



Christian Liberty

Christian liberty includes four major laws governing the conduct of the believer relating to their participation in questionable or doubtful things. These laws are; the Law of Liberty, the Law of Expediency, the Law of Love, and the Law of Supreme Sacrifice.

The question of which of the believer's actions are right and which are wrong has to do with whether or not the action is specifically forbidden by the Word. For those actions not specifically forbidden in the Word, these four basic biblical principles can be used easily discern the correct application of Bible doctrine to the situation. 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)

Christian liberty for the believer is set forth in many passages of Scripture. It is done in some passages in contrast to legalism in one of its many expressions. There are over 66 passages in the Bible that relate directly with the concept of liberty or freedom for a believer.

Liberty is a concept which basically embraces you as an individual. It is directed toward self. It results from your personal relationship and position with Christ, your own personal knowledge of Bible doctrine, your own personal full persuasion in the mind.

Liberty is based on knowledge of Bible doctrine. Not all believers have knowledge of Bible doctrine, therefore, not all believers understand their Christian liberty and their responsibility to others weaker believers. 1 Cor. 8:4, 1 Cor. 8:7.

"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." (1 Corinthians 8:4, NASB)

"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." (1 Corinthians 8:7, NASB)

The believer who has knowledge of Bible doctrine should understand their own personal liberty and not allow it to be a stumbling block to another believer. 1 Cor. 8:9.

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

Liberty should not be dogmatically insisted upon if it is going to cause a weaker believer to fall. 1 Cor. 8:10-13, Gal. 5:13-15.

"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 8:10-13, 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. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.” (Galatians 5:13-15, NASB)

Christian liberty is the object of scrutiny of religious legalists. Gal. 2:1-14. Those religious legalists who scrutinize the use of liberty by other believers are called “false brethren” in Galatians 2:4.

“But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.” (Galatians 2:4, NASB)

The methods of the religious legalists are always done in what they think is privacy. They seem convinced that no one will understand their clever subilities. In Galatians 2:4, “to spy out” is the aorist active infinitive of purpose of κατασκοπέω (kataskopeō) and means to inspect, to spy, to check out carefully. “Bring us into bondage” is καταδουλόω (katadouloō) and means to enslave utterly, to bring into bondage.

The Four Laws of Christian Liberty

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 can 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 was 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 my personal love for my Savior and unconditional love for fellow believers, there are certain things which I 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 love (agapao) 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 brother 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 [Utilization of Time](#).

“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)



Christian Liberty From the Greek and Hebrew Texts

Liberty related to relaxation.

The Greek term ἀνεσις (anesis) means to loosen, relaxing, relief, rest from persecution, held in less rigorous confinement, relief from the troubles of poverty.

Anesis means relaxation from persecution in 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

"and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire," (2 Thessalonians 1:7, NASB)

Anesis means relaxation of the mind. 2 Corinthians 2:13 and 2 Corinthians 7:5.

"I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia." (2 Corinthians 2:13, NASB)

"For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within." (2 Corinthians 7:5, NASB)

Anesis means relaxation of those things confining you in Acts 24:23.

"Then he gave orders to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and yet have some freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to him." (Acts 24:23, NASB)

Anesis means relaxation from the personal poverty pain in 2 Corinthians 8:13.

"For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality" (2 Corinthians 8:13, NASB)

Liberty as a Release From Bondage

In Luke 4:18, "release" is ἀφεσις (aphesis) and means to release from the oppression of sin. "Oppressed" is the perfect passive participle of θραύω (thrauō) and means to be broken by calamity, break in pieces, shattered, smitten through.

"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED," (Luke 4:18, NASB)

Aphesis is used as liberty as a release from "penalty" of sin in Matthew 26:28, Mark 1:4, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 9:22, Hebrews 10:18, and Colossians 1:14.

"for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:28, NASB)

"John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." (Mark 1:4, NASB)

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7, NASB)

"And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." (Hebrews 9:22, NASB)

"Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin." (Hebrews



10:18, NASB)

"in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:14, NASB)

Positional and Volitional Liberty

In 1 Corinthians 10:29, "freedom" is ἐλευθερία (eleutheria) and means the freedom of volition to do or not to do.

"I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience?" (1 Corinthians 10:29, NASB)

Eleutheria is used as liberty from the law of Moses in Galatians 2:4, Galatians 5:1, Galatians 13, and 1 Peter 2:16.

