

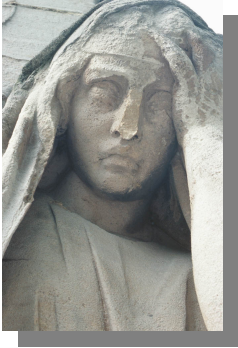


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## Are You Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ?

**Hebrews 12:2:** (NKJV) ...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

So, what role does shame play in our lives? When is it good to feel shame? When is it bad to feel shame? In the theme text, we are told that because Jesus "despised the shame", he was accounted as worthy to sit "down at the right hand of the throne of God!" What about us? Do we have to overcome shame today to be with him? Are we subjected to shame today by our neighbors, colleagues, and friends, or is shame a thing of the past? Is shame a big deal today for a Christian or is it nothing to worry about especially when you live in a so-called "Christian country"? Stay with us as we look into this not so often talked about part of our lives - shame - the good, the bad and the ugly.

### Questions for consideration:

1. What is shame?
2. Is there *good* shame?
3. What could cause us to be ashamed of the Gospel and how can we avoid it?

#### 1. What is shame?

There are a number of words that are translated "shame" in the New Testament:

**Shame:** Strong's #152 aischune (ahee-skhoon'-nay); shame or disgrace (abstractly or concretely):

- Lexicon - 1) the confusion of one who is ashamed of anything, sense of shame  
2) ignominy, disgrace, dishonor 3) a thing to be ashamed of

**A few examples:** 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 Philippians 3:17-19

The Apostle gives a comparison between himself as a pattern compared to others who were enemies amongst them, whose focus was on themselves.

**Let's look at the root word for the above:**

**Shame:** Strong's #153 aischunomai (ahee-skhoon'-nom-ahee); to feel shame (for oneself) Lexicon: 1) to disfigure 2) to dishonor 3) to suffuse with shame, make ashamed, be ashamed

**A few examples:** Luke 16:1-4 1 Peter 4:15-16

If you are suffering as a Christian, shame should not be a part of your life.

By definition thus far, shame is an inward sense of disgrace or dishonor that is often revealed on the outside by way of expression and body language.

**Observations on aspects of shame from these previous four verses:**

- Shameful things are done under cover;
- It would be shameful to misuse the Gospel;
- For those with no spiritual conscience, the shame of the abuse of the Gospel is their glory; (for example, someone preaching the Gospel in order to make a lot of money - that is their glory, which is actually their shame.)
- Shame brings embarrassment;
- There is no place for shame if we suffer for Christ.

#### 2. Is there *good* shame?

**Luke 14:7-11:** Good shame! The lesson here is one of thinking more highly of one's self than we ought to, which should bring us shame. Whenever we elevate ourselves, inevitably we are in territory that doesn't belong to us.

**Ephesians 5:8-12**

**Shameful:** Strong's #149 aischron (ahee-skhron'); a shameful thing, i.e. indecorum: Lexicon: 1) shame, base, dishonorable





Good shame! The thought here is that to repeat the things of darkness for the sake of conversation without reproof (end of verse 11), brings us into a context of not only gossip, but tolerating iniquity. That should result in our shame.

Luke 13:14-17

**Shame:** Strongs #2617 kataischuno (kat-ah-ee-skho'-no); to shame down, i.e. disgrace or (by implication) put to the blush.

Lexicon: 1) to dishonour, disgrace 2) to put to shame, make ashamed

2a) to be ashamed, blush with shame 2b) one is said to be put to shame who suffers a repulse, or whom some hope has deceived

Good shame! When we are found to be condemning of another and in so doing our own hypocrisy is revealed, shame is appropriate.

1 Corinthians 6:1-6

**Shame:** Strongs #1791 entropē (en-trop-ay'); confusion

Matters that could have been solved between them were being taken to court. We want to make sure what's due us! The Apostle is upset about this - "*I say this to your shame*," (a confused state) because they were bringing a bad light upon the name of Christ. The lesson is don't be so concerned about yourself that you forget what you are called to stand for, which is much higher.

Good shame! When we are revealed to be living to a lower standard than our privilege of Christianity, we should feel the unsettled, confused result of shame.

In summary, the New Testament lays out for us a number of examples of when we should be ashamed. When we do the things we ought not to be doing, we should see the shame and react to it by correction.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-15

**Ashamed:** Strongs #1788 entrepo (en-trep'-o); to invert (turn over) in a good sense, to respect; or in a bad one, to confound.

