

## **Excuses and Exchanges**

### **Ready:**

“Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.” -- Romans 1:21

### **Set**

There’s a lot of noise when the early morning alarm goes off indicating it’s time to wake up and workout. Frankly, the alarm’s volume isn’t obnoxious—it’s the rush of excuses that are most deafening. When you’re dazed and disoriented, take your pick as to what will paralyze you on any particular morning: *I’m too tired! Out of shape! Sore! Hungry!* Or, for the optimistic procrastinators, maybe the “five extra minutes” of sleep turns into seven more snooze button cancellations, which forfeits any previously planned workout time.

You know what I’m talking about.

Today’s goals easily get pushed back to tomorrow, thanks to a barrage of excuses.

The manifestation of excuses permeates everyday life when it comes to the reality of our faith. In Romans 1, the Apostle Paul unpacks two key truths that cut sharper than any 5:00 a.m. alarm blast. The first point—there’s no excuse to deny God’s reality. God makes Himself obvious. He’s difficult to miss. The Artist reveals Himself in His work, whether in a meticulously-colored sunset, the rich aroma of freshly brewed coffee, or the fresh-cut grass on your favorite sports field. Creation makes the invisible visible. Consciences also come into play here, too. God writes the law on everyone’s heart to bear witness and accuse of right versus wrong. Therefore, Paul proclaims, “[*People*] have no excuse for not knowing God,” (Romans 1:20).

God wants you to know Him. Yet, the best intentions often get side-tracked by excuses. It’s hitting life’s snooze button.

Paul’s second truth is equally clear—Creator-worship is exchanged for creation-worship. “*And instead of worshipping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles*” (Romans 1:23). Images and idols soon capture hearts’ affections, replacing the spot reserved for the Immortal One. Birds and reptiles may not claim our attention, but bank accounts, relationships and the stat sheet, sure do steal our attention.

While tangled up in excuses and exchanges, God allows us to obtain our pursuits. God gives us over to “*foolish hearts*”, “*sinful desires*”, “*shameful lusts*” and “*depraved minds*” (Rom. 1:21,

24, 26, 28). Here, the sin-cycle emerges; sin cannot be quenched by more sin. It will always underdeliver for the heart's deepest longings. St. Augustine articulated it best: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

It's never too late to eradicate the excuses and eliminate the exchanges. God is calling you to Himself, inviting you to a greater satisfaction than you've known. Wake up to the deeper journey.

It starts today.

## Go

- How do "excuses and exchanges" help you view those that don't follow Jesus?
- Are you more prone to making excuses or exchanges to satisfy your heart's desires?

## Workout

Ephesians 1:17-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; James 4:8

## Overtime

"Father, open my heart to the deeper journey of intimately knowing You. Forgive me for the times that I make excuses and exchange Your glory for lesser things. Reclaim the throne of my heart. All I am is Yours. Amen."

## Bible Reference:

Romans 1:21

Ephesians 1:17-19

1 Thessalonians 5:6

James 4:8



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