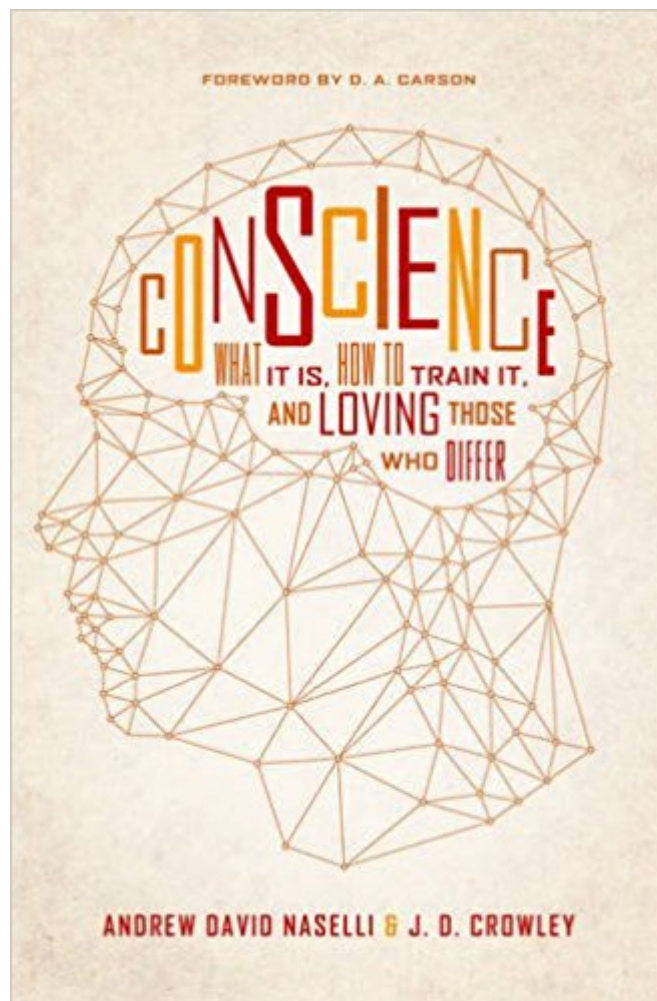


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# Conscience: What It Is, How To Train It, And Loving Those Who Differ



## Synopsis

Christian, meet your conscience. What do you do when you disagree with other Christians? How do you determine which convictions are negotiable and which are not? How do you get along with people who have different personal standards? All of these questions have to do with the conscience. Yet there is hardly a more neglected topic among Christians. In this much-needed book, a New Testament scholar and a cross-cultural missionary explore all thirty passages in the New Testament that deal with the conscience, showing how your conscience impacts virtually every aspect of life, ministry, and missions. As you come to see your conscience as a gift from God and learn how to calibrate it under the lordship of Jesus Christ, you will not only experience the freedom of a clear conscience but also discover how to lovingly interact with those who hold different convictions.

## Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Crossway (April 30, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1433550741

ISBN-13: 978-1433550744

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.4 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 40 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #50,485 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #66 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Ethics #866 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Theology

## Customer Reviews

"I expected this book to be good but found it to be great. Conscience is a much-needed treatment of a vital yet neglected subject. Naselli and Crowley's overview of the New Testament doctrine of conscience is superb. I was ready to say that that chapter was worth the price of the book, but in fact, I found every chapter to be worth the price of the book! Its treatment of how Christian consciences overlap yet differ and of why we need to calibrate our consciences was remarkable. This book is for everyone with an interest in cross-cultural ministry, as well as for those seeking to become all things to all people that they may win some. It's also extremely helpful for those living in churches, marriages, and friendships where different convictions

aren't always as black-and-white as we imagine. Conscience would be great to study in a small group.

•Randy Alcorn, Founder and Director, Eternal Perspective Ministries; author, *Heaven*, *The Treasure Principle*, and *The Ishbane Conspiracy*

“How should Christians navigate the complex world of disagreements with other Christians? Can we differentiate the scriptural non-negotiables, the things we just personally feel strongly about, and those to which we give scarcely a second thought? How can the church best model unity in both love and truth in these matters? Naselli and Crowley bring both cross-cultural experience and scriptural acumen to deftly deal with these issues in straightforward language that almost anyone can grasp. Warmly recommended.

•Craig L. Blomberg, Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Denver Seminary

“In our culture awash with instructions to follow our own hearts, we desperately need this book. On a personal note, next to the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, the Bible's teaching on the conscience has become to me a deeply encouraging motivation in my evangelism. In the last chapter in particular, Naselli and Crowley have given a great gift to cross-cultural workers everywhere!

•Gloria Furman, author, *The Pastor's Wife*; *Missional Motherhood*; and *Alive in Him*

“It is rare to find a book that is both punchy and practical. It was a delight to read, and now it is a delight to recommend. I believe that the scriptural concept of the conscience has become so fuzzy or forgotten that all readers will find this little book illuminating for issues that touch upon all of life. All will find it life-giving. Some will find it life-changing.

•Jason C. Meyer, Pastor for Preaching and Vision, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

“I have never read a better book on the conscience. Naselli and Crowley base their view of conscience on a careful reading of the Scriptures. At the same time, the book is full of practical wisdom. The biblical teaching on conscience is applied to numerous situations so that readers see how the Scriptures apply to everyday life. The reflections on how conscience should operate in missionary situations is alone worth the price of the book, but the entire book is a gem.

•Thomas R. Schreiner, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Professor of Biblical Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky

“There is, for too many of us, a casual, maybe even self-righteous, contentment with the current status of our consciences rather than an active cultivating of them so as to bring them more in line with God's view of things. This book pushes us to that second, better choice. It is a thoughtful and provocative treatment of this hugely important and all too often insufficiently considered subject. I believe you will find it very helpful.

