

## Small Group/Sermon Notes for Instead Part 2: No Stumbling Blocks

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- Make sure everyone knows each other's names. Have everyone share a little about themselves and how life is going right now.
- **Instead: Set Up**
- This is a series about replacing the old with the new!
  - We will look at some Scriptures with the word "instead" included or implied.
  - It's basically **Romans 12:2** applied in a variety of circumstances.
  - It's not enough to reject bad things, we must replace those things. **Matthew 12:43-45**.
- **This Week: No Stumbling Blocks**
- **Romans 14:13**
  - The harvest is plentiful = you can make this world a better place!
    - However, your actions can be positive, neutral, or negative.
    - Roman 14:13 implores you to have a positive influence!
  - Assumptions:
    - They are trying, so don't get in the way.
      - Some people aren't trying. They need to be engaged.
    - God is dealing with them, so give God space to work.
    - Apply this wisely. This is no excuse for complacency!
- Back drop of Romans 14:13 is nitpicky religious rules.
  - **Romans 14:1**. These disputable matters included: what foods are permissible for the believer to eat, and which days/holidays are holy.
  - Sounds funny, but parallels to today are: alcohol and Halloween.
    - We must not get side tracked! **Timothy 2:23-24**
- What are examples of stumbling blocks?
  - Confusing controversies for starters! Then: legalism, hypocrisy, dysfunction, discord, off base expectations, etc.
  - Even doing something ok but that hurts someone else. **Romans 14:19-21**
    - The line is in different places for different people and it moves!
      - **Romans 14:15** and fault vs responsibility.
  - Let talk about off base expectations in light of **Matthew 23:25-26**.
    - Requiring the appearance of a growing relationship with the Lord without truly cultivating a growing relationship with the Lord creates weird religious goofiness. The end extreme is religious hypocrisy.
      - Ex: being full of faith and joy is good. But expecting that even though the person is struggling is destructive.
        - Tithing, forgiveness, serving, etc.
      - The inside of the cup and dish is where the work gets done!!
      - Off base personal expectations = placing a stumbling block in front of yourself!!
      - Imposing what God is dealing with you about onto others.
- The stumbling block placer is often just trying to help.
  - There is something else you can do to help! **Matthew 7:1-5**
  - Instead of tripping people with your plank, remove it!
    - Your life will be way better without your planks! You, with God's help, can remove them.
    - If you are frustrated with why God isn't using you more, focus on removing the planks from your eye.
- Pray for each other before you finish up!