



Stumble

Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right, and the righteous will walk in them, but transgressors will stumble in them.

Hosea 14:9

I am a very clumsy person and I bruise very easily which is not a good combination. I have bruises all over my body that show up without me remembering any impact that would have caused them because it is so commonplace for me to run into things. I don't watch carefully where I'm going, and I end up hitting the corner of a table or banging my shin on a door. It happens so frequently that I usually just roll my eyes when I find a new bruise.

I thought about that when I read the last part of the feature verse above, "but transgressors will stumble in them." I thought about how often I stumble, trip over my own feet, or sometimes thin air, as I'm walking. It's very easy for me to do. In a spiritual sense, it is also very easy for me to stumble over the ways of the Lord. When I am walking in close fellowship with Him, when I am allowing the Spirit to lead me in every thought, word, and deed, I find that the ways of the Lord are a clear, smooth path that He and I go sailing down. I don't see the rocks in the way when my attention is on Him. They disappear. When I am not walking in close fellowship with Him, there are stones and logs and dips and hills in the path and I stumble and tumble around, acquiring new bruises all the time and bruising others in the process.

Sometimes, whether I stumble or not has to do with my companions on the walk. Even when I begin my day sitting still before the Lord and leaning into Him, learning from Him, having Him feed my starving soul, when I walk out into my day and end up around other people I easily forget the sweet communion with Him, and the smooth path becomes rocky. I trip and slip, stumble and fall.

The most interesting thing to me is that how smooth my path for the day is depends entirely on how closely intertwined I am with Jesus, and how closely I *remain* intertwined with Him throughout the day. It is *His* power that keeps me from stumbling along His path, carrying me through to end the day flushed with success, smiling and praising Him. I am humbled and thankful that when I do take my eyes off Him, when I allow the opinions and thoughts of others, the foibles and flaws of those around me to distract me and I stumble and fall, He is right there to pick me back up, dust me off, and start off again.

The ways of the Lord are right, and the righteous will walk in them. I pray that I walk in His path by His power today and not stumble over His ways.

Father, we thank You for Your patient love for us. We thank You that You have laid out Your path of righteousness for us to walk in, and yet do not leave us to walk it alone. We thank You for Your restoration when we stumble, and pray that we keep our eyes on You this day.