

Escaping the Victimization, Blame-Game Trap



**Exposing the Tendencies and Consequences of
Having an Accusing Attitude Toward Your Past**

By Chris Simpson

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*M*any people spend years playing the “victimization, blame-game” without even realizing it. It’s a dumb game to play. It stifles spiritual growth and locks out much of what the Lord would do in a believer’s life. The victimization, blame-game began long ago, in the life of Adam and Eve. Let’s start by considering their story, found in the first chapters of Genesis.

It all began one day, when Eve was alone, Satan approached her in the form of a serpent. Through trickery and deceit, he convinced her to eat from the forbidden tree.

“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.” (Genesis 3:6-7)

In breaking God’s clear commandment, Adam and Eve brought shame and guilt upon themselves, which they immediately covered up. Then the Lord came on the scene:

“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.” (Genesis 3:8)

Interestingly enough, hiding is often the first thing we also tend to do when we’re about to be discovered in our sin.

“But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” (Genesis 3:9-11)

God asked Adam a couple of very specific questions, (“Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree?”) But, if you’ll notice, Adam didn’t answer either question. Instead, he changed the subject by placing blame.

“The man said, ‘The woman you put here with me - she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.’” (Genesis 3:12)

Following Adam’s lead, Eve did the same thing. She placed the blame on the serpent:

“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)

When the Lord turned to the serpent, he had no one left to blame - and God nailed him:

“So the Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.’” (Genesis 3:14)

The “blame game” started in the garden when man first began to see himself as a ‘victim’. Adam’s attitude about his sin is all too familiar to us today: “God, it was the woman’s fault! If it hadn’t been for her I would never have...” Do you relate at all to Adam’s victim mentality? Have you found yourself saying similar things? Once you see yourself as a victim, you’ll find yourself blaming others for your

mistakes. Eve couldn't judge Adam because she did exactly the same thing: "God, it was the snake's fault! If it hadn't been for him I would never have..."

The All Too Common Tendency To Blame

Unfortunately, the tendency to see yourself as the victim - with everyone else being the problem - is all too common. Our 'psychological culture' teaches us to blame selfishness and judgmental attitudes on the basis that we've been so wounded, rejected, and abused in our lives. Focusing on the hurtful things others have done to you can be a dangerous trap. Many people spend their whole lives being victims. When you ask how they're doing, they're likely to say, "Well, I'm very hurt, wounded and rejected" and go into a litany of problems and circumstances in their lives that have contributed to their misery.

Our whole American culture is diseased with the victim mentality. If a particular group desires federal funding for something or other, all they have to do is establish themselves as a victimized group to receive the special treatment they're seeking. This victimization mindset is a fruit of the 'religion' of psychology in our culture. If you believe the main focus of Christianity is to get free from the hurts, abuses and rejections of your past - then you've opened yourself to this very deception. It's not that finding freedom from things of the past is not important; it's just that such deliverance should not be the central issue to the believer.

Frankly, deliverance from the past is often a by-product of obedience in the present. As you focus your life on the Lord's command to be loving to others, then the things within you that hinder such love will find their way to the surface. What good is a 'psychologically whole' and 'self-fulfilled' believer who's about to be thrown to the lions? We have our focus all wrong. Be willing to be thrown to the lions for Jesus FIRST, then, as a result, see how the Holy Spirit will come in and

purify your life from the hindrances of the past. Let's consider what Jesus said along these lines.

The Spiritual Blindness of Judgmentalism

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. “Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the log in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”(Matthew 7:1-5)

In these verses, Jesus describes the spiritual blindness of those who play the victimization, blame-game. As long as you're not looking at the log in your own eye, it's impossible to see with any clarity the real issues in the lives of others. As long as you see yourself as a victim - that you got a 'raw deal' out of life - then you'll find yourself falling repeatedly into a blaming and accusing mode. The following example will show how difficult it is to help someone stuck in 'victimhood.'

