

The Church's Right and Duty to Restrict

Key Terms:

- 1. Conscience:** the human sense of moral “oughtness”; the capacity to distinguish between moral right and wrong.
Note: Since God is the absolute authority to determine right and wrong, He alone is the Lord of the conscience. [WCF 20.2; Prov. 20:27; James 4:12]
- 2. Christian Liberty:** NT liberty *always* expresses itself in willingness to refrain from what conscience may allow rather than demanding to do what conscience may permit. Willful submission to authority outside of self is not a violation of conscience but rather the biblical exercise of liberty. The purpose of Christian liberty is the mutual upholding and preserving of the Body. It is always about others; never about self. [WCF 20.4; 1 Cor. 8; Rom. 14-15]

[Hints for implementation from Rom. 14-15]:

1. Am I *fully* convinced? 14:1-5
2. Am I *really* doing it unto the Lord? 14:6-9
3. Will it stand the day of judgment? 14:10-12
4. How will it affect others? 14:13-21
5. Am I doing it in faith? 14:22-23
6. Am I pleasing self or others? 15:1-7

Biblical Logic:

1. The Purpose of the Church Requires Restrictions.

- A. To glorify God—Eph. 3:21
- B. To evangelize—Mt. 28:19-20
- C. To edify believers—Eph. 4:12

2. The Ministry of the Church Demands Restrictions.

- A. Faithful preaching of the Word of God
 - B. Right administration of sacraments
 - C. Faithful and consistent discipline
- 1 Tim. 3:15

3. The Type of the Church Illustrates Restrictions.

Note: Fundamental to the doctrine of the church is that Christ is the sole Head and King (Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:20-23). The Church is a Theocratic Kingdom ruled by Absolute Monarch.

- A. Lessons from the type: OT reveals what life is supposed to be like in a Theocratic Kingdom. Israel was the church in the wilderness.
- B. Implications for the Antitype
--the specific issues?