**REGRET AND SHAME PART 2**

Sunday School Lesson 8

*FORMER THINGS*

Jeremiah 3:25

3/27/2022

**Introduction:** During last week’s lesson, we took some time to consider the shame that often accompanies our regrets over past decisions. As a reminder, shame is the painful feeling of humiliation, distress, or dishonor that comes as a result of wrong behavior. We’ve already observed that shame has accompanied regret since the very fall of mankind. Adam and Eve were the first people to have to deal with shame, and that feeling was quickly followed in their own child Cain. Mankind has been dealing with shame ever since that time. We also observed that shame is based on our regret over failure to achieve a set standard. The Bible shows us that we should be ashamed when we fail to obey the standard that the Lord has established in His Word. Unfortunately, the world also tries to cause us shame when we don’t live up to societal expectations. We also understand that shame may be unnecessarily increased by our prideful expectations. We tend to set expectations for ourselves that are not realistic. These expectations are a direct result of our pride. Thus, we find ourselves ashamed when we don’t live up to the image that we have tried to make of ourselves. Instead, as Christians, we are to remain humble and recognize just how much we need the Lord and His Spirit to help us daily in our decision making. Let’s see some other observations about regret and shame:

1. **IT’S VERY DIFFICULT TO HAVE OUR SHAMEFUL REGRETS UNCOVERED.**
2. **Notice that there is a tendency for man to try to hide his shame (Isaiah 47:3; Ezekiel 16:54; Hosea 4:7; Proverbs 28:13; Ephesians 5:12; Genesis 3:10).** We hit on this a little bit in the lesson two weeks ago and again last week when we observed the difficulty of seeking forgiveness from others. It is a very difficult thing to have our shame from past regrets uncovered. For this reason, we tend to tuck our shame down as deep as we can get it to go. We will often go to great lengths to prevent that shame from coming out. This behavior typically leads to even more regrets and poor decision-making taking place. Going back to the Garden, we see this to be the behavior of Adam and Eve. They sought to make clothes out of fig leaves in order to cover up their shame. Of course, we know that we cannot cover over our shame before the Lord. We might be able to conceal potential shame from others so that they cannot see how we have failed those expectations previously mentioned. Regardless of whether we are successfully able to do this or not, we still have to deal with the internal pain of that shame and the knowledge that we have failed the Lord and maybe even others that we love as well.
3. **Notice that while there is some relief when our guilt is made known, it is still very painful to have it uncovered (2 Samuel 12:7-13; Psalm 19:12; 90:8; Proverbs 27:5; 25:2; Joshua 7:18-26).** We’ve probably all experienced the relief that accompanies the revealing of suppressed guilt. It takes great effort and energy to hide and conceal those regrets and failures. Consider the dilemma that Achan faced. He had taken something that he shouldn’t have. He knew he was guilty. He hopefully had some regrets over what he had done. After all, his decision was so foolish. How could he think he would get away with it? I believe it’s safe to assume that Achan felt some relief when the truth was finally out there. Unfortunately, Achan still had to own up to his wrongdoing. David had a similar situation. Knowing the character of David, it’s likely that he was eaten up with regret and internal shame over what he had done with Bathsheba and her husband. Just like Achan, David knew he was guilty. Yet, he was not eager to have his shame revealed. When Nathan confronted David over his sin, David was quick to own it and likely relieved to finally let it out. Yet, the shame that David still had to carry was very difficult to bear.
4. **IT’S VERY DEMANDING TO CARRY THE SHAME THAT COMES FROM OUR REGRETS.**

.

