

Finding and Chopping the Spiritual Root of Your Guilt and Shame Issues

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Proverbs tells us that “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Prov. 18:21a). Our words have creative power: power to bless and power to curse. Shame attached itself to Jabez by the very meaning of his name and how it was spoken over him.

Merriam-Webster's defines shame as “a feeling of guilt, regret, or sadness that you have because you know you have done something wrong; ability to feel guilt, regret, or embarrassment; dishonor or disgrace.”

Much of the shame people experience is due to spiritual root issues. In some cases, a person may not have done anything wrong but feels shame as a result of being unwanted or rejected in some manner. Love honors others; it doesn't shame them.

“Love does not traffic in shame and disrespect, nor selfishly seek its own honor” (1 Cor. 13:5a, TPT).

Shame was attached to Jabez's name and identity. When a person comes into the world in these circumstances, it is a lot to overcome. Perhaps you can identify with Jabez. Maybe you were not wanted, born into difficult circumstances or despise your family name. Remember the words of the psalmist: You are known, desired and loved by God:

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the

secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you” (Ps. 139:13-18, NIV).

Jabez lacked positive affirmation from his parents, and the cry of his heart was to be loved and affirmed. You see, what Jabez really wanted was to hear something like, “I love you, and I am proud of you; you’re going to do just great in life!”

God answered his prayer, but more importantly than receiving land and wealth, Jabez received the affirmation he craved.

We live with people all around us who feel abandoned, rejected and orphaned. The cry of Jabez, the cry of humanity, is to receive affirmation, blessing and favor.

Such emphasis was put on success and prosperity in the Jewish society in which Jabez lived, it may appear that he was being materialistic. But in essence he wanted God’s hand of affirmation, recognition and honor. He wanted to move from shame to honor.

My experience in working with youth is that the primary longing of their heart is to know they have value, their life matters and they can make a difference. Especially those who have come from disadvantaged situations.

His Need for Acceptance Led Him to the Father

And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Then Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, ‘Oh, that You would indeed bless me and enlarge my territory, that Your hand might be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that it may not bring me hardship!’ So God granted what he asked” (1 Chron. 4:10, MEV).

Notice his prayer as He called on the God of Israel? He was a devout, prayerful man. He was a man who sought and walked with God.

Some Jewish scholars believe Jabez was a doctor in the law, with a school of scribes around him, and connection between his name, Jabez, and the city so named (1 Chron. 2:55). It is believed that Jabez left many disciples after him.

Jabez became someone. He did not allow his past or shame-based identity define him.

“Oh, that You would indeed bless me and enlarge my territory” (1 Chron. 4:10b).

What is territory? In Hebrew, this was no ordinary request. Rather, this expression means, “Bless me with overwhelming blessing.” *Bless me with uncommon blessing, God.* When you move from shame to honor, you are confident in asking God for more so others can be blessed.

Solomon asked for wisdom, and God commends him for not asking for wealth and grants him wisdom. Yet Jabez asks for material blessing, and God grants it. Why? God sees the heart and motivation. Jabez, in asking for more acreage and more territory, was asking for a greater share in the covenant so that others could be blessed.

God wants His people to walk in His blessing, in His fullness. God invites you and me to dream with Him and to believe for more kingdom territory, so others would be freed from their pain and God glorified.

The psalmist prays, “God be merciful to us and bless us ... That your way may be known on earth” (Ps. 67:1-2b, NKJV). Heaven’s desire is for Jesus to be made known. This happens when God’s people have a correct identity and are free from shame. They then are confident to be His ambassadors and witnesses on the earth.

Once born again, the Holy Spirit begins to renew our minds to establish our correct godly identity. True godly identity and beliefs, based on God's Word, break the cycle of negative expectations and empower you and I to live confidently in God.

For example, God, in His goodness, wants you and me blessed and prosperous. "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2).

"Prosper" means to have a prosperous journey, or to succeed in business affairs. It means to have the hand of God resting on us, not merely money or popularity, but God's permission to do well and be blessed—not given to greed, but humble and obedient to God.

If I do not believe God wants me blessed, I inhibit the power of His blessing through Christ and my sonship to receive his favor. It does not end here; others will not receive of the blessing I can release to them.

"Your hand might be with me" (1 Chron. 4:10b, MEV): What does the hand of God represent?

In the Old Testament culture and literature, the hand represented power, strength, control or skill. Throughout the Bible, God's power and intervention are represented by the "hand of the Lord."

We see a pattern in Scripture: Those whom God blesses and uses with the greatest impact are those who live in submission to His authority and seek only His glory. We are to stay humble and submitted to God.

"Keep me from evil, that it may not bring me hardship" (1 Chron. 4:10c). Jabez was essentially asking God, "Protect the blessing you bring me, and free me from the shame and anguish in my life that I may not live up to this. God, break the cycle of pain and shame in my life, so I and others will not

be affected!”

From Shame to Honor

“Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers” (1 Chron. 4:9a).

The definition of “honorable”: weighty, represented by character, but also position and wealth. We could say that Jabez was a man of weight. Reputation is of importance in these usages of the Hebrew term.

Keep in mind these words were written, not during his lifetime, but after it had ended. Whatever the sorrowful circumstances surrounding the beginning of his life, he ended his days with more honor, greater status and influence than all his brothers.

Jabez was a great man; though his life began in pain, it ended in honor. Proverbs 15:33 (ISV) states that “humility precedes honor.”

Jabez moved from shame to honor, and God desires the same for each of us!

Jesus gives a secret to joy and overcoming your past—seek to lose your life in service to others. “Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it” (Luke 17:33, NIV).

Christian, Jesus has given you a new name, a new family lineage and a new identity.

To break the cycle of rejection and shame, you must renew your mind to the truth of how God sees you (Rom. 12:2). In Christ, you are made new, and God sees you as one who is a diffuser of His love and grace, not of pain. Expect grace to flow—not pain through your life.

Final Thoughts

Jesus became our curse and took our shame on the cross, so we could share His name and have a new identity. Let us declare shame to cease and honor to be restored.

Father, I present my life to You and give You permission, Holy Spirit, to renew my mind. I renounce ungodly beliefs of shame, rejection and abandonment contrary to what Your Word says about me and my new identity.

I choose to believe the truth that Jesus endured the shame, so I could be free of it. I forgive others and myself for holding onto shame and grief.

I believe the truth that You love me, accept me, have honored me and want to bless me. Let my life glorify Your name and be a blessing to others. Enlarge my territory, my influence, so others could know you and be free!

“Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne” (Heb. 12:2, NLT).

“Instead of your shame, you shall have double honor” (Isa. 61:7a).

Bob Sawvelle is the founding and senior leader of Passion Church in Tucson, Arizona. Passion Church is a vibrant, kingdom-minded church in the heart of Tucson that values God’s love and presence. He is a doctor of ministry, doctoral mentor for the Randy Clark Scholars cohort at United Theological Seminary, an adjunct professor teaching master’s-level classes in evangelism, discipleship and church planting with the Global Awakening Theological Seminary and an online course facilitator for Global Awakening’s Christian Healing Certification Program and Christian Prophetic Certification Program.

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