

Stumbling Blocks

December 2003

Conscientious people worry about impeding the progress of others toward heaven. Foolish things are sometimes done which bring reproach upon the name of Christ and give God's enemies an opportunity to blaspheme (Rom 2:24; 2 Pet 2:2). Perhaps we should pray that, wherein we stand guilty of such, God will provide other godly influences in the lives of those people whom we have failed.

David in the 69th Psalm has similar concerns. He is in great distress from his enemies (69:1-4), and the turmoil makes him painfully conscious of his sin (69:5).

With the weight of the entire nation upon him, David prays (69:6):

*"Let not those who wait for You, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed because of me;
Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel."*

"Men pray thus when they have the burden of the welfare of souls on their heart" (Leupold, *Exposition of Psalms*, p. 503).

Conversely, when men do not have the "welfare of souls on their heart," they thoughtlessly do things which interfere with the spiritual progress of others. They seem to have little concern for the negative influence they exert upon others by their words and actions.

This is the most puzzling – and inexcusable – when parents are stumbling blocks to their own children. Parents who are unwilling to attend Bible study or find 1001 excuses to miss worship teach their children that such activities are not very important.

But that is mild compared to what some parents do. I have known of a mother and daughter "dating duo" to go nightclubbing while their husband/father was working 24-hour shifts at the fire department.

They would even bring their dates to the house while the man was on duty. One such occasion led to a confrontation in which the daughter stabbed her father in the neck with a knife.

Some parents buy booze for their kids, procure abortions for their daughters, attack school officials for disciplining their little darlings and otherwise teach their children to be irresponsible and immoral.

The problem often is that children are raising children. Many parents are selfish, emotionally unstable and weak in character and thus do not know how to instill the higher qualities of godliness in their children. This surely is a sign of a society in decline.

If we decide to throw our own souls away, God certainly gives us that "right." But some people have so little conscience as to take their children with them. **Ω**