

Honor and Obey Authority

Ephesians 6:1 – 3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with a promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

The Ditches

- Some avoid the difficulty of the passage by separating minor children from adult children. However, the passage is addressed to children, so they must be of age to comprehend its significance. Further, the Bible gives no clear benchmark for emancipation, not even the death of the parents. Rather, this passage is addressed to Christians who have parents.
- Some teach that children are under the authority of their parents until they marry (Ephesians 5:31, Genesis 2:24), making Ephesians 6:1 – 3 refer only to the unmarried. They teach that the “leave and cleave” prescription illustrates that human relationships have priorities. Rather, we must follow both ideas (obey and leave), not use one to cancel the other.
- Paul endorses the option of remaining unmarried in order to devote full time to Kingdom pursuits (1 Corinthians 7:7 – 9, 32 - 35) without mentioning the role of parents. Certainly, culture pressures many parents to encourage marriage for their children (7:36 – 38).
- Some teach that “the will of the father IS the will of God,” drawing parallels with obedience to pagan governments (Romans 13:1 -7, 1 Peter 2:1 – 17, Titus 3:1). No passage specifies that this “honor and obey” directive is reserved for Christian parents. It is directed to Christians who have parents. But, many give children the option to invoke Acts 4:19 – 20 and 5:29, “We must obey God rather than men.” Such an understanding creates a contradiction in the Scriptures, so must be false.
- Further, widows appear to retain their independence of choosing whether to marry (1 Corinthians 7:39), rather than reverting to the authority of father (or brother if the father is deceased).
- Some define “honor” and “obey” through incomplete research, choosing only passages about honoring God and obeying God. Our study must encompass all passages, not just the ones that “prove” the point we want.

New Testament Use of “Honor” (variations on τιμεω appear about 100 times).

- Honor your father and mother (Matthew 15:4 – 6, 19:19, Mark 7:10, 10:19, Luke 18:20, Ephesians 6:2)
- These people honor Me with their lips (Matthew 15:8 Mark 7:6)
- Because they are the *price* of blood (Matthew 27:6)
- The *value* of Him who was *priced* (Matthew 27:9)
- A prophet is not without honor except in his own country (Mark 6:4, John 4:44)
- Lest one more honorable be invited (Luke 14:8)
- All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father (John 5:23, 8:49)
- If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor (John 12:26)
- And brought the *proceeds* and...laid them at the apostles feet (Acts 4:34)
- Kept back some of the *proceeds* (Acts 5:2, 3)
- Gamaliel...held in *respect* by all the people (Acts 5:34)
- They counted up the *value* of them...50,000 silver (Acts 19:19)
- Nor do I count my life *dear* to me (Acts 20:24)

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- They [of Malta] honored us with many honors (Acts 28:10)
- Seek for glory, honor, and immortality (Romans 2:7, 10)
- To make one vessel for honor and another dishonor (Romans 9:21, 2 Timothy 2:20 – 21)
- In honor giving preference to one another (Romans 12:10)
- Render to all their due: taxes to whom taxes...honor to whom honor. (Romans 13:7)
- Builds his foundation on *precious* stones (1 Corinthians 3:12, Revelation 17:4, 18:12, 16, 21:11, 19)
- You are *distinguished* but we are *dishonored* (1 Corinthians 4:10)
- You were bought at a *price* (1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23)
- Those of the body we deem less honorable...greater honor (1 Corinthians 12:23 – 24)
- But are of no *value* against the indulgences of the flesh (Colossians 2:23)
- Possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor (1 Thessalonians 4:4)
- To God...be honor and glory forever and ever (1 Timothy 1:17, 6:16, Revelation 4:9, 11, 5:12, 13, 7:12, 19:1)
- Honor widows who are widows indeed (1 Timothy 5:3)
- Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Count your masters worthy of all honor (1 Timothy 6:1)
- You have crowned Him with glory and honor (Hebrews 2:7, 9)
- He who built the house has more honor than the house (Hebrews 3:3)
- No man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God (Hebrews 5:4)
- Marriage is honorable among you all (Hebrews 13:4)
- *Precious* fruit of the earth (James 5:7)
- Faith, more *precious* than gold...may be found to praise, honor, and glory (1 Peter 1:7)
- The *precious* blood of the Lamb (1 Peter 1:19)
- To you who believe, He is *precious* (1 Peter 2:7)
- Honor all people...Honor the king (1 Peter 2:17)
- Husbands...give honor to the wife (1 Peter 3:7)
- Exceedingly great and *precious* promises (2 Peter 1:4)
- He received from God the Father honor and glory when a voice came...(2 Peter 1:17)
- The kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it (Revelation 21:24, 26)

Summary of Honor: to be counted worthy, special, and desirable. Figuratively, value or price. “Authority” is nowhere implied on the part of the one being honored.

