

Our Tendency to Blame Shift

Harvest Missionary Baptist Church
Sunday Morning, March 26, 2006

Illustration:

"O, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive!" ~ Sir Walter Scott

The sign "The Buck Stops Here" sat on President Truman's desk in his White House office.

The saying "the buck stops here" derives from the slang expression "pass the buck" which means passing the responsibility on to someone else. The latter expression is said to have originated with the game of poker, in which a marker or counter, frequently in frontier days a knife with a buckhorn handle, was used to indicate the person whose turn it was to deal. If the player did not wish to deal he could pass the responsibility by passing the "buck," as the counter came to be called, to the next player.



On more than one occasion President Truman referred to the desk sign in public statements. For example, in an address at the National War College on December 19, 1952 Mr. Truman said, "You know, it's easy for the Monday morning quarterback to say what the coach should have done, after the game is over. But when the decision is up before you -- and on my desk I have a motto which says 'The Buck Stops Here' -- the decision has to be made." In his farewell address to the American people given in January 1953, President Truman referred to this concept very specifically in asserting that, "The President--whoever he is--has to decide. He can't pass the buck to anybody. No one else can do the deciding for him. That's his job."

The First Recorded Examples of Blame Shifting

Genesis 3:11-13 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? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And Jehovah God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. (Notice in this passage that Satan does not speak. Who could he have blamed?)

Job 31:33 If like Adam I have covered my transgressions, By hiding mine iniquity in my bosom,

Genesis 4:9-10 – Cain follows the pattern of his parents when faced with taking responsibility for Abel's death. Cain kills Abel, God comes calling. Cain says "Am I my brother's keeper?"

- † Not talking about the real issue.
- † Not addressing the obvious sin.
- † Let's debate a non-related point.

Principle:

- † This is not an original problem with people. IT'S MORE LIKE A KNEE-JERK REACTION!
- † It's probably the most followed after pattern we must break ourselves of when dealing with sin.
- † God will never be fooled by our effort to deceive Him.

Application:

- † God will always come calling on our sin. He will never let the issue rest until it is resolved.
- † The resolution is confessing the sin and forsaking the behavior, i.e. repenting.

Implementation:

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper: But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.

The Sinner's Position Before God

Jesus explained to Nicodemus, "...the Light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than the Light, or their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." (John 3:19b-21)

Our Tendency to Blame Shift

You have the option of setting your mind on the flesh or on the Spirit

- † The lost cannot set their minds on the Spirit because the Spirit is not in them, but the saved have a choice.

Romans 8:5-8 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity [hostile] against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

God Will Deal with Sin Now or Later – WOW!

Saved people should be very worried if they are covering their sins and blame shifting.

Hebrews 10:26-31, “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries...It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Principle:

- † Even for the saved children of God, sin can be judged at the judgment when Christ returns for His own.
- † Those who continue in sin should without caring for God’s ways should wonder about their souls.
- † The punishment for such actions will be handled by God, but it indicates that it won’t be pleasant because of the knowledge of the offender.

Application:

- † It should stir up a conviction in us to change and evaluate our hearts.
- † We should deal with sins right away, repent and ask for forgiveness, so we can have a clear conscience.
- † Deal with sins now or deal with the sins later. Later is much worse.

Implementation:

- † Don’t cover up your sins. Claim them. Repent and ask for forgiveness.
- † **2 Corinthians 5:10** – We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Other Examples of Blame Shifting

Aaron blamed his actions on the demands and evilness of the Israelites

Exodus 32:21-24 And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought a great sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on evil. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off: so they gave it me; and I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

Principle:

- † **24:1-11** – Aaron had a personal invitation from God to eat and worship with the Lord on Mt. Sinai.
- † **24:13-14** – Moses had left Aaron in charge to resolve any difficulties among the people while Moses was gone.
- † Aaron, who God on Mt. Sinai called to be the first High Priest (**28:1**), was down with the people making them an idol!

Application:

- † Top to bottom among us, no one is immune. Pastors, preachers, leaders, teachers, we can all fall to blame shifting.
- † We can’t blame our sin on others. “You know how the people are...” It’s their fault!
- † How did that golden calf get there...let me tell you...it just came out of the fire on it’s own!

Implementation:

- † We must take care of business and show restraint before situations get out of hand. Aaron did not show restraint and it led to his sin and cover up. (**32:25**)

Consequences:

Our Tendency to Blame Shift

- † 32:25-29 – The Levites killed 3,000 Israelites by the sword at Moses' command.
- † 32:33-34 – God also promised to punish the people for their sin at a future point.
- † 32:35 – God plagued the people because they had made the calf – because Aaron wouldn't restrain them!!

Blaming God is a Popular Option for Our Failures

Matthew 25:24 And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter;

James 1:13-15 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death.

Other's Who Shifted Blame

Sarah – blamed Abraham for laying with Hagar even though it was her idea in the first place

Story: **Genesis 12:1-3; 15; 16:1-5**

Blame: **Genesis 16:5**

Esau – blamed Jacob for stealing his birthright even though he had earlier sold it for lentil soup and bread

Story: **Genesis 25:21-34**

Key: **Genesis 25:34c** – Esau despised [had utter contempt / scorned] his birthright. His birthright was to inherit the promises God made to his grandfather, Abraham (**Genesis 12:1-3**).

Blame: **Genesis 27:36**

A Word to the Lost

There is no excuse for your sins if the Holy Spirit has revealed them in your heart.

John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin.

- † The advice is the same for the lost and the saved, repent and ask forgiveness. To the lost it concerns their very soul's salvation.