"But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage." (Galatians 2:4, 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)

"Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God." (1 Peter 2:16, NASB)

Eleutheria is used as liberty from Jewish errors in 2 Corinthians 3:17.

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:17, NASB)

Eleutheria is used as liberty from the old sin nature control in James 1:25 and James 2:12.

"But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." (James 1:25, NASB)

"So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty." (James 2:12, NASB)

Eleutheria is used as liberty from the frailties of life in Romans 8:21.

"that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." (Romans 8:21, NASB)

Eleutheria is used as liberty by some to do what one pleases as a license in 2 Peter 2:19.

"promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved." (2 Peter 2:19, NASB)

Liberty's Authority, Right, and Privilege

In Romans 9:21, "right" is ἐξουσία (exousia) and indicates liberty and right. It is used as the power of choice and authority in Acts 1:7.

"Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?" (Romans 9:21, NASB)

"He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;'" (Acts 1:7, NASB)

Exousia is used as the liberty of doing as one pleases in 1 Corinthians 9:12, 1 Corinthians 9:18, Acts 5:4,



and 1 Corinthians 8:9.

"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." (1 Corinthians 9:18, NASB)

""While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."" (Acts 5:4, NASB)

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

Exousia is used as the liberty to give leave or permission in Revelation 22:14.

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14, NASB)

Exousia is used as the ability or strength which one possesses in Matthew 9:8.

"But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men." (Matthew 9:8, NASB)

Exousia is used as the authority or right to do something in Matthew 21:23, Mark 9:28, and Luke 20:2.

"When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?" (Matthew 21:23, NASB)

"When He came into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out?" (Mark 9:28, NASB)

"and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?" (Luke 20:2, NASB)

Exousia is used as the power of rule or government in Matthew 28:18.

"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 28:18, NASB)

Exousia is used as delegated authority in Acts 9:14 and Acts 26:10.

"and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." (Acts 9:14, NASB)

""And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them." (Acts 26:10, NASB)

Exousia is used as the authority to manage domestic affairs in Mark 13:34.

" " It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. " (Mark 13:34, NASB)



Liberty of Termination

Liberty means more than liberty of position, volition and authority. It also means the liberty of termination. The Greek word ἐλευθερος (eleutheros) has the following expressions of liberty. It is used as having liberty by birth in John 8:33, Ephesians 5:8, and Colossians 3:11.

"They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free?'" (John 8:33, NASB)

"for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light" (Ephesians 5:8, NASB)

"a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all." (Colossians 3:11, NASB)

Eleutheros is used as one who ceases to be a slave in 1 Corinthians 7:21.

"Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that." (1 Corinthians 7:21, NASB)

Eleutheros is used as one who is not bound by an obligation in 1 Corinthians 9:1 and Romans 7:3. One is no longer under obligation so that one may now do what was formerly forbidden by the person or thing to which one was bound.

"Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?" (1 Corinthians 9:1, NASB)

"So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man." (Romans 7:3, NASB)

Eleutheros is used as liberty to remarry in 1 Corinthians 7:39.

"A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39, NASB)

Eleutheros is used as liberty from paying taxes in Matthew 17:25-26.

"He said, 'Yes.' And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, 'What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs or poll-tax, from their sons or from strangers?' When Peter said, 'From strangers,' Jesus said to him, 'Then the sons are exempt.'" (Matthew 17:25-26, NASB)

Eleutheros is used as liberty from the obligation to the law of Moses in Galatians 4:26 and 1 Peter 2:16.

"But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother." (Galatians 4:26, NASB)

"Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God." (1 Peter 2:16, NASB)

Eleutheros is used as liberty to follow one's own will and pleasures, so far as it relates to righteousness in Romans 7:20.

"But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me." (Romans 7:20, NASB)

Liberty Resulting in Freedom



The Greek word ἀπολύω (apoluō) has the following expressions of liberty. It is used as liberty to liberate one from a thing (termination concept). Luke 13:12.

"When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, 'Woman, you are freed from your sickness.'" (Luke 13:12, NASB)

Apoluō is used as liberty to let go or dismiss in Matthew 15:23.

"But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, 'Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.'" (Matthew 15:23, NASB)

Apoluō is used as liberty to send away in Matthew 14:15.

"When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, 'This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.'" (Matthew 14:15, NASB)

Apoluō is used as liberty to release, to let go in Matthew 18:27.

