

What Does the Bible Teach About Shame?

April 28, 2022 Thursday Indepth Bible Class
of the Trilacoochee church of Christ

What Does the Bible Teach About Shame?

- At one end of the spectrum are those who have imbibed the spirit of modernism and teach that all shame is bad and does harm, and that shame is a self-abusive byproduct of religion out of control.
- At the other end are those who have drunk deeply of the spirits of Puritanism and Calvinism and teach that all shame is morally good and healthy, and they have done severe harm to the hearts and souls of vulnerable, honest souls.
- BOTH are in error.

What Does the Bible Teach About Shame?

- Human beings deal with shame in many different ways, most of which are not helpful, and often harmful.
- A few instinctively or conscientiously use shame as the emotional condition that, based on past mistakes, moves them to make better moral choices in the present and future.

What Does the Bible Teach About Shame?

- Some persons allow their sense of shame to dominate their thoughts and feelings to the extent that they have a tragic and poor self-image; they do not believe that God or anyone else could love them because they see themselves as nothing but filthy and evil.
- Still many more persons elect to view shame as an unwanted barrier to unrestrained, selfish, or wicked behaviors. They break down their natural inhibitions and dismiss moral imperatives until they no longer feel that all choices, good or evil, have moral values and consequences attached. They forget their shame.

What Does the Bible Teach About Shame?

- “Shame breaks down into two main categories: healthy shame and toxic shame. Healthy shame describes the feeling of: “I have done something that goes against my core values and beliefs, and I feel badly about that,” while toxic shame describes the feeling of: “I am inherently flawed and defective and therefore unworthy of love and belonging.” Basically, this is the difference between “I did something bad” and “I am bad.” *(Robert Weiss LCSW, CSAT-S)*

What Does the Bible Teach About Shame?

- “I never wonder to see men wicked, but I often wonder to see them not ashamed.” (*Jonathan Swift*)
- “A man must not be without shame, for the shame of being without shame is shamelessness indeed.” (*Mencius*)
- “The wicked fear the good, because the good are a constant reproach to their consciences. The ungodly like religion in the same way that they like lions, either dead or behind bars; they fear religion when it breaks loose and begins to challenge their consciences.” (*Fulton Sheen*)
- “What is at the base of shame or guilt? It is the consciousness of an imbalance, or of an action in the past that has caused, and probably continues to cause, suffering.” (*Darrell Calkins*)

Shame And Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is the dismissal of any debt or obligation incurred by the person or to the person.
- We cannot forgive someone's sin. This is only something God can do, because sins incur a penalty, which only God can and will enforce.
- God has told us how to obtain forgiveness and the means are merciful and gracious.
- We cannot forgive another's sins committed against us, or against God, or against anyone else. Nor can we forgive our own sins.

Shame And Forgiveness

- Forgiveness does not always remove the consequences of those sins.
- When God forgives us, we no longer face eternal punishment; the debt and the penalty are removed as if the sin never happened.
- However, the consequences frequently remain; murder, theft, lying, gossip, violence, assault, adultery have consequences in this world that leave marks and scars.
- Forgiveness will not remove the memory of what we have done and our feelings of shame for having done those things.

Shame In Scripture

- When we violate God's will, there should be a feeling of embarrassment that we weakened and fell to Satan's trap.
 - Gen. 3:10 - "So he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.'"
 - Psalm 51:3 - "For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me."

Shame In Scripture

- Forgiveness does not erase the memory of our wrongs. Though forgiven and ordained as an apostle, Paul said of himself:
 - Acts 26:9-11 - “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”

Shame In Scripture

- 1Cor. 15:9 - “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”
- Gal. 1:13 - “For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.”
- 1Tim. 1:15 - “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”

Shame In Scripture

- Paul was not a man who could not forgive himself; he was a man who chose not to forget himself.
- Paul did not harm himself with shame, even though he had fought against the Lord Jesus Christ. The forgiveness he received from the Lord was greater than Paul thought he deserved.

Shame In Scripture

- God often uses shame as a wake-up call or an example.
 - Psalm 44:13-15 - “You make us a reproach to our neighbors, A scorn and a derision to those all around us. 14 You make us a byword among the nations, A shaking of the head among the peoples. 15 My dishonor is continually before me, And the shame of my face has covered me.”
 - Is pain a bad thing; it is our enemy? In what way does pain protect and preserve us?
 - Then shame is likewise our friend and protector; it alerts us to spiritual harm and protects us from being lost.

Shame In Scripture

- God wants us to have the right attitude towards sin.
 - Psalm 51:17 - “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-These, O God, You will not despise.”

Shame In Scripture

- That is why Christians are to dress with an awareness of behaviors and appearances that can become shameful.
 - 1Tim. 2:9 - “In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation.”
 - Heb. 12:28 - “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”
- Showing respect for our bodies and the proper use of them shows respect for God who made us in His Image.

Shame In Scripture

- Ezra was ashamed of his nation's behavior -
Ezra 9:5-10
- Joseph thought that Mary had sinned, so out of love for her, he planned to hide her shame -
Matt. 1:19-25
- Ham, instead of being ashamed of his father's sin, tried to make a spectacle of him - Gen. 9:20-27

Shame In Scripture

- Perhaps the reason sin is so universal is that many have lost the sense of shame.
 - Jer. 3:2-3 - “Lift up your eyes to the desolate heights and see: Where have you not lain with men? By the road you have sat for them Like an Arabian in the wilderness; And you have polluted the land With your harlotries and your wickedness. 3 Therefore the showers have been withheld, And there has been no latter rain. You have had a harlot's forehead; You refuse to be ashamed.”
 - Jer. 6:15 - “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time I punish them, They shall be cast down, says the LORD.”
 - Hosea 4:18 - “Their drink is rebellion, They commit harlotry continually. Her rulers dearly love dishonor.”

Shame In Scripture

- Sin separates us from God and sentences us to death. It must be addressed; shame moves us to deal with sin rather than ignore it.
 - 1Tim. 4:2 - “...having their own conscience seared with a hot iron”
 - Zeph. 3:5 - “The LORD is righteous in her midst, He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, But the unjust knows no shame.”

Shame In Scripture

- To love is to forgive and hide sin. We are not protecting the sinner in his sins, but the repentant sinner from the damage of long term unrestrained shame for his sin.
 - Psalm 32:1 - “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.”

Shame In Scripture

- We do not make a mockery of a brother's weakness. We do not set up a brother for public ridicule.
 - James 5:20 - "let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."
- It is a part of being empathetic with brethren
 - Rom. 12:15-16 - "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion."

What Does the Bible Teach About Shame?

- David's prayer Psalm regarding shame is the Biblical, comprehensive, practical, and healthy approach to shame.
- Psalm 25