International Bible Lesson
International Bible Study Commentary
L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Playing the Blame Game
John 9:1-12

And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? (John 9:2—KJV).

And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" (John 9:2—NASB).

His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2—NRSV).

Humans often spend a lot of time trying to assign blame for the diseases, misfortunes, and horrible evils in our world. Some blame God. When bad things happen, some say God is evil or not much of a god. Others say God causes every evil that happens, but He does not sin when He does evil. Similarly, when Jesus' disciples met a man born blind, they wanted to know if he or his parents had sinned and caused his blindness. Jesus said neither. Jesus looked at people from God's point of view. Jesus saw every person as created in the image of God, and in some mysterious way Jesus is involved in the creation and birth of every person. Rather than look for someone to blame when He saw an evil, a misfortune, sin, disease, or genetic disorder, Jesus looked for ways to solve problems and help those in need when given the opportunity. By helping those in need, by healing people, by telling people the truth, by dying to save sinners, Jesus did the work of God and those He helped revealed the work of God. Jesus told His disciples and everyone who wants to follow Him that they have God's work to do. Rather than always trying to assign blame for all the bad things that happen, Jesus expects His followers to do as He did. Jesus prayed fervently every day for opportunities to help others, even those who wanted to kill Him. Jesus expects Christians to pray, study the Bible, learn the will of God, use God's special gifts to them, prepare themselves, and look for opportunities to help others.

Thinking Further

1. Who sinned that the man was born blind?

2. In what special way did Jesus look upon the man who was born blind? How do you look upon people who have a genetic disorder?

3. How did Jesus explain our responsibility to do the works of God?

4. What did Jesus do to heal the man? Why do you think Jesus healed him this way?

5. What did the man do to receive his sight? If he had disobeyed Jesus, do you think he would have been able to see?

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