



#59958

Stumbling Blocks to Stepping Stones

Characters: Narrator, Corrie, the Devil, the World, our Flesh (or just one person wearing these three titles), kids' voices in background and the voice of God

Props: Hair brush and possibly lipstick; stumbling blocks (can be boxes or large crumpled paper) with the words *Demands*, *Worry*, *Discontent*, *Not Gifted* and *Worthless Sinner* written or taped on them; large cross; path of stepping stones (construction paper or cardboard will work); flowers enough for each lady present to take one (real, plastic, silk or paper) in vases or pots; watering can; table; chair; phone; kitchen items as desired (pan and spoon); and Bible.

Also needed: Paper and pen/pencils for the audience and list of Scripture passages read by "God" in this sketch

Notes for sketch actors:

After each section where World, Flesh or Devil speak to Corrie, each gives a stumbling block to Corrie and leaves. Corrie then carries this block along with the others from scene to scene, sometimes dropping and tripping over one. As the sketch unfolds, Corrie's attitude becomes more negative and burdened.

Narrator: Our life's journey is like a path. Since the fall into sin, life will have its problems, trials and hardships. How do we respond to what this world, the devil and our own sinful flesh put in our way? What does God want our response to be? Today we will join Corrie on her journey. Though she is a Christian and knows Jesus as her Savior, we will see how she struggles putting all she knows into practice in her life and how easy it is to listen to the wrong voices. Along her journey, Corrie loses sight of some important Biblical truths and becomes critical, complaining and completely stressed. She becomes a person who has lost sight of the joy and purpose in life.

Act I

Scene I: *Corrie is getting herself ready for the day (in front of mirror fixing hair, putting on makeup, checking out how clothing looks).*

Corrie: I seem to be putting on weight and feel so tired all the time. I do need to exercise but there is just no time with work, keeping up with the house, kids

schedules and, well the list could go on. I am so busy taking care of everyone and everything else, which I don't keep up with very well, that I cannot find time to take care of my own needs.

Flesh: *(Enters carrying block of "demands")* That's right Corrie, you can't do it so why even try? There will never be enough time for you. Everyone else demands too much from you. All their needs are more important than yours. What's a few extra pounds anyway? Besides, you will get to buy new clothes as the old ones get too tight.

Scene II: *Corrie is sitting at a table paying bills.*

Corrie: There is just never enough money to go around. Maybe I need to work full time; but it's hard enough now to keep up with the kids, house and everything. Working full time would put me over the edge! Where can we cut back? There are just no solutions. I really feel the need for a house with a basement but how could we afford a bigger home?

Devil: *(Enters carrying block of "worry")* Not enough money, basement needed with storm season coming, raising kids, keeping up with the house, aging parents; need I go on? You had better figure out what you are going to do about all these things or you will have real problems some day.

Scene III: *Corrie is working in the kitchen when the next three events happen; first she is looking out the window and notices a neighbor whom she envies; next there is a phone call; and finally Corrie tries to fix the evening meal and must deal with arguing kids in the background.*

The scene opens with Corrie looking out the window.

World: *(Enters carrying block of "discontent")* Corrie, I see you watching your neighbor Mary. There she goes in her new car. Too bad you cannot have a nice car like that. She has everything together. She is always so happy. You would be less stressed and happier if you did not have to work or have money problems. Wouldn't it be nice to buy new clothing and do whatever you wanted each day? Doesn't it make you sick how she is always volunteering at school and church and even in the community? Your life is so dull compared to hers; work, clean, take care of kids. Just think; her family is going on a cruise over spring break!

Corrie's thoughts are interrupted by the phone ringing.

Corrie: *(Answers the phone)* Hi, Linda. Oh, I'm fine. How are you? *(Pause)* You want me to lead a devotion at our next meeting? But I have never done that before. I am not good in front of others. I just do not think I have the abilities to do something like that. There are plenty of others who have been gifted that way. *(Pause)* Pray about it? Well, I guess I could at least think and pray about it. *(Pause)* See you Sunday. Bye.

Flesh: (*Enters carrying block of "not gifted"*) You don't even need to pray about that one, Corrie. You are definitely not a speaker and could not lead devotions. That takes a highly spiritual person. Who are they trying to kid? God can't use you in that way. Of course, if you want to gain God's favor you have to help the church out in some way.

Corrie is fixing the evening meal, feeling very grumpy, burdened and not at all joy-filled. Her thoughts and supper preparations are interrupted by kids arguing.

Kids' Voices: I had that first. But I was going to play with it first. Give it to me. It's mine. It's not fair. You have all the good toys and never want to share them.

Corrie: (*Yells*) Stop that arguing, kids! Go to your rooms until supper! I have had enough of your arguing. Why can't you share with each other instead of always yelling and fighting?

Devil: (*Enters carrying block of "worthless sinner"*) You are such a bad mother, Corrie. You are grumpy and taking it out on them. Face it, Corrie, they are only following your example. They have learned all their bad behaviors from you. You are not showing them a good example. You are a failure. You are not worthy to be their mother. In fact, how could God even love you?