"And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt." (Matthew 18:27, NASB)

Apoluō is used to acquit one accused of a crime and set at liberty in John 19:12.

"As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, 'If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.'" (John 19:12, NASB)

Apoluō is used as liberty to divorce, dismiss from the house in Matthew 19:3.

"Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?'" (Matthew 19:3, NASB)

Apoluō is used as liberty of the wife who improperly deserts her husband and marries another in Mark 10:12.

"and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery."" (Mark 10:12, NASB)

The Hebrew adjective for freedom חֲפֹשִׁי (chophshîy) has the following usages. It is used for freedom from slavery where slaves were set free in the seventh year. Exodus 21:2.

"If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment." (Exodus 21:2, NASB)

Chophshîy is used for freedom from slavery because of injury in Exodus 21:26.

"If a man strikes the eye of his male or female slave, and destroys it, he shall let him go free on account of his eye." (Exodus 21:26, NASB)

Chophshîy is used for freedom from taxes and obligations in 1 Samuel 17:25.

"The men of Israel said, 'Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel.'" (1 Samuel 17:25, NASB)



The Hebrew word for liberty דֶּרֹר (derôr) has the following uses.

Derôr is used of liberty of the year of Jubilee in Isaiah 61:1.

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;" (Isaiah 61:1, NASB)

Derôr is used of liberty of release in the Sabbatical year in Jeremiah 34:8.

"The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who were in Jerusalem to proclaim release to them:" (Jeremiah 34:8, NASB)

Derôr is used of liberty to be destroyed by sword, pestilence, and famine in Ezekiel 46:17. Liberty has a volitional connotation here.

"But if he gives a gift from his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his until the year of liberty; then it shall return to the prince. His inheritance shall be only his sons'; it shall belong to them." (Ezekiel 46:17, NASB)

Balancing the Four Laws of Christian Liberty

The Law of Liberty must be balanced with the Law of Love. Liberty is not to be used as an opportunity to satisfy your fleshly desires. Gal. 5:13-15.

"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. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another." (Galatians 5:13-15, NASB)

In Galatians 5:13, "opportunity" is ἀφορμή (aphormē) and refers to a base of operation, a place from which a movement or attack is made, that by which you are excited to do a thing, that which gives occasion or incentive, the resources we have in attempting to do a thing. Therefore, the idea of this word is a base of operations, an exciting motivator, incentive or resources to do a thing.

Liberty is not to be used as a base of operation, the motivator, the incentive, or the resource to do the thing you desire. "Love" is ἀγαπάω (agapaō) and refers to the unconditional mental attitude love from the filling of the Holy Spirit coupled with the *epignosis* Bible doctrine in the soul that produces a capacity to love others regardless of how they behave.

The Law of Liberty must be balanced with Law of Expediency. 1 Cor. 10:23-33. Liberty is not to be used when it is not expedient to do so. In 1 Corinthians 10:23, "profitable" is συμφέρω (sumpherō) and also means expedient. All things are lawful, but not all things contribute in order to help. All things are lawful, but not all things build.

"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)

"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?" (1 Corinthians 10:28-29, NASB)

"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;" (1 Corinthians 10:31-32, NASB)



Liberty is built on knowledge which by itself can puff up and cause arrogance. Love is built on knowledge, which itself builds up and is profitable. Love edifies. The knowledge of *epignosis* Bible doctrine is the product of the filling of the Spirit and that which is a part of the spiritual growth process. 1 Cor. 8:1, Gal. 5:15, Eph. 4:25-32.

“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.” (1 Corinthians 8:1, NASB)

“But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.” (Galatians 5:15, NASB)

“Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger,” (Ephesians 4:25-26, NASB)

“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.” (Ephesians 4:29, NASB)

The Law of Liberty must be balanced with the Law of Supreme Sacrifice. 1 Cor. 9:1-18, 1 Cor. 9:19-27.

“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?” (1 Corinthians 9:4-5, NASB)

“If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? 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 9:11-12, NASB)

“For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. 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.” (1 Corinthians 9:17-18, NASB)

“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law;” (1 Corinthians 9:19-20, 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. I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.” (1 Corinthians 9:22-23, NASB)

Christian Liberty’s Self-imposed Restrictions

The strong or spiritually mature believer is one who by reason of knowledge of Bible doctrine and resultant spiritual growth understands their own liberty and recognizes the legalism possible or at least lack of liberty of a weaker believer. Strength and liberty are directly related to truth. James 1:25.

