

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

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Issue of Conscience - Any issue about which the Bible gives no clear command either positive or negative.

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Primary Texts on IOC: 1 Corinthians 8-10 and Romans 14-15

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Theme: God's glory, brotherly love, and biblical wisdom must guide the use of our liberty.

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Theme: God's glory, brotherly love, and biblical wisdom must guide the use of our liberty.

3 Considerations

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Theme: God's glory, brotherly love, and biblical wisdom must guide the use of our liberty.

3 Considerations

Consideration 1: Setting the Context

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Outline of Romans 12 and 13:

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12:1-2=be transformed by the renewing of your mind

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12:3=don't think too highly of yourself

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Outline of Romans 12 and 13:

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12:6=love others thru the proper use of your spiritual gifts

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Outline of Romans 12 and 13:

12:1-2=be transformed by the renewing of your mind

12:3=don't think too highly of yourself

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12:9-21=what love looks like in the Church

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13:8-10=love your neighbor

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13:8-10=love your neighbor

13:11-14=love God by putting off sin and putting on Christ
(obedience)

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Chapter 14-15=love others by exercising your liberties with wisdom

1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, *but* not for *the purpose of* passing judgment on his opinions.

2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables *only*.

3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

Romans 14:1–12

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4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.

7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;

Romans 14:1–12

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8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Romans 14:1–12

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10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

11 For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me,
And every tongue shall give praise to God.”

Romans 14:1–12

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12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

Romans 14:1–12

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Two groups of Christians in view here:

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Group 1: The Weak Brothers (14:1-2)

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Two groups of Christians in view here:

Group 1: The Weak Brothers (14:1-2)

One whose conscience is convicted that a certain liberty is sinful when in fact it is not.

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Two groups of Christians in view here:

Group 1: The Weak Brothers (14:1-2)

One whose conscience is convicted that a certain liberty is sinful when in fact it is not.

Group 2: The Strong Brothers (15:1)

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Two groups of Christians in view here:

Group 1: The Weak Brothers (14:1-2)

One whose conscience is convicted that a certain liberty is sinful when in fact it is not.

Group 2: The Strong Brothers (15:1)

One who rightly understands that exercising a legitimate Christian liberty is not sinful.

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The center of the issue is the Mosaic Law: (2 main areas)

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-Romans 14:1-6

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Issue 1: The Dietary Laws (purchase of meat)

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The center of the issue is the Mosaic Law: (2 main areas)

-Romans 14:1-6

Issue 1: The Dietary Laws (purchase of meat)

Issue 2: The recognition of certain holy days

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3 Considerations

Consideration 1: Setting the Context

Consideration 2: Glory Guides Liberty (1 Cor. 10:31)

31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

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Consideration 1: Setting the Context

Consideration 2: Glory Guides Liberty (1 Cor. 10:31)

Consideration 3: Love Guides Liberty (Romans 14:13-23)

13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

Romans 14:13–23

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15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil;

17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Romans 14:13–23

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18 For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

Romans 14:13–23

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21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles.

22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

Romans 14:13–23

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23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating is* not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

Romans 14:13–23

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Consideration 2: Glory Guides Liberty (1 Cor. 10:31)

Consideration 3: Love Guides Liberty (Romans 14:13-23)

18 This command I entrust to you, Timothy, *my son*, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,
19 keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

1 Timothy 1:18–19

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3 Considerations

Consideration 1: Setting the Context

Consideration 2: Glory Guides Liberty (1 Cor. 10:31)

Consideration 3: Love Guides Liberty (Romans 14:13-23)

- 1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves.
- 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.
- 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."

Romans 15:1–3

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Consideration 1: Setting the Context

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Consideration 3: Love Guides Liberty (Romans 14:13-23)

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Consideration 1: Setting the Context

Consideration 2: Glory Guides Liberty (1 Cor. 10:31)

Consideration 3: Love Guides Liberty (Romans 14:13-23)

Consideration 4: Wisdom Guides Liberty

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

Schooling Options (Home/Private/Public)

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

Examples of Liberty Issues:

Schooling Options (Home/Private/Public)

Drinking Alcohol in moderation

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

Examples of Liberty Issues:

Schooling Options (Home/Private/Public)

Drinking Alcohol in moderation

The Use of Tobacco Products

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

Schooling Options (Home/Private/Public)

Drinking Alcohol in moderation

The Use of Tobacco Products

Dietary Trends

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

Schooling Options (Home/Private/Public)

Drinking Alcohol in moderation

The Use of Tobacco Products

Dietary Trends

Vaccines

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

Schooling Options (Home/Private/Public)

Drinking Alcohol in moderation

The Use of Tobacco Products

Dietary Trends

Vaccines

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Entertainment Choices (music, movies, books, etc.)

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

Schooling Options (Home/Private/Public)

Drinking Alcohol in moderation

The Use of Tobacco Products

Dietary Trends

Vaccines

Tattoos

Entertainment Choices (music, movies, books, etc.)

Shopping at a business that has liberal views on moral issues.

