

SHAME and CHRISTMAS

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Christmas! This word is the one of the few words that creates a great deal of excitement and anticipation inside of me. All the pictures in my mind of lights, presents, favorite songs, and different people I care for come flooding to the forefront. It is a special time of year I enjoy celebrating others by giving.

One of the origins of the word “Christmas” actually means “Christ’s festival”. The celebration began December 24th and continued through January 6th. The enjoyment of picturing the Heavenly Father’s excitement in giving the gift of His Son is beyond my comprehension. Even more so, I am humbled by the thought that He would enjoy giving such a precious gift to me. So, why couple the word with shame?

Ron and Pat Potter-Effron in their book “Letting Go of Shame”, partially define shame as “separation from God.” In the great ongoing battle on Satan’s part to ruin any gift we may receive from God, he loves nothing better than to divide and conquer. He cannot stand the thought that we, as children of God, may enjoy and celebrate relationship with God the Father and with one another.

The Effron’s outline five lies of shame that are designed to create division relationally and spiritually. They do not originate from the heart of God.

1. I am no good.
2. I am not good enough.
3. I am not lovable.
4. I do not belong.
5. I am not real. I am a phony.

These are the lies in that they leave one feeling defective and unable to be relate freely. Each lie interrupts our ability to trust our God given skills and one another. Our ability to celebrate Christ’s “festival” ceases. We are divided and conquered. God’s word directly combats the enemy’s goal in John 3:17, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned.”

Celebrating Christ’s Festival means we give ourselves permission to receive His gift then challenge the lies with the truth of God’s Word. Dare to challenge them. “Those who look to Him are radiant. Their faces are never covered with shame.” (Psalm 34:5 NIV) In looking to God, we allow a reconstructing of God’s image in our thoughts, feelings, and choices. The image is not one based in lies. Jesus came to SAVE us not to divide and conquer (condemn) us.

God the Father rejoices in our receiving of His gift! The end result is the joy of experiencing the grace, mercy, and intense love of our creator/Father. Receiving God’s

gift of His Son creates a festival of joy in our Heavenly Father. The celebration began 2000 years ago and continues to this day. Shame condemns. For each of us, there is no greater joy than to receive God's gift and in turn, experience being set free from the lies that condemn. We are reunited with the one who loves us most. We are freed to reunite with one another with grace and mercy. Christ's Festival! ENJOY!

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