

## What Keeps People from Submitting to Jesus Christ?

### I. There are many things which keep people from submitting to Christ, such as:

1. Reprobation - some are natural men who have not the ability to understand and believe the gospel and submit to it.
2. Pride - the pride of even God's elect can prevent them from submitting to Christ.
3. Apathy - some people just don't care about truth.
4. Accountability - some people do not want to be held accountable to God's law by a church and pastor.
5. Love of sin and self - some people love themselves and their sin more than God and will not give it up to follow Him.
6. Love of family - some people love their spouse, parents, or children more than God and can't bear the thought of hurting or angering them by submitting to Christ.
7. Fear of ostracization - some people fear being ostracized by family, friends, acquaintances, or coworkers for their faith or church.
8. Fear of rejection by God - some people fear that God will not accept them because of their past or present sins.
9. Fear of unworthiness - some people fear that they are not "good enough" to be a Christian and that they could never measure up.
10. Fear of failure - some people fear that if they commit to Christ they will not be able to stick with the commitment.

### II. The call to men to repent and believe the gospel

1. There was a time in which God turned a blind eye to the ignorance of Him by the heathen, but since NT times, God now calls all men everywhere to repent (**Act 17:30**).
2. The fundamental call of the gospel is to repent, believe the gospel, and be baptized (**Mar 1:15; Act 2:37-40**).
3. God hath reconciled His people unto himself by Jesus Christ being made sin for them (**2Co 5:17-19,21**).
4. Gospel ministers have been committed the word of reconciliation and our call to men is "be ye reconciled to God" (**2Co 5:19-20**).
5. But like some of Israel, "they have not all obeyed the gospel" (**Rom 10:16**).
  - A. There are dire consequences to not obeying the gospel (**1Pe 4:17-18**).
  - B. There will be eternal consequences for some who obey not the gospel (**2Th 1:8-9**).
  - C. My job is to exhort men to behold the goodness *and severity* of God (**Rom 11:22**).
  - D. Knowing the terror of the Lord, I persuade men (**2Co 5:10-11**).

### III. Reasons why men will not submit to Jesus Christ

1. Reprobation - some are natural men who have not the ability to understand and believe the gospel and submit to it.
  - A. Natural men have not the ability to understand, seek God, or do good (**Rom 3:9-12**).
  - B. They are not, nor can be, subject to the law of God (**Rom 8:5-7**).
  - C. They *cannot* please God (**Rom 8:8**).
  - D. But not all people who don't obey God are reprobates.
2. Pride - the pride of even God's elect can prevent them from submitting to Christ.
  - A. Pride will prevent someone from seeking after God (**Psa 10:4; Hos 7:10**).

- B. Pride - The quality of being proud. I. 1. a. A high or overweening opinion of one's own qualities, attainments, or estate, which gives rise to a feeling and attitude of superiority over and contempt for others; inordinate self-esteem.
  - C. A proud man has such a high opinion of himself that he will not humble himself and admit that he is a sinner in need of a Saviour.
  - D. Pride will eventually lead to a man's destruction (**Pro 16:18; Pro 18:12; Pro 29:23**).
  - E. God hates pride (**Pro 16:5**).
    - i. Most men do too.
    - ii. Worldly men hate pride in others.
    - iii. Godly men hate pride in others *and in themselves*.
  - F. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (**Jam 4:6**).
  - G. Therefore God's children should *submit* themselves to God (**Jam 4:7**).
3. Apathy - some people just don't care about truth.
- A. Jesus hates lukewarm religion (**Rev 3:15-16**).
  - B. Apathy toward truth is a great epidemic which we face today, just as Israel did of old.
  - C. Truth is fallen in the street and has failed (**Isa 59:14-15**).
  - D. When truth is perished, people stop obeying the Lord (**Jer 7:28**).
  - E. People who are not valiant for truth won't know the Lord (**Jer 9:3**).
  - F. The lack of truth in a land goes hand in hand with a lack of the knowledge of God (**Hos 4:1**).
  - G. The reason why people don't come to the knowledge of the truth is because they don't want to.
    - i. If someone asks God for wisdom, in faith, not wavering in their heart, it SHALL be given them (**Jam 1:5-7**).
    - ii. This SHALL is as sure as the fact that Jesus SHALL save His people from their sins (**Mat 1:21**).
    - iii. Therefore if people have been exposed to the truth, but they reject it, it's because they don't want to understand and believe it, because if they did they would ask God for wisdom and it WOULD be given them.
  - H. If people don't care about truth, they will obviously not submit to Jesus Christ Who is *the truth* (**Joh 14:6**).
  - I. God will send people a strong delusion who receive not the *love of the truth* (**2Th 2:10-12**).
4. Accountability - some people do not want to be held accountable to God's law by a church and pastor.
- A. A pastor is supposed to preach the word boldly and not hold back (**2Ti 4:2**).
  - B. Church members are supposed to submit to the pastor who teaches them the word of God and watches for their souls (**Heb 13:7,17**).
  - C. A pastor's job is to admonish the brethren under his care (**1Th 5:12**).
    - i. Admonish v. - 1. gen. To put (a person) in mind of duties; to counsel against wrong practices; to give authoritative or warning advice; to exhort, to warn.
    - ii. Some people don't like this and will turn away from it (**2Ti 4:3-4**).
  - D. Church members are also supposed to submit themselves one to another (**Eph 5:21; 1Pe 5:5**).
  - E. The idea of accountability is too restrictive for some people, therefore they will not submit to Christ and His church.

