

## STUBBORN CHRISTIANS

Last time we took a brief look at the building of the Church and the role the ministry gifts have to play. We must remember that every member of the Body of Christ is to be a vibrant, active, fruit-producing member. We dealt with this in previous teachings.

Lately, the issue of “stubborn Christians” has been brought up, repeatedly. What is a “stubborn Christian? In reality, stubbornness is disobedience.

There are two categories of disobedient Christians that I have identified so far:

- 1) The born-again Christian who has accepted Jesus as Lord, but the pull of the world is so strong that they keep returning.
- 2) The Christian who loves God and in their own eyes they are serving Him to the best of their ability when the truth is they are only serving Him to the extent of their comfort ability.

### Category 1

This Christian will get to heaven, but will totally miss out on God's blessings here on earth. They will not fulfill the plan and purpose that God has planned for them on earth. Members of the early Church were like that. Paul had to write to the Church at Colosse:

*“3-4 Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. He is your life. When Christ (your real life, remember) shows up again on this earth, you'll show up, too—the real you, the glorious you. Meanwhile, be content with obscurity, like Christ.*

*5-8 And that means killing off everything connected with that way of death: sexual promiscuity, impurity, lust, doing whatever you feel like whenever you feel like it, and grabbing whatever attracts your fancy. That's a life shaped by things and feelings instead of by God. It's because of this kind of thing that God is about to explode in anger. It wasn't long ago that you were doing all that stuff and not knowing any better. But you know better now, so make sure it's all gone for good: bad temper, irritability, meanness, profanity, dirty talk.*

*9-11 Don't lie to one another. You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're*

*dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it. All the old fashions are now obsolete. Words like Jewish and non-Jewish, religious and irreligious, insider and outsider, uncivilized and uncouth, slave and free, mean nothing. From now on everyone is defined by Christ, everyone is included in Christ.* (Colossians 3:3-11 The Message)

Why would Paul write this if there was not an issue with the believers reverting to their former lifestyles?

This type of Christian, will eventually find themselves a victim of the adversary who comes to steal, kill and destroy.

Paul had to deal with such a situation in 1 Corinthians 1:1-5 (CEV)

*"I have heard terrible things about some of you. In fact, you are behaving worse than the Gentiles. A man is even sleeping with his own stepmother. 2You are proud, when you ought to feel bad enough to chase away anyone who acts like that. 3-4I am with you only in my thoughts. But in the name of our Lord Jesus I have already judged this man, as though I were with you in person. So when you meet together and the power of the Lord Jesus is with you, I will be there too. 5You must then hand that man over to Satan. His body will be destroyed, but his spirit will be saved when the Lord Jesus returns."*

Notice that God is not the destroyer, but because of the individual's conduct and stubbornness contrary to the teaching of the Word of God, he loses the protection under the umbrella of the Body of Christ, and is exposed to the whims of satan, the destroyer.

## **Category 2**

The Christian who serves God to the extent of their comfort - ability will eventually find themselves wondering where the fire went. We cannot serve God the way He wants out of our own ability, far less to the extent of our comfort! Philippians 2:13 (AMP) says:

*"13[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight."*

It is through His ability that we are able to please Him, not our own! If we live in a comfort zone, we are not walking by faith! Faith demands uneasiness of the flesh, but a rest in the spirit.

John 14:21-24 (AMP) *21The person who has My commands and keeps*

*them is the one who [really] loves Me; and whoever [really] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I [too] will love him and will show (reveal, manifest) Myself to him. [I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.] 22Judas, not Iscariot, asked Him, Lord, how is it that You will reveal Yourself [make Yourself real] to us and not to the world? 23Jesus answered, If a person [really] loves Me, he will keep My word [obey My teaching]; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home (abode, special dwelling place) with him. 24Anyone who does not [really] love Me does not observe and obey My teaching. And the teaching which you hear and heed is not Mine, but [comes] from the Father Who sent Me."*

From this passage we see that Jesus' word, command, and teaching are all from the same source and He says that the proof of our love for Him is that we obey.

Obedience to the Word of God will bring discomfort. It will make us give, pray, and fast (Matthew 6)

Obedience to the Word of God will make us forgive our enemies and love those that revile and persecute us.

Obedience to the Word of God will make us enemies of the world.

Obedience to the Word of God will make us keep the Sabbath. (I'm not talking about a day. I'm talking about setting aside one day a week that is God's day. In other words, His Word, prayer and worship take priority at that time and nothing and no-one is allowed to encroach on that time).

[Isaiah 58:13-14, Hebrews 4:9]

Obedience to the Word of God will make us seek His kingdom first in everyday life!

Obedience to the Word of God will make us let go of people we love, terminate close friendships, and leave well-paying jobs that are out of line with His will.

In short, obedience to the Word of God will cause us to do and speak things that are contrary to the natural man, but totally in line with the Word and the will of God.

Let us spend some time in the Word of God and in prayer.

Let us see where we have fallen short of God's expectations of us. No matter how "holy" we think we are, there is some area that has fallen short - maybe religious pride?

All of this stems from one question – do you really love God?

If you love Him, keep His commands, obey His words, and observe His teaching.