

PAPER WALLS

MOVING BEYOND
THE EXCUSES
THAT HOLD YOU BACK

Part 1: Excuses

There are things worth carrying forward from one season to the next, one year to the next. Good habits and good friends, both come to mind. But there are also things we should leave behind. For the next few weeks, we will be exploring something worth leaving in the past—the excuses that hold us back. The problem, of course, is that excuses look impenetrable from a distance, when in fact, they may be only illusory. While our excuses may appear to be real obstacles, they are often paper walls of our own making, which means we also have the power to tear them down.

Start Talking

1. What are you looking forward to in the week to come? The next month? 2022 as a whole?

What About You

2. Have you ever exposed and discarded a personal excuse? If so, what did that process entail?
3. Can you think of a time when you noticed an excuse (in yourself or somebody else) that looked like humility, but was actually selfishness in disguise?
4. Have you ever known anyone who refused to let excuses hold them back? Who were they?
5. Andy argued that excuses keep us focused on ourselves, rather than the people and opportunities around us. Is this true, in your experience?



Look It Up

Read the following passage before answering the questions below: Hebrews 12:1–2,

6. What reasons would the first-century Jews following Jesus have had to give up? What excuses do you imagine them fighting each day?
7. Why do you think the author of Hebrews presents focusing on Jesus as an antidote to excuses?
8. When you hear the word “hindrance” in this passage, what comes to mind?
9. Based upon what the author of Hebrews says here, how do you define the difference between a legitimate reason not to do something, and an excuse or hindrance?

Putting It All Together

10. During Andy’s message, were you reminded of something you tell yourself as a way of avoiding responsibility or opportunity?
11. What excuses, specifically, would you like to leave in 2021? How will you do it?
12. Have you been lying to yourself? Do you owe you an apology?
13. What good things have excuses been keeping you from in recent years? What might your life look like without these particular paper walls?

