

# Hindering The Gospel

**Introduction.** At the age of seven, he had to go to work to help support his family. At nine, his mother died. At twenty-two, he lost his job as a store clerk. At twenty-three, he went into debt and became a partner in a small store. At twenty-six, his partner died leaving him a huge debt. By the age of thirty-five, he had been defeated twice when running for a seat in Congress. At the age of thirty-seven, he won the election. At thirty-nine, he lost his reelection bid. At forty-one, his four-year-old son died. At forty-two, he was rejected for a land officer role. At forty-five, he ran for the Senate and lost. At forty-seven, he was defeated for the nomination for Vice President. At forty-nine, he ran for Senate again and lost again. At the age of fifty-one, he was elected President of the United States. But his name lives on among the greats in U.S. history — Abraham Lincoln.

We really look up to people who overcome obstacles, making their life better and achieving their goals. In 1 Corinthians 9:12, Paul spoke of “hindering” the gospel. The word “hinder” pictures an obstacle — a tree that was cut down in the path of something or a ditch cut in the road to impede an enemy in pursuit.

Paul knew the gospel was a sacred trust for which he was to give an account of his stewardship (1 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:11). Some Christians are obstacles who slow down the progress of the gospel. In what way do they hinder the gospel?

## ***I. Those Who Will Not Tell It***

- A. Jesus meant for the gospel to be told (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8).
- B. The early church obeyed that commission (Acts 2:40; 5:42; 8:4; 1 Corinthians 9:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-8). Now the burden of responsibility is on our shoulders (cp. Ezekiel 3:16-21).
- C. Teaching is the only way to communicate the good news of Jesus to others.
  1. It’s never been easier to rant. Nor has it ever been more tempting to lash out at the culture, or defiantly explain why you’re right and everyone else is wrong. It’s also a deadly mistake if you want to reach unchurched people.
  2. We live in an age where opinions are strongly held and weakly formed. Nuanced thought and an open mind shows people that you’ve done your research and that you can discuss alternative worldviews rationally, showing the superiority of the gospel for someone’s life. That means that when you speak, far more people will listen.
  3. There’s a lot of skepticism today, and it’s very easy to search online to find answers, but people need true biblical teaching that connects the dots for them and builds their faith. They will need a touch of humility instead of a “I’m right and you’re wrong” mentality.

## ***II. Those Who Will Not Live It***

- A. Faithful Christians demonstrate what they preach (Colossians 3:1-10). Those who will not live as the gospel directs do tremendous damage to both those inside and outside the body of Christ.

1. You are what you love, and the gospel changes us from a love of power, fame, money, and lust to a love of God who transcends all of these.
  2. Because of this, we are “married” to the Lord and serve Him (Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2)— but some Christians work for Satan (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 11:8-15).
  3. Even Peter, when it was found that he did not live in agreement with the gospel, was condemned by Paul (Galatians 2:11-14).
  4. The sad fact is that many of our prospects may be better morally and less hypocritical than we are. People who refuse the gospel make their own decisions and will bear their own judgment. But will there be any at the judgment who were turned off to the gospel by the actions of Christians (2 Corinthians 6:3)?
- B. Do you find real joy in serving God? Paul certainly did and expressed that fact many times (Romans 14:17; 15:32; Galatians 5:22; Philippians 1:4; 2:17). People want to know, not only if the gospel is true, but if it works.

### ***III. Those Who Will Not Defend It***

- A. We are commanded to stand for its defense (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 6:10-12; Philippians 1:17; Jude 3).
- B. It has to be defended because of perversion and alteration (Galatians 1:6-8; Jude 4; Revelation 22:18-19).
- C. Against what must the gospel be defended?
  1. It must be defended against false teaching in different religious groups (Matthew 15:13-14).
    - a) People need to see how the gospel compares to the teachings of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. These are appealing to more and more people.
    - b) The gospel can stand on its own against perversions like Calvinism and Premillennialism, but you are the way that people will learn true doctrine.
  2. It must be defended against brethren having itching ears (2 Timothy 4:1-4).
    - a) While this may not pervert the gospel per se, it does strip away its power to reprove and rebuke — to change people’s lives.
    - b) It leaves the gospel being nothing more than inspirational and motivational material, instead of a force for correcting one’s life.
  3. It must be defended against brethren perverting the gospel (Acts 20:29; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:17-19).
    - a) We will continue to fight the false teaching on important doctrinal issues like fellowship, the social gospel, institutionalism, creation, etc.
    - b) We will continue to fight the false teaching on important moral issues like divorce and remarriage, immodesty, drinking, gambling, etc.

**Conclusion.** Are you an obstacle to the gospel? If you are, then you need to realize the seriousness of your plight. Be someone who can overcome your obstacles. Come to Jesus today and become a faithful soldier of God, joined together with other brethren as we fight the good fight of faith and convert a lost humanity.