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PRESENTS

Frankly Speaking Notes . . .

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Ed Smithson, Editor

NO EXCUSE

Everyone makes excuses just about everything. In fact, it is so common one begins to wonder if it might just be something people are born with, but we know better. When God created man, he made him with the ability to make decisions and control himself in every situation in which he finds himself in life.

It starts with “my dog ate my homework,” to “I just couldn’t help myself.” The first is rather harmless but the latter is denial of the ability God instills in every human being. We make excuses to escape or absolve ourselves of responsibility or to save face.

Excuses are a big problem for those making them and a bigger problem for those who accept them. Sometimes we accept excuses because it makes it easier for us to deal with the problem. However, those who accept excuses when they know well enough that is what they are, are enablers. If we accept an excuse from someone for a breach of trust, or to excuse themselves of responsibility, we are a party to it.

When I went into military service, I quickly learned one thing, they do not accept excuses for failure to get the job done. In fact, they don’t generally except “explanations” because they sound too much like excuses. You learn two things about responsibility in the Army: If you foul up and are reprimanded, there is just one answer, “NO EXCUSE, SIR.” The second thing you learn is that if you foul up, you will receive some sort of punishment, but it is not nearly as bad as the punishment you will receive if you try to make excuses.

One of the excuses we used to hear often when people didn't go to services regularly was "I was providentially hindered." I never did quite understand that. Providence, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary is "God, conceived as the power sustaining and guiding human destiny." What they are really saying is "God hindered me from worship." Now how much sense does that make?

Another excuse that we hear a lot today, from those who are involved in illicit affairs is, "I just couldn't help myself." Now think about that for a minute. In the beginning when God created man and put him in the Garden of Eden, He told him he could eat of every tree of the garden, except one. Then He concluded, "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." (Genesis 3:3) Now if man "couldn't help himself" why would God have given him the chance to make a decision?

From the beginning of man, he has had in himself, put there by his creator, the ability to make decisions. Therefore he had control and COULD have restrained himself if he chose.

The Bible teaches, "And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." (Matthew 12:36) Now if we are to give account for the words we speak, we will also give account for other things we do. Paul said, "...each one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)

Solomon said long ago, "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:14) The 25th chapter of Matthew gives a graphic description of the final judgment and is worth the read. It is intimated that when that time comes those who are losing souls will attempt an excuse but it will not be allowed.

In fact that will be the time when there will be NO EXCUSE!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Smithson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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