**SHAME OFF YOU : DEVELOPING THE SUBTLE ART OF SHAME**

**JANUARY 22, 2023 – 9:30AM**

**ED YOUNG**

I've listened to podcasts, and I've heard master classes, and I've seen YouTube videos and I have read a lot of books, but I've yet to hear anyone, even TED Talks. I'm yet to hear anyone talk about how to increase your level of shame. It's always how to thwart shame, how to get shame off of you. But today I thought we would do something that maybe has never been done before. I want to preach a sermon on how to increase your shame, the fine art of shaming. That way when you leave, you'll know how-to walk-in shame, how to deal with shame, how to receive shame, and how to shuffle shame on others. Does that sound good? Very positive, isn't it?

Shame, the first week we talked about the origin of shame. Last week, we talked about how to face the sandstorms of shame. Today we're looking at how to increase shame. I know a lot about this subject because I deal with shame and so do you because we're human beings, and I was just praying about this, and thinking about this. So, I thought I'm just going to share some stuff from my life regarding how I've walked in shame in ways I shouldn't have. And then I began to look through scripture. Scripture is littered with people, characters, men and women who dealt with shame. Well, today we're going to talk about one of my favorite characters and his life though is a tragedy of what might have been. His name is Saul. Would you say that with me? Saul. That's right. Saul was a guy that was super talented, he had so much ability, so many things going for him. Yet he ended up living in the cesspool of shame.

What is shame you might be asking? You showed up here, you're like, "What? Shame. What is that?" **Shame is that all-encompassing emotion of disappointment that we have with ourself, with others, and with God.** Some shame is self-imposed. I would say most is. Sometimes shame is imposed on us by others. No matter what it is, it's shame. Shame is the result of sin and guilt because if we stay with guilt too long, if guilt is left unchecked, it segues into shame. Guilt is my bad. I made a mistake. Shame is I am bad. I am a mistake. It's my prayer that the Holy Spirit of God would move and convict and point out shame sources in all of our lives so we can walk in victory because God is a shame off God. He's all about shame off.

Whenever you hear these voices, because we have running conversations with ourselves, don't we? God is always telling you and me who we are. Your sin, your shame has been forgiven and God has chosen to forget that stuff. So, whenever we hear shame, “I'm not good enough, I'm not cool enough, I'm not this enough, I'm not curvaceous enough, I'm not ripped enough, or whatever.” that is from the enemy himself. The enemy wants us to take laps of regret in the cesspool of shame, and too many of us waste too much time doing that.

What are these drivers that are causing shame? Well, let's look at Saul.

The first thing I want you to see from Saul's life, and here's something you have to do if you're going to increase shame. **TALK BAD ABOUT YOURSELF.** Just talk bad about yourself. That's what Saul did. A couple of figures you need to understand in today's message as we do a quick flyover of the life of Saul. Samuel. He was God's man. He was a judge and a prophet. He was like the guy with God's people, the Israelites, Samuel. All right, Samuel, anointed Saul as king over Israel. It wasn't God's real plan. Basically, God's people wanted a king because the neighboring nations had one. You know how it is? Your neighbor buys a new truck, you want a truck. Someone else buys this necklace, you want that necklace. It's just kind of a human situation that we all deal with.

One day through a strange set of circumstances, through some lost donkeys, Samuel meets Saul, and God tells Samuel, "This dude is going to be the next king of Israel." Now Ladies, Saul was something else. The average height, if you're wondering of men, back in the day, 5'5”, most scholars believe Saul was about 6'5”, long flowing, thick, black hair, articulate, handsome, he was a Hallmark guy. Those Hallmark guys always have a bunch of hair, they always have stealth wealth, and they can cook, and decorate, and their favorite thing to do is cuddle. That's what women want, guys. They act like women. I'm not saying Saul was that, but I want you to get into your mind, this guy was like the man, handsome. He stood out.

So, Samuel basically tells him, "Saul, you're going to be the next king." And check out the negativity. You'll see it. **1 Samuel 9:21, “Saul answered, ‘But am I not a Benjamite,”** In other words, he's not from the right place, the wrong side of the tracks. **“…from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?’”** I'm not. I'm not. I'm not. "Why Samuel do you say such a thing to me? I mean, me being king?" Sounds like he didn't want the responsibility. But this gives us an insight, talking negative about yourself.

What if people could hear the conversations going on in our minds right now? **(“CONVERSATIONS” - PRE-RESORDED THOUGHTS)**

Well, here I am again, speaking, speaking is weird. It's almost like you are emotionally undressing in front of scores and scores of people that you don't know. If people knew the level of shame that I've walked through and even what I deal with now, I'm not sure they would believe it. As I look at my life, I see how shame has manifested itself in certain ways, and God is doing work in my life, believe it or not. While I'm preparing for this and while I'm even delivering this message. Sometimes I think, well, on another note, hope this looks okay. Dad got this suit for me 10 years ago. That's right, 10 years ago from Suit Supply. I don't wear it that much, and I almost didn't wear it today, but Lisa said, "That looks great." And that's enough for me. For insecure me. It's just my prayer as I'm thinking that people will understand the role that shame plays and the freedom we can have as we discover how Jesus has taken it, how he's forgiven us of it and forgotten it.

