

LBCF 21:2 – Who Is Lord of the Conscience?

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God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or not contained in it. So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.

SURVEY OF SCRIPTURE

1. God alone is Lord of the conscience (Jam 4:12; Rom 14:4)
2. And hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word or not contained in it. (Act 4:19; 5:29; 1 Cor 7:23; Mat 15:9)
3. So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience (Col 2:20,22-23)
4. And the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also. (1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 1:24)

WHAT DOES THIS TEACH US?

1. How do paragraphs 1 and 2 relate?
 - a. Paragraph 1 speaks of that in which our liberty _____.
 - b. Paragraph 2 is the _____ of Christian liberty.
2. Note the order: personal _____ and liberty of _____ must be built upon the foundation of _____ freedom.
3. There is no liberty of conscience without _____.

4. The foundational principle of liberty of conscience is that '_____ is Lord of the conscience' (James 4:12; Rom. 14:4; Gal. 5:1).
- a. This means that God has left the _____ 'free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or not contained in it' (Acts 4:19; 5:29; 1 Cor. 7:23; Matt. 15:9).
 - b. Requiring others to believe doctrines or obey commandments which are not in the Word of God, we must not do so out of _____ (Col. 2:20, 22, 23; Gal. 2:3).
5. Tempering our understanding here is important
- a. There is an obedience to _____ (Romans 13:5); note the conscience is involved.
 - b. There is also the matter of offended brethren (Rom. 14:21; 1 Cor. 8:13).
 - i. This NOT teaching that we should cease doing anything _____ regards as wrong. Why
 1. This would be the end of any freedom of conscience and lead to a new bondage, the bondage of the fear of the brethren. One could never know when one might sin by doing that which another Christian _____ is wrong.
 2. Christ did not practice such a _____ (Matt. 15:1-14). The Pharisees were professing worshippers of Jehovah. There was nothing wrong with hand-washing. Why did not Jesus in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 8 and 9 become all things to all men? They were offended, but he refused to comply.
 3. In the third place, such an understanding completely misunderstands what the Bible means by the word '_____'. The word used here is frequently used in the Scriptures of _____ (Matt. 11:6; 13:21, 57; John 6:61).
 4. If there is no danger of the 'offended' brother _____ his conscience or _____ your example, then these passages simply do not apply.