Not long ago, I was ministering to a lady who had a very sharp tongue. On the surface, she was quite sweet. But if she ever felt slighted or rejected by someone - watch out! A forked tongue of bitterness would come out blasting and accusing. While praying for her one day, the Lord gave me a picture in the Spirit. I saw a hermit crab scurrying in and out of its' shell that it carried on its' back. I knew I was seeing a picture of the spirit of bitterness that worked in her life. Just as that crab would come out for a moment and then hide back in its' shell, so it was with her forked tongue. She'd say the ugliest things about those who hurt her (or who she thought hurt her), and then would go back again to being her sweet self.

Try as I would, I could never get her to see the poison that would spew from her mouth when she felt hurt. She was so focused on what others did to her that she was totally blinded to what she did in return. The gravity of the perceived hurt totally eclipsed the ugliness of her response. The spirit of bitterness (the crab) would hide back in its' shell. Because of the rejection that worked in her soul, she was incapable (or more often than not, unwilling) to see the operation of this spirit. As soon as she'd try to see it, it would hide behind her "hurt" and she'd get mad all over again. She always felt justified in her tendencies to lash back and accuse others that hurt her - so blinded was she by the victimization trap.

What Others Do, Good or Bad, Is God's Will For You!

The truth is, instead of getting mad and judging others for the things they may do, we're actually called to give thanks and not complain. Why? Because what others do to you, good or bad, is always God's will for you. Now it may not be God's will for them - it may be sin on their part. But when it comes to you, it's God's will for you. In other words, if someone compels you to go a mile, you need to go two. If someone slaps you on one cheek, what are you supposed to do? You see, their offense is actually God's will to help you learn to love them unconditionally (the way He does). That's why we're called in the Bible to give thanks and never complain, regardless of the offense. When you truly understand this powerful spiritual truth, it will eliminate every right to blame, accuse or judge.

"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats, rather, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." (1 Peter 2:21-23)

“Blame” is Satan’s Middle Name

“The great dragon was hurled down - that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.” (Revelations 12:9-10)

Whenever you play the blame game, you line yourself up under the father of lies - the devil. As a result, something will immediately come over you - like a veil or a mist. A dark cloud will enshroud your mind, keeping you from thinking straight. Once you enter the “I’m a victim and it’s your fault” mindset, you’ll find it difficult to see the log in your own eye. Instead, you’ll be distracted by the speck in your brother’s.

At this point, God is shut out of the equation. All kinds of twisted notions will then come into your head. You’ll begin thinking, “Well, if I humble myself to my brother or give up the right to get mad, then he’ll get off scot-free! That’s not fair! He needs to see his sin as well - that’s when I’ll look at mine!” While you’d probably never say these things out loud, these are the very types of thoughts that will go through your mind when you shut God out with the blame game. However, the Lord assures us in His Word that we don’t have to fall into such a mindset:

“You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written: ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’ So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or any obstacle in your brother’s way.” (Romans 14:10-13)

Since, as we're told here, everyone will give an account of himself to God, you can back off! You don't have to judge anymore. In fact, we're told that if you are going to judge, then judge this: try not to be an obstacle or a stumbling block in your brother's walk with the Lord. However, that is exactly what you'll be if you play the blame game. Ironically, it may be your critical attitude that is the very thing that keeps your brother from the truth he needs to hear in order to come to repentance.

Judge Not Or It Will Come Back the Same Way

Let's suppose you understand this and say, "O.K. Lord, I'll get out of the way and not judge. I'll release You to judge them. Just do it quickly, Lord, and don't let them get away with it!" Then the Lord says, "Oh, do you want me to judge them quickly? Don't forget - in the same way you judge others, you also will be judged, and with the measure you give out, it will be measured to you. How quick do you want me to come down on them?" Then you say, "Whoa, wait a minute! I'm not as bad as them, Lord." Again, while you may not come out and say these things, that's what a lot of people believe - that they're 'better' than so-and-so. But what does the Word say about that?

