



Stumbling block

A stumbling block is anything that can cause another to stumble, to become weak, offended, grieved, or fall in their walk with God.

Romans 14:15 says it is causing grief to another that is weaker in faith. This would also imply that not everything causes grief to another. **Sometimes people have dislikes which may not necessarily cause them to stumble or grief but rather turn those into so called stumbling blocks to hinder the liberty of others.**

Because of the liberty we have in Christ, we need to be careful not to use that liberty to the point where we have no consideration of others, and their faith is in their walk with God.

1 Corinthians 6:12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Every one of us has scruples and personal convictions. These doubtful things include:

- i) Movies
- ii) TV
- iii) Hobbies
- iv) Dancing
- v) Certain foods and drinks
- vi) Days—Holy days such as Christmas.

There are four laws we can follow as we walk in not putting a stumbling block before others.

- a) Love
 - i) If a subject is not clearly addressed in scripture, we need to walk in love towards one another and be led by the Spirit of God in our hearts. One of the ways we exercise this love towards others is by holding back from exercising our liberty in order to not cause others to stumble.
 - ii) Walking in love with fellow Christians ought to be a priority. This is simply referring to exercising reservations and restrictions around weak brothers. This is to help not tempt

them with sin against their conscience nor offend them. We choose not to do certain things because of the love of our brothers and sisters.

b) Liberty

- i) There is a law of liberty according to James 1:25.
- ii) Galatians 5:1 *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*
- iii) Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.
 - Although we are free to do all things not listed as a sin in scripture, we should be willing to limit our liberty to advance love and remove occasion for another falling or being grieved.
 - We need to limit our liberty when it comes to other believers and the World.

c) Expediency

- i) 1 Corinthians 6:12 *All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*
- ii) 1 Corinthians 10:23 *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*
 - Somethings the world sees as wrong. We should be careful not to have these things as a stumbling block towards others. This could hinder them from believing in the Lord Jesus.

d) Sacrifice

- i) Romans 12:1-2 *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*
 - We have to be willing to give up certain things for the furtherance of the gospel or our relationship with God such things can be movies, alcohol, pork. And so forth.

In the following chapters, Paul used an example of a day, meat, or drink as an example of something that can be a stumbling block. Nonetheless, there are many other things that we have the liberty to do yet can cause others to stumble.

- A person's dislikes are not synonymous with a stumbling block.

Romans 14:5-6,13-23 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

- a) Whatever we choose to esteem, we need to be fully persuaded in our own mind.
 - i) This can include those that worship on Saturday rather than Sunday or those that do not or do keep holidays like Christmas and Easter.
 - ii) Those who choose to keep Saturday for worship can do so but that does not make them superior to others.
- b) We can value one thing above the other, but we need conviction and persuasion in that thing or else we are in sin.

[6] He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

- a) If we chose to regard or not regard a day, food or drink, or anything else, it ought to be done unto the Lord—not unto men nor to please men.
- b) As long as we do what we do unto the Lord, we are safe. The words “unto the Lord” are used about 3 times.
 - i) 1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.
 - ii) Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.
 - iii) Colossians 3:23-24 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.
- c) Whatever we do unto the Lord is to honor, serve, and worship Him. We should do what we do unto the Lord, not unto men.
- d) Our convictions to do certain things or not to do certain things should be to honor, glorify, and bless God, not to be seen of men, please men or impress men.

[13] Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

- a) If we are going to judge, we need to ensure that it is not to put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in the way of our fellow brother.

- b) One of the most important things we need to ensure is that we are not putting a stumbling block before our fellow brethren.

[14] I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

- a) Nothing is unclean in itself. It is in the esteeming that renders something clean or unclean. Until we regard it as unclean, it is not truly unclean.

[15] But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

- a) Notice the word "if." This means it is not all the time that liberties grieve another.
 - i) If what we do or our liberties grieve another brother, it is clear that we are not walking in love.
- b) We should not let food destroy another's faith. For that reason, we need to abstain or give up eating that thing just to be a blessing to another brother. This is love in action.

[16] Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

- a) If we do not follow this pattern of love, our liberty and goodwill be evil spoken of.
- b) We should be willing to limit our liberty in order to advance love and remove occasion for another falling or being grieved.

[17] For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

- a) There is more to the kingdom of God than what many have focused on. Rather than being focused on foods, meats, drinks, days, and so forth, it is important that we understand that the kingdom of God is not about all those things but rather righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

[18] For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

- a) What things?
 - i) Righteousness
 - ii) Peace
 - iii) Joy in the Holy Ghost

[19] Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

- a) If what we are doing is not directed towards bringing forth peace and edification, we need to quit doing it.

- b) Our liberties should be sacrificed for peace and edification among each other.

[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.

- a) This offense is an offense towards others. It is evil and sin for one to carry on eating or exercising their liberties while knowing they are offending, making one weak, grieving, or a stumbling block to others.
- b) They are eating with offense. This is selfish and inconsiderate.

[21] It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

- a) It is not a good thing to eat meat nor drink wine or anything which causes the other brother to stumble, to be offended, grieved or to be made weak in faith.
- b) Notice the words "anything." In other words, anything could be our dress code, our language, and many other things.

[22] Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.

- a) If you are doing what you are doing saying I have faith, then have your faith between you and the Lord. You do not have to make others stumble, weak, offended, grieved, and uncomfortable in the name of "I have faith."

Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. [23] And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

- a) We need to do what we do by faith. If we are doubting, wavering, or not persuaded and yet we still go ahead and do that thing such as eating meat or drinking or keeping a day, we are in sin because we are not doing those things in faith.