I think all Christians have a cleansed conscience. So that's true of all Christians. And then to various degrees in various areas, it's gonna be good or bad, it's gonna be strong or weak.

Jocelyn: Okay. And then unbelievers, what kind of category of a conscience? What might they have?

Andy: It's not cleansed. So it needs to be purified, so it's bad in that sense. And they also can be on a spectrum of good and bad because of common grace. So a non-Christian can have a conscience that works correctly in some areas. That's definitely true.

Jocelyn: And they can also have a conscience that's been seared by exposure to wicked things.

Andy: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Jocelyn: So one of the things you talk about in the book is how to train the conscience. Why don't you talk to us a little bit about that? How do we make it more biblical, more effective, more helpful for us?

Andy: Yeah. when I teach on this I'll usually go around the room and ask if someone, usually someone who's a little older can testify that at this point in his or her life, there's something that he thinks is wrong. That, you know, 20 years ago he thought was okay. Or the reverse. Today there's something that thinks okay, but 20 years ago we thought was sin and why the change? What happened between then and now? And usually the answer is I understand the Bible better. I've matured as a Christian. So what are the factors that go into better understanding how to cultivate, how to train your conscience? Well, it's of course input of truth, mainly from the word of God, but also outside the word of God, and being in community with other believers. Having the Holy Spirit inside you and leading you, all those factor into improving your conscience.



Jocelyn: So a good functioning conscience would be in alignment with what God has said in his word. Is right and good. Loving what he says is Right, hating what he says is wrong and functioning in sync.

Janet: When I think about, so why don't we just all do that, especially as believers, you know, as counselors, I think we recognize on a practical level that a lot of people, a lot of us are deceived and going after other things. And it makes me think of Matthew 7. If I have a big log in my eye, I'm not gonna see very clearly to be able to train my conscience. So sometimes it may include figuring out why do I believe what I believe? What is that doing for me? I think it's based on the Bible frequently. But then in reality, it's really a tool I'm using to get something. And then it's not until I'm able to see that, that I can then retrain it because I think about, you know, we want to think through the difference between calibrating your conscience and sinning against it. So, and that's where I guess it makes me think about emotions again, if I have trained myself that going to this particular place is sinful, because that's what I was told in my upbringing, and then I look at scripture and I can't back that up. But it's still hard for me to go to that place. At what point am I violating my conscience? At what point am I calibrating my conscience? Does that make sense?

Andy: Oh yeah. And it's when you're convinced by the word of God that there's freedom to do that in a way that you could thank God for that activity and do it in a way that honors the Lord. If you're convinced of that, then the first time or a few times you do that, you might have a residue of, ugh, I've not done this before. Are you sure this is okay? But that's where you preach to yourself based on scripture. This is, I can honor the Lord doing this. And I'll try to make an example here. Let's say you grew up in a context where you were taught that all dancing is sinful. I don't know what you guys think about this, so maybe I'm stepping on.

Jocelyn: No, this is good. This is good.

Andy: All dancing is sinful. And then maybe you move to a context where you're not doing like, Those wicked vial, like grinding sinful sexual moves. But you're like doing square dancing or like the pride and prejudice ballroom dancing. Or I went ballroom dancing for the first time with my wife last December. That was a lot of fun.

Jocelyn: They have been taking dancing lessons too.

Janet: Once we became empty nesters, we decided we would take ballroom dancing.

Jocelyn: We still haven't had a demonstration

Andy: My wife wanted to do that. Anyway, this example assumes that that kind of dancing is permissible. If that's the case, then, if you're convinced from scripture that that's permissible the first time you try to do that, it might feel a little bit awkward. Like, is this really okay?



Janet: Right. Yeah. What are people thinking? You habituated yourself that that's not right.

Jocelyn: Yeah. I really appreciated the examples that you gave in the book because I also grew up in a much more conservative background than what I live in now. I remember the first couple times I learned things that were scripturally, biblically appropriate feeling, this soaring sense of freedom. Like what? I can just listen to what the Bible says about this, and I don't have to care what other people think about me, I don't have to worry that I'm not making people mad or people won't see me doing this. So when you have that kind of, you know the conscience that has been also trained by a lot of people's opinions. It's free to be able to see the black and white truth from God's word and to train yourself to live within those bounds and to not extra or less.

Janet: Yeah.

Andy: And that is a wonderful truth for a mature Christian. Sadly, when an immature Christian hears this, what can happen is they immaturely want to broadcast on Facebook or whatever social media platform or all the things they're doing that they were never allowed to do and rub it in the faces of all the people who think it's wrong. So that's just straight up maturity.

