

Stopping the Blame Game

We've made a national pastime out of blaming others for our woes. It's the number one sport in America. Instead of throwing a football or baseball, we're throwing responsibility for the mess we're in on the shoulders of someone else.

- *She started it.*
- *I wouldn't have done it if he hadn't ...*
- *It's the way I was raised.*
- And this one from high school: *Everyone's doing it.*

It's not our fault! We blame our parents for our bad attitudes ... our friends for our bad habits ... our boss for our behavior toward co-workers ... the government that "led" us to cheat on our taxes ... the Internet that made pornography so accessible ... the family dog that caused us to cuss because of the mess on the carpet. We blame everybody but ourselves.

And who gets the most blame? Satan. I'm certainly no fan of the devil, but he's taken a lot of blame for things he is not responsible for. "The devil made me do it" is a lame excuse. You'll not find that anywhere in Scripture.

BUT IT'S NOT MY FAULT!!

Yes, it is.

The serpent did not make Adam and Eve take a bite out of that forbidden apple (or peach or kumquat). He merely raised questions. It was what Eve did that got her in trouble.

"The **woman saw** that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So **she took** some of its fruit and **ate it**" (Gen. 3:6).

The serpent did not hold her down and force-feed her. She did it on her own. And lest you think I'm only picking on Eve, Adam was not clueless. Look at the rest of verse 6: "She also gave some to her husband, **who was with her**, and he ate it."

Did you catch that? Adam was right there! Adam had been watching this whole thing! He could've stepped in and called out the serpent; he could have cautioned his wife. Instead, he stood there like a hapless husband watching his wife go wild shopping at Target.

Adam and Eve chose to sin. We sin because we inherited a sin nature from them. It is in our spiritual DNA to sin. We sin because we're sinners! We can't do anything but sin.

But Jesus Christ came to change that. He took our sin upon Himself, dying the death our sin deserves. That means, when we look to Him for forgiveness and salvation, He forgives! And saves!

- "But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).
- "He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 2:2).

On the cross, Jesus removed the penalty for our sin—but He didn't stop there. This is the part too many believers miss, but as Jesus removed the penalty for sin, He also removed the power of sin.

"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, because we know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, will not die again. Death no longer rules over him. For the death he died, he died to sin once for all time; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So, you too **consider yourselves dead to sin** and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:8-11).

If I'm dead to sin, then why do I still sin?!

As Christians, we no longer have to give in to sin. We were once slaves to sin, but we've been set free. We sin now because we choose to sin.

Wait a minute! I don't choose to sin!

Sorry, but if you're a believer indwelt by Christ Himself and you've sinned, it's because you made

that choice. You gave in to temptation and sin because you chose to. Look at how James described the sin process:

“But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and **enticed by his own evil desire**. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death” (Jas. 1:14-15).

Satan (or your friends) may try to tempt you, but it’s your choice to listen. Unfortunately, we often sin out of habit. It’s a sin we’ve given in to so much, we can’t imagine not giving in. I’ve heard the excuse, “I can’t help it; I’ve always been this way.”

We can stop blaming the past as well. When we come to Christ, we are made new. We are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). I’m not dismissing the struggle and the tug of old sins and habits, but I’m begging for us to start listening to the tug of the Holy Spirit who now indwells the heart of every believer.

If you don’t want to sin, you don’t have to. It begins by looking to Christ Himself.

“But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

When temptation comes knocking, throw yourself under the lordship of Christ. Look to Him, and as Scriptures promises, He will provide the way out.

- “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!” (1 Cor. 15:57)
- “You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).