

Excuse Hunting

Dub McClish

It's often been said that when a person does not want to do something, one excuse is as good as another. This is also true about things we want to do. If we want to do it badly enough, we can find an excuse that will rationalize the matter for us. An employee may excuse merchandise theft from the employer on the excuse that he is overworked and underpaid. The husband may be unfaithful to his wife, excusing his adultery by blaming his wife for being a poor cook or housekeeper. A child may shoplift a piece of candy with the excuse that one piece would never be missed. On and on the excuses go.

Have you ever noticed that some people seem to make up their minds they are going to do a certain thing and then they sort of sit back and wait for something to happen that will (in their own minds) give them an excuse for doing what they had already planned to do? It happens all the time.

Person "A" offends person "B," but sincerely repents and asks forgiveness. Person "B" verbally extends forgiveness, but a little later person "A" accidentally neglects to speak to person "B" in the supermarket. This was just the excuse person "B" was looking for to start a slander campaign against person "A" to avenge the original offense, supposedly forgiven!

I have talked with people who have heard the sweet Gospel story all of their lives and who know it so well they could tell it to others. Yet, they have not obeyed it. The excuse often given is that "I'm already living better than old brother _____. " Whatever a person's reason for refusing to save himself, when he blames his disobedience to God on someone else, he is merely excuse-hunting. This may ease his own mind for a while, but he still must give account for his life personally at the Judgment (2 Cor. 5:10).

A brother or sister drops out of a good program of work in the church in which he or she has been very active. The excuse given is that "someone offended me, and I just can't work with him anymore." Often it is apparent that the person intended to quit for some time because the work required too much sacrifice. He was just hunting an excuse to "retire gracefully." People quit the church altogether at the "drop of a hat." They may blame others, but the truth is, their fire went out. They were just hunting an excuse to quit!

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, October 1, 1987, of which I was editor.]

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