Note: Some Old Testament passages are quoted in Greek in the New Testament. The word used in Exodus 20:12 and Isaiah 29:13 (“Honor father and mother” and “Honor Me with their lips”) is a figure of speech, “to make heavy.” Psalm 8:4 – 6 (crown with glory and honor) means “to ornament.” Zechariah 11:12 (Matthew 27:9) uses the word for compensation or value.

Difficulties with “Obey”

- People create contradictions in their recommendations concerning whom to “obey”.
 - If Christians must heed every command of parents, then those who are the children of Muslims must renounce Jesus. Obviously, this is an extreme illustration in our culture, but is very real in most of the world. However, the New Testament gives no hint as to the existence of a line between commands that must be obeyed and those

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that may be ignored. Again, resorting to “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 4:19 – 20 and 5:29) begs the question with poor hermeneutics; that answer leaves the option to the individual, which denies authority while pretending to support it.

- The third sentence after “Leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife” is “Children obey your parents.” The author certainly was aware of both, yet indicated no inherent contradiction, difficulty, or priority.
- As a parallel, leadership in the church is defined by hegemony, not authority. Followers choose whom to follow; leaders are never instructed to subjugate. Claiming a title does not result in authority. Rather, followers are enjoined to follow successful faith.
- Authority appears to be the key issue in understanding the concept of obedience.

New Testament Use of “Obey” as used in Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20
(variations on ὑπακούω appear 36 times)

- Even the winds and sea obey Him (Matthew 8:27, Mark 4:41, Luke 8:25)
- He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey Him (Mark 1:27)
- “...be planted in the sea,” and it would obey you. (Luke 17:6)
- A great many of the priests were obedient to the Lord (Acts 6:7)
- Whom our fathers would not obey (Acts 7:39)
- A girl named Rhoda came to *answer* (Acts 12:13)
- We have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith (Romans 1:5)
- By one man’s obedience, many were made righteous (Romans 5:19)
- ...your mortal body that you should obey it in its lusts (Romans 6:12)
- To whom you present yourselves as slaves to obey (Romans 6:16 twice)
- Obedience leading to righteousness (Romans 6:16)
- ...to make the Gentiles obedient (Romans 15:18)
- You obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine (Romans 6:17)
- Your obedience has become known to all (Romans 6:19)
- ...for obedience to the faith (Romans 16:26)
- ...test, whether you are obedient in all things (2 Corinthians 2:9)
- He remembers the obedience of you all (2 Corinthians 7:15)
- Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5, 6)
- Children, obey your parents (Ephesians 6:1, Colossians 3:20)
- ...became obedient to the point of death (Philippians 2:8)
- As you have always obeyed...work out your own salvation (Philippians 2:12)
- Bondservants, obey in all things your masters (Colossians 3:22, Ephesians 6:5)
- Having confidence in your obedience (Philemon 21)
- ...on those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8, Romans 10:16)
- If anyone does not obey our word in this epistle... (2 Thessalonians 3:14)
- He learned obedience by the things which He suffered (Hebrews 5:8)
- The author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9)
- By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out (Hebrews 11:8)
- Sanctification of the Spirit into obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:2)
- As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts (1 Peter 1:14)
- Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth (1 Peter 1:22)

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- Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord (1 Peter 3:6)

Summary of “obey” as used in Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20 (ὕπακούω)

- Literally, the word means “readiness to attend,” as Rhoda attended to the gate.
- In every case, individuals are called upon to make a choice concerning whom to heed.
 - Jesus did not overpower the wind and the sea (and demons), but with a word. Those forces responded.
 - Sarah chose to respond, as implied by the middle voice in 1 Peter 3:5.
 - We respond to God or Jesus or the faith because we choose it (from the heart).
- Obedience is used as a figure of speech for faith (Romans 5:19, 6:16, 6:19, *et al*)
- Obedience to the flesh is a choice. The flesh has no real authority.
- This word that is translated “obey” carries no assignment of authority to the one “obeyed” but rather is better understood as a recommendation to listen to good advice (or avoid bad advice). The Old English word “hearken” is a better translation.
- In what way and to what extent we choose to respond to parents depends on the demands of the parents and the objectives of the children. Parents will not be given the opportunity to advise Jesus on whom to accept. Paul advises children to give serious consideration to the advice of parents. Children must be prepared to accept the repercussions of their choices, either of declining good advice or of accepting faulty advice.
- This word does not carry any overtone of authority of one person over another. Rather, one party pays heed to the advice of another.

