

## R12.2 June 2022 Blog

### The Role of Sin, Guilt, Shame and Blame in Conflict

The topic for this blog is the role that blame plays in creating conflicts in our relationships. Relational conflict worsens when men turn to blame.

Picture a lineup of 7 dominoes. From left to right there's a word written on each domino: first sin, then guilt, shame, blame, pain, separation, death.

When the sin domino falls, guilt and shame follow. Men get uncomfortable when they experience shame. This discomfort leads them to blame, which produces pain that leads to relational separation. Separation can bring relational death.

Shame turning to blame has Biblical familiarity. Let us look at what happened in the garden with Adam and Eve.

Satan's scheme was to influence Eve's desire and in Genesis 3 she was convinced. The tree looked beautiful, the fruit looked delicious, and she desired the wisdom this tree could give. She ate and shared.

How did this get started? Satan asked the question "Did God really say...?" God left Adam and Eve alone to deal with Satan, but He had given them what they needed - His Word. Notice that Eve wasn't able to repeat His Word accurately.

Satan continued influencing Eve's desire: "Trust your gut Eve. You know God, you walk with Him in the garden. Death? God wouldn't do that. *You won't die.* In fact, only good will come out of this." Satan told her that she would become more like God. She would have the full knowledge of good and evil. Read Philippians 2. While Jesus gave up His divine privileges and humbled Himself in *obedience* to God, Adam and Eve's desires changed to become *like* God.

Note: Satan cannot make us do anything. He tries to influence our desires and thinking: By the way, the Holy Spirit works through influence also, except He influences us to grow into God's person.

*But each one is tempted when by his own evil desires he is lured away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:14-15*

The product of evil that leads to sin is man losing his thirst for God and then replacing that close relationship with God for something other than God.

Adam and Eve 6,000 or more years ago in Genesis 3, King David 3,000 years ago on a roof top, you and me in 2022... the same scheme is in play. Satan prowls, influencing desire. Our own evil desires lure and entice us and, when allowed to conceive, give birth to sin. Sins full grown give birth to death.

What was it like for Adam in that moment in Genesis 3:7 when their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame and knew they were naked? I suspect that somewhere in his emotions he wished he could go back to Chapter 2. Undo what was done. Shed those feelings of guilt and shame. Close his lips from blame. Lose the pain. Stop the relational separation.

Like Adam in Chapter 2, we were so happy when we first met our wives. She was so awesome. So incredible. So amazing. How does this deteriorate into blame? When God asked if he had eaten from the forbidden tree, Adam replied, “the woman you gave me made me do it.” Men still blame their wives. “She’s always criticizing me, doesn’t respect me, she’s impossible to live with. She is the problem.”

How does this happen? Where should the domino fall have ended?

God wired us to feel guilt and shame following sin. Every man without a seared conscience experiences this following sin. These reactions were put in us to lead us to repentance.

As the dominoes fall from sin to guilt and shame, Jesus came and put His hand between shame and blame and took a spike through it. Blame is our alarm that something is off. If we are blaming or defending, we missed the needed step of owning our responsibility for confession and repentance.

Check out how this played out with King David who fell to his knees after being confronted by Nathan. In Psalm 51 he stated:

*Wash me clean of my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. (**guilt and shame**) Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight... (**took ownership**)*

*Surely You desire truth in the inmost being; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones You have crushed rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence; take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit. **Psalm 51:2-12***

What a strong picture of vertical repentance and spiritual cleansing that allows horizontal interaction without blame.

*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. **2 Corinthians 7:10***

God cleanses our guilt, shame, and unrighteousness.

The Accuser of the brethren accuses day and night (see Revelation 12:10), but through Jesus' finished work on the Cross and our confession we are cleansed. We can talk through the

horizontal hurt and grief in a relationship without the pull to defend or blame. Our vertical standing with God provides calmness as we help those we hurt.

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

God's forgiveness cleanses us so we can move forward. Confession and repentance will cleanse us from the things behind us and now we can move forward and lead and love in renewed strength.

Do not allow guilt and shame to lead you into the pit of defense and blame. Jesus put his hand right there as a stopping point. Receive this, embrace it, end all blame-based relational conflict and lead forward in love.

Application:

1. Take a close look at your most recent relational conflicts and evaluate them. Men defend and blame. It has truly become an art. This can be as simple as blaming traffic for persistently being late or the weather for being in a bad mood. Wives hear this as defending and lose hope of any forward change because admittance, confession and repentance are not in play. Take responsibility for your actions instead of blaming someone or something else.
2. Is your shame and guilt for your sin leading to more pain and separation? When a man is caught in porn and blames his wife for not satisfying his needs, that domino of shame falls to more pain followed by separation in their relationship. Satan weaves his schemes of desire and selfish need. This can lead to death in the relationship and divorce. Take your guilt and shame before God rather than blaming others. He will release you from the shame and guilt of your sin. This will free you to take responsibility for your actions as you work to restore the breaks in your relationships.
3. Make a list of issues between you and your wife, Mom, Dad, siblings, children. Take this list to God over an extended time. Ask for His help and forgiveness. Go to them and ask for forgiveness. And start being the new person God said He would make of you.