Lexicon: 1) to shame one 2) to be ashamed 3) to reverence a person 4) to turn about

Good shame! There were those taking advantage of Christianity. When it is revealed that we are slacking in our responsibilities, we should feel the overwhelming need to change.

By definition thus far, shame is an inward sense of disgrace or dishonor or confusion as a result of our thoughts or actions being out of line. It is often revealed on the outside by way of expression and body language and can carry with it a motivation to change.

Good shame is...

- ...when one thinks more highly of one's self than we ought to and it's brought to our attention.
- ...when we repeat the things of darkness for the sake of conversation and without any reproof. That brings us into a context of not only gossip, but tolerating iniquity - that should result in our shame.
- ...when we are found to be condemning of another and in so doing our own hypocrisy is revealed.
- ...when we are revealed to be living a lower standard than our privilege of Christianity affords.
- ...when it is revealed that we are slacking in our responsibilities, and we feel the overwhelming need (and then the willingness!) to change.

How can you tell if shame is good or not? Good shame is for the purpose of growth and maturity! Shame is a tool of Christianity to put us in the right context so that we can develop in Christ.

None of the good shame works if we don't have a properly tuned conscience! 1 Timothy 4:1-3: A conscience "*seared with a hot iron*" is dead and can no longer measure for us where we ought to be, so shame doesn't help us.

Properly-applied shame has a role to play in our lives, and we need to learn from it.



### 3. What could cause us to be ashamed of the Gospel and how can we avoid it?

Going back to our theme text, we can examine the shame that Jesus was faced with:

Hebrews 12:2 To understand his handling of the shame, we need to understand his handling of his mission:

**Looking:** Strong's #872 aphorao (af-or-ah'-o); to consider attentively: KJV-- look.

Looking to Jesus means focusing on him as the long range goal. When Jesus is our vision, we focus on him instead of ourselves. Proverbs 29:18



*As a practical example of shame in a very different kind of way than most of us are used to, a listener retells her story of growing up a Christian in Romania.*

**"Communism wanted to create not only a new political ideology, a new economy, a new social structure, but also a DIFFERENT MAN from the one who had existed before. This new political ideology dug into the human soul – into its inmost fibers of faith in God. Communism alleged that atheism was the way to this NEW MAN." -- Excerpt from *The Sky Through Bars, Inspirational Memoirs of Faith and Courage*, by Ligia Brie**

Hebrews 12:2

**Despising:** Strong's #2706 kataphroneo (kat-af-ron-eh'-o); to think against, i.e. disesteem: (make little of)

Jesus did nothing to be ashamed of, but the manner in which he was executed was shameful and would bring shame to any human and their family. He made light of that shame, because the reasons he went through it were far greater than the shame itself. Jesus never "earned" any shame and considered it joy. What can we learn from this regarding our own experiences in holding up the standard of Christ?

**First Lesson: Christianity is a HIGH STANDARD!**

**Ashamed:** Strong's #1870 epaischunomai (ep-ahee-skho'-nom-ahee); to feel shame for something: to be ashamed

Stand up beyond the shame!

**Second Lesson: Circumstances and the powers that be can give us cause to feel shame – but we inevitably have a choice as to what we do with the experience.**

Acts 5:12-42: selected verses There was a direct command from God for the Apostles to continue their work. Having been delivered, they heard the word of God and obeyed...

They listened to the angel's admonition, but this obedience could only mean trouble for their flesh and blessing for their spirit! Jesus taught us it is a glory to not be ashamed of the Gospel but to stand up for it - even in the face of great adversity.

The clarity of Apostle's vision turned the possibility of shame into the opportunity to witness! And should shame come, consider it as a blessing - that's what Jesus did!

2 Corinthians 5:20: Now then we are ambassadors for Christ...

This is such a powerful thought. We are representatives on this earth of the King of the Universe. Who is bigger than that? This should give us dignity and serve to renew our faith and



relieve our fears. Shame is very much related to fear. Shame can be overcome with a deep and abiding faith, serving God.

**Third Lesson: what if we are afraid or ashamed in spite of all that Jesus is? Look to him and move forward!**

John 3:1-2:

Why by night? Probably out of fear, maybe shame...but this is not the end of the story:

John 19:38-42: These two disciples looked to Jesus, saw his strength and were inspired beyond their fear and shame!

Good shame is in place so we can grow from it because we are willing to change. But when it comes to the Gospel, what you dedicated yourself to and what you are is higher than anything that could possibly bring you shame.

*So are you ashamed of the Gospel of Christ?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

We ran out of time!

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