Janet: Which is incredibly unloving.

Andy: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah.

Andy: So I'm affirming what you just said then. I'm also very aware of how people can run with it and not love each other.

Jocelyn: So a word of caution as you're learning and calibrating your conscience to be more biblical, to be very humble about the way you enact that growth.

Janet: Yeah.

Andy: And another caution is when I talk about theological triage in there with JD Crowley, and some people have misused that model that some truths are less important than others. To mean that basically they're the things that all Christians need to agree on, like the trinity and such. That's really important. And if it's not that level, whatever. And I don't want to give that impression at all. All truth matters.

Janet: Yeah.

Andy: It's all important. It's just some is more important. So I don't wanna trivialize anything in the Bible.

Janet: And would it be accurate to say, and some is not as clear, like.



Andy: Oh, certainly. Certainly.

Janet: And some things are just clear. we don't really have an option to say, my conscience says Jesus isn't God. So

Andy: I'll tell you the thing I have in mind here is an example in 1 Timothy 2. Paul says, I don't permit a woman to exercise authority over a man. And speaking about authority in the church context. And I'm a New Testament academic, and I, there are a lot of academics who will make that say, I do permit. And, and it's, and someone said, well, theological triage, that's not a first level issue. Egalitarians are going to heaven too. Why are we fighting over this? And I'm thinking okay, granted that's not a first level issue. Egalitarians can go to heaven too. However, we wanna obey the Lord, right? And I don't want to say anything that would minimize a person to give weight to what God has said to do and not to do. So just, that's another caution with the triage model. It does not mean if it's not first level, therefore it doesn't matter.

Jocelyn: Yeah, I think this would be a good time to kind of give us a little summary of what is spiritual triage. It's a really helpful concept. We've talked about it on the podcast several times, but tell us what you mean by that.

Andy: Yeah. So the word triage is a sorting according to priority or urgency. It's a medical term. If you have a hurt finger and you go to the emergency room, you might be waiting for four hours and then a guy gets bumped in front of you 'cause he just had a car accident and he's life's in the balance 'cause that's more important, more urgent. Some doctrines are like that. They're so crucial to Christianity. If you lose that, you lose Christianity like that. It's necessary to affirm certain doctrines to be a Christian. And others, like, what's your view on the Sons of God in Genesis 6? It's like it matters. I'm sure your husband has a very nuanced view on that. He's an Old Testament scholar, but you know, you might think it's angels, you might think it's giants or something else. And you know what? I think we can be fellow church members and disagree on that one. It matters. I don't wanna trivialize it. But that's different than what's your view of baptism.

Janet: And it's not as clear.

Andy: Yeah. But even the baptism issue, I've got friends who baptize babies and they're great friends, but I think they're wrong on that.

Jocelyn: And you wouldn't go to the same denomination of church probably.

Andy: That's right.

Jocelyn: So a first tier issue is salvific. To understand that means that you are truly saved. Is that accurate?



Andy: Well, some people affirm those first level issues and they're not Christians like the demons can believe in tremble. So it's more that you can't deny them and be a Christian. In any meaningful sense.

Jocelyn: And so second tier issues are really important and would probably separate denominations.

Andy: Yeah. They're more about health at the church level.

Jocelyn: And then third tier issues?

Andy: Those are matters of conscience that Paul addresses in Romans 14. They're important matters. But they're not at the level of church health or that first level of fundamental dogma.

Jocelyn: And we could be members of the same church, friends, but maybe not agree on those issues. Maybe not see them eye to eye.

Andy: Yeah. A fellow pastor could disagree on third level issues.

Janet: Yeah. So that goes along with, you mentioned earlier when someone is learning and their conscience is being calibrated, and then they use that on social media or in some public way to now denigrate others. So then I know you address in your book, in your subtitle, how do we love those whose conscience differs? How should we handle that when we differ on those issues?

Andy: Yeah. Well, first recognize there's something more important than convincing others that you're right. And that's, are you loving them? And welcoming them as God has welcomed them in Christ. That's the message in Romans 14, but it doesn't mean you're not allowed to talk about third level issues or explain why your convictions are what they are. It's just you need to do that in a kind, respectful, loving way.

Jocelyn: Especially because the scriptures are so clear about the unity of the church and its importance. And if you're making a big deal about how you're free to do Christian liberty things, then you're not at the same time valuing unity.

Andy: Right. And this sounds so wonderful when you talk about it like that, but it's when you name the issue, that's where the debate is well, is that second level or third level.

