

The Law of Liberty; James 1:25

- I. Freedom
 - a. "America, the land of the free"
 - b. Originally it was religious freedom that people sought
 - i. "The religious persecution that drove settlers from Europe to the British North American colonies sprang from the conviction, held by Protestants and Catholics alike, that uniformity of religion must exist in any given society.
 - ii. This conviction rested on the belief that there was one true religion and that it was the duty of the civil authorities to impose it, forcibly if necessary, in the interest of saving the souls of all citizens.
 - iii. Nonconformists could expect no mercy and might be executed as heretics.
 - iv. The dominance of the concept, denounced by Roger Williams as "inforced uniformity of religion," meant majority religious groups who controlled political power punished dissenters in their midst.
 - v. In some areas Catholics persecuted Protestants, in others Protestants persecuted Catholics, and in still others Catholics and Protestants persecuted wayward coreligionists.
 - vi. Although England renounced religious persecution in 1689, it persisted on the European continent.
 - vii. Religious persecution, as observers in every century have commented, is often bloody and implacable and is remembered and resented for generations." ¹
 - c. If the government in charge decides what religious freedom is, then it can become very misguided
 - d. God determines what freedom is – and he gave us freedom from everything, including the Law, to follow Christ
 - e. The Law of Moses had very specific laws regarding all aspects of life
 - f. The Law of Liberty moves away from a 'checkbox' religion to one of love and a desire to listen to and follow God through His Son, Jesus
- II. Hearer Who Forgets
 - a. Reading Exodus 20 through Deuteronomy 34 gives us an idea of all of the requirements of the Law of Moses
 - i. The sacrificial requirements (Leviticus 1ff)
 - ii. Laws about restitution (Exodus 21:33ff)
 - iii. Laws about Social Justice (Exodus 22:16ff)

¹ John, et al. "Religion and the Founding of the American Republic America as a Religious Refuge: The Seventeenth Century, Part 1." *America as a Religious Refuge: The Seventeenth Century, Part 1 - Religion and the Founding of the American Republic | Exhibitions (Library of Congress)*, Library of Congress, 4 June 1998, www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel01.html.

- iv. Laws about eating (Leviticus 11:1ff)
- v. It is easy to see why the Law is called a burden and compared the Israelites to being slaves under the Mosaic Law in the New Testament
- b. We are still called to act, to be doers, under The Perfect Law
 - i. We act out of Love for God, not out of a law written on stone (or even one written in our Scriptures)
 - ii. Matthew 22:36–40 (ESV); ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”
 - iii. James 1:22–24 (ESV); ²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.
 - iv. Like the two sons in Matthew 21:28ff, one said he would not go work, but changed his mind and went – the other said he would go work, but never went
- c. We all have our reasons for wanting to be part of the body of Christ
 - i. Whatever it was that got us here, we are here now and cannot continue to act the same way we did before
 - ii. We cannot be blind, forgetting that Jesus cleansed us of our life of sin and gave us the freedom to follow Him

III. Doer Who Acts

- a. Colossians 3:12–14 (ESV); ¹² Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
- b. I love the idea of being a ‘beloved’ of God – to cherish
- c. God cherishes us, He loves us – this is what drives our behavior
- d. While God desires a change in our behavior, what He really wants is a change in our Character
 - i. He wants us to become more like His Son, Jesus
 - ii. This transformation of our character will then change our behavior
 - iii. These lists of character traits are the mirror we use to monitor, to measure our change
 - iv. Are we compassionate, kind, humble, meek, patient?
 - v. Do bear one another’s burdens, forgive each other?
 - vi. Romans 12:2 (ESV); Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- vii. 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NASB95); But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
 - e. Yes, there are lists of behaviors that God says are not consistent with being His child
 - f. No, we should not engage in those behaviors
 - g. But not because God says not to, but because we love and cherish Him
 - i. I know it sounds like I'm splitting hairs
 - ii. But this is a fundamental change in our thinking that has to happen
 - iii. This is how we are transformed into the image of His Son
 - iv. This is the perfect law, the Law of Liberty
- IV. The Law of Liberty
 - a. We are no longer held in bondage by sin or any other law
 - b. We are free to worship God through His Son, Jesus
 - c. We are free to be transformed into the image of His Son
 - d. We are free to follow Jesus!