
Christian Liberty in Daily Life

Foundations & Definitions

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Questions We'll Try to Answer

- # What is the definition and purpose of Christian Liberty?
 - # How do I recognize whether something is a liberty issue?
 - # How do I decide what to do for a given liberty issue?
 - # What do I do when others disagree with me about liberty issues?
 - # Does respect for liberty negate the pursuit of wisdom?
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Biblical Basis for The Answers

Romans 14

1 Corinthians 8

1 Corinthians 10

Galatians 5

Colossians 2

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The basic theology of Christian Liberty is summarized in Chapter 20 of the Westminster Confession of Faith

Definitions

Liberty: The condition of being able to act in any desired way without hindrance or restraint; faculty or power to do as one likes. (OED)

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Christian Liberty: The condition of being able to act in any desired way to glorify God without biblical hindrance or restraint; faculty or power to do as one likes to glorify God. (CMH)

Biblical Restraints on Liberty

We do not have Christian Liberty to ignore the positive commands in Scripture

- ▶ Love your neighbor as yourself
- ▶ Worship the Lord
- ▶ Children, obey your parents in the Lord
- ▶ ...

We do not have Christian Liberty to disobey the negative commands in Scripture

- ▶ Do not steal
 - ▶ Do not covet
 - ▶ Do not commit adultery
 - ▶ ...
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Christian Liberty Issues

When God has neither forbidden nor required particular behavior, then Christian liberty applies.

- ▶ So long as we operate within the bounds established by Scripture, we are able to glorify God by doing what we want to do.

We'll call any issue to which Christian liberty applies a Christian liberty issue.

- ▶ That is, something is a liberty issue whenever God, through the Scripture, does not reduce to one the number of God-glorifying choices available to His people.
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Illustration: Occupations

teacher mathematician
fireman politician farmer
bridge builder dentist accountant
preacher electrician
hit man journalist lawyer
surgeon veterinarian pathologist
prostitute

Illustration: Occupations

teacher
mathematician
fireman
politician
farmer
bridge builder
dentist
accountant
preacher
electrician
~~hit man~~
journalist
lawyer
surgeon
veterinarian
pathologist
~~prostitute~~

