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*“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)*

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## OFFENSES

Have you ever stumbled and fallen? Most likely you have. When I was a child and in a hurry, I would sometimes stub my toe against a rock or the root of a tree and fall on my face. When we are old, it is a serious concern that we will stumble over something in our path and fall and break an arm or a hip. Stumbling can lead to falling and can be very serious. Stumbling and falling in a spiritual sense can also be very serious. We can cause someone else to fall by our words and actions. The word is offense. Jesus said in Matthew 18:7,

*Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs*

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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



*be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!*

Sometimes we may misuse the word offense. We might say “That offends me”, meaning that we don’t like what someone says or does. But their action is likely not going to make us stumble and fall. The biblical meaning of the word offense [spelled “offence” in the KJV] is to cause to stumble, to sin and to fall. You can then see how serious it is to offend another Christian. Jesus was speaking of little children when He said in Matthew 18:6,

*But 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.*

There are several ways that you might offend another Christian and cause him to sin and fall. One way is to encourage someone to participate in your sin. Maybe you encourage him to lie about where you have been or what you have done. Or maybe you ask him to participate in stealing and taking what is not his from a neighbor or a business. Or maybe you tell him it is okay to break the law since it isn’t a good law and nobody will find out. Or maybe you commit fornication or adultery with him or her and sin. There are lots of ways that you can encourage another to sin. God knows what you are doing. Perhaps this is what is referred to in Romans 16:17-18:

*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

Your heart is not right if you persuade another person to sin.

You may remember the story of Balaam (Numbers chapters 22 -24). When the Israelites came out of Egypt, Balak, the king of the Moabites, saw the great multitude of the Israelites and he

was very much afraid. He sent for the prophet Balaam to come and curse the Israelites, but the Lord did not permit Balaam to do so. When Balak sent to Balaam the second time and Balaam inquired of the Lord, the Lord said to go on, but the Lord was angry that he went. The Lord sent his angel to kill Balaam, but twice the donkey Balaam was riding avoided the angel. When the donkey saw the angel the third time, he lay down under Balaam. When Balaam beat the donkey, the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey so that it spoke to Balaam and the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam so that he saw the angel. Balaam proceeded on to king Balak but multiple times he blessed the Israelites and did not curse them. Finally, Balaam returned home. You would think that was the end of the story, but it was not. The story continues in Numbers 25:1-3:

*And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.*

Why did the Moabites have their women commit harlotry with the Israelites and invite the Israelites to participate in the worship of their gods? We are told in the writing to the church in Pergamos in Revelation 2:14,

*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 Isra-*

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*el, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*

Balaam taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the Israelites. Apparently the church in Pergamos had individuals that did a similar thing as Balaam did by putting a stumbling block before the children of God. Beware of such individuals.

You may somewhat innocently offend your brother by doing something that you think is okay but is contrary to the conscience of your brother. Since they see you do the thing, they are emboldened to follow your example. The case given in the Bible is eating food sacrificed to an idol. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 8:9-13,

*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.*

Your situation will be different. There may be something you think is okay to do but your brother sees it differently. The apostle Paul said that if meat caused his brother to stumble, he would never eat meat. You can avoid offending your brother by restricting your actions because you love your brother and you do not want him to stumble.

Causing someone to stumble and fall is very serious. My encouragement to you is to avoid people who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ. Also be careful that your actions do not offend others.

ED ANDERSON  
Sierra Vista, AZ

## OLD WIVES' TALES

*If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. (1 Tim. 4:6-7)*

Many sayings are attributed to the Bible but which in fact are not found in it.

### CLASSIC EXAMPLE

In the 1950's in South Mississippi at the beginning of a series of meetings, I offered \$10.00 to anyone who would produce the location of this passage:

“The time will come when you can't tell Summer from Winter except for the budding of the trees and the falling of the leaves.”

But here is what the Bible actually says, with the above saying nowhere to be found in it:

*Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: (Mat. 24:32)*

*While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. (Gen. 8:22)*

### SOME TOTALLY IN ERROR

The tale: “Only believe.”

*As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. (Mark 5:36)*

The comment was taken out of its context. The discussion was not forgiveness and salvation but healing of the ruler's daughter. The ruler was being exhorted to TRUST Jesus.

*Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (Jas. 2:19)*

*Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (Jas. 2:24)*

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:8-10)*

The tale: "I wouldn't sell a Bible."

*Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. (Pro. 23:23)*

This is a reference, rather, to selling one's principles.

#### SOME A TWIST OF THE ACTUAL TEACHING

The tale: "Money is the root of all evil."

*For the love of money is the root of all evil: (1 Tim. 6:10a)*

It is not a sin to be rich. Consider Job, Abraham, Lot, and David. These faithful men used their money properly, as can also faithful rich men in our current day.

The tale: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine."

These words are actually in the Bible, but lest we conclude that which is not intended we must complete the verse -

*Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. (1 Tim. 5:23)*

If we take such liberties, we can prove anything we wish; but taking the Bible as it is proves but one thing - the truth!

#### NOT IN BIBLE BUT TRUE IN PRINCIPLE

The tale: "Every tub shall sit on its own bottom."

*For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (Rom. 14:11-12; also Isa. 45:23 and Php. 2:10-11.)*

The tale: “Weep at a birth and rejoice at death.”

*A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. (Ecc. 7:1)*

The tale: “Spare the rod and spoil the child.”

*He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. (Pro. 13:24)*

The tale: “Cleanliness is next to Godliness”

*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 7:1)*

The tale: “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread” (Alexander Pope).

*Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. (2 Pet. 2:11)*

*Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. (Jude 1:9)*

#### EVEN PETER SPOKE OF SOME DIFFICULT PASSAGES

*Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (2 Pet. 3:14-16)*

Let us always strive to be as the Berean brethren,

## GOSPEL MEETINGS

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DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
October 2 - 4	Goochtown Eubank, KY	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)

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*In that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (Acts 17:11b)*

Adapted from a sermon by HARRY COBB  
(Deceased)

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### SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What was Bathsheba doing when David first saw her?
2. Solomon judged wisely over the rightful mother of a child, but how did he determine who the child belonged to?
3. What did Jesus do to each of the disciples during the Last Supper?
4. What event occurred to help release Paul and Silas from prison?
5. What does James say happens if we “*draw nigh to God*”?

...ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

And remember last month’s questions?

1. Abram was rich in gold, silver and what else?  
CATTLE (Gen. 13:2)
2. In prison, for whom did Joseph interpret dreams? THE BUTLER (CUPBEARER) AND THE BAKER (Gen. 40:5)
3. How long did Jonah say it would be before Nineveh was to be overthrown? FORTY DAYS (Jon. 3:4)
4. Which bird does Jesus say we have more value than?  
A SPARROW (Mat. 10:31)
5. Demetrius of Ephesus was a...?  
SILVERSMITH (Acts 19:24)