Another word translated “obey” as used in Romans 1:30 and 2 Timothy 3:2

(variations on *πειθαρχέω* appear 37 times)

- He who believes...has everlasting life; he who disobeys shall not see life (John 3:36)
- We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29)
- The Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32)
- He was slain and all who obeyed him were scattered (Acts 5:36, 37)
- But the *unbelieving* Jews stirred up the Gentiles (Acts 14:2)
- Some were hardened and did not *believe* (Acts 19:9)
- I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision (Acts 26:19)
- You should have *listened* to me and not sailed from Crete (Acts 27:21)
- ...disobedient to parents (Romans 1:30, 2 Timothy 3:2)
- ...who do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness (Romans 2:8)
- I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people (Romans 10:21)
- You were once disobedient to God (Romans 11:30, 31, 32)
- ...delivered from those in Judea who are disobedient (Romans 15:31)
- Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth (Galatians 3:1, 5:7)
- ...who now works in the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2, 5:6, Colossians 3:6)
- ...being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work (Titus 1:16)
- To be subject to rulers...to obey, to be ready for every good work (Titus 3:1)
- We once were also foolish, disobedient, deceived (Titus 3:3)
- ...did not enter because of disobedience (Hebrews 3:18, 4:6, 11, *cf.* 3:19)
- Rahab did not perish with those who were disobedient (Hebrews 11:31)
- Obey those who have hegemony over you (Hebrews 13:17, middle)

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- We put bits in the horses mouths that they may obey us (James 3:3)
- To you who believe, precious; to the disobedient... (1 Peter 2:7, 8)
- Even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word (1 Peter 3:1)
- Who formerly were disobedient (1 Peter 3:20)
- What will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel (1 Peter 4:17)

Summary of “obey” as used in Romans 1:30 and 2 Timothy 3:2 (πειθαρχέω)

- Describes the things that are done in response to the direction of another
- Often used as a figure of speech for faith.
- James 3:3 implies coercion or at least training

Another word translated “obey” (variations on ὑποτάσσω are used 31 times)

- The creation was *subjected* to futility (Romans 8:20, active)
- ...have not *submitted* to the righteousness of God (Romans 10:3, passive)
- ...the women are to keep silent...and be *submissive* (1 Corinthians 14:34, middle)
- All things are *put* under Him...made *subject* to Him (1 Corinthians 15:27, 28, active)
- ...that you submit to such [people] (1 Corinthians 16:16, middle)
- ... for the obedience of your confession of the gospel (2 Corinthians 9:13, passive)
- ...to whom we did not yield submission for even an hour (Galatians 2:5, passive)
- *Submitting* to one another (Ephesians 5:21, implied but not stated in 22, middle)
- Wives, *submit* to your own husbands (Colossians 3:18, 1 Peter 3:1, 5, middle)
- He is able to even *subdue* all things to Himself (Philippians 3:21, active)
- Let a woman learn uncontentiously with all *submission* (1 Timothy 2:11, middle)
- ...having his children in *submission* with all reverence (1 Timothy 3:4, middle)
- ...obedient to their own husbands (Titus 2:5, middle)
- Exhort bondservant to be obedient to their own masters (Titus 2:9, middle)
- Be *subject* to rulers (Titus 3:1, middle)
- He has not put the world to come...in *subjection* to angels (Hebrews 2:5, active)
- Put all things in *subjection* under His feet...*put* under (Hebrews 2:8, three times, active)
- ...be in *subjection* to the Father of spirits (Hebrews 12:9, passive)
- *Submit* to God (James 4:7, passive)
- *Submit* yourselves to every ordinance of man (1 Peter 2:13, middle)
- Servants, be *submissive* to your masters (1 Peter 2:18, middle)
- Younger people, *submit* to your elders...be *submissive* to one another (1 Peter 5:5, middle)

Summary of “obey” generally translated “submit” (ὑποτάσσω)

- When used with reference to God, it is in the active or passive voice, leaving no room for choice.
- When used with reference to people, it is always in the middle voice, adding the concept of voluntary action.

