

If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab them. If you don't have a Bible with you, there should be a hard black one somewhere around you. If you don't own one, that's our gift to you. Let's start in Genesis, chapter 2.

I want to take the ideas we've been covering, and I want to move them out of the realm of ideas and get them down onto the ground. Specifically, what we've covered in regard to justification, adoption, and sanctification. I now want to move those from just ideas that are nice and plug them into how certain issues play themselves out in our lives, mainly guilt and shame, anger, abuse, and lust. Then next week we'll cover fear and anxiety. So it'll be a chipper couple of weeks.

With that said, I want us to start, again, with how God designed us and that design of us giving us insight into what God wants to accomplish in the person and work of Jesus Christ for his glory and on our behalf. With that said, Genesis, chapter 2. We're going to pick it up in verse 18. I'm going to read a lot of verses here simply for context. We're just trying to get down to verse 25, but I think it's important for you to see a single verse in regard to its context. So here it goes:

"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.' Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.

But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Then the man said..." This is the first song in the Bible. My good friend, Pastor Leonce Crump in Atlanta, says this is the first R&B song in the Bible.

"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." The big verse for our time together is verse 25: **"And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."**

Now you keep your shirt on while I unpack this text, all right? When we're talking about the idea of nakedness and lacking shame, what we're really looking at is that God creates man to walk in innocence and honor. God's plan for you and me in the creative design is that our lives would be marked by innocence and honor. See, we alone, as human beings, stand higher than anything else in the creative order. We alone have been made in the image of God.

That means you and your dog are not of equal value. This means human beings and whales are not on par with one another. This means sea turtles and children aren't on the same line of worth and value. Now should we steward the environment? Absolutely. So I don't want that email from you. But to line up these two things as, "Hmm, sea turtle eggs or children? Gosh, it's a toss-up..." No. As human beings, we have an intrinsic value that's beyond the value of anything else in the creative order because we and we alone have been made in the image of God.

So God's good design is that you and I would have lives marked by innocence and honor. But if you've read your Bible, you know there's this thing that happens in chapter 3, and we're literally going to watch innocence and honor dissolve before our eyes. Let's pick it up in verse 7 of chapter 3. Sin has now entered into the world. Man has rebelled against his Creator, the Creator who made them innocent and full of honor. Now they have rebelled against that God. We're going to watch what happens, starting in verse 7:

"Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'"

We literally just watched it disintegrate. We watched innocence give way to guilt, and we watched honor give way to shame. Now the normative human experience is no longer innocence and honor, as God rightly designed it, but rather, our lives are marked by guilt and shame. Now here's what's interesting to know. Guilt and shame are often talked about as though they are synonymous, but they are most definitely not.

Both guilt and shame are falling short of some sort of standard, but guilt carries the connotation of a legality. It's a falling of a clear moral code. Shame doesn't operate like that. Shame isn't so much a breaking of a clear moral code, but rather, shame has more to do with how we see ourselves and how we fall short of how we see ourselves.

Maybe this would be helpful. Psychologists say all of us have in our minds a portrait of the person we would like to be. They call this the "self-ideal." Psychologists say you and I have a self-ideal. We have kind of a heroic hero in our minds that's who we actually are. When we fall short of that self-ideal, we begin to feel shame. Maybe I can put scenarios around it.

If your self-ideal is that you are a hard worker who is disciplined and your reality is that you are lazy and undisciplined, you're going to walk in a type of low-grade shame. If you feel like you are ferociously faithful and you are not the kind of guy or woman who would, yet you entertain fantasies about those who are not your spouse, you flirt with a coworker, you play around online, either with pornography or on Facebook stalking your exes or in chat rooms or in those kinds of things... That dirtiness you feel? That's shame. That shame is there because you have fallen short of your self-ideal.

