Jesus Healing Shame

GraspingGod.com’s Bible Study Lesson #6.15

Jesus Healing Shame Bible Verses:
But when they continued asking Jesus, he looked up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone at her." When the accusers heard it, they went out one by one, beginning from the oldest, even to the last. Jesus was left alone with the woman where she was, in the middle. Jesus, standing up, said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way. From now on, sin no more." John 8:7-11 NHEB.

Preliminary Bible Study Questions:
1) What is a guilty conscience?
2) How can my public shame be healed?
3) Who receives forgiveness from God?

Is personal guilt wrecking your otherwise respectable and successful life?

Has public shame overcome you, haunting you with regret from past decisions, words, or actions?

Shame and guilt are sister emotions with which God has gifted us. Shame and guilt are very real, very good things, despite what the modern world says about them.

Shame and guilt should not be suppressed, but properly addressed, so they won't haunt you forever.

God has a word for you today. He wants you overcoming guilt and dealing with shame, even eliminating it.

You heard that right, my friend. God has the power to destroy both your guilt and shame.

He won't force such a good thing upon you, though, so you have to listen to him and obey his instructions. Let's discover how to restore your precious, clear conscience; while rebuilding your warm, loving relationship with God.

Please read Luke 7:36-50 before beginning the Jesus Heals Shame Bible lesson.

Jesus Healing Shame - the Harlot

Jesus was having dinner at a religious leader's home early one evening, when a prostitute heard about Jesus' whereabouts.

The immoral woman didn't want to waste an opportunity to personally meet this great man she'd heard about. So she prepared to depart and brought along her most expensive perfume in a
beautiful alabaster jar.

She arrived, and quietly, cautiously, humbly she knelt near Jesus. As she listened to his amazing teaching, tears flooded down her cheeks, dropping onto Jesus' feet.

The harlot took long locks of her beautiful, dark hair and wiped the tears from Jesus' feet. She kissed his feet, too; and started massaging her expensive perfume deep into his tired feet (Luke 7:36-38).

**Jesus Healing Shame - the Pharisee**

The Pharisee watched the woman doting all over Jesus and thought to himself, "If Jesus were a true prophet, he would know this woman was a sinner." He was disgusted in the whole situation, and he didn't believe Jesus was a prophet, not to mention the Son of God and Messiah.

Jesus knows all men's thoughts, not trusting any (John 2:24-25), like his Father (Romans 8:27). Jesus knew exactly what the Pharisee was thinking (Luke 7:39-40) and shared a simple but powerful story with him. It went something like this, "There was a man who forgave the debts of two other men. One of the men owed him 50 pieces of silver, and the other owed him 500 pieces of silver." Jesus then asked the Pharisee, "Which of the two men showed a greater love to the kind man?"

The Pharisee responded, "I guess the one who had the greater debt canceled."


Jesus, being the great Teacher he is, then applied his story directly to their situation. He told the Pharisee, "When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but this woman washed them with her tears and her hair. You didn't welcome me with a kiss, but she hasn't stopped kissing my feet. You haven't offered me oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with the rarest of perfumes."

Jesus then drove the point home, "I tell you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven; so she has displayed much love to me in return. But a person who is forgiven little shows only a little love."

Jesus loves healing shame, and proved it by turning to the woman, saying, "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Luke 7:44-50).

Notice how Jesus directly mentioned the harlot as being forgiven, but gave NO indication that the Pharisee (aka hypocrite) was forgiven. Jesus generalized when he said a person who is forgiven little, loves little.

Let's do a little work on understanding the conscience of man.

**Healing Shame - the Conscience**
Conscience, broken down to its Greek roots, means: "con" = with, or together; "science" = knowledge; fully meaning "together with knowledge." Your conscience is your internal moral code that speaks to you.

This next fact is important to remember as we work through this topic. One's conscience is not infallible or inerrant. Our sin and neglect of our conscience defiles it, leading us astray.

Anyway, back to the definition of conscience, it means that when we transgress our conscience we transgress with the knowledge that what we did was wrong.

Understanding the fact that we sin "with knowledge" requires that you understand that God wrote at least a portion of his law on our hearts, like he promised us in the Scriptures (Jeremiah 31:33-34). He created each of us with an innate knowledge, or at least an educated "sense," of his will (Romans 2:14-15).

We know we break God's law when we steal something from someone, or when we hurt someone, or when we blame and hate God for things he didn't do. We know those things are sinful without anyone telling us so.

The inner workings of a person's conscience leaves him feeling guilty, because he broke God's law with knowledge. It was a choice to break God's law; therefore, he or she experiences guilt. During or after a sin, one's conscience triggers the emotion known as guilt, which then immediately leads to shame.

