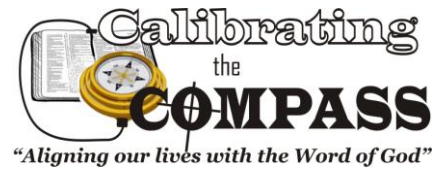




Sermon Notes

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The Compass is Reading Wrong- Excuses God Didn't Buy the First Time *Gen 3:12-13*

Have you ever noticed how we usually find someone else to blame for our failures or mistakes. It like saying the compass is reading wrong and pointed me the wrong direction is the reason I did such and such.

Have you ever heard, "Well such and such told me to do it," to which your momma would reply, "If such and such told you to jump off a cliff would you do it?"

Ecclesiastes 1:9 says, "***The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.***"

How many times did we make excuses to our parents that they looked at us with skepticism about? They may have said something like, "tell me another one I'm not buying that one." How many times have our sons and daughters told us stories and we look at them and say, "yea right."

There was recently a country song out called, "That's my story and I'm sticking too it." In it the man was making all kinds of excuses to his wife for things. One was when he came in at dawn or so he told her he fell asleep in the hammock. She told him she had taken it down months before. To which he replied, "That's my story and I'm sticking too it."

Have you ever wondered how God feels about some of our excuses why we do not do what He wants of us? Are we still trying to use the excuses that were used on God before that He never bought? Today, we are going exploring in the Bible to see what I have called, "The Compass is Reading Wrong, Excuses God Didn't Buy the First Time."

I- Companionship:

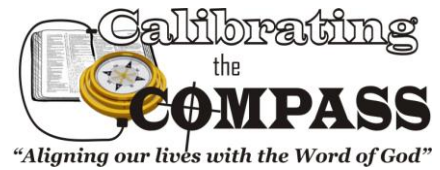
One day, my son Jonathan came home from preschool with a picture of Adam and Eve he had colored. He began to tell me the story of creation, and it seemed as though he had his facts down pretty well. "Adam and Eve disobeyed God because they ate the fruit God told them not to eat," he explained. Impressed by how much he knew, I pointed to the picture and asked, "What's this place called?" Jonathan replied earnestly, "The Garden of Eating." -- Laura Groves, Fort Lauderdale, FL. Today's Christian Woman, "Heart to Heart."

Genesis 3:12-13 "***And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.***"¹³ ***And the LORD God said unto***



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the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

Many times when we are involved in something and get caught we have a natural inclination to play the blame game. Notice that Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent.

Notice what *Romans 14:12* says, "***So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.***" We are responsible for our actions and cannot blame them on others. This points out we must choose our friend carefully. Perhaps we need a more discerning spirit to help us see others like the little girl I read about.

In a class of 11- and 12-year-olds, I intercepted a note a girl was passing to a boy. "I like you," it read, "but you sin too much."-- Wava Campbell, Paw Paw, Mich. Christian Reader, "Kids of the Kingdom."

II- Circumstances:

Have you noticed that if we do not blame others we blame our circumstances? He grew up in a broken home, he did not have a dad, he hated his mother, he was picked on as a child, his coworkers made fun of him and on and on. In the Bible we have a classic illustration of someone saying it was not his fault but just the way circumstance happened. Remember the story of Aaron and the golden calf. *Exodus 32:21* "***And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?***"

Exodus 32:24 "***And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.***"

Sin is no accident. It is purposefully done. But so is the right thing. Right should trump any self interest.

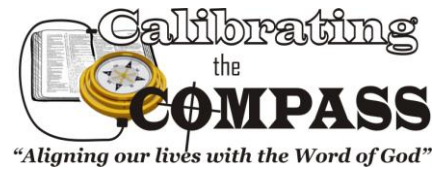
"Dear Rob," begins the hand-scrawled letter, "I read Bob Greene's wonderful column about you. I love sports and true sportsmen. My faith in our future was renewed and lifted by that column. Never lose your principles. Always stand for what's decent and right. That's what you told us all when you refused the victory!" The signature: former President George Bush.

Soccer player Rob Mouw, a senior at Wheaton (Illinois) Christian High School, isn't used to publicity, much less letters from former presidents. But his unusual action in a hotly contested soccer match was reported by local newspapers, and then by nationally syndicated columnist Bob Greene.



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In the closing seconds of a game against Waubonsie Valley, a team ranked high in the state, Mouw managed a breakaway and kicked the tying goal. With Wheaton fans cheering the upset and Waubonsie fans protesting the goal was late, Mouw walked to the referee and asked whether the official time was kept on the scoreboard or the referee's stopwatch.

The scoreboard time was official, he was told. Mouw then explained that just before his kick, he had seen zeros on the scoreboard clock. Since he hadn't heard a whistle, he kept playing. But his goal was late, and he didn't think it should count. The referee reversed his call, awarding the game to Waubonsie.

That night, Mouw went home to his homework. "I didn't think much about it," he says. "I hadn't done anything that great. For me, acting honestly was just a reflection of Christ in me."

Bob Greene opened his column with: "If you're sick of the direction sports in this country have been taking--from the preening and taunting of Deion Sanders and his many followers, to the tiresome bickering between millionaire professional athletes and the millionaire owners of their teams--then here's a sports story for you."

And he ended by quoting Mouw: "Every time in your life you have an opportunity to do right, you should be thankful. For a person to know what right is, and then not to do it--that would be a sin. To have won the game--I mean, really, who cares? Doing the right thing is more important. It lets you have peace."

-- Christian Reader, "Ordinary Heroes" (1995).

* Note: Rob went on to play soccer for Wheaton College, helping the team to a national championship in 1997.

III- Communication:

Many times we use the excuse to God that we cannot talk. In the life of Moses we find such an excuse.

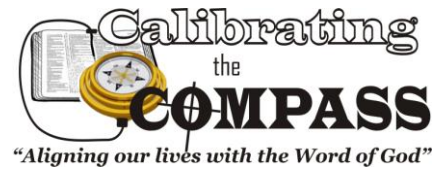
Exodus 4:10-12 "And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. ¹¹ And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." God told Moses that He would give him the words.

Notice he promises us the same. *Luke 12:11-12* "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how



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or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: ¹² For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.”

IV- Childhood:

Many times we want to use age as a factor in not serving God. Jeremiah provides the excuse of Childhood that God didn't buy.

Jeremiah 1:6-7 “Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. ⁷ But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.”

Does physical age give us an excuse? Are we ever too young or too old to stand for God? Remember that Moses was 80 and Abraham and Sarah were well advanced as well. Sometimes we use the excuse of being too new of a Christian.

Jesus told us we must become like little children to enter the Kingdom. Perhaps we all could do with a little injection of childhood into our lives as adult. We have a tendency to become cynical as we grown into adulthood. We become “mature” which at times is another way of saying, “critical” of others.

Robert Fulghum wrote in the Kansas City Times, "Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school.

"These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. ... When you go out into the world watch for traffic, hold hands, and stick together."

This writer has captured part of what Jesus meant when he said, "Unless you become like little children you won't enter the kingdom of heaven." -- Hugh Duncan, Moses Lake, Washington. Leadership, Vol. 9, no. 2.

V- Convenience:

Perhaps you are here today and have felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit telling you that you need to be saved. There is one last excuse that we need to look at, that being the excuse of convenience. Notice in when Paul is witnessing the Roman rule named Felix.

Acts 24: 25 “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”