

# I'M JUST NOT READY YET

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Being a preacher is an interesting way to live. Doing the job has a tremendous spiritual reward. It is an intellectually demanding work that requires a great deal of time and frequently involves no little stress. Most of the fellows I know in local work love what they do and the people within whom they work. And that's the way I feel about my job.

But there is an area of the work of the preacher that can be bothersome. For the sake of this article, I will call what I am writing about "gospel resistance." I define "gospel resistance" as the behavior by folks who know the truth of God's Word very well and yet refuse to take the step of obeying the gospel. Such individuals may attend most if not all services of the church. If asked if they believe that Jesus is the Christ, they will reply that they surely do. All they need to do was repent of their past sins (Acts 2:38, 3:19), confess their faith in Jesus as the Christ (Romans 10:9-10) and be baptized into Christ (Romans 6:1-6), Galatians 3:26-28). When asked about it the answer is frequently this: "I'm just not ready yet." This is the creed of those in the grips of gospel resistance.

This is a frustrating thing. Resistance to the gospel can be understood when expressed by folks who had not heard the Word so many times. I fully expect it to take some time for a person new or in foreign fields to decide to do God's Will. It is a big step that ought to be carefully considered. But the gospel resistance I have in mind cannot be explained by a lack of familiarity with the material. And that's what makes it so frustrating.

Since frustration is not a healthy thing, I've tried to understand what is going on when folks say, "I'm just not ready yet." I've heard it said that stubbornness is the problem. Well, maybe. But the more important question is what causes the stubbornness. These are a few of the options.

First, the "not ready" individual may not really believe in Jesus as the Christ. Remember, we are considering someone who has had the opportunity to examine the Biblical evidence (Romans 10:17). These "not ready" folks should know what the Bible says. Perhaps some of them just don't believe it. This may be due to a lack of understanding or some substantial misunderstanding of the Bible. For such a person, baptism is not an option, because the text says, "*He that believeth and is baptized...*" (Mark 16:16).

Second, the "not ready" person may not want to repent of their sins. Such a one may be doing something that they know a Christian must not do and just don't want to give it up. This is a manifestation of two things: love for sin (1 John 2:15-17) and a lack of confidence in the power of God's truth (see 1 Corinthians 10:13).

Third, the "not ready" person may be allowing small things to get in the way of important matters. Some folks want to wait for their friends to obey the gospel. This is folly...we should seek to lead our friends to Heaven, not follow them to Hell. Others let the shortcomings of Christians dissuade them from doing what is right for them. The fact that "brother so and so" is a cad won't be an acceptable excuse on Judgment Day. Christians are to have the best influence on others possible; that's a fact. But the responsibility for obeying God lies with each individual. That others sin does not relieve me of responsibility for my own sins.

Why the frustration? If one of these "I'm just not ready yet" *gospel resistant* folks were to die unprotected by the blood of the Lamb it would be so very needless. Are *you* one who says, "I'm just not ready yet"?

Well, get ready, before it is too late.

