

“Excuses, Excuses”

Someone has compiled a list of excuses that parents gave to teachers why their child couldn't come to school. Here are some:

“Dear school: pleas akuse John for bean asbent on Jan. 28, 29,30, 32 and 33.”

“Mary could not come to school because she has bothered by very close veins.”

“I kape Billie home because she had to go Christmas shopping because I didn't know what size she wear.”

“My son is under the doctor's care and could not take P.E. Please execute him.”

“Please excuse Joey Friday. He had loose vowels.”

“Please excuse Fred for being absent. He had a cold and could not breed well.”

“Please excuse Joyce from Jim today. She is administrating.”

“Please excuse Johnny for being. It was his father's fault.”

“Please excuse Dianna from being absent yesterday. She was in bed with Gramps.”

“May Ann was absent Dec. 11-15 because she had a fever, sore throat, headache and upset stomach. Her sister was also sick, fever and sore throat, her brother had a low-grade temp and ached all over. I wasn't feeling the best either, sore throat and fever. There must be the flu going around – father even got hot last night.”

Is there any of us who has never made an excuse for something we did, or didn't do? Or for something we didn't want to do? Maybe not as outlandish as some of these – but excuses nevertheless?

People in the Bible made excuses also! Some of the men and women who did great things for God also made up excuses for themselves! The Scripture reading today was from Judges, chapter 6. The story involves Gideon. The Israelites are in the promised land of Canaan. They are trying to learn to live with the people already there. They're called by God to live as His unique people, but Judges 6:1 says, “The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites.”

So, they cry out to the Lord for deliverance. One day an angel of the Lord appears to Gideon. Let's pick up the narrative: “The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, ‘The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior.’ Gideon answered him, ‘But sir, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our ancestors recounted to us, saying, “Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?” But now the Lord has cast us off and given us into the hand of Midian” (Judges 6:12-13). The Lord responds: “Then the Lord

turned to him and said, ‘Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; I hereby commission you’ (Judges 6:14). God is saying, “You’re a strong person! And I’m sending you on this mission!” How does Gideon respond to that? “But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family” (Judges 6:15). “Excuse me!”, Gideon says! “My family background is not the best. And I’m not that important even in my own family!”

God reassures him: “The Lord said to him, ‘But I will be with you, and you shall strike down the Midianites, every one of them’” (verse 16). No doubt Gideon *did* feel he wasn’t big enough to fill the shoes of the kind of person God needed. But it was an *excuse* – because God plain out told him “I want *you*, and you can do it!”

Gideon wasn’t the only excuse maker! When God appeared before Jeremiah, and said He chose Jeremiah to be a prophet even before he was born, Jeremiah said, “Whoa...wait a minute! I’m not a great speaker! I’m way too young!” Excuses, excuses.

Ever read the story of how God tried to recruit Moses for the work God wanted him to do? (It’s in the Book of Exodus). Moses tried every excuse in the book to get out of it! Finally, God wears him down, and Moses admits his *real reason* for dodging God’s call – “Please send someone else!” (Exodus 4:13). The next verse says God got a little ticked off at Moses’ excuses!

So, what does all of this have to do with us? *God has created us, redeemed us in Christ, and calls us (sometimes hounds us) to be part of His loving design and purpose for the world.*

This is true in a general sense. We’ve all been created by God to believe in His Son Jesus and follow Him. To be counted among the redeemed. And to reflect the light of Christ in the way we live. God destined us to do what’s right. To care about others. To give ourselves to something larger than our own self-centered pursuits. Hopefully, we have done that, and are doing that!

Some people reject this call of God to believe in His Son and follow Him – to part of the kingdom of God. Jesus told a parable (found in Luke 14) about God’s invitation for us to come to God’s great banquet feast, to be part of God’s kingdom. But, in the parable, it says, “They all alike began to *make excuses*” (Luke 14:18).

For heaven’s sake – don’t make an excuse why you can’t be a Christian! Why you can’t surrender your life over to Christ and live for Him!

But also, God comes to each of us individually, and calls us to certain tasks. Every one of us has been created for a *specific* purpose, to partner with God to make this world a better place. To share God’s love with others. To do something that no one else can do but you! I can’t tell you what that is! That’s between you and God. Just like I have to figure out what tasks God wants me to do. But God has a purpose for your life.

And I bet already some of you are falling back into excuse mode! I don't have any special talents. I'm not smart enough! I'm too old. I'm not good enough. Right?

Want to know some of the excuses I've presented to God over the years? I'm too shy. I'm not a good speaker – I could never get up in front of people and talk. I don't want to have to move and live somewhere I may not like. I'm not a good enough person morally. Excuses!

I'm convinced that we will *always* be able to say "it's not a good time" or "the situation isn't the best" or "I'm too inadequate" when it comes to doing the things God calls us to do! There's so much good that needs to be done in the world, and God has a specific niche that each of us can fill if we're only willing to say "Yes" to God – even if it means going out of our comfort zone.

But here's the wonderful thing about all of this: If we're willing to let go of our timidity and our excuses of why we're not the person God should want for this job, God is able to do things through us we never of which we never dreamed! That's been true of my life!

Remember, Jesus chose 12 men to be with Him as His students, His disciples. "Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor (Luke 6:12-16). Folks, these were not the brightest and the best the world had to offer Him!

This piece of writing was circulating around a while back.

Letter to Jesus

To: Jesus, Son of Joseph
Woodcrafter's Carpenter Shop
Nazareth 25922

From: Jordan Management Consultants

Dear Sir:

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for managerial positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests; and we have not only run the results through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant.

The profiles of all tests are included, and you will want to study each of them carefully.

As part of our service, we make some general comments for your guidance, much as an auditor

will include some general statements. This is given as a result of staff consultation, and comes without any additional fee.

It is the staff opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capability.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew had been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind, and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious, and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man. All of the other profiles are self-explanatory.

We wish you every success in your new venture.

Sincerely, Jordan Management Consultants

We may think that when God has a job He wants done that He always will pick the brightest and the best, the most holy and religious, the super talented and extraordinarily gifted. But I've come to believe that *most of the time* God comes to the most unlikely people, ordinary and unimpressive people (who usually will find an excuse why they couldn't possibly do anything of importance for the Lord).

So, what kind of action will you take as a result of hearing this sermon? The beginning point, of course, is that you and I have answered the call to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus, so God can use us to advance His kingdom on earth. If not, will you surrender your life and will to Christ today!

Next, I'm sure some of you have experienced the joy of doing something you know is making life better for someone. You're doing something God really wants you to do. Thank God for it!

And then, perhaps there's something you've kind of felt you should be doing for the Lord, and others. But you've been making excuses. Maybe it's to teach a Sunday School class or start a small Bible study group. Maybe it's to drive people to their doctor's appointments. Maybe it's to sing with the worship team. Maybe it's to volunteer at a clothing bank or some community

service. Maybe it's to offer to take some leadership role in the church. I can't tell you what God task God is asking you to do, but He will tell you if you just ask, and if you are patient to wait for the answer!

Your first inclination will be to make up an excuse: I'm already too busy. I'm too old. My health is failing. I'm not smart enough. I've got too many skeletons in the closet to be useful to God.

STOP IT! Just be open and willing, and you will be amazed what God can do with your life!

Harry L. Kaufhold, Jr.
Community United Methodist Church
September 21, 2025