Watching shame and guilt interact with one another is fascinating. So let me explain to you how they intersect. This isn't unique to me. Actually, David Keys wrote a fascinating work on guilt and shame, and I'm pulling most of this from him. So if at some point today you're going, "That guy is really insightful," I'm really not; I can just read. So here's guilt and shame and how they interact.

The most healthy way guilt and shame ever interact is they work together. What I mean by "working together" is I might tell a lie and immediately feel guilty because I know lying is wrong but also feel shame because I think I'm a stronger man than that. "I'm not the kind of man who needs to lie, because I don't need you to like me. I can speak the truth in love and then let the cards fall where they may." Yet I felt like I needed to lie in order to be accepted. Right? Do you see how guilt and shame begin to work together? I feel guilty because I've violated a clear command of God, but now I feel shame because I thought I was better than that.

Now what I mean by saying this is the place where guilt and shame are the healthiest is that when those two work together, they reveal that something has gone wrong in my heart. They kind of take on a spiritual MRI or CAT scan-type of role in our lives. When we feel guilt and shame, when we feel unacceptable, when we feel dirty, that is the Lord pressing on us that there is more for us. That goes back to what we covered last week about that eternal heavenly Father. He's like, "No, no, no. I have more for you than this. This isn't what I have for you. I want more for you than you want even for yourself right now." So they work together.

There are other places where they function independently from one another. To give you some examples here... I can know I've done something morally wrong and not feel any shame at all. Our culture is just picturesque on this front. I can do something that is morally wrong and feel absolutely no shame for breaking what I know to be right and good. The Bible addresses this in multiple places, but I'll take Romans 1:28-32 because the list is extensive. Here's what he says:

"And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents..."

Haters of God, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents. See what I mean about this list? No one is getting off clean in this list. Then he continues: **"...foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them."**

This is we know we're breaking God's divine law, but we don't care. Not only will *we* do them, but we will approve of others who do of those also. In fact, we will applaud as they pursue rebellion against the God of the universe. This is breaking a law and feeling no shame for it. Now it also works back the other way. There are times we feel painful and debilitating shame when there has been no moral infraction whatsoever.

People will feel shame for all sorts of random things. Like some people feel shame because they're poor. Some people feel shame because of where they live. They feel shame about the car they drive. They feel shame about the clothes they wear. They feel shame about the college they went to. They feel shame about where they're from. These things are all morally neutral. It's not sinful. It's not a breaking of the law to not have a lot of money or not live in a certain neighborhood.

All of that goes back to a self-ideal that is way outside the bounds of God's ideal for you. You have the wrong heroes. You have the wrong picture in your mind of what is acceptable and right. In fact, a strange one (probably one of the more common ones in our culture) is to feel shame over the way our bodies look. In our airbrushed, Photoshop, "weigh out your macadamia nuts as you eat paleo" culture, a lot of shame begins to be felt about the way our bodies look.

There's nothing shameful about not having much money. There's nothing shameful about driving what when I was a kid we called a "hoopty." There's nothing shameful about living in a neighborhood that doesn't require you to pay \$1,000 every other month in order to keep everybody's grass the same length. But it's painful shame. I mean, it's actually there. We feel unlovely. We feel unworthy. We feel dirty. We feel less than. But that's not guilt; that's shame. So see, they can work independently of one another.

The last place I think you see guilt and shame and their relationship work out is they'll work against one another. What I mean by that is we can feel shame for doing the right thing, and we can have a sense of

glory in doing the wrong thing. So we can feel ashamed doing something that is morally right. One of the things we see in the New Testament is Paul repeatedly encouraging the church to not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"Don't be ashamed, for it is the power of God unto salvation, first to the Jew and then to the Gentile." And again to Timothy in 2 Timothy: "I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed in." You have this idea that we are prone to be ashamed of loving Jesus. There is nothing more morally right than loving and serving and having your life shaped by the Creator God of the universe, and yet we will at times feel embarrassed or ashamed that we *do* love him, or we don't want to be seen as *that* guy, right?

