



## SHAME IN THE SCRIPTURES

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### SHAME

At first glance, it may seem that the Scriptures don't talk much about shame. But Scripture often pairs shame with disgrace, dishonor, reproach, or humiliation. As we survey these passages, we see that shame is not always a bad thing. God often used shame as a redemptive tool to bring his people to repentance and restore them to relationship with him. Scripture provides a vivid picture of shame, with all of its uses, falling into three distinct categories:

### CATEGORIES OF SHAME

<b>Harms by Me</b> <i>(Legitimate Shame)</i>	personal sin, something I did or failed to do	lying, gossip, cheating, anger, sexual sin, abortion, adultery, self-harm, addictions, betrayal
<b>Harms to Me</b> <i>(Illegitimate Shame)</i>	something someone did to me	abuse, trauma, family wounds, betrayal, neglect, unfaithfulness
<b>Social Shame / Brokenness of the World</b> <i>(Illegitimate Shame)</i>	social shame—something or someone I am associated with	infertility, suicide, mental health, debt, poverty, single-ness, unemployment, lack of education, gender, race, body shame

### SHAME IN THE BIBLE

#### **You can bring shame on God's name**

- Leviticus 19:12-14, 21:6, 22:32; Ezekiel 20; Ezekiel 36:20-23

#### **You can do shameful things**

- Idolatry, sexual immorality, misplaced trust, unholy alliances
- Judges 19:22-24; 1 Samuel 20:33-35; Proverbs 18:13; Hosea 4:6-7; Romans 1; Ephesians 5:12

#### **You can be shameless over your sin (unrepentant, haughty, proud)**

- Jeremiah 3:2-4; Ezekiel 16:29-31, Ezekiel 23:43-45; Zephaniah 2:1-3, 3:4-5; Mark 12:40; Ephesians 4:19; Philippians 3:19; Jude 1:12

#### **You can be associated with shame**

- Those cut off/rejected/cast out because of things like leprosy, being unclean, blindness, disease, lameness, infertility, widowhood, youth

- These are usually related to cultural or social stigmas
- John 9, Act 3, Mark 5, 1 Timothy 4:12

**You can bring shame to others/be shamed by others**

- fathers bringing shame to their children and family
- children bringing shame to parents
- wives bringing shame to husbands
- bringing shame to the community
- bringing shame on the name of God/Word of God/God's church
- bringing shame to the poor
- Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 28:7, 12:4, 19:26, 29:15; 1 Corinthians 11:21-22; Titus 2:4-5

**You can be clothed in shame or in dishonor**

- Psalm 109:29

**Shame as judgment:**

- For *God's enemies*
  - » Habbakuk 2:16; Psalm 78:65-66; Isaiah 47:1-4; Nahum 3:4-6
- For *God's people* (as a redemptive tool in the Old Testament)
  - » Isaiah 3:16-26, 25:28; Jeremiah 2, 13:25-27; Daniel 9:7-9

**Shame as a redemptive tool in the New Testament**

- 1 Corinthians 5:1-3, 6:1-5, 15:33-34

**Psalmists often ask God to bring shame on their enemies**

- Psalm 34:5, 35:4, 35:26, 40:14-15, 70:2

**Idolatry brings shame to those who worship lesser gods**

- Isaiah 42:17, 44:9-11, 45:16; Hosea 4:7, 19; Psalm 97:7; Jeremiah 10:14, 51:47

**Faces are "covered with shame"**

- Daniel 9:7-8; 2 Samuel 19:5; 2 Chronicles 32:21; Psalm 44:15; Ezekiel 7:18

**God's people can experience collective shame**

- Ezra 9-10

**Shame over something done to you**

- 2 Samuel 10:4-5
- 2 Samuel 13

**Your desires can be shameful**

- Romans 1

**Jesus took our shame**

- He was publicly shamed—mocked, spat upon, disgraced, dishonored, cast outside the camp, cut off from God and others, rejected
- Isaiah 53; Luke 18:31-34

**Jesus shamed his enemies, spiritual rulers, and authorities**

- Colossians 2:14-15; Luke 13:16-17

**Jesus despised the shame of the cross and was given honor**

- Hebrews 12:2

**Those who trust God/believe in Jesus will not be put to shame**

- Psalm 34:5, 22:5, 25:3, Isaiah 49:23; Romans 9:33, 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6

**God's people are given glory and honor in place of shame and disgrace**

- Isaiah 54:4-5, 61:6-8; Proverbs 3:35; Zephaniah 3:19

**Jesus is not ashamed to identify with us**

- Hebrews 2:11

**In the end:**

- Evil will be shamed
  - » Isaiah 66, Jeremiah 2, Daniel 12:1-4
- Righteousness will be unashamed
  - » Psalm 34:5; Isaiah 49:23, 61, 54; Daniel 12:1-4

## WORD ASSOCIATION

Whenever you see these words in the Scriptures, they often carry the connotation of shame and disgrace that were present in the ancient Eastern world.

Outcast	Unwanted/undesirable	Ridicule
Social isolation	Untouchable	Exposed
Outside the camp	Worthless	Naked
Outsider	Unworthy	Reproach
Isolation	Inferior	Less than human
Alone	Forsaken	Unclean
Not belonging	Rejection	Contaminated
Unacceptable	Disgraced	Leper
		Blind/lame

**As you read Scripture, reflect on these questions:**

Where do you see shame (harms to me, harms by me, and brokenness of the world) in the story?

How does God engage those who are covered in either legitimate or illegitimate shame? What does he offer to those carrying legitimate shame? What does he offer to those carrying illegitimate shame?

What hope and encouragement can this give you?