

Stumbling Block IV The Stumbling Block of Sexual Immorality

In the previous articles, we discussed what it means to be a stumbling block, and we examined how Balaam and Jezebel were stumbling blocks to Israel and how they led the nation to commit fornication. For this reason, I wish to speak in this article about the most common stumbling block that is still plaguing our community: **sexual immorality**.

Since the fall of mankind, the devil has been devising schemes for us to misuse our sexuality. When St. Marina the martyr was battling a demon, the demon told her, **“I am the one who makes adultery, stealing, blasphemy, and earthly desires good and desirable to humans. And if I do not overcome them, I steer sleep and laziness against them, so they will not pray and ask for the forgiveness of their sins.”** This encounter teaches us that fornication is a trap set by the devil to separate us from God. What is even more treacherous about this trap is that it captures at least two people per occurrence, and there is always at least one stumbling block involved.

Say, for example, one sins by watching pornography in their room. Although the person might seem to be alone, the wicked devil has trapped many people in this scenario. **Everyone who participated in the production of the filthy content is guilty of sin and is considered a stumbling block who “would [have done] better [to have] a millstone hung around [their] neck, and [be] drowned in the depth of the sea”** (Matt. 18:6).

In another scenario, let’s say two young teens are “in love.” In an effort to show affection to each other and to quench their own desire for lust, they commit sin together. **The sad irony is that rather than giving love to their partner, they are loading their partner with sin, condemnation, and defilement, and all the while they themselves have also become a stumbling block. Do you see how cunning and deceiving the devil is?** He camouflages fornication as a celebration of love, disguises lust as intimacy, and uses God’s children as stumbling blocks to trap one another.

Another common stumbling block that is prevalent in today’s society related to sexual immorality is clothing, particularly woman’s clothing—or lack thereof. **The real purpose of clothing is to cover oneself**, yet it seems that these days, clothes are used to accentuate certain features so as to receive attention for revealing certain body parts. Shorts have gotten shorter, necklines of tops are cut lower, and tights have gotten tighter, leaving less to the imagination than ever before. Someone dressing according to these standards will undoubtedly be a stumbling block by causing other women to feel self-conscious about their weight, bust size, and general beauty and they will undoubtedly cause men to fall into the sin of lust.

Some women may read the preceding paragraph and claim that they cannot control how others think of them. My response to such a claim is that **although it is true that they cannot control what other people think, they should not be a source of temptation because of their immodest clothes**. During the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus condemned anyone who looks at a woman with lustful intentions saying, **“[W]hoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart”** (Matt. 5:28). Therefore, **if we truly care for our friends, then we should try our best to prevent them from being charged with any sin.**

My hope and prayer is that each person makes a conscious effort to be a building block and not a stumbling block as we discussed in the first article in this series. **If everyone felt such conviction to not be a stumbling block, then we could eradicate the sin of lust and sexual immortality.**

In the next article, I hope to conclude this series with a general principle that will aid us in avoiding being a stumbling block.



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