

Intro: Liberty, Laws, Rules, & Regulations. (Examples of weird laws to follow)

1. In Wisconsin: Butter substitutes are not allowed to be served in state prisons.
2. In Fairbanks, Alaska: it is illegal to feed alcoholic beverages to a moose.
3. Baldwin Park, CA: nobody is allowed to ride a bicycle in a swimming pool.
4. In Iowa: If a man has a mustache, he cannot kiss a woman in public.
5. In Alabama: Bear wrestling matches are prohibited.

Read (backing up to the beginning) **1 Cor 6:1-20 and Pray** ¹

1. In Corinth was the Temple of Aphrodite – the goddess of love and beauty
 - a. 1,000 temple prostitutes that came out each evening.
 - b. The spirit of the city was invading the church – but it should be the opposite.
2. The thinking in that day: Sex is biological and natural

1 Corinthians 6:12 ¹² **All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.**

1. The phrase “**All things are lawful for me**” had become a popular Greek phrase that Paul is repeating...
 - a. Here’s the question: Is Paul *really* saying that I am free to do anything I want?
2. Let’s look at the rest of this chapter and then come back to this verse.

1 Corinthians 6:13 ¹³ **Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.**

1. Paul repeats another popular Greek saying: “**Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods**”
 - a. The Greeks/Romans reasoned that “food” was both pleasurable and necessary. When their stomachs signaled hunger, food was taken to satisfy them.
 - b. So too, they argued, sex was pleasurable and necessary. When their bodies signaled sexual desire, they needed to be satisfied.

¹ Unless otherwise marked, all scriptures taken from the New King James Version. © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

- c. Common belief at that time was that every man should have 3 women.
 - i. A wife for raising legitimate children.
 - ii. A female lover for fulfilling sexual desires.
 - iii. A lady friend for simply talking to.
2. It seems that this type of thinking had made its way into the church. Underlying principles:
 - a. First of all, sex is not to be grouped with life-sustaining physical needs.
 - i. We need food and water to live; we don't require sex to live.
 - b. Second, don't sell out to the temporary at the expense of the eternal.
 - i. Both food and the belly are going to be destroyed. The things of this world, food and even this body will pass away.
 3. In the U.S., unmarried couples living together has increase over 1200% since 1960.
 - a. From data compiled over a 50 year period, they've found that there is a 50% greater chance of divorce if a couple lived together before marriage.
 - b. It's no wonder why the divorce rate is so high and continues to grow.
 4. When you give yourself away, you are giving part of yourself away emotionally which is not something you can easily get back.
 - a. When a man and woman says "I Do", it's binding and beautiful.
 - b. But when a man and woman live together and have sex before marriage, it's bondage and backwards!
 - c. Sex has been given to us to enjoy within the right context, but remember, it's fleeting, it's passing.
 5. We are not to give our bodies to sexual immorality, instead we should be giving our bodies to the Lord.
 - a. Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, bretheren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

1 Corinthians 6:14

¹⁴ And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.

1. Don't be dominated by those desires, remember that those desires are earthly and fleshly.

a. As a believer you will be raised by God into eternity where we will not be given to one another as sexual beings any longer. (Matt 22:29-30)

2. But you say, "But I just can't help it!"

a. Yes you can. 1 Corinthians 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

b. If God has the power to resurrect from the dead, then He can certainly help you overcome your sexual temptations.

1 Corinthians 6:15-16

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For "*the two*," He says, "*shall become one flesh*."

1. Here a quote from Genesis, repeated by Jesus, and now used by Paul.

a. The principle, "*the two shall become one flesh*" is a beautiful thing in marriage.

b. But is it a beautiful thing to think that a person has become one flesh, intimately connected through fornication or adultery with some other person or worse, a prostitute?

c. Sexual sin is like no other...

1 Corinthians 6:17-19

¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*. ¹⁸ Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

1. Sexual sin is especially detestable for the Christian because as a Christian we are joined to Christ in a marriage relationship, and when we commit adultery, we are bringing Christ into that very act.

