Power Over The Body

A. Preamble.
   1. I am not an "anti-vaxxer" but I am pro-Christ, pro-inquiry, pro-conscience and anti-coercion when it comes to the government of a mature free person's body.
   2. Jesus Christ is the supreme example of a human Whose holiness, mind and conversation should be our aspiration, and Whose sinlessness was evident in all that He did and in what was done to Him. **EPH 4:13; HEB 4:15; 1PE 2:22.**
   3. Man is made in the image of God (**1CO 11:7; JAM 3:9**) above the brute creation (**PSA 8:4-8**) and should not be experimented on without informed consent as if an animal.
   4. The law of God has precedence over the laws of man. **ACT 5:29.**
   5. It is of divine institution in nature that men nourish and cherish their own flesh. **EPH 5:29**.
   6. The issue at hand is whether a free man has sovereign power over his own body if he has not by choice surrendered or by crime forfeited that power.

B. Scripture condemns various coercions against a free individual's body, autonomy and conscience.
   1. It condemns assault. **EXO 21:18-27; DEU 25:11-12.**
   2. It condemns murder. **MAT 19:18.**
   3. It condemns rape. **DEU 22:25.**
   4. It condemns menstealing. **1TI 1:10.**
   5. It condemns willful neglect. **ISA 58:7; LUK 10:30-32; JAM 2:15-16.**
   6. It condemns coercive intoxication. **HAB 2:15.**
   7. It condemns coercive seduction. **PRO 7:21.**
   8. It condemns coerced nakedness. **2CH 28:19; MAT 27:28.**

C. Scripture does not proscribe the denial of others' duties and freedoms for the sake of the sick. **LEV 13:2-6, 46.**
   1. The infected needed to be temporarily quarantined, not the healthy.
   2. The sick need the physician's oversight, not the healthy. **LUK 5:31.**
   3. Compassion for one's fellows is a double-edged device. Showing compassion to the vulnerable or sick by denying the healthy the ability to freely function to perform everyday tasks, duties and benefits is a withholding of compassion to the healthy.

D. Scripture commands a consensual clear conscience for what one consumes. **ROM 14:22-23; 1CO 10:31; DAN 1:8.**
   1. This principle applies to both impermissible things (**ACT 10:14**) and permissible things (**1CO 8:7**) but not commanded things like the Lord's Supper. **1CO 11:24-25.**
   2. If one has doubts in conscience about a product because it may have been created from moral turpitude (e.g., the Soylent Green syndrome), one should not partake of such product until such doubt is rationally removed. Fetal tissue research has implications.
   3. The "consumption" of other humans for one's own health is a very sketchy notion, and one's conscience should be troubled by such. **2KI 6:28-29.**
   4. If one has doubts of conscience about consuming something inadequately tested and not proven safe, or which is shrouded in occult obedience (e.g. Jim Jones' Kool-Aid) or about which he has not been intelligently informed so as to give consent, he should not partake.
   5. Coerced consumption is only fitting for those who are unable by personal condition to make their own informed decisions. **ISA 7:15.**
   6. If the State demanded that you eat blood, would you do it? **GEN 9:4.**
   7. All that we do, including what we eat, should be to the glory of God. **1CO 10:31.**

E. The body is for the Lord. **1CO 6:12-13, 19-20.**
   1. The context concerns the subjugation of the body to addictions or fornication, matters of individual choice.
   2. Except for blood and issues of conscience, what one eats is lawful (**1TI 4:4**), unless it gains

mastery over the individual, putting him under its power.

3. These are examples of improper surrendering of one's power over his own body.
4. God holds the individual accountable for this regulation.

F. The stewardship of the body is both a gift and a responsibility from God to the individual.
1. Each man is to possess his own vessel responsibly. **1TH 4:4.**
2. Each man is personally accountable to God. **ROM 14:11-12; 2CO 5:10.**
3. No man may lay blame on others for his own choices. **EXO 32:22-24; 1SAM 15:24.**
4. Good stewards rightly consider the implications of any action or consumption lest it adversely affect their power to live holy lives and fulfil their God-given duties.

G. The regulation of our bodies' desires and intakes are individual decisions according to the will of God as freemen.
1. What might be permissible for one might not be so for another. **1CO 8:7.**
2. Our individual regulation is according to choices born of personal conviction based upon God's commandments, temperance, moderation, continence and such like.
3. These are personal choices based upon knowledge, not things forced upon our bodies by the coercive power of the State.
4. The denial of the individual's power over his body is the basis for numerous statist excesses like eugenics, forced sterilizations, forced lobotomies, forced electro-shock treatments, Tuskegee syphilis experiments, forced child-killing in China and ancient Egypt, etc. and humans are not lab rats.
5. Should the State be able to force you to take a blood transfusion if you don't want it, coercively order your diet to prevent overloading the healthcare system, regulate your conjugal relations ("All must regularly copulate and we monitor!") or conceptions by coerced medication, abortion or punitive threat? Should the State have the power over someone's body that Paul speaks of in **1CO 7:4**?
6. It is a shame that in a modern society which has rightly eschewed slavery that people have bought into the idea that a free man's body should by coercion be made to serve others for their benefit in the name of "the public good."

H. If it be wrong for an innocent man to individually determine what he will permit to be done to his own body, then Jesus Christ was wrong for refusing the wine mingled with myrrh. **MAR 15:23.**

I. Objection: What about circumcision? Was this not a forced operation on the body in Israel?
1. Yes, and it created a two-tiered society of privileged v. non-privileged. Is this desirable?
2. It was not a universal requirement: women were not circumcised.
3. A stranger among them could choose not to be circumcised but was restricted in Israel's observances. **EXO 12:48; EZE 44:9.**

J. Objection: What about the bitter water the woman was made to drink? **NUM 5:24.**
1. This was not a universal order for all women, let alone it not being for men at all.
2. This had nothing to with "the public good." It was a means to quell suspicion by a jealous husband who may have even had no basis for his suspicion. **NUM 5:14.**
3. By analogy it was like a breathalyzer test for fidelity which an innocent woman need not fear and which a falsely jealous husband should have feared since it would have exposed his unjustified suspicion and damaged the relationship.

K. Conclusion: Men are independently and individually masters over their own bodies before God and have the right to permit or deny something to be done to their body.
1. How much they comply with coercion against their body and how much they refuse it is their own choice.
2. How one resists unwanted coercion of what is done to his/her body is a sobering matter for all to think through.

L. Who owns you? **1CO 6:20; 7:23.**

M. Quotes.

1. "One does not need to be a Christian or a person of faith to recognize that trampling on the rights of conscience can open a path to the abuse of power. We Canadians have been blessed to have been spared those consequences because our tradition of the limited State recognizes that the rights of conscience must be respected. Indeed, the first liberty listed in our *Charter* is found in section 2(a), freedom of conscience and religion, which is an echo of Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that 'everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion…' "
   (Jason Kenney, current Premier of Alberta, in 2014 speech, "Conscience Versus the Spirit of the Age.") https://www.convivium.ca/articles/conscience-versus-the-spirit-of-the-age/
2. "Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience." (C.S. Lewis)
3. "Let the doctor tell me I shall die unless I do so-and-so; but whether life is worth having on those terms is no more a question for him than for any other man." (C.S. Lewis)
4. Bonus medical quote: "If one's bowels move, one is happy, and if they don't move, one is unhappy. That is all there is to it." (Lin Yutang)