Stumbling Blocks to Stepping Stones

A couple years after I gave my life to Christ, I was at work and a supervisor approached me asking, “Is it ok in your religion to be addicted to certain vices?” Now, this man was somewhat of a new believer and his question stemmed from him witnessing my habitual vice. Genuinely curious, he awaited my response. I quickly reminded him that my vice had nothing to do with my salvation. Puzzled, he looked at me, expecting more. After an awkward pause, I finally looked him in the eye and admitted, “Actually, I’m just too weak to lay it down and I haven’t been willing to surrender it all to Christ…I know I should stop.” Later that day, God gripped my heart and lovingly convicted me. I eventually found victory over that vice, through Christ, and still to this day witness to that supervisor. Today, I am much more sensitive to the call to be blameless before all men.

In Romans 14:15 we get a glimpse into the heart of God concerning this matter when the scripture says, “Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.” (NKJV) In other words, if Jesus was willing to lay down His life for our brother in Christ, then we should be willing to lay down food, habits, vices, traditions, or any other “nonessential” which may be a stumbling block that is going to hinder or confuse our brother. Remember when Jesus said to His disciples in John 15:12-13, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” (NKJV) Every day we have the freedom to exercise our liberties, but if we flaunt them in the face of others, then we are being selfish in our salvation. Instead, the kind of love Jesus called us to have is a selfless love, the kind of love that concerns itself with the hearts of others, the weaknesses of others, and the spiritual growth of others.

Remember that the world is watching, analyzing, and searching out the hope that is in us. Some observers are looking for inconsistencies, while others are searching for answers. So remember, “…we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us…” (2 Corinthians 5:20, NKJV) Is God calling you to lay something down for the sake of the furtherance of the Gospel? Are we representing the King of Kings with a completely surrendered life? Are we turning all of our stumbling blocks into stepping stones?

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