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)

Do you really believe others are better than you? Look carefully - that's what the verse says. In fact, the best place to be in life is to recognize that when the chips are down and sin is piled up, yours is the biggest pile. That's the safest way to look at things. The apostle Paul understood this. He told Timothy that of all sinners, he (Paul) was chief. He knew that where sin did abound, grace did abound

much more; that by owning his sin and getting his eyes off the sin of others, he'd receive much more grace to walk in the way of holiness.

You see, wherever sin is to be found, there's always grace. The reason so many believers are lacking grace in their lives is they won't acknowledge their own sin. They're too busy focusing on the sins and failings of others. As long as you blame others, there's no grace for you. At the same time, when you judge another person, there's grace for them! Why? Because they've had sin imputed to them by someone else. And where there's sin, there's grace. The goodness of God will be sent to those who are judged to lead them to repentance. That's what it means when the Lord says He will bless those that are cursed.

How the Victimization, Blame-Game Works

The victimization, blame-game tendency operates in both the past and in the present. When someone has a 'blaming' attitude toward their past, they will invariably behave the same way in their present. If you see yourself as a victim of your past, it's extremely difficult to relate any other way to situations as they arise.

This is not to discount the fact that there may have been genuine abuses and mistreatments during the growing-up years. It's just that continued focus upon such things will result in an ongoing victimization mindset. Popular psychology contributes to these tendencies in its' focus on one's past hurts, rejections and abuses, with hardly ever a mention of the word 'sin'. Psychology replaces Calvary's cross with the comfort of the couch. And the effects of psychology have permeated many people's thinking to the point of outright rejection of the basic truths of God's Word. Let's consider an example of how past attitudes affect those in the present:

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ - which is the first commandment with a promise - ‘that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy a long life.’” (Ephesians 6:1-3)

Here the apostle Paul quotes the fifth commandment. Let’s consider this commandment for a moment. Most victimization, blame-game tendencies seem to be rooted in attitudes toward fathers and mothers or toward those in authority during the child-rearing stage. When a child honors his parents, there’s a wonderful blessing promised. Would not the opposite be true as well? If a child dishonors his parents, then the result could be a cursed, shortened life. What else would shorten one’s life span other than debilitating infirmities, sicknesses and diseases? If this is true, it may be that a spiritual root in many sicknesses is the violation of the fifth commandment to honor your parents.

The Deadly Consequences of the “Victim” Mindset

“He who robs his father or mother and says, ‘It’s not wrong’ - he is partner to him who destroys.” (Proverbs 28:24)

This verse actually describes the consequences of violating two commandments: to honor your parents and not to steal. The ‘destroyer’ in this case would be none other than Satan who comes to steal, kill and destroy. It’s hard to imagine a more severe curse than one promising the devil as your partner. Here’s another proverb along the same line:

“The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.” (Proverbs 30:17)

This verse describes a person given over to a spirit of mocking and rebellion toward his or her parents. The consequences of this are terrible. The ‘eye’ in scripture speaks of the source of light for the whole being. ‘Birds’ are often types of

demons. In other words, a haughty, arrogant attitude against one's parents can bring a demonic darkness that eats out the very core of who you are.

Unfortunately, many believers look at their past from a victimized mindset. Now, again, I do not want to demean any real traumas and abuses of your child-rearing years. Yes, many mistakes may have been made. In some cases, genuine evil and perversion were perpetrated. However, until you cease to look at the past from the standpoint of what was done to you, you'll never be free. Blame can be quite comfortable. You can hide from yourself in blame. The problem is, it gets really lonely in that cave of 'victimhood'. No light of God can penetrate a heart set in judgmentalism. If you would ever be really free, you must look at the past from the standpoint of what you did to break God's inviolate commandment to honor your father and mother, or those involved in your child rearing.

