

6. Learning to Reverse Blame

In our last several topics, we have focused on helping the new Christian learn to reverse the effects of original sin. Sin changed man's relationship with God: There was separation. Separation can be reversed as people restore that relationship by placing their trust in Christ and learning to walk in fellowship with Christ.

Sin changed man's relationship with himself as Adam immediately experienced:

Fear

- Fear will be replaced by love as we learn to take root in the love of Christ

Guilt

- Guilt will be replaced as we learn to experience forgiveness and cleansing and learn to forgive others

Shame

- Shame will be replaced by self-acceptance as we begin to live as new creations in Christ who realize that our sufficiency is from Christ because He is renewing our inward man day-by-day and giving us an outward ministry to others

Sin also changed our relationship with others:

Instead of unity in the family, Adam immediately began to blame God for the wife God had given him and blame his wife because she gave him the fruit. Today, we are going to learn how to help the new Christian begin to learn to take responsibility for his own choices and the results (consequences) of those choices, both the good choices and the wrong choices.

At the moment we placed our trust in Christ, sin lost its dominion (power) over us. Romans 6:9 and 6:14 tell us, "Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him...For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace." In these two verses, we see the following:

1. Christ defeated death when He rose from the dead
2. Christ defeated the power of sin over our lives and placed us under grace

However, new Christians do not yet know that Christ defeated death and the power of sin over our lives and placed us under grace at the moment of salvation. That is why we need to help them understand that at the moment we placed our trust in Christ, sin lost its power over us because we are now in Christ. We are now under grace instead of sin and we are now free to make right choices. When we as Christians sin, it is because we are depending on ourselves instead of yielding to the Lord. As a result, we now have the freedom and power to make the choice whether we will depend on ourselves or whether we will yield to Christ. Once we begin to fully understand this, we realize that we can no longer blame others for our choices because we now have the power to make right choices.

In fact, we begin to realize that sin now happens when we depend on our own strength. 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 tell us, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not

allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.” These verses tell us that we now have two choices every time that we are tempted to sin. We can make either one of the following choices:

1. We can depend on our own strength — we will fall and commit sin
2. We can yield to a faithful God — He will make a way of escape

One thing that we need to remember and teach the new Christian is the fact that since we are now free to make our choices, just as Adam was free to make his choices before he sinned, we will also reap the consequences of our choices. If we depend on our own strength, we will sin and reap the consequence of that sin. If we yield to God, he will make a way of escape and we will reap the good consequence of that obedience. Galatians 6:7-9 tell us, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”

It is one thing to realize that we can now make right choices. However, the thing that is even more exciting is that now we have the power to carry out those choices. That power is not our own power. Instead that power is the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives to give us the power to carry out the choices that we have made. A person who is a new Christian has probably made resolutions many times but never had the power to carry out those resolutions. That is why it is important to help him understand he will only be able to carry out right choices as he depends on the power of the Holy Spirit working in his life.

In Romans 6:13 and 16, we see that we are to yield to God.

In Romans 7:14-25, we see what happens when we do not yield but depend on our own strength instead. In those verses, we see that the words I, me, my and myself are used 37 times (“I” trouble, not eye trouble). The summary of depending on ourselves is given in verse 24 where we read, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”

In Romans 8, we see what happens when we yield to God and depend on the power of the Holy Spirit. In the first seven chapters of Romans, the Holy Spirit is mentioned four times. In chapter 8, the Holy Spirit is mentioned nineteen times. The summary of yielding to the Holy Spirit is given in Romans 8:37-39, where we read, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We see at least three important things happen as we yield to God:

1. We are able to make wise choices as we yield to God - Isaiah 55:8-9

“For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your ways My ways,” says the Lord “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

In these verses, we see that:

- ◆ the thoughts of God are higher than our thoughts
- ◆ the ways of God are higher than our ways.

2. We are able to put on the new man as we yield to God - Colossians 3:9-14

“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all. Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.”

- The new man is renewed in knowledge
- The new man is able to show proper attitudes toward others
- The new man is able to act out of love

3. We have the power to carry out wise choices as we yield to God - Luke 24:49

“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” In this verse we see that we must depend on power from on high if we are going to have the power to carry out wise choices.

As the new Christian begins to understand these principles, he will realize that he no longer needs to blame others for his failures and sins. If he sins, he can confess those sins to someone who loves him with a perfect love and he will be forgiven and cleansed (1 John 1:9). At the same time, he will realize that he now does have the power to make wise choices as he yields to the Lord and carries out those choices in the power of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord richly bless you as you help new Christians begin to reverse the effects of original sin.