

REVIEW

- In this series, we are discussing how to not let our emotions rule our lives.
- Our emotions are God-given—they are a gift that allows us to experience life more fully. They connect what goes on inside us with the circumstances of life.
- Emotions are incredibly influential in how we live our lives, but they are also very unreliable. They can change quickly, and often we don't even understand why we feel what we feel.
- Our emotions often change when we go through varying circumstances. When we get squeezed, stuff comes out, and it is often the stuff that we don't want people to see.
- If we aren't careful, we can hurt ourselves and others with how we respond to our emotions.

GUILT

- Today's topic is shame, but in order to understand it, we need to look at guilt, as well.
- Guilt can have two meanings:
 - the state of being guilty of some offense or sin
 - the emotion we feel when we know we've done something wrong
- Guilt in and of itself is not bad. It can actually be good.
 - Guilt helps us regulate our sinful nature. Because we feel guilt, we often don't do something we want, or we stop a behavior that we have done in the past.
 - Guilt is designed to move us towards God. When we have sinned, we are supposed to turn to the One who can forgive us.

Psalm 51:4 (NLT) Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just.

- When we justify our guilt or making excuses, we hurt ourselves, and often others.
 - Unresolved guilt causes a debt/debtor relationship.
 - We experience guilt as a weight—often terrible weight.
- When we allow guilt to do what it is designed to do, turn us to God, it's a good thing. But when we try to ignore our guilt, that sin imbeds itself in us and becomes a part of us.

SHAME

- The difference between guilt and shame: Guilt says, "I did something bad." Shame says, "I am bad."
- There are some things that are such gross violations of God's Word, so hurtful to others, I have a hard time not separating them from my identity.
 - When I refuse to admit my guilt and allow God to take it from me, at some point, it does the same thing; it becomes part of my identity. This is where shame comes from.

"Shame drains us of energy and withers our desire to exist. Like other emotions of flight (fear and despair), shame is a withdrawal from engagement. Its typical posture is eyes downcast, shoulders slumped, heart disengaged."

- Dan Allender, *Cry of the Soul*

- Most of us seek to escape from shame by spending our energy insulating ourselves from anything or anyone that might provoke exposure. Satan wants us to believe we are worthless, and then he wants us to isolate ourselves from anyone or anything that might speak the truth of God into our lives.

"To have shame as an identity is to believe that one's being is flawed, that one is defective as a human being."

- John Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You*

- There is an element of truth in this statement. While shame should not be our identity, the fact is, we are flawed compared to God's original design. We feel this, especially when we sin. In fact, scripture indicates that those who are free from shame are the most arrogant and God-hating:

Philippians 3:18-19 (NLT) ¹⁸For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.

- There are things we should feel ashamed about. That’s just not our identity.
- Do not underestimate the depth of spiritual attack that goes along with guilt and shame. Satan will be whispering in your ear throughout the entire process because he wants to destroy the identity God has for you.
 - Shame is highly correlated with addiction, depression, violence, aggression, bullying, suicide, and eating disorders.

CONDEMNATION AND REDEMPTION

- When we allow guilt to do what it was designed to do—draw us to God—we can avoid allowing shame to control us.
- When we admit our guilt, it leaves us standing condemned. We’re exposed for failing and now deserve the consequences of our condemnation.
- But you don’t have to be defined by your past, and you don’t have to deny your past.
 - If we understand what Jesus did for us, we recognize that He sees us, accepts us, loves us, and already paid the price to redeem us. (See also **Romans 8:1**)
 - To redeem means, “*gain or regain possession of (something) in exchange for payment*”¹
 - That’s the key to it all! We can’t pay for our own sin, but the good news is, Jesus already did it. He died on the cross to cover all our guilt and shame.

1 Peter 1:18-19 (NIV) ¹⁸For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

- It doesn’t do any good to hide our guilt from God. He already knows—and he still loves us!

Paul had more reason to doubt this than most because of what he had done pre-Christ.

1 Timothy 1:12-15 (NLT) ¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him, ¹³even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus. ¹⁵This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” - and I am the worst of them all.

FOUR IMPLICATIONS OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS BASED ON FORGIVENESS, NOT CONDEMNATION:

1. You forfeit the right to condemn yourself because you are not yours to condemn.
 - When Jesus redeemed you, he bought you.
2. Your guilt will remind you, but it will not define you.
3. You forfeit the right to condemn others because that would make you a hypocrite.
 - Typically, the more judgmental you are, the less aware you are of your own sin.
4. You are free to make restitution without expectations or excuses.
 - Not taking ownership for our sin “because we are forgiven” is not Christianity.
 - As Christians, we make restitution. We ask for forgiveness.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

Passages to consider: Romans 8:1-4; Proverbs 4:23; Philippians 3:12-4:1

- What stood out to you from the sermon?
 1. How did you become aware of some of the “bosses” in your life?
 2. Read Romans 8:1-4 and Proverbs 4:23 **OR** choose a passage from the sermon. Read it twice. A) What do you discover about God in this passage? A) What do you discover about people in this? B) What do you discover about what can be the boss of you?
 3. How would you explain the difference between guilt and condemnation to a grade-schooler?
 4. What has been your experience with guilt or condemnation being a boss of you? A) How do you recognize their voices and presence in your thinking?
 5. What role does confession have in your relationship with God? What helps you practice that regularly?
 6. How do you experience forgiveness? A) How do you express forgiveness in your relationships? Think about family, friends, fellow Christ-followers, neighbors, and co-workers.

Passages to prepare for next week, You’re Not the Boss of Me (Week 4) Anger: Proverbs 15:1; James 1:20; Ephesians 4:26-27,31-32

¹Definition of *redeemed* taken from the *Oxford Dictionary*

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