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

Worship Style (drums, electric guitars, lifting hands, closing eyes, lighting, style of dress)

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Selected Scriptures

Examples of Liberty Issues:

Worship Style (drums, electric guitars, lifting hands, closing eyes, lighting, style of dress)

Politics (Voting, Attending protests, rallies, how proactive a Christian should or should not be in the public square)

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

Worship Style (drums, electric guitars, lifting hands, closing eyes, lighting, style of dress)

Politics (Voting, Attending protests, rallies, how proactive a Christian should or should not be in the public square)

Clothing Choices (applying modesty)

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Worship Style (drums, electric guitars, lifting hands, closing eyes, lighting, style of dress)

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Clothing Choices (applying modesty)

Traditional vs Alternative Medicine

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Selected Scriptures

Examples of Liberty Issues:

Worship Style (drums, electric guitars, lifting hands, closing eyes, lighting, style of dress)

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Clothing Choices (applying modesty)

Traditional vs Alternative Medicine

Dating vs Courtship

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Selected Scriptures

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Santa Claus/Easter Bunny/Halloween

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Worship Style (drums, electric guitars, lifting hands, closing eyes, lighting, style of dress)

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Clothing Choices (applying modesty)

Traditional vs Alternative Medicine

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Santa Claus/Easter Bunny/Halloween

When to give your child a smart phone

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

Certain slang terms

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

Certain slang terms

Use of social media

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Selected Scriptures

Examples of Liberty Issues:

Certain slang terms

Use of social media

Attending secular concerts

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

Examples of Liberty Issues:

Certain slang terms

Use of social media

Attending secular concerts

Dancing

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Examples of Liberty Issues:

Certain slang terms

Use of social media

Attending secular concerts

Dancing

The use of debt

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

Examples of Liberty Issues:

Certain slang terms

Use of social media

Attending secular concerts

Dancing

The use of debt

Cremation vs Traditional Burial

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

Examples of Liberty Issues:

Certain slang terms

Use of social media

Attending secular concerts

Dancing

The use of debt

Cremation vs Traditional Burial

The use of non-abortive methods of birth control

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

Principle 1: Accept your brother without passing judgment.

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

Principle 1: Accept your brother without passing judgment.
The Romans 14:3 Test

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

Principle 1: Accept your brother without passing judgment.

The Romans 14:3 Test

"The one who ___ is not to regard with contempt the one who does not ___, and the one who does not ___ is not to judge the one who ___, for God has accepted him."

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Principle 1: Accept your brother without passing judgment.

Principle 2: Prioritize brotherly edification over personal gratification.

Unity in Liberty

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1 Corinthians 8:4-13

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Principle 1: Accept your brother without passing judgment.

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1 Corinthians 8:4-13

-Paul has admonished us to consider the needs and spiritual condition of our brothers in Christ before we exercise our liberty.

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Principle 1: Accept your brother without passing judgment.

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1 Corinthians 8:4-13

-Paul has admonished us to consider the needs and spiritual condition of our brothers in Christ before we exercise our liberty.

-This is why **both love and wisdom** are required when it comes to preserving unity in the local church on these matters of liberty.

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Key: You have to learn to **read the room** and the people you are with and to slow down before rushing in to exercise your liberty.

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

Key: You have to learn to **read the room** and the people you are with and to slow down before rushing in to exercise your liberty.

-We should never knowingly encourage another brother to do anything that would be a sin against their conscience. (cause them to stumble)

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-We should be especially mindful of other Christians when we are in a group setting and not practice a liberty that might potentially cause another Christian to stumble into sin or stir up disunity.

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

-We should be especially mindful of other Christians when we are in a group setting and not practice a liberty that might potentially cause another Christian to stumble into sin or stir up disunity.

Notice: Paul says he would become a complete vegetarian if that were required in order not to be a stumbling block to his brothers!!

13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

1 Corinthians 8:13

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Principle 1: Accept your brother without passing judgment.

Principle 2: Prioritize brotherly edification over personal gratification.

Principle 3: Protect the unity of Christ's Church.

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Principle 1: Accept your brother without passing judgment.

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Principle 3: Protect the unity of Christ's Church.

Principle 4: Understand that different circumstances demand different decisions.

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Principle 5: Educate your conscience with Scripture

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Principle 3: Protect the unity of Christ's Church.

Principle 4: Understand that different circumstances demand different decisions.

Principle 5: Educate your conscience with Scripture

-Romans 14:5b "Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind"

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Common Pitfalls:

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Common Pitfalls:

Pitfall 1: Don't allow personal experience to trump Biblical wisdom

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Selected Scriptures

Common Pitfalls:

Pitfall 1: Don't allow personal experience to trump Biblical wisdom

Pitfall 2: Don't elevate personal conviction to the level of Scripture

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Common Pitfalls:

Pitfall 1: Don't allow personal experience to trump Biblical wisdom

Pitfall 2: Don't elevate personal conviction to the level of Scripture

Pitfall 3: Trading legalism for license or vice versa.

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Conclusion

Practical Questions:

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1: Is there any area of Christian liberty that consumes or defines you more than the Gospel?

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Conclusion

Practical Questions:

1: Is there any area of Christian liberty that consumes or defines you more than the Gospel?

2: Are there any people in the Church that you avoid or speak negatively about to others because you disagree with the choices they have made in an area of liberty?

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Conclusion

Practical Questions:

3: Do you make judgments about the spiritual maturity of other people based on their liberty choices?

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Conclusion

Practical Questions:

3: Do you make judgments about the spiritual maturity of other people based on their liberty choices?

4: Do you judge your own spiritual maturity based on your position on liberty issues?

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4 Positive Implications:

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Selected Scriptures

4 Positive Implications:

1. Love one another

8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another,
because love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:8

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4 Positive Implications

1. Love one another
2. Accept one another

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

4 Positive Implications

1. Love one another
2. Accept one another
3. Cherish Our Unity

Unity in Liberty

Selected Scriptures

4 Positive Implications

1. Love one another
2. Accept one another
3. Cherish Our Unity
4. Trust God in Liberty