



The Good News

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Shame

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“You should be ashamed of yourself!”

What young boy (and I assume girl too, though I am without experience there) hasn't heard this from their parents at one time—and likely many additional times? It's a chastisement, a means of conveying to us that we've done something wrong or shameful. Being ashamed or feeling shame is not, in our modern language, culture, and context, a good thing. However, being able to feel shame for something *is*. Stealing a fellow student's lunch money and feeling no shame whatsoever is a problem. Feeling guilt and shame afterward is a product of being taught that stealing another person's belongings is wrong, evil, hurtful, etc. Shame comes as a result of knowledge of right and wrong: with no knowledge that what you do is wrong, you cannot feel shame for that act. Of course our culture has a lot of universally accepted guidelines that fall within the Bible's definitions of right and wrong; theft, murder, harm done to another person for reasons other than self-defense are all shunned in society, just as they're condemned by God. It's not hard to understand why a person should feel shame for most of these rather obvious wrongdoings. There is, however, any number of things that the Bible condemns that society doesn't and, in some cases, actually encourages. It is made more difficult through various means—peer pressure, professional requirements, social status—to remain loyal to the word of God and still maintain our same friends, job, status, etc. Often, those pressures attempt to shame us for our beliefs. They wish to make us ashamed of God.

Why shouldn't we be ashamed of the Lord, or of His Word, or of His will? The quick answer is that the result will mean condemnation for those that are ashamed of being children of the Lord. **Luke 12:9** tells us, “*but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.*” If one is ashamed of the Lord, will he voluntarily claim allegiance to the Lord

before men who would punish him for such a claim? Why should he? That person will lose whatever it is he values that society grants him by distancing himself from God and His will. Right now, the gay and lesbian community is wielding an increasingly heavier stick in cultural and political arenas. They are boycotting those people, businesses and communities who openly stand in opposition to their desires to live their lives according to their will, and not the will of God. They are attempting to shame anyone who does not share their views into silence, reducing the opposition to their desires. Many of us have friends that will—and do—think less of us for going to services on Sunday evening during the Super Bowl. Some will make comments to the effect of, “wasn't Sunday morning enough,” or, “it's only one night, can't you skip out one night? God's not going to mind you missing for this.” Maybe its friends asking you to come over for a party on Saturday night, and you know that going will make it difficult to be at services Sunday morning, or that going will lend your assent to some of the behavior you know will be taking place that is very clearly condemned by God.

Sometimes loyalty to God costs us in certain ways now. But as **Luke 12:8** says, “*And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God,*” the sacrifice of not being ashamed to own our Lord is repaid in eternal life. When kept in the proper context, how can any of us look at God and His will for us with shame? How can we look at that with anything other than eternal gratitude and faithfulness? Paul says in **Rom. 1:16**, “*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...*”. If the Gospel is the power of God to salvation, then how dare we be ashamed of it.