

## **FREEDOM IN THE CROSSHAIRS #6**

### **I. Introduction**

We continue our 'Freedom' series with a powerful promise from Jesus...

#### **John 8:32**

**You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.**

There is a close connection between knowing the truth and being made free. On the other hand, there is a close connection between believing a lie and being brought into bondage. We're living in an hour where our freedom, as a person and as a people, is in the 'crosshairs' of our enemy.

**"In the Crosshairs" means to be in a position to be attacked or to become a target.**

The Bible tells us that our enemy is not 'flesh and blood'. Our enemy is the Devil, who comes to bring us into bondage using 2 'devices'.

#### **The Devil's Devices** **Deception and Accusation** **Revelation 12:9-10**

**Satan is the 'great dragon' who was cast out of heaven; the serpent of old, called the Devil, who deceives the whole world...**

**The one who is the 'accuser of the brethren, who accused them before God day and night' has been cast down to the earth...**

Tonight, I want to continue to look at how the enemy uses a special form of accusation to steal our freedom and bring us into bondage...

#### **The Blame Game**

### **II. The Blame Game**

#### **A. Definition**

1. The Blame Game has invaded American culture so much it's now in the dictionary. much a part or our lives it's now in the dictionary.

## **Merriam-Webster Dictionary**

### **The Blame Game**

**A situation in which different individuals or groups attempt to assign blame to each other for some problem or failure. The Blame Game has become endemic in American life.**

### **“Endemic”**

**Belonging or native to a particular people or country.**

Our own dictionaries now tell us that America is the home of the Blame Game!

### **The Blame Game has other names:**

- **The spirit of accusation**
  - **Passing the buck**
- **A spirit of entitlement**
- **The victim mentality**

Any person or any group of people who buy into the Blame Game will be brought into bondage by the Devil, who is the ‘Accuser of the brethren’. But...

**We can overcome the Accuser and be set free by taking 100% personal responsibility for our lives.**

I want to show you how you can disarm the Devil with....

## **II. The Power of Personal Responsibility**

### **A. God’s Great Gift to the Human Race**

#### **Vaclav Havel**

**The secret of man is the secret of man's responsibility.**

1. What does he mean? We begin with defining the word.

#### **Responsibility**

**The ability to choose your response.**

2. Havel means that of all the creatures God created, only human beings have the ability to choose their response.

a. All other creatures respond to their circumstances by instinct. The secret of man is found in responsibility--our ability to actually choose our response whatever happens to us.

b. This is especially true if our circumstances are bad.

3. This principle applies whether my circumstances are my fault or not my fault.

4. For example, I may be in a mess because I am to blame. I have sinned or made poor choices in life. So, what do I do? I have a choice. Will I play the Blame Game or will I choose to take responsibility for my sin?

a. This was Adam's choice in the Garden of Eden. He sinned. His fellowship with God was broken. He was naked and afraid. But he still had a choice as to how he would respond to his sin.

b. He could have taken responsibility, confessed his sin and been forgiven. Instead, he chose to avoid responsibility by playing Blame Game.

5. On the other hand, we can find ourselves in bad situations through absolutely no fault of our own.

- You have a birth defect
- You are a victim of sexual abuse
- You have suffered racial discrimination

6. You are not responsible for being born with a birth defect; you did not choose to be sexually abused or to suffer discrimination. You didn't have the power to keep these things from happening to you, but you do have the power to choose how you will respond to what happened to you.

6. Here is the main thing to remember:

### **Theme**

**We are not always responsible for *what* happens to us. But we can always take responsibility for how we *respond* to what happens to us.**

7. I also want to mention another subtle form of the Blame Game...

## **B. The Victim Mentality**

1. Powerful forces are dividing our nation by perpetrating a form of the Blame Game known as the victim mentality.

### **“Victim Mentality”**

**Victim mentality is a psychological term that refers to a type of dysfunctional mindset which seeks to feel persecuted in order to gain attention or avoid self-responsibility.**

a. People play the ‘Victim Card’ because, after all, a victim cannot be blamed for being unhappy.

b. And there are other benefits:

### **LonerWolf.com**

**Playing the victim has a number of juicy perks:**

- **Not having to take responsibility for anything**
  - **Others lavish you with attention**
  - **People feel sorry for you**
- **Other people are less likely to criticize or upset you**
  - **You have the ‘right’ to complain**
- **You’re more likely to get what you want**

2. The politicians and the mass news media cultivates the ‘victim mentality’ as an art form.

### **Thomas Sowell**

**There is no talent so ardently supported, nor generously rewarded, as the ability to convince parasites that they are victims.**

3. The experts tell us that no one is born with a victim mindset.

### **Wikipedia**

**Victim mentality is an acquired personality trait in which a person tends to recognize or consider themselves as a victim of the negative actions of others, and to behave as if this were the case in the face of contrary evidence of such circumstances.**

a. One political party is seeking to create a permanent ‘victim class’ of people on the subject of race.

b. The lie is that America is a *systemically racist* nation.

c. Therefore, people of color, especially African-Americans, are all ‘victims’ of a system controlled by white supremacists!

