

Obstacles To Obedience

Introduction. All will agree that there are obstacles to obeying the gospel. But many of these obstacles are unfounded excuses. Someone once said that an excuse is "the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie." Excuses are without justification as is seen in Luke 14:15-24. Several years ago, in a teenage Bible class, a question was asked, "Why are you not a Christian?" In all, four answers were given which will be discussed in this lesson.

I. ***"I Don't Have Enough Knowledge"***

- A. When will one have enough? This implies that one cannot obey the gospel until everything is known. Thus, obedience is perceived as difficult, if not impossible in the mind of the one who uses this excuse.
- B. In a very positive fashion, Jesus said that enough truth can be known to set one free (Jn. 8:32). In the first century, disciples were converted after hearing the gospel once.
 - 1. The day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
 - 2. The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8).
 - 3. Lydia and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16).
- C. If we must wait until we have complete knowledge, then why does the New Testament encourage us to grow?
 - 1. Ephesians 2:21; 4:15.
 - 2. 2 Thessalonians 1:3.
 - 3. Hebrews 5:12-14.
 - 4. 1 Peter 2:2.
 - 5. 2 Peter 3:18.
- D. Only a modest amount of intelligence and corresponding knowledge is necessary. One must know enough that they are in sin and they must know enough to believe in Jesus and His plan of salvation (Romans 7:9; John 8:24). How old must one be?

II. ***"I Can't Live As A Christian"***

- A. This statement has serious implications because it is an indictment that God has commanded man to do the impossible. The gospel gives us the power to obey and be faithful (2 Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 3:20; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Peter 1:5).
- B. Yet, we learn that the commandments are given with the expectations that they be obeyed and they are not burdensome (1 John 5:3).
- C. Notice the comments made by Paul in Colossians 1:25-29.
 - 1. Paul was a minister of the word of God (vs. 25).
 - 2. What was once unknown is now known or revealed (vs. 26).

3. The gospel Paul preached was to make the hearer complete or perfect (vs. 28).
 4. Paul labored mightily for that end (vs. 29).
- D. Was it all for nothing? Was it an exercise in futility or could it actually be done? Is the problem more of a matter of "won't" than it is "can't"?

III. **"I'm Not Ready Yet"**

- A. When will you be ready? A lot of people believe they have unlimited time (Job 7:6; Psalm 90:10; Proverbs 27:1). But some think they will somehow find more time!
1. Everyone has 24 hours in a day and 168 hours in a week.
 2. This fact will never change. Will we ever have hours than this?
- B. Felix put off his obedience (Acts 24:22-26). Did he ever obey? Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a Christian (Acts 26:28). Did he ever obey? The five foolish virgins said, "We'll get the oil later" (Matthew 25:1-13). They learned that you can wait too long!
1. Procrastination is delaying or deferring an action to a later time.
 2. People do this because of carelessness, laziness, or some other needless reason.
- C. It may be that you are thinking that you will wait until high school is over, college is over, marriage, the children are raised, and then retirement. But you may find that you have waited too long (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

IV. **"I'm Too Busy"**

- A. Worldly interference can cause people to think they are too busy. The same happened with the certain rich man (Luke 12:16-21). Jesus furthermore said that the cares of the world can choke the seed and it can become unfruitful (Matthew 13:22).
- B. In Luke 14:15-24, the people invited to the feast all gave excuses. They were "too busy" to partake in the wonderful bounty provided by the master. The master simply passed them by and told his servants to find others who would come to the feast.
- C. Do you really think visiting Aunt Maude, fishing, gardening, waxing the car, playing ball, etc. is worthy of keeping you out of heaven? Some people act as if they will not even have enough time to go to the cemetery (Ephesians 5:15-17).
- D. There is tremendous wisdom in Solomon's instructions (Ecclesiastes 12:1). It is a known fact that 90% of all conversions occur before someone is 25 years old. As they grow older, people are less inclined to obey the gospel and walk by faith.

Conclusion. The preacher related that none of these young people, to the best of his knowledge, ever obeyed the gospel. One real and common problem is that once an excuse is put into use it will be used over and over and over again. While young people have been the examples used in this lesson, older people can and will use the same excuses also. As far as the gospel is concerned, we can know enough (Mark 16:16); we can live it (Philippians 1:27); we have the opportunity (2 Corinthians 6:2); and, we must make the time to obey and be faithful to God (Matthew 6:33).