

I. Introduction

- A. Today is part five in our summertime series: Grace Powered Living.
- B. Grace is a doctrine, a teaching, yes, it is that.
- C. But it is more. Grace is a power, a force, a mysterious influence on the deepest parts of your life. So in this series we are looking at how the Spirit of God brings the grace of God to the deepest parts of you. In other words, we are looking at God's wisdom on human emotion.
- D. I invite with you to think with me today and one of the most painful and pervasive problems we all deal with. Our topic today is... **Shame Detox**
- E. I want to say right away that there is good shame and bad shame, healthy shame and unhealthy shame, productive shame and unproductive shame.
- F. Today I'm going to talk about the unproductive, unhealthy, and bad shame. So you don't have to email me and tell me that I said shame is bad when actually some shame is good, and our society could use a little more shame. I'm with you, okay?
- G. Let's go back to the very beginning of time to understand what shame is and how to get past it.

II. *And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."* (Genesis 2:18)

- Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.* (Genesis 2:24, 25, NKJV)
- A. These verses from the dawn of human history are packed with truths that ripple down to today.
 - B. Here, God gives four laws of human relating that ripple down to today. Let's look at those, because that will set up God's wisdom on shame.

III. Four Laws of Human Relationships

A. **The Law of Bonding**

1. God says in verse 18, "It is not good that a man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."
2. God designed humans to create a bond of affection in a relationship called marriage. That bond of affection gives us safety, warmth, togetherness, and attachment.
3. I'm going to do a whole teaching on bonding at the end of this series, so I'll just say a few things.
4. God said that a man should leave his father and mother — leave them physically and leave them emotionally. He should be joined to his wife — the Hebrew phrase means to enter a lifelong committed relationship with her. This is the institution of marriage. And, from the beginning, this institution of marriage is God's only context for a man and woman becoming one flesh.
5. Marriage is God's plan for joy, for healing, and for love in our lives. It is also God's plan for bringing up children.
6. God said it is not good that a person should go through life alone, so God instituted marriage.
7. At Pathway, we believe in marriage. We stand up for the institution of marriage. We see marriage as two equals, a male and a female, in a lifelong union. This is God's design, God's ideal.
 - a) Do we live up to God's ideal all the time? No. But it's what we strive for by the grace of God.
8. There's a whole lot more to say here, but let me add this.
 - a) There are a lot of men and women who have left their father and mother physically, but are still stuck with them emotionally... that failure to fully launch is where shame begins and it messes with your marital bond. Shame is a person stuck in the damaging parts of their past.
 - b) You have to leave... forsake... and process your past so you can be free and healthy to love.
9. Don't go through life alone. Go get yourself a quality marriage partner, and start building a decades-long intimate, fun, funny, playful, purposeful, God-centered marital bond.
10. Moses said, commit, become one flesh, and start this decades-long bonding process. That's the plan.

B. **The Law of Differentiation**

1. No matter how intimate you are, you never become the other person, and you never lose yourself in the other person.
2. The principle of differentiation comes from the phrase "and they were both..." The Hebrew word translated "both" is the normal word for the number two. Moses literally wrote two numbers in this verse:
 - a) One flesh. Two people.
3. Marriage makes two people one flesh, but it doesn't mean you become one person.
4. There are always two distinct persons in every bonded, marriage relationship.
5. Do you know what this means?
6. This means boundaries. Marriage does not erase personal boundaries. Therefore...
 - a) Marriage does not give you the right to control another person.
 - b) It does not give you the right to edit another person.
 - c) It does not give you the right to exploit another person.
 - d) Or live vicariously through another person.
 - e) Marriage does not give you the right to hurt, harm, deceive, correct, mess with, smother, enmesh with, abandon, cheat on, sneak around on, take from, domineer, ignore, yell at, use, abuse, or misuse your spouse, your kids, or anyone else.
 - (1) In marriage your job is to create a place of safety for your family.
 - (2) You create safety by creating trust.
 - (3) You create trust by respecting their personhood and their dignity and their boundaries.
 - (a) Once you break those boundaries, you lose trust. God's grace is there for you, but it's a lot of work to stage a comeback.
 - (4) You are not your spouse. Your spouse is not you.

(5) You are not your children. Your children are not you.

(6) You are not your parents. Your parents are not you.

