

## Small Group Discussion Guide — Read Hebrews 9:1-14

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*“The conscience is properly man’s inner knowledge of himself, especially in the sense of his answerability for his motives and actions in view of the fact that he, as a creature made in the image of God, stands before and must give an account of himself to his Creator. As a sinner, who has failed to keep the standard of God’s law, he has an inner consciousness of his guilt and of his need for cleansing and restoration.”*

*-Philip E. Hughes<sup>1</sup>*

- Do you often consider that you have this “God-given” faculty of a conscience that can be seared or damaged, but also can be informed and calibrated by the truth of God’s Word? Why is it important that we listen to our conscience?
- What does it mean that your conscience can either excuse you, or accuse you? What are some ways that others, or even us at times, are often tempted to try to pacify our guilty conscience?
- What effect is the author’s contrast between the old covenant sacrificial system and the new covenant sacrifice of Christ meant to have on a guilty conscience? Why is he so intent on walking through the regulations for worship under the old covenant in vs. 1-7?
- Why were those under the old covenant never able have a cleansed conscience? We were given at least three answers to that question, do you remember? Can you explain and show where we see each answer here in our text?
- What new insights, or fresh reminders, did you glean from the thorough description this morning of the tabernacle in the Old Testament and the Day of Atonement? What was its “set up” intended to communicate to the old covenant people?
- Even though we won’t look in detail at vs. 11-14 until next time, how is what Christ has done to purify our conscience something that was impossible under the old covenantal system, but possible now?
- How were you comforted, challenged, or convicted this morning by God’s Word?
- In what ways are you tempted to focus on the “externals” in order to provide you cleansing from sin and a “clean conscience,” rather than clinging to Christ? Why is this often such a struggle for us?

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<sup>1</sup> P. E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, pg. 324.