

ON BLAME

Like stones around a campfire, there are a number of good gifts that at first lead us safely up to the fire of God, but then must NOT become substitutes for personally connecting with Christ, NOT places of **hiding from intimacy** with God.

Examples of the Four Ways of Help...

1. Habits of the heart - Ethics or ideals, Organized religion or significant community
2. Deep Connection - Ideas of god or of the holy, Openness to the world
3. Others around us - Family or community, Significant mentors
4. Receive the Gifts of life - Passion and art, Experience of suffering or evil,
Awesome nature, Satisfying work/income, Science and intellectual beauty

We can make an **idol** of any one of them. Give them too much priority out of proportion with other ways. Idols always rot and fall, so let us move on to the common question - what will happen when the failings of our idol shows up?

Stop trying? All ways, all effort, all relationships are not easy enough, so I will stop.

Try harder? Will we then make an ideology of them (overlooking their limitations)?

Throw the Blame? Will we make a whipping post of them (blaming them for our shortfall)?

Can we remember that they are all **fallible**? All the above list of things/people are going to fall, from time to time, as you and I do. Everything is fallen. Everyone fails sometime.

Blame the church? Blame God? Some blame is deserved! The church has in the past committed or allowed atrocities in order to protect its own politics. In the present era, churches have abused their role and privilege in society, and sometimes betrayed their trust as personal carers. Many of them have apologized and sought to make amends, though this too hasn't been perfect. Over time, should it accept the assignment, the church will have to earn its respect and trust all over again. If the issue matters to you, what would a humble church look like?

For all those who point their finger at the church and say they are a bunch of hypocrites, I have this message – you are right, come and join us. We ALL fail to live up to our own standards. We are not consistent. If you have seen that truth in the church, wide open target that it is, look for some other ones too – how we openly confess our hypocrisy every Sunday, and how Jesus Christ has made a difference in our lives, even if we are not perfect.

PASSING THE BLAME - a joke!

My dentist did such a painful job, so I found a different dentist.

My hairdresser messed my hair up just before the big party, can you recommend yours?

My footy team is having a bad year, maybe a bad decade, but I suppose I will hang in there.

My garage gave me my car back and hadn't even tightened the wheel nuts. They could have killed me. I am going to that mechanic on the highway now.

That church was terrible at both preaching and music – I'm not going to church anymore.

But there is a deeper thing about Blame.

See Genesis 3.6-13 on blame! Adam passes the blame like a hot potato, first to Eve his new bride, then to God for having made her. The Adam story is about us. Blaming others for our own shortcomings is quite a tradition, it goes right back to the first humans. Psychologists call it 'projection'. It runs deep. Therefore, taking personal responsibility for our own feelings and attitudes, our own mistakes, our spirituality, our own purpose in life, is all afflicted with this blame game.

The bible calls the whole church "the bride of Christ". Like Adam in the garden, we are still finding it easy to blame that bride. As I said above, there are reasons why you should be angry at the church, but blame must not be the last word. It is time to take personal responsibility to approach the FIRE.

Recall all those great ideas, wonderful persons, precious memories and good gifts that have led you positively through life. One day, you have to leave them behind, and become a pilgrim, not a keeper of bags.

CONCLUSION

By blaming or by idolizing, we express a compulsion to disconnect ourselves from responsibility. The church is an easy target. By hanging on to our past hurts, we close the door on our future.