

What Hinders Men from Following Christ. Luke 9:57–62

Luke 9:57–62 (NKJV)

⁵⁷ Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, *that* someone said to Him, “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.”

⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, “**Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head.**”

⁵⁹ Then He said to another, “**Follow Me.**”

But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, “**Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.**”

⁶¹ And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house.”

⁶² But Jesus said to him, “**No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**”

INTRODUCTION

I don't know if you have noticed but evangelicals are trying desperately to court the world's favor.

Churches plan their worship services to cater to the lost

Christian performers ape every worldly fad in music and entertainment.

Preachers are terrified that the offense of the gospel might turn someone against them, so they deliberately omit the parts of the message the world might not approve of.

Evangelicalism seems to have been hijacked by legions of carnal spin-doctors, who are trying their best to convince the world that the church can be just as inclusive, pluralistic, and broad-minded as the most politically-correct worldling.

The quest for the world's approval is nothing less than spiritual harlotry. In fact, that is precisely the imagery the apostle James used to describe it. He wrote: "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

Founder of Heart Cry Missionary Society, Paul Washer, so accurately said:

"We [most modern churches] are using carnal [worldly] means to attract people. If you use carnal

means to attract men, you are going to attract carnal men; and you're going to have to keep using greater carnal means to keep them in the church. So, what has happened is this – we have these large churches filled with many unconverted, carnal people. But, in those churches, we also have this small group of people that honestly want Christ... all they want is Jesus.” He continues, *“But the pastor, in order to keep this larger group of unconverted people, he caters to them; so, while he is feeding these carnal men and women with carnal things, he is letting the sheep of God starve to death... The leadership is catering to the carnal and letting the Bride of Christ starve to death impoverished. That is wrong, and there is going to be judgment for it.”*

Charles Spurgeon once said, “I do believe we slander Christ when we think we are to draw the people by something else but the preaching of Christ crucified.”

There is and always has been a fundamental, irreconcilable incompatibility between the church and the world. Christian thought is out of harmony with all the world's philosophies. Genuine faith in Christ entails a denial of every worldly value.

Biblical truth contradicts all the world's religions. Christianity itself is therefore antithetical to virtually everything this world admires.

Jesus told His disciples, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:18-19). Notice that our Lord considered it a given that the world would despise the church. Far from teaching His disciples to try to win the world's favor by reinventing the gospel to suit worldly preferences, Jesus expressly warned that the quest for worldly accolades is a characteristic of false prophets: "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26).

He further explained: "The world . . . hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil" (John 7:7). In other words, the world's contempt for Christianity stems from moral, not intellectual, motives: "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (John 3:19-20). That is why

no matter how dramatically worldly opinion might vary, Christian truth will never be popular with the world. Yet in virtually every era of church history there have been people in the church who are convinced that the best way to win the world is by catering to worldly tastes. Such an approach has always been to the detriment of the gospel message. The only times the church has made any significant impact on the world are when the people of God have stood firm, refused to compromise, and boldly proclaimed the truth despite the world's hostility. When Christians have shrunk away from the task of confronting popular worldly delusions with unpopular biblical truths, the church has invariably lost influence and impotently blended into the world.

Both Scripture and history attest to that fact.

And the Christian message simply *cannot* be twisted to conform to the vicissitudes of worldly opinion. Biblical truth is fixed and constant, not subject to change or adaptation. Worldly opinion, on the other hand, is in constant flux. The various fads and philosophies that dominate the world change radically and regularly from generation to generation.

The only thing that remains constant is the world's hatred of Christ and His gospel.

In all likelihood, the world will not long embrace whatever ideology is in vogue this year. If the pattern of history is any indicator, by the time our great

grandchildren become adults, worldly opinion will be dominated by a completely new system of belief and a whole different set of values.

Tomorrow's generation will renounce all of today's fads and philosophies. But one thing will remain unchanged: until the Lord Himself returns and establishes His kingdom on earth, whatever ideology gains popularity in the world will be as hostile to biblical truth as all its predecessors have been.

Revivalist, Leonard Ravenhill, used to say, "The early church was married to poverty, prisons and persecutions. Today, the church is married to prosperity, personality, and popularity."

The very things that Jesus erects as barriers to keep people from coming to him as false converts are the very things that the church offers to the world to get converts.

