

Lesson: LAW OF LIBERTY AND LOVE

We have been studying a series of lessons on **Resolving Disputable Matters in the Christian Way of Life**. This title is taken from Romans 14:1 – “Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.”

The Greek word for “on his opinions” is *dialogismos*. It is translated several different ways in the English translations of the Bible.

- KJ – doubtful disputations
- NAS – on his opinions
- NIV – disputable matters
- Amplified - scruples

Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words – “*dialogismos* expresses reasoning or questioning hesitation.” (Doubtful, pg.182).

“*dialogismos* denotes, primarily, ‘an inward reasoning, an opinion’ (*dia*, ‘through,’ suggesting separation, *logismos*, ‘a reasoning’), “in Rom.14:1, ‘disputations of doubts.’ (Dispute, pg.175)

Paul addressed the problem of Resolving Disputable Matters in the Christian Way of Life in two great Christian churches – Roman and Corinthian (Rom.14; 1 Cor.8-10).

We will study FIVE lessons on Resolving Disputable Matters in the Christian Way of Life.

- 9/21 – Weak Believers and Liberties (Rom.14:1-6)
- 9/28 – Passing Judgment (Rom.14:7-12)
- 10/5 – Stumbling block (Rom.14:13-23)
- 10/12 – *Al Rosenblum*
- 10/19 – Law of Liberty & Love (1 Cor.8:1-13)
- 10/26 – Law of Liberty & Lost (1 Cor.9:1-23)

Hopefully we will learn from the mistakes of these great churches on how to Resolve Disputable Matters in Christian Way of Life.

We will study today’s lesson text by the following four points of contrasts (1 Cor.8: 1-13).

- 8:1-3 – Learning vs. Love
- 8:4-6 – gods vs. God
- 8:7-10 – Conscience vs. Communion
- 8:11-13 – Wound vs. Win

This lesson will study SIX aspects of the Law of Liberty and Love.

1. **We need to begin today’s lesson by defining Christian liberty and Christian love.**

Christian Love (*he agape/ 8:1*) is unselfish, unconditional, benevolent concern for the well being of others. It is directed towards other believers.

Christian liberty (*he exousia/ 8:9*) is anything a believer has a right to do scriptural without causing him to personally fail the Lord. It is directed toward self.

2. In every doctrinal teaching grace church, there are two types of spiritual advancing believers.

These two types are called enlightened believers and unenlightened believers in 1 Cor.8.

“However not all men have this *knowledge (he gnosis)* 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.” (8:7)

The difference between these two spiritual advancing believers is their grace orientation because of pertinent bible doctrine related to specific issue or category of liberty even though they attend the same grace bible teaching church.

3. The unenlightened believer has made a false spiritual issue out of food because of false norm and standards related to a specific grace liberty (1 Cor.8: 4-7).

“But food will *not commend (paristemi/ f.a.ind)* us to God; we are not the worst if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat.” (1 Cor.8:8)

The unenlightened believer has made temple food a taboo and has attached his legalism to it. They believed that if they ate, it would result in carnality and if they abstained, it would result in spirituality.

4. The unenlightened believer attached the pagan idolatrous religion of the temple to the temple food. For the unenlightened believer, eating food offered to temple idols was equivalent to indulging in the idolatry of the temple and thus sinful.

Either the unenlightened believer doesn't know or doesn't chose to believe that all food is clean in the Church Age (Acts 10:10-23; 1 Cor.8: 8; 10:30; Rom.14: 20; 1 Tim.4: 4-5). All food is the token of God's grace.

5. When the unenlightened believer sees an enlightened believer exercise his liberty in eating temple food, he has four basic options.

- 1 – Become critical and judgmental of the enlightened believer's liberty (Rom.14: 4, 10, 13); (Eve – don't touch!)
- 2 – Abuse liberty by unrestraint sinful indulgence (drunk and fornication)
- 3 – Engage in taboo resulting in guilty conscience (*suneidesis/ sun – oida*)
- 4 – Become a student of the word of God regarding the liberty and grace approach to it (Rom.14 and 1 Cor.8-10).

6. In this case, the weak conscience of the unenlightened believer acts as a substitute for categorical bible doctrine.

The weak conscience replaces residence bible doctrine as the source of divine norms and standards of the Christian Way of Life. Taboos and legalism become the criteria of the Christian Way of Life apart from grace teaching of the word of God (Acts 15; Gal.2).

Weak conscience can be defiled (*moluno/ polluted with cosmos diabolicus*) (8:7-13). Therefore it is important for the enlightened believer to recognize and minister the law of love to the enlightened believer – **LOVE EDIFIES!** (8:1)