

“Who Hindered You From Obeying The Truth?”

By Kyle Pope

In Paul’s letter to the churches in Galatia, he asks them the question, **“You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?”** (Gal. 5:7, NKJV). What does it mean to *obey the truth*? The phrase is used of those who have never begun to follow Christ. Peter warned, **“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”** (1 Peter 4:17). Paul prophesied God **“taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (2 Thessalonians 1:8). These souls stand outside of Christ. They have not put faith in Jesus, turned from sin, confessed Jesus and been baptized into Christ. They are lost in sin. Some reading this may be like that. You know what to do, you know you have sinned, but something hinders you. The phrase can also apply to Christians who do not *continue* to obey. This is the emphasis of Galatians 5:7. They were Christians who had turned from the truth to error. I suspect there may be some reading this who are also like this – no one sees it. You look faithful, but let’s think about this question in a very personal way. If you are not obedient to the truth, I ask you to ask yourself the question **“who hindered you from obeying the truth?”**

The “Who” Could Be...

Friends. Rehoboam asked for advice from the elders who had served his father but also from his friends. He chose to follow the bad advice of his friends and lost the people and most of the kingdom because of it (1 Kings 12). You may have been hindered from obeying the truth because you thought your friends wouldn’t like you anymore if you followed God. You were afraid they would think you are strange. What does God think about your choice?

Family. Jesus said, **“a man’s enemies will be those of his own household”** (Matthew 10:36). If our family hinders us from following God that can be the case. We don’t choose our family, nor can we abandon them, but we don’t have to let them cause us to lose our soul. Job’s wife could have hindered him, but he was faithful to God in spite of her discouraging attitudes towards him (Job 2:9-10).

Peers. The Gospel of John records the sad record that some among the Jews actually believed in Jesus but refused to confess Him because, **“they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”** (John 12:43). We often worry about how we look to others. Sometimes even to those we don’t know. Why is it that we care so much about what people think that don’t even know us? Why is it that we care so little about what the One thinks about us who knows us better than anyone?

Yourself. The Wise man wrote, **“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city”** (Proverbs 16:32). Sadly, we are often our own worst enemy. When we fail to exercise self-control and restraint it is not so much a question of **“who”** the hindrance is but **“what”** we have allowed to hinder us from obedience to the Lord. When the Ethiopian Nobleman learned the truth he didn’t allow anything to stand in his way. He asked Stephen, **“What hinders me from being baptized?”** (Acts 8:36b). Will you allow something in your life to hinder you from obeying the truth?

Sometimes The “What” Is...

Fear of Failure. In the Parable of the Talents the man who was given one talent was afraid that his master would expect more from him than he could deliver. He allowed his fear to keep him from doing anything (Matthew 25:24-30). Certainly, all who begin to follow Christ will stumble, but we only fail if we stop fighting to get back up as quickly as we can when we realize we have done wrong. What each of us must realize is that if the fear of failure is what hinders us from obeying the truth – failing to obey the gospel is failure, not a way to avoid failure!

Thinking We Have Time. Jesus told a parable about a rich man who assumed he had time and...