5. Love of sin and self - some people love their self and their sin more than God and will not give it up to follow Him.
  - A. There are those who *cannot cease from sin* (**2Pe 2:14**).
    - i. This is not the case with a child God saved by grace (**Rom 6:11-14**).
    - ii. Those who were the servants of sin should become servants of righteousness (**Rom 6:17-18**).
  - B. There are those who love this world too much to submit to Christ.
    - i. Rich young ruler is a good example of such (**Mar 10:17-22**).
      - a. The young man was concerned about having eternal life (**Mat 10:17**).
      - b. He was not so concerned about giving up all and following Christ though (**Mat 10:21**).
        - 1) This man was a child of God, which is evident because Jesus loved him (**Mar 10:21**).
        - 2) Even children of God will turn from following Jesus when they are not willing to forsake all and follow Him.
        - 3) The love of money is the root of all evil and will lead to a man's destruction (**1Ti 6:10**).
      - c. Following Christ costs. Those who will follow Christ and be His disciples are called to deny themselves and take up the cross and follow Him (**Mar 10:21 c/w Luk 9:23 c/w Luk 14:27**).
        - 1) Deny - II. To say 'no' to the claims of. To refuse to recognize or acknowledge (a person or thing) as having a certain character or certain claims; to disown, disavow, repudiate, renounce. III. To say 'no' to a request or proposal, or to him who makes it; to refuse. To refuse or withhold (anything asked for, claimed or desired); to refuse to give or grant.
        - 2) To deny yourself is to say "no" to yourself and your desires.
      - d. Jesus invites people to count the cost, just as one would in any other major endeavor, before following Him (**Luk 14:28-33**).
    - ii. The parable of the sower shows us that there are those whose growth is choked by the cares and riches of this world (**Mat 13:22**).
    - iii. Pleasure is another thing which will prohibit one from following and continuing with Christ.
      - a. A love of pleasure will choke the word and make a believer unfruitful (**Luk 8:14**).
      - b. There also those who love themselves and are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (**2Ti 3:1-4**).
      - c. These have only the form of godliness and should be withdrawn from (**2Ti 3:5**).
6. Love of family - some people love their spouse, parents, or children more than God and can't bear the thought of hurting or angering them by submitting to Christ.
  - A. The first and greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength (**Mat 22:36-38**).
  - B. Family must take a backseat to God.
    - i. Jesus didn't come to bring peace between families, but division (**Mat 10:34-36**).

- ii. Jesus said that he that loves his father or mother, or son or daughter more than Him is not worthy of Him (**Mat 10:37**).
- iii. Not only are we not to love family more than Jesus, we are supposed to hate anything in them or ourselves which comes between us and Jesus (**Luk 14:26-27**).
  - a. Some say that "hate" just means that we are supposed to love Jesus more than family and our love for our family in comparison to our love for Christ would appear to be hate.
  - b. Hate v. - 1. *trans.* To hold in very strong dislike; to detest; to bear malice to. The opposite of *to love*.
  - c. Hate is not a lesser degree of love, but rather the opposite of it.
  - d. However it is that we are supposed to hate our family must be reconciled with the following verses which say we are supposed to love them (**Mat 19:19; Eph 5:25; Tit 2:4; 1Pe 1:22**).
  - e. So *how* are we to hate our family members?
    - 1) Since *hate* is the opposite of *love*, if we find out from the scripture how to love, we will know how to hate.
    - 2) Loving God is keeping His commandments (**Joh 14:15,21; 1Jo 5:2-3**).
    - 3) Not keeping Jesus' commandments is not loving Him, which is hating Him (**Joh 14:24; Luk 19:14**).
    - 4) So how do we hate our families?
    - 5) When our parents, husbands, wives, children, brothers or sisters demand things of us that are contrary to God's commandments, either requiring us to do something that God has forbidden, or to not do something that God has required, we must disobey them and not keep their commandments in order to keep God's, which is to not love them and hate them by definition.
    - 6) We ought to obey God rather than men (**Act 5:29**).
    - 7) This doesn't mean that we are supposed to hate them utterly or entirely, but we must hate that particular part of them that is contrary to Jesus Christ and His word, just like we must hate that same part of ourselves.
    - 8) We are to hate every false way (**Psa 119:128**) and hate evil (**Psa 97:10; Pro 8:13**).
- iv. Consider the following examples of people who loved God more than family:
  - a. Abraham left his family and his homeland at God's command to follow Him (**Gen 12:1-4**).
  - b. The tribe of Levi was blessed for standing with the LORD instead of family (**Deu 33:8-9 c/w Exo 32:25-28**).
  - c. Israel was to kill anyone, even their closest family members or friends which enticed them to serve other gods (**Deu 13:6-11**).
  - d. Gideon destroyed his father's alter of Baal, choosing God over family (**Jdg 6:25-27**).
    - 1) Gideon's father, Joash, on the other hand chose his son over his god when push came to shove (**Jdg 6:28-31**).

