

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. - 1 Peter 2:2

THE SINCERE MILK OF GOD'S WORD

The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword... - Hebrews 4:12

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Excuses for Not Obeying God

In **Matthew 7:21**, Jesus said "*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*"

In this verse, Jesus makes it clear that those who do God's will (obey Him) will enter heaven, while those who do not obey Him will spend eternity in hell.

Many choose the second option by "excusing" themselves from obeying God. Consider nine specific excuses Satan may tempt us to make, and what the Bible teaches in response to these.

"I'm Already A Good Person" - Some fail to see their need for obedience because they live a "good life" and therefore do not think they need what God offers. The thought is, "I treat people well. I've raised my children to be respectful (etc.), so why do I need God?"

Yet, *God* teaches that if we have sinned against Him even once (which we all have - **Rom. 3:23**), then we face eternal condemnation (**Rom. 6:23**), unless we submit to God's terms for forgiveness.

No matter how good we are from the world's perspective, if we do not obey God, we will face eternity in hell.

"God Will Forgive Me Regardless" - Some acknowledge their sin, but do not obey God, thinking "everybody sins, so God will forgive me just like everyone else."

This ignores what God teaches about *repentance*. In **Acts 3**, the apostle Peter spoke to Jews who were guilty of rejecting and crucifying Jesus (**verses 14-15**). He indicated they *had* sinned. He did *not* tell

them, however, they could *continue* in sin. Notice **verse 19**: *Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out...*

While it is true that all *have* sinned, it is not true that all are living in *current unrepentant* sin. God commands repentance.

"I Could Never Be Good Enough" - While some believe they are too good to need God, others may think they could never be good *enough* to be forgiven.

Notice though what the apostle Paul said in **1 Timothy 1:15**: *The saying is faithful and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

Paul had zealously opposed Christ before his conversion, yet God was willing to forgive Paul when he submitted to the Lord's terms for forgiveness. God is willing to forgive *any* who will turn to Him in obedience.

"I Cannot Change Like God Wants" - We may acknowledge our need for forgiveness, but think that God's terms for forgiveness are unattainable. God may tell us to put off a sinful behavior that we claim is "just who we are, and there's no changing."

For instance, someone might say, "I cannot stop my homosexual behavior. That is impossible." Yet, God mentioned this sinful behavior in **1 Corinthians 6:9**, and then said of the Corinthian brethren, "*such were some of you*" (**verse 11**). It is clear from the Corinthians' example that homosexual behavior can be turned away from.

The same is true with all sins God forbids. God commands us to do things that are *hard work*, but that does not mean it is impossible to change in the ways He expects.

“Many Christians Are Hypocrites” - Some excuse themselves from obeying God because “many Christians are hypocrites.”

Hypocrisy is a problem, but someone else’s evil does not excuse *us* from obeying God.

In **2 Corinthians 5:10**, the Holy Spirit through Paul said, *“For we must all be revealed before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* Notice that *each one* will be judged by Christ according to what *he* (or she) has done. Someone else’s hypocrisy does not change our responsibilities.

God does not command us to follow the hypocrite, but to follow Him.

“I Don’t Want to Make the Sacrifices” - Jesus taught that being His disciple is no light task (**Matt. 16:24**), and some do not want to commit to the “cost of discipleship.”

Consider though, what temporary hardships are not worth spending eternity in heaven rather than hell? What temporary pleasures are worth forsaking an eternal home in heaven to spend eternity in hell?

Furthermore, consider what Christ did for us. When we think about Him giving His life for us, is it too much for Him to ask us to trust and obey Him?

“My Family Will Be Upset” - A specific sacrifice that some must make is to upset family as a result of submitting to God (**Matt. 10:35-36**). This may be given as an excuse for failure to obey Him.

Jesus said though in **Matthew 10:37**: *He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me isn’t worthy of me.* Our allegiance to Christ must trump all.

“I Like Fitting In” - Living as a Christian involves being different from the world

around us (**Rom. 12:2**). We may thus be tempted to excuse ourselves from obeying God for fear of not “fitting in” with the world.

But notice what Jesus said in **Matthew 7:13-14**: *Enter in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter in by it. How narrow is the gate, and restricted is the way that leads to life! Few are those who find it.* Would we rather be with the “*many*” headed for eternal torment, or with the “*few*” headed for eternal comfort?

Furthermore, would we rather be with the “*many*” who are opposed to God, or with the “*few*” who are on the Lord’s side?

“I Am Not Ready Yet” - Some may understand each of the points made thus far, and conclude “I know I need to obey God,” but think, “I’m just not ready yet.”

Consider the danger of this.

2 Peter 3:10 says *“the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”*

In this context, the “*day of the Lord*” is the day Christ will return to judge the world. That this day will “*come as a thief in the night*” indicates that God is not going to tell us the specific day and time when Christ will return. He could come at any moment. We must “*watch therefore, for you don’t know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming*” (**Matt. 25:13**).

These excuses are among those we might be tempted to make for failing to obey God. May we not look for excuses, but simply serve Him to the best of our ability.

-Michael Hickox