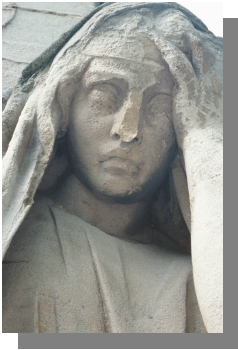




Are You Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ?

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.*

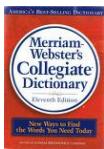


So, what role does shame play in our lives? When is it good to feel shame? When is it bad to feel shame? In the theme text, we are told that because Jesus “despised the shame”, he was accounted as worthy to sit “down at the right hand of the throne of God!” What about us? Do we have to overcome shame 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?



Merriam Webster Dictionary: Shame *noun*

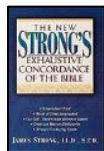
1a: a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety

b: the susceptibility to such emotion

2: a condition of humiliating disgrace or disrepute: IGNOMINY

3a : something that brings censure or reproach; also: something to be regretted: PITY

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:

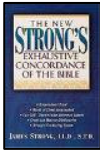
2 Corinthians 4:1-2: (NKJV) ¹Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. ²But we have renounced the hidden things of **shame <152>**, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Philippians 3:17-19: (NKJV) ¹⁷Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their **shame <152>** who set their mind on earthly things.



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: Strongs #153 aischunomai (ah-ee-skho'-nom-ah-ee); 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: (NKJV) ¹He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. ²So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' ³"Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am **ashamed <153>** to beg. ⁴I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'

1 Peter 4:15-16: (NKJV) ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be **ashamed <153>**, but let him glorify God in this matter.

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.

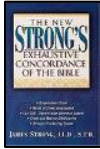
2. Is there good shame?

Luke 14:7-11: (NKJV) ⁷So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: ⁸"When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; ⁹and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with **shame <152>** to take the lowest place. ¹⁰But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. ¹¹For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

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.



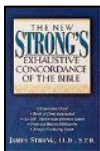
Ephesians 5:8-12: (NKJV) ⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²For it is **shameful <149>** even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.



Shameful: Strongs #149 aischron (ah-ee-skron'); 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.

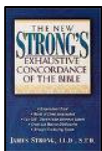
Luke 13:14-17: (NKJV) ¹⁴But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." ¹⁵The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? ¹⁶So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" ¹⁷And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to **shame <2617>**; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.



Shame: Strongs #2617 kataischuno (kat-ah-ee-skhoon'); 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: (NKJV) ¹Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ²Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? ⁴If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? ⁵I say this to your **shame <1791>**. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? ⁶But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!



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

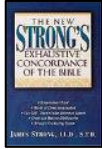
Matters that could have been solved between them were being taken to court. We want to make sure what's due us! The Apostle is upset about this - "I say this to your shame," (a confused state) because they were bringing a bad light upon the name of Christ. The lesson is don't be so concerned about yourself 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: (NKJV) ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. ¹¹For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. ¹²Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. ¹³But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. ¹⁴And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be **ashamed <1788>**. ¹⁵Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.



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: (NKJV) ¹Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ²speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

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:

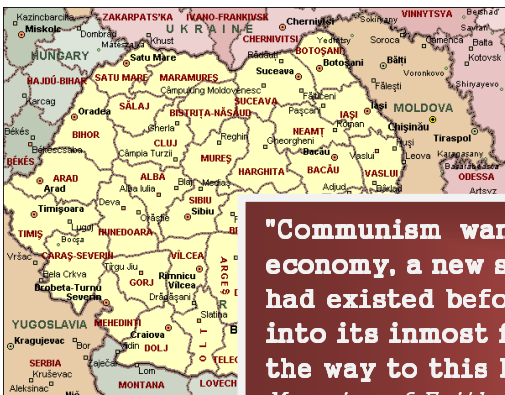
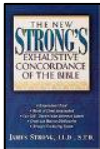
Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV) ...**looking <872>** unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

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

Looking: Strongs #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: (KJV) *Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*



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

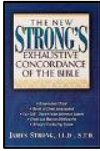
Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV) ...**looking** unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, **despising <2706>** the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Despising: Strongs #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: Strongs #1870 epaischunomai (ep-ah-ee-skhooh'-nom-ah-ee); 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 (KJV) ¹²And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people;... ¹⁵Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets,...and they were healed every one. ¹⁷Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him,... and were filled with indignation, ¹⁸And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. ¹⁹But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, ²⁰Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. ²¹And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.

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...

Acts 5:12-42: selected verses (KJV) ²¹But the high priest came, and...called the council together,... and sent to the prison to have them brought. ²²But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, ²³Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. ²⁴Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. ²⁵Then came one and told them, saying, **Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.**

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.

²⁶Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people,..²⁷And...they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, ²⁸Saying, Did not we straightly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. ²⁹Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.** ³⁰The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. ³¹Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. ³²And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. ³³When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

The clarity of Apostle's vision turned the possibility of shame into the opportunity to witness!

Acts 5:12-42: selected verses (KJV) ³⁴Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded



to put the apostles forth a little space; ³⁵And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men... ³⁸And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: ³⁹But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. ⁴⁰And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. ⁴²And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

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: (NKJV) ¹There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

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

John 19:38-42: (NKJV) ³⁸After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. ³⁹And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. ⁴¹Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴²So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

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!

For Your Continued Study:

Fourth Lesson: When your brother has been made a gazing-stock of shame, it is all the more reason to co-labor with him in his humiliation!

2 Timothy 1:7-17: (NKJV) ⁷For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. ⁸Therefore do not be **ashamed <1870>** of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, ¹⁰but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. ¹²For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not **ashamed <1870>**, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. ¹³Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. ¹⁵This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not **ashamed <1870>** of my chain; ¹⁷but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me.

Fifth Lesson: If we immerse our thoughts and actions in the truth of the Gospel, shame will not come to us, but to those who seek to oppose us!

Titus 2:6-8: (NKJV) ⁶Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be **ashamed <1788>**, having nothing evil to say of you.

1 Peter 3:13-17: (NKJV) ¹³And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." ¹⁵But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be **ashamed <2617>**. ¹⁷For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.



Sixth Lesson: If we truly live by faith, then shame of the Gospel simply becomes something that is automatically absorbed by the Power of God!

Romans 1:16-17: (NKJV) ¹⁶*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

Seventh Lesson: Having put shame in its place we are now free to unabashedly meditate upon Jesus, which in turn alleviates weariness and discouragement!

Hebrews 12:3: (NKJV) *For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*

Isaiah 40:28-31: (NKJV) ²⁸*Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. ³⁰Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, ³¹But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*