The conscience is a person's moral self-evaluation of his or her actions or words, or even thoughts and plans.

The word "guilt" means that a person is fully culpable for breaking God's law with knowledge.

**Definition of guilt:** *Nelson’s Bible Dictionary:* bearing responsibility for an offense or wrongdoing; remorseful awareness of having done something wrong.

God holds a lawbreaker responsible for sin. "Sin" means a person "misses the mark" and transgresses what he or she knows about God's law. The standard of righteousness God has given the person has been violated, resulting in sin.

A sinner experiences a guilty feeling, which can then lead to shame. Shame is one's embarrassment at breaking God's law.

**Definition of shame:** *Nelson’s Bible Dictionary:* a negative emotion caused by an awareness of wrongdoing, hurt ego, or guilt. In the Bible, the feeling of shame is normally caused by public exposure of one’s guilt (ex. Genesis 2:25; 3:10). But, does not necessarily come from sin (Psalm 25:2-3; Proverbs 19:26; Romans 1:16).

Shame is the terrible end result of the public exposure of one's personal sin, leaving the black cloud of shame covering the person's life (Psalm 34:5; Daniel 9:7-8).
Now, apply this to your life. Think back to a time when you did something really stupid, meaning sinfully stupid. You know, like when you afterwards thought, "HOW on earth could I have done THAT?!" Or, "HOW on earth could I have said THAT?!"

The sin bothered you, even haunting you without relenting, until you confessed it and apologized to the person and/or to God himself. That's your conscience at work, an inner voice that told you, "You messed up, Buddy. You really blew it this time!"

**Summary of the definition of conscience:** Violating one's own conscience leads to internal turmoil, led by guilt and condemnation. The accusation then triggers one or more of many possible emotions, including shame, disgrace, fear of the punishment or consequences, anguish, regret, anxiety, and finally depression.

Cognitively heeding and guarding our conscience at all times leads to an inner peace that quiets the soul. Obedience to one's inner moral code, aka conscience, maintains his or her joyfulness, self-respect, dignity, well-being, and proper relationship with God.

**Jesus Healing Shame - Forgiveness**

Guilt and shame, therefore, are gifts of mercy from God.

Wait! What?! How can things that make us feel terrible be a gift of mercy?!

Let me explain.

Guilt and shame help us hate our sin, because the sin offended God and more than likely other people. Guilt and shame are meant by God to open our eyes to the fact that we broke his law. Those two things are our warning system for alerting us to our sin. That's the way he wired us.

Guilt and shame are ultimately meant to lead us to our knees in repentance, which is the necessary human response to personal guilt and shame.

The prostitute was brought to her knees in repentance and thusly received forgiveness from God. The Pharisee remained judgmental of the immoral woman and of Jesus' authority to forgive her sins. Therefore, he failed to receive forgiveness.

Forgiveness comes from God, who loves pardoning people, because it brings him great glory. In fact, the forgiveness of sins brings God greater glory than anything else.

Forgiveness also results in the removal of one's guilt. Forgiveness is also God's remedy for healing human shame.

Forgiveness is really God's greatest miracle. Healing shame is the name of Jesus' game. It's the reason he came to earth. It's the reason he died as a sacrifice. It's the reason he is interceding on our behalf at the throne of God.
God loved us so much that he sent his only Son to die for us, that our shame may be healed.

So, when you blow it, *i.e.* sinning badly, and come to recognize the fact, then it's time to respond to the Lord (and anyone else you hurt). You throw yourself at their mercy, confessing, apologizing, and asking for forgiveness.

Being able to apologize is the greatest show of humility possible to a man (Luke 18:14). We sinners also have the huge responsibility to forgive others when they respond to their conscience and ask for our forgiveness.

**How to Overcome Guilt and Heal Shame**

Jesus once asked a group of hypocrites who were condemning him of blasphemy, "*Why do you have such evil thoughts in your hearts? Is it easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up and walk?'* So, I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Jesus then told a lame man, "*Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!*” (Matthew 9:1-6).

Jesus first forgave the man, which drew the ire of the hypocrites. His rhetorical question to the Pharisees was a statement saying it was easier to forgive a person's sins then to physically heal the man. So, Jesus healed the man, proving that he had the authority to also forgive people's sins.

People need to take this teaching from Jesus to heart. We have to understand that having our sins permanently forgiven is much more important than being physically healed; or, then getting our felt needs met.

The prostitute had her sins, her guilt, her shame healed by Jesus. Because God removed that terrible burden from her heart, she experienced full joy. So much joy, in fact, that she took her valuable perfume and honored Christ by washing and anointing his tired feet. She perfectly modeled for us exactly how to deal with guilt.

