

Is continued stumbling the way of a Christian, or is it error?

As Christians we have all stumbled and fallen into sin. However, if it is our intent to go on with God, we are brought to a decision, first with respect to specific sins and then to sin in general, that is, is this stumbling God's intended way for a Christian or not? As we shall see there are many scriptures which clearly reveal that God has made a failsafe way to keep us from stumbling. But there are some Christians who don't yet want to stop sinning, and who look for scriptures that seem to justify continued stumbling, in order to give them a license to carry on living in the flesh. One such scripture is found in the book of James:

James 3:1-2 **My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.**

For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

James goes on to give some examples and analogies for stumbling in word, but concludes

James 3:10 **Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.** (not a license to keep stumbling, is it)

John Wesley's commentary on James 3:1 and 3:2:

3:1 ...St. James here, as in several of the following verses, by a common figure of speech, includes himself "we shall receive, we all stumble, we put bits, we curse" none of which, as commonsense shows, are to be interpreted as referring to him- (or any who are sanctified)

3:2 "Able also to bridle the whole body" - That is, the whole man. And doubtless some are able to do this, and so are in this sense perfect. [1 Thes 4:4 **That each of you should know how to possess (to bridle) his own vessel (body) in sanctification and honor,**]

Do other scriptures support the teaching of continued stumbling? Consider Jude and Peter

Jude 24 **Now to Him (God) who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,**

2 Pe 1:10 **Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;**

Do other scriptures support the teaching that it's not possible to be made perfect in Christ?

Matt 5:48 (Jesus) **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.** NRSV

Phil 3:15 (Paul) **Let us therefore, as many as be perfect...(not stumbling into sin) KJV**

In what way has God made provision to keep us from stumbling and to no longer sin?

1 John 3:5-6 **And you know that He (Jesus) was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin...**

John 15:4 (Jesus) **Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**

To those who won't, Jesus is now "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense" 1Pe 2:8