

PAPER WALLS

MOVING BEYOND
THE EXCUSES
THAT HOLD YOU BACK

Part 4: The Way Through

There are things worth carrying forward from one season 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 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. After all, if we built these lies, we are probably capable of labeling them and leaving them behind..

Start Talking

1. When you hear the phrase, “there are two kinds of people in this world,” what comes to mind?

What About You

2. Have you ever noticed somebody you care about converting fear into an excuse not to do something? Have you ever done this? Been called on it?
3. What past events keep you timid? What circumstances do you find yourself most afraid of repeating?
4. In your mind, what is the difference between pursuing achievement, and finding a sense of purpose?
5. Have you ever tried to articulate your purpose in life, at least as you understand it? What have you come up with? Where did this idea come from?

Look It Up

Read the following passage before answering the questions below: Ephesians 2:10

6. What does Paul seem to outline as the purpose of life– and even salvation– in this passage?
7. What does Paul’s conception of life as described here tell us about the nature of God? Our own lives?
8. How would the world around us be different if people understood their purpose as an exercise in actively tackling good works, rather than mere self-preservation?
9. How do you imagine Paul would define “good works?” What comes to mind for you in this phrase?

Putting It All Together

10. What are you missing out on as a result of walling yourself in with excuses?
11. What excuses can you identify in your life right now? What “because’s” keep appearing to rob you of purpose?
12. Will you commit to writing down and interrogating your excuses this week? Who can you share these with?
13. Let’s get specific. What are you afraid of right now? Can you identify any areas where you’re being lazy? Selfish? Insecure?
14. Will you practice relabeling at least one excuse out loud? What “reason” not to live your life or improve your world comes to mind? What, specifically, is driving it?