- 2) God chided Eli for honoring his sons before God (**1Sa 2:29**).
  - 3) Blood often runs thicker than water.
  - e. King Asa removed his mother, Maachah from being queen and destroyed her idol (**1Ki 15:11-13**).
  - f. James and John left their father and their job to follow Jesus (**Mar 1:16-20**).
- C. There is a great reward for people who forsake family, houses, and lands for Jesus, the kingdom of God, and the gospel (**Mat 19:27,29; Luk 18:28-30; Mar 10:28-30**).
- i. God blesses those who leave their family to follow him and be joined to His people (**Rut 1:15-17 c/w Rut 2:10-12**).
  - ii. God sets the solitary in families (**Psa 68:5-6; Psa 27:10**).
7. Fear of ostracization - some people fear being ostracized by family, friends, acquaintances, or coworkers for their faith or church.
- A. Followers of Christ are persecuted by Christ's enemies.
  - B. This persecution includes:
    - i. Speaking evil of them (**1Pe 4:3-4**).
    - ii. Reproaching them (**1Pe 4:12-14**).
      - a. Reproach v. - 1. a. *trans.* To object or cast up (a thing) to, or bring (up) against, a person as a reproach or fault.
      - b. Reproach n. - 1. A source or cause of disgrace or shame (to a person, etc.); a fact, matter, feature or quality bringing disgrace or discredit upon one.
    - iii. Persecuting and reviling them (**Mat 5:10-12**).
    - iv. Hating them and excluding them from the company of others (**Luk 6:22-23; Act 13:50**).
    - v. Beating them (**Mat 10:16-17; Act 5:40-41**).
    - vi. Putting them in prison (**Heb 11:36; Act 12:3-5**).
    - vii. Torturing them (**Heb 11:37**).
    - viii. Killing them (**Mat 10:21-22; Joh 16:2; Act 7:54-60; Act 12:1-2**).
  - C. There is no shame in suffering as a Christian (**1Pe 4:16**) - it is rather a blessing (**Mat 5:10-12**).
  - D. Because of the fear of ostracization or persecution, some people will not confess and commit to following Christ (**Joh 12:42-43**).
    - i. They fear going against the opinions of the religious leaders of the day (**Joh 7:13**).
    - ii. They fear being labeled as a heretic and being separated from (**Joh 9:22**).
    - iii. They fear being made a gazingstock by becoming companions with other Christians (**Heb 10:32-33**).
  - E. There are many people who are content to believe in Christ (**Act 26:27 c/w Act 26:22-23**), but they are not willing to publicly commit to Him and become a Christian (**Act 26:28**).
8. Fear of rejection by God - some people fear that God will not accept them because of their past or present sins.
- A. It is true that God is holy (**1Pe 1:16**).
    - i. God can't even look on iniquity (**Hab 1:13**).
    - ii. The foolish can't stand in God's sight and He hates sinners (**Psa 5:4-5**).

