

## Shame: Its Hidden Power and Remedy

Shame is a complex emotion that lies beneath many of our other feelings and thoughts and contributes to depression, anxiety, perfectionism and other problems. We will look at the source and effect of shame in our own lives and in different cultures, and explore the biblical remedies for both shame and guilt.

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### I. Creation

- a. Naked and no shame (Gen 2:25)
- b. No fear of rejection
- c. Complete acceptance
- d. Vulnerability

### II. The Fall (Gen 3:7-10)

- a. Eyes opened
- b. Awareness of nakedness
- c. Hiding "Where are you?"

### III. Loss of Face – whole person response.

- a. "Swampland of the soul" Jung "Master emotion"

### IV. Shame

- a. Traumatic exposure of sin, nakedness, folly, weakness, deficiency, inferiority, powerlessness, and unworthiness
- b. Flawed and unworthy of acceptance
- c. "To suffer shame is to feel that the true self with all its defects is exposed, naked and vulnerable to the damning judgment and criticism of others" Teyber
- d. Anticipation of disapproval or rejection
- e. Affects the way we think, feel and act... but often out of touch!

### V. Examples:

- a. Comparing ourselves to how we think we ought to be in order to be accepted
- b. I give the right to someone other than God to take away my security, identity, and peace of mind
- c. "...empowering of another to determine our desirability and worth." D. Allender
- d. Idolatry

**Men  
Individualism**

**Women  
Group/Collective**

**Emotions**

**VI. Evaluation Systems**

- a. Guilt in relation to morals (what I do)
  - i. Guilt v. innocence
- b. Shame in relation to models (who I am)
  - i. Shame v. honor/glory
- c. "You come of the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve, that is both honor enough to lift up the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor on earth." (C.S.Lewis. Prince Caspian)

**VII. Job 10:14-15 – guilt and shame**

- a. If I sinned you would be watching me and would not let my offence go unpunished. If I am guilty – woe to me!
- b. Even if I am innocent I cannot lift my head, for I am full of shame and drowned in my affliction.

**VIII. Shame and Guilt**

- a. Sin – guilt – forgiveness – righteousness
- b. Sin/folly/exposure – shame – acceptance – honor
- c. Lev 26:13 "I am the Lord you God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enable you to walk with your heads held high."
- d. "See I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (1 Peter 2:6)

**IX. True and false guilt and shame**

- a. True shame and guilt should lead to sorrow and repentance over sin
- b. Peter
- c. False shame and guilt lead to layers of cover up and escape

**X. Distortions of Shame**

- a. Ashamed of doing well in school
- b. Ashamed of not being brave enough to lie, steal, cheat, take drugs, have sex, kill..
- c. Ashamed of knowing Christ.

**XI. Roots of False Shame – corrosive shame - examples**

**XII. Shame-prone sense of self**

- a. Core Beliefs
  - i. I am bad, defective, unlovable, inferior...
  - ii. I am stupid, untalented and a failure...

**XIII. Shame-prone sense of self leads to:**

- a. Shame – anxiety
  - i. Perfectionism
  - ii. Eating disorders
  - iii. Addictions
  - iv. Social withdrawal
  - v. Depression
  
- a. Shame – anger
  - i. Arrogance and contempt
  - ii. Intimidating, controlling, inducing shame in others
  - iii. Judgmental and critical of others
  - iv. Self critical and withdrawn
  - v. “Punitive” and “protective” (Dan Siegel)

**XIV. Contempt**

- a. Self-contempt and other-centered contempt
- b. “The shamed person can turn his eyes away from the penetrating gaze and focus on the element in his own being that is the cause of the shame. Or he can attack his “enemy’s” eyes directly with the poison of his hatred, blinding those eyes so their power is nullified.” Dan Allender

**XV. Exposing Idols**

- a. Shame exposes what is most important to us
- b. Many live as enemies of the cross... their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. (Phil 3:18-19)
- c. All who worship images are put to shame... who boast in idols. (Ps 97:7, Is 42:17)

**XVI. From Shame to Sorrow and Grief**

- a. Lost glory
- b. Sinned against and sinner

**XVII. Redemption and Guilt**

- a. Guilt dealt with by punishment or confession, repentance and forgiveness
- b. "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven... sins are covered." Ps 32:1
- c. "Your guilt is taken away, your sin is covered." Is 6:7
- d. Or our "works" to try to absolve guilt

**XVIII. Redemption and Shame**

- a. Acceptance with all our deficiencies, faults, folly, and weakness.
- b. Grace in relationship: Hosea and Gomer
- c. Prodigal son. Luke 15:11-32, Peter restored John 21:15-19

**XIX. God's delight**

- a. "He will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. I will gather those who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. Behold at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and **I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.**" Zeph 3:17-19

**XX. Solemn Warning**

- a. Many live as enemies of the cross... their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. (Phil 3:18-19)
- b. All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols. (Ps 97:7, Is 42:17)

**XXI. Jesus not ashamed of us**

- a. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Hebrews 2:11-13

**XXII. The Big Picture enables us to endure and despise some shame**

- a. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus... who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame... Heb 12:2
- b. So Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us then go to him... bearing the disgrace he bore. Heb 13:12-13
- c. God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 1 Cor 1:27

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References: *Perfecting Ourselves to Death: The Pursuit of Excellence and the Perils of Perfectionism*, IVP. Richard Winter See chapter on Shame