

# The Death of Shame

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*"For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."  
(Ephesians 5:12)*

I asked a fellow preacher recently if, at the beginning of his ministry, would he have ever imagined addressing from the pulpit some of the things that we are facing today. We both agreed that no, we never would have, and that every day it is getting worse.

Consider what Albert Barnes, in his 1832 Bible commentary, *Notes on the Whole Bible*, had to say about this in his comments on Ephesians 5:12:



*It is still a shame to speak of the practices of the heathen. Missionaries tell us that they cannot describe the images on the car of Juggernaut, or tell us what is done in the idol temples. All over the world the same thing is true. The cheek of modesty and virtue would be suffused with shame at the very mention of what is done by the worshippers of idols; and the same is true of what is done by multitudes in Christian lands, who are not worshippers of idols. Their deeds cannot be described in the circles of the refined and the delicate; they cannot be told in the presence of mothers and sisters.*

Barnes, who lived from 1798 to 1870, lived in a time when people had a sense of shame.

He continued:

*Is there not emphasis here in the words, "even to SPEAK of those things?" If the apostle would not allow, them to name those things, or to speak of them, is it wise or safe for Christians now to be familiar with the accounts of those practices of pollution, and for ministers to portray them in the pulpit, and for the friends of "moral reform" to describe them before the world? The very naming of those abominations often produces improper associations in the mind; the description creates polluting images before the imagination; the exhibition of pictures, even for the purpose of condemning them, defiles the soul. There are some vices which, from the corruptions of the human heart, cannot be safely described; and it is to be feared that, under the plea of faithfulness, many have done evil by exciting improper feelings, where they should only have alluded to the crime, and then spoken in thunder. Paul did not describe these vices, he denounced them; he did not dwell upon them long enough for the imagination to find employment, and to corrupt the soul. He mentioned the vice, and then he mentioned the wrath of God; he alluded to the sin, and then he spoke of the exclusion from heaven.*

There is no such shame today. Adult men dressed as clownish, grossly exaggerated caricatures of women dance provocatively in our churches and read stories to children in our libraries. Pornographic “literature” is foisted upon our children in our schools and libraries. Mental illness is being celebrated as normal and even heroic as we force our sisters, wives, and daughters to share locker rooms and shower facilities with men who claim to be women. Communities celebrate men and women parading through the streets on Gay Pride days openly engaging in activities the Bible calls abominable. Churches perform and condone same sex marriages while vilifying those who believe the Bible says that marriage is between a man and a woman. Those advocating the killing of unborn children, up to and including at birth (or after) are considered compassionate and caring while those who seek to save the lives of the most vulnerable among us are portrayed as cold and uncaring. Even pedophilia is being groomed as a valid expression of human sexuality, albeit differently attracted.

Things once done in secret are now done openly. Not only done openly but highlighted, glorified, and encouraged in our schools, our workplaces, our public places, and, yes, even in our churches. It is no longer “a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret,” but rather a shame not to speak of them.

Consider, for example, the Riddel homophobia scale, originally developed by Dorothy Riddle in 1973–74 while overseeing research for the American Psychological Association Task Force on Gays and Lesbians. This scale has been used in schools, businesses, and government agencies to assess homophobic attitudes. Essentially, it looks like this:

1. Repulsion: Homosexuality is a 'crime against nature' and a sin. LGBTQ people are strange, sick, crazy, and perverse.
2. Pity: LGBTQ people are born that way and, therefore, should be pitied.
3. Tolerance: Same-sex attractions and gender non-conforming behaviors are just a phase of development that most people outgrow.
4. Acceptance: One needs to make accommodations for LGBTQ people’s differences. LGBTQ are not as valued as heterosexual, gender-conforming people but LGBTQ people should be accepted as long as their behaviors and differences are not flaunted or pushed on others.
5. Support: The rights of LGBTQ people should be protected and safeguarded. Fear, hatred, and intolerance are inexcusable.
6. Admiration: Being an LGBTQ person in our society takes strength. Therefore, I need to examine and improve my own attitudes, values, and behaviors toward LGBT people.
7. Appreciation: There is value in diversity. Homophobic attitudes should be confronted and I am involved in combating homophobia in myself and in others.
8. Nurturance: LGBTQ people are an indispensable part of society. They have valuable gifts to offer and I have deep affection for particular gay and lesbian persons. I celebrate their individuality and their gifts and work as an advocate for the LGBTQ community.

As you can see, the scale goes from very homophobic (Repulsion) to embracing and celebrating LGBTQ people (Nurturance). Most people are surprised to learn that, according to this scale, being accepting of LGBTQ people is still considered homophobic. It is not until you reach Level 5, Support, that you are no longer considered homophobic. Level 4, Acceptance, is still considered homophobic.

The reason, I think, is because at Level 4 you still do not want to see or hear about LGBTQ behaviors and differences. There is still a sense of shame attached to them. It is still considered “a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.” However, when you reach Level 5, the shame attached

to LGBTQ behaviors and differences disappears. From Level 5 on you work to remove any residual shame attached to LGBTQ behaviors and differences that you, those around you, and that society itself may have. It becomes not only a shame not to speak of them, but a shame not to celebrate them.

As our society rushes headlong, striving to be nurturing to the LGBTQ community, we have pushed aside Biblical values and societal norms. And, as shame dies in our society, things once considered shameful have increasingly come out into the open. Those who object are increasingly being painted as narrow-minded, hateful, judgmental, homophobic bigots.

Consider, for example, the recent declaration of March 31 – Easter Sunday of all days – as Transgender Visibility Day with a proclamation by President Joe Biden saying:

*To everyone celebrating Transgender Day of Visibility, I want you to know that your President sees you. The First Lady, the Vice President, the Second Gentleman, and my entire Administration see you for who you are — made in the image of God and deserving of dignity, respect, and support. On this day and every day, we recognize the resilience, strength, and joy of transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people. We celebrate the activism and determination that have fueled the fight for transgender equality. We acknowledge the adversity and discrimination that the transgender community continues to face across our Nation and around the world.*

On the holiest day in the Christian calendar, the Biden Administration went out of its way to bring those who once hid their shameful behaviors out into the open for all the nation to see and celebrate. Then, when the predictable backlash began, they vilified those who objected as narrow-minded, hateful, judgmental, homophobic bigots. The vilification of those who objected was quickly picked up, echoed, and even amplified across the country by leftists in the media. Even left leaning clergy and their deceived church members chimed in saying things like, “This is extra special as it falls on Easter, a day when we are taught to love. We see and love you! Thank you for enriching our lives.” After all, to say otherwise would be judgmental and unloving.

So, when did all this happen? When did shame die in our society? Shame began to die when the pulpits began to forsake the Word of God, the schools began to exclude the mention of God, and our public institutions began to disregard the influence of God.

It is time for God’s people to rise up and urge our nation to turn back to the Bible and reintroduce shame into our increasingly shameless culture. But it will not be easy. We will be vilified, marginalized, silenced, and censored. Remember what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:12-15:

*<sup>12</sup>Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. <sup>13</sup>But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. <sup>14</sup>But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; <sup>15</sup>And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

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