The very things that Jesus says you cannot have if you are going to be his disciple are the very things the church offers for people to get saved.

We have turned the gospel completely on its head.

We have got to stop offering Jesus as a

1. solution to your problems

2. a means to satisfy your carnal desires
3. or as a fixer upper
4. or a means to an end.
5. or as an addition to your way of life

We need to stop telling people to accept Jesus as if he is at your disposal to do with as you will.

Rather we need to do as the the Prophets and Apostles and Jesus himself did and tell them that Jesus commands you repent of your sin you lifestyle, and believe in you heart that he is God and died a sacrificial death to remove the wrath of God from you and that Christ demands that you deny all that you are and all that you want to be and embrace Christ wholeheartedly, with absolute life abandoning commitment

Lesson

Three Reasons People will not follow Christ.

- I. Possessions
- II. Priorities
- III. People

I. Possessions

We don't want to give up the lifestyle we have or the things we possess

⁵⁷ Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, *that* someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."

⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "***Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.***"

⁵⁷ Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, *that* someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."

Somewhere in the vicinity of Capernaum **as they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go."** Matthew identifies this

man as a scribe (Matt. 8:19). Scribes were highly esteemed experts in the Mosaic and rabbinic law, which they interpreted authoritatively for the common people. Scribes were qualified and authorized by the Jewish religious leaders, and were hostile to Jesus (Matt. 9:3; 12:38–42; 15:1–2; 16:21; 20:18; 21:15–16; 23:1–36; 26:57; 27:41; Mark 2:6–7, 16; 3:22; 12:38; 14:1, 43; Luke 6:7; 15:2; 20:19; 23:10).

MacArthur, J. (2011). *Luke 6–10* (p. 317). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

v.57 “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.”

I will follow

akoloutheó: to follow

Original Word: ἀκολουθέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: akoloutheó

Phonetic Spelling: (ak-ol-oo-theh'-o)

Short Definition: I accompany, attend, follow

Tense: Future

Mood: Indicative

Voice: Active

given that hostility was so common among them, it is surprising that this scribe approached Jesus and said to Him, “**I will follow You wherever You go.**” Having no doubt witnessed the miracles recorded in Matthew 8:5–18, he was attracted to Jesus and eager to attach himself to such an unparalleled teacher. Traveling rabbis frequently had groups of students that accompanied them and

learned from them. This scribe acknowledged Jesus as his rabbi and wanted to join His entourage. According to Matthew's account, he addressed Jesus as "Teacher," thus offering himself as a willing pupil of the miracle worker from Nazareth. Moreover, his willingness to follow Jesus wherever He went suggests that there was the notion of long-term loyalty in his decision. And even though he knew that Jesus condemned the narrow legalism of the scribes, He was nonetheless the most impressive teacher this scribe had ever met and was thus worthy of his devotion.

MacArthur, J. (2011). *Luke 6–10* (pp. 317–318). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

has nowhere to lay

Present Tense

The Lord saw through his professed commitment driven by his desire for comfort and confronted him with reality. Even the foxes that were common in Israel (cf. Judg. 15:4–5; Ps. 63:10; Song 2:15; Lam. 5:18; Ezek. 13:4) had **holes** to sleep in, while the ubiquitous **birds of the air** had **nests**. But **the Son of Man** (Jesus' favorite title for Himself), the Messiah, God incarnate, had **nowhere to lay His**

head. The Creator had fewer creature comforts than the animals He had created.

MacArthur, J. (2011). *Luke 6–10* (p. 318). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Jesus' response was that a person desiring to follow Him must give up what others consider necessities. Jesus had no home of His own nor did His followers. They were on their way to Jerusalem where Jesus would be put to death.

Martin, J. A. (1985). Luke. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 232). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Lord raised this issue because He knew that self-denial was a barrier for this man. He viewed following Jesus in terms of what he would gain rather than the reception of forgiveness of sins at any cost. He lacked the desperation from fear of judgment that characterizes the penitent poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3) who hunger and thirst for righteousness (v. 6); who, in fear of divine punishment, want grace, forgiveness, and eternal life so badly that they put no conditions on it—even the kind of rejection Jesus experienced

This man typified the rocky soil, which symbolizes people “who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away” (Mark 4:16–17). Ultimately, he was not prepared to “deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow” the Lord

(Luke 9:23). He wanted to be in on the benefits of following Jesus, but not the sacrifices.

