



Laws for Doubtful Things

The area of doubtful things are uncertain situations that the believer may encounter that cannot be solved by direct prohibition found in the Bible. These problems can be solved by yourself by application of four basic biblical principles. The question of what is right and what is wrong to do when it is not specifically forbidden by the Word is easily resolved by these four laws. In each law is the principle that a believer should never become a stumbling block to another believer. The believer is never to cater to legalism. Rom. 14:14-15; Rom. 14:20-21.

“I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.” (Romans 14:14-15, NASB)

“Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.” (Romans 14:20-21, NASB)

The context for illustrating how these four laws work is the City of Corinth in the First Century, which was a well-known “good-time” city. There were many heathen temples with bars, a bank, a prostitution center, and also the best cafeterias in town. However, the meat served in the cafeterias and markets had been offered to idols in the heathen temple.

The Law of Liberty

The Law of Liberty is directed toward one’s self. The Law of Liberty is the believer’s liberty to walk in the Spirit free from the bondage of sin. The believer has the right to walk in fellowship and to serve the Lord. The believer has the liberty to operate outside the demands of the old sin nature. This also includes the liberty to curtail your liberty or to enjoy it, depending on the situation. However, this is not the liberty to sin. 1 Cor. 6:12; Gal. 5:1; Gal. 5:13; Rom. 6:1; Rom. 6:15.

“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.” (1 Corinthians 6:12, NASB)

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1, NASB)

“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13, NASB)

“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?” (Romans 6:1, NASB)

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!” (Romans 6:15, NASB)

In Corinth, the debate centered around the meat offering to idols. The Corinthians believers had liberty to eat this meat for they knew the idol meant nothing. However, this knowledge lead to egocentricity. 1 Cor. 8:1-6.

“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought



to know; but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him. Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.” (1 Corinthians 8:1-6, NASB)

The Law of Expediency

The Law of Expediency is expressed toward unbelievers. The Law of Expediency tells us that all believers are witnesses for Jesus Christ and are to refrain from doing some things, not because they are sin, but because doing them prevents the unbeliever from seeing the true issue of their need for salvation. Because of my witness for Jesus Christ to the unbeliever, there are some things I will choose not do in order to have a testimony with certain unbelievers. 1 Cor. 6:12; 1 Cor. 9:22; 1 Cor. 10:23-24.

“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.” (1 Corinthians 6:12, NASB)

“To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.” (1 Corinthians 9:22, NASB)

“All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.” (1 Corinthians 10:23-24, NASB)

If a Corinthian believer was invited to an unbeliever's home, they were not to make an issue out of meat, but to make Jesus Christ the issue. If the unbeliever made an issue out of the meat, they were to refuse it. 1 Cor. 10:23-33.

“All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor. Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience' sake; FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS. If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake. But if anyone says to you, “This is meat sacrificed to idols,” do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience' sake; I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks? Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved.” (1 Corinthians 10:23-33, NASB)

The Law of Love

The Law of Love is directed toward other believers. The Law of Love means that because of your personal love for your Savior and unconditional love for fellow believers, there are certain things which you will refrain from doing. The Law of Love rules out doing some activities in the presence of a weaker or immature believer because doing so will cause them to sin and thus, you become a stumbling block to another believer. By doing what the Law of Liberty allows in their presence, you become a hindrance to their spiritual growth. Even though the weaker believer is in error by believing what you are doing is a sin, you chose to apply the Law of Love and unconditional love for them and refrain from that activity when they are present. Gal. 5:13; 1 Cor 8:13; 1 Cor. 8:9.

“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the



flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13, NASB)

“Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.” (1 Corinthians 8:13, NASB)

“But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.” (1 Corinthians 8:9, NASB)

The maturing believer has the right to do certain things, but they will refrain from doing them not because they are wrong, but because of unconditional *agapao* love for the weaker and often legalistic believer. The maturing believer will refrain from doing certain things to keep the weak believer from being upset, disturbed or critical, and because they want to help other believers rather than hinder them. This is a sign of spiritual maturity.

In Corinth, the weaker believer often saw the other believer in the restaurant where the meat was served. Through the use of the Law of liberty, the weak believer may get out of temporal fellowship. Actually you sin against Christ when you cause a fellow believer to get out of fellowship. The Law of Love is a higher law than the Law of Liberty. 1 Cor. 8:7-13.

“However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.” (1 Corinthians 8:7-13, NASB)

The Law of Supreme Sacrifice

The Law of Supreme Sacrifice is directed toward God and is the highest law of Christian behavior. It generally applies to mature believers to refrain from normal living and legitimate functions in life to serve the Lord in some special way. There are normal pleasant things in life that neither the weak believer nor the unbeliever would object too, which will be set aside to serve the Lord to the maximum.

Paul functioned under this law in 1 Corinthians 9:1-19. Under the Law of Supreme Sacrifice, a few normal things in life are voluntarily set aside when they interfere with concentration on a special ministry or leadership function in life. This is not to be confused with legalism. See category on [Time Utilization](#).

“My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we not have a right to eat and drink? Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?” (1 Corinthians 9:3-6, NASB)

“If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 9:12, NASB)

“What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a



slave to all, so that I may win more.” (1 Corinthians 9:18-19, NASB)