4. Look at the quote above: as people acquire the victim mindset, they see themselves and behave as victims even ‘in the face of contrary evidence of such circumstances.

**Dr. Steve Mariboli**

**The victim mindset produces a delusion of fault and blame that blinds you from the simple truth of cause and effect. It dilutes the human potential. By not accepting personal responsibility for our circumstances, we greatly reduce our power to change them.**

5. The Blame Game and the Victim Mentality are the devil’s devices to blind us to the power of personal responsibility. Some are speaking out...

**Brandon Tatum**

**“This victim/entitlement mentality in our country sickening. Quit blaming other people and hoping someone feels sorry for you. Have some guts and take life head on.”**

6. The truth that sets us free is the secret of man’s responsibility; we all have the ability to choose our response.

**Fr. Richard Rohr**

**When you don’t need to play the victim or create victims, you are free.**

7. Let me interrupt this program to give you some real-life stories of men and women who had every reason to play the Blame Game but refused to do it.

### **III. Real-Life Examples of Proactive People**

#### **A. Meet Nick Vujicic**

1. Nick Vujicic was born in 1982 in Melbourne, Australia with no arms and no legs.

a. He had two small feet, one of which had 2 toes. Nick is one of only 7 people on earth born with this condition.

b. According to his biography, when the nurse presented him to his mother, she refused to see him or hold him.

c. Later, his mother and father accepted Nick's condition as "God's plan for their son."

2. Nick prayed very hard that God would give him arms and legs; he initially told God that if his prayer was unanswered, he would never give God praise.

3. But a turning point came when his mother showed him a newspaper article about a man who overcame a severe disability and Nick realized that he was not unique in his struggles and he could accept life with a lack of limbs.

a. He began to encourage others.

b. He got his first speaking engagement at age 19 and began to travel the world as an author, musician, and actor.

**4. Nick went on to establish a ministry known as 'The School of Greatness', with the motto, 'No Limits, no Limbs, no Excuses'.**

a. Who can see these pictures and not be stunned with how many challenges face one without arms and legs!

b. But Nick has not only survived but thrived!

**5. Today, he and his wife Kanae have 4 children and he has a full-time ministry as a Christian evangelist.**

a. One of his books is, "Be the Hands and Feet: Living Out God's love for All His Children.

### **Nick Vujicic**

**People ask how I can be happy despite having no arms and legs. The quick answer is, I have a choice.**

6. The point is that Nick had no choice about being born with no arms and no legs. But he says he did have a choice about how he would respond to having no arms and no legs.

7. He refused to play the Blame Game. He refused to play the victim. He used the power of personal responsibility to make a difference in the world. As did the great Dr. Ben Carson...

## **B. Meet Ben Carson**

1. Another one of my heroes is Dr. Ben Carson.
2. Unlike Nick, Ben was born with arms and legs; but he was born with other challenges.

### **Meet Ben Carson**

- **His mother was 1 of 24 children, and raised in poverty**
- **She married at 13, only to discover her husband was a bigamist**
- **His parents divorced when he was 8**
- **He and older brother raised in near poverty conditions in the slums of Detroit by his Mom, who worked as a cleaning lady**

3. Ben's mother refused to let Ben play the Blame Game; she made sure Ben and his brother got a good education. And Ben went on to become...

### **Achievements**

- **An honors student**
  - **Graduated from Yale University**
  - **Appointed Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns-Hopkins Hospital at age 33, the youngest Dr. in America to hold such a position**
    - **2016 Presidential candidate**
- **Author of 6 books, including "Healing Hands", which was made into a movie**

a. Ben continued to expand his skills into new kinds of surgery no one had ever done before.

### **Medical Miracle**

**In 1987, in one of the most famous surgeries in medical history, Dr. Carson successfully separated Siamese twins conjoined at the head and sharing the same brain.**

### **Update**

**Today, the twins are alive and living perfectly normal lives.**

4. Here we have an African American Christian man who refused to play the Blame Game or see himself a victim. How did he do it?

