

In her case, it was not something she did that caused her to stumble; it was the action of another. But in Titus 2:12 and Hebrews 12:1 the writer is speaking about our own sins that beset us and cause us to stumble and fall.

Now it seems to me that if we are to renounce our besetting sins and lay them aside, we need to address at least three key questions:

First, what are "besetting" or entangling sins?

Second, in what ways do besetting sins hinder our progress and effectiveness in the Christian life?

Third, how can we decisively renounce and rid ourselves of besetting sins?

First of all, then,

I. WHAT ARE BESETTING SINS?

Besetting sins appear to have at least five important characteristics, and the first of these is that

A. Besetting sins are really sins

They are not merely mistakes, errors, weaknesses, or temptations.

They are forms of ungodliness and worldly desire, as God defines them.

B. A second characteristic of besetting sins is that they are harassing sins.

The word "besetting" means "constantly harassing or attacking."

Let me ask: are there sins in your life that are besetting; sins that are hindering and entangling you, causing you to slip and slide and stumble, slowing you down, and keeping you from experiencing the progress and effectiveness in the Christian life that you know you should be seeing? These sins are besetting sins, and they harass and attack you again and again.

C. A third characteristic of besetting sins is that they are habitual sins.