

4. WHAT DO I DO WHEN OTHERS DISAGREE ABOUT LIBERTY ISSUES?

Disagreements over Liberty issues generally take two forms: Sometimes, they are disagreements over the boundaries; more often, they are disagreements over actual choices.

Example: Sport and Leisure Options

Disagreements over the boundaries

This may be when someone thinks the choice is a sin

- You could ignore it (1 Pet 4:8; Prov 19:11)
 - a) Suggest some reasons why you might choose to ignore it?

- You could confront it (Matt 18:15-17; Gal 6:1; 1 Thes 5:14)
 - b) What would be your purpose in confrontation?

Disagreements over the choices

This may be when someone thinks the choice is unwise?

- You could ignore it (Prov 26:17)
- You could discuss it (Prov 26:4-5)
 - c) Suggest some reasons why you might choose to discuss it?

By the way, going through this process of discovering the bounds of our freedom in Christ is not a liberty issue. It is a joyful, God-glorifying duty, commanded as the means by which we seek the mind and will of God for your life.

(Rom 12:2; 1 Tim 4:4-6, 12-16; 2 Tim 2:15)



**THIS, THE SCRIPTURES
TEACH AND THIS WE
BELIEVE ABOUT...**

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY



CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Romans 14

SOME USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Libertarian: Someone who has a correct understanding of the Biblical teaching on Christian liberty. The Bible is just right.

Libertine: Someone who seeks to remove Biblical restrictions on Christian liberty. The Bible is too long.

Legalist: Someone who seeks to place non-Biblical restrictions on Christian liberty. The Bible is too short.

These labels are issue specific, for example, one might be a **legalist** about dress; a **libertine** about worship; and a **libertarian** about alcohol.

1. WHAT IS THE DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY?

To add three words to the Oxford English Dictionary, Liberty, as a Christian, can be defined as,

*The condition of being able to act in any way to **glorify God** giving regard to **biblical** hindrance or constraint.*

In other words, it is a Christian liberty issue when, in seeking to glorify God, we are not hindered by a negative command (thou shall not) or constrained by a positive command (thou shall).

The purpose of our freedom in Christ is summed up in 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Galatians 5:13, during lengthy discussions on Christian Liberty. We are to use our freedom, bordered by scripture,

*To **Glorify God** and **serve** one another in love.*

This Liberty has been purchased by Jesus Christ and consists of our freedom from; condemnation, the dominion of sin and the bondage of Satan. (cf. WCF 20 and references)

2. HOW DO I RECOGNISE A LIBERTY ISSUE?

The first and most basic question to ask in identifying something as a liberty issue is this,

Does Scripture explicitly or by good and necessary deduction require a particular behaviour?

Or, to put it another way,

Does Scripture reduce the number of God glorifying options to one?

If the answer is 'yes', then it is not a liberty issue. If the answer is 'no', then it is a liberty issue and we can move on to the next question.

3. HOW DO I DECIDE WHAT TO DO FOR A GIVEN LIBERTY ISSUE?

Lets consider some guiding principles and how we might use them for a given liberty issue.

Chief End Principle: Do that which gives glory to God (1 Cor 10:31; Rom 14:7-8; Col 3:17)

Conscience Principle: Be convinced that any action you are considering is not sin (Rom 14:14, 23; WCF 20:2)

Edification Principle: Do that which edifies others (Rom 14:19-21; 1 Cor 10:23; Rom 15:2)

Providence Principle: Consider your abilities, interests, and circumstances (Rom 8:28; Esther 4:14)

Authority Principle: Give deference to those God has placed in authority over you; accept responsibility for those in submission to you (Eph 5:22-6:6; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:5)

Counsel Principle: Seek the counsel of fellow believers (Prov 12:15; Prov 13:20)

Diligence Principle: Do all things to the best of your ability (Prov 6:6-11; Prov 20:4; Col 3:23)