

Whose Glory Is In Their Shame

Joe Slater

In the year 2000, by presidential proclamation, June became “Gay Pride Month.” Nine years later, also by presidential proclamation, the name was expanded to “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month.”

While pride doesn’t have to mean arrogance, it often does. In this context it obviously means the opposite of shame.

Taking pride in shameful behavior is nothing new. Paul warned of those *“whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things”* (Philippians 3:19). “Belly” refers to the seat of the fleshly appetites, especially sex. Far from being ashamed of their immorality, these people boasted about it!

Centuries prior to Paul, Jeremiah lamented about his wicked countrymen in Judah: *“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush”* (Jeremiah 6:15). God clearly identified homosexual behavior as an abomination (Leviticus 18:22), and a quick glance through the history of the kings shows that the kingdom of Judah periodically practiced it shamelessly (1 Kings chapters 14-23).

American society used to frown on all aspects of sexual immorality. Unmarried couples cohabiting was scandalous! Homosexual behavior was viewed as the perversion it is, and lesbianism was practically unmentionable. As Paul said, *“It is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret”* (Ephesians 5:12). But no longer are they secret. Modern society insists that all such things are not only to be tolerated but celebrated! Anything less will get you branded as a narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant hater.

Faithful Christians don’t hate anybody. We recognize our own sins, but we hate them and are ashamed of them. And we love others enough to speak the truth and lead them to repentance.

Identity Crisis

We admire the main character in the musical “Annie” for her self-confidence. Although abandoned as a baby, Annie’s unwavering belief in her parents’ love molds her much more than her surroundings, thus setting her apart from the other children in the orphanage. As a result, her matron and fellow orphans mock and goad her. All she needs to do to be popular is to conform to the world’s expectations.

In Luke 3 God proclaims Jesus His “beloved Son,” but right away His identity gets tested. Satan repeatedly goads Jesus: *“If You are the Son of God . . .”* (Luke 4:1-13). Although the three temptations sound strange to modern ears, each one tempts Jesus to take the easy road, to be the royal, earthly king the Jews longed for. All Jesus needed to do to be popular was to conform to the world’s expectations. Instead, He tenaciously held to His true identity, as the next scene shows (Luke 4:16-30).

You also are God’s beloved child. Be courageous! Be confident! Do not be swayed by the taunts and temptations of those who would seek your “popularity” by making you conform to their expectations. Instead, treasure your true identity as a child of God.

--Curt Niccum (Abilene, TX) via *Power For Today*

It’s Your Choice

Hatz has four lëttërs, but so dozs lovz.

Enëmiçs has sëvën lëttërs, but so dozs friënds.

Lÿing has fivz lëttërs, but so dozs truth.

Cry has thrëz lëttërs, but so dozs joy.

Nëgativity has tën lëttërs, but so dozs positivity.

Lifz is two-sidz; choosz thz bëttër sidz of it.

The Wrong Day To Shoplift

Several years ago, at the Beverly Center in Los Angeles, a couple of men were shoplifting. They grabbed merchandise and started to run away. A security guard sprang into action. He struggled with one of the shoplifters who was bigger than himself. What these criminals did not realize was that NFL player Jonathan Martin was a few yards away. Not only is he a professional athlete, Martin is listed at 6’5” and 304 lbs. Shoplifting with a very large NFL player standing nearby? Talk about the wrong day to shoplift! Martin rushed over and quickly overpowered the shoplifter who was struggling with the security guard. The other shoplifter ran away.

There is certainly great power in numbers, especially when one of those is a beast of a human. This obviously comes in handy when confronting criminals, but even more so when facing the greatest enemy in the history of the world, Satan.

It is awesome having each other to rely on in our battle with Satan. We help sharpen each other (Proverbs 27:17). We can encourage each other so we do not become hardened by sin (Hebrews 3:13). And let us never forget that together, *“a chord of three strands is not easily broken”* (Ecclesiastes 4:12). We most certainly can resist Satan (James 4:7), and it is much easier when we have each other to rely on. Best of all, we have an incredible power standing on our side as well. As 1 John 4:4 states, *“greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”* If we are on God’s side, then He is with us.

We are going to come across trials and temptations in life. We will battle sin and Satan. Therefore, let us help each other, stand for each other, and stand with the Lord!

--Author Unknown (via Mt. Carmel CoC, Athens, AL)