Then, if you're paying any attention to the world around you, we have built whole heroes around what is despicable. My wife and I went to a concert on Friday night. That was a total love deposit. It's not that I didn't enjoy the concert, not that I didn't enjoy the artist, it's that I don't go to things that start at 10:30...ever. I'm literally in my second dream, usually, by 10:30.

So we went to this concert. It wasn't at a church. It's a rare thing for me to be right in the middle of debauchery like that. Our Christmas parties don't boil down to that. So here I am at this concert. We're having a good time. The music is incredible. But people will celebrate what is deplorable. You'll hear guys say, "I was so wasted, I don't even remember last night." Well, congratulations. Like he's bragging, "I got so drunk, I don't even..." Like that's a banner of pride.

As my daughter gets older and older, I have a special violence in me for men talking about women. Listen, if at some point I disqualify myself for ministry and the elders aren't coming clean, that's what happened. If the elders are like, "There was an incident; Matt is no longer with us," and you're like, "What was the incident?" I took a stick to some 17-year-old kid in my front yard and got arrested and, guilty, will gladly now pay my price to the state.

When men talk about women as though they are property, as though they lack souls, when they prey upon the guilt and shame that exist in women for their own pleasure, I feel a special kind of violence creep up in me. Maybe it's because I have daughters, and maybe it's because of the house I grew up in, but I feel... I want the wrath of God to come like Old Testament, rolling down like a river. All right?

So just know if the elders ever get up and go, "Pastor Matt isn't here; Josh Patterson is now the lead pastor of teaching," and you're like, "What did he do?" and they're like, "There was just an incident," that's what the incident was. All right? I'm not going to cheat on my wife, but I'll beat a fool with a stick who's messing with my daughters. So when all is said and done, I can feel that in me. Because young men celebrate this. They celebrate this kind of hook-up culture, where they just take advantage of and use. Without any

concern for soul, without any concern for humanity, they'll abuse and use, and then they wear it as a banner of pride.

In fact, the movie *Don Jon* that's out right now is just a celebration of debauchery. "Oh, isn't this guy cool?" People are flocking to this movie. "Oh, isn't this awesome?" No. It's awful. And our culture celebrates it with pride. "Look at how big of an idiot I am." The prophet Isaiah says, "Woe to you who are heroes at drinking much wine." It's this idea that "I'm going to celebrate debauchery." So this is guilt and shame really working in opposite directions.

Now here's where we get ourselves in a cross fire of self-rejection. If you let your moral, legal code be the Bible, so you're good church folk, you believe the Ten Commandments, and you're going to believe what the Bible says, but your self-ideal has been built around heroes in the world, you have set yourself up for guilt and shame, regardless of where you turn.

When you show up at church, you're going to feel guilt because you're in violation of the law of God, but when you show up at work and the party scene, you're going to feel shame for being the goody-goody. So you've set yourself up to be rejected and be miserable at every turn. Guilt and shame will mark your life, because your morals are in Jerusalem and your self-ideals are in Hollywood or, for you businessmen, in Manhattan. When you do that, your life is going to be built on and around guilt and shame.

Guilt and shame are wrung out of us and turn into other things. The one I want to talk to you about today (not one, but I do think it's all one) is anger, abuse, and lust. When you walk in guilt and shame, a by-product of that is oftentimes (yet not always) anger. So we feel guilt. We feel shame. We're falling short of our self-ideals. We're in violation of the laws and commands of God, so we feel guilt and shame. That brings about anger in our lives.

Now anger first works itself out up and against ourselves. There's a form of self-hate that begins to form in our hearts. Let me flesh out how this works. I'm not speaking now as someone who has read a book on this; I'm speaking now as one who has lived in this environment. I'm not speaking out of ignorance, but I am speaking out of experience.

When self-hate exists, you will first abuse yourself. Now how do you abuse yourself? Well, that range is all over the place. I mean, it's everything from cutting yourself, hurting yourself... But more than likely it's just a giving yourself over to shame. It's, "Since I am guilty, since I do feel dirty..." You give yourself over to the shame you feel.

