

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Feeling Shame

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Our ability to feel pain may at first appear to be a negative thought but is a positive and helpful part of our makeup. If we feel no pain while our hand touches a hot flame, we might keep our hand over the fire and do further damage, even resulting in death. Likewise, a sense of shame helps us avoid permanent spiritual death.

A sense of shame is strongly associated with our conscience. When we do things we judge to be wrong, we feel guilt. The action which falls short of the moral standard we acknowledge leads to the feeling of shame when we fall short of its demands. It may be only known by ourselves and God, leading to private shame. Some are willing to live with this shame and not change one's ways. When the lawful action is known by many, public shame sets in. Compartmentalizing shame does not help us in our relationship with God. Like Paul, we must renounce *“the hidden things of shame...commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God”* (2 Corinthians 4:2). Living up to the proper standard to avoid all shame, not just public shame, is spiritually healthy.

We do not see much evidence of the sense of shame in the world around us. Men and women today

flaunt their nakedness through immodest dress instead of covering up to avoid the shame of nakedness (*cf. 1 Timothy 2:9; Revelation 3:18*). Suggestive movements on the dance floor are praised, instead of feeling shame for works of the flesh beginning in the heart (*Galatians 5:19*). It is not that men and women are incapable of feeling shame today; they just do not acknowledge the standard of God's Word in their consciences. Setting our own standard will affect our sense of shame. Men can so harden their heart against God's law, that like God's people of old: *“You have had a harlot's forehead; you refuse to be ashamed”* (*Jeremiah 3:3*).

Have God's people today become like the people of old? What do you see today when you attend weddings among those who claim to be Christians? Do you see exposed bosoms, and bare backs through the revealing dress of the bride and her attendants? Do you see our brethren guarding their godly influence at the reception, or do you see members of the church dancing before the gaze of many who are willing to feed lustful thoughts through the bodily suggestive movements? We have not lost the ability to feel shame, we just refuse to be ashamed!

Coupling God's standard for living with a sense of shame can help us domestically. A caring and industrious wife can be a crown to her husband avoiding making him *“ashamed”* and thus becoming *“rottenness to his bones”* (*Proverbs 12:4*). A son who diligently gathers fruit of grain in summer is a *“wise son”* but he that *“sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame”* (*Proverbs 10:5*). A son neglecting aging parents in need or treating them violently is a son that *“causeth shame and bringeth reproach”* (*Proverbs 19:26, cf. 1 Timothy 5:4*).

Shame felt internally can help us discipline our spiritual lives, resulting in living a godly and righteous life in the sight of God. Brethren taking away their social company from me due to my refusal to turn from my sin should cause me to *“be ashamed.”* (*2 Thessalonians 3:14*). This point needs to linger with us with sobering reflection. Today, causing people to feel inward shame is *“evil”* in many circles. God has placed the ability to feel shame within us for our *“good.”* Never allow the conscience to become so seared that a hardened heart will keep you from feeling shame. Feeling shame might just keep you from the eternal flames of Hell! Never *“refuse”* to feel shame, ignoring God's standard!