

Casting Blame

We love to cast blame. Indeed, with every negative circumstance in life we all have this compelling need to assign accountability for a wrong to someone or something. But why do we humans have such a strong inclination to cast blame? Are we attempting to distinguish right from wrong? Are we attempting to help someone own their sin unto repentance? Or is there something more?

One of the reasons why we have such a strong inclination to cast blame is because when something goes wrong, it wreaks havoc on our outlook on life – it reveals to us that our world is unstable and unpredictable. In other words, when something in life goes wrong and then causes our world to spin out of control, we want to explain what caused the problem. As a result, we attempt to pinpoint what triggered the problem and then we cast blame upon the culprit. By casting blame, we are attempting to rationalise in our minds why we are uncomfortable and why a particular thing went wrong. Casting blame also allows us to feel like we are in control of the world, it allows us to feel like the world is safe, and it allows us to not panic over an evil situation. Blame allows us to feel as if we can restore a sense of control; it is what we do when we are unable to accept the painful and unstable realities of life.

There is no shortage of blame in our culture these days though; everyone is quick to blame. A tragedy happens, and within minutes, blame is being applied – even before all the facts are gathered. Our media certainly does not help with this either. Media commentators are quick to cast blame in order to return our world to a sense of normalcy. It seems that our culture – more than ever – cannot deal with the feelings of being helpless and out of control when bad things happen. We want to feel o.k. and we want to feel in control; therefore, we blame.

But does casting blame really help that much? It does help to assign responsibility to someone or something when tragedies occur, for it is important to always discern right and wrong, good and evil. Blame (assigning responsibility) is also helpful in bringing about Godly sorrow and repentance for a wrong. But beyond the ethics of discerning good and evil and the blessing of repentance, does blame do anything to calm our nerves and reduce our helplessness? No, it does not. The reason why? Blame does nothing to change our unstable and unpredictable world that is, more often than not, full of erratic evil. That is to say, simply casting blame will not erase our world's unstable past, and it will not bring forth a stable future, for blame only points out evil but does 'nothing' to overcome evil.

For the Christian, though, there is hope. As bad as it gets, we know that this world will not last forever. Furthermore, we know that Jesus is coming back and holds everyone and everything accountable. With the Lord, blame will not only be assigned, but the Lord will have vengeance. Everything evil will be burned. Every knee will bow to Christ (Philippians 2:10).

What this means is that we Christians can apply blame in order to discern right and wrong and for the sake of repentance, but we need not use blame in order to somehow restore a sense of control over the world. Indeed, we do not need to panic and fret, for the Lord is our Rock and our Fortress in a world that is mad. The Lord holds the beginning and the end. The Lord holds you and me when tragedies occur.