Edit your self-talk. Edit those conversations. Ask questions. Is this coming from the enemy? He speaks shame-ese, or is this coming from God? The first way, you want to increase shame, Talk bad about yourself. There's another way. **RESIST ANY FORM OF VULNERABILITY.** As we look at Saul's life, when people said things bad about him, when they joked about him, he couldn't really laugh at himself. You show me someone who cannot laugh at themselves, and I'll show you someone who's swimming in the cesspool of shame. Can you laugh at yourself, or do you have those rabbit ears? Have you ever heard of that before? Rabbit ears? It's a baseball term. That means you pick up everything people are saying: good, bad, ugly. You exaggerate it, and you hear it, and then you repeat it, and it's on this negative loop from hell itself. And that keeps us from being vulnerable.

Saul wouldn't say, "Okay, here I am, God, warts and all," because the Bible says in **1 Samuel 10:22 (NLT), “So they…”** Who are the "they" in your life? Sounds like a great book. **“So they asked the Lord, ‘Where is he?’ And the Lord replied, ‘He is hiding among the baggage.’”** In some translations it says hiding amongst the baskets. Saul is the first basket case we have on record.

I want you to watch this progression. Here's how you become a shameful person, Saul begins to talk bad about himself, and he hears that negative loop from hell. He's listening to that voice. He's leaning into that. Then, not only is he listening to that voice, but he’s also listening to what others say about him. Whenever you step out and do anything, whether you're a pastor, a dentist, a coach, whether you're a teacher, whenever you make any decision, whenever you step out there, you're going to have people that don't dig it.

Leaders hear everything, but they only listen to the right "they" and where do you find the right "they"? In church. They are in church. **T-H-E-Y**. The right "**THEY**" are **Tough** and also **Tender** because they're listening to the Holy Spirit. **H,** they're **Honest** and they're **Honorable**. **E,** they're **Encouraging** and also **Exciting.** I don't want to hang around people who are discouraging. I don't want to hang around doggy downers. You know Debbie Downers. I don't want to hang around people like that. I want to go where I'm celebrated, not tolerated. Who are the "they" in your life? **Y,** they're **Yielded** to God and to your friendship.

As you read Saul and about his life, Saul had the right they around him for a while. The Bible says he was walking around, he was going from one place to another, and he had the right "they" with him. But the scripture says "scoundrels," that's what the Bible says, started making fun of him. He acted like he didn't hear it, but he did.

Who are the "they" in your life? The right "they" always have something to say, and they're going to parrot back what God says about you. The wrong "they," they always are going to pull you into the fray, and you’ll be prey. So regularly, we have to edit not only the conversations that we say to ourselves but edit the "they" in our lives. Who are the "they"? Because I could meet your "they" and I could learn a lot about you just by meeting those people. So, are you vulnerable? That's why church is so, so critical. It's a place where we can be real, and it's vital that we're real before God, real with ourselves and real with others. And quite frankly, if you're not involved in a community of vulnerability, known as the church, you're signing up for shame.

Saul was sort of clueless as far as his relationship with the Lord. He had his moments, but the guy didn't even know who Samuel was when he met him. I'm like, “Saul, how self-unaware can you be, man?” What's funny about shame is most of us are self-unaware about it. It's like, "Oh, you're talking about someone else, not me." "Oh, you're talking about my husband, not me." "Oh, you're talking about my boss. I wish my boss could hear this. He's all about shame."

We're going to find out, too, that Saul turned into a narcissist. I like that word, “narcissist”. We've sterilized pride out of control. We call it “narcissism”. It sounds easier, doesn't it? Forget narcissism? That's psychobabble. It's about pride out of control. Let me tell you this, all of us have some narcissism in our lives. All of us do. But Saul, we're going to see, slowly became that narcissist because the driver of narcissism, the trigger of narcissism is, you guessed it, shame.

When pride is out of control, someone has a shame issue. Talk down to yourself. Resist any form of vulnerability. In other words, hide. That's what Saul was doing, hiding in the baggage. It was his day. They were announcing him, his coronation. "Fighting out of the Hebrew camp, he stands six feet, five inches tall, Saul!" He's nowhere to be found. I mean, they're flying drones trying to find where he, no one could find him. He's hiding. Adam and Eve, what did they do when they sinned, they hid from God. How about Moses? What did he do when he killed the Egyptian? He hid him in the sand. Now we find Saul hiding.

