

Excuses and God

There are many things that point to the existence of God, some of them, until we think about it, quite unexpected. C. S. Lewis in *The Case for Christianity* looks at a peculiar life trait that supports the idea that God exists. That is the phenomenon of excuses. Have you ever noticed how we are, as a race of people, highly imaginative in making up excuses for bad behavior. My brother and I used to operate a creamery some years ago. We received and shipped over considerable distances by independent truckers. Operating with limited storage facilities and dealing with a perishable product it was highly beneficial to have trucks arrive reasonably close to their scheduled times. Often they did not. It is not noteworthy that we were fighting constantly with disrupted production schedules, but it is that there was such an array of improbable excuses from those that disrupted it. I wish I had had sufficient foresight to keep a diary of the most imaginative. Nearly all of them involved an inability to see that while they were ten hours away from their destination they were not going to arrive at their appointed schedule five hours hence. And, of course, there were never any phones available. The counterpart of this phenomenon was that when trucks arrived on time, there were no excuses. That's the point. Excuses only accompany bad behavior. Good behavior stands alone. Why is that?

I go home and snap at the wife and children. Then I offer excuses. I had a bad day, I was in terrible traffic, I had a headache, or all the above. I don't go to church because it is the only day of the week that I can relax. I rob the bank because I was fired from my job. I ran over the old lady crossing the street because I was high on drugs. I murdered my neighbor because my father ridiculed me all the time I was growing up. I gunned down a bunch of school children because... whatever. There probably has never been a society more proficient in offering up excuses for bad behavior, but the bad behavior is still bad. We simply offer excuses for it.

In contrast we do not offer excuses for good behavior. We do not offer excuses for volunteering at the local school or hospital. We do not feel compelled to explain why we sent money to help a hungry child. We do not scramble and fumble for an excuse to enter a burning building to bring out a victim, even if it's only a dog or a cat. There is something distinctly different about the two types of behavior. The one seems so often to come with an excuse, the other never does. Rarely do we argue that our bad behavior is good, but we do make excuses for it. We make excuses for it because we recognize that it was bad behavior. The fact that "we couldn't help ourselves" does not change the bad behavior into good. We simply attempt to hold ourselves free of any accountability for the bad behavior. But we have no compulsion to do the same with good behavior? What is the explanation for this phenomenon?

Could it not be that there is a standard for behavior that exists apart from you and I that determines good behavior, and consequently bad behavior? Every time we analyze human behavior, we are drawn to the same conclusion. We may deny vehemently that there is an overriding

Moral Code in our world, but our actions consistently speak otherwise. This is another point that adds weight to the argument for a Universal Moral Code. While we haven't gone so far as to call this Moral Code, God, you have to see the evidence mounting in that direction. The weight of evidence that points to God is simply getting too great to lift. It is prudent to recognize that fact and begin our journey to find this Author of Morality.