

## A Comparison of Worldviews

There are results of sin and the rebellion of “The Fall” in all cultures. In most cultures these results can be divided into three types with the following major emphases:

- ◆ Guilt – breaking the law
- ◆ Fear – breaking a trust
- ◆ Shame – breaking a relationship

In fact the result of sin is guilt **and** shame **and** fear **and** the wrath of God! But different cultures tend to focus on one or other of these results although the other two may also be present.

### 1. Guilt-based Cultures

These are mainly found in western protestant cultures. As post-modernism becomes more influential, there is a shift to shame and fear in western cultures.

### 2. Fear-based Cultures

These are common in animistic cultures. They come into Muslim cultures through Folk Islam. The emphasis is on taboos and living at peace with spiritual beings and spiritual forces. Sacrifices to placate these spiritual powers are usually involved.

### 3. Shame-based Cultures

This is true of semetic cultures and of most Muslim cultures. Here are some differences between shame and guilt cultures:

Trait	Shame Cultures	Guilt Cultures
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure before one’s ideal or exposure before an inner or external audience</li> <li>• Loss of face before significant persons</li> <li>• Embarrassment before social demands</li> <li>• Total emotion: fearing rejection as a person, exclusion from the community or the withdrawal of love</li> <li>• Humiliating exposure, dishonour, self-negation; the impulse is to hide, to cover, to deny</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condemnation before an inner parent or judge</li> <li>• Loss of integrity before one’s own conscience</li> <li>• Pain under moral demands</li> <li>• Specific emotion: fearing judgement of behaviour, correction of acts or withdrawal of trust</li> <li>• Humbling disclosure, discomfort. Regretted acts; the impulse is to justify, rationalize, excuse</li> </ul>
Origin	Identification with an idealised parent	Submission to an idealised parent
Precipitating Event	Unexpected, possibly trivial, event	Actual or contemplated transgression
Character	Failure of being; falling short of goals – of whole self	Violation of values and norms
Primary Feeling	Inadequate, deficient, worthless, exposed, disgraced, disgusting	Bad, wicked, evil, remorseful
Primary Response	Physiological: eyes down, strong emotions, behavioural paralysis	Cognitive: being responsible, weak emotion, focus on the act
Involvement of self	Total self image involved, <i>‘How could I have done that?’</i>	Only moral self image involved, <i>‘How could I have done <b>that</b>?’</i>

Primary Focus	Focus on self	Focus on act
Central Focus	Not belonging	Punishment
Social Reaction	Ridicule and exclusion	Demand penalty
<b>Mechanism</b>	Feels <b>anxiety</b> when violation is pre-meditated or enacted	Feels <b>guilty</b> when violation is pre-meditated or enacted
Initial Defense	Denial, withdrawal, arrogance, rage, exhibitionism, perfectionism	Rationalisation, intellectualisation, paranoid thinking, obsessive/compulsive thinking, seeking excessive punishment
Positive Features	Sense of humanity, builds strong relationships, works towards reconciliation	Initiative, moral and ethical behaviour, reparation when proven wrong
Social reaction to those caught	Ridicule and exclusion	Demand that the law is upheld and the penalty exacted
<b>Evangelism</b>	? (see section 4 below)	Emphasis on the Book of Romans: guilt, penalty, law, justification, righteousness, use of forensic language e. g. The Four Spiritual Laws
The Interpretation of the Cross	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An instrument of shame</li> <li>• God's ultimate identification with us in our sinful shame</li> <li>• Expresses God's love</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An instrument of penalty</li> <li>• God's substitute for our sinful guilt</li> <li>• Expresses God's justice</li> </ul>
Restitution	Identification and communication; reintegration and reconciliation banish shame	Propitiation through penalty; justification and reparation banish guilt
<b>Treatment</b>	<p><b>Affective:</b> help a person to expose his hidden defects in a safe relationship</p> <p><b>Behavioural:</b> overcoming effect; the binding of shame</p>	<p><b>Cognitive:</b> allocates responsibility</p> <p><b>Behavioural:</b> Turns confession into plans of action</p> <p><b>Affective:</b> Discerns between the emotions of true and false guilt</p>

#### 4. Presenting the Gospel to Shame-based Cultures

This is an introduction to a very major subject!

##### a) From being unclean to being clean

There are helpful stories such as the story of Naaman. (2 Kings 5:1-19) The concept of defilement makes sense to shame-based cultures. The issue is then: *'How do I become pure and clean?'*

See Mal. 3:1-3 and Psalm 51: 2, 7, 10.

***"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."***

***"Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."***

***"Create in me a clean heart, O God."***

##### b) From being naked (a very great shame) to being clothed with beautiful clothes.

There are pictures in Scripture of garments of salvation and righteousness. There is a great story in Mt. 22:2-14

**The Great Wedding Feast.** It is about the man with no wedding clothes.

### **c) From being expelled to being visited by God**

The shame of expulsion – the Garden of Eden and what happened to Cain etc.

The honour of being visited by God:

- ✧ Abraham
- ✧ Pillar of fire/cloud in Exodus
- ✧ Tabernacle/temple (2 Chron. 6:13-42; 7:1-3)
- ✧ Emmanuel – Jesus
- ✧ The Holy Spirit

### **d) From weakness to strength**

We are weak and therefore shamed. We can be strengthened by the Holy Spirit. (Phil. 4:13)

It is important to show that Jesus demonstrated great strength on the Cross and even greater strength in the Resurrection! Run through 10 major accomplishments of Jesus on the Cross and in His Resurrection:

- He completed a perfect sacrifice. (Heb. 9:11-14)
- He inaugurated a new covenant. (Heb. 9:15-17)
- He disarmed the principalities and powers. (Col. 2:15 and Jn. 12:31)
- He plundered hell and released captives. (1 Peter 3:19)
- He set us free from the dominion of self. (Rom. 6:6-14 and Col. 2:11-13)
- He set us free from the fear of death and judgement. (Heb. 2:14-15)
- He brought reconciliation and unity in all creation. (Eph. 2:11-19)
- He won the right to take the title deeds of all creation. (Rev. 5:1-14)
- He entered into His high priestly ministry as our intercessor. (Heb. 7:25)
- He took the keys of death and Hades. (Rev. 1)

### **e) From sickness to health**

There are many great stories that illustrate this – physical, emotional, social and spiritual healing.

Look at the examples in Mk. 5:24-35 and Jn. 4:1-41

#### ➤ **A life from which health had gone**

- A crippling disease bringing very great shame
- A crushing despair

#### ➤ **A life in which hope was born**

- Learning about Jesus
- Longing for Jesus

#### ➤ **A life for which help was found**

- What Jesus gives must be received personally
- What Jesus gives must be revealed publically

## Homework on A Comparison of Worldviews

1. Ask around among your neighbours and other workers to discover what brings shame to the local people. Note especially the strong group-conscience as against the individualism of the average westerner.

Another good source of what constitutes a sense of shame is 'sayings and proverbs' i.e.

*"Make sure that you don't get caught!"*

*"Where people don't know you, you can do what you like."*

*"Innovation is the root of all evil."*

*"Be the same as everyone else."*

*"The nail that sticks up above the rest gets hammered down!"*

2. Ask around among your neighbours and other workers to discover how to build up honour in your family.

3. How does a person with much honour **behave** in society?

4. Concerning honour and shame, how do women differ from men in your local culture. What brings shame to women? What can women do to bring honour to their family? How do honourable women behave?