7. The law of bonding pulls us together. The law of differentiation holds us apart... just enough for two authentic individuals to really shine together...
8. God wove these laws of human relationships into our hearts from the very beginning.
9. They are all right here in the words of Moses in Genesis.

C. The Law of Transparency

1. Moses writes that they were naked. Naked comes into English from an old english verb "nake." To *nake* means to strip. You could nake the bark from a tree or the paint from a table. Naked (one syllable) means stripped. Exposed. Uncovered.
2. That's how Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden. Now, the primary application of this word here is physical. Moses tells us that they weren't wearing any clothes. But he goes beyond the physical because he talks about shame, a function of the inner life.
3. The law of transparency says that intimate bonding requires that you gradually strip yourself of pretense and false identities in the presence of your spouse.
4. Naked and not ashamed.
5. Nothing hidden. Nothing secret. Nothing fake.
 - a) Marriage, ideally, provides a safe place to let down our masks. It allows us to know and to be known.
6. Because until somebody knows the real you, without your masks and your false identities, and loves the real you, grace will always be just a theory. You will always feel insecure. If they knew the real me would they love the real me? That's the question your soul never stops asking.
7. Once a person has proven that they respect you and that your boundaries are sacred, and once you've made that mutual commitment called marriage, you can be naked with them — emotionally, spiritually, physically — and not ashamed.

D. The Law of Shame

1. Moses writes "they were naked and they were not ashamed." This is a really big deal. They were not ashamed.
2. And there's an important nuance in the Hebrew verb. Out of 155 times this word is used in the whole Bible, this is the one and only time it is spelled in a very specific way. It is a Hebrew reflexive form, and it means... they were naked and they did not shame themselves.
3. From the beginning of time, God is saying that no one can shame you but you... and that you can be fully transparent and fully unashamed.
4. Some of you can hardly imagine life without shame.
 - a) You grew up in a shame-based family.
 - b) You entered a shame-based marriage.
 - c) You attended a shame-based church.
 - d) You work at a shame-based company.
 - (1) The giant foam finger of shame is wagging in your face every single day.
 - (2) And now, you're shaming your children or your spouse or anyone else you can.
 - (a) The law of shame shreds the law of bonding — it keeps you isolated and alone.
 - (b) It shreds the law of differentiation — whatever relationships you do have are enmeshed and clingy and dependent.
 - (c) It shreds the law of transparency — because shame hides the real you beneath a cloak of secrecy.
 - (d) It is painful. It is damaging. It is not God's plan for you.
 - e) So what is shame?
5. Shame is related to guilt but they are different.
 - a) **In guilt, your conscience pings you because you have done something wrong.**
 - (1) We should all be very grateful that God gave us a conscience. And especially grateful if your neighborhood has one.
 - (2) Ideally, this healthy sensitivity to guilt keeps us kind and respectful toward one another.
 - (3) When you feel guilty because you have done something wrong, God does not want you to beat yourself up over it. He does not want you to turn away from him.
 - (4) When you feel guilty because you have done something wrong, God wants you to bring your heart and mind back to the Cross of Christ. He wants you to remember Jesus dying there. He wants you to remember that Jesus was paying for your sins. He wants you to hear again in your imagination those beautiful words, It is finished.
 - b) **Guilt is the human response designed by God to keep us alert to sin, and to drive us again and again and again to that old rugged Cross, the place of our redemption and forgiveness.**
 - (a) That is guilt.
 - (b) But shame is different.
 - i) Guilt says, I did something bad. Shame says, I am bad.
6. Shame
 - a) Shame is what happens when your flesh takes over your conscience and your guilt.
 - b) Shame beats you up because you see no solution to your guilt.
 - (1) **Shame is the voice in your head saying, "I am hopelessly flawed."**
 - (a) Shame leaves a person feeling less valuable than other human beings.
 - i) It's the voice that says, I am a mistake. It's not my behavior, it's my being, and there's no hope for change.
 - (b) This voice is a liar.

- i) It tells you you have to work twice as hard to be half as good as other people. It tells you you never measure up. It tells you to isolate from others because you're not worthy of others... It tells you to avoid others because they're simply not safe.
 - (c) With shame, a person is embarrassed at just being themselves.
- (2) David
 - (a) There's a story where king David summons the son of his friend, Jonathan. David intends to bless him.
 - (b) But the son feels unworthy. He is broken. He is afraid. He has a physical disability. And when he begins to speak before David he asks, Who am I that you should notice a dead dog such as myself?
 - (c) This is shame. He's had a really hard life. He calls himself a dead dog. He's internalized his struggles and blames himself.
 - (d) What name do you call yourself?
 - (e) Are you...
 - i) Unwanted? Unloved? A big mistake? Stupid? Ugly? The wrong shape, wrong size, wrong look?
 - (f) I am telling you, these voices are not from God. These voices are lies from the devil.
- c) **Shame is the script in your soul saying I must be punished.**
 - (1) Under shame a person feels a need to balance the scales of justice, and they don't even know why. They think they're bad, and they don't see a solution.
 - (2) So, without being conscious of why, they pick up self-destructive drives, self-sabotaging patterns, self-harming habits.
 - (3) They don't even know where it came from. They're probably not aware it's happening. All they know is something is way wrong about their life, and they don't know why.
 - (a) This is shame.
 - (4) In our fallen world, shame gets programmed into us when we're kids. Imperfect parents, traumatic moments, scary stuff, cruelty, abuse, abandonment, neglect, kids raising kids... shame is this alien life form implanted in your chest, growing and waiting to take over.
 - (a) *but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea.* (Matthew 18:6, NASB).
 - (5) Some people seem to spend their whole lives stumbling. Falling from one problem into another problem. From one mess into another. They call themselves cursed or unlucky, demonized or judged by God. It's none of those things.
 - (6) What actually happened is your parents gave you a giant shove in a certain direction. If you were raised in a messed up home, you were "caused to stumble" and shame took root.
 - (7) I'm so sorry. I feel that with you.
 - (a) What happened to you in childhood is not your fault.
 - (b) But what you do with it in adulthood is now your responsibility. And there is tremendous hope.
 - (8) So shame was embedded into your soul, a voice that says "I am hopelessly flawed, and I must be punished."
 - (9) But it gets deeper.
 - (10) Because shame is a very specific punishment.
- d) **Shame is the pattern in your life that says I will punish myself by judging myself unworthy of love.**
 - (1) Toxic shame is you, becoming judge and jury, and sentencing yourself to a life not worth loving.
 - (2) When God came down to talk with Adam and Eve in the garden after they sinned, they were hiding from him.
 - (3) Adam said, I was afraid, and I hid myself. And he covered himself up with fig leaves.
 - (4) This is what shame always does.
 - (a) Shame hides. Shame hides from love. Shame hides from God. Shame hides from friendships. Shame puts on masks because the real self cannot risk being known. Shame projects a false self, because if they reject that, they're still not rejecting you. Shame makes you feel responsible for the emotions of other people who should be responsible for themselves. Shame isolates. Shame withdraws.
 - i) The verdict is in. I'm not worth loving.
 - (5) Maybe there's a part of you today that doesn't believe you can be loved. You won't pursue love. You don't expect love. You hold yourself back from love. And when someone offers you love, you're suspicious. You have a hard time receiving it.
 - (a) You're convinced that people can't be trusted.
 - (b) You're convinced that love is conditional, and you can lose it for breaking rules you didn't even know were rules.
 - (c) You've been trained to walk on eggshells.
 - (d) You've been trained to be hyper vigilant, totally clued in to the slightest clues of disapproval or danger.
 - (e) You been trained to keep your shields up and to protect your core self, which is truly precious, at all times.
 - (6) It's exhausting. It makes you numb. It's just too much to deal with, so you check out.
 - (a) Anything to deaden the pain of feeling so profoundly unlovable and unloved.
 - (7) This is the birth of addiction, the birth of perfectionism, the birth of adultery and affairs, the birth of sexual addiction, the birth of over-achievement, legalism, workaholism, despair, criminal behavior, withdrawing into a fantasy world, and a thousand other distractions from the risky, beautiful love God designed you for.
 - (8) Shame is the voice in your head that punishes yourself by judging yourself unworthy of love, and bringing into your life all kinds of distractions and malfunctions to protect you from the risks of bonding, differentiation, and transparency..

- (9) Genesis says that Adam and Eve were naked and they were not ashamed. Literally, he writes that they were naked and they didn't not shame themselves...

IV. Shame Detox

- A. So now, let's get to the detox part of my message. What is the biblical solution to shame? How do we detox from shame?
1. There's no quick fix... you have a lifetime of momentum in the wrong direction, and yes, God can do a miracle, but you have to do what Paul says in Romans 12:2... be transformed by the renewing your mind.
 2. There's no quick prayer... no magical experience... no spiritual guru to detox your soul from the power of shame.
- B. What do you need?
1. **You need to go deeper into REDEMPTIVE RELATIONSHIPS.**
 - a) You are invited by the shepherd of your soul to come out of your shell. You are invited by the one who knows you best to let yourself know and be known.
 - (1) *Confess your faults, your shortcomings, your struggles to one another and pray for one another that you might be healed.* (James 5:16)
 - b) This might mean sitting with a counselor or a therapist. Celebration Recovery. It might mean Care Coaches here at Pathway. This might mean sharing with our prayer team or talking with one of our pastors. Or might mean starting from scratch to build friendships you can trust. Small groups. Ministry teams. Anything that gets you interacting and talking and forging healthy bonds.
 - c) Shame thrives in secrecy, so bringing your uncomfortable truth into the grace of a relationship unravels the knots it ties.
 - d) Next level...
 2. **You need to go deeper into THE CROSS of Christ.**
 - a) Remember, shame is guilt turned toxic and shoved into your identity.
 - b) And the only solution to guilt is the shed blood of Jesus Christ. You can't pray guilt away, you can't rationalize guilt away, you can't rationalize or redefine guilt away. Your conscience won't let you.
 - c) You need the full weight of Jesus Christ's death on the Calvary's Cross to balance the scales of justice on your behalf.
 - (1) What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. So be saved.
 - d) But if you are saved... you already know that. But you need to go deeper with it. It can't be a superficial knowledge. You need to build muscle on the wondrous depths of the meaning of the Cross.
 - (1) The atoning work that takes your sins as far from you as the east is from the west.
 - (2) The propitiatory work declaring God is satisfied with you, just as much as as he is satisfied with Christ.
 - (3) The justifying work by which God has declared you good enough for heaven and good enough for God because of the imputed righteousness of Christ... you've got nothing left to prove and no one left to impress because of the Cross of Christ. God's approval makes everyone else's approval optional.
 - (a) Go deeper into the Cross.
 - (4) It is a forgiving work so profound that you couldn't lose your salvation if you tried. A forgiveness so strong that even on your very worst day, the love of God for you doesn't even flicker.
 - (a) **Shame cannot coexist where the fullness of Christ's sacrifice is embraced... and Scripture alone can take you there.**
 - (b) It takes the constant intake of the Word of God to make the shaming committee inside your head just shut up.
 - e) Because the more heavily you lean your psychology on the Cross of Christ, the less space the devil has to slather you with shame.
 3. **You need to go deeper into your NEW IDENTITY in Christ.**
 - a) If anyone is in Christ, you are a new creation. You have a new name, a new status, and a new identity.
 - b) Best of all, you have new labels.
 - (1) Shame says you're garbage, but God says your his Treasure.
 - (2) Shame labels you condemned, but God labels you Forgiven.
 - (3) Shame calls you unlovable, but God calls you Beloved, and shouts his love for you to the highest heavens.
 - (4) Shame hides the real you, but God unburies you and calls you by name.
 - (5) Shame calls you unworthy, but God calls you Qualified.
 - (6) Shame calls you damaged goods, but God calls you his redeemed, beautiful, just right, made whole, perfected, completed, cleansed, forgiven, grace-filled, mercy saturated, truth-oriented child of heaven and royal saint of God most high. There are no missing pieces. You've got nothing to hide. And there's nothing left to prove.
 - (7) You are in Christ, and in him, you can do all things.
 - c) And when the devil, the serpent, that tiresome critic and accuser of the people of God comes to whisper shame, and beat you down, and remind you of how shameful and unworthy you are, you will be ready. You will punch him in the teeth and kick him in the gut, and knock him to the ground with the very words of God in Scripture to tell him that no one can shame you and make it stick... because God has declared you a royal saint of God Most High, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, and qualified to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light.
 - d) Get behind me Satan.
 - e) I am who God says I am, no matter what bullies and mean girls might say, and I step into that identity every single day.
 - f) If you want to rise above, you need to go deeper into your new identity in Christ. You are richer, stronger, and better than you have ever believed.