A Christian or a Victim

Nearly a century ago two young men, Leopold and Loeb, were tried for the murder of a young boy. Their legal defense was unusual; rather than plead not guilty, their lawyer (Clarence Darrow) pled guilty, but then argued that in fact it was the murderers themselves who were victims. "*Darrow appealed to the belief among evolutionists, reinforced by the then-popular psychiatric theories of Sigmund Freud, that a man's character is derived from many external influences. As the man cannot control those influences — most especially his genetic makeup — the man cannot be held responsible for his actions.*"[1] Darrow made this closing argument: "*Is any blame attached because somebody took Nietzsche's philosophy seriously and fashioned his life upon it? … it is hardly fair to hang a 19-year-old boy for the philosophy that was taught him at the university.*" Effectively, this was the first time that our legal system heard an argument that said "*I'm guilty, but it wasn't my fault*!".

Today, we are inundated with this concept. People identify themselves as victims of their passions, their upbringing, their financial status, or any of a number of other factors in their lives. Solomon once said that there is nothing new under the sun; "victimization" is not new, but rather an ancient practice of men.

Consider these ancient victims: Adam in Genesis 3:12, when he claimed "Eve made me do it" Aaron in Exodus 32:22 (the people made me do it); Saul in 1 Samuel 13:11-12 and 1 Samuel 15:24 (the people made me do it). In the New Testament, the One Talent Man of Matthew 25:24 (God made me do it). No, "victimization" is not new.

Are we "victimized Christians"? Is there an acknowledgment of our sin, but no acknowledgment of guilt? If so, consider that such is not real repentance. We blame our sins on parents, children or family; emotional condition; experiences; a husband or wife; church or religious experiences. But really, does God excuse "Victims"? Did he pardon Adam, Aaron, or Saul? James said "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires "

God makes it clear He judges us by our conduct (Ezekiel 18:3-24). Understand that Christians CANNOT be victims. How can we repent if it is not our fault? How can we grow if we are not weak? How can we "sin no more" if it's uncontrollable? Simply stated "victims" can't be forgiven!

God demands accountability in order to forgive. An excellent example is found with David in 2 Samuel 12:7-13 and in 1 Chronicles 21:14-17. In both instances, David readily admitted his culpability in sin, even though it would have been reasonable to have blamed others for at least some of the guilt. The Bible is full of righteous examples of people who refused to be victims. Abraham was not a victim of his pagan heritage. Consider Ruth, a Moabite. Consider David and his faithless children, or Josiah and his wicked father. James and John were called sons of thunder, and Peter was predisposed to rashness. Timothy likely had an unfaithful father. None of them were restrained by victimhood.

In truth, God respects even the worst of men who accept their guilt. In 1 Kings 21:25-29 we read about king Ahab, the worst king of the Old Testament. When Elijah confronted him with his sins, Ahab admitted his fault. God said to Elijah ""Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days".

Taking responsibility for ourselves as Christian might mean looking at ourselves in a new light. "I am spiritually weak because……" or "I am morally weak because….." or "I have not stopped sinning because….." or "my family life suffers because….." or "my finances suffer because……" are hard statements but necessary. Victims cannot be fixed; only sinners can.

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[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopold_and_Loeb