

What GOOD parent does not understand “Liberty’s Limitations”?

The man in the supermarket was pushing a cart which contained, among other things, a screaming baby. As the man proceeded along the aisles, he kept repeating softly, "Keep calm, George. Don't get excited, George. Don't get excited, George. Don't yell, George." A lady watching with admiration said to the man, "You are certainly to be commended for your patience in trying to quiet little George." "Lady," he declared, "I'm George."

This parent understood how he was technically free to voice his great frustration. Yet his freedom was limited by his responsibility to the welfare of baby. Someone put on the marquee of their store: “Liberty is not the freedom to do what we want, but the opportunity to do what we ought.” (I Cor. 6:12) Paul says, “*All things are lawful for me but all things are not expedient.*” Paul understood that, even though he was free in Christ and no longer under law, there is still a responsibility that he has to God.

It is our responsibilities that limit our liberties. I was two or three years old, sitting on the floor of my bedroom trying to get a shirt over my head and around my shoulders, and having an extraordinarily difficult time. I was grunting and sweating, and my mother just stood there and watched. Obviously, I now realize that her arms must have been rigidly at her side; every instinct in her had wanted to reach out and do it for me. Finally, a friend turned to her and said in exasperation, "Ida, why don't you help that child?" My mother responded through gritted teeth, "I AM helping him." (By [Harold Wilke](#).) This mother understood that even though she was free to do for her child, it was not what was best for the child. We are responsible for each other.

We must consider the needs and the maturity of one another. How much energy and time is taken up with a judgmental attitude toward one who disagrees with us? We may be totally right in the position we take on an issue and totally wrong in our attitude. Who is worse off? Rather than condemning someone and causing them to go against their conscience, ought we not to provoke one another unto love and good works?

As a Christian, our liberties are limited by our responsibility to Christ. Did you know that there is nothing wrong with eating? Yet, there is something wrong with gluttony. All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient. God has given us what is in this world, to use to His glory. God has given mankind sex. Sex was purposed by God to be used inside of marriage. Outside of marriage it is wrong. God has given us a tongue to use for His glory. At the same time, it is wrong to use it for swearing and blaspheming.

The world will not understand that their liberties are limited by their responsibility, because (all too often) they accept no responsibility. Do we wrestle with what is our responsibility and what is not? Consider the spiritual battle of pride and humility. The one that wins will determine your freedom and your responsibility.