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| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | By **Martha Rodman** on January 23, 2025 |   *A man prepared a great feast and sent out invitations. When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to tell the guests.* *Come, the banquet is ready. But they all began making excuses. Luke 14: 16-18. NLT.*  I mentioned before that I host a Life Group (small group) in my home. It is a privilege and blessing to grow together with these dear sisters. Some of them have some mobility issues. There is a two step concrete porch that leads to my front door. I felt a bit hopeless and frustrated as I watched these ladies navigate the steps with walkers and canes. I often heard, "I wish there were hand rails". I didn't know what to do.  When my home was built in 1969, there were no handrails installed. I just thought, I am sorry. I can't install handrails into concrete. This was my legitimate excuse. After a few months, I thought, maybe they do make a product. how do I really know they don't. So, I googled it! I was surprised to discover they make such a product. To top it off, I can get them from Amazon Prime. So there went excuse #1. But how expense would this be? Quickly excuse #2 went, because they were in my budget! But then excuse number #3 began swirling around in my mind. Suppose they look bad and it detracts from my homes value? I am not a "visualizer"...so in my mind I could not imagine what the final product would look like. So I procrastinated.  Excuse #4. I asked my friend and contractor, Kenny, if he knew how to install them. He said yes, and he would do it. But excuse #3 was still standing strong, would it be worth it?? One Sunday, our pastor preached a sermon about "love going beyond". I realized that moment if I loved these women, as I claim, I must buy them and have them installed. Love took away every excuse about this project. I would feel terrible if one of them fell. Or worse, if they chose to quit coming because they didn't feel safe. Especially since I knew there was a solution.  In the parable of the great feast, Jesus tells, none of the excuses were legitimate. One bought a field, and wanted to inspect it. I am sure that field wasn't going any where. Another, bought some oxen and wanted to "try" them out, again it could have happened at another time. Even the one who got married, could have chosen to come. When God asks us to do something, do we remember He understands all about our life? Or do we make our flimsy self-centered excuses? The excuses usually involve our time, effort or money. Each one of the "excusers" were focused on themselves, they did not consider the expense or effort the one who did the invite had gone to. I think we are often guilty of the same thing.  Luke 14 sets the stage for this parable. Jesus is at the home of a Pharisee, and some other religious law experts. They were watching him, but he also was watching them! After asking them if it was permitted to heal on the Sabbath, he healed a man. He then watched them vie for more prominent places at the table--which led to an exhortation about humility.  We then find Jesus encouraging the host. He tells the host not to invite those who could invite him back. Instead, he should go out and invite the lame, the poor, the blind, and the crippled. Embedded in verse 14, he gives us a clue to the why and what our perspective should be. *And then you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just. Luke 14:14 ESV.*In other words, it is another way we can sow our treasures in heaven. We make the wrong choice when we focus only on this life. We make decisions based on time, effort, or finances for the present rather than for heaven's sake.  Oh my friends, watching the ladies enter and leave my home last night was a blessing. They thanked me for the installation. I am trusting God about any changes to my home value--I'm not planning on moving anytime soon anyway!  Remember, when God asks something of you, He remembers your frame. He knows everything about you--even in the asking. So if you don't see a way, ask Him to make a way. If you are afraid of the outcome, tell Him that. Ask Him how to move forward, because His ways are always best. Let's get rid of our lame excuses and just get on with it!  *Father, help us do your will. Freely, joyfully and faithfully. Thank you for helping us deal with our excuses, no matter how big or how small. In Jesus' Name, amen.* |