

Blame and Excuse

Excuses through the ages:

- 1860 Dear teacher, please excuse Mary for absence from school yesterday because it was her brother's turn to wear the shoes.
- 1900 Dear teacher, please excuse Mary for absence from school yesterday because the threshing crew came and she needed to help me feed them.
- 1920 Dear teacher, please excuse Mary for absence from school yesterday because the old Model T got stuck in the gumbo at Clancy's Corners.
- 1960 Dear teacher, please excuse Mary for absence from school yesterday because she overslept and the school bus wouldn't wait for her.
- 2010 Dear teacher, please excuse Mary for absence from school yesterday because the Internet was down and we weren't sure if school would be cancelled over it or not.
- 2026 Dear teacher, please excuse Mary for absence from school yesterday because the battery died on her phone and she was afraid that she wouldn't be able to participate in the Poll Everywhere discussion without it.

There is a challenge that we are born to. It is the challenge to understand blame. It is not necessarily a sin to blame someone or something for what has gone wrong. Yet, we turn blame into a sin so frequently that we think of blame more as a negative, sinful thing than as an useful tool.

I. How we turn blame into a sin:

A. When we try to avoid responsibility for a mistake

1. See Genesis 3:12-13. How long did it take for the whole concept of accepting responsibility for your actions to be abused by people?
2. In which responsibilities did Adam fail?
Genesis 2:16-17, 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, Genesis 2:24, Ephesians 5:28,31
3. In which responsibilities did Eve fail?
1 Timothy 2:14, Ephesians 5:22,31

B. When we try to avoid accepting a responsibility for a job because we fear the thought of failing.

1. Exodus 3:11, 4:10. In these examples, what approach did Moses use to try to excuse himself from standing up to the Pharaoh? What was God's answer?
 2. Judges 6:15. What excuse did Gideon use to try to avoid responsibility for the safety of the Israelites? What was God's answer?
 3. Jeremiah 1:6. What did Jeremiah say when he realized that God wanted to call him into a challenging position of leadership?
- C. When we try to avoid accepting responsibility because we believe we have the right to turn down God's commands as if they are options and not duties.
1. Matthew 25:24-30. Was the issue here one of fear of the Master or was it simply one of thinking you have the right to disagreeing with what the Master wants of you?
 2. Matthew 25:44-45. What was the problem here? What reward does such an attitude earn?
- D. When we want to take control away from God in such a way as to look like we are doing the right thing.
1. 2 Peter 2:10-12. What is the motive that these people have for falsely accusing others?
 2. Matthew 12:10, John 8:6-8. What was the motive these Pharisees had for accusing Jesus? What did laying this blame do for their ability to see God's grace?
 3. 2 Timothy 3:1-9. How serious is the problem of using blame to get out of responsibility or to take control over others?
- II. How blame works as a tool for God.
1. Romans 2:14-16. How basic is blame when it comes to working as a tool for God?
 2. John 5:45. In this example, how is blame used rightly?
 3. 1 Timothy 5:19. When does blame become a serious issue?
 4. Acts 2:29ff, Acts 25:1-7. How should blame be handled to keep it fair and useful?
 5. Revelation 12:10. What has God done to rescue blame from sin and keep it useful?