“But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.” (James 1:25, NASB)

The mature believer will normally have some responses to the weaker believer. They may want to establish a friendship with them to help them. They may want to establish a friendship with them to straighten them out. They may simply observe them as one who is stupid and deficient in doctrine.



They may develop a wrong mental attitude toward the believer with norms and standards that seem to point accusing fingers at their liberty. They may seek to impress the weaker believer by showing off in front of them in the area where the weaker believer is sensitive. They may consider the weaker believer to be out of fellowship and not make a distinction between the concepts of carnality and the restrictions due to a lack of spiritual growth.

The strong believer is not to use their liberty, their spiritual growth, or their knowledge of Bible doctrine to intimidate, belittle, annoy, upset, criticize, torment or harass another believer regardless of how far off from Bible doctrine they may be. The strong believer is responsible to help the weaker believer in establishing a better understanding of the Word in areas of question.

The weak believer will also normally have some responses to the strong believer. Often the weak believer will consider the other believer to be out of fellowship and not really the spiritually stronger at all. This is a typical attitude of the spiritual babe or adolescent. The weaker believer will make their own norms and standards the criteria for determining the error of the stronger believer, rather than learning Bible doctrine in the local church from the pastor-teacher.

The weaker believer very cleverly concludes that if this person is a strong believer, then they should not do that thing that offends them. The weaker believer fails to realize that the stronger believer lives their life to God and not to them. They fail to respect the more developed norms and standards of the other person.

In both cases the issue is for the stronger believer to get his eyes off the weaker believer and onto the Lord and if necessary restrict himself regarding the weaker believer. On the other hand, the weaker believer needs to get his eyes off the strong believer and onto the Lord, with the application result of respecting the norms and standards of the stronger believer.

In each case, they must live their lives as unto the Lord and not to men. Both the strong and weak believer must realize that they are no better or worse in the sight of God for doing or not doing a certain thing. Each gives their own account to the Lord. Col. 3:23-25.

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality." (Colossians 3:23-25, NASB)

The usual reason why you want someone to adhere to your standards or practices or respect your liberties, is that you feel that God does. The weak believer arrogantly feels that God is impressed with their great self-discipline and sacrifice, so therefore why shouldn't you be? The strong believer thinks God is impressed with the marvelous spiritual growth they have and therefore, why should not the other be impressed? Why should they be curtailed in using the liberty that God has provided for them?

Those believers who most often practice the judging of others have themselves been duped into some false system of worship or spirituality. Col. 2:16-23.

"Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. If you have died with Christ to the elementary



principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence." (Colossians 2:16-23, NASB)

Paul's Application of the Law of Supreme Sacrifice

In times of great pressure, for the benefit of the ministry, it may be necessary for a person to choose to labor under the Law of Supreme Sacrifice as did Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:1-18. Paul was free because of his relationship with Christ. He was free in the exercise of his authority because the Word of God was his work. He was free in the exercise of his authority because of his spiritual gift of Apostleship. 1 Cor. 9:1-2.

"Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 9:1-2, NASB)

Paul was free to eat meat and drink and to marry as did the other apostles including Peter. 1 Cor. 9:4-5.

"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?" (1 Corinthians 9:4-5, NASB)

Paul was free to carry on the ministry without working. 1 Cor. 9:6.

"Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?" (1 Corinthians 9:6, NASB)

Paul was free to benefit from the fruits of my labors. 1 Cor. 9:7-14.

"Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?" (1 Corinthians 9:7, NASB)

"If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?" (1 Corinthians 9:11, NASB)

"So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:14, NASB)

Paul was free to lay aside his freedom and operate under personal sacrifice if it enhanced the ministry. 1 Cor. 9:16-18.

"For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. 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." (1 Corinthians 9:16-18, NASB)

Paul made himself a servant to all that he might win more to the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 9:19.

"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more." (1 Corinthians 9:19, NASB)

In his ministry, he did not make the norm or standard of the conscience of others an issue in ministering to them. He abstained from violating their norms and standards in order to help them. The reason for this was "for the Gospel's sake." 1 Cor. 9:20-22, 1 Cor. 9:23.