Jocelyn: And one of the things I appreciated in reading your book was that you talk about how the culture values so highly authenticity and like the whole Fair Trade Coffee growers thing. Like I so identified with it. Because people will make a huge deal about social justice issues and violate very clear scripture at the same time. So I appreciate that that was spoken about in this book. When should we challenge someone's conscience, if ever?



Andy: Well, the clearest way is if they are breaking a black and white commandment. Like if someone is sleeping with his girlfriend with a clear conscience. That conscience is not working correctly and you need to confront that person in love. If it's a professing Christian, obviously. Now, if it's a third level issue that's a little more challenging, you want to respect that person's ground before God to hold that view in a way that honors the Lord and being wrong. That's the category in Romans 14 where you can be theologically incorrect and still honor the Lord. And there's something more important than being theologically correct. The question is it a third level issue and how significant is it? And this is where this book is already eight, nine years old since we wrote it. I might put some things in different categories now. Given what's happened in our culture.

Jocelyn: So how would you speak to a non-believer about their conscience? So like someone is doing something that is not godly. You wouldn't expect them to be living in a godly way. They're not...

Janet: The Bible is not their standard.

Jocelyn: The Bible is not their standard. Jesus is not their king. However, we are all accountable to Him. And we will give an account for how we live according to His truth.

Andy: Right. Romans 1 says that God will hold people accountable for suppressing the general revelation God has given us. For unrighteously suppressing that so people are guilty before God for suppressing that, which means there's built into the human conscience of every person, the ability to recognize what's right and what's wrong. So what do we do when we interact? All we can do is pray and as a Holy Spirit to use the word of God and truth and general revelation to convict the heart. There's no special secret sauce here. Follow steps 1, 2, 3. And this will do it. You need a miracle. There are a lot of strategies I could talk about. One is this a long-term, they know what you believe, you've explained it and they know that you love them. And the relationship isn't exclusively okay you to become a Christian or not, or we're done. But you're in it 'cause you love him.

Jocelyn: I think it's such an important conversation and I was thinking about this as I thought through the book in the last several days about how the world is talking a lot about your truth. My truth, and the importance of living authentically to your truth. While I can live authentically to my truth and it's just such an impossibility, if we are all born with a conscience that has an awareness of right and wrong, there is ultimate truth. And no matter what you think about any given situation, we do have a conscience that speaks loudly. To how our truth interacts with the truth.

Andy: So what's happening in our culture right now is a widespread suppressing of the truth in unrighteousness with reference to gender fluidity. Or this whole identity issue of I identify as this or that. It's craziness, it's make believe. It's not real, it's not in line with reality. How are



people going along with this? They're suppressing the truth and they're harming their consciences. Their consciences are getting worse and worse.

Jocelyn: Yes. As seen by the culture. Yeah. Getting worse and worse.

Janet: But what I have loved just in thinking about big picture of all that we've been talking about with the conscience is that it keeps coming back to the motive in all of it needs to be love. Love even when I need to challenge, because what you're doing is not consistent with the scriptures even if you have a clear conscience. Love if at a second or third, but I feel strongly, but you differ. But that the goal has to be love or we end up, just trying to control other people.

Andy: Agreed. And we should define love. It's not. Some people will say that you're not loving me unless I feel loved. And what they mean by feel loved is I feel affirmed. No, love is I'm doing what's best for you. Not what's best for me, but it's actually what's best for you because I love the Lord and I wanna honor him and how I interact with you. And that might mean I say something that offends you.

Janet: Yeah. It's what's best for their soul.

Andy: Yeah.

Jocelyn: In your book you speak about the fact that there's God's truth. And there's truth that is still true, but it's not in the Bible.

Andy: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Can you talk about that a little bit?

Andy: Sure. let's talk about contraceptives that do not abort a conceived child. What does the Bible say about that? Nothing.

Janet: Nothing. I'm like, I can't think of anything.

Andy: Yeah. Yeah. So I know we're not supposed to murder according to scripture.

Janet: Yeah, that's clear.

Andy: But I don't know from scripture which contraceptive methods take the life of a person or not? How do I find that out? Well, it's not from the Bible, right? I have to go to other resources to find that out. So when you're trying to reach a conviction about a matter, sometimes it means you read your Bible carefully and you study truth outside the Bible to reach a conclusion. And sometimes we could do that wrong. Like some people study truth outside the Bible and they do that wrongly, and that means they reach a wrong conclusion. Right. Is why there's so many



strong convictions about masking or not masking. Vaccines or not vaccines. People are studying truth outside the Bible. And reaching convictions strongly and then putting it all together. And.