Scene IV: *Corrie sits down, having tripped over one of the stumbling blocks. The stumbling blocks are scattered around her, and she is still holding one in her lap. She is exhausted and overcome by the burden she is carrying. (Large cross and Bible visible nearby) Her mind is filled with the stumbling blocks from the day. She hears the words of the Devil, the World and her Flesh plaguing her thoughts.*

(Standing in the distance, Devil, World and Flesh taunt with the following words.)

D, W, F: Worthless sinner, you're a bad mother; not gifted, God can't use you; discontent, others have been blessed with more; worry, you have to take care of it all; demands on time, no time to take care of yourself or do anything for yourself.

Corrie: (*Looking to the cross*) Help me, God! I hate how I have become! Why am I this way? Life is so unfair and hard. I have lost the joy in my life. I cannot keep going like this. I try to be all You want me to be, a good mother, member of our church, neighbor and steward of your gifts but I keep tripping over all these stumbling blocks.

God: Corrie, remember who I am! I am God. I am your Father who loves you. Have you forgotten that you are my forgiven child in whom the Spirit dwells? On your own, you cannot be perfect. That's why I sent Jesus to the earth; to live perfectly and then be the perfect sacrifice so that your sins

could be forgiven. In Him, you are perfect. Tell me what has been causing you to stumble, for I have good news for you!

(One by one Corrie reads what is on the stumbling block and gives it to God, laying each at the cross. As she does, God speaks the truth from His Word to her.)

Demands: *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”* Matthew 11:28-30

“...the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10b

Worry: *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* John 14:27

“And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” Phil 4:19

Discontent: *“Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.”* Psalms 37:4

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33

Not Gifted: *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* Ephesians 2:8-10

“I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” Phil 4:13

Worthless Sinner: *“...you are precious and honored in my sight, ...and I love you..”* Isaiah 43:4

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

God: Remember, Corrie, *“...the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”* 1 John 4:4b When your focus is on me and who I am, then you will have peace in your heart because you will know and trust that I have it all under control and my love for you will bring my best into your life. Any concerns you have or shortcomings you see in yourself will only be an opportunity to see me at work and to anticipate my gifts to and through you. You will be free to live a life of love and service with joy in your heart.

(Corrie bows her head and prays this Psalm as a prayer.)

Corrie: *“Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.” Psalm 25:4-5*

End Act I

While the stage is being set for Act II, narrator will lead the ladies in this reflective activity. Pass a sheet of paper and pencil for each lady.

Narrator:

1. What stumbling blocks are in your life? Ponder that for a few minutes. Tear the paper into as many pieces as desired and then write a stumbling block on each piece. Make a stumbling block out of each piece of paper by crumbling it into a block.
2. In groups of two to four, share some of the stumbling blocks you trip over. Then share truths from God’s Word (from those used in the sketch or others you know) that strengthen you when faced with the devil, the world and your flesh.

Act II:

Path of stepping stones leading through a garden with flowers along the path (in pots or vases) which lead to the cross. Corrie enters and walks along the path with a joyful heart. As she goes along the path she stops here and there to water, weed or pick a flower or two. Each time she stops, the narrator reads a truth from God’s Word (see narrator comments below.) When she gets to the cross, she kneels and speaks a prayer.

Narrator Comments:

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you...

Delight yourself also in the Lord...

We are His workmanship...

You are precious in My eyes...I love you

Be anxious for nothing, with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God

Walk in love

Corrie: Thank You, my Heavenly Father. You have filled my life with so much joy and peace. I am overflowing with Your love within me. Thank You for taking all of my stumbling blocks and turning them into stepping stones. Oh, and I brought another one. It is such a relief to be able to bring these to You every day instead of carrying so many around for so long like before. Not only did it wear me out and make me miserable but it also kept my mind on myself instead of You and others! When I look back over the past few months since You showed me all the lies I was stumbling over and filled me instead with Your truths, Your love and Your forgiveness, I am amazed at the beauty with which my life has been filled. I can now see the blessings You give me each day and am much more pleasant for others to be around. I had become such a whiner and a grump! You have even used me in ways I never imagined You could, like leading that devotion for LWML! I have really begun to know Your peace and live in it because I have learned to

trust You more completely. Now I even have more energy and desire to serve others in many different ways. I know I will stumble and fall many more times. Thank You that You will be there to pick me up, forgive me, teach me and lead me in Your ways. Amen

Corrie leaves following the path of stepping stones.

Narrator: Ladies, please join me in prayer:

Heavenly Father, we too have at times listened to the lies the devil, the world and our flesh speak to us. Forgive us and fill us with the truths from Your Word. We ask You to give us the peace and joy that come from trusting You and knowing that nothing, "...neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38, 39 Amen

Ladies, I invite you to follow the path of stepping stones to bring your stumbling blocks to the cross. As you leave, please take a flower as a reminder of the beauty that God's love causes to bloom in your life as you leave your burdens at the cross and trust in Him. May God's peace and joy fill you to overflowing!!! (*Ushers may be helpful if the gathering is large.*)

Note: This prayer of Paul for the church in Ephesus may be spoken as the ladies bring forward their stumbling blocks or could be printed out and given to each lady to take home for personal meditation.

"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations for ever and ever! Amen."
Ephesians 3:14-21

All Scripture is from NIV

STUMBLING BLOCKS TO STEPPING STONES
Written by Keven Wrege
Published by Lutheran Women's Missionary League
May 2007