

Intro: Many years ago, if someone was caught in adultery they would have to wear a red 'A' on their clothes as a brand - to show the world that they were adulterers. It was a symbol of shame. Today, shame is considered an evil by most of the church as well as the world. Is there still a need for shame? What is its scriptural place in our emotions?

I. Lets define our terms.

- A. Google gives this definition: a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the *consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior*.
- B. The first time we see shame in scripture is in the garden: (Gen 3:10), it goes on to explain shame fairly well in the next verse when God asks 'who told you?' Shame is clearly the knowledge of good and evil applied to shortcomings and failures.
- C. Gen 2:25 further cements this point with the revealing statement that they 'were not ashamed' (Rom 7:7-11)
- D. Even God shows that shame is a part of His emotional makeup. (Mark 8:38) This passage also goes to show that shame is not necessarily distress caused by **your** wrong or foolish behavior.

Challenge: Do you respond with feeling shame to blatant sin? To put it another way (and yes, I know this sounds funny) do you still blush? Or are you so callous, so jaded, that when evil stands up straight and tall and openly throws its bile you simply think 'ah well, that's the world for you'?

Pray with me: 'Lord, please strip us of these callouses and scars. Help us to be tender towards the things of the spirit like little children, so that we can hear your voice. Help us to love the things you love, and hate the things you hate. Help us to open our hearts enough to feel ashamed at sin, and to feel a burning desire to help those trapped by it.'

II. The relationship between boldness and shame.

- A. The world boldly (brazenly) goes about doing what should be shameful (Phil 3:19). Conversely, they are ashamed of 'prudish' behavior.
- B. We boldly speak and act on the word of God. (Phil 1:20, personal shame, for what you have done - i.e. guilty shame)
- C. Rom 6:17-21, The shame we should now feel is not for present acts, but for our shameful pasts. Shame for present acts acts for the Christian as a warning flag that it is something that would make God unhappy.
- D. 1 Cor 6:5, To have worldly shame (for personal guilt) is the opposite of boldness (Rom 1:16), but to have and express Godly shame you **MUST** be bold.

Challenge: Free yourself from personal worldly shame by recognizing your past sins as opportunities for ministry. Did you have a problem with drugs? Praise God for it! Perhaps someone who is still trapped by drugs will be open to your testimony where they would not allow others access to their heart. This freedom from personal shame is like shedding your achilles heel in witnessing. Wrong and right are not subjective.

(Share testimony about guys attacking my character because of a sin, Boys' State)

(1 Pet 3:16) This is the source of our boldness - the grace given freely to us through Christ. We literally have the moral high ground, and that's not a pretentious statement. As long as you walk in the spirit, your past failures are now doorways for ministry.

III. Christ gave us grace, not to abuse - but to free us from sin.

- A. Rom 1:32, Do not misinterpret the freedom you have been given as a license to sin. - We should never feel comfortable with sin.
- B. Heb 4:16, We do need help. Don't get caught up in the worldly line of thinking that being ashamed of who you are is a bad thing. You are not sinless, you are blameless. (Rom 7:17-25) You have two parts to you while you are alive, and one of them is a nasty, stinky, ugly, sin sick husk. It is ok, or even good, to be ashamed of that creature. It should distress you that you can't seal away your flesh and be perfect here on earth - without sin. O wretched men that we are!
- C. To quote Luke Gilkerson, "In other words, when we tell people they shouldn't feel bad about who they *are*, we limit the glory of the gospel. The truth is, Jesus didn't come to save good people who do bad things. He came to save bad people who wanted nothing to do with God. As the late Jack Miller used to say, *"Cheer up! You're a worse sinner than you ever dared imagine, and you're more loved than you ever dared hope."*

Final Challenge: It is a bittersweet, introspective truth that I want you all to take from here today. First, you should feel shame. Shame on you for the sin in your lives. The debt, the murmuring, the lack of faith. Shame on you for succumbing to temptation when the way to escape has been laid out in scripture. You should recognize those failures for what they are and feel as upset about them as Christ does. That is what it means to put on the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 2:14-16) To see things the way He does, and to be upset by what upsets Him.

Second, take joy and solace not in who you are, but in who He is. (Eph 2:8-9) Should we blush when confronted by the open debauchery in the world? Yes. Why? Because we should not be minding earthly things - we should be focused on heavenly things. (Phil 4:8-9) It should be revolting to us, disgusting, devilish. Not because we judge those in the world, but because the character of Christ in us reacts to sin. It should push us to share God's love with them, not to drive them away. 1 Cor 2:1-5

Close: Shameless people need to be confronted with their sin before they will see the need for a savior. It is only through the shame, guilt, doubt and fear that they will be willing to accept the freedom of Christ's gift.

Final Song: Amazing Grace

Gen 3:10

Gen 2:25

Rom 7:7-11

Mark 8:38

Phil 3:19

Phil 1:20

Rom 6:17-21

1 Cor 6:5

Rom 1:16

1 Pet 3:16

Rom 1:32

Heb 4:16

Rom 7:17-25

1 Cor 2:14-16

Eph 2:8-9

Phil 4:8-9

1 Cor 2:1-5

Final Song: Amazing Grace



shame

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Noun

A painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior.

Verb

(of a person, action, or situation) Make (someone) feel ashamed: "I shamed him into giving some away".

Synonyms

noun. disgrace - dishonour - dishonor - ignominy - opprobrium

verb. disgrace - abash - dishonour - dishonor

For I am not
ashamed of the
gospel of
Christ
for it is the
Power of God
unto salvation to
every one that
believeth.
Romans 1:16