- a. What's more, every Christian has been sealed with God's Holy Spirit. When we commit such an act, we are grieving the Holy Spirit within us.
 - b. Would you commit such an act if I were there with you? No Way!!!
 - c. But who am I? Nothing compared to the Lord God Himself.
2. We are not told to avoid it, we are told to flee from it!!!
- a. Joseph in Genesis 39 is an excellent example.
 - b. Potiphar's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph and repeatedly said, "Lie with me."
 - c. When she had grabbed him by his coat, Joseph fled and ran from her leaving his coat in her hand.
3. Paul gives another reason we are to flee from sexual immorality, we must remember...

1 Corinthians 6:20a ²⁰ For you were bought at a price;

- 1. What was the price? The blood of Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:20b therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

- 1. You can't separate body and spirit.
- 2. Do you guys get it? Sexual immorality, especially detestable!

Coming back to 1 Corinthians 6:12, Paul declares: ¹² All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

- 1. How Free are We?
 - a. Consider where this verse is positioned. Surrounded by corrective instruction in the middle of a letter of correction to the church in Corinth.
- 2. We are free, but we must not allow sin to remain within the church chapter 5 tells us.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 5:5, 11
- 3. We are free, but not free to sue another Christian.
 - a. If we have a problem with a Christian brother or sister, we are to seek wisdom and guidance from within the church – 1 Cor 6:1-8 tells us.

4. We are free, but not free to commit the very things that he just condemned in 1 Corinthians 6 verses 9 and 10.
 - a. Ten things that are marks of the unsaved unrighteous person.
5. We are free, but not free to break the law of the land, for we are called to be in submission to those authorities appointed over us.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:13–17 ¹³ *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— ¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*
 - b. These commands repeated in Romans 13:1-2 and Titus 3:1
6. We are free, but not free to live in sin and sexual immorality.

We are free in Christ from the Law – the Old Testament Law, and various *unregulated* traditions, customs, and observances that are legalistically enforced.

1. Christ is the end of the law to those that believe. The law was a tutor, a schoolmaster to drive us to Jesus Christ. The law was for the lawless.
 - a. If a person is living after the Spirit, following after God, serving the Lord, he has been set free from the bondage of the flesh, these things that used to be a part of our lives.
2. But not only that, we've been set free to serve God with everything that we have.
 - a. And so all things are now lawful for me because my purpose and my desire is to live a totally sanctified life, set apart for His use. My body now belongs to Him, for His use and thus in this mode, all things are lawful.
3. But, if you have not yet come to Jesus Christ, the law still has power over you and you are going to be judged by the law.
 - a. It's only when you come to Christ that you become free from the law. And there is now a new law in the Spirit of Christ Jesus, that has set me free from the law that had condemned me to death.

- b. But until a person comes to Christ, the law is still there binding and you are responsible to it. Once, you have come to this new life in Christ, there is therefore now no condemnation.
- 4. All things are lawful for me, but I am really held by a higher standard, you see, all things are not helpful.
 - a. Because of this new life in Christ, it is my desire, it is my purpose and intent to run this race and win.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 9:24 *“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”*
 - c. We are told in Hebrews 12:1-2, *“Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”*
- 5. Training for a marathon or a race. You take steps that help successfully complete the race.
 - a. Food: it is important that you consume foods that are going to help your body store energy for long runs and speed your body's recovery.
 - i. Foods high in carbohydrates and proteins, rich in potassium.
 - b. Clothing – comfort, fit, prevents chaffing, handles moisture, is broken in, and is designed for your body type.
 - c. Shoes – Do you have high arches or no arches, do you Overpronate or Supinate?
 - d. You can wear cowboy boots in the race, but you won't finish well.
 - e. You can eat anything you'd like leading up to the race (KFC), but...
- 6. So even though some practices may be lawful for me, does it impede my progress towards the goal? I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, which is in Christ Jesus.
 - a. As I am pressing toward this goal, I don't want anything that will impede my progress towards the goal.

