

What about the inalienable rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution -- life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? Are these rights absolute, or are there limits to these rights?

What about life? Is this right unlimited? If we do not hold the life of other human beings as sacred, and kill them, do we still have the right to our own life? Do we continue to have the right to life if we unlawfully take away the life of another? Does the Constitution guarantee U.S. citizens the absolute right to life? If one citizen violates the right to life of another citizen, does the State have the right and the responsibility to punish the first citizen?

What about liberty? Is this right unlimited? If we threaten or actually take away the life or persons or property of other persons, do we still have the right to our own liberty? Does the State have the right and the responsibility to restrain us in the exercise of our liberty so as to protect others and to deter and punish us for our wrongdoing?

What about the pursuit of happiness? Is this right unlimited? If we pursue happiness in ways that are hurtful or harmful to the life, persons, or property of others, do we still have the right to our own happiness? Does the State have the right and the responsibility to restrain us in the pursuit of our happiness so as to protect others and deter us from our wrongdoing?

And what about these inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness -- where do these rights come from?

D. Law and Love

These concepts are constantly set in contrast to one another. But what about a law that requires love? Is this a grinding contradiction in terms? Interestingly, Christ summarizes what is necessary to do in order to inherit eternal life by quoting two Old Testament commands, one of which states: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind"; and the other states: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37, 39)

Is law something that is required and love something that is voluntary? If law commands love, is this legal love as distinguished from non-legal love? Is legal love required, whereas non-legal love is voluntary? If Jesus commands us to love one another, is this non-legal love? Does Jesus expect obedience to His commands? If the law requires obedience and love requires obedience, then what is the difference?

Is the difference that legal obedience is required and obligatory, whereas non-legal obedience is voluntary and nonobligatory? Is love commanded by law an act of obedience for the sake of obedience (an end in itself), and is love commanded by Christ an act of obedience for the sake of expressing love to and pleasing Him (an end beyond itself)? Is it possible to obey the law out of love for God?

To take another approach, is law oriented toward righteousness (in cases of obedience) and penalty (in cases of disobedience) of oneself; whereas love is oriented toward the well-being (in cases of obedience) or ill-being (in cases of disobedience) of another? In other words, is