MacArthur, J. (2011). *Luke 6–10* (p. 319). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Related verses

Matthew 19:16–22 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”

¹⁷ So He said to him, “**Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.**”

¹⁸ He said to Him, “Which ones?”

Jesus said, “*‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’* ¹⁹ *‘Honor your father and your mother,’* and, *‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’*”

²⁰ The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Matthew 6:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ “**No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the**

one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 16:25–26 (NKJV)

²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

So often today, we plan our life around our Career, Job, money, investments, possessions, with very little thought to what God wants, or what Christ demands of us.

We store up, build up an bank up as if this is all there is.

So our culture is built on this massive consumerism. Its all about what I can get and so many are unwilling to let that go, so that I can love and serve Christ.

II. Priorities

We have our own priorities, goals and ambitions, We want the same things the world wants

59 Then He said to another, **“Follow Me.”**

But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

60 Jesus said to him, **“Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.”**

59 Then He said to another, **“Follow Me.”**

“Follow Me.”

Tense: Present

Mood: Imperative

Voice: Active

v 59 But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

let me first go

Neuter of protos as adverb (with or without ho); firstly (in time, place, order, or importance) -- before, at the beginning, chiefly (at, at the) first (of all).

At first glance, this seems to be a reasonable request. It was every son’s duty to make sure that his father was properly cared for in death (cf. Gen. 25:9; 35:29; 49:29–50:13); only the high priest (Lev. 21:10–11) and those who had taken a Nazarite vow (Num. 6:6–7) were excused from their father’s funeral, since they were forbidden to go near a dead person.

The problem with the man's excuse was that his father was not yet dead! Since the Jews did not embalm, Jewish custom dictated that burial take place immediately after death. A comparison of John 11:1, 6, and 17 reveals that Lazarus was buried the same day that he died (one day for the messenger from Mary and Martha to reach Jesus, Jesus delayed two more days, then arrived on the fourth day to find that Lazarus had been buried four days earlier). Both Ananias (Acts 5:6) and Sapphira (v. 10) were buried immediately after they died.

What this man was really saying was that he wanted to delay following the Lord until his father died and he received his inheritance. He knew that Jesus was moving out of the area, and to leave now might cause him to lose out on his share of his father's estate. Unlike the Twelve (cf. Matt. 19:27; Luke 5:11, 28), he was not willing to leave everything and follow Jesus. He was an example of "the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity" (Luke 8:14).

MacArthur, J. (2011). *Luke 6-10* (pp. 319-320). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Luke 12:16-21 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. ¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' ¹⁸ So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there

I will store all my crops and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.” ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’

²¹ “So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.”

you go

Tense: Aorist

Mood: Participle

Voice: Active

and preach

Tense: Present

Mood: Imperative

Voice: Active

diaggelló: to publish abroad, proclaim

Original Word: διαγγέλλω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: diaggelló

Phonetic Spelling: (de-ang-gel'-lo)

Short Definition: I announce throughout, spread the news of

Definition: I announce throughout (the world), spread the news of, give notice of, teach.

1229 *diaggéllō* (from **1223** /*diá*, "all the way through, thoroughly," which intensifies *aggellō*, "declare") – properly, *thoroughly declare (publically*

herald); *fully* announce, "declaring *far and wide*," i.e. *widely (profusely)* proclaiming.

Jesus replied with a proverbial saying that was a rebuke of this man's wrong priorities: "**Allow the dead to bury their own dead.**" That does not mean that believers are forbidden to attend funerals or care for their dead relatives' affairs. To say that the spiritually **dead** can **bury their own dead** is to say that there are issues that are priorities to the spiritually dead, but not to those who are alive in Christ.

Jesus challenged this individual to leave temporal, earthly matters to worldly people and not make them his overriding priority. Secular people are preoccupied with secular matters, but he was to **go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God** no matter what doing so might cost him.

James 4:4 (NKJV)

4 Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

1 John 2:15–17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing

away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

“The church, in the days of her power, never got along with the world; and the world never got along with the church.” ~ **A.W. Tozer**

Jesus, says the priority in life is spiritual not carnal and secular.

Yet to look at the church, you rarely can see any difference between the world and the church. We spend most of our life on the secular but when it comes to the service of Christ, the ministry of the church... many rarely have time for it.

