

## ARE YOU A STUMBLINGBLOCK?

“Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord” (Lev. 19:14).

**Many through their bad examples are causing others to stumble.** This very action was going on in the days of Eli. Concerning the sons of Eli, we are informed that “Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD” (1 Sam. 2:17). Eli hearing of the evil his sons were involved in rebuked them saying, “Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress” (1 Sam. 2:24).

**We learn also that the evil doings of Samuel's sons were one of the reasons that Israel rejected God as their king.** “And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment” (1 Sam. 8:3). The people of Israel came to Samuel saying, “Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (1 Sam. 8:5). From this account, we see clearly that the sons of Samuel were causing the children of Israel to stumble.

**How are Christians causing others to stumble today?** When we do not hold firm to sound doctrine (Tit. 2:1), and are not concerned with contending for the faith (Jude 3), we will cause many to stumble. Paul commanded Timothy to “Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. 4:16). It is critical that all Christians be great examples of soundness and “hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13). We, as God's faithful, must proclaim truth and mark the false teacher (Rom. 16:17).

Another strong scripture for not wanting to cause any to stumble is Romans 14:20. “For meat destroy not **the work of God**. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.” God is working in each of our hearts, and if we ruin His work, He's NOT going to be too happy. “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3:17).

Still, another action that causes others to stumble is **Christians failing to practice what they preach.** We can tell others all day long that the church is to be the most important thing in our lives, but if we fail to proclaim this by our daily living, it will fall on deaf ears. For example, if we tell our family, neighbors and brethren that the word of God is the most important thing in our lives, and yet, spend little time in studying its holy pages, do we not cause others to stumble? Paul said, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15), and to “give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching” (1 Tim. 4:13).

To tell others how important Christianity is, and yet, **erratically attend Sunday night worship services and mid-week Bible Study**, do we not cause many to stumble in faithful attendance? What about the little children who see you on Sunday morning and look again for you on Wednesday night? Do they find you? Are you setting a good example for the little ones? "But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6).

**Many are causing others to stumble because they love to stir up trouble and will not control their tongue.** Paul proclaimed, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15). Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John. 13:35). Brethren we must "follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another" (Rom. 14:19), and "let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26).

**Are you building up the church or tearing it down?** If every member of the church were just like you, would the church be strong or near calamity? Be a good Christian example in all that you do! "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psa. 119:165).

—Beth Johnson