

## Causes of Unbelief (part 2)

Hebrews 3:12, *“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.”*

Introduction: We began our theme of “Help My Unbelief” by noting the various types of unbelief. This morning, we noted several causes of unbelief and tonight, we’ll look at four more causes of disbelief and rejection of God.

### I. Evil, Pain and Suffering

A. For some people, the existence of evil, pain and suffering is a philosophical hurdle that prohibits believe in God?

1. Gideon once struggled with this as he saw God’s people hiding in caves and oppressed by the Midianites and asks, *“O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?”* (Judges 6:13)

2. Like Gideon, there are many who view the co-existence of God and moral evil as an intellectual inconsistency incapable of solving.

B. The greatest tragedy is not the evil, pain and suffering we endure but the fact we fail to realize God loves us and wants to take us from it for all eternity!

### II. Hypocrisy and Misconduct of Believers

A. Clearly, one of the well-documented reasons some reject the faith is due to the hypocrisy of Christians.

B. With these things in mind, the person who uses the hypocrisy of others as a crutch for their own unbelief should consider...

1. Hypocrisy is inconsistent with Christianity and should be rebuked (Galatians 2:11-14).

2. Yet, how can someone living in unbelief (thus, without an ultimate standard of moral law) condemn someone else for living immorally?

3. Furthermore, has “hypocrisy” ever kept someone from going other places or being a part of other organizations (union, team, club, college)?

4. Next, hypocrisy never stopped Jesus or His disciples from serving the Father and it should not stop us (how would life be if we quit every time someone else failed?)!

5. Yet, finally, blaming God for the misconduct of Christians is like blaming the gardener for the weeds in our garden—it’s not his fault!

C. The most loving thing to do when one spots hypocrisy is to expose it and forgive the sinner when he repents (Galatians 6:1-2; Matthew 18:15-17).

### III. Historical Acts of Violence

A. Another similar reason offered for unbelief may be examples of believers carrying out acts of violence in the name of God (the Crusades, the Inquisition, bombing abortion clinics).

B. So, how should we respond to such a tattered history?

1. First, admit it happened and admit these acts were abhorrent and deplorable.
2. Second, realize God nor Christ ever forced anyone to adhere to the Divine Will (John 18:36; Luke 6:27-31).
3. Third, note it is unfair to blame God for the unjust acts committed in His name without authority (it's like blaming the law for the cruelty of a cop).
4. Fourth, separate the real believer from the counterfeit (cf. Matthew 7:15-20).
5. Fifth, again, let's not throw out Christianity because some have abused it!

C. Finally, let's ask: if the atheist is allowed to throw out Christianity because of a few bad fruits, shall we not also be allowed to apply this same test to the atheists?

### IV. Unbelief

A. Just think of the rampant unbelief displayed in our culture.

1. It is hundreds of times more likely your child will pick up a book from the school or public library that advocates evolution than creationism.
2. Our children are being indoctrinated everywhere from the school to the zoos to the museums to the universities to Hollywood with an anti-faith agenda.

B. So, with this type of cultural saturation at play is it any surprise that 2 out of 3 kids are leaving the church when they leave home?

Conclusion: Why is it important to note the causes? Because of the effect. Notice what God's Word says about unbelief.

John 8:24, "... unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."

Hebrews 3:12, "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God."

Hebrews 11:6, "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."

Revelation 21:8, "But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

These are the consequences of unbelief, but unbelief can be forgiven (1 Timothy 1:12-14). Yet, you must allow the evidence to change your mind.