

How many here would consciously bow down to an idol? Most of us would not think of doing that, yet there is one area of life that we may not think about, yet never the less we often actually bow down to this idol.

You see, the bible equates this area with idolatry and that is the area I want to think about today. The reason I want to explore this area a little bit is because it is one that I have bowed down to at various times, and probably everyone here has at one time or another.

My goal is to remind us that it is an area that does us, or those around us, no good spiritually or even in general life in the family or community. I Samuel 15:23 says *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.* I have entitled this message

### **When being bullheaded is sometimes a lot of hogwash**

Intro: Is there anyone here that has ever been stubborn. Maybe I should ask, is there anyone here, who has not had a stubborn streak boil up in your day to day activities and relationships? We all have, so lets look at this subject of stubbornness. Lets begin by looking at

#### I. Stubbornness defined

Stubbornness is defined as refusing to yield, obey, or comply; it is also seen as, resisting doggedly or unreasonably; resolute or obstinate, hard to handle, treat, or deal with

**Question:** Doesn't that pretty well sum up how we sometimes act or think? Don't forget, Hard heads lead to hard hearts. But I want to move along and think briefly about

#### II. A biblical example

We have all read this story many times. God comes to Jonah and asks him to go to Nineveh, a wicked city, and cry out against it's wickedness.

In Jonah 1:1,2 it says *Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.* Jonah wanted no part of this so he stubbornly went the other way. *V3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*

**The Harper's Bible Commentary** describes Jonah as "*a man who is the embodiment of intolerance, bigotry and lack of human sympathy.*" **Remembering our definition,** lets ask the question, Does it appear from these verses that Jonah was possibly refusing to yield, obey, or

comply? Is it possible that He was resisting doggedly or unreasonably; Was he being a bit resolute or obstinate, hard to handle, treat, or deal with?

This is just a brief example of a biblical character who had a stubborn streak but lets move along and look at

### III. The time line

Being stubborn starts in childhood and runs straight through till we finally die. The timeline starts when we see a small child digging their feet in, (so to speak) when they are told to do something, or can't have something. Sadly we as adults many times think it is cute, but guess what, we find out that after awhile that it isn't so cute anymore.

We will always be plagued with stubbornness to some degree as long as we live. There will always be those times when we are sure we are right and we ain't changing our mind. So there!!!!!!

### IV. Suggested signs of stubbornness in our lives. I thank Dr. Dave Hartson for his help in this area

One sign that we struggle with stubbornness is When I have a problem and I refuse to go to God with it, but chose rather, to fix it on my own, it reveals stubbornness toward God. God desires to help us through the difficulties of life, and when we refuse to call upon Him for help it reveals our stubbornness.

Another sign is my willingness to settle for less than the best, just to say I have done it. How often do we settle for less than the best to say we did it rather than wait for God to give us the very best? I think more often then we would like to admit.

A third sign of stubbornness is that I get angry rather than repentant when I am confronted with the truth. Isn't it true that we have two choices when we are confronted with the truth of God's Word.

- We can embrace it, repent of our present condition and ask God's help in the future.
- We can attack the truth, or attack the messenger of the truth, but never admit that I am the problem.

Don't forget, We all have a stubborn streak within us. It is most dangerous when that stubborn streak is directed toward God.

### V. The fertile growing ground for stubbornness

I see stubbornness flourishing in 4 major areas First, it flourishes

#### **A. In marriage and the home.**

Have any of you ever gotten into a discussion with your mate or other family member about who was right, why they were right, and since they are right, well that's the way its going to be? Who is the most stubborn person in your house?

#### **B. In the school**

Did you ever see a stubborn student or teacher? All this is, is a person following the time line I just laid out

#### **C. In the workplace.**

I have worked in the factories enough that I have I have seen stubbornness first hand. You can often see this when it comes to the negotiations with the union at contract time. Neither side willing to bend because they think they are right.

#### **D. The church**

Here it is seen in problems with people, programs, and projects. Everyone likes to think they are right and if anyone disputes them they take it personally. Wouldn't it be much more profitable is we could get to the place that we can admit that maybe it is just that person presenting a different view as seen through the window of their life journey and experience? That will take some of the sting out and replace it with spiritual growth and love.

#### **VI. What stubbornness does**

It causes resentment when others refuse to agree with our way of thinking. It makes working conditions difficult. More time is spent arguing and disagreeing, than there is actually working, so the project is often late. It kills the incentive and privilege of learning new things. Too much of our lives are spent in the rut of stubbornness and unwillingness to change. Finally it kills relationships. **Billy Graham says this for us to think about** " Have you ever thought about how stubborn we often are - and how much it hurts us? Stubbornness makes us do things we shouldn't do, and cuts us off from others (even those who want to help us) - simply because we insist on our own way and won't admit we might be wrong."

#### **VII. How to overcome this bad trait**

I want to look at two little verses that carries a lot of clout but will go a long way in helping us if we will simply choose to apply them. Philippians 2:3,4 are the verses *Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing.*

This requires a specific action and that is changing our mind which, cuts right to the core of the stubbornness problem. Changing our mind. But lets not forget the An old Spanish proverb that says, A wise man changes his mind, a fool never will. Lets not be so foolish that we miss blessings

**In closing**, lest you think there is no redeeming value in stubbornness let me close with the words of Glen Beaman who said "**Stubbornness** does have its helpful features. You always know what you're going to be thinking tomorrow."