

Laws of Christian Behavior: The Law of Expediency: Directed toward the Unbeliever: Flexibility Is Necessary to Remove Distractions in Evangelism, 1 Cor 9:19–23; Law of Supreme Sacrifice: Directed toward God, 1 Cor 9:1–6

3. The Law of Expediency is applied to the unbeliever by a believer with emphasis on the evangelism. Because of the erroneous worldview of what a Christian's modus operandi should be, unbelievers evaluate Christians by superficial standards. This is an unrealistic expectation in the mind of the believer since through spiritual growth he has come to reject these ideas. But, in order to avoid putting up a barrier to the unbeliever's objectivity, he is willing to be expedient toward the unbeliever's frame of reference. The expected behavior is not necessarily wrong, although often frivolous, but to not respect the preconceived opinion of the unbeliever would likely cause him to be distracted from an objective consideration of the gospel. Paul teaches this law in:

1 Corinthians 9:19 - Since I keep on being free from all, I have made myself a slave to all so that I might gain more.

Paul has spiritual freedom under the law of liberty to live his life according to the doctrine in his soul. But he considered himself obligated to all to preach the gospel. In so doing he did not want anyone to conclude that he demanded any monetary support from anyone. In Corinth, he made tents to earn a living. No one was under any obligation to him when he preached the gospel which resulted in an even greater number of followers.

1 Corinthians 9:20 - To the Jews I became a Jew that I might gain the Jews [Paul was no longer a Jew but a member of the body of Christ]. To them that are under the Law, as under the Law (though I am not under the Law) that I might gain them that are under the Law;

The Jews had quite a number of cultural observances that are required by the Law, among them dietary guidelines. Among these was the prohibition against eating pork. Paul was willing to be "under the law of not eating pork" so as to remove a distraction from his presentation of the gospel to those under the Law. The regulation against eating pork is a nonessential about which Paul could be flexible.

PRINCIPLE: When evangelizing a person who follows some religion, never make an issue over doctrinal differences. It doesn't matter what they believe until they are saved. Beforehand, the only issue is, "What think ye of Christ?"

1 Corinthians 9:21 - to those free from the Law I became like one free from the Law (though I am not free from God's law but under the law of Christ) [Gentiles have no interest in the Law so obviously Paul disregards it as a concern when dealing with Gentiles], to gain those free from the Law.

Paul must abide by the essentials of Bible doctrine but he is free to be flexible with those who have no knowledge of the Law and concentrate solely on the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:22 - To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some.

The weak here are those who make up the masses—the hoi polloi. Paul does not put on airs. He was able to be flexible with the nonessentials without compromising the essentials in order to save some. He does not entertain nonessential issues when evangelizing the lost: he presents the gospel without it being obfuscated by discussion of subjects that are left for the new believer to later discover under the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 9:23 - And this I keep on doing habitually for the sake of the gospel that I might become a partner with Him.

Paul says he is habitually flexible regarding the nonessentials whenever he witnesses to Jews, Gentiles, or the hoi polloi in order to partner with Christ. This means that the believer must be filled with the Holy Spirit when carrying out the duties of ambassadorship. This passage provides an excellent example of the Law of Expediency.

4. The Law of Supreme Sacrifice is directed only toward God and is the utmost application of Christian service. It requires the believer to sacrifice the pleasures of a normal life's legitimate functions in order to more efficiently serve God.

1 Corinthians 9:1 - Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

Yes answers are required by each of these questions. Paul is an apostle, appointed by the Lord Himself on the Damascus Road, he is free under the law of liberty, He saw the resurrected Christ on the Damascus Road, and he founded the church in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 9:2 - If I am not an apostle to others [those believers influenced by the Judaizers who questioned Paul's apostolic claims], at least I am to you [those original converts who remain loyal to Paul], for you keep on being the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

v. 3 - This is my defense to those who judge me [Judaizers who assert he is not an apostle]:

v. 4 - Do we not keep on having the right [ἐξουσία, *exousia*] to eat and drink [idiom for logistical support]?

v. 5 - Do we not have a right [ἐξουσία, *exousia*] to the company of a believing wife, even as the other apostles [most were married], and the Lord's brothers [he had four], and Cephas [Peter was no more celebrate then he was the pope]?

v. 6 - Or is it only Barnabas and I that do not have the right [ἐξουσία, *exousia*] to refrain from working?