

# EXCUSES???

*Tim Smith*

Many offer what they call excuses for absenting themselves from active and faithful service in the Lord's church. Some give reasons for not working and worshiping as God instructed them to do. But, in reality, there is no excuse or reason for not being obedient to the most holy faith. The word *excuse* means, "1. A statement made or a reason given as a ground for being excused. 2. A cause, factor, or circumstance that frees from blame, etc." (*Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary*). Is there anything that can free us from blame for ignoring God's commandments? The word *reason* is defined as follows: "A reason seeks to explain or justify an action by citing facts, circumstances, inducement, and the like, together with the workings of the mind upon them" (*Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary*). Is there something that justifies our neglect of the perfect law of liberty?

When one considers the excuses and reasons given by many, they quickly realize that they neither excuse the offense committed nor are reasonable. Some have left faithful service through the years because the song leader led only old songs and that bored them; others left because the song leader led only new songs that they did not know and were confused. Some have gone out from among us because the song leader led too many songs, others because not enough were led. Some left because the prayers were too long, others because the prayers had no heart and were merely short recitations of tired phrases. Some left because the Lord's Supper was served before preaching, others because it was served after. Some did not like the announcements, they were too long, and besides that, all the information was given in the bulletin; others did not think enough was mentioned in the announcements. Some became angry because the elders and preacher did not visit them often enough, others because the elders and preacher would not leave them alone. Some left because when they were sick no one came to see them, others become angry because people do come around and they do not feel like company. Some think the sermons are too long and complicated, others think, them too short and simple. Some do not like the way the preacher combs his hair or presents himself. Others do not like the hypocrites in the church, while still others do not feel worthy of the name "Christian." Some feel that the gospel is too tough on young people, others bemoan the liberties of modern society and Christianity.

Regardless of the reason, there is no excuse for you not being faithful to God. The church is composed of human beings, and there will be flaws in it from time to time; but those same flaws are in each of us. If you are looking for an excuse, you may find one that satisfies you, but you will never find one that satisfies God. Think of our Lord as He walked among us, teaching, and preaching to a people who rejected and scorned Him at every turn. Think of His compassion and love as he hung, suspended between heaven and earth on the cruel cross, and said, "**Father, forgive.**" Think of the apostles as they were imprisoned, beaten, threatened and

the like; yet they did not stop. They refused to let others dictate their eternal destination. When people are rude to you, try to ignore it. If they have no control over your actions, kindly ignore their suggestions and live right in God's sight. Try to love them. Try to remember that we all have imperfections. Never forget that the crown is given after the race is finished, and never before (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Instead of offering excuses to leave the Lord, find a real reason to abide with him. ~

*Deceased*