7. We are free in Christ, but for what? For example: While a moose in Fairbanks is not, I *am* free to drink alcohol.
 - a. The scriptures state that we should ***not*** get drunk, but it does not explicitly forbid an occasional drink.
 - b. I personally crave a beer with corn chips, but I choose not to satisfy that craving. I have chosen not to drink altogether.
 - c. I'm free to drink, but I choose not too. And there's so much freedom in this.
 - d. My decision is not a burden, it's not a drag. I do so because I don't want my behavior to stumble another believer who does have a problem with drinking responsibly.
 - e. Not only does my decision prevent anyone from being stumbled by my actions, it also ensures that I don't foolishly drink too much causing me to get drunk and fall into sin.
 - f. If I don't drink, I can't get drunk and so for these reason I feel very good about my decision not to drink. It's not a drag.
8. Example: I am free to smoke.
 - a. I won't smoke b/c I watched my grandfather die an untimely death in 1994 from smoking related illnesses which broke my heart. All my grandfather's siblings are still alive to this day.
 - i. His choice to smoke robbed him of many years of life with us.
 - b. But I won't be brought under the control of nicotine.
 - c. What purpose does smoking serve anyways? It is only satisfying a fleshly desire with damaging and stinky affects.
 - d. Again, I feel very good about by choice not to smoke. Why kill myself with cigarettes when I can live for Christ?
9. Paul writes of this freedom both here and in the 10th chapter of this letter (10:23).
 - a. In the 10th chapter Paul tells us that our decisions and freedoms should not cause people to stumble, we'll cover that at length when we get to it.

- b. Listen again to the way Paul puts it here: **All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.**

10. There is a two-fold emphasis:

- a. While it may be lawful, it may not be helpful.
 - i. What's the distinction here? That even if we can do it, why do it if it's not helpful?
- b. While it may be lawful, we are not to allow that thing or act to control us.
 - i. Things that are habit forming... especially concerning alcohol, tobacco, even caffeine are often substances that begin to control you.

11. I know that drinking and smoking are pretty clear cut and perhaps you have already dealt with these issues. How about TV?

- a. How many believers today are under the power of television?
- b. Studies show that the average American watches 28 hours of TV a week!
- c. Believers are not immune to this problem. Are we squandering our talents and abilities by sitting in front of the TV?
- d. Shows like American Idol, 24, Supernatural and so many others. Are we more excited about these shows than we are about living for Christ?

12. Golf, softball, fishing, hunting, running, biking, hiking, yard-work, reading, and even our jobs all are morally neutral, and yet can become harmful addictions if we are not careful.

- a. Yet we rationalize our behavior because "It isn't forbidden in the Scripture."

With anything you do, you can ask yourself these questions:

Q1: Is it helpful or profitable?

- 1. Specifically in your relationship with the Lord.
 - a. If you have trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior, then you are a child of God.
 - b. Of the things that you do, or don't do, what affect does that have on your relationship with God?

- c. Is it helping you to become more like Christ, or does it leave you looking just like the rest of the world.
- 2. God has entrusted to each of you gifts and responsibilities.
 - a. And He has given you His Holy Spirit to help you uses those gifts and to fulfill those responsibilities.
 - b. Are the things you are doing and involving yourself in helpful in being a good steward of those gifts and responsibilities?
- 3. It may be lawful, but Dads, are the things you're involved in helpful in raising your kids in the ways of the Lord.
 - a. Husbands, are those things helping you to love your wife and to care for your family as the provider and protector and spiritual leader of your home?
 - i. Eph 5:25-28, Eph 6:4, Col 3:21, 1 Tim 5:8
- 4. Ladies, it may be lawful, but is it helpful to be complaining about your husband's job, deployments and time spent at work?
 - a. Is it helpful to be a part of that conversation about someone who's not there at the time?
 - b. It may be lawful, but are your actions or attitude marked with modesty, propriety, moderation, submission, gentleness, love, and respect?
 - i. Eph 5:22-24, Col 3:18, 1 Tim 2:9-11, 1 Pet 3:1-6

Q2: Does it enslave me? Does it control me?

- 1. Are you addicted to it? Does it control your body, mind or heart?
- 2. Is it taking you away from your God given talents and abilities.
 - a. Does it hinder you in faithfully using your gifts and fulfilling your God given responsibilities?

Conclusion:

- 1. "To live is Christ" Paul wrote in Philippians 1:21.

- a. Are you living for Christ?
 - b. Or are you bound up in some type of addition or artificial man-made legalism that Christ came to free you from?
2. We have freedom in Christ and we should be living in that freedom.
- a. Fleeing from sexual immorality.
 - b. Avoiding those things that are not helpful.
 - c. Avoiding those things that become controlling.
 - d. Avoiding those things that stumble another person.
 - e. We are free in Christ, free not to sin. Free to live to the Glory of God who has purchased us and freed us from the bondage of sin and death.
 - f. Therefore let us live as freed men and women for Christ!