

## 4. Its Requirements

### a. Every oil lamp requires daily trimming.

- 1) When we lived in the jungle in PNG, we had a simple kerosene lantern. Every day, we had to clean the glass and carefully trim the wick. If not, it was useless.
- 2) The Jewish lamps required similar trimming. In the story of the ten virgins who awaited the bridegroom, we read, (Matthew 25:7) "**Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.**"
- 3) When you confess sin that your lamp reveals, you are trimming the wick and cleaning the glass.

### b. Every oil lamp requires daily refuelling.

- 1) If a Christian drifts away from the Lord, at first his conscience chides him, but it eventually becomes calloused and hardened. This greatly hurts him spiritually.
- 2) Communion with God refuels our inner lamp. Reading of God's Word reviews God's truth and keeps the conscience sharp. Praying as David prayed fuels the conscience with God's power.
- 3) Because unbelievers do not do this, their candles burn dimly or go out. They can do evil things that do not seem to bother them.

**Conclusion:** Read Proverbs 20:27 again. Is your inner candle in good repair, or has it become dirty and in desperate need of trimming? When God uses your conscience to identify a sin, whether large or small, the worst thing you can do is ignore that conviction.

If your conscience is convicting you of something you said, thought, or did, I urge you to trim your lamp by confession, clean the glass through repentance, and refuel it your lamp by spending quality time with the Lord in His Word and in prayer. If you practice this on a daily basis, the candle of the LORD in your inner spirit will help to keep you close to the Lord.

**Song:** Cleanse Me - 166

# The Candle of the LORD

3 March 2024 PM – Text: Proverbs 20:27 – Topic: Conscience

**Introduction:** Candles today come in many shapes, sizes, colours, and fragrances. Candles are used at weddings, at special dinners, for romantic evenings, at Christmas, and just for enjoyment.

This evening, we are going to look at another kind of candle that has a very important purpose.

**Transition:** (Proverbs 20:27) "**The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.**" Here, we read that our spirit is a candle. As we study this verse, I want you to learn four things about your spirit's function as a candle: its description, its design, its object, and its requirements.

## 1. Its Description

### a. Just what is the spirit of man?

- 1) God created man unique from all the animals. He did not make us advanced animals; He made us humans. He gave humans a living soul. (Genesis 2:7) "**And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.**"
- 2) Our spirit is a rational thinking Spirit, conscious of its own existence, and exerting powers which make its existence apparent to others. <sup>Wardlaw</sup>
- 3) "The spirit of man," means his understanding, reason, or conscience. <sup>Ibid, underline added.</sup>
- 4) Solomon calls this spirit, "the spirit of the LORD" because it was a gift from God to humans. Every human has this spirit or conscience deep within him.
- 5) It is that part of you that pricks you when you do something that you know is not right.

### b. Why is it compared to a candle?

- 1) First of all, this candle is not a wax stick with a wick in the middle. The word actually refers to a lamp. Lamps in Bible times were often a shallow clay bowl filled with olive oil with a spout on one end into which a flax wick was inserted and lit.

- 2) God compares the spirit of man to a candle because a candle lighted dark places. Today, we are spoiled by electric lights and large glass windows. However, many ancient homes had only small windows, making the interior dark. This made oil lamps very important in daily life.
- 3) If you have gone tent camping where there is no electricity, you can picture the importance of lamps in Bible days. Without a lamp, everything at night is in the dark.
- 4) When God said that the spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, he was saying that your spirit acts as a lamp or light. God uses it as a lamp in your life.

## 2. Its Design

### a. God created your spirit as a lamp to search.

- 1) The ancients used their dim oil lamps to search for things they could not find. In Luke 15:8, the woman who lost a coin lighted a lamp to help her search for the lost coin. We also read in Luke 11:33, "**No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.**"
- 2) Even today, if you just walked around your yard and accidentally dropped something valuable, what would you do? You would get a torch to shine around as you searched for it.
- 3) That is exactly why God gave you a spirit or lamp. He designed it so that you could search for things.

### b. God created it to search your belly.

- 1) What is your belly? We know it as our stomach area. However, in Bible days, when people spoke of the invisible inner part of their being, they called it their belly. Your belly is your whole inner being.
- 2) Commentator Richard Wardlaw gives a helpful description of this and similar terms. "Thus, we speak of the **heart**, when we mean the affections; of the **bowels**, when we mean the emotions of compassion or tenderness; of the

**spleen**, when we mean capricious ill-nature. It is on a similar principle that, in a more general way, the Hebrews used "the **belly**" for all within." Emphasis added.

- 3) When the candle of the LORD searches your belly, it is searching all that is in your inner being, every part. It is acting as your conscience. You cannot hide anything from your spirit, the candle of the LORD, which is your conscience.

## 3. Its Object

### a. Why does God want our conscience to search us?

- 1) It examines closely, not only our actions, but also our motives. It uncovers and reveals all that displeases the Lord.
- 2) To this, Wardlaw adds, "It is only when "the lamp" is not used, or used with unfaithful and superficial carelessness, that evil remains undetected."
- 3) God's Word works in harmony with a Christian's conscience. Hebrews 4:12 states, "**... the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**"
- 4) Harry Ironside notes, "Through the spirit [conscience], God communicates to man and pours His light into every chamber of his being."

### b. Our conscience also protects us.

- 1) It protects us from self-deception.
- 2) If your inner lamp or conscience did not convict you when you did or thought something wrong, you would easily deceive yourself into thinking that you did no wrong.
- 3) God uses his candle in your inmost being to reveal sin so that you cannot ignore it without miserable consequences.
- 4) When David prayed, (Psalms 139:23-24) "**Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting**", he was asking God to use His candle to examine him thoroughly.