At that moment, you're saying, "I have no honor in me; there's nothing good or lovely in me," so then you allow others to abuse you. You allow others to take advantage of you. You handle yourself cheaply as though there is nothing intrinsically valuable about you. You will stop taking care of yourself. It is self-hate. It has its roots in anger, and that anger is derived from guilt and shame. Then there are times that self-hate begins to roll out onto others, and that's where we get into abuse. Sometimes that abuse is just control and manipulation. A lot of times that abuse is verbal, where you're going to attack and tear down.

See, to actually walk in legitimate biblical love is a risky, scary thing, because you're known. I can tell you right now, you would be hard-pressed to say something to me that would wound my soul. You really would. But my wife could do it right now. I could point to her right now and go, "Say it," and she could just be like...*Pow!* And I'd just die. Because she knows me. She knows where I'm weak. She knows where I'm fragile.

She knows where she could touch that would wound me deeply, because by the grace of God I've let her in. I have no secrets from her. She knows where I struggle, she knows where I'm weak, and she could just pop me if she wanted to. Now, by the grace of God, I can honestly say in coming up on 16 years together I don't know that she has ever done that. She has never tried to verbally abuse me. Yet it's possible.

Angry people walking in self-hate have a desperate need for no one else to be happy either. So now you have verbal abuse. Now you have a tearing down of, a dismantling of, everybody else's joy. A person walking in guilt and shame will show up at your birthday party but is going to ruin it and make it all about them. "I walked in and nobody said hi to me, and you guys didn't even... Nobody did this for me on *my* birthday." Now they're pouting in the corner. "What's wrong?" "Nothing. Just do your party. Why do I matter?" They're going to dismantle and destroy. They're going to pull you aside, and it's always going to be your fault. They're going to verbally abuse.

Sometimes verbal abuse rolls over into physical and sexual abuse. Verbal and sexual abuse have at their roots guilt and shame that has led to anger that is built up in self-hate that now is spilling out of themselves onto others violently. The reason I wanted to say anger and abuse and lust kind of becomes the perfect storm is now you're in a circle where this thing is feeding itself.

What I mean by that is if you're struggling with anger and that's built on your guilt and shame, then you're going to hate yourself, so you're going to eat more than you should. You're going to drink more than you should. You're going to punish yourself because you're not worthy of anything. You're going to give yourself over to abusive relationships. You're going to treat yourself cheaply. You're going to put yourself in scenarios where you *will* be hurt, you *will* be betrayed, you *don't* have the dignity to go, "Nuh-uh," and

then that's going to build more guilt and shame. Then that guilt and shame is going to lend itself to more self-hate that's going to lead into more guilt and shame that's going to... Right?

If you are an abuser, then that abuse will make you go, "Oh my gosh. I can't believe I did that." Guilt and shame. That then leads to more anger that leads to more abuse. This is why so many people who are abused end up becoming abusers, despite the fact that they swear they never will. It's the perfect storm. Guilt and shame fuel anger that fuels abuse and lust.

Now why is lust in this mix? Lust is in this mix because lustful intent is the dehumanization of another person. Lustful intent. I'm not talking about you thinking your wife is sexy. That's not lustful intent. That's a good gift from the Lord for you to enjoy rightly. Lustful intent is the dehumanization of another human being for no other purpose except for physical pleasure. There's no concern for their soul or their emotions. And this is a two-way street in 2013. This isn't just dudes out there doing this.

"You don't matter outside of your physical body. Your emotions are of no concern to me. Your spirit is of no concern to me. You have no real value other than the physical body God has given you." It is wicked. It is abusive. People who are off the rails promiscuous have a guilt and shame issue built into anger that then has them punishing themselves by giving themselves cheaply to other people. You're not cheap. So expensive are you before the King of glory that Christ died on the cross in your stead. The sovereign King says you're unbelievably valuable. Let's stop this madness. So that's how lust is tied into this.

