

A GAME NOBODY CAN WIN

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As she sits in the counselor's office, tears are slowly running down her cheeks, in a sobbing voice she says to the counselor, *"My husband is seeing another women. I have begged him to stop but he won't. He says it's my fault; that I am to blame because I am emotionally dead. Maybe I am to blame. Do you think I am responsible for his unfaithfulness?"*

Johnny brings home his report card for his parents to review and sign. When they look at the report card they see two Ds, two Cs and one B. The conduct evaluation section is checked as unsatisfactory. In the midst of having a heart-to-heart talk with Johnny about his report card, Johnny begins an emotional response blaming the teacher for his grades. Johnny's mother makes an appointment to see the school Principal to talk about the "unqualified teacher."

George had gotten into the habit of slipping out of work before the official time he was to leave. He was developing a pattern of arriving late to work. The quality of his work was slipping. The Supervisor called him in and gave him a reprimand and placed him on probation. That evening George went to a local bar and while self-medicating with alcohol, started blaming his boss for the problem.

Gus had been in and out of juvenile detention homes and jails several times between ages 15 and 19. Now at age 29 he was serving a life sentence as a habitual criminal. His arrest record contained numerous sheets. A psychologist read about Gus and tried to help him get a probation release. The reason for the release was the fact that Gus's parents, neighborhood, and peers were responsible for his life of crime. A member of the Hearing Committee, upon hearing the Psychologist's case, said, *"This sounds like the old blame game to me dressed up in psychological jargon."*

The Blame Game

The above illustrations are examples of the blame game. We live in a society where the most popular game in town is the **blame game**:

1. The Republicans blame the Democrats—The Democrats blame the Republicans.
2. The Senate blames Congress—Congress blames the Senate.

3. The coach blames the players—the players blame the coach.
4. The media blames the public—the public blames the media.
5. The husband blames the wife—the wife blames the husband.
6. The patient blames the doctor—the doctor blames the patient.
7. The Supervisor blames the worker—the worker blames the Supervisor.
8. The leader blames the followers—the followers blame the leader.
9. The singer blames the band—the band blames the singer.
10. The preacher blames the members—the members blame the preacher.

And the blame game goes on and on. There are no limitations to the many ways it can be played, nor the number of people who can play it. The blame game can have a domino effect. The janitor was chewed out by the boss of the cleaning crew. The janitor fussed at the elevator operator for being too slow. The elevator operator complained to the doorman for not opening the door fast enough. The doorman jumped on the bus driver for not stopping at the correct spot. The bus driver spoke harshly to the clerk at the local market. The clerk went home and kicked his dog. The dog chased the cat up a tree. Was the boss of the cleaning crew responsible for the cat being up the tree? This humorous story illustrates how the blame game and passing-the-buck is practiced.

One of the major features of the blame game is its use as a propaganda technique. For example when a politician, or any person, continually blames a person, group, or situation for a specific condition, which isn't true only fabricated, it becomes a propaganda tactic. Through the use of accusations, suggestions, innuendos, and hyperbole the assigned negative status is believed and acted upon. We sometimes call this "Brain washing." This turns a "lie into a truth."

Do you know who the original players of the blame game were? It was our greatest great grandparents, Adam and Eve. We know the story. God had placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden with permission to partake of every fruit except one—*"the tree of knowledge of good and evil"* —to disobey would bring death (Genesis 2:15-25). As time moves forward Eve is tempted by Satan relative to the possibility of her becoming a god (Genesis 3:1-5). Eve took the bait and ate the forbidden fruit, and as any good wife would, she gave her husbands, Adam, some of the fruit. He ate!

The next act is one of discovery. Dressed in their new clothes, which they had never worn before, God shows up—He always shows up (cf. Numbers 32:23). God’s question was a simple one—three words—*“Where are you?”* (Genesis 3:9). In reply Adam starts the first round in playing the blame game. It was Eve’s fault: *“... The woman whom YOU gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate”* (Genesis 3:12). Adam blamed Eve but he first blamed God for giving him Eve.

In his confrontation with Eve, God asked, *“What is this you have done?”* Eve gave a quick blame game player’s reply, *“The serpent deceived me, and I ate”* (Genesis 3:13). From the day they were driven out of the garden, the descendants—all mankind—of Adam and Eve have continued to play the blame game. We all have played it at one time or another.

In his epistle to Christians, James responds to the accusation that God is responsible for man’s sins. It is impossible for God to tempt man to sin (James 1:13). Each person is responsible for his or her sins: *“But each one is tempted when HE IS DRAWN AWAY BY HIS OWN DESIRES and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown, brings forth death”* (James 1:14, 15). Adam and Eve were responsible for their actions.

I must be quick to acknowledge that other people through their lack of responsibility, hurtful behaviors, and sins, can cause harm to people. Jesus warned about causing people to stumble (Matthew 18:1-9). For example a family while enjoying a family drive is hit head on by a drunk driver. The drunk driver is to blame for the death and injuries caused by his behavior of driving while drunk. The irony is a lawyer tries to shift the blame by blaming the clerk in the liquor store for selling the booze to the driver; the car manufacture and road conditions were also blamed.

Responsibility and Playing the Blame Game

It doesn’t take any effort to see the explosion of people in society playing the blame game. It is the pointing and shaking of fingers at others; it is the shouting and cursing others; it is printed accusations against persons and groups; it is creating a new politically correct vocabulary; it is being selective in applying the First Amendment.

The consequences of failing to take responsibility for one's own behavior, attitudes, and beliefs are far reaching. Playing the blame game may make it seem like you have won, but not so. The consequences prove otherwise. Note these consequences:

1. A stubborn refusal to admit one's own issues, problems, and contributions to marital issues will eventually lead to unhappiness, family problems, and divorce.
2. A stubborn refusal to accept one's responsibility for bad choices, decisions, and results may lead to emotional and physical health issues. Worry, fear, etc.
3. A stubborn refusal to accept responsibility by blaming others leads to isolation. People don't want to have a relationship with a blame game player.
4. A stubborn refusal to accept responsibility will create a denial mentality that leads to no personal growth, nor acknowledgement of needs, etc.
5. A stubborn refusal to accept responsibility and play the blame game will lead to judging other people, which is forbidden by the word of God (Matthew 7:1-6).
6. A stubborn refusal to stop blaming others creates an unforgiven spirit, which is condemned by Christ (Matthew 6:14, 15).
7. A stubborn refusal to stop playing the blame game may create victims and manipulation of others. It will upset their peace of mind; even cause agony, doubt and fear.
8. Playing the blame game may cause unwarranted blaming of yourself, which may lead to all kind of emotional issues—assigning self with “victim status.” The “*Poor me syndrome.*” In psychology this is called *characterological self-blame (i.e. feeling something is inherently wrong with self)*.
9. Playing the blame game can create an environment where others are encouraged to play the game—“the monkey see—monkey do” imitation. It's what we do around here.
10. Playing the blame game can create laws, government controls, and rules that are founded on suppositions, not proven facts or sustainable truths. These are promoted through fear tactics and ignorance. They are designed to control people.

As described in this study the blame game is not winnable. That is when viewed by God's standards and the attitude of Christ. It may stroke our ego, shift the blame and temporary responsibilities, but in God's sight we are losers. If a player, repentance is the cure.

What are you intentionally doing to cancel your participation in playing blame games?
Believe me, Satan's team will go on without your participation.