

Living Our Spiritual Liberty in Wisdom and Love

Working on Sundays	Playing card games with “real” cards
Riding in an Automobile	Riding in an Airplane
Parachute Jumping	Going to a Movie Theatre
Taking Prescription Meds	Skating (at a Skating Rink)
Bowling (at a Bowling Alley)	Playing Pool (in/out of a Pool Hall)
Buying Insurance	Going to the Doctor (MDs)
Eating Food in a Church Building	Listening to Music with a Beat
Buying from Stores with Scanners	Going to a Casino
Celebrating Christmas at All	Christmas Trees (Real or Artificial)
Drinking Alcohol in Moderation	Trick or Treating on Halloween
Wearing a Toupee-Generally	Wearing a Bad Toupee-Specifically

Many Christians insist some or all of the areas listed above are black/white moral issues. However I am convinced these are what Romans 14:1 calls “opinions” (NASB and NIV), a translation of the Greek word *dialogismos* which means “disputable matters” that is issues concerning which there are no direct/specific biblical commands (I can’t find “Thou Shalt Not Go to a Store That Uses Computer Scanners/Bar Codes.” in the Bible)

THE PRACTICAL QUESTION: How should believers proceed in areas in which we must apply general biblical principles to specific current issues, knowing that some Christians will see these issues are definitely sinful/off-limits.

WISDOM

- 1: Distinguish between Direct Commands (C1) and Gen Principles (C2)
- 2: Hammer Out Your Personal Convictions in Areas Governed by C2
- 3: Allow Other Believers the Same Privilege Without Taking Offense

LOVE

- 1: Limit Your Liberty to Avoid Causing a Weaker Believer to Stumble
- 2: Live Your Liberty Even Though Legalistic Believers May Be Offended
- 3: Be Able to Kindly Explain Your Convictions When Prudent

Which One of These Three Types of Christians are You?

IOWs: Do You Know/Apply the Biblical Principles of Spiritual Liberty?

1: Strong Believers: do understand/enjoy their spiritual liberty and are not offended with other believers who have different convictions than they do. This believer is not arrogant about his/her knowledge of spiritual liberty and isn't surprised when other believers don't understand him/her. Moreover, s/he does not try to talk all other believers into embracing all of his personal convictions in areas of spiritual freedom.

2: Weak Believers: don't understand their (or others) spiritual liberty. They are surprised by other believers whose specific convictions are different than theirs AND they can be influenced to violate their convictions by (otherwise totally legitimate) actions of strong believers. This is why strong believers will limit the when/where/how of certain expressions of their spiritual liberty in contexts that could cause weaker believers "to stumble" that is to violate their own convictions.

3: Legalistic Believers: don't understand the principles of spiritual liberty. They believe almost EVERY issue is black/white. They are offended by other believers whose convictions in areas of biblical freedom are different than theirs. But in contrast to weak believers, they will NOT be tempted to violate their convictions when this happens. What they will tend to do is to slander and question the sanctification and/or the salvation of strong believers. Legalistic believers are proud of their self-proclaimed spiritual superiority > other believers who dare to have different convictions than they.

Take This To Heart

Believers Should Live Our Spiritual Liberty in Wisdom/Love to the Glory of Christ

We are to love other believers including weaker ones and legalistic ones and not allow our knowledge/application of biblical spiritual liberty cause us to treat them with an arrogant contempt.

We are to love weaker believers-and at times we voluntarily limit the expression of our spiritual liberty in love/concern for them-to avoid possibly causing them to stumble.

We are to love legalistic believers, knowing that at times it may be impossible not to avoid causing them to take offense at us. While are to love legalistic believers, strong believers should not allow themselves/their churches to be controlled by them.