

Romans 14:13-19

Tripping Hazards

Recap of v. 1-12 – Terms Used

- Christian Freedoms – things neither commanded nor forbidden by God
- “Strong” in an area of Christian Freedom – knowledgeable of that freedom, and confident before God to assert it
- “Weak” in an area of Christian Freedom – unknowledgeable about that particular freedom, or unconfident to assert it
- Example Case – eating meat “unclean” by OT law, or meat that had been sacrificed to a pagan idol

Questions to Ask Regarding Christian Freedoms

1) Is this an Area of Christian Freedom?

2) Am I Loving my Brother?

- a) Tripping Hazards – v. 13
- b) Principle – v. 14
- c) Application – v. 15 (1 Cor 8:7-13)
- d) Objections...
 - Not Fair
 - Not Possible
 - Frustration
- e) Perspective – v. 17-18
- f) Appeal – v. 19

Praxis

1. What areas would you add to the list of “tripping hazards” (freedoms that some perceive as sin)? What areas would you delete from the list? Why?
2. Consider the principle stated in v. 14 – “it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.” What does this mean? What are the implications for our decisions in areas of freedom?
3. What practical steps can you take to keep from tripping others in areas of freedom that you enjoy?
4. What further questions / objections does this teaching bring to mind?
5. What further questions do you think we should ask ourselves in making decisions in areas of freedom?

Trippable Areas of Christian Freedom

Below are examples of areas in which Scripture does not clearly or directly command, and yet it is not uncommon for some Christians to view their decisions on such matters as “right” and “wrong.” Thus these are some examples of modern areas in which you might possibly “trip” a brother.

Long Held Christian Traditions

(usually held by those with a long or narrow history in the faith)

- Church Building – must have a cross on a church building; get married in church building, etc.
- Bible Version used
- Piety – "Family Worship" requirement, Use of a Catechism, etc.
- Sabbath – Not working on Sundays
- Honor / Respect – Taking hat off when entering building, address of older people, not putting Bible on floor, etc.
- Music – Singing "hymns", using certain instruments
- Religious Celebrations – Christmas, Easter, Halloween, etc.

Biblical References / Examples of Cultural Accommodations in Scripture

(usually these convictions arise out of differing approaches to interpreting the Scripture)

- Head coverings
- Hair length (men and women)
- Clothing choices
- Degrees of Modesty
- Marks on your body
- Betrothal
- Family Togetherness in Worship

Entertainment Choices

(usually because tainted with varying degrees of "worldliness" or they have led some into life-dominating habits or sin)

- Gambling
- Alcohol
- Movies / Gaming with worldly elements
- Music with worldly lyrics
- Public Water parks / Beaches, etc.

Parental "rules" for protection / guidance of Children

(essentially wisdom issues, but sometimes children wrongly perceive these as "God's Law", or sometimes parents present them as such; but important to realize that for a child, breaking a parents' rule is a sin for that child)

- One family allows PG movies, but another allows PG-13
- Dating / Courting / Betrothal guidelines
- Sports involvement