



Expository Counseling Training Center

**Personal Liberties and Relationships
(Romans 14:1-23)**

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I. Understanding Personal Liberties

- A. Definition of Liberties – Any area in life where God has not given a command to do or not to do. It is an area of life where we are free to choose what we like. These are commonly known as the gray areas of life (e.g. watching television, going to the movies, dancing, etc). We are given freedom by God to choose what we will and will not do in these areas.
- B. Decision on Liberties – What we choose to do or not to do in these areas are to be lived out before God by faith and in love.
- C. Detriment of Liberties – If we believe it is wrong to do it and we do it we are walking in sin before the Lord. If we believe it is something we can't do without, it has become our master and has thus become a sin (1 Corinthians 6:12).
- D. Deferring of Liberties – We must also accept that other brothers and sisters in Christ may not share our freedom and faith or lack thereof in these areas. As a result, we must not criticize them if they do not share our view, nor put them in a position where they feel compelled to do what we do in those areas even though they believe it is wrong to do so. We must consider them and not allow our liberty to become a problem for them.

**II. The Choosing of Personal Liberties/The Challenging of People's Liberties
(Roman 14:1-12)**

- A. Paul instructed the church to accept the fact that, when it comes to liberties, they were to accept that they each had different levels of faith in acting on them.
- B. They were not to reject with criticism anyone's level of faith to act on or not act on the various liberties.
- C. Therefore, if they had the faith to act on those liberties at the highest level possible of their faith before God to do it, it was okay (strong faith).
- D. If within their faith they chose not to act on or practice those liberties at all, it was okay (weak faith).

- E. Hence, this is where Paul was referring to weak and strong faith to act freely or not on the God-allowed liberties of life.
- F. Each person was to be convinced in their own mind. Each person had the freedom to decide what they would and would not do in the areas of liberties.
- G. God will hold each individual accountable or judge accordingly each individual for his choice in those areas.
- H. Therefore, they were not to condemn or criticize each other for how they choose to live in those areas where God has given them freedom to choose.
- I. They needed to accept that they were not the judge of another man's liberties; God was.

III. The Practice of One's Liberties in Relation to Others (Romans 14:13-23)

- A. Paul was making it plain that one's liberties were not to be exercised in such a manner that it overrode one's love for their brother whose faith did not lead them to exercise those same liberties.
- B. Paul did not want them to allow what was good for them to be spoken of as evil by their brother whose faith did not lead them to exercise those same liberties.
- C. Even though the liberty in and of itself was not wrong, to any Christian who believed it was wrong to practice, to them it was declared wrong.
- D. Therefore, out of love for their brother who believed it was wrong, they were to consider his interest, walk in a loving manner and not exercise that liberty— in order to avoid bringing grief to their brother as he watched them exercise that liberty, or being such an influence as to compel their brother to practice that which he believed it was wrong to do.
- E. Since God's Kingdom is about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit and not about their liberties, they were to walk by the Spirit in this manner which is acceptable to God and would bring approval instead of rebuke from those who do not practice the same liberties.
- F. They were to seek to build up each other and not tear down each other as a result of their liberties.
- G. What they choose to do or not to do in the areas where they had been given freedom by God to decide was to be lived out before God by faith and in love.

- H. They would bring a guilty conscience upon themselves if they chose not to operate in faith in those matters of freedom.
- I. They would bring division within the body if they did not operate in love with others in those areas of liberties.

Key Points

1. Accept the fact that when it comes to liberties, each of us have different levels of faith in acting on them.
2. What each of us choose to do or not to do in the areas where we have been given freedom by God to decide is to be lived out before God by faith and in love.
3. God will hold each individual accountable/judge accordingly each individual for his or her choice in these areas.
4. Therefore, we are not to condemn or criticize each other for how we choose to live in those areas where God has given us freedom to choose.
5. Our liberties are not to be exercised in such a manner that it overrides our love for our brother or sister whose faith does not lead him or her to exercise those same liberties.

Key Applications

1. Learn and understand the various liberties of life God has allowed us to enjoy and exercise.
2. Enjoy and exercise those liberties according to what you believe is okay to do before the presence of God.
3. Consider the interest of other Christians as you enjoy and exercise those liberties.
4. If you have Christian brothers and sisters who do not share in your enjoyment and exercise of certain liberties, do not make them uncomfortable or seek to compel them to join you in what you are doing.
5. If you have Christian brothers and sisters who enjoy and exercise certain liberties you do not, do not condemn them for their exercise and enjoyment of those liberties.