

## **Whose fault is it anyway? And who gets the credit after all?**

It's not my fault I am the way I am. Have you ever heard these words? Have you ever said these words? It seems the world we live in is upside down. We inadvertently punish victims and make victims out of perpetrators. A few years ago Hank Williams Jr. sang a song with these words: "They get on me and want to know, Hank, why do you drink? Why do you roll smoke? Why must you live out the songs that you wrote? Over and over everybody makes my predictions. So if I get stoned, I'm just carrying on an old family tradition." Do you hear what he is saying? He is saying, "It's not my problem that I do wrong, my daddy lived like this and taught me the ropes, Hey! It's his fault."

God laid down the law when He said, "*The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin*" (Deuteronomy 24:16). King Amaziah had to make a decision. He was now king and was able to make some sovereign decisions. One of his first very important decisions was what shall he do with the proven perpetrators of his father's murder? The law of God is clear: "*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man*" (Genesis 9:6). "*Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die*" (Numbers 35:30). So if by witnesses a man was found guilty of murder, he died for his crime. According to the law the murderers should be executed. What about their children? The Bible records his decision: "*Now it came to pass, when the kingdom was established to him, that he slew his servants that had killed the king his father. But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin*" (II Chronicles 25:3,4).

As we consider this question, who's to blame for wrong or right done, what conclusions may be drawn?

### **1. Human nature wants someone to blame or credit for the deeds we perform.**

"*And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*" (John 9:2). It was taken for granted that there was someone to whom we could point a finger if someone or something was wrong. The disciples were simply portraying something that already had a precedent. "*And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat*" (Genesis 3:12). When Adam was confronted with his sin, he blamed the woman and even went a step beyond by ultimately blaming God by inferring, after all, you were the one who placed her in my life in this garden! She followed the pattern when confronted: "*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*" (Genesis 3:13). Well, now it wasn't Eve's fault either, it was the snake. So the snake didn't have much defense, you might say, "he didn't have a leg to stand on". The truth is none of us have a legitimate defense. The Bible says, "*So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God*" (Romans 14:12).

There is a humanistic philosophy called "Determinism". I am going to give you the secular dictionary definition of this term: "the doctrine that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by causes external to the will. Some philosophers have taken determinism to imply that individual human beings have no free will and cannot be held morally responsible for their actions."

So far we have only dealt with the negative side of this philosophy. There is another prideful effect of this philosophy as well. It is the belief that if we do right and good, it is because another person made us this way. There is no doubt that God uses the influences of others who are godly to

help encourage us along the path of life. But to give others the credit for making us good can lift someone with pride that is not righteous. Paul said of his past, *“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith”* (Philippians 3:8,9). He was saying, Yes, I was influenced by what others did for me. He called himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was taught by the greatest scholars of his day, but he was saying everything compared to Christ’s righteousness is refuse. I am so very thankful that my wife and I were reared by Christian parents. In turn, my wife and I attempted to bring our kids up in a Christian environment as well. If there is any good in us it is Jesus! As much as I love my parents, they were sinners like we are and the good they gave us all goes back to Christ, not them. I appreciate the way Paul said it: *“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me”* (I Corinthians 15:10).

## **2. God will not accept the blame we heap upon others, including upon our own family, for the wrong we do.**

In Ezekiel 18:1-4 the Bible says, *“The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”* Later in the chapter God says, *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die”* (Ezekiel 18:20,21). This is the harmony of the Scripture; God laid down the law in Deuteronomy and He will not violate His principle. God was rebuking a proverb popular in that land that if a father eats sour grapes, the kid’s teeth feel the effect. The false teaching was rejecting responsibility for their own evil action by blaming their parents. God said, you are through with that teaching; I do not accept it!

Many a parent has gone to their grave beating themselves up for the iniquity their children have performed, thinking if only they had done things differently, if only they had been better Christians then their kids would not have turned out the way they did. We sometimes don’t even realize that when we voice this before our children, we are actually taking the responsibility from our children, letting them off the hook to continue their own destructive pattern. I know there is not a conscientious parent that in their heart wants to allow this to happen. We need to stop this vicious cycle. What can we do? Let’s talk about this subject next week in *Pastor’s Word*.

- Pastor Pope -

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