Now how, then, do the things we've been talking about...justification, adoption, sanctification, what God has done for us in Jesus Christ...invade this perfect storm? In this moment, the wind and the waves are up. The boat is being tossed about. We can't seem to get out of this storm. There is no safe harbor. Now praise God that the same Jesus who quieted *that* storm quiets *this* storm. The same God who quiets the wind and the waves on that boat in the Sea of Galilee also steps into anger, abuse, and lustful intent and guilt and shame, and he dismantles and quiets them so the waters stop and safe harbor is found.

Now how does that work? Well, let's take them separately. How does God handle guilt in your life and in mine? Well, we've covered this. This is the idea of justification, that the just Judge of the universe bangs the gavel and, by the blood of Christ, declares us as innocent. Let me show you this, because you don't look like you believe me. Colossians 2:13-14 says:

"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us..." What's that word? *All*. That's important to know. **"...all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross."**

Oh, that you would believe that all of your sins, past, present, and future, were nailed to the cross with Jesus Christ! You feel guilt that creates in you a feeling of unworthiness and dirtiness, a feeling of helplessness. God's response is, "I've canceled the record of debt." There's no sacrifice you can lay on his altar. It has already been paid for in full. All of it...past, present, and future. You walked in here busted up, broken, and guilty? God has paid the price for that for those of you who believe.

So that handles guilt. That's the cancellation of the record of debt by the blood of Jesus Christ. What do we do, then, with shame, if shame is that feeling of dirtiness that may or may not be attached to a moral code? Well, nothing drives shame away from the heart more than being fully known yet still delighted in. Shame vanishes when you're known and delighted in. Both of those are important.

The reason I will press hard on confession and openness among the people of God until God calls me home is the quieter you are about your struggles, the quieter you are about the fantasies of your mind, the quieter you are about where you fall short of the right ideal, the more fertile the ground is for shame to take root, and where shame grows, anger grows, and where anger grows, self-hate and the other forms of abuse can begin to grow.

So the best way to make sure shame doesn't grow is to be fully known. Don't have secrets; they betray you. Look, you're not getting away with anything. "Well, nobody knows but me." You're wrong. There *are* no secrets. God knows, and I would bet that the fruit of your secret is weighing heavily on you. How do you feel when you're laying in bed imagining someone else other than your spouse? How do you feel after they go to bed and you're on your computer looking?

You feel great, don't you? It's invigorating. You feel awesome about yourself as you climb into bed after betraying the one you entered covenant with before God Almighty. You feel awesome when you get home after abusing the sensibilities of some young woman or some young man. No, you don't. You feel dirty. You feel betrayed. You feel worthless. Right?

So what do you do about shame? Nothing drives out shame like being fully known and still delighted in. Let me show you this in two texts, and we'll chat some about it. In Luke, chapter 15, you have the parable of the prodigal son. The Prodigal Son takes his inheritance from his father, and the Bible tells us he goes and squanders it on prostitutes and barhopping. So the dude had a great weekend in Vegas.

Everything goes wrong, and he ends up working in this pigsty. Things have broken so down that he's literally crawling through the filth in the pigsty and eating the slop that was meant for the pigs. Then the Bible says he comes to his senses. We have already covered that. That is a gift from God: to come to our

senses. He begins to think, "Even my father's servants live better than this. Maybe he'll just let me be a servant." He crawls out of the muck and the mire and begins to head home, head hung in shame, physically filthy, in his heart feeling dirty, just hoping to be a servant to his father.

Then look at what happens starting in verse 20: **"And he arose..."** That's out of the pigsty. **"...and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion..."** Why don't we think that about God? Why is our default that our God is not compassionate but rather disappointed? The way we interact with God is that God is on the front porch going, *Look at this idiot*. "Come on home. I have my lecture already built out. Oh, I'll let you be a servant, the servant of servants."

