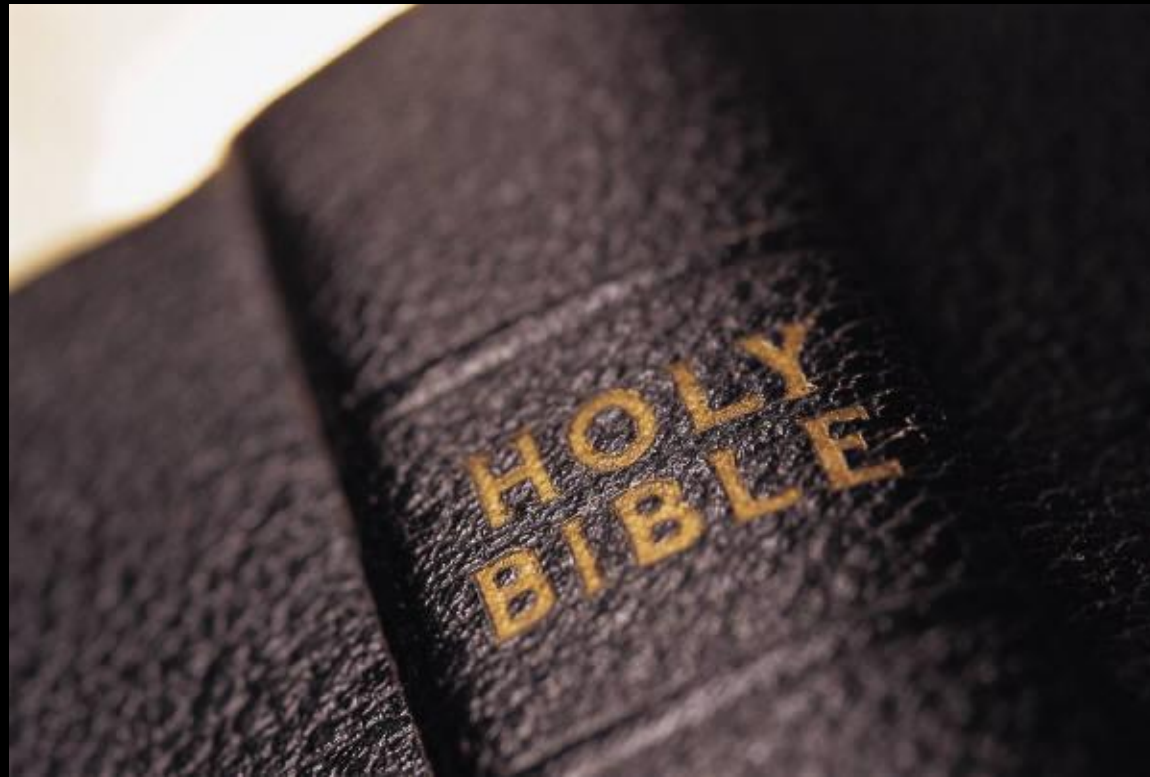


# The Bible



**Making a Distinction between  
Matters of Law and Liberty**

# Bible Review

- How we got the Bible (manuscripts)
- Internal evidences (creation and revelation) confirm our faith (Heb. 11:1ff).
- The Bible = God's Inspired Word (II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:19-21)
- The Bible reveals instructions for man to be saved from the consequences of sin (Acts 2:38; Rom. 5:1ff).
- Word of God consist of 2 primary covenants (Jer. 31:31ff; Heb. 8:8ff).
- The Bible; God's Authoritative Word.

# **Making a Distinction between Matters of Law and Liberty**

**“Circumcision is nothing, and  
un-circumcision is nothing; but  
the keeping of the  
commandments of God”**

**I Corinthians 7:19**

# Distinguishing between Law and Liberties

- The “**Commandments of God**” = God’s authority (Col. 3:17) or the teachings of Christ (II Jn. 9) that are expressed in direct commands, necessary inference, and apostolic example.
- When an action in consideration does not violate God’s authority nor does it disrespect God’s silence the action may be termed a “liberty.”
- The types of food I eat or do not eat is an example (consider **I Cor. 8:8-9**).
- **Liberty** = “license... power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases” (LS 276; Thayer 225).

# Distinguishing between Law and Liberties

- When it comes to my eternal salvation I do not have the liberty to “do as I please” (Matt. 7:22-23; Acts 26:9).
- Liberties (practices that are matters of indifference) are areas that will neither commend or condemn me before God (I Cor. 8:8).
- Can I say that fornication, lying, forsaking the assembly, stealing, cheating, and murder are Christian liberties?

# How Do I Distinguish Between Law and Liberty?

- Paul said, “All things are lawful for me; but no all things are expedient” (I Cor. 6:12).
- What constitutes the “all things?” (consider I Cor. 6:9-11).
- Liberties constitute the “all things;” however, I must exercise good judgment even in the case of liberties.
- **Expedient** = “to help... useful... appropriate to the purpose at hand” (LS, Thayer, AHD).
- The point: Judgments must be made when determining whether or not a practice is a “liberty” or a matter of “the commandment of God.”

# The Christian's Judgment

- Based on the Word of God (I Cor. 12:3).
- Through truth we judge a man's teaching to see whether or not it represents truth (Acts 17:11; I Thess. 5:21-22; I Jn. 4:1, 6).
- We judge a brother's conduct by truth (II Cor. 2:9; II Thess. 3:14; I Tim. 3:5-8).
- We determine discipline by truth (I Cor. 5).
- We appoint elders, deacons, and preachers based on truth (I Tim. 3; Titus 1:5ff; Eph. 4:15).

# A Clear Distinction Between Law and Liberties

- Jude commands that we “**contend earnestly for the faith**” (Jude 3-4).
- Shall I “**contend earnestly**” over matters of liberty (my license to do as I please)?
- Some turn their liberties into binding law on everyone else (cf. Gal. 2:1-5). To give way to such a brother is to promote unity in diversity.
- Said activity has the potential of “**destroying**” a brother in Christ (cf. Rom. 14:15; I Cor. 8:8, 10-13).

# Concluding Thoughts

- There are areas of practice in our lives that will commend or condemn us before God and there are practices which will do neither (I Cor. 7:19; 8:8).
- We cannot “**blend**” the two ideas together (I Tim. 1:3; 4:1-3; 6:20).
- Some brethren tell us that calling the names of false teachers from the pulpit, using the term watchdog, preaching on the errors of musical instruments in worship, etc. constitutes a stumbling block due to a weak brother’s conscience.
- Question: How does preaching truth cause one to stumble? (Matt. 15:6-14).
- Brethren must learn to make a distinction between law and liberty for the sake of theirs and other’s souls.
- Once that distinction is made, I am not at liberty to press my opinions on others to the point of wounding their conscience (think about others; Rom. 14:15; I Cor. 8:9).

# A “Slippery Slope”

- “A course or **situation regarded as easily or inevitably leading to further decline or deterioration**” (WCD 1349).
- The Corinthian brethren justified their fornication by saying that since the body craved sex they were at liberty to fulfill their desires with others (I Cor. 6:12-13). **They confused law and liberty!**
- Brethren often use the same argument. “If you preach on the errors of denominations, the sin of mechanical instruments in worship, calling names of false teachers from the pulpit etc. you will cause others to stumble and we will loose them.
- Let us never blend law and liberties (Paul and Barnabas).