New Testament use of “authority”

The main word translated “authority” is ἐξουσία, also jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, and strength. Four other words are used once each.

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- Matthew 7:29, Mark 1:22, Luke 4:32 He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.
- Matthew 8:9, Luke 7:8 I am also a man under authority, having soldiers under me.
- Matthew 9:6, Mark 2:10, Luke 5:24 ...the Son of Man has *power* on earth to forgive sins...
- Matthew 9:8 They marveled and glorified God who had given such *power* to men
- Matthew 10:1, Mark 3:15, Luke 9:1 He called His twelve...and gave them power and authority over all demons...diseases
- Matthew 20:25, Mark 10:42, Luke 22:25 Those who are great exercise authority over them.
- Matthew 21:23 – 24, Mark 11:28 – 29, Luke 20:2 By what authority are you doing these things?
- Matthew 28:18 All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
- Mark 1:27, Luke 4:36 For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits
- Mark 6:7 He called the twelve...and gave them *power* over unclean spirits
- Mark 13:34 Gave authority to his servants and to each his work.
- Luke 4:6 And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You...”
- Luke 10:19 I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions
- Luke 12:5 Fear him who, after he has killed, as the *power* to cast into hell
- Luke 12:11 When they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities
- Luke 19:17 Because you were faithful in a very little, I give you authority over ten cities.
- Luke 20:20 In order to deliver Him to the power and authority of the governor.
- Luke 22:53 This is the hour and the *power* of darkness.
- Luke 23:7 As soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod’s *jurisdiction*...
- John 1:12 As many as received Him, He gave the *right* to become children of God
- John 5:27 [The Father] has given Him authority to execute Judgment.
- John 10:18 I have *power* to lay it down and *power* to take it up again
- John 17:2 You have given Him authority over all flesh
- John 19:10 I have the *power* to crucify You and the power to release You?
- John 19:11 You could have no *power* over Me if it were not given to you from above
- Acts 1:7 ...which the Father has put in His own authority
- Acts 5:4 After it was sold, was it not in your own *control*?
- Acts 8:19 Give me this *power* also, that anyone on whom I lay hands...
- Acts 9:14, 26:10, 12 He has authority...to bind all who call on Your name.
- Acts 26:18 Turn them...from the *power* of Satan to light...
- Romans 9:21 Does not the potter have the *power* over the clay?
- Romans 13:1 – 3, Titus 3:1 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities
- 1 Corinthians 6:12 All things are lawful for me...but I will not be brought under the *power* of any
- 1 Corinthians 7:4 The wife does not have authority over her own body
- 1` Corinthians 7:37 ...has *power* over his own will
- 1 Corinthians 8:9 Beware lest somehow this *liberty* of yours become a stumbling block
- 1 Corinthians 9:4 – 6 Is it only Barnabas and I who have no *right* to refrain from working?
- 1 Corinthians 9:12 Nevertheless, we have not used this *right*.
- 1 Corinthians 9:18 ...that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.
- 1 Corinthians 11:10 ...a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head

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- 1 Corinthians 15:24 When He puts an end to all rule and authority and power.
- 2 Corinthians 10:8, 13:10 Even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority...for edification
- Ephesians 1:21 ...far above all principality and *power* and might and dominion
- Ephesians 2:2 ...according to the prince of the *power* of the air
- Ephesians 3:10 ...by the church to the principalities and *powers*
- Ephesians 6:12 ...against principalities, against *powers*, against the rulers of the darkness
- Colossians 1:13 He has delivered us from the *power* of darkness
- Colossians 1:16 All things were created...whether...principalities or *powers*
- Colossians 2:10 ...who is the head of all principality and *power*.
- Colossians 2:15 Having disarmed the principalities and *powers*
- 2 Thessalonians 3:9 not that we do not have the authority but to make ourselves an example
- Jude 25 ...be glory and majesty and dominion and *power*
- Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar from which...[they] have no *right* to eat.
- 1 Peter 3:22 Angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.
- Revelation 2:26 To him who overcomes I will give *power* over the nations
- Revelation 6:8 ...*power* was given them over a fourth of the earth.
- Revelation 9:3 To them was given *power* as the scorpions of the earth have *power*.
- Revelation 9:10 Their *power* was to hurt men five months.
- Revelation 9:19 Their *power* was in their mouths and in their tails.
- Revelation 11:6 They have *power* to shut heaven...*power* over waters to turn them to blood.
- Revelation 12:10 Salvation and strength...and the *power* of His Christ have come
- Revelation 13:2 And the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.
- Revelation 13:4 So they worshipped the dragon who gave authority to the beast.
- Revelation 13:5 He was given authority to continue 42 months.
- Revelation 13:7 Authority was given him over every tribe, tongue and nation.
- Revelation 14:2 Who had *power* over fire
- Revelation 16:9 God, who has *power* over these plagues
- Revelation 17:12 – 13 They receive *power* for one hour as kings
- Revelation 18:1 Another angel...having great authority
- Revelation 20:6 Over such the second death has no *power*.
- Revelation 22:14 ...the *right* to the tree of life

