

## AM I A STUMBLING-BLOCK?

The world is already doomed, being a stage for sin; yet sorrow awaits anyone who becomes an instrument - Matt 18:7-9 - 7 "**Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin!** Such things must come, but **WOE TO THE MAN THROUGH WHOM THEY COME!** 8 If your hand or your foot **causes you to sin** cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown **into eternal fire.** 9 And if your eye **causes you to sin**, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be **thrown into the fire of hell.**

**According to God, facing death is better than becoming the cause of another person's sin.**- Matt 18:5-6 - 5 "And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. 6 But if anyone **causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin**, it would be **better for him** to have a **large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned** in the depths of the sea.

**Causing others to stumble into sin is one of the traits of those doomed to Hell** - Matt 13:41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and **they will weed out of his kingdom everything THAT CAUSES SIN and all WHO DO EVIL.**

**The only acceptable stumbling block is Christ** - Matt 11:6 **Blessed** is the man who **does not fall away on account of me.**"

**Ministries must feed the flock and NEVER cause stumbling** - 2 Cor 6:3 **We put NO STUMBLING BLOCK in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.**

**To accomplish this, we must make sure that if our ministry causes anyone to stumble it is ONLY because the message is sound in Christ and they refuse to accept it** - 1 Cor 1:23-25 - 23 but **WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles**, 24 but **to those whom God has called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For **the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom**, and the **weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.**

**What are some of the things we do that can cause others to stumble?**

**We cause others to stumble when we live carelessly in our freedoms rather than in reverence.**

**Not taking in to account others' lack of knowledge** - 1 Cor 8:9-12 - 9 Be careful, however, that **the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.** 10 For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? 11 So **this weak brother**, for whom Christ died, is **destroyed by your knowledge.** 12 **When you SIN AGAINST YOUR BROTHERS IN THIS WAY** and wound their weak conscience, **you sin against Christ.**

**Failing to value others above your freedoms** - Rom 14:19-21 - 19 Let us therefore **make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.** 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but **it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.** 21 It is **better not to eat meat or drink wine or to DO ANYTHING ELSE THAT WILL CAUSE YOUR BROTHER TO FALL.**

**A responsibility of all Christians is to live with the purpose of saving others** - 1 Cor 10:32-33 - 32 **DO NOT CAUSE ANYONE TO STUMBLE**, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 33 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For **I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, SO THAT THEY MAY BE SAVED.**

**So following Paul's lead in Christ, I will cancel all freedoms to avoid causing my brother to fall** - 1 Cor 8:13 Therefore, **if what I eat CAUSES MY BROTHER TO FALL INTO SIN, I will never eat meat again, SO THAT I WILL NOT CAUSE HIM TO FALL.**

**Another item that causes stumbling is any foundation apart from God** - Matt 16:21-23 - 21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. 22 **Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.** "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" 23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! **YOU ARE A STUMBLING BLOCK TO ME;** you **DO NOT HAVE IN MIND the things of God**, but **the things of men.**"

**The greatest cause of stumbling is professing to be a Christian while not living as one.** - 1 John 2:9-11 - 9 **Anyone who CLAIMS TO BE IN THE LIGHT but hates his brother** is still in the darkness. 10 **Whoever loves his brother lives in the light**, and there is **nothing in him to make him stumble.** 11 But **whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.**

**All Christians must live intentionally, making sure we don't cause others to stumble** - Rom 14:10-14 - You, then, **why do you judge your brother?** Or **why do you look down on your brother?** For **we will all stand before God's judgment seat.** 11 It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" 12 So then, **each of us will give an account of himself to God.** 13 Therefore **let us stop passing judgment on one another.** Instead, **MAKE UP YOUR MIND not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.**

**The church bears responsibility for addressing and removing those who cause others to stumble** - Heb 12:15 **SEE TO IT** that no one misses the grace of God and that **NO BITTER ROOT GROWS UP TO CAUSE TROUBLE AND DEFILE MANY.**

**We must remember, no matter who or what causes stumbling, God has provided what is needed for us not to stumble -**  
2 Peter 1:3-4 - 3 His divine power has given us EVERYTHING WE NEED for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE DIVINE NATURE and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

**We are obligated to soberly examine ourselves continually to keep us from causing “self” to stumble -** 1 Cor 10:12-13 - 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DON'T FALL! 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

**Most importantly, God will keep us IF WE ALLOW HIM -** Jude 24-25 - 24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.