Can I Be Excused?
by Ed Jordan

Most of us lead very busy lives, and we have too much on our plates. How does that happen? Occasionally a boss dumps the work on us, but generally we are the ones who choose to add more agendas into our lives. We often add things that are easy, popular, or we like doing. We tend to avoid doing what takes more discipline or isn’t much fun. There is a well-known statement: People do what they want to do and avoid the things they don’t want to do. We love burgers and fries, but we hate to exercise. We love diversions and enjoyment, but we avoid places like church that require us to face reality. We avoid the truth taught at church, because it convicts us of things we should be giving more attention to in our lives.

Once there was a very prominent person who planned a by-invitation-only gala feast, asking for RSVPs. On the day of the feast, limos were sent to pick up the guests because everything was ready and waiting. But those who had been invited and gladly said they would attend soon began to make excuses for not going. The limo drivers reported to the host that all the people who promised to come gave excuses instead. Can you imagine how the host felt? He had done everything he could, but when the time came, his guests stood him up. And he was so looking forward to welcoming and celebrating with his guests! He was gravely disappointed in those whom he thought were his friends.

But he didn’t let that ruin his celebration! He told the limo drivers to go out into town and invite anyone they saw to come for the best feast they have ever experienced. The drivers came back with cars overflowing of excited people. But there was still more room at the feast, so the limo drivers were told to go out again, and check out the backroads and alleys, and invite everyone and anyone to come to the most memorable feast of their lives.
In Luke 14:24 (The Message) the host said: “Let me tell you, not one of those originally invited is going to get so much as a bite at my dinner party.”

The man throwing the great banquet is Jesus. He invites us to dine with him every day, to join him in church services every week, and to experience a quality of life that is incomparable to anything else on this planet. All of us have been invited to this life. Some say, “Yes,” and interact with Jesus every day! They come together in churches each week to hear the words of Jesus that can change their lives and to give thanks to Jesus for the banquet of life that he has invited us to partake in. Alas, many more have given Jesus their “yes” RSVPs, but rather than seizing each opportunity to spend time with Jesus, they begin to make excuses as to why they can’t do that. Such people don’t realize how that makes Jesus feel. They don’t understand that meeting with God is a very special experience. They just assume the banquet will always be there. And so they go through life, full of themselves but empty as can be. They think they have God fooled. But God knows our hearts; he knows if we have real reasons or just excuses.

G. Campbell Morgan said that excuses are merely expressions of a lack of desire. If we wish to serve Jesus, we will. If we don’t, we will make excuses. If we wish to grow in Christ, we will. If we don’t, we’ll manufacture excuses. If we wish to spend time with Jesus and his people, we will. If we don’t, we can think up lots of excuses.

Jesus invites you to come to his feast and to live in his presence. He invites you to learn and fellowship with others at church, to worship him, and to express your appreciation to him. It’s funny how dogs and cats know whether or not a person really cares about them. Do we really think that God can’t figure out who loves to come be with him versus those who make excuses to avoid him?

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