

SEVEN REASONS PEOPLE DON'T OBEY GOD

Luke 8:4-15

I. INTRODUCTION:

1. We have a duty to reach the lost (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16).
2. Much could be said about our effort (e.g., why and how):
 - A. Fervency, especially in view of what is at stake (Matt. 16:26).
 - B. Methods (Jn. 12:48; Lk. 8:4-15; Jas. 1:21; Rom. 1:16-17).
3. However, despite how fervently we try to sow the pure word of God--some, if not most, will not obey. Matt. 7:13-14; 22:14
4. This lesson will explore seven reasons people don't obey God.

II. DISCUSSION:

1. THEY ARE NOT READY

- A. There are millions of people who have not obeyed God and that's okay!
- B. Babies and children who have not reached the "age of accountability" – they are not ready to obey; regardless of what many religious groups would have us believe (false concept of "original sin", "total hereditary depravity").
- C. There is not a single case recorded in the New Testament where teachers sought to make disciples of babies or children.
- D. Why not? Because they aren't ready! Why? Because...
 - (1) They are not guilty of sin (1 Jn. 3:4; Ezek. 18:20; Jas. 1:12-15; Matt. 18:1-3).
 - (2) They are not ready to understand about God and their responsibilities to Him.
 - ☛ Not ready to believe (Mk. 16:16; Heb. 8:10; Jn. 6:44-45; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Rom. 10:17; Rom. 6:17; Acts 18:8; 8:12).
 - ☛ Not ready to make the commitment necessary to be a true disciple (Lk. 9:23-24).

2. THEY ARE IGNORANT

- A. Ignorance is not an excuse (Rom. 1:18-20, 32).
- B. In my mind there are at least two "classes" of ignorance:
 - (1) **Arrogant ignorance**: hostile towards the gospel, do not have a "good and honest heart" (Lk. 8:4-15).
 - ☛ Athenians (Acts 17:16-32): This is a competency issue (such people lack knowledge) **AND** a "dispositional" issue (v. 32a; Lk. 8:11-12; "wayside" soil, impenetrable heart).
 - (2) **Honest ignorance**:
 - ☛ Ethiopian Eunuch was in this situation (Acts 8:26-31): This too is a competency issue (such people lack knowledge) **AND** a "dispositional" issue (v. 34, 35, 36-37; Lk. 8:15).
- C. It is our duty to "sow the seed"! (1 Cor. 3:5-11; Lk. 8:4-15; Jn. 4:35; 1 Pet. 3:15). People are out there that are "honestly ignorant" (good and honest hearts; groping for the Lord; Acts 17:26-27; if a person is honestly mistaken → will either cease to be mistaken or cease to be honest).
- D. God's word always accomplishes its intended purpose! (Isa. 55:11)

3. THEY DO NOT SEE THE IMPORTANCE

- A. We have already established that ignorance is no excuse (Rom. 1:18-20).
- B. God has created man with an "innate need" that only He can satisfy! Eccl. 3:11; Matt. 11:28

- C. But, unfortunately, most people look to other things (riches, things, pleasures, fame, etc.) believing these temporal things will satisfy (theme of Eccl.; Eccl. 12:13-14).
- D. Felix is a good example of a person who did not see the importance of obeying God (Acts 24:22-25).
 - (1) Earlier Paul had made his defense before this Roman governor of Judea (24:1-21).
 - (2) Felix clearly had knowledge of the “way” [vs. 22; “Jewish” wife Drusilla (btw: daughter of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1); thus, brother-in law to Herod Agrippa II of chap. 25)), vs. 24].
 - (3) The preaching of the gospel had somewhat of a positive effect on Felix’s heart (vs. 25 “*afraid*”). So, this **WAS NOT** a **competency** issue (not lack of knowledge). It was purely a “dispositional” (heart) issue:
 - ☛ v. 25: “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time (season) I will call for you.”
 - ☛ v. 26: Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him (v. 26). Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him. (2 years! v. 27)(Lk. 8:14; “*thorny*” soil, “*choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life*”).
- E. Obedience to God is life’s most IMPORTANT issue - bar none! If we did everything when it was convenient for us, we would get very little if anything done! Thus, we have to impress Matt. 16:26 on people! 2 Cor. 5:10-11

