

Amen. Amen. (Johnson, 1922)

We are a culture obsessed with finding fault and assigning blame. Holding ourselves or others accountable is a good thing, but blame and accountability are very different. I think the difference between accountability and blame is very similar to the relationship between guilt and shame. Like guilt, accountability is most often motivated by the desire to repair and renew.... On the other hand, we often use blame to discharge overwhelming feelings of fear and shame.... Like shame, blame shuts us down and is not an effective tool for change. (p. 212)

Back to Adam and Eve. They made a huge mistake. They were hiding in fear and guilt. But notice what happened. Before God gave them the consequences of their sin (mistake), He made a promise. He promised that Jesus would come and put enmity between the serpent and the

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. (E. G. White, 1893, p. 68)

Imagine that! An atmosphere of grace encircling the whole world—enough grace to take care of the deep poverty of our spirits. Enough grace to heal the wounds inflicted by guilt, shame, and blame. Enough grace to forgive my waywardness. Enough grace to forgive myself and others. Enough grace to destroy fear. Enough grace to reclaim God’s original plan and release the power of creativity in me and others.

It really is pretty simple—if we embrace the grace story and allow ourselves to be embraced by it.

References

- Brown, B. (2007). *I thought it was just me (but it isn't)*. New York, NY: Gotham Books.
- Brown, B. (2010a). *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you're supposed to be and embrace who you are*. Hazelden, MN: Hazelden.
- Brown, B. (2010b). *The power of vulnerability*.