THE PROBLEM AND POWER OF PAIN
WEEK 4 • DAILY BRIEFING 2 • THE FIRST BLAME-SHIFT

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 32:10

Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.

This week follows Sunday's sermon, "Self-Inflicted Suffering." You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I want Your best, and Your best is on the other side of learning from my sin and folly. Give me the courage to stop hiding and stop blaming everyone and everything else for the suffering and pain I've created. Use my honest introspection to bring real change in my life and blessing in the lives of others. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

On Sunday we talked about radical ownership, which is the unnatural but essential step of rejecting blame-shifting. Today we go back to where blame-shifting started, with the very first failure in human history. People have been avoiding ownership since the beginning, and the cost has always been the same. When you take the warm fuzzy feeling of shifting responsibility to someone else, you also give away your power to change anything going forward.

Most people blame because it feels like it protects them from accepting their faults. If my boss, my ex, my parents, or the economy caused this, then I still look fine. But think about what that actually means. If the problem is someone else's fault, then fixing it is someone else's job, and you are stuck waiting and hoping for the world around you to change. Blame protects your image for a moment, but it leaves you powerless to bring about a better or more peaceful outcome. That does not mean everything is your fault, because some of what you carry really was done to you, and it really is not your responsibility. But you should be passionate about identifying and owning whatever part is yours, so you can change the inputs for a better outcome.

The first passage today comes from the beginning of the Bible. God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, and placed them in a garden full of good things. He gave them one command: they could eat from every tree except one (Genesis 2:16–17). A deceiver, the serpent, convinced them to eat from that tree anyway. Today's passage is what happened next.

The second passage comes from Psalm 32, the same psalm as this week's memory verse. It was written by David, the king of Israel, who knew what it was like to hide his sin for a season. "Selah," which appears twice, is most likely a musical marker telling the reader to pause.

READ & MEDITATE

Genesis 3:8–13

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. [9]But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" [10]And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." [11]He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" [12]The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." [13]Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Psalm 32:3–5

For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. [4]For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah [5]I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

As you read, compare what Adam did with what David did.

REFLECT

Answer these honestly. This is between you and God, and nobody else needs to see what you write.

God asked Adam a direct question in verse 11.

1. Fill in the blank from Genesis 3:12: "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I _____."

How many people does Adam blame before he gets to his own part?

Adam blames his wife, and he blames God for giving her to him. His own part comes last, in three short words. Eve does the same thing with the serpent.

God knew exactly what had happened before He asked a single question.

2. What do God's questions in verses 9–13 tell you about Him?

God came looking for them. "Where are you?" was not a request for information He lacked. It was an invitation to come out of hiding and tell the truth.

Adam and Eve hid before they ever blamed anyone, and Adam admitted, “I was afraid.”

3. When you are caught in a failure, what are you most afraid of?

4. When it comes to fear, let’s play a little game of “Would You Rather?” Which scares you more: looking bad for your failure, or repeating it because you never owned it?

In the second passage, David describes what hiding his failure did to him.

5. What changed when David stopped hiding?

Hiding wore David down, while confession set him free. Ownership is not the end of the story. It is the doorway to forgiveness and real change.

Most blame-shifting sounds reasonable when you say it out loud.

6. What situation in your life are you explaining mostly by pointing at someone else?

What part of it is yours to own?

7. What could you change this week if you owned that part?

PRAYER

Bring what you just wrote to God. Write your prayer or pray out loud.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Psalm 32:10 from memory.