Whenever you think about this term "shame," there's a dichotomy in shame, a major dichotomy. On one hand, you have secrecy. I'll put an S. But on the other hand, you have honesty and vulnerability. Which voice do you listen to? Where do you lean? What do you do and how do you unpack this in your life? These situations that seem just like, "Okay, that's serendipitous. That just happened."

Look at what happened to our boy Saul. Chasing donkeys. Meets Samuel. He's anointed as king over Israel. He's talking down about himself, running from responsibility. He's resisting any type of vulnerability. As you read about his life you won't believe how many times, he kept silent, and didn't share what was going on.

And now, this is one of my favorites, this is one of the things that I do and so do you to increase shame, **BRAG ON YOURSELF.** Man, it got quiet. You mean... Yeah, brag on yourself. Brag on yourself. Pride is an interesting sin. It's the forerunner of all sins, pride. I can't have anger, I can't have lust, I can't have greed without, first of all, being prideful. As you've heard me say, I've heard a lot of people confess to a lot of things, but I've rarely heard someone say, "Hey, I deal with pride, my man." It's silent. It's seductive pride, and it shows up in shame.

As you read this, you're like, "Ed, man, you're being too hard on Saul. He's hiding. I mean, the guy's humble." No. No, no, no. We can be prideful in our pride. You know people like that, don't you? They're just straight up prideful. But also, check this out, we can be prideful in our humility. So, the most prideful person here might not be this person who's like, "I'm in the house," might not be the most prideful person. Could be that person that's quiet. Could be that person that looks very, very conservative, but they think that they are God, and they think they're running the show in their lives. And that pride is the sin, is the issue, that the devil had in heaven that caused him to be kicked out to earth.

So, Samuel is like, "Man, Saul, you got to do better." But Saul was like, "I am going to do better. I'm the man." Now, what I'm telling you spans over about 25 years. We find Saul, he's the new king. He is the man, and his son wins a victory. And the Bible tells us this: the Bible says in

**1 Samuel 13:3-4, 3 “Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, ‘Let the Hebrews hear!’ 4So all Israel heard the news: ‘Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become obnoxious to the Philistines.’”** That's right, Saul, "Saul has gained the victory." I'm the man. It's me. It's me, me, me. No, Saul. No, sorry, but no cigar. And I like cigars. It was your son. Give credit to where credit is due. Someone who takes credit for another person's ideas, they get a shame issue. Someone who's always got to be the man or the woman, they've got a shame issue. Someone who's hypercritical of themselves and others, they've got a shame issue. Someone who has outbursts of anger, they've got a shame issue. So, it's not just those things we see many times on the surface. It's what's beneath it.

I was in a styrofoam boat one time, just messing around in a little lake. So, I was paddling and looking around. I love the outdoors. And all of a sudden, the boat came to a screeching halt. I guess you could say screeching halt if you're paddling pretty fast, can't you? And I'm like, “man, what's the deal?” I didn't see anything. So, I began to do something that most boaters do who really know what's going on. I began to rock the boat back and forth. That was kind of a joke. Nothing happened. So, I thought, this is really weird. The water's coffee black, this kind of scary, swampy water. Have you ever seen the movie “The Creature From The Black Lagoon”? That's a classic. Watch that. It scares me every time I watch it.

Anyway, so I thought, well, I can't stay out here the whole time. I'm going to have to take a dive and see what the deal is. So, I curl my toes over this little Styrofoam boat. I jump in the water. I'm going, “whoa, man, water moccasins, alligators”. So, I dive down. I can't see, and I'm feeling on the bottom of this cheap boat, and I'm saying to myself, Ed, why did you buy this boat? You could afford a boat better than this. I mean, you know all this stuff, self-talk. So, I feel this limb, underwater limb. I'm going like, you've got to be kidding. It literally had my boat impaled. How about that? One limb, the boat was impaled. So, then I just swam up under the boat, planted my feet - I don't recommend this -on the bottom and pushed with all my might. And I freed the boat, got back in the boat, paddled around, had a fun day.

What the Holy Spirit of God is asking you to do is to curl your feet and your toes over the gunnel of the boat, to dive in and see and locate what it is that's driving this. Partner with the Holy Spirit of God. Ask the Holy Spirit of God, pinpoint these issues in my life. I want to deal with this. Search me, God, and know my heart. Then by his power and his grace, he's going to push you off of that.

It's not just a one and done thing. Too many churches are like, "Okay, yeah, you got shame? Pray, and you will be delivered from shame. Boom." Sorry, no cigar. Yes, there are moments when we make that decision, okay, I'm ready to deal with shame, God, Holy Spirit, you point it out, you set me free. However, it is a process. So, if you want to join me on this process of living a shame-free life, pretty much just do the opposite.

