BaptistWay Bible Series for July 10: David and Nathan: Accepting personal responsibility for sin

June 28, 2011

Recently, I had the opportunity to travel to Colorado with our senior high students for youth camp. I have worked with youth for many years, and I was excited to have the chance to get to know some of our youth better.

Within only a few hours, I was reminded of the humor and frustrations wrapped up in working with young people. Someone brought a fountain drink on the bus and, of course, shocker of all shockers, the drink spilled and began sliding down one side of the bus. These things happen, and if you get too upset about a spilled drink, you probably should reconsider working with youth—or people for that matter.

In light of the sticky syrup slowly covering one half of the bus, we asked the question: Who brought a fountain drink on the bus? With one accord, the response of 16 youth was: "Not me. It was _____." I think every youth blamed a different person.

This simple experience demonstrated the mentality we have as a society. We really do not want to take responsibility, even for simple and meaningless actions. Our first response is to find out who to blame. Even when we are caught red-handed doing something wrong, we tend to blame someone else for driving us to that action.

Many of you probably are thinking, "That is what is wrong with our youth

today, they don't take responsibility." Before you proceed to far in blaming youth, realize this is a societal issue, and we are all responsible. Turn on one of the endless news channels, and you will realize they spend most of their time talking about who is to blame for this or that. When they interview parties from opposite sides of an issue, each party blames the other for any and all problems.

The blame game is not limited to the national media. Churches, schools and businesses are filled with people who are more than willing to deflect as much responsibility from themselves as possible.

This is not a new phenomenon we are experiencing in the evil 21st century. Remember the first time people were confronted with their mistakes? Yes, I am talking about Adam and Eve. What was their response? Blame.

The natural tendency to deny responsibility for our failures has created a whirlpool of blame that keeps us from moving forward and maturing in Christ. If we want to avoid being drowned by our own failures, we must first learn to take responsibility.

Clearly, God desires for us to take responsibility for our failures. If we do not, we will not experience his forgiveness. The importance God places on taking responsibility is seen clearly in the life of King David. David is referred to as a man after God's own heart in the Bible.

I consider that a high honor and compliment. Think back on David's life and remember all the stories you have read about him. For me, his battle with Goliath comes to mind first. This was one of his greatest victories. The next story I think about is David's affair with Bathsheba. This story jumps out because we have this great and godly king who not only takes the wife of a loyal general, but then has the general killed in order to cover up his own failures. How could David be called a man after God's own heart when his heart was clearly filled with lust and selfishness?

Our Scripture this week tells the story of David's greatest failure. Nathan, the prophet, confronts David in a very shrewd manner. By the end of Nathan's parabolic story, David is ready to hold the rich man accountable and put him to death. Then Nathan responds by saying, "You are the man!" The color must have drained from David's face and his legs felt like jello. His epic failure was not a secret any longer.

If I were in David's shoes, I would have been tempted to use my royal authority to deflect attention away from me. David could have claimed that as king he had the right to any woman in the kingdom. Who could tell him different? He had all the power. He could have claimed Uriah's death was an unfortunate consequence of war; people, even generals, lose their lives in war all the time.

David could have continued to spin in the whirlpool of blame, but he chose to take responsibility for his failures. David acknowledged his sin before God and took responsibility for his actions and the results of those actions. David was not a man after God's own heart because he was perfect, but because he recognized his failures and sought after the heart of God.

If we do not take responsibility for our own failures and acknowledge them before God, we will never experience the relationship God wants to have with us. Blame keeps us from moving forward and overcoming our failures.

There are many people who are caught in a whirlpool of pain, frustration, and discontentment all because they continue to blame others and not take responsibility and present themselves before God. I am not talking only about those who are lost.

Take time to look in your life for those pockets of guilt and blame. God wants to restore your relationship with him, but you must first follow the example of David and accept responsibility for your sin.