

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).

Most normal people would never imagine such wickedness as to cause a blind man to fall, yet they may mock him. How many times have you seen someone who ridiculed a deaf person or others who were handicapped? Some may be like the children who mocked Elisha (2 Kings 2:23-24). Was it a sin for Elisha to curse those children? We are not told, but we can read clearly “Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit...” (Pro. 28:10).

Even from Old Testament times, the way of an adulterous woman, caused many to go astray.

Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness (Pro. 30:20). Her ways are unstable. For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell (Pro. 5:3-5).

Many stumble because of alcohol.

But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment (Isa. 28:7).

Ezekiel was told to speak to warn the wicked in his way—to be a watchman for the house of Israel (Eze. 3:2; Eze. 3:17-19). If the people did not listen, they would die in their iniquity, but Ezekiel would not be held responsible.

Notice how many warnings there are in the New Testament against those who would cause God’s people to err!

- Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered (Luke 11:52).
- Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way (Rom. 14:13).
- But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which

hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend (1 Cor. 8:9-13).

- But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication (Rev. 2:14).

When god-fearing men do not lead the way, they indirectly cause the people to err [go astray]. (Isa. 3:12). The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). Our Heavenly Father's punishment is meant to bring His people back, not to destroy them.

Paul told Timothy to be an example to the believers (1 Tim. 4:12); Jesus declared, "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). The way we live ought to be drawing people closer to the Lord—not pushing them away!

--Beth Johnson