Talk down to yourself. Resist any form of vulnerability and don't share who you really are with others. Brag on yourself. And one of the best ways to do that is on Insta Shame, I mean Instagram. And isn't it true about 80% of Instagram's bragging? Why do we post, really? "I'm here, and you're not. I'm traveling there, and you're stuck in Grapevine. I bought this car, and you can't afford it." Always positioning. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, all of it is that way.

Here's the deal. Let me talk about social media for a second. If you spend more than 30 minutes a day of social media, you are dealing with a major shame problem. Let me say it again. If you spend more than about 30 minutes a day on social media, you've got a shame issue. So many of our young people spend hour after hour after hour on the shame machines. No wonder we're just cranking out narcissists left and right. No wonder we have the depression in young people. No wonder the suicide. No wonder the addiction. No wonder the eating disorders. We've taken shame, as I like to say, to a hole 'notha level.

This is fun, isn't it? This is negative, but it's fun. Here's another way to invite shame in your life. **FOLLOW YOUR HEART.** That's what Saul did. He just followed his heart, followed his feelings. He had all of these battles, and he didn't fully obey God. He didn't fully do what Samuel told him to do. As you read about his life, he blamed, and blamed, and blamed, and blamed again. Do you remember this cycle that we've been talking about? We've been talking about the fame game, and then that segues into the lame game. And the lame game segues into the blame game. You can put Saul once again in this: "I'm God, I'm going to do what I'm going to do. Yeah, I'll kind of tip my hat to you, God. But I'm the man. I'm six feet five, black flowing hair, Saul." Well, how good did that get him? I'll tell you what it got him, it got him into the lame game. He was all about secrets and hiding. Then he blamed. He blamed the soldiers. He blamed the topography. He even blamed God. Here was his problem. He followed his heart. How many times have you heard that? “Just follow your heart.” Sometimes, but that's really an exception, not the rule. Normally, my heart is wrong. I just follow my heart. Wherever my heart goes, I'm just going to follow it. I just really feel it. God just wants somebody to be happy, right? Well, I'm still trying to find that verse. No. God wants us to be obedient because Samuel told Saul, "Obedience is better than sacrifice." (1 Samuel 15:22). Follow your heart.

Here's another way to increase shame. **CRITICIZE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR PEERS.** That's what I love to do. One of your peers is successful, just criticize him or her. Pastors aren't critical of professional athletes. Pastors are critical of other pastors. Professional athletes are critical of other professional athletes. Builders aren't critical of brain surgeons. Builders are critical of builders. When someone is successful in your life, who's a peer, what do you do?

Saul spent so much time chasing after people who were successful. David, who was the next king who defeated the big behemoth Goliath. He chased David, and worried about David so much that he didn't use the gifts that were right in front of him.

Let's talk about something good. **Instead of talking down to yourself, talk about what God says about yourself.** I'm lovable. I'm forgivable. I'm valuable. Man, just put that on a loop and press play.

**Instead of resisting any form of vulnerability, be real.** Be real. Have you seen that APP kids, BeReal? Come on, young people. Lift it up. Lift it up. BeReal. You know what BeReal is basically? It gives context to Instashame and Face Crook and all the other ones, and Litter. It gives context to it because everything you see on social media is out of context. Social media is not a place to listen. It's a place to just dump all of your stuff on others. And basically, it's to say, I'm here and you're not.

**Instead of bragging on yourself, become more self-aware.** Are you self-aware? Guys, if not, just ask your wives, am I self-unaware? She'll tell you, first of all, the Holy Spirit will. Secondly, the Holy Spirit has given us our wives, guys to say, boom. Now, now, most of us, most guys are the most self-unaware people. Guys are. Yeah, women are. But guys, we really, really, really struggle with it. We do. When we look in the mirror, we see reflected back, Saul, six feet, five, thick flowing black hair, articulate ladies. That's how delusional we are. So, it's time that we're real with ourselves. Obviously, we have to be real with God and with others, and we're only as sick as our secrets.

If I shared what was really going on, if I shared my struggles, if I shared that I did this because of shame, if I shared that I'm a prideful person, and I dropped that name, or that place or that deal out there in the conversation, just so people would go, “wow, he's the man.” People would think I'm crazy.

**Instead of following your heart, obey God whether you feel it or not.** Let me say that again. Obey God whether you feel it or not.

**Instead of criticizing the success of your peers, celebrate them.** Next week, we go to the life of Jesus. When he tells a story about shame. Next week, I promise you will be a positive message, but if you ever want to increase the shame in your life, just do these things and think you were here when someone preached the first ever message on how to increase your shame.

Lord, thank you for this message. Thank you for this church. And I pray, Lord, as you do business in our lives, that we would start with receiving you and allowing that transaction to take place. We ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen.