

Stumbling block

“Walk” represents our lives - 2 Cor 5:7 -for we walk by faith, not by sight — NASB

Stumbling block - skandalon (skan'-dal-on) ("scandal"); i.e. snare (figuratively, cause of displeasure or sin): occasion to fall (of stumbling), offence, thing that offends, stumblingblock. * **Purpose for a Stumbling block is to distort the way or to delay.**

All stumble - James 3:2 -We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

Being the cause of someone stumbling is a horrible thing to be - Matt 18:7 "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!**"

We endanger ourselves by causing someone to stumble - Matt 18: 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.

We are not to be each other's judges, we are to be each other's helpers - Rom 14:12-13 - 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.

To truly glorify God is to look-out for others. DO NOT be part of the problem - 1 Cor 10:31-11:1 - 31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 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. 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

The true Christian falls but always gets up - Prov 24:16 for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.

CAUSES OF STUMBLING

Living for Christ can cause us to stumble - Luke 7:23 Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."

Example how some can fall on the account of Christ - 1 Cor 1:20-25 - 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 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.

Jesus revealed one of the main reasons someone becomes a stumbling Block - Matt 16:22-23 - 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.**"

A huge stumbling block is loving people based on anything-else other than God - James 2:8-13 - 8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. 9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. 12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13 because **judgment without mercy WILL BE SHOWN to anyone who has not been merciful.** Mercy triumphs over judgment!

A major way we are a stumbling block to ourselves is based on how we are with others - 1 John 2:9-11 - 9 The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. NASB

What we put our trust in will dictate if/when we fall - Prov 11:28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf. ***Riches mean more than money.**

We MUST be careful in our knowledge and our freedom -1 Cor 8 - Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But the man who loves God is known by God. 4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, →

→ from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. 7 But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. 8 But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. 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. 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.

All ministries must be stumble free - 2 Cor 6:3-10 - 3 We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. 4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; 5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; 6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; 8 through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; 9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; 10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

proskope (pros-kop-ay'); a stumbling, i.e. (figuratively and concretely) occasion of sin: offence.

HOW TO AVOID BEING A STUMBLING BLOCK AND STUMBLING OURSELVES

Only Christ can keep us from falling - 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.

Christ keeps us from falling by us getting to know Him and depending on Him - 2 Peter 1:3-11 - 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. 5 For this very reason, **make every effort to** add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. 10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For **IF YOU DO THESE THINGS, YOU WILL NEVER FALL,** 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

***We need to recognize and eliminate the things in our lives that cause us to stumble** - Matt 18:8-9 - 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.

We need to recognize and avoid those who live to cause stumbling blocks - Rom 16:17-19 - 17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. **Keep away from them.** 18 For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, BUT THEIR OWN APPETITES. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. 19 Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

Part or the Church responsibility is not to allow a stumbling blocks to grow - Heb 12:14-15 - 14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. 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.

Totally trusting in God will keep us from falling - Ps 55:22 Cast your cares on the Lord and **HE WILL** sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

We need Godly advice to keep us from falling - Prov 11:14 For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.

We need to watch our lives for the sake of others - 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.