We will if we have time after everything else is done.

If we have room in our schedule, we will help

It makes me wonder how few there are that really are saved.

You say you love Christ. I say I can't tell

III. People

We don't want to give up relationships, friendships,

61 And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house.”

62 But Jesus said to him, “**No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**”

61 And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house.”

He had only one request, which seemed reasonable enough: He wanted to delay joining Christ long enough to go home and say good-bye to his loved ones.

MacArthur, J. (2011). *Luke 6–10* (p. 321). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

His words revealed that his family ties were too strong for him to break away from them. Jesus knew that if he returned home, the impulse of the moment would die and he would never be able to leave. Like many people, fear of being away from or ostracized by his family would keep him from following the Lord. That is why Jesus cautioned the crowds that followed Him,

Matthew 10:32–37 (NKJV)

32 “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

³⁴ “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; ³⁶ and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ 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 is not worthy of Me.

⁶² But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow,

“No one

Original Word: οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδέν

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: oudeis and outheis, oudemia, ouden and outhen

Phonetic Spelling: (oo-dice')

Short Definition: no one, none, nothing

Definition: no one, none, nothing.

3762 *oudeís* (from **3756** /ou "no, not" and **1520** /heís, "one") – properly, *not one*; *no one, nothing*.

3762 /*oudeís* ("no one, nothing *at all*") is a powerful negating conjunction. It rules out *by definition*, i.e. "shuts the door" *objectively* and leaves no exceptions. **3762** (*oudeís*) is *deductive* in force so it excludes *every (any) example* that is included within the premise (supposition).

[**3762** /*oudeís* ("not one, none") *categorically excludes*, declaring as a *fact* that no valid example exists.]

“No one, having put his hand to the plow,

Tense: Aorist

Mood: Participle

Voice: Active

“No one, having put his hand to the plow, ***and looking back,*** is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Tense: Present

Mood: Participle

Voice: Active

fit

euthetos: well-placed, i.e. ready for use

Original Word: εὐθετος, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: euthetos

Phonetic Spelling: (yoo'-thet-os)

Definition: suitable, fit, useful.

2111 *eúthetos* (from **2095** /*eú*, "good, well" and **5087** /*títhēmi*, "to place") – properly, well-placed; "fit because well-adapted; hence, ready for use" (A-S).

Jesus replied by adapting a popular proverb that dates back to the eighth-century b.c. Greek poet Hesiod: “**No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back,** He declared, **is fit for the kingdom of God.**”

This saying pictures complete dedication to the task at hand, since one could hardly plow a straight furrow while looking backwards. It is impossible to follow Christ with a divided heart, as this man’s was. He was

not fit for the kingdom of God because he was holding on to the kingdom of this world.

Luke 9:23 (NKJV)

²³ Then He said to *them* all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

During His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ repeatedly called people who were attracted to Him to follow Him permanently as Messiah and Lord. Some singularly responded to His call and became His true disciples; others rejected it when His demands were stringent and left Him (John 6:60–66). Whenever Jesus called people, such as Matthew (Matt. 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27), Philip (John 1:43), Peter (John 21:19, 22), as well as the rest of those who became His disciples (Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; John 12:26), He used the same word, *akoloutheō* (“to follow,” “to accompany,” “to be a disciple”). He always employed that verb in the present imperative tense, to indicate He was not seeking a momentary following, but a continuous, lifelong commitment.

MacArthur, J. (2011). *Luke 6–10* (pp. 315–316). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Martin Luther captured the essence of that principle in the very first of his famed Ninety-five Theses: “When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said ‘Repent,’ He called for the entire life of believers to be one of penitence” (cited in John Dillenberger,

Martin Luther, Selections from His Writings [Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1961], 490).

MacArthur, J. (2011). *Luke 6–10* (p. 316). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers

In keeping with that principle, Jesus often made things extremely difficult for superficial followers. In His conversations, He would deliberately put up barriers between them and salvation.

MacArthur, J. (2011). *Luke 6–10* (p. 316). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Christ demands
that you

deny all that you are and all that you want to be and embrace Christ wholeheartedly, with absolute life abandoning commitment

According to Christ

There is no such thing as a half-hearted and half-committed Christian...

Either you are a Christian and you are committed, or you are not committed and not a Christian

He leaves no wiggle room for a non-committed life.