That's not what just happened. His father saw him and felt compassion. Now look at what happens next: **"...and [he] ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'" Notice the father is not even having that nonsense.**

"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate."

Now that drives out shame. "I know where you've been. I know what you've done." He hugs him and kisses him. He feels compassion in the brokenness the son had experienced. He puts shoes on his feet and a ring ("You're mine") on his hand and the best robe, and he kills the fatted calf, and this party gets crazy. The Bible tells us you could hear music and dancing from the field.

See, the parable of the prodigal son isn't about the Prodigal Son. The parable of the prodigal son is about a loving father who loved both his idiot boys: the one who wasted his inheritance on prostitutes and devoured his father's land in barhopping and the one who thought he could be good enough by following all of the rules and stayed outside of the party and pouted. The father goes out to him and entertains him to come in. "All that I have is yours, but this is right. Get in here."

The parable of the prodigal son is about a father's delight in his stubborn, foolish children. I have thought, just trying to imagine this night, how awkward... I mean, yes, how loved, but how awkward does the younger son feel? I mean, here he comes. He knows he has betrayed everyone in the room, and now there's this huge party. You don't think he's a bit self-conscious, not one to look people in the eyes?

We have a hard time with people delighting in us. We really do. We so crave it, but we have a hard time with it. One of the things we've started doing recently in our family devotional time is I'll have one of our kids stand up on the dining room table after dinner or family night, and then we'll all go around the room and say one thing we love about that person, and we'll bless them. Then we'll lay hands on that one kid and pray for them.

This past Thursday night was Norah, so Norah got up in her chair. Here's what I've noticed, regardless of who the kid is. They almost refuse to look you in the face when you're telling them what you love about them. There's something in us that just can't handle it. So we're going around the room, and everybody... Lauren was like, "You have such energy and such vitality, and you bring so much joy to our family, and you're such a delight to us," and literally, Norah cannot look her in the face.

So my job that night was to go, "Look at your mom when she's talking. Just look her right in her face. Norah, look at your brother. Norah, look at your sister. Look at daddy's face. Just look at my face while I say this." We just can't handle that we might be delighted in. Right? This is kind of the residue of sin, shame, and guilt, where there should be innocence and honor.

Then, again, in Hebrews 2:11 (I love this one), he says, "**For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers...**" Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. What destroys shame? Being fully known yet still delighted in.

In just a couple of weeks, we'll do baptisms across all of our services. People are going to get in the water, and they will lay out aspects of their shame. They will say, "I was caught in this. I was doing this. This is something that was going on in my life." Everyone, from those who were in same-sex relationships to those who were swingers to those who were strung out on drugs, will get in the water, and they will testify.

Now have you thought of how crazy that is, that someone would stand in front of thousands of strangers and say, "Here's what I was at my worst"? What could create the type of confidence that you could say that? Well, you're delighted in and being known by a forgiving God who has forgiven your guilt and whose love has driven out your shame. You're not *bragging* about your shame but rather saying how much greater Jesus is *than* your shame. That's coming on October 12-13.

Delight when we're fully known drives out shame. Listen, it's hard to believe. I mean, my 4-year-old can't hardly look someone in the face when they say, "I love you. You are awesome. You bring a lot of joy to this family." She can't handle that. How much more, then, can we not handle a loving God who picks up our filthy heads and says, "Give me the best robe. Give me the best ring. Let's put shoes on his feet. Kill the

fatted calf and get the good wine. Don't get that box. You roll out the good stuff." Then what? Celebrates that we're home?

That's why we feel awkward in it. It *does* feel awkward. It doesn't feel right. This is why grace is so scandalous. It doesn't feel right. It's why the Bible says the love of the Lord is extravagant. It's over the top. It's ridiculous. Like the son here is like, "Come on, Dad. Can't I just get in my room and take a shower?" "Oh no, no. You don't even get to shower, bro. Not until you drink some good wine and eat some filet and listen to this live band we've just kicked up for you. We're going to celebrate the fact that you're home."