She loved Jesus because she recognized herself as totally vile, lost from her Creator, and unworthy of forgiveness. She knew Jesus was her only hope to be restored to a loving relationship with God.

Suddenly, the Holy Spirit filled her wretched body and corrupt soul with Living Water. She felt his forgiveness run through her dirty soul, washing it clean, and turning her crimson stains as white as snow.

She was born again! The immoral woman became a renewed work of God and an honorable woman. She can now forget the past and move on to a bright future (Philippians 3:13-14). That's the key, you see.

No longer was she only beautiful on the outside, but she became beautiful on the inside. God recreated her into a woman who would bring him great glory. The prostitute became another of Jesus' greatest miracles!
Romans 6:20-23 is a terrific passage to contemplate and seal this lesson into your heart. Paul wrote that in our natural state we were slaves to sin, which resulted in SHAME. Something to note here, additionally, is that shame isn't the end of it. If we have unforgiven sin for which we're accountable, we'll also suffer eternal doom.

However, once forgiven, once we're freed from the chains of sin, we're free to live a new life. We can do those things that lead to holiness and which also lead to eternal life.

Romans 6:23 summarizes God's great salvation truth, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Do you want to love God with "much love?" Then let him forgive all of your sins. Repent for the fact that you're a sinner from birth and that you have committed many sins against him. Acknowledge your sin, confess them, apologize, vow to stop chasing more lusts and temptations, and devote yourself to the study and obedience to God's word, the Bible. That's a pretty good deal, wouldn't you say?

**Grasp This!**

Similar to Jesus healing the shame of the harlot, your shame can also be healed. But, you have to first count the cost of accepting God's offer.

Here's a situation... A person hears the gospel message and then decides to accept it or reject it. If they accept the gospel of salvation by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9); and, Jesus then accepts them into the family (John 15:16), all is well.

However, for those who contemplate the sacrifices that come with true salvation and discipleship, but conclude that they cannot give up their love for certain worldly things, they'll be rejected by Jesus (Mark 10:21-24).

An insincere prayer effort also fails to open the door of salvation, because God cannot be fooled - He knows your heart.

The problem with the people who hear the gospel but can't decide to accept it is this: They are deceived by Satan into thinking the things of the world are better than the riches of God. They can also be self-deluded by their own sinful hearts into thinking the same, that is, that this world offers greater riches than God does.

It's a sad reality, but true. So, if you're one of these deceived persons, please shake off the delusion and look past the foreseeable future into eternity. Realize that the place you'll spend eternity is dependent upon your humble submission to God's gospel - the Holy Bible.

Your personal salvation brings these heavenly riches for starters: a clear conscience, a forgiven soul, an enriched earthly life, and an eternity with God, Jesus Christ, their angels, and the forgiven saints of all time. This will all take place in an incredibly beautiful and majestic
heavenly home called The New Jerusalem.

Every living person has a God-given responsibility to accept God's offer of salvation. To neglect one's duty leads to eternal death, of which a taste is given here...

The opposite of heaven is hell, which includes the absence of all good things and good people. Plus, you'll have a guilty conscience tormenting you forever and ever. Your sin will always be part of you, and you will forever be punished for it.

The only way to remove your sin once and for all, is by the blood of Jesus (John 14:6).

Jesus Healing Shame Discussion Questions:
1) Paul tells us to keep a clear conscience many times (e.g. 2 Timothy 1:3). How is that task maintained and permanently accomplished? (see Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 4:17-24).
2) Those who are forgiven of more sins, love God more than other people (Luke 7:47). Give examples of that biblical truth that you've witnessed in your own life, or in the life of others.
3) The born again salvation experience brings with it a renewed life. Can or will a real Christian's bad sin, and subsequent shipwrecked conscience (1 Timothy 1:19), be forgiven by God? (see 1 John 2:1; Psalm 145:14,18-19).

Jesus Healing Shame Bible Verses:
But each one is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it has conceived, bears sin; and the sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, nor turning shadow. James 1:14-17.

Blessed is he whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD doesn't impute iniquity, in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silence, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me. My strength was sapped in the heat of summer. Psalm 32:1-4 NHEB.

I acknowledged my sin to you. I did not hide my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the LORD, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this, let everyone who is godly pray to you in a time when you may be found. Surely when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach to him. You are my hiding place. You will preserve me from trouble. You will surround me with songs of deliverance. Psalm 32:5-7 NHEB.

Healing Shame Miracle Prayer:
Dear Lord, Thank you for showing me that you forgive people who believe that you are the only answer to sin. Your forgiveness, Father, is incredible. Your forgiveness liberates me from sin, guilt, shame, punishment, and death. Thank you for your miracle of healing my shame, Jesus. Your persecution and death made it all possible. I love you, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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