Using the Conscience:
A Guide to Being a Light in the World
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As a 17-year-old African American male, my journey through high school has been one of challenge, growth, and resilience. My experiences as a varsity football player, despite receiving little playing time, and my achievement of becoming an Eagle Scout have taught me profound lessons about character, patience, and the power of the Conscience. The Conscience, that inner voice that whispers Truth, has been my guiding force in moments of frustration, self-doubt, and perseverance. It has shaped my thoughts, words, and actions in ways that have led to both expected and unexpected consequences, ultimately allowing me to embrace my role as a light in the world.

The Challenge: Choosing How to Respond
Playing varsity football as a tight end was a dream I had worked toward for years. I put in countless hours of training, conditioning, and studying the game. However, I spent more time on the sidelines than on the field, watching teammates play while I waited for an opportunity that never fully came.

Frustration and disappointment crept in. My Conscience gave me two choices: I could allow resentment to take hold, and could become bitter and disengaged, or I could choose to stay committed, work harder, and support my team regardless of my personal circumstances. I decided to listen to my Conscience, recognizing that true character is revealed in moments of adversity, not in easy victories.

The Results: Strength in Character Over Recognition
Despite my limited playing time, I chose to be fully engaged. I studied the plays, encouraged my teammates, and trained relentlessly. Though my efforts did not immediately lead to more time on the field, they did result in something greater—respect. My coaches noticed my discipline, my teammates saw my dedication, and I gained confidence in myself, knowing that my worth was not solely tied to external validation. I was even selected to lead the team on the field with the State of Texas flag during state playoffs as a result.

Off the field, my involvement in the Boy Scouts had already shaped my values. I had completed every requirement to become an Eagle Scout, a journey that required

leadership, service, and integrity. In Scouting, I had learned to put others before myself, to act with honesty, and to lead by example. These same principles guided my response to my football challenges. By staying true to my Conscience, I realized that being a light in the world is not about being in the spotlight; it's about how we carry ourselves when no one is watching.

The Unexpected Consequences: Influence Beyond the Field

What I did not expect was the ripple effect of my actions. Younger players began looking up to me, not because I was the star player, but because of the way I handled adversity. Some confided in me about their own struggles, and I became a mentor without even realizing it. My words of encouragement and my example of perseverance inspired them to stay focused, even when things didn't go their way.

Additionally, I found that my patience and humility on the football team carried over into other areas of my life. In school, I became more understanding of classmates who felt overlooked. I intensified my studies, resulting in the University Interscholastic League (UIL) All District American and National Honor Society honors. At home, I learned to handle conflicts with a level head. In my community, I felt compelled to serve even more—whether it was helping at my church's youth ministry, volunteering through Scouts, or simply being someone others could count on.

Lessons Learned: The Power of The Conscience

Through this journey, I learned three major lessons about the Conscience and being a light in the world:

1. Your Value Is Not Determined by Others' Recognition

It would have been easy to measure my worth based on playing time or public praise, but I realized that true value comes from character. Choosing to act with integrity, regardless of the outcome, builds a foundation that cannot be shaken.

2. Influence Comes in Unexpected Ways

Initially, I wanted to prove myself on the field. In the end, my impact was felt off the field. My decision to listen to my Conscience and remain positive inspired those around me in ways I had not anticipated. Influence is not always loud or obvious—it often comes from quiet strength.

3. Being a Light in the World Starts with Small Choices

Every day, we are faced with choices that test our Conscience. Do we respond with kindness or frustration? Do we uplift others or focus only on ourselves? Being a light is not about grand gestures but about making consistent, positive choices in daily life.

Looking Forward: Carrying the Light into the Future

As I prepare for college, I carry these lessons with me. I plan to study finance and entrepreneurship, with the goal of making a lasting impact in business and beyond. No matter what challenges come my way, I know that listening to my Conscience—choosing to act with integrity, perseverance, and selflessness—will guide me in the right direction.

The 2025 contest theme, “Be a Light in the World,” is not just an idea; it is a challenge to live every day with purpose. Light does not need permission to shine. It shines in quiet strength, in moments of uncertainty, and in the way we uplift others even when we may feel overlooked. By choosing to listen to my Conscience, I have already begun that journey, and I am committed to carrying that light forward into every aspect of my life.