- B. God is fearful (**Heb 10:31; Heb 12:29**) and terrible (**Psa 47:2**).
    - i. Terrible - 1. Exciting or fitted to excite terror; such as to inspire great fear or dread; frightful, dreadful.
    - ii. If this was all a person knew of God, they would likely come to the conclusion that Joshua did concerning Israel when he warned them saying, "Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins." (**Jos 24:19**).
  - C. But there is more to God than just His terror; He is also very merciful and full of compassion (**Psa 86:15; 2Ch 30:9**).
  - D. The Lord knows and remembers that we are weak and frail (**Psa 78:38-39; Psa 103:14**).
  - E. Because of this, God is merciful and gracious (**Psa 103:8-18**).
  - F. Far from forbidding them, God the Father through Christ invites His elect to come to him (**Mat 11:28-30**).
    - i. Jesus invites men to come unto Him and drink (**Joh 7:37-39**).
    - ii. The Holy Spirit likewise invites men to come (**Rev 22:17**).
    - iii. God invites men to come to Him freely (**Isa 55:1-3**).
  - G. God promises that He will receive people who come out of false religions (**2Co 6:17-18**).
9. Fear of unworthiness - some people fear that they are not "good enough" to be a Christian and that they could never measure up.
- A. The fact is that we are all unworthy of being called children of God and Christians because we are sinners.
    - i. Worthy *adj.* - Of sufficient merit, excellence, or desert to be or have something.
    - ii. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God (**Rom 3:23**).
    - iii. Grace and mercy are only for people who are *unworthy* (**Eph 2:4-5**).
    - iv. Grace *n.* - Favour, favourable or benignant regard or its manifestation (now only on the part of a superior); favour or goodwill, in contradistinction to right or obligation, as the ground of a concession.
    - v. Mercy *n.* - Forbearance and compassion shown by one person to another who is in his power and who has no claim to receive kindness; kind and compassionate treatment in a case where severity is merited or expected.
  - B. Those who feel they are unworthy are those who are of great faith because they trust Christ and don't rely on their merits (**Luk 7:6-9**).
    - i. The prodigal son who thought himself unworthy to be called his father's son was welcomed with open arms (**Luk 15:18-24**).
    - ii. Our heavenly Father will do likewise to those who come to Him (**Luk 15:10**).
  - C. Those who trust to themselves that they are righteous are a stench in God's nostrils (**Luk 18:9-14**).
  - D. *Jesus* is worthy to receive all blessings from God (**Rev 5:9**).
    - i. God's elect are *in Christ* (**Eph 1:4**).
    - ii. Therefore, since they are in Christ, they are *counted* worthy (**Luk 20:35; 2Th 1:11**).
    - iii. Counted *ppl.* - Accounted, numbered, etc
    - iv. Accounted *ppl.* - Counted, reckoned, considered.
  - E. Some people believe that Jesus died for others, but He couldn't have died for them.
    - i. This is impossible.

- ii. If you hear and believe the gospel, you are passed from death unto life and shall not come into condemnation (**Joh 5:24**).
  - iii. If a person believes that Jesus is the Christ, he *is born of God* (**1Jo 5:1**).
  - iv. You can't believe that Jesus is *the* Christ without believing that Jesus is *your* Christ.
  - v. You can't believe that Jesus is *the* Saviour without believing that Jesus is *your* Saviour.
  - vi. The Bible is written to believers so that they can know that they have eternal life (**1Jo 5:13**).
  - vii. If you struggle with believing that Jesus died *for you* then ask Jesus to help your unbelief (**Mar 9:24; Luk 17:5**).
10. Fear of failure - some people fear that if they commit to Christ they will not be able to stick with the commitment.
- A. Commitment to the kingdom of God is a serious thing which is not to be taken lightly (**Luk 9:62**).
  - B. Jesus taught that one must count the cost before making the commitment to be His disciple (**Luk 14:27-33**).
    - i. A person has to forsake all that he has to be Jesus' disciple (**Luk 14:33**).
    - ii. There can be no sacred cows in our lives that we will not forsake for Christ.
    - iii. Christians are the salt of the earth (**Mat 5:13**), but if they lose their savour, they are good for nothing, not even the dunghill (**Luk 14:34-35**).
    - iv. Therefore failure should be feared by potential converts and mature Christians alike.
  - C. When a person joins the church and becomes a Christian he must hold fast the profession of his faith and not forsake the assembling of the saints (**Heb 10:23-25**).
    - i. If we sin willfully after having received the knowledge of the truth, we will be judged severely (**Heb 10:26-31**).
    - ii. To whom much is given much is required (**Luk 12:47-48**).
  - D. Though the stakes are high, God will help us stick with it.
    - i. Jesus was tempted, and therefore He is able to help us when we are tempted (**Heb 2:18**).
    - ii. Jesus was *in all points* tempted like as we are (**Heb 4:15**).
    - iii. Therefore we can come boldly unto Him to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (**Heb 4:16**).
    - iv. God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able and will make a way to escape (**1Co 10:13; Exo 13:17**).
    - v. God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations (**2Pe 2:9**).
  - E. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and He will direct your paths (**Pro 3:5-6**).
  - F. If you trust in the Lord, you may fall, but God will not allow you to be utterly cast down (**Psa 37:23-24**).