

LESSON 3

EXCUSES DON'T WORK

MARK 3:1–35



1 Think back to when you were young and you tried to get out of something you were supposed to do, like a chore around the house or an assignment at school. What tactics did you use to try to get out of it?



Read Mark 3:1–35 and the following notes:

☐ 3:6 ☐ 3:7, 8 ☐ 3:14 ☐ 3:21 ☐ 3:31–35

2 The Pharisees and supporters of Herod did not normally work well together. Why then did they cooperate against Jesus (3:6)?

3 Why would a young man at this time want to follow Jesus and become one of his disciples (3:13–19)?

4 If you had been among the crowds watching Jesus, how willing would you have been to side with him, identify with him, and become known as one of his followers?



While large crowds followed Jesus, not everyone wanted to be known as his follower. Some sought to be healed, and others were merely curious or attempted to get some firsthand information about this controversial figure. To become known as one of his followers would be costly. A follower might incur the wrath of the religious and political leaders of the nation, not to mention the disdain of some relatives and friends. Following Jesus will cost us as well. At times we want to avoid the disdain of family, friends, and acquaintances—there is no benefit in being known as a religious fanatic. Yet if we avoid identifying with Christ at all cost, we will be unable to serve him.

5 If a reporter interviewed people in a shopping mall for the evening news, what would they say about those who want to be followers of Christ?

6 How would you rate your willingness to be known as a follower of Christ?



7 In what ways do you feel underqualified to be a disciple of Jesus?

8 If Jesus were selecting disciples today, what excuses would you be tempted to use for not following him? Why?



9 In what situations are you most afraid to identify with Christ? When are you most embarrassed to be known as a Christian?

10 List the excuses or tactics you tend to use to avoid being known as a Christian. Pray that you will stop using them and have the courage to identify with Christ.

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A Why did Jesus choose twelve men?

B Look at the chart entitled “The Twelve Disciples.” Which of the lessons from their lives is the most meaningful for you?

C Why did the crowds follow Jesus? Why did the disciples follow him? Why do you follow Christ?

D What evidence is given for Jesus' divinity? How did the religious teachers explain his power (3:22)? How do people explain Christ today?

E Who are Christ's brothers and sisters? On what basis can a person count himself/herself as one of them?