

Series: The Gospel of Freedom and the Things That Hinder

Message: "The Blame Trap" Genesis 3:1-13,21

Central Thought: *The Blame Trap results from our fear of being punished. Our default mode is to avoid guilt and blame at any cost. But blaming never achieves the freedom we desire; it only makes the trap deeper and more painful.*

- 1) Where did the Blame Trap start?
 - In a **Garden** at the beginning.
 - The Bible tells us we are **actually** guilty.
 - Our nature is to try and throw off feelings of guilt in whatever way **we** can.
- 2) What is the Blame Trap?
 - A response to the fear of **punishment**.
 - A lie that says, "Anyone who fails is unworthy of **love** and deserves punishment."
- 3) Whom do we blame?
 - Ourselves – for our and others' failure. 3:7
 - Others – for their and our failure. 3:12,13
 - **God** – for the possibility of failure. 3:12
- 4) What makes blaming / deflecting blame a trap?
 - Personal **cycle** – the more I blame, the more I need to blame.
 - Generational cycle – blaming and avoiding blame **passed** down through families.
 - The **futility** of placing or receiving blame.
- 5) How and why do we blame?
 - **Distract** – keep others from noticing us.
 - **Deflect** – keep accusation away.
 - **Defend** – avoid lowering in others' eyes.
 - **Accuse** – stay ahead of the worst.
- 6) What are some symptoms of the Blame Trap?
 - Sense of inferiority – today's fig leaves.
 - Self-**critical** humor – lowering people's expectations.
 - Perfectionism – avoidance of **mistakes** and thus, blame.
 - Judgmentalism – pointing out others' failures so mine aren't **noticed**.
 - Comparison – measuring ourselves by **others** instead of by Jesus.
 - Tightly controlled agendas – staying busy, avoiding confronting our weaknesses and showing our **superior** achievement.
- 7) How do we start on the path back to freedom?
 - Only through a relationship with **Christ**.
 - Understand **humility** vs. inferiority.
 - Practice repentance as a discipline of **joy**.
 - Forgiveness – replace blame with **grace**.

- **Hope** in the final product of propitiation – keep running! 2 Corinthians 3:18

Word bank: accuse, actually, Christ, critical, cycle, defend, deflect, distract, futility, Garden, God, grace, hope, humility, joy, love, mistakes, noticed, others, passed, punishment, superior, we

For LIFE Groups and personal reflection

- 1) What does the Genesis 3 story tell us about the enemy, our human sinful nature and God?
- 2) Read Galatians 6:1-2. How do you respond when someone is caught in sin and desires to repent?
- 3) Matthew 18:17 says to treat unrepentant Christians as tax collectors. What does that mean?
- 4) Grace-receivers become grace-givers. Blame-receivers become blame-givers. Agree or disagree? Why and how does it happen?
- 5) Satan is "the accuser of God's people". What does that tell us about the Blame Trap?

Resource – Robert McGee, [The Search for Significance](#).

Resource – Bobb Biehl, [Why You Do What You Do](#).

Resource – Brennan Manning, [Abba's Child](#).