4. **THEY DO NOT SEE THE URGENCY**

- A. Folks may realize it is important for them to obey God, but they don’t think that it is urgent (Jas. 4:14; Rom. 13:11-12; Eph. 5:14-16; 2 Cor. 6:2).
- B. Something can be important without being urgent (e.g., changing oil). But everything that is urgent is important (e.g., making sure the engine has oil to begin with!). Jesus stressed “preparedness”: in Matthew 25 and He gave three illustrations on it!
- C. Acts 22:16 (“*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*”) (“*And now why tarriest thou?*” KJV)
 - (1) “*tarriest*” from Greek: *mello*.
 - (2) We get our English word “mellow” - relaxed, comfortable, complacent.
 - (3) Ananias is essentially saying to Paul, “Don’t be mellow! Get on with it!” Saul needed to be impressed with the urgency of obeying the Lord, so he was told to do it that very moment!
- D. We are inundated on TV with commercials concerning how to have a financially “secure retirement.”
 - ☛ These commercials, rightly so, stress the need to start putting away for the future. When do they say to start? NOW!
 - ☛ Why is this so easy for us to understand urgency in the realm of finances, but we so quickly dismiss the concept when it comes to the spiritual realm? Jas. 4:14; Heb. 9:27; 10:31

5. **THEY ARE AFRAID THEY ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH (WORTHY)**

- A. Get over it! None of us are worthy! Rom. 3:23 Jesus’ mission was to save the unworthy! Matt. 9:10-13; Lk. 19:10
- B. None of us will ever be worthy of Jesus in the sense of deserving Him. That is why God provided Him--Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of God’s grace, mercy, and love--He provided us with the most important gift none of us will ever deserve--a Savior.
- C. People can be so humble and contrite they cannot act; they are afraid they can never live up to Christ’s sacrifice--none of us ever will, because if God gave us what we deserved we would all go to hell (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 5:6-8).
- D. We must get over it! We will never be worthy, we will never be good enough!
 - (1) John the baptizer realized it! Jn. 1:27: “*He...who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*”

- (2) The centurion realized it! Matt. 8:8: “Lord, I am not worthy.”
- (3) Paul realized it! Rom. 7:24: “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (8:1: “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”)
- E. We need to recognize this (fear of “unworthiness”) for what it is: Another weapon of Satan to keep people from obeying God!

6. **THEY ARE AFRAID TO COMMIT**

- A. King Agrippa in Acts 26:27-28 is a classic example.
- B. There are a lot of people like King Agrippa, they are almost persuaded to become a Christian but hold back because they’re afraid of what they might have to give up to become one.
- C. For example, the rich young ruler (Lk. 18:18-27) did not want to give up his money. Being a disciple requires “total commitment”! (Lk. 14:25-33) This is something very foreign to the 21st century American mind/lifestyle! (e.g., over 40% of children these days are born out of wedlock.)
- D. People who think this way have not discovered the “pearl of great price” (Matt. 13:45-46); nor do they appreciate the value of their soul (Matt. 16:26). To them the condition of their soul is not an urgent issue, they are selfish to the point of causing themselves great hurt! Why would you ever set your own house on fire?
- E. They are living life with a short-term perspective (Jas. 4:4; Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10). We have to impress upon them the consequences of their actions, the effect they are having on their “long-term” (eternal) future.

7. **THEY DO NOT WANT TO OBEY**

- A. This is NOT a knowledge issue, but an issue of **WILL**.
- B. They are just flat out unwilling to obey; they are the “*wayside*” soil in Lk. 8:12. Two general types of people in this category:
 - (1) For some, the kingdom of God just doesn’t appeal to them in any way, shape or form (Matt. 5:2-10; Psa. 14:1; Prov. 14:16).
 - (2) On the other hand, some may be very “religious,” but practice “*lawless*” religion (Matt. 7:21-23; Col. 2:23). Regardless of their “sincerity”; these folks really don’t love God or the truth! 1 Cor. 2:9; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Thess. 2:10-11
- C. Two Frightening Passages: 1 Jn. 2:3-5; 2 Thess. 1:7-9 Those who don’t want to obey (whether “religious” or “unreligious”) are in rebellion - they are lost!

III. **CONCLUSION:**

Have you obeyed God? If not, why not?

- 1. Is it because you are not ready? (acceptable only if you are a child; Matt. 18:3).
- 2. Is it because you do not know your need...are you honestly ignorant? (Acts 8:26-31)
- 3. Is it because you do not see the importance of obedience? (Matt. 16:26)
- 4. Is it because you do not appreciate the urgency of obedience? (5 foolish virgins; Jas. 4:14)
- 5. Is it because you are afraid you are not good enough? (you will never be good enough, nobody will!)
- 6. Is it because you are afraid to make a commitment to God? (he doesn’t require perfection, only growth)
- 7. Or, is it that you simply do not want to? Whether your “*lawlessness*” is under the guise of “religion” or not; if you are disobedient to God’s word you are subject to God’s vengeance!