

STUMBLING BLOCK

Paul warned two great churches against building their churches out of stumbling blocks (Rom.14; 1 Cor.8-10).

Paul used three different Greek words in our lesson text to describe the STUMBLING BLOCK problem: proskomma; skandalizo; and proskopto.

- **Proskomma** emphasizes the obstacle that causes one to stumble (Rom.14:13, 20; 1 Cor.8:9).
- **Skandalizo** emphasizes the offense that causes one to stumble and get hurt (Rom.14:13).
- **Proskopto** emphasizes the actual stumbling (Rom.14:21).

A brief syntactical look at our text will reveal seven interesting points on STUMBLING BLOCK.

1. The entire text is addressed to the mature Believer, with the exception of one verse. Rom.14: 23 is addressed to weak believer.
2. Seven prohibitions are given, to the mature Believer regarding liberty and the weak Believer. There are four imperatives (14:13,15-16,20) and three negatives (14:13, 15, 21).
3. Beatitude is pronounced for the proper exercise of the law of liberty, love, and lost (Rom.14: 22).
4. The law of love always supercedes the law of liberty (Rom.14: 15).
5. The kingdom of God is not about rights of taboos or liberties but about spiritual responsibility, service to Christ and the building up of others. (Rom.14: 17-20).
6. One positive imperative is given to the mature Believer, regarding application of the faith cycle to the stumbling block problem ((Rom.14: 22).
7. Our text can be divided into three sections by the Greek conjunction (oun/ therefore).
 - Don't let liberty become a stumbling block (Rom.14: 13-15).
 - Don't let liberty hinder spirituality and service to a weak Believer (14:16-18).
 - Let love pursue peace and edification with one another (14:19-23).

In the concluding part of this lesson, we will discuss four important principles regarding the STUMBLING BLOCK problem.
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1. **A stumbling block is any grace liberty, in Christian Way of Life (CWL) that antagonizes a spiritually advancing, but weaker believer so as to hinder his spiritual momentum.**

It offends the weak Believer and causes him to leave the classroom of doctrinal truth (Rom.14: 1; 15:1).

Do not tear down (kataluo/ p.a.impv) the work of God for the sake of food (liberty). All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense (to proskommatos). (Rom.14:20)

2. The mature Believer is commanded to accept the weaker Believer without accepting his taboo or legalism attached to it (Rom.14: 1/ proslambano/ p.m.impv) (Rom.14: 7-9, 15).

The mature Believer is commanded to accept the weak Believer without passing judgment (Rom.14: 1-4, 10).

The mature Believer must never cater to the weak Believer's legalism (Rom.14: 8-9). If the weak Believer is not benefited by your action and comes back to bible study, then return to your liberty. This weak Believer has been trying to superimpose his legalism upon you (Gal.2: 11-21).

3. The mature Believer must always be conscious of building-up the church, with peace, righteousness and love in the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit (Rom.14: 17-19).

Let me give an example of two weak Believers, with two different views of a food taboo.

One weak Believer thinks its wrong to eat food offered to idols. He gets out of fellowship every time the stumbling block eats the best prime steak in town. [The stumbling block – I must not eat it when with him – law of love.]

The other weak Believer has an eating disorder (gluttony) and eats only vegetables but likes the idea of the liberty to eat prime steak. But he has a problem with gluttony. [The stumbling block - I must not eat it when with him – law of love.]

If the mature Believer eats in either of these cases, he has become a STUMBLING BLOCK (Rom.14: 13; 1 Cor.8: 9-13).

4. The mature Believer should set aside the law of liberty for the law of love, whenever he is faced with any STUMBLING BLOCK situation (Rom.14: 15-19; 1 Cor.8: 12; 10:23).

Your right is not always right (Acts 24:16).

It is more important for the weak Believer to get the truth of God's word than for the mature Believer to exercise his liberty (Rom.14: 19-23).

The purpose is to get the weak Believer to operate under the Filling of The Holy Spirit (Eph.5: 18) and the faith cycle. (2 Cor.5: 7).

In time and growth, the weak Believer will come to understand that here is no merit or favor with God or spirituality in the abstinence of the grace liberty (Rom.14: 6-9; 1 Cor.8: 4-8).

“But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.” (1 Cor.8: 9)