The four other words are sometimes translated “authority”:

- Acts 8:27 A eunuch of great authority (δυναστης, better translated “power”)
- 1 Timothy 2:2 For kings and all in authority (ὑπεροχη, “superior” or “those on top”)
- 1 Timothy 2:12 I do not permit women to teach or have authority over a man (αυθεντεω, to act independently)
- Titus 2:15 Speak these things. Exhort and rebuke with all authority. (επιταγη, commandment)

Notes about “authority”:

- That the translators many times chose “power” shows that the word implies enforcement ability.

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- “Power and authority” emphasizes the strength to enforce.
- Christians have authority over themselves. (1 Corinthians 8:9)
- Christians have authority to eat the sacrifice (Hebrews 13:10)
- Christians rule over the nations with Jesus (Revelation 2:26)
- Christians have the authority to eat of the tree of life (Revelation 22:14)
- Apostles have the right to be supported (1 Corinthians 9:4 – 18, 2 Thessalonians 3:9)
- Apostles are the authorities of edification (2 Corinthians 10:8, 13:10)
- Prophetesses were to wear head coverings to illustrate their submission (1 Corinthians 11:10)

Summary of honor, obey, and authority:

- To honor is to count someone or something as worthwhile or valuable.
- Three entirely different words are translated “obey.”
 - Hearken: consider advice
 - Obey as a description of action (not implying authority by the one obeyed) except
 - Hebrews 13:17 “Obey those who have hegemony over you” Obey is in the middle voice, adding the concept of choice by the one obeying.
 - Titus 3:1 The admonition to obey earthly leaders is absolute.
 - The third “obey,” when used as a verb, is always in the middle voice when obeying humans, adding the concept of choice by the one obeying.
- Authority by humans is given only to apostles and only in two areas: financial support and edification.

No authority (enforcement ability) is mentioned for church leaders. What does the New Testament say about church leadership?

- The most common leadership model today appoints elders, bishops, pastors, etc.
 - All leaders were appointed miraculously? (Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23, Acts 16:4, 1 Timothy 3:1 – 7, 5:22, although Timothy was not told to appoint.)
 - Were any congregations encouraged to appoint elders?
- Ephesians 4:11 – 16 contains the expiration clause for those miraculously appointed leaders: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Claiming that they exist today rejects Jesus prayer of John 17:20 – 24.
- What problems of leadership are mentioned in the New Testament
 - Galatians 2:11 – 21 Paul corrected Peter
 - 3 John 9 – 10 Diotrephes. Claiming exclusivity is the mark of a false leader.
 - Acts 20:28 – 30 From among your own selves ...
 - 1 Timothy 4:1 – 4, 6:3 – 5 giving heed to deceiving spirits
 - 2 Timothy 3:6, 4:3 – 4 itching ears
 - 1 Peter 5:1 – 4 not lording it over
 - 2 Peter 2:1 – 3 secretly bring in destructive heresies
- What instructions are given to followers?
 - Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5 submitting to one another
 - Galatians 5:13 do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh...serve one another
 - 1 Corinthians 12:12 – 31 God composed the body...greater honor to that which lacks

