



What's Your Excuse? - Week 1

"What is the thing that is holding you back from taking a new step in following Jesus?"

Icebreaker: Share a funny or unusual excuse you've heard or used in the past.

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the Theme of Excuses: How do you differentiate between a reason and an excuse in your own life? Can you identify a "lion outside" excuse that has held you back from taking steps in your faith journey?
2. Scripture Reflection: Hebrews 12:1-2 encourages us to "throw off everything that hinders." What are some things in your life that might be hindering your spiritual growth? How can you begin to "throw them off"?
3. Personal Application: The sermon emphasizes taking both a "deep step" and a "wide step" in following Jesus. Which step do you find more challenging, and why? What practical step can you take this week to address this challenge?
4. Theological Implications: Consider the role of community, as described in the "great cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews 12:1. How can being part of a faith community help you overcome excuses and grow in your walk with Christ?
5. Emotional and Spiritual Responses: How did the sermon challenge your understanding of what it means to truly follow Jesus? Were there any moments that particularly resonated with you or inspired you to change?
6. Community Impact: How can our church collectively address the "wide steps" of loving our neighbors? What are some outreach or service opportunities we can engage in as a community?
7. Call to Action: What specific step will you commit to taking this week to move past excuses and follow Jesus more closely? How can the group support you in this commitment?



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Scripture Exploration

- Read Proverbs 22:13. What is the excuse given by the sluggard, and what does it reveal about human nature?
- Examine Hebrews 12:1-3. What does it mean to "throw off everything that hinders" and "fix our eyes on Jesus"?
- In the context of Hebrews 12:1, who might be included in the "great cloud of witnesses," and how do they inspire us?

Personal Reflection

- What does it mean to you to "fix your eyes on Jesus" in your daily life?
- Reflect on a time when you overcame an excuse to follow through with a difficult decision. What motivated you?
- How do the examples of faith in Hebrews 11 challenge your current faith journey?

Personal Application

- Identify one area in your life where you feel "stuck." What steps can you take to move forward, despite excuses?
- How can you encourage someone else in your community to overcome excuses and take their next step in faith?
- Consider the "Follow Initiative" mentioned in the sermon. What new deep or wide step can you take this week to follow Jesus more closely?