

The Blame Game

(Part 1 of a 5-part series)

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Special to ChristianWeek*

Of the five possible attitudes that people can take when they find themselves in conflict or facing their own guilt and sin, blaming is the first and most common.

It started in the beginning.

The Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." (Genesis 3:9, 10)

Conflict on the horizon? Blame the state you're in.

He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." (Genesis 3:11, 12)

Guilty of disobedience? Blame someone else.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:13)

Chosen to commit a sin? Blame Satan.

Blaming is the polar opposite of righteousness, the inevitable result of self-righteousness. It's projecting fault onto others so that I'm never at fault. It's casting my responsibilities, guilt and sin on others so I can deceive myself that I'm perfect and never appear weak.

The person who blames is often aggressive, short-tempered to the point of explosive, and sometimes paranoid. In extremes they can become violent – abusing, assaulting, raping and even murdering. (Think of Cain and Abel!) While distracting them from their responsibility and guilt, these behaviours provide a way to feel dominant and powerful by instilling fear in others.

But what's really inside? The person who blames knows their responsibility, their guilt, and their sin. They're at least somewhat aware that they're unsuccessful at achieving the joyful life they really want. And they're lonely because by their

blaming they push away the important people in their lives.

Sadly, in most marriages and families one spouse or parent is likely to be a person who blames. Their mood – at every moment – is dependent upon the obedience and submission of the other spouse and children, who learn to hide and pretend or find other means of escape, whether mentally or physically.

If you're a person who blames, your first step is to recognize that others are just as important as you, if not more so. (Philippians 2:3) Your displays of anger subject you to greater judgment than the guilt you try to hide! (Matthew 5:21-22) Release your anger to God and find a new, gentler identity in Him that reflects the love Christ has for you. Remember: your guilt is already washed away (Ephesians 2) and you will find God's strength in showing your weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

If you're married to – or the child of – a person who blames, see from Scripture that God is neither unjustly accusing (2 Peter 3:9) nor violent (Isaiah 42:3). Your identity and self-esteem may seem to have been stripped away by all the accusations; but know that your God loves you perfectly and tenderly (Psalm 139), and you have a secure identity in Him. (Ephesians 1, 2)

In both cases, seek help. You can live free from the blame game.

Charles and Charlene are counselors/life coaches in private practice in Winnipeg MB. To learn more about this topic and what to do about it, join us for one of our many workshops – see www.ccsg.com for details.