Illustration: Boundaries of Liberty

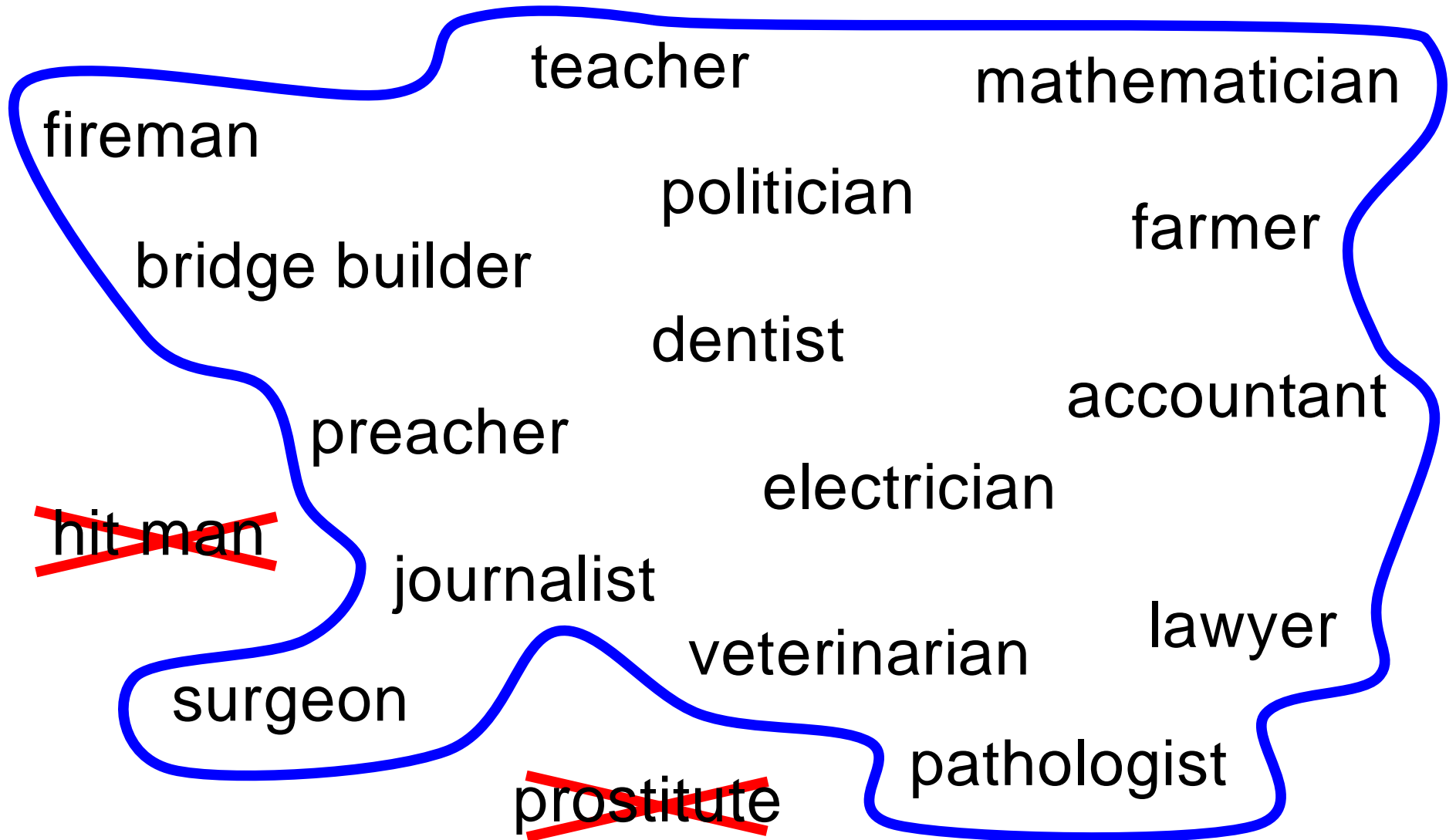


Illustration: Specific Application

(bad at math, ...)