That's hard for us, but that's the thing that drives out shame. Until you get that, shame is going to be a companion. It doesn't have to be. It's just too hard to believe. I know it is. That's why we have to ask the Holy Spirit to help us believe it. That's why I'm trying to preach it to you week in and week out. Have you picked up yet that I preach one sermon, just out of a different text every week? Have you picked up on that yet? Okay. If you haven't, then you're slow, because I can't be more blatant. Just one message.

Ultimately, this is adoption. So justification takes care of our guilt, and adoption takes care of our shame. That leaves sanctification for us. Sanctification, then, is the deconstruction of false self-ideals and a replacement of what is true and right and good. You must be careful at what you put up as being heroic. Depending on who you are, you'll probably want to be more careful around certain things, but always be careful at what you set up as the self-ideal. Here's what I mean.

I find my heart drawn to things at times that my heart should not be drawn to. Patterson and I have been talking lately... How many of you have read Steve Jobs' biography or listened to it? Okay, three of you read. Awesome. If you get a chance, it is a fascinating read. This is by proxy, all right? Here's what's interesting. This dude... I mean, he is off the rails insane. I mean, cruel, vindictive, ruthless, and awesome.

Did you hear me? That's what happens in my heart. I'm like, "Man, that is ruthless! That would be awesome...if it wasn't wicked and evil." This is just me putting my cards on the table. Like to be able to just walk in and go, "Hey, staff meeting in my office. Not so fast, Bleecker." I mean, that would be crazy...and wicked. To treat people as commodities? To act as your own god when you have full power?

Be careful that you don't make stuff like that self-ideal. It's wicked. Be careful. The guy who has all kinds of money and goes here and does this and accomplishes... Be careful. Don't make that your ideal. That's not God's ideal for you. Our ideal, our picture, our model, is Jesus Christ. We want to become like him. We want to be shaped and molded like him. We want to be a servant like he is a servant. We want to consider others better than ourselves as he considered others better than himself, despite the fact he was God. We

want to live sacrificially. We want to give joyfully. We want to lay down our lives for the good of the glory of God.

This is our self-ideal, and you will fall woefully short of it, and you will be *aware* that you fall woefully short of it on repeat. Yet the grace of God and the delight of God and the justification of God in Jesus Christ anchor our hearts in this place where guilt and shame don't lead us to fear and anxiety, don't lead us to anger and abuse, don't lead us to lustful intent, but rather, has an ever-increasing joy in our Father who delights in us despite us, so that when we fall short, it will actually serve to stoke the fire of delight in God.

Then we get in a perfect storm where grace feeds passion that feeds grace that feeds passion that feeds grace that feeds passion, and that's where we'll be stuck, and those are good waters to be stuck in. Let's pray.

Father, thank you that you have canceled the record of debt. Thank you that right now, for those of us who are children of God, you delight in us. I pray that would drive out our shame. I pray that as we think about the sins of the younger brother, that he devoured the father's lands with prostitutes and alcohol, that as wayward as he was, the father felt compassion, and for the self-righteous, that the father was moved to go outside and entreat the older brother to come in...

We thank you that you delight in us. The Bible says there is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents. For those who are in this place and guilt and shame has them shackled heavily, where self-hate rules and reigns, where there's a perpetual giving over of themselves to things that will harm them and hurt them, where they seek out relationships where they will be used and abused, where they allow others to try to rob from them the intrinsic dignity of being made in the image of God, Holy Spirit, would you work? Would you heal?

For the victims of abuse in this place, Father, might you grant freedom? Holy Spirit, help. Would you allow them to forgive the perpetrator and trust you for vengeance, lest their self-hate devour and destroy them? Where we are verbally abusive, where anger is low-grade constant in our lives, will you set us free, Holy Spirit? It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.