Think about it for a minute. Our memory is usually quite clear concerning the things in the past that hurt and wronged us. How often, however, do we bring to mind our own insolent attitudes and disrespectful tendencies displayed to our parents or those in authority over us? It might be good to honestly ask ourselves in what ways we might have provoked our parents to wrath. How often did we respond to their correction with a surly, selfish attitude? How often did our parents have to tell us something over and over because we refused to listen?

It's usually when we begin having children of our own that we're forced to admit we weren't the innocent little victims we thought we were. The sins of the parents tend to pass down to the children. When mom sees her daughter curling her lip in defiance, hopefully she'll come to her senses and realize that's exactly the way she behaved towards her own mother. Unfortunately, only then do many wake up and recognize their victimization, blaming tendencies. These curses passed down the family line can never be fully broken until the sin that occurred up the line is fully recognized and confessed.

How Victimization and Blame Fogs Up the Past

Recently I was praying with a lady who suffered from a severe mental block in regard to her past. She could not recall anything that occurred between the ages of eight and fifteen. There had been considerable trauma during that time (parents divorced, severe rejection from a stepmother, etc.). But after years of counseling, nothing had ever really opened up her memories for those years.

However, after sharing with her about the victimization, blame-game trap, things began to click. Once she confessed to the Lord her own rebellion, stubbornness and sin of those years, the long-suppressed memories began to return. Within minutes, she found herself deeply convicted concerning something she'd said to her stepmother years before. For a long time, she'd been hung up on how her stepmother had wronged her. Now, for the first time, the fog lifted and she saw the past in the true light of God's justice. The grief of her sin surfaced and she was able to truly repent. Ultimately, her relationship with her stepmother was restored after she asked forgiveness for a long-forgotten offense.

Let me reiterate again that there is certainly healing and deliverance available for the hurts and abuse inflicted upon children by their parents. In the book of Joel, God promises to restore the years of our past that have been damaged. However, much of this deliverance comes about only after you first take responsibility for your own sins during that time. Until you're willing to forgive those who have sinned against you - you're stuck. Bitterness and unforgiveness locks people in the victimization status.

You must forgive everyone, everywhere, for everything they've ever done. Forgive whoever, whenever, for whatever. You'll find forgiveness far easier to do once you can see that you were not a victim, but rather that you also were responsible

for the choices you made. Only then will you truly understand that, but for the grace of God, you would act the same way as the very ones you've judged. Once you truly forgive, God's grace and mercy will pour down on your soul like fresh waters on a parched land.

The Solution? Just Shift Your Focus!

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalms 139:23-24)

The solution to all of this is really simple. Just shift your focus from the way you were hurt or rejected in your past (as well as in your day-to-day present) and take responsibility for your own sins. When offended by someone, determine to first cry out to the Lord to show you your own sin in the matter. Then, take that sin to the cross and be forgiven. As far as the person who sinned against you is concerned, whether he's standing in front of you or he's someone from your distant past, give him over to the Lord. At that point, God's Spirit will come and bring the release, wisdom and correction most needed in the situation to bring peace.

“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.” (Isaiah 53:6-7)

The only way you'll ever know freedom from victimization is when you see Jesus as the true victim, not yourself. This verse tells us that it was Jesus who bore the blame, who came as the innocent Lamb to undo the victimization, blame-game started by Adam and Eve in the garden. So what does that mean for us? We're free! We don't ever have to blame anybody again! Rather, we can give thanks for what-

ever comes our way, knowing that the Lord can redeem, restore and even turn everything around for the good! Instead of being the product of our past, in Jesus we become the product of His Holy Spirit.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

If you’ll notice, the first five words of this verse are our responsibility, “If we confess our sins”. The next word is, “He!” You see, once you do your part, the Lord takes over and does all the rest. Your taking responsibility and confessing your sins (past and present) is the key that starts the whole process of deliverance and freedom in your life.

"But I fear that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, so your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."
(2 Corinthians 11:3)

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