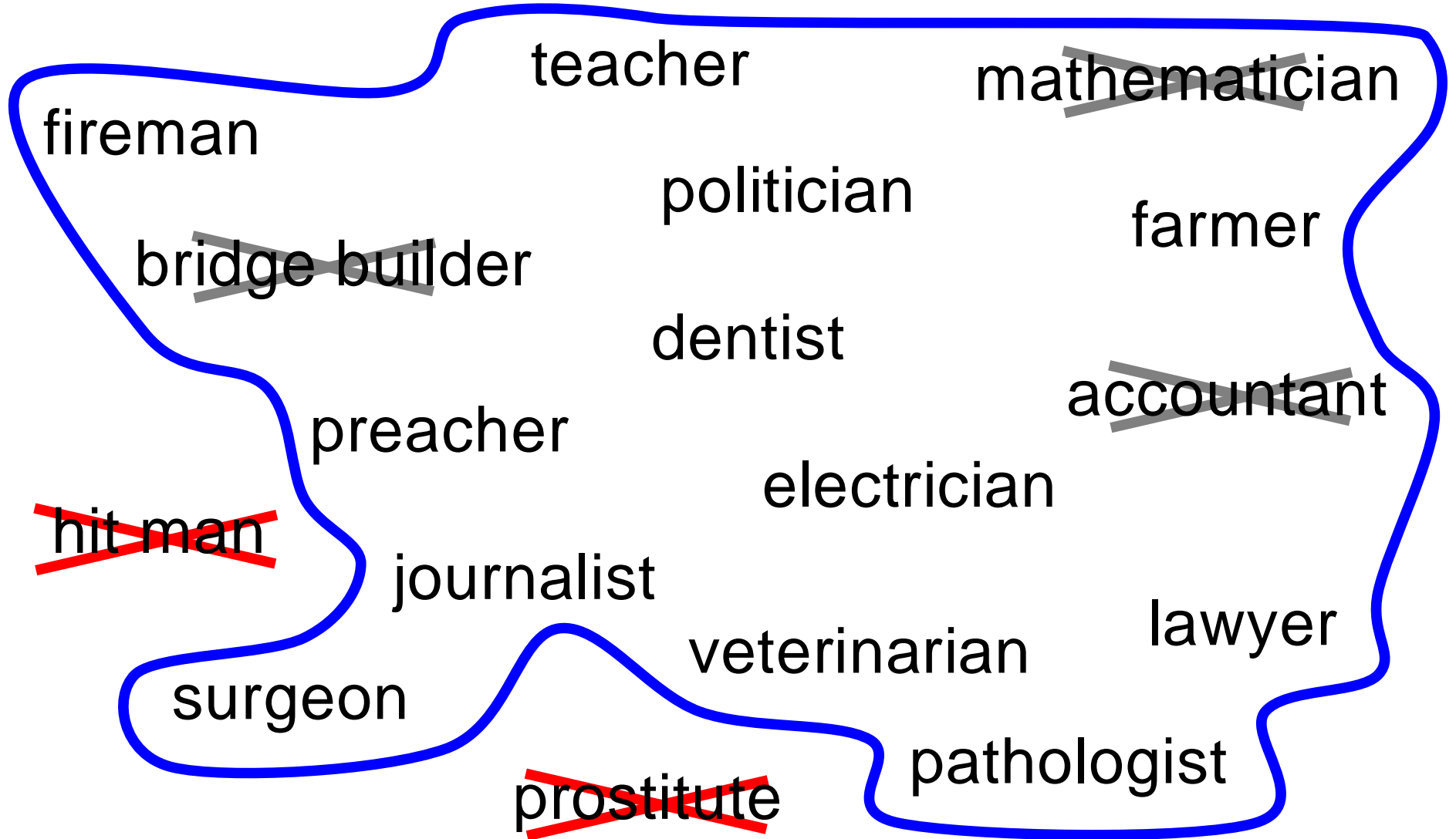


Illustration: Specific Application

(bad at math, faints at sight of blood, ...)

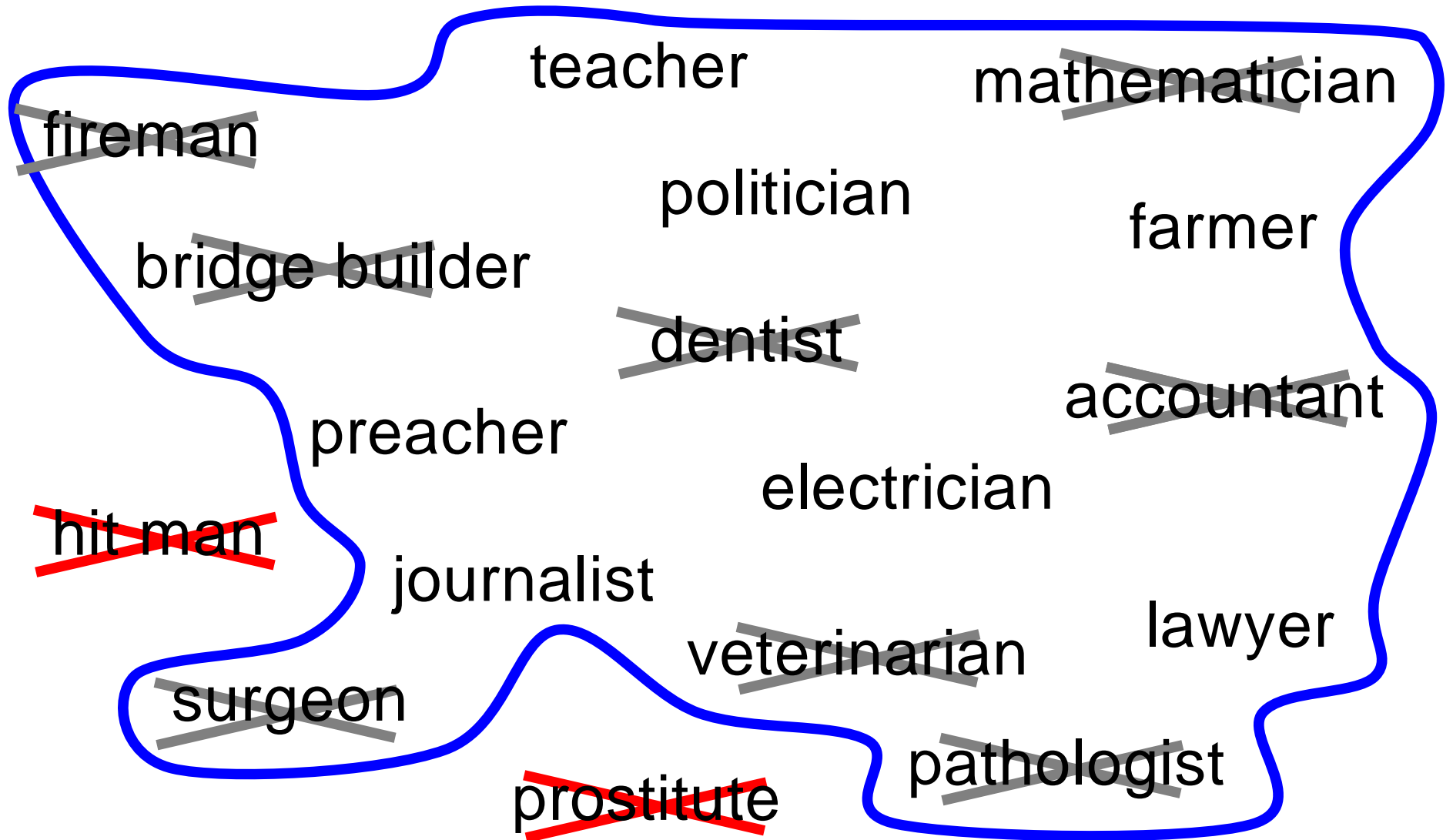
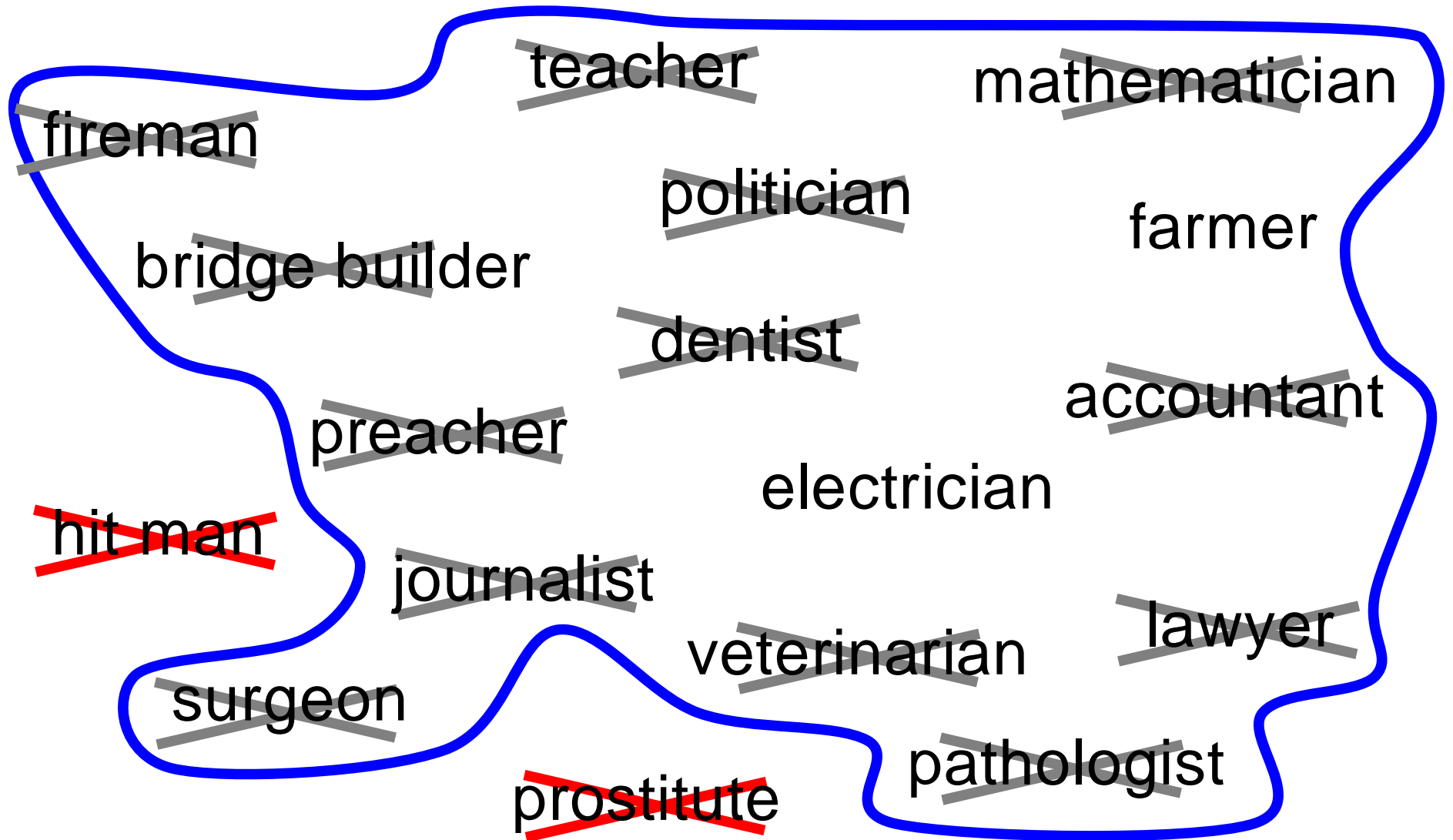


Illustration: Specific Application

(bad at math, faints at sight of blood, poor speaker)



Definition Revisited

Christian Liberty: The condition of being able to act in any desired way **to glorify God** without **biblical** hindrance or restraint; faculty or power to do as one likes **to glorify God**.

Therefore, whether you eat or drink,
or whatever you do, do all to the
glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Convenient Labels

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.
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Convenient Labels

- # Libertarian** — someone who has a correct understanding of the Biblical teaching on Christian liberty. These labels are issue specific: one might be a legalist about dress; a libertine about worship; and a libertarian about alcohol.
- # Libertine** — someone who seeks to remove Biblical restrictions on Christian liberty.
- ▶ The Bible is just right.
 - ▶ The Bible is too long.
- # Legalist** — someone who seeks to place non-Biblical restrictions on Christian liberty.
- ▶ The Bible is too short.
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