“To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. 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 9:20-22, NASB)

“I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.” (1 Corinthians 9:23, NASB)

The desire for more fruit by the Apostle Paul has a completion in the rewards which will come to him for his service. The curtailment of his own liberties was therefore done in view of greater blessings and rewards in the future. 1 Cor. 9:24-27.

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27, NASB)

Paul likens the curtailment of his liberties in the ministry to the discipline of the athlete in competition. The idea in context is that of curtailing those liberties which would hinder the race. In long races, you have more liberty than in short races. Two wrong strides in a short race will cost you the race. In the mile run, you might be ahead or behind or in the middle a half dozen times. It is long enough to make up for some of your mistakes. Paul likens the ministry to a short race where one error can cost you the race.

1 Corinthians 9:25, “competes” is the present middle participle of ἀγωνίζομαι (agōnizomai) and means to strive to enter the contest, then compete in the contest. First, he must qualify to enter, then he must be in good enough physical condition to win. Here are two concepts. There is a curtailment of liberties in order to prepare and enter the ministry race. Then there is the curtailment of liberties in order to win the race, once begun.

This curtailment of liberty is called “exercising self-control” or ἐγκρατεύομαι (egkrateuomai). Certain liberties of the Greeks were set aside to enter a race. They put themselves under strict supreme sacrifice. Some of these curtailments were abstaining from unwholesome food, abstaining from wine, and from sexual indulgence. Now, for a Greek, this was really supreme sacrifice, considering this was most of their normal life

Paul’s curtailment of his liberties was deliberate and planned. They were not just passive omissions. In 1 Corinthians 9:26, “not without aim” is οὐκ ἀδῆλως (ouk adēlōs) and with the negative indicates a clear objective. He wasn’t fumbling around with whether he should or should not restrict himself. He knew full well that he had to do.

“I box” is πυκτέω (pukteō) and means to be a boxer, not as one that is just throwing punches out in the air. He had a real purpose behind each one and that is the contact with an opponent in some vital spot. This is given to underline the fact that he had a definite purpose behind each action.

In 1 Corinthians 9:27, “but I discipline my body and make it my slave” means to discipline the body by hardships, handle it roughly with rigid discipline so that it could take the strain of the contest. The purpose for the practice of the law of supreme sacrifice is that Paul might not be “disqualified” ἀδόκιμος



(adokimos) and refers to the Bema Seat or the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Literal Translation of Romans 14:1-10

Literal translation of Romans 14:1 - "And the weak in the faith, take to one's self, grant them access into your heart and into your friendship, not for the purpose of passing judgment on them or straightening them out."

"Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions." (Romans 14:1, NASB)

Literal translation of Romans 14:2 - "Who indeed believes all things are for the purpose of eating, but the one who is weak, he is eating garden vegetables."

"One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only." (Romans 14:2, NASB)

Literal translation of Romans 14:3 - "The one eating let him not despise the one whose characteristic is not eating, and the one who is not eating judge not the one whose characteristic is eating all things for God has received him."

"The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him." (Romans 14:3, NASB)

Literal translation of Romans 14:4 - "Who are you, the one judging not one's own household servant? to his own Lord he is standing (he is not your household servant, you don't decide what he eats) or falling. But he shall stand, for the Lord is able to make him to stand."

"Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand." (Romans 14:4, NASB)

Literal translation of Romans 14:5 - "For who indeed is Judging a day from a day, and who is judging each day; each in his own mind let him be fully persuaded."

"One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind." (Romans 14:5, NASB)

Literal translation of Romans 14:6 - "The one regarding the day to be sacred, to the Lord he regards it; and the one eating to the Lord he eats, for to God he is thankful. And the one who eats not to the Lord he eats not, and to God he is thankful."

"He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God." (Romans 14:6, NASB)

Literal translation of Romans 14:7 - "For no one of us to himself lives, and no one to himself dies."

"For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;" (Romans 14:7, NASB)

Literal translation of Romans 14:8 - "For whether we shall live, to the Lord let us live, or whether we die, to the Lord let us die, as therefore we live so let us die, we are of the Lord."

"for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14:8, NASB)

Literal translation of Romans 14:9 - "For unto this, Christ died and lived in order that he might be Lord



of the dead and the living.”

*"For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."
(Romans 14:9, NASB)*

Literal translation of Romans 14:10 - “But why are you judging your brother? or why do you make your brother of no account? for all will stand before the judgment seat of God.

"But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God." (Romans 14:10, NASB)