

sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And thus, 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, that I might not cause my brother to stumble (1 Cor. 8:9–13).

Don't exercise your liberty at someone else's expense. A failure to apply the Law of Love when the occasion demands is a sin against the weaker brother and against Christ (1 Cor. 8:12). To know in advance that your liberty will hurt another Christian and to do it anyway is a sin—a failure to apply the Law of Love.

#### **THE LAW OF SUPREME SACRIFICE (1 Cor. 7:25–35)**

Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you should marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form

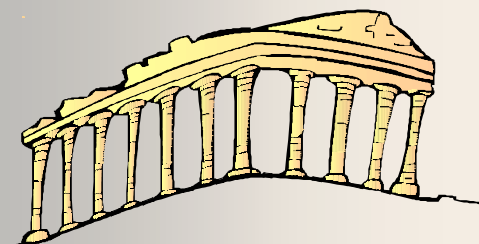
of this world is passing away. But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and *his interests* are divided. And the woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:25–35).

The Law of Supreme Sacrifice is applied toward God. It benefits the Almighty. It's willingly giving up something you're free to do for God's sake—to be more productive in the Christian life. Your sacrifice advances the cause of Christ even more. For example, Paul had a right to get married (1 Cor. 9:5) but he never did: he wanted to spend all his time serving the Lord instead of dividing his time between a wife and the Lord (1 Cor. 7:25–35).



*Glendale Baptist Church*  
12338 Coulson  
Houston, Texas 77015  
Robert C. Lewis, Pastor  
713-453-8351

# FOUR LAWS THE OF LIBERTY



LAW OF LIBERTY  
LAW OF EXPEDIENCY  
LAW OF LOVE  
LAW OF SUPREME SACRIFICE

What then?  
Shall we sin because  
we are not under law  
but under grace?  
May it never be!  
~Romans 6:15~

The first law, the perfect Law of Liberty, is the normal *modus vivendi* (way of life) for Christians living in this age. Christ's death on the cross has set us free from bondage to the Mosaic Law, to sin, and to Satan.

### THE LAW OF LIBERTY

The Law of Liberty is applied toward yourself so you can live life to the fullest and enjoy all of God's creation. It benefits you.

1. The Law of Liberty says you're free to do anything not prohibited in the Bible or contrary to the character of God.

The prohibition against drunkenness may be generalized to include any substance abuse not mentioned in Scripture such as doing drugs.

2. Liberty is not license—you're not free to sin.

You're not free to live any way you want or do anything you please; there are commands in the New Testament that must be obeyed.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! (Rom. 6:15)

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 (Gal. 5:13).

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).

3. There are times when you have to fight to defend your freedom.

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

There are always a few legalists around who would like to take your freedom away. Freedom of any kind needs protecting. The more freedom you lose the more control others gain over your life. You become a slave to their will.

4. Don't let your liberty be a stumblingblock for the weak.

But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumblingblock to the weak (1 Cor. 8:9).

Note the balance here: liberty must be defended on the one hand and sacrificed on the other. At times your liberty must be restrained for the sake of others. Such self-restraint should be done willingly out of love for a weaker brother. There's a big difference between willingly giving up things you're free to do in love and being bullied into giving up things you're free to do to please someone else.

Christian liberty is a "right" (1 Cor. 9:4, 5, 6) but there are times when you should set aside your rights for the sake of others (1 Cor. 9:12). "All things are lawful" but not always expedient (1 Cor. 10:23). Your wisdom will help you apply these principles to experience.

Now, there are three laws that supersede the perfect Law of Liberty:

### THE LAW OF EXPEDIENCY (1 Cor. 9:19–23)

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, 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, 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, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it (1 Cor. 9:19–23).

The Law of Expediency is applied toward unbelievers to win them to Christ. It benefits the lost. It's becoming all things to all men to win some (1 Cor. 9:19–23). It's willingly giving up your freedom to establish a rapport with unbelievers to witness to them. For example, Paul had Timothy circumcised to win Jews (Acts 16:3). You may choose to eat fish on Friday instead of steak to witness to Catholics.

### THE LAW OF LOVE (1 Cor. 8:9–13)

The Law of Love is applied toward weak believers to keep them from stumbling. It benefits weak believers. It's willingly giving up things you're free to do to keep from hurting the spiritual life of weaker brothers.

But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumblingblock 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