

Unexcused Excuses

by Caroline Ferdinandsen

for use as

STEP 1



Lesson 2

Focus:

God wants us to obey,
not make excuses.

Lesson 2

Bible Basis:

1 Samuel 15:1-3,
7-15, 20-22, 24-26,
28-29

Lesson 2

Memory Verse:

If we claim to be without sin, we
deceive ourselves and the truth is not in
us. If we confess our sins, he is
faithful and just and will forgive us our
sins.

—1 John 1:8-9a

Your students will watch a video featuring a man who makes no excuses to follow his dreams as they look at what it takes to obey God completely.

Materials:

Internet access

Do any of you train for any athletic event or fitness goal? Or, maybe you are part of a robotics team or a difficult honors program at school. Many good things require discipline and training. Many people like the idea of success and being good at something, but they don't always follow through or persevere to get there. Let's watch this video together.

Share the following video with your students [3:57; stop at 1:08]:

Title: How man with no arms and legs tackles daily obstacles

Source: YouTube.com

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdkuALA62hA>

Short Description: Nick Vujicic talks about resilience to try and learn new things.

After your class is finished watching the video, discuss the following questions together:

- **How did you feel when you saw Nick's disabilities?** (Students answers will vary.)
- **What does this video clip tell us about persevering instead of making excuses?** (It can be very easy to do things the wrong way. We may come up with reasons why we can't do something. We have the opportunity to try again until we get there.)
- **If a teacher, coach, or parent tells you to do something, why is it so hard to obey?** (Most teenagers push back against things that might be good for them. All of us—even adults—will search for reasons to disobey.)

Nick would have more reasons than most of us to make excuses for not trying new things or persevering until he accomplishes something. But he proves that if he can do it, none of us have a good excuse.

The Bible shows us many examples of people who refused to obey God's commands. The Israelites were people who didn't always take action when God spoke, and the consequences were deadly. Let's see if we can discover how to get better at quick obedience . . . and put aside excuses.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

middle school



Lesson 2 / September 13, 2020

Unexcused Excuses

for use as
STEP 4 

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Materials:

- Pens/pencils
- index cards

If you are meeting online, invite students to get a piece of paper and a writing utensil before class.

Being obedient is hard work! It usually doesn't happen by itself, and we all need help. Do you know what a personal trainer does? In sports, it's an individual who evaluates another person's goals and helps them work to achieve them. We're going to figure out where we struggle with obedience and employ a "personal trainer" to help us stay on track.

Before placing students in pairs, give everyone an index card. Tell them to think about three rules or guidelines they have trouble following. (These can be household rules like showing respect to a sibling, or they can be instructions from a coach or teacher regarding schoolwork or practice.)

If you are meeting online, you can use a break-out room feature to place students in pairs.

Depending on the chemistry of your group, prompt them to choose a partner—or pair them up by design. In round one, the older of the two will play the role of personal trainer, and the younger person will be evaluated. They will switch roles in round two. If you have an uneven number of students, you can step in to pair up with a student.

Tell your personal trainer one of the areas you are struggling with and write it on your index card. Next, talk together about some strategies for improving your behavior and attitude. If you are the personal trainer, give your trainee a specific plan of action by writing your idea on the back of their card. It's not particularly helpful to say, "Obey your

mom,” but instead say something specific like, “Put your cell phone in another room after 10:00 P.M.”

After both students have traded roles, discuss these questions as a class.

➤ **Sometimes we make obedience harder than it needs to be. Why do we resist doing what’s right?** (Our tendency toward selfishness and comfort can make it hard to obey. Also, poor role models in the media can influence our thinking. Some friendships can create pressure to disobey.)

➤ **Would anyone like to share a great idea that you and your personal trainer discovered together?** (Students’ answers will vary. Prompt adult leaders to share if students are hesitant.)

➤ **A lot of times, we’ll follow a plan of action really well for a few days and then just fade out. How can we keep a good plan going?** (We all need reminders. Text or call your partner to see how they’re doing. Post your index card somewhere visible. Let someone in your family know you are working on getting better in a particular area. Pray regularly for God to help you.)

If you have time, allow your students to pray with their partner about what they shared today. When class concludes, encourage each student to take home their plan of action.

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