

RESPONSIBILITY

Harmony M.B.C., January 12, 2020

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Gen. 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Gen. 3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

Gen. 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

Gen. 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

Gen. 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Gen. 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Gen. 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Gen. 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Gen. 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?

Gen. 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.

Gen. 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

Gen. 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Gen. 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

The first sin that our original human parents committed was the act of disobedience to the Lord's command, which was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The second transgression of our original human parents was the act of "shifting the blame." Which means not taking responsibility for their actions.

We read a news story this week about a man who sexually violated and killed a 92 year old woman on the streets of New York. He said it happened because he was trying to help her and his belt broke and his pants fell down!

Human beings began their existence shifting the blame for their actions...not accepting responsibility for their personal doings. Human beings are still doing that in mass numbers today. One of the major reasons our world is in the turmoil it is now in is because of this dreaded sin-sickness.

Our congress is in total disarray today because a group of liberal Democrats were involved in a conspiracy to block Donald Trump from being elected president, then after he was elected that same group of conspirators are involved in trying to overthrow the work of God in which the Lord put him in office. To accomplish both of these goals, they have accused President Trump of doing the very things that they are behind the scenes doing themselves. They are trying to shift the blame...refusing to take responsibility for what has been nothing more than treasonous actions against a legally run presidential campaign and then refusing to take responsibility for being haters of the Constitution, haters of the will of God, despisers of the rule of law, and haters of the one man who can be made the target of those multiple antichrist motives. This is the world that we live in.

Because we as Americans are neck deep in a political and social swamp created by the failure of humans to assume responsibility for their actions, we need to spend some time and take a good look at our own behavior regarding this important thing.

I. Looking back at the first example of shifting the blame...refusing to take responsibility, we can notice a few things about the circumstances

- ❖ First, both Adam and Eve were eminently responsible for their own actions...regardless of the influence by the serpent
 - Eve argued the argument of God against the serpent before she ate
 - **Gen. 3:3** But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, **God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it**, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
 - Adam confessed his awareness of where the fruit came from before he ate

- **Gen. 3:12** And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me **of the tree**, and I did eat.
- ❖ Second, communing with God does not give us immunity from falling into this fault
 - **Gen. 3:8** And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.
 - Gen. 3:9** And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?
 - I hope we can see that the very language used here in scripture points to a reality that existed at that time. That is, that God was accustomed to meet with Adam and Eve in the Garden, and Adam and Eve were accustomed to communing or talking with God directly at that time

II. What can we learn from Adam and Eve about this:

- ❖ First, Knowledge from God about do's and don'ts makes us responsible
 - On the other hand, we can excuse ourselves and others, to an extent, for ignorance we might be suffering from:
 - **Luke 12:47** *And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*
 - Luke 12:48** *But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*
- ❖ Second, Collaboration in a matter that is detrimental to us will not shield against shifting the blame (refusing to take responsibility) when called to account for our actions
 - At the time of eating the fruit, both Adam and Eve agreed that it was something they wanted to do (notice the hint of this in verse 6: "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her **husband with her**; and he did eat."
 - Although they had reached some kind of agreement to eat the fruit, and by that setting up a kind of consensus and team spirit, when it came time to weasel out of the guilt, they both caved
- ❖ Third, refusing to take responsibility is a strong enough motive in us that we will look for a scapegoat
 - Adam blamed his wife, who was just a pawn of the devil

- There is a tendency in men to yield their leadership of those who are their responsibility, in order to go along with a controversial or bad decision that is made without actually ever being the one to lead in the doing of it
 - When we were boys, we would go around shooting our BB guns at things. Invariably it came time to shoot at mama's or grandma's fruit jars behind the shed, or at grandpa's mule, or dad's extra window glass that was laying out by the work shed. And invariably, we would "egg somebody in the group on" usually the more bold one, until they shot at it, then we would jump in...but we could always blame the other guy
- So, Adam blamed his wife, but Eve blamed the serpent who, though guilty enough of lying to commit murder, was just the messenger, not the enforcer of any actions.
 - "The devil made me do it" is no excuse at all for refusing to take responsibility
 - It is human nature to attempt to lay blame on others who have no enforcement control over us; those who have no means of compelling us to do something; those who may try to influence us to do the wrong things, but can only influence, not force.

III. Most of the time, we are tempted to shift the blame and refuse to be responsible when we know or suspect that we have messed up...that we have done something that should have been left alone or that has caused damage and that there are consequences coming. But, we need to remember that refusing to take responsibility does not eliminate the consequences that are coming

- ❖ Eve receives the prophesy from the Lord about what she has forfeited and the chastening she has gained: (talk about what blessings are implied by what punishments are named)
 - **Gen. 3:16** Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.
- ❖ Adam receives his: (talk about what blessings are implied by what punishments are named)
 - **Gen. 3:17** And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life;
 - Gen. 3:18** Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

Gen. 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

IV. What can we do about this genetic tendency we must wrestle with?

- ❖ Quit blaming others in an effort to shift the blame off ourselves
 - We notice in 2Tim. 3:3 that one of the things that will mark the last days will be a list of things spawned by the devil; among these is the term "false accusers"..which is what shifting the blame actually is
 - Paul advised Titus in Titus 2:3 to teach his church members to not be false accusers
- ❖ Face our own responsibility for what comes to pass when we are the perpetrators
 - John was addressing the possibility of us imagining that we are not committing sin, and in that he gives us some great advice which applies to this situation: **1John 1:8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
 - The tendency to shift the blame is, whether we want to admit it or not, a kind of saying we have no sin
 - There's a great quote from Sean Connery in the film *The Rising Sun*, he says, "Fix the problem, not the blame".
- ❖ Understand the tendency in our fellow man to shirk responsibility and shift the blame
 - We live in a culture of blame, not a culture of admission. "It's not my fault—I'm a victim of circumstances." "It's not my fault—I'm a product of my upbringing." "If I had had different opportunities I would be a different person." Some of that may be true in part, but until people recognize that they have a responsibility too they will not be looking for a solution.
 - Don't excuse it...understand it as part of the human condition
- ❖ Try to help those we love to simply take responsibility
- ❖ Be ready to reprove those who will be benefitted by the reproof when they try to do it
- ❖ Be smart enough to recognize when someone is shifting the blame onto you in order to escape being responsible themselves
 - You will need to be blunt and honest with those who try this, or you will just have to eat the blame and keep your mouth shut