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- Hegemony, authority by consent of the followers, is the New Testament generic word for leadership, meaning that this type of leader is granted the role because it makes sense to the followers to do so. Not everyone in a congregation necessarily follows the same leaders.
 - Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24 ...whose faith follow
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:12 – 15 ...esteem them highly in love
 - Matthew 2:6 ...who will shepherd My people Israel
 - Luke 22:26 ...he who governs shall be as he who serves
 - Acts 7:10, 14:12, 15:22 Three examples of hegemony
- Even hegemony can be overdone, but has its own cure (1 Corinthians 1:10 – 17, 3:4 – 23)
- In the early church, who taught? (1 Corinthians 14:26)

The counterpoint to authority is liberty. The primary word translated liberty is ελευθερια (also free and delivered):

- Matthew 17:26 “Then the sons are *free*.”
- John 8:32, 33, 36 And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you *free*.
- Romans 6:18, 20, 22 Having been set *free* from sin, ... slaves of righteousness
- Romans 7:33 If her husband dies, she is *free* from that law
- Romans 8:2 ...set me *free* from the law of sin and death
- Romans 8:21 ...creation will be *delivered*...into the liberty of the children of God.
- 1 Corinthians 7:21 – 22 If you [slave] can be made *free*, rather use it
- 1 Corinthians 9:1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not *free*?
- 1 Corinthians 9:19 Though I am *free* from all men, I have made myself a servant
- 1 Corinthians 10:29 Why is my liberty judged by another’s conscience?
- 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 6:8, Colossians 3:11, Revelation 6:15, 13:16, 19:18 ...whether slave or *free*
- 2 Corinthians 3:17 Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
- Galatians 2:4 ...to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ
- Galatians 4:22, 23, 30 the child of the *freewoman*
- Galatians 4:26, 31 But the Jerusalem above is *free*
- Galatians 5:1 Stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us *free*.
- Galatians 5:13 You have been called to liberty, only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh.
- James 1:25 The perfect law of liberty.
- James 2:12 ...those who will be judged by the law of liberty
- 1 Peter 2:16 ...as *free*, not using liberty as a cloak for vice
- 2 Peter 2:19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves

Summary of liberty:

- Under the Law of Moses, individuals were granted authority (Matthew 23:3).
- Many passages contrast law and liberty.
- With liberty comes responsibility.

In our culture, the focal point of authority is money. Some passages suggest that Christians have an obligation to support certain people monetarily.

- Early Christians in Jerusalem shared with each other

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- Acts 2:44 – 45 They had all things in common.
- Acts 4:34 – 35 They distributed to each as anyone had need.
- Acts 5:4 Christians were under no compulsion to sell property
- Christians in other places sent funds for famine relief in Jerusalem
 - Acts 11:29 The disciples [in Antioch of Syria]...determined to send relief
 - 1 Corinthians 16:1 – 3 Now concerning the collection for the saints...
 - 2 Corinthians 8 – 9 ...by way of equality
- Teachers of the gospel are to be supported financially
 - 3 John 6 ...that we may become fellow workers
 - Titus 3:13 Send Zenas and Apollos on their journey...that they may lack nothing.
 - 1 Corinthians 9:3 – 14 Who goes to war at his own expense?
 - 1 Timothy 5:17 – 18 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor
- Needy brethren are to be helped
 - Matthew 25:35 – 40 ...I was hungry and you gave me food...
 - 1 John 3:17 ...and shuts his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?
- Generally helping the poor
 - Ephesians 4:28 ...labor that you may share
 - Galatians 2:10 ...remember the poor.
 - Luke 14:12 – 14 When you give a feast, invite the poor...
- Taking care of needy relatives is essential
 - 1 Timothy 5:8 ...anyone not providing for his own...is worse than an unbeliever
- Sharing must be from love
 - 1 Corinthians 13:3 ...but have not love, it profits me nothing
- Poverty will not be eradicated; honoring Jesus is a more worthy expenditure
 - Matthew 26:11, Mark 14:7, John 12:8 The poor you will have with you always
- Deciding how to share is not a matter of resources or priorities, but of faith
 - 2 Corinthians 8:12 ...according to what a man has, not what he does not have
 - 2 Corinthians 9:6 He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly.
 - 2 Corinthians 9:7 God loves a cheerful giver.
- 2 Corinthians 12:14 Children ought not to lay up for the parents, but parents for the children.

Who decides with whom I am to share?

- The apostles had authority to demand support; they are not recorded to have used that right.
- One who claims authority over the finances of another takes what God has not granted.
- Asserting that someone else must give money to a certain cause in order to have worthy faith is ungodly manipulation.
- All believers have liberty. Each must assess his or her own generosity and share accordingly.