

Gospel Identity

Session 1 – First the bad news...

Serge

Read Luke 10:25-29, Revelation 3:1-3

1. What does it mean to justify yourself, based on these passages? Why do we do it?
2. What are the consequences of justifying ourselves rather than leaving it to God—for ourselves and others around us?
3. Look at the list below in the table titled “Excuses: how to be right and look good.” Which of these excuses do you find yourself using to justify your actions? What are you really saying about yourself, and others, when you make these excuses?

Read Luke 6:37-45 and 1 John 1:8-10, then discuss the following questions:

4. What are we really saying when we claim we are not sinners, or that someone else’s sins are worse than ours?

“When Christ calls a man,
he bids him come and die.”
-Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Read Psalm 73:1-28, then discuss the following questions:

5. What is a Seth struggling with at the beginning of this Psalm—both in terms of the world around him and within himself? What changes his perspective?
6. What area in your life do you most need to stop justifying yourself and your old identity— whether it’s through words or actions—and replace your perspective with God’s?

Excuses: How to be right and look good

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ “I’m just weak” (it’s not really my fault) ❖ I was just being honest (Can’t you handle the truth) ❖ I didn’t mean to do it (I didn’t mean to get caught) ❖ It made me so angry (I’ve been treated unfairly) ❖ I misunderstood you (You’re not as crazy as I thought) ❖ I’m just saying what I feel (There’s nothing wrong with my feelings) ❖ My family was like that (You think I’m bad, you should meet my...) ❖ I’m having a bad day/week (I deserve better) ❖ I’m tired... It’s hot today! (I deserve a break) ❖ I’m sorry but you... (It’s really your fault) ❖ I make mistakes (Don’t we all) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ I was only kidding (Didn’t you get the joke?) ❖ You misunderstood me (I’m not as bad as that) ❖ Nobody is perfect (Including you) ❖ That’s just who I am (I’m a center you’ll just have to live with that fact) ❖ Sorry please forgive me (Let’s get this over with as quickly as possible) ❖ I’m just upset (Can’t you see that? The problem is that you’re not compassionate) ❖ We have personality problem (You’re half the problem) ❖ We have a communication problem (You’re half the problem) ❖ You’re just too sensitive (It’s not my fault)
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Weekly challenge—with your accountability partner, their Number is _____

- Actually try to hold your tongue when you want to defend yourself. Watch what happens when God defends you instead.
- At the end of your day review the conversations you’ve had. Try to find places or areas where you struggle the most with trying to justify yourself. Pray and ask God to heal that part of your life.
- Is someone you know having a rough week? Make time for that person, how can you lift them up with your words? The more time you spend lifting others up in your life the less time you have for yourself, you just might feel better, too.

Pray out with your accountability partner.