**AVOIDING THE STUMBLING BLOCKS**

***Matthew 18:6-9 6But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.7Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!8Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.9And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.***
“Stumbling” comes from the Greek word "**scandalon“.**
It is probably one of the broadest terms in all of Greek language.
It means: a stumbling block, anything against which one stumbles, an impediment; a cause of ruin, destruction, misery, a cause or occasion of sinning, scandal, offense, cause of indignation.
I’m sure we all remember going barefoot, and stumbling over roots and rocks when we were young.
**Stumbling Can Be Hurtful**Some falls caused by someone stumbling can seriously injure someone, especially if you are up in age, some falls have actually been fatal.
It is a terrible thing to stumble.
It is also a terrible thing to cause someone else to stumble.

**Stumbling**
What does the LORD think of causing someone else to stumble?
***Leviticus 19:14: “You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the LORD”.*Isaiah 57:14: *14And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people.***

**THE BIBLE SHOWS US SOME EXAMPLES OF THOSE THAT STUMBLED IN THE PAST.**
Eve, Adam, Cain….too many to mention….
Beloved, Actually, everyone who has lived and has sinned before God has stumbled.
Not only individuals, but nations have sinned and stumbled as well.
We should not be so naïve or closed minded to think that this country will not be punished for its sins by causing a stumbling block to its own people or other countries.

**WHO CAN STUMBLE?**
Answer…..Anyone.
***1 Corinthians 10:12: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”.***Peter said and assured himself and others that he would not stumble, but he did when he denied Jesus:

***John 13:36-38;*** ***36Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.37Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.38Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.***

***Peter was not the only one to say this…….***

***Matthew 26:33-35. 33Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.34Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.35Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.***

**CAN A CHRISTIAN STUMBLE?**
***Galatians 6:1: Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.(stumbled)***

***James 5:19,20: My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins”.***

**SOME CAUSES OF HOW ONE CAN STUMBLE?**

**Over silver and gold.**

***Ezekiel 7:19. 9They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumbling block of their iniquity***

**Over idols and iniquity.**

***Ezekiel 14:3-8; 3Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?4Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;***

***VERSE…7,8… 7For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the Lord will answer him by myself:8And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.***

***QUESTION..WHAT IDOLS ARE CAUSING A STUMBLING BLOCK IN YOUR LIFE BEFORE THE LORD?***

**Warning!!!! GET RID OF THEM NOW!! HE IS COMING SOON!!!!ALOT SOONER THAN MANY PEOPLE THINK!!!!**

 **Over unbelief.**

***John 8:24 24I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.***

***Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,***

***Romans 4:20 20He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;***

**Over failure to study God's word**.

***Hosea 4:6 6My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.***
***2 Timothy 2:15 5Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.***

***1 Peter 2:86Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.7Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,8And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.***

**Over disobedience.**

***Isaiah 1:2-20*** PLEASE READ!!!

**WHO CAN MAKE ONE STUMBLE?**

**Lawyers.** ***Luke 11:52. 2Woe 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.*** (they still get a bad rap)
**Preachers. *Matthew 15:14; 14Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.***

***Malachi 2: 7,8.For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.8But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.***
**Christians.**

***1 Corinthians 8:9-13. 9But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.10For 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;11And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?12But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.13Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. WORDS TO LIVE BY!!!!!***

Not to mention…..
Fathers, Mothers, Wives, Children, loved ones.

***Matthew 10:37. 37He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.***

**WHAT WILL BE THE OUTCOME OF THOSE THAT STUMBLE AND THOSE THAT CAUSED THEM TO STUMBLE?**
***Matthew 18:6,7. 6But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.***
**HOW CAN ONE KEEP FROM STUMBLING?**
**Love God's Law.**

***Psalm 119:97-104, 97O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.98Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.99I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.100I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.101I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.102I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.103How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!104Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.***
**Obey God's Law.**

***Matthew 7:24-27. 24Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:25And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.26And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:27And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.***

**By walking in the light.**

***1 John 1:6,7; 6If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.***

***John 11:9,10. 9Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.10But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.***

**Search the scriptures daily.**

***Acts 17:11. 11These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*Let whatsoever you do be done in faith.**

***Romans 14:23. 3And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.***
**And by the authority of Christ.**

***Colossians 3:17. 7And 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.***
**HOW CAN ONE KEEP FROM CAUSING ANOTHER TO STUMBLE?**

**Love God with all thy heart, strength and mind and Love thy neighbor as thyself.**

***Mark 12:30,31. 30And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.**31And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.***

**Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.**

***Matthew 7:12. 2Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.***

**Obey the Lord now, and lead others on a straight and narrow way.
By offending not.**

***Proverbs 18:19.. 9A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. ( STRONG WISDOM!!!)***

**By being a good example**.

1 Timothy 4:12. **12**Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

**CONCLUSION**:
Today can be your last day to carry a stumbling block or be a stumbling block in some one’s life! You can obey Him today and do away with that stumbling block.
In your disobedience, to God you might be a stumbling block to others.
Do not be a stumbling block and a rock of offence to others!

***May God Continue To bless the Readers of This Message! Pastor, Evangelist…. Carlos Sepulveda!***