

Lame Excuses

Part 1

Key Scriptures: Romans 1:20; Romans 2:15; Romans 3:9-18; John 8:34; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Romans 3:19-22

1. Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What is the lamest excuse you've ever given for not doing your homework or a project?
- What is the funniest excuse you've ever heard for someone being late or not attending an event?

2. Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Romans 1:20. What are some of God's "invisible qualities" that you have seen? Can everyone recognize those things? How do they point to the reality of God?
- Read Romans 2:15. How does our conscience demonstrate that God's Moral Law is evident to everyone? Do our feelings govern morality or are there things that are objectively right (good) and wrong (evil) in this world? If so, then who decides what is ultimately right and wrong? Why?
- Read Romans 3:19. What does it mean "that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God"? Why? Why are we accountable to God's Law?
- Does sin have power over us? What do Romans 3:9-18, John 8:34, and Isaiah 64:6 have to say about the power of sin? What hope do we have if sin has power over us? (1 Corinthians 10:13)

3. Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- God has defined right and wrong, good and evil. But if you ask someone if they are going to heaven, how do they respond? Do they appeal to God's standards or some moral standards of their own design? Does "good" behavior get us into heaven? Why or why not?
- What does 2 Corinthians 4:4 say about the minds of unbelievers? What does that mean for us as believers? How is this "blindness" removed from their lives?
- In the true story of Lance Armstrong (who cheated by taking performance-enhancing drugs), he said, *at the time*, he didn't feel bad about it, he didn't feel that it was wrong, and he didn't even feel that it was cheating. Do you identify with those feelings? Do your (or Lance's) feelings determine in any way if it really was right or wrong? If a governing authority determines something is wrong, even if you don't agree with it, do they have the ability to punish an offender justly? How does that apply to us and God?
- Does sin affect our minds, motives, decisions, words, or emotions? Explain.

4. Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Pray that you are not blind to sin's effect on your life.
- Pray that God removes the blindness of sin's effect on the lives of people in your life.

5. Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Commit to "get around to it" this week and accomplish something that you've been putting off. Fix the thing that needs fixing. Knock out that chore you've avoided. Call that person you need to call. Ask forgiveness. Show up. Be present in someone's life. And then do it!