

Shame, part 1

How Life Feels - part 11

Book of Psalms

July 5, 2020

DAY 1: What is Shame?

1. There are very few things in life we guard more than how we look, how people see us, and how we “come across.” Why? Because we view shame as catastrophic to ourselves. Few things are as painful as feeling shame in front of someone else.

2. What is shame?

“Shame is the traumatic exposure of nakedness.”

-Dr. Dan Allender

3. Shame can run the gauntlet from the serious to the trivial. We experience shame for public acts of immorality to forgetting an appointment, and from spilling coffee on our shirt in a business meeting.

*Psalms 44:15 My **disgrace** is before me all day long, and my face is covered with **shame***

4. “Disgrace” is a compound word. It is the antithesis of grace, the opposite of grace.

a. Grace is the experience of feeling loved by someone else even when you feel exposed as ugly and undeserving.

b. “Disgrace” is the experience of receiving contempt and derision when you feel exposed as ugly and undeserving.

5. Shame exposes us as:

a. “Deficient.”

b. Foolish.

6. When you think about shame what experience comes to your mind?

7. Did you feel exposed as ugly? What did you do in response to feeling shame?

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 2: Shame and Idolatry

Psalms 97:7 All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols-- worship him, all you gods!

1. We will continue to feel a self-induced feeling of shame as long as we're trusting anything other than God to (1) protect us from pain and (2) gain satisfaction.

2. "Me? An idolater? I don't have any little statues on back patio. I'm not an idolater!"

3. Idolatry is simply trusting something other than God to gain the satisfaction I crave and to protect me from the painful rejections of people and the painful disappointments of life.

4. What kinds of idols does modern man and woman worship? Here's a partial list. Underline all that may be some of your "favorite" idols.

Perfection, looking competent, being in control, always looking good, being smart, having it "together," tough guy, consummate father/mother, physical appearance, being seen as successful, health, sports, reputation, financial security or wealth, never making mistakes, determined to be successful, being on top of things, etc.

5. How can I tell if I am really worshipping one or more of those as idols? Simple answer. When one of those "idols" temporarily "fails," do you feel shame?

- a. Do you avert your eyes from someone?
- b. Do you berate yourself with contempt?
- c. Do you "hide" from someone or others?

6. The experience of shame is like the hot engine light on your car's dashboard. If your engine is overheating your problem is not the hot engine light. It's what's under the hood—your engine! Shame is the dashboard light that tells us we're are worshipping something other than God.

Shame is the exposure of foolish trust.

Shame exposes what we *really* worship.

7. Do you see idolatry in your life? What is it you continue to pursue? What do you have to do to "protect yourself from pain?"

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: Shame, a “poor self-image” and self-worship

1. Secular culture tells you two messages about shame and a poor self-image:
 - a. Culture message #1: “You feel shame because you’re a victim. That’s why you feel bad about yourself.”
 - b. Culture message #2: “You feel shame because of a poor self-image. You need to think better of yourself.”

Neither of those messages is going to make any difference in experiencing less shame or getting a better self-image. At best they are children’s aspirin after open-heart surgery.

2. The bible’s wisdom exposes what’s really going on in the heart:
 - a. Bible’s message #1: You feel shame because you are an idolater.
 - b. Bible’s message #2: You feel shame when your idol topples or fails.

The more you can see your idolatry and repent, the freer you become of shame!!!!

Psalms 4:2 How long, O men, will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? Selah

3. The psalmist puts his finger right on the problem!
 - a. Turning God’s “glory to shame” is what idolatry does. We turn our back on what we really need from God and chase after what we think we need with some idol or set of idols.
 - b. We “love delusions.” We are deluded into believing that we can be the master of our lives and serve whatever idols make sense to us. “It ought to work!” (Or so we think).
 - c. “False gods.” Idols topple, and idols fail.
4. When we worship an idol we are doing each of the following:
 - a. Trusting that I know what I need and I know how to avoid pain.
 - b. I can make both those things happen.
 - c. Our idols are merely extensions of our selves. Ironically, idol worship is another way of worshipping ourselves. (Our ultimate trust is in our “abilities” and “control”). We are deluded.
5. What strikes you about a “poor self-image?”
6. How does the hope of experiencing less shame by repenting of idolatry strike you?

DAY 4: Shame and ignorance (denial)

1. Hardly anybody sees themselves as idolaters. Why do you think that's true?
2. The first two of the Ten Commandments prohibit putting anything higher than God in our lives.

Isaiah 44:9a All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless.

3. What does Isaiah say is the value of our idols?

Isaiah 44:9b Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame.

4. We don't see our idols as worthless. We see them as "necessary," a "right," and as "happiness" or "satisfaction." What does Isaiah say about our ability to assess the validity of idols?

5. Ironically, Isaiah says that the more idols I pursue the greater the experience of shame!

6. In Isaiah's day, many idols were attempts to "control" the "gods" and procure what the people wanted. There were gods and idols for fertility, the sun, rain, crops, harvest, etc.

7. Many idols were made from wood cut from trees. Listen to Isaiah's wake up call to the people.

*Isaiah 44:19 No one stops to **think**, no one has the **knowledge** or **understanding** to say, "Half of it I used for fuel; I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate. Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood?" ²⁰ He feeds on ashes, **a deluded heart** misleads him; **he cannot save himself**, or say, "**Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?**"*

8. As long as you don't see the connection with idolatry, you will always deal with shame. You will just be in a battle with it using the "weapons" of blindness, ignorance, and delusion.

9. What is it I'm blind to, deluded to? That the idol has the power to give life. Ironically, in order to "help" a sagging self-image you'll naturally turn to an idol!

10. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: Shame and Change

1. You may wonder, how does a person:

- a. Enjoy a secure self-image?
- b. Experience less shame?
- c. Become freer of our idols?

2. The paradoxical answers are these:

- a. God allows us to seek our idols! Why would He allow that???
- b. It's not until we become so sick of ourselves and the futility of pursuing idols that we will repent! (We have to "hit bottom" before meaningful change can occur).
- c. Shame shouts louder and louder to us. Pain and futility may finally get our attention.

3. Shame should drive us to God for what we most want! Notice how the psalmist sees shame.

*Psalms 44:13 You have made us a **reproach** to our neighbors, the **scorn** and **derision** of those around us. ¹⁴ You have made us a **byword** among the nations; the peoples **shake their heads at us**. ¹⁵ My **disgrace** is before me all day long, and **my face is covered with shame** ¹⁶ at the taunts of those who **reproach** and **revile** me, because of the enemy, who is bent on revenge.*

4. Notice carefully, God did not fix their problem with being shamed. He allowed them to continue in it until they finally hit bottom.

Psalms 44:17 All this happened to us, though we had not forgotten you or been false to your covenant.

5. Notice that the psalmist is ignorant of any connection between the shame they are experiencing and any sinful reason on their part. In fact, he proclaims his loyalty to God's covenant!

Psalms 44:23 Awake, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever. ²⁴ Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression? ²⁵ We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground. ²⁶ Rise up and help us; redeem us because of your unfailing love.

6. The psalmist still doesn't see any connection between shame and idolatry, but I suspect he's getting closer to making the connection! Misery is a potent teacher!

Teaser: Next week we'll complete our study on shame, focusing more on how God changes us from idol-making and shame-making machines to people freer and freer to worship God above anything or anyone else, and thus freer to reflect Him and His amazing, grace-filled love to those around us.