1. **Notice that there is a tendency for man to be swallowed up in his shame (Jeremiah 51:51; 3:25; Micah 7:10; Psalm 44:15; 109:29).** The Bible mentions, on several occasions, where shame covered someone up. This is how powerful shame can be. It so easily can swallow us up. It makes us unrecognizable without it. Jeremiah wrote extensively about the shame of Israel. He was experiencing great shame on behalf of the sins of the nation. He noted that the shame had covered their faces. This means that it was all anyone saw when they looked at them. Shame has a very recognizable look. Unfortunately, we all know too well what it looks like. Jeremiah also described their condition by stating that they lie down in their shame. Their shame covered them. It followed them even to their place of rest. There are many people in the Bible who are covered with shame. When their names are mentioned, all you think about are the wrong decisions that they made. Their reputations are covered with shame. That good name that they might have sought to achieve never happened.
2. **Notice that there is only one shame that is expressly found to be everlasting (Daniel 12:2; Jeremiah 23:34-40).** In the sixth lesson of this series, we noted that you may have to carry your regrets for a period of time in order to be able to deal with them. In like manner, we understand that there may also be shame that we have to carry along with those regrets. The good news is that there is only one type of shame that will have to be carried forever. That shame is reserved only for those who do not receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. There is no other shame in all of Scripture that is said to be eternal, perpetual, or everlasting. This thought ought to bring us some comfort. Perhaps, there is nothing that you can do now to undo the shame that you are suffering through. After all, one decision can bring such shame that it wipes out anything else people think or remember of you. You may find yourself even now swallowed up with shame. Despite all of this, I can assure you that the shame is not everlasting. You will not have to carry around that shame with you in Heaven for all of eternity!
3. **IT’S VERY DISTRESSING TO SUFFER SHAME CAUSED BY AN INDIRECT SOURCE.**
4. **Notice that we may suffer shame that is caused by the actions of someone else (Proverbs 10:5; 12:4; 14:35; 17:2; 19:26; 28:7).** The Bible makes several references to a child who brings shame to his parents. It also speaks of a wife who brings shame to her husband. It is said that she is as rottenness in his bones! It also speaks of those who bring shame to the Lord. It is very distressing to have to deal with shame that is caused by someone else. As parents, let’s be honest about the reason we respond so harshly when our children misbehave in a public setting. We do it because we are ashamed by their behavior. Likewise, I believe the Lord deals strongly with His children when they bring shame to His name in this world. He hates it. It is greatly distressing. As you learn to deal with the past, you may be faced with trying to figure out how to deal with shame that has been brought on you as the result of the past decisions of someone else. There are those who shame the name of Christians by their behavior, and we are left to deal with those actions. Is the answer to allow that shame to overwhelm and debilitate us? Certainly not.
5. **Notice that your shame does not guarantee your guilt (1 Samuel 20:34; 2 Samuel 19:5; Proverbs 29:15; Hebrews 6:6; 2 Corinthians 9:4).** There are likely some parents studying this lesson today that need to understand the difference between shame and guilt. You have a grown child who has rebelled against the Lord. Perhaps, you have a grown child whose life is best described as a total mess. The Bible tells us that you will sadly have to deal with shame that has been caused by your child. I wish that you did not have to deal with such shame. It’s heartbreaking. Even worse, I’ve found that these wayward children often seek to guilt their parents over past decisions. They do this because it is easier than taking personal accountability for the choices that they have made. Every parent needs to understand that just because you are dealing with shame over the behavior of your children, it does not mean that you are guilty. Is the Lord guilty when we act shamefully against His name? Of course not! Why then do we allow our shame to lead us to the belief that we are guilty? You should own up to the failures of your past as a parent, but that does not make you guilty of your child’s present behavior.
6. **IT’S VERY DREADFUL FOR A BELIEVER TO BE ASHAMED AT HIS COMING.**
7. **Notice that we are to strive to not be ashamed at His coming (1 John 2:28; Luke 9:26).** You may be dealing with the shame of past decisions, but let me tell you something much more dreadful that could happen. You could be ashamed at the coming of the Lord. You could be ashamed when you find yourself standing before Him, and He has nothing to reward you with as it relates to your Christian service. I promise you that the shame from that encounter will far outweigh any earthly shame that might take place. For this reason, we ought to be able to deal with our shame and regrets. Those failures and poor decisions are in the past, but the coming of the Lord is in the future. That means that there is still opportunity to either be unashamed or ashamed. The thief on the cross next to Jesus lived a life of regret and shame. He suffered shame all the way until the very end of his life. Yet, Jesus lovingly and joyfully welcomed this man into Paradise! Overcome your shame by regarding the potential for greater shame.
8. **Notice that we must study the Word of God to prevent us from being an ashamed workman before Him (2 Timothy 2:15).** Paul helped Timothy understand how he could avoid being ashamed before the Lord. He told him that he needed to study the Word of God. He needed to rightly divide the word of truth. When it comes to the shame and regrets that you are dealing with, have you considered the cause for that shame? It could be that you did not study the Word of God before making decisions in your life. Staying in the Word of God will keep you from suffering shame, except for the good shame that believers may have to suffer for His name’s sake. Additionally, let’s be sure to understand what things ought to be shameful and what things ought not to be. Are you more ashamed about some earthly, insignificant thing you did or did not do, or are you more ashamed by a lack of knowledge of the Bible? Let’s not be workman who are going to be ashamed before the presence of the Lord!