### **Ben Carson**

**“I came to understand that I had control of my destiny. And at that point, I didn’t hate poverty anymore because I knew it was only temporary. I knew I could change that. It was incredibly liberating for me, and it made all the difference.”**

5. Ben had no choice about being born black-in poverty-with no functioning father-but he did have a choice about how he would respond. And so do we.

### **C. Meet Carol Swain**

1. Another one of my heroes is fellow Nashvillian Carol Swain. I met her a few years ago when she spoke at a Pastor’s Retreat in Kentucky.

2. If anyone could have an excuse for playing the Blame Game, it would be Carol Swain.

### **Who is Carol Swain?**

**One of 12 children, Carol grew up in extreme poverty in a 2-room shack with no running water or indoor plumbing. She slept on the kitchen floor.**

**The 12 children bathed by sharing a bucket of water.**

**Her mother and stepfather had violent fights; he once chased her with an ax.**

**Carol dropped out of high school and married at 16 to get away from home and had 3 children by age 20.**

a. Being female, black, having 3 children but no husband, she went into a tailspin.

### **3. But Carol had a turnaround!**

**After a divorce and several suicide attempts, a man from Sierra Leone, Africa encouraged her to take responsibility for her life and go to college; and she did. From a small community college she went on to 4 year schools where she received several graduate degrees Magna Cum Laude.**

**From G.E.D. to P.H.D.!**

4. Carol Swain had many obstacles to overcome: Female. African American. Born into abject poverty. But she refused to play the Blame Game.

### **Up to Date**



**Carol Swain came out of poverty to become a college professor, public speaker, author, and a candidate for Mayor of Nashville. Today she works as advocate for the American Dream and to see African Americans set free from the enslaving power of our government's welfare system.**

5. Nick Vujicic, Ben Carson and Carol Swain are powerful examples of what can happen when we break out of the Blame Game and start taking responsibility for our lives.

a. Personal note: I'm particularly inspired the stories of great African Americans like Ben Carson and Carol Swain in doing what they have done.

b. I am not in denial that there are racists in America; or that black people have been victimized during our history.

c. But the lives of these heroes, and many other great black leaders today, prove that the devil's accusations of systemic racism are lies. As another one of my heroes says...

### **Thomas Sowell**

**Racism isn't dead—but it's on life support—only kept alive by politicians, race hustlers, and people who get a sense of superiority by denouncing others as 'racist'.**

6. Christians need to stop sitting around letting these politicians, race hustlers and the fake news media accuse America as systemically racist.

7. We need to preach the Word of God about the power of personal responsibility to everyone, regardless of color, gender, or political party.

8. But it must begin with the Church, which is the House of God.

## **IV. Close**

### **A. Review**

1. The message is this:

### **Theme**

**We can overcome the Accuser and be set free by taking 100% personal responsibility for our lives.**

2. What is responsibility?

**Responsibility**

**Our ability to choose our response.**

3. We have this power no matter what happens, good or bad.

**Theme**

**We are not always responsible for what happens to us. But we are responsible for how we choose to respond to what happens to us.**

4. There is a difference between failing and being a failure!

**John Burroughs**

**American Naturalist (1837-1921)**

**“A man can fail many times. But he isn’t a failure until he begins to blame somebody else for his failure.”**

5. Even the world knows that the Blame Game is a trap.

**Psychology Today 3/19/15**

**Unlike other games, the more often you play the blame game, the more you lose. Learning to tell when you need to own up to your role in a bad situation will help you grow from your experiences, and ultimately help you achieve more fulfilling relationships.**

6. God has given us the powerful gift of responsibility; our ability to choose our response, no matter what happens around us.

**Dr. Henry Cloud/Dr. John Townsend**

**It’s Not My Fault**

**Even if you’ve gotten a raw deal from other people, your DNA, or life’s circumstances, there is always something you can do to make things better- as you focus on what you can control and break free from the blame game that sabotages success.**

7. Too many Christian lives have been sabotaged by the Blame Game and the Victim Mentality. But knowing the truth can set us free!

a. Christian author Steve Goodier speaks about his own turning point.

**Steve Goodier**

**“An important decision I made was to resist playing the Blame Game. The day I realized that I am in charge of how I will approach problems in my life, that things will turn out better or worse because of me and nobody else, was the day I knew I would be a happier and healthier person. And that was the day I knew I could truly build a life that matters.”**

8. Building a life that matters doesn't depend on our circumstances; our DNA; or the government. It depends on how we handle our power of personal responsibility. It can deliver us from the Blame Game!

**Closing Prayer**

**The Blame Game**