•Mike Bullmore, Senior Pastor, CrossWay Community Church, Bristol, Wisconsin

“Naselli and Crowley have

produced a book of deep and broad practical relevance for living the Christian life. We are often far too little aware of the role of our consciences in our day-to-day lives, while the truth is, God has given us those faculties as part of the divinely designed means to keep us on the path of righteousness. I found their discussion of the recalibration of the conscience, and of how to deal with fellow Christians who have different senses of right and wrong, to be filled with biblical wisdom and enormous insight. Here is a book that promises great reward for those who will follow not only its clear discussion but also its biblical admonition.

—Bruce A. Ware, T. Rupert and Lucille Coleman Professor of Christian Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Naselli and Crowley have provided us with a practical, biblical work that cleans out the clutter in the closets of our consciences. There is gospel-centered perspective here that can bring about greater healing in our relationships, holiness in our lives, unity in our churches, and joy in our mission.

—Tim Keesee, executive director, Frontline Missions International; author, *Dispatches from the Front: Stories of Gospel Advance in the World's Difficult Places*

“In his kindness God has created each of us with a conscience to bear witness to his supreme authority. The problem for many of us is that our consciences have been subject to cultural, religious, and sinful influences that warp and distort our ability to make life choices. Naselli and Crowley have provided God's people with a tremendous tool for understanding the Scriptures as they define the conscience, describe its role, and teach us to cleanse and calibrate it according to God's authority alone. The church is indebted to these two authors for their careful scholarship and practical discussion of this most important topic.

—Dan Brooks, Pastor, Heritage Bible Church, Greer, South Carolina

“If you don't know the state of your conscience, or if you have never done a serious study of the Bible's teaching on the conscience, Christian freedom, and Christian unity, then I cannot commend enough Andy Naselli and J. D. Crowley's book, *Conscience: What It Is, How to Train It, and Loving Those Who Differ*. I think it might be the most important book written in the last twenty years.

—Thabiti Anyabwile, pastor, Anacostia River Church, Washington, D. C.; author, *What Is a Healthy Church Member?*

Andrew David Naselli (PhD, Bob Jones University; PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) is assistant professor of New Testament and biblical theology at Bethlehem College & Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota. J. D. Crowley (MA, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary) has been doing missionary and linguistic work among the indigenous minorities of northeast Cambodia since 1994. He is the author of numerous books, including *Commentary on*

Romans for Cambodia and Asia and the Tampuan/Khmer/English Dictionary.D. A. Carson (PhD, Cambridge University) is research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he has taught since 1978. He is a cofounder of the Gospel Coalition and has written or edited nearly 120 books. He and his wife, Joy, have two children and live in the north suburbs of Chicago.

The Christian life is unique and simple. We are called to obey God's will. However, God has also chosen to equip us all with different personalities, interests, cultures, skin colors, and languages. This makes living life according to God's will all the more challenging especially since we are called to live it out in a diverse community of individuals and not a simple homogenous society. This book helps serve as a quick guide for navigating the edges or grey spaces of our faith traditions. I very much enjoyed reading it!

Great book covering a very important topic. Our Bible study class in our church is currently going through a study, using this book as the basis for our study. God's word specifically mentions our conscience many times (30 times in the New Testament) and the importance of our conscience being properly aligned with the truth. Our conscience, itself, is a gift from God, and we must be fully aware of truth, otherwise our conscience can lead us toward making wrong decisions and having wrong understandings.

How in the world could I recommend this book for everyone? If you want to participate in missions (local, regional or global), or spend time with someone from another culture/upbringing, or you want to spend time with someone other than yourself, you're probably going to run into conscience clashes. Learning what our conscience is, how we can better align it with God's conscience (and no the Holy Spirit is not our conscience after we are saved), and understanding why someone's conscience differs from mine have been immensely valuable in my interactions with people.

I really appreciated this biblical and thoughtful book on the human conscience. It is a topic that is rarely ever discussed/studied within Christianity even though the bible makes some pretty important points in regards to how our conscience functions in our lives and in our fellowship with God. This book is a must have if you want to be able to better understand how we need to think about, reason with, and obey the Word of God as Christians.

I found this book to be a thorough explanation of God's design for the conscience. The authors followed logical arguments on how to calibrate the conscience with helpful graphics to illustrate, and did a good job of boiling it all down to the purpose of it all - advancing Christ's kingdom agenda with maturity and preference of others. I believe Christians would find this book extremely helpful, as they navigate the spectrum of Christianity, to not go to the extremes of being judgmental or licentious. If nothing else it will provoke thought and lay the burden of constructing an authoritative rebuttal at the feet of those who disagree.

Don't even bother with this book. Less-than-sophomoric, rambling, nonsensical, even hypocritical. The author conflates "conscience" with shifting personal commitments, and sliding-scale morality that holds its finger to the wind. Pretending to be scripturally based (LOL), the author on one hand condemns in-vitro fertilization then turns around and blesses the observance of Halloween.

This is the best book on the conscience I have ever read! Naselli and Crowley do a great job presenting the biblical evidence, illustrating it with beautiful triangles, and applying it to missions. Their applications were very well thought out and helpful to the church. Their description of Christian liberty and love in the church was the highlight of the book. This book will not answer all your questions, but it will help you think through issues of conscience.

In my 35 plus years as a believer and in ministry I can remember three sermons on the conscience (one of them was my own). This book is not only needed to fill in the gap but also to instruct and challenge the Church of Christ. Division within the Body (both locally and worldwide) is often over conscience issues. This book will help us sort things out and learn to love those with whom we disagree.

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