Jocelyn: Melding the two.

Andy: Not everyone's doing it correctly.

Jocelyn: I just appreciated the fact that you pointed out that there is God's truth and there is truth that is true. It's just not in the Bible, but it should inform how your conscience makes decisions. I really appreciated the example that you used about IVF in the book. That was helpful to hear specific examples of after thinking through it biblically and also getting outside help from experts in that field, I had to come to this conclusion. And now I can use that firmly held understanding of what's right and wrong, to then confidently move forward and make decisions. And one of the reasons I'm thankful that we're talking about this is because it's so freeing to be able to say, I can be trained by black and white truth that never changes. And it's freeing to fall into what God says is right and good, and to not argue against it, to not fight against it, to not, you know, try to make my truth more important. It's such a comfortable place to live while the world is going crazy all around us. There is right and wrong. God has clarified it, and we just have to agree with him and then live in unity and love as we apply it to our relationships with others.

Janet: Excellent. So I know you also wrote a children's book. Which I thought was really good. And we will have, in the show notes, we'll link your book and the children's book. But why did you write that?

Andy: One of my daughters came to me one day and said, hey daddy, when are you gonna write a book for kids on this? You're always talking about to adults. What about us? And never hit me like, can I do a kid's book? So I'm like, how hard can a kid's book be?

Jocelyn: Theology for children.

Andy: I've read hundreds of kids' books. So like, I read Dr. Seuss, I'm like, I can do this. So I tried to.

Janet: But yours didn't rhyme.

Andy: No, I tried and it not as easy as it looks. In fact, when I was teaching at Faith Bible Seminary years ago, I forget when I did this. I was mentioning it. I was preparing this kid's book and there's a student in the class last name Carter. He said, hey, my wife loves to illustrate.

Jocelyn: Oh, that's so cool. I didn't know that.

Andy: Julie Carter.



Janet: That's where the illustrations came from.

Jocelyn: That's so cool.

Janet: I did not know that.

Jocelyn: That's neat. It's been helpful. We have had to really help one of our kids think through conscience issues and this book has been helpful. She and her mentor working through it It's been interesting to be able to think through, like sometimes you can have an untrained conscience, sometimes you can have a weak conscience all in the same person. Like you can believe really, really strongly that your beliefs are right. And they could be absolutely wrong. And you could be letting yourself off the hook when you should be being much more strict with yourself.

Andy: That's right.

Janet: Yeah. No, I thought it was a really helpful book, and I know for me, if it's a new concept or if I'm reading something and I just need, how do I distill it? Children's books done well are I think it's an excellent tool for that.

Jocelyn: My favorite theology book favorite is a kids book. Yeah. Theology. It's a great, it's a great theology book.

Andy: When I teach seminars on the contents. I often will start by reading the kid's book. I'll say, explain it to more like, I'm five, so like, here we go.

Jocelyn: There you go. It's already done.

Janet: Are there any other resources that you would recommend if somebody wants to dig deeper on this subject? I mean, obviously you wrote it because there was a need, so are there others?

Andy: Yeah, there are resources in the footnotes of the book where you can track down references of more academic resources. There's some missiologists that we cite and some commentaries that are helpful. Yeah, there's not a whole lot I know that are that's like this.

Janet: I know. So that's why I'm glad you wrote it. I think these are unique. Glad Yeah, for sure.

Jocelyn: And another plug for the book, for those who might be thinking about cross-cultural ministry, I loved that you worked through missionary examples. I'm a missionary kid. I grew up on the mission field.

Andy: Oh, so you understood that part.



Jocelyn: I totally was like, yes, this is why I was never allowed to wear anything but coolots growing up, like you have to wear skirt shorts for the rest of your life. So it was helpful to think through like, how do you take black and white theology? And apply it to a situation that is culturally different than you, and it's possible that neither of you are actually right. . Like both of you might be a little bit off from what God says is the standard. So applaud for that. There's a whole section on how this applies to cross-cultural ministries.

Andy: Yes. The last chapter. And JD Crowley is the one mainly behind that and he has so much missionary experience. It's really rich. I think it's the best part of the book.

Jocelyn: I really appreciate it and I appreciated the practical real life examples. And just a plug, I listened to it. You can listen to it in about three and a half hours, and it's very, very helpful.

Janet: Well, excellent. Well, thank you. Thanks for coming, Andy. And I hope that this will be encouraging to our listeners. I know it was a challenge and encouragement to us. Thanks.

Andy: As they say at Chick-fil-A, my pleasure.

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