

Ashamed No More

Genesis 2:25-3:21

Dealing with our guilt and shame is what the whole Bible is about. ... Jesus took our shame, hanging in public, numbered with the criminals. He took our guilt by taking our sin on himself and paying the price for it-death. He did this even though he had no reason for either shame or guilt, because he was a perfect man. ...Why? So guilt and shame would not hold us ... We would quit hiding, quit excusing, quit blaming, and quit rising to our own defense. - Paul D. Tripp

1. The next time you have dinner with your parents, imagine if they asked you, "So, what are you learning at church these days?" and you responded, "We're going through a seven-week sermon series called *God & Sex*." How do you think they would respond?
2. Within mainstream culture, media and society, how much is shame associated with the topic of sex/sexuality? How about within a Christian community of a local church?

Read Genesis 3:1-8

3. How does the enemy (serpent) attempt to distort the Word of God and cast doubt on the goodness of God (vv. 1-5)?
4. What are some potential consequences of having an inaccurate biblical understanding of sexuality? Furthermore, how does belief in God's goodness, or lack thereof, correlate to our sexual ethic?
5. Notably, Adam and Eve hid from one another (behind '*fig leaves*') before they hid from God (vv. 7-8). Give some examples of how shame can create distance, dissonance and distrust in the following relationships:
 - men & women (dating, marriage):
 - family of origin dynamics (parents, siblings, etc.):
 - church community/spiritual friendships:
6. What are some ways that Christians, struggling with shame, attempt to "hide from the presence of God" (v. 8)? How does the good news of the Gospel offer hope, healing and freedom to those who feel 'shacked' by shame?

Read Genesis 3:9-13, 20-21

7. As you read these verses, what do you assume was God's tone of voice when He was asking these questions of Adam and Eve (vs. 9, 11, 13)?
 - What does our assumption reveal about our view of God's character?
 - How would viewing God as full of compassion, grace and steadfast love (*Psalm 103:8*) impact our sense of shame and weight of guilt?
8. How does God's act of "clothing" Adam and Eve (v. 21) parallel what Christ did for us on the cross?
 - When's the last time you paused to reflect upon and personally thank Jesus for covering you with His righteousness (see *2 Corinthians 5:21, Colossians 3:3*)?
9. **Read Hebrews 12:1-2.** How do these verses help us stay focused on Christ (v. 2) more than the sins that cling closely to us (v. 1)? How can our small group specifically encourage and pray for you to keep "*running with endurance the race that is set before you*" (v. 1)?