**Shame**

Introductory Text: Jer.6:6-15; 8:3-12. After listing some of the *transgressions* of *Jerusalem/Judah,* God added they were not even *ashamed-* indeed *“they did not even know how to blush,”* 6:15.

When was the last time anyone said “Shame on you!” to you? When was the last time you heard “Shame on you!” even spoken to anyone? When was the last time you said, “Shame on you!” to anyone?

Causing “shame” in someone else, and/or the ability to be “ashamed” yourself, has gone from being a powerful correctional and motivational force to being *the* *greater sin* than just about anything else. Obviously, these things can be taken *too far*. No one should be made to feel ashamed of anything that is beyond their ability to control- like their *gender,* their *race,* or *where* or *to whom they were born.* But is it too late for some well-intended and well-rendered shame- at home, in school, on the job, in public, and certainly on a congregational level?

**What is *shame?***

“A painful emotion caused by a strong sense of guilt, embarrassment, unworthiness, or disgrace; a condition of disgrace or dishonor…” (American Heritage Dictionary).

In the NT, it is usually translated from the Greek term *entrepo-* the base word of which is *trepo,* a *turning,* as of the *turning of the heavenly bodies* (stars, planets, etc.); thus a *turning away in shame.*

**What is the *premise* or *principle* of “shame”?**

The *premise* of right conduct according to generally accepted rules (either *biblical* or *societal; morality*) is the principle that undergirds “shame” to give it power. This *morality* obviously should stem from the *divine* source of the Bible, or, lacking that knowledge, can come from basic *humanity-* albeit by God’s design*,* cf. Rom.2:14-15.

**What prevents it?**

If we remove the ability of the conscience to be “ashamed” by rejection of the standard- either societally or individually, we lose the ability (and the potential benefits) of shame. This happens when each person becomes their own standard for “right,” thus becoming their own *god,* cf. Phil.3:19. Thus, rejection and removal of a general standard of “right” and “wrong” in favor individual determination of the same first undermines and then eliminates shame.

**Of what should we be ashamed?**

* Immodesty of *dress,* yes, but also immodesty of *spirit, thought, words,* and *actions,* 1Tim.2:9; Titus 2:2-8; 1Pet.3:1,2-4. In these there is the underlying foundation of a standard of *modest* propriety that, when not met, should cause shame.
* Unrepentant, and especially *public* sins, 1Cor.5:1ff; 6:1-5; 15:34. The Corinthians should have been *ashamed* of their *harboring of sin* in the congregation, their *public display* of sin, and of their lack of spiritual influence on those *“who have no knowledge of God.”*
* Hypocrisy, Gal.2:11-14. The *public nature* of the hypocrisy of Peter and *“the rest of the Jews”* (including even Barnabas) warranted a *public* confrontation by Paul- the *shameful* aspects of which were surely being used to bring about repentance.
* Disloyalty/Failure, Luke 22:61; Matt.27:3-5. The *disloyal failures* of both Peter and Judas produced *extreme personal shame-*  one resulted in repentance, life, and dedication; and one produced only degradation, death, and eternal shame.
* Timidity/Fearfulness/Lack of Faith, Mark 4:40-41; Rev.21:8. There is, and should be, *shame* in *rebuke.* It is not just providing *information,* it is doing so in a way that makes one *ashamed* of his failure and thus motivates him to do better. Our culture may reject this method (and largely has), but Jesus embraced it.
* Past lives of sin, Rom.6:21; cf.1Tim.1:15 and 1Cor.15:9. While Paul certainly *turned away from* (repented) of his *past life,* cf. Phil.3:8-14, but he never *let go* of the shame of it- instead he allowed such to motivate him to greater service and dedication.

**Of what should we not (never!) be ashamed?**

* God of Creation, Gen.1:1ff; Heb.3:4; 11:3; Acts 15:14; 17:24; Rom.4:17. Don’t let others *bully* you into being ashamed of belief in Special Creation, Intelligent Design, or whatever else is used to describe *God creating the heavens, the earth, and all things therein,!*
* Inspiration of the Bible, Rom.3:4; 1Cor.1:18ff; 2:11-13. Never lose faith in our being ashamed of your conviction that God- as the absolute standard of “right” and “wrong,” *inspired* (*breathed*) such standards into His Word, the Bible.
* Jesus and His gospel, Luke 9:26; Rom.1:16. Becoming or being ashamed of Jesus and His gospel not only forfeits *your* soul, it removes the possibility of others being saved through you influence.
* To wear the name *Christian,* or of *suffering* because you do*,* 1Pet.4:16; 2Tim.1:8,12. The *bullies* of society are coming, and they want to make you ashamed of believing in and serving the God of the Universe and His Son, Jesus Christ.

**Conclusions:**

**Despite what society has come to believe, practice, and demand, “shame” has a rightful place in the world. Without its guiding impact and influence, we are all damned to eternal destruction.**

**Let us refuse to join them in *glorying* in what should be our *shame* by *setting our minds on earthly things,* Phil.3:19.**

**Instead, let’s allow *shame-* and the principles of right conduct on which it is founded, to work as God intended to help us avoid the *shameful* and practice righteousness!**