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Doctrinal Studies Bible Church  
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I Timothy Book Study (#23)

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## A GUILTY CONSCIENCE

The background of this lesson comes from an incident in the family of Jacob some 30 years after his brothers sold him into slavery, They then showed their father Joseph's special coat soaked in animal blood and their father concluded Joseph had been killed by wild animals (Gen.37:25-36).

**After 30 years** of getting on with their lives, Joseph's brothers **guilty consciences** resurfaced in our lesson text.

We will examine our lesson text by the following three parts.

(Gen.42:1-5)	Famine test	God is bringing their guilt conscience to a head (Gen.50:19-20)
(Gen.42:6-17)	Fidelity test	Joseph is bringing it to a head (Gen.42:9)
(Gen.42:18-34)	Family test	Family has no more options but to deal with the ugly truth (42:18-22, 28, 31, 34)

### **Let's do the math:**

- 17 yrs. old [His dream]
  - (Gen.37:2a) This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, [Cast into the pit and left for dead]
  - (Gen.37:23) This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen,
- 30 yrs. old [Prime Minister of Egypt]
  - (Gen.41:46) Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh King of Egypt.
- 7 yrs. of plenty
  - (Gen.45:47) During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully.
- 2 yrs. into the next 7 yrs. of famine
  - (Gen.45:6) For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping.

$(30 - 17 = 13) + (7 + 2 = 9) =$  it has been some 22 years and now the brothers hear of the abundance of food in Egypt and we are into our lesson text (Gen.42:1-34).

<b>This lesson will introduce <u>four aspects</u> of a Guilty Conscience.</b>
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### **1. Our lesson text begins with Jacob recommending his sons seek famine relief from Egypt, the only nation that had food.**

This triggered a bewildered look in his sons that evoked a question from Jacob, "Why are you looking at one another this way (raah/ hithpael impf? (Gen.41:57-42:2)

Jacob is puzzled by their bewildered look and restates his recommendation about Egypt (Gen.42:2). This is a 22 year old guilty conscience in the 10 sons regarding their evil action against Joseph (Gen.37:28).

Jacob knew something was wrong but there was no obvious reason to suspect any evil act against Joseph.

**2. Their sin is still present in their guilty consciences and will remain so until it is cleansed by the blood of Christ.**

It will remain dormant but still intact – Why? – Because of unconfessed sin and uncleansed conscience (Acts 24:16; 1 John 1:7-9).

It is interesting to me that they used a sacrificial animal to conceal their sin. Shadow Christology was used to cleanse their guilty conscience. (Gen.37:31; Lev.16:9).

(Heb.9:13-14) “For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, **how much more will the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve a living God?”

**3. The depth of their guilty conscience shows that there was a traumatic history attached to it.**

(1 John 3:19-21). It also shows that it will not go away until it is dealt with properly by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7-9).

It has been some 22 years and a guilty conscience is present in the brothers. When triggered, it resurfaces with its trauma history (Rom.2:15) [accusing and defending].

You hear **the world say**, “let your conscience be your guide.” (2 Cor.1:12) But a guilty conscience doesn’t guide well. It wallows in the details of a guilty conscience (Gen.42:1, 21-22).

**“Reuben answered them, saying, ‘Did I not tell you, Do not sin against the boy;’ and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood.”** (Gen.42:22)

It was still present even after the offended person forgave them (Gen.45:5-6). In fact after another 17 years in Egypt, the brother’s guilty conscience still remains intact **some 39 years later!** (22+17=39) (Gen.47:28; 50:15-21).

**4. The difference between the conscience of Joseph and the brothers is the difference between cosmos diabolicus thinking of the world and divine viewpoint thinking of the word of God.**

The brothers tried to justify their two evil actions: one against Joseph (Gen.37:12-19) and one against Jacob (Gen.37:11, 23, 31-35). The special coat had become an object of hate.

**THE DIFFERENCE:** Joseph understood the need for the cleansing of the conscience by blood of Christ to have a good conscience based on faith in the word of God.

(Heb.10:22) “Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, **having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience** and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Eph.5:26; 2 Tim.1:3)

**GOOD CONSCIENCE:** when Joseph knew it was his brothers, he remembered that his **dream from God** had been fulfilled (Gen.37:5-8; 45:3-8; 50:19-20; **1 Tim.1:19; Ps.119:11**).

- **Do you understand the difference between Joseph’s conscience and his brothers?**

Joseph gave his brothers good Scriptural counsel on dealing with their guilty conscience (Acts 24:16; Gen.45:5, 7-8; 50:19-20) – **“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”** (Gen.50:20; Rom.8:28; 12:2)