An Anatomy of Unbelief

Jesus knew in Himself that He was saying about Himself exactly what the Father was saying (vv. 31-32, 37-38). He did not need any external testimony, but we do (v. 34). Although God has given abundant testimony to His own existence and to Christ, many still do not believe.

**Why don’t people believe in Jesus?**

**1. They reject God’s general testimony** **in creation**

A. *Existence* & *Power* (Romans 1:18-20)

B. *Glory* (Psalm 19:1)

C. *Wisdom* (Psalm 104:24)

D. *Goodness* (Acts 14:16-17)

E. *Righteousness* (Romans 2:14-16)

**2. They reject God’s special testimony** **to Jesus**

A. *John the Baptist*

B. *The miracles of Jesus*

C. The *Scriptures*, which contain—

* The *prophecies* of Israel’s Messiah
* The *pattern* of Israel’s history
* The *personal* testimony of eyewitnesses

**3. They are hostile to God Himself.**

A. They do not want to *come to Christ*.

B. They do not want *glory from God*.

* Glory from man feeds *pride*.
* Glory from God feeds *humility*.

**For Private Meditation or Family Discussion**

1. How did the Lord speak to you through the message? Did He put His finger on any habits or attitudes that you need to change? Did He encourage you regarding some difficulty, move you to undertake some new challenge, or open your heart to some truth you hadn’t seen before?

2. People say they openly reject Christ or passively ignore Him for many reasons. Here are a few—

* Supposed conflict of Scripture with science (especially evolution)
* Psychological or physical abuse in a religious context
* A desire for intellectual respectability
* Apathy—religion is irrelevant to my life
* “Scholarly” doubts about the reliability of the Bible
* Psychological explanations for the phenomenon of belief
* Mythological parallels to the Bible

These objections to faith are new or particularly threatening to well-informed believers. Have you met people who offered these reasons for their unbelief? What other reasons for unbelief have you met?

3. How might you deal with people if their reasons for unbelief are—

* actually a cover for a moral and spiritual aversion to God and His rule over their lives?
* based on ignorance of God’s truth or on a distorted idea of what the Bible really teaches?