Bob: Are there parts of your life—maybe, aspects of your past or even your present—that you keep walled away from everybody else so that no one, not even God, can go there? Dr. Ed Welch says that is not uncommon to the human condition.

Ed: There’s a rule that is almost inviolable, I think. What we see, in our relationship with other people, we’re going to see in our relationship with the Lord. If a person is saying: “No! Stay away from these places,” you can bet that they have said the same thing to the Lord. That’s not the way we were intended to be. The way we were intended to be was openness—nothing to hide. It doesn’t mean we are perfect; but it means that we are so persuaded—that we rest in the reputation of another—that there’s nothing to hide.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Tuesday, December 17th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I’m Bob Lepine. Is it possible or is it even desirable for a person to live a shame-free life? We’re going to explore that subject today. Stay tuned.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us on the Tuesday edition. Have you ever had a time when you have felt overwhelmed by your own shame? Have you ever felt like it was just oppressive?

Dennis: Yes. I think, as you ask that question, I reflect back on my early days of turning my life over to Christ—and kind of realizing what I had done that was so offensive to God and how far I had drifted away from Him. Frankly, I was ashamed of that. I needed to embrace forgiveness and grace. Truthfully, I didn’t understand, either, all that much.

Bob: Yes. We are spending time, this week, unpacking this issue of shame as we listen back to a conversation that I had with Dr. Ed Welch, who has written a book called Shame Interrupted. Ed is with the Christian Counseling and Education Foundation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He happened to be here on a day when you happened not to be here.

Dennis: I had—

Bob: You were scheduled to be here.
Dennis: —I had shoulder surgery and the anesthesiologist won the day.

Bob: He said, “No, no, no.” [Laughter] “You should not talk.”

Dennis: No! I said, “No, no, no. I’m in no condition to talk.” But I’m healed up and better than I was before the surgery—definitely.

Bob: You know, before we listen to Part Two of the conversation that I had with Ed Welch, I think it would be helpful if you would take just a minute and explain to our listeners why December is such an important month for a ministry like FamilyLife Today, and why we try to rally folks in December to make a year-end contribution. I don’t think most of our listeners recognize that about 30 percent of the money that we receive throughout the year comes during the month of December. For us to be effective in 2014, it’s really important for us to hear from listeners, here at the end of 2013. Do you want to speak a little bit to that?

Dennis: Yes. FamilyLife Today is supported and made possible by you, the listener. We’re on this station at your request, and by God’s favor, and by your generosity. The good thing is, Bob—just around the urgency of this moment—we’ve had some families, who’ve come alongside FamilyLife, who’ve said, “We’ll take $50 that’s given by a donor, and we’ll turn it into $200.”

Bob: Yes, it’s really pretty cool. They’ve agreed to match every donation we receive, during the month of December, on a three-to-one basis. They have just recently increased the total amount that they’re willing to give. So, now, they will match every dollar three-to-one, up to a total of $800,000. That’s the reason we’re coming to listeners and saying, “Can you help us take full advantage of this matching gift?”

Dennis: I turn to you, as a listener, and say: “Have you benefitted from FamilyLife Today? Do you agree with a ministry that is standing strong for biblical marriage and doing that in a loving way—not in a confrontational way—but just attempting to represent the love of Christ to the culture—but stand firm for the truth—and equip you and your family and other families with the biblical blueprints?” If you agree with that, then I want to ask you: “Would you stand with us? We’re in need of folks stepping up, and stepping out, and helping us stand firm.”

Bob: You can go to FamilyLifeToday.com and make an online donation. Just click the button that says, “I CARE.” Or you can call 1-800-FL-TODAY to make a donation over the phone. If you’d like to mail a check to us, our mailing address is P O Box 7111, Little Rock, AR. Our zip code is 72223. Keep in mind every donation you make is going to be matched three-to-one. Be as generous as you can be and help us take full advantage of this matching-gift opportunity.
Dennis: And, Bob, as you’re talking, it occurs to me that I used $50 as a number. For some—that may not be reachable—for others, they may be able to do more and really help us. So, I would say to those of you who can really step up and increase your giving—even if you’ve given earlier this month or earlier this year—your gift will be quadrupled. So, $1,000 becomes $4,000—$5,000 becomes $20,000. I don’t know what your capabilities are and what God’s doing—follow His leadership is what I would encourage you to do. If you can’t give, would you pray for us? Pray that God would provide and enable us to stand firm.

I think, Bob, there is nothing the enemy would delight in more than silencing a voice for the family today, in this generation, at this time in history. I think it’s real. I think the spiritual battle is that real. He would love to shut us up.

Bob: Well, one of the other areas of spiritual battle that’s very real for a lot of our listeners is the area of shame. It has become a paralyzing factor in their lives. That’s the reason we asked Ed Welch to join us and talk about that subject. This is Part Two of the conversation I had with him, not long ago.

Bob: We are talking about the subject of shame. I guess we’ve kind of defined it—a sense of something makes me unworthy—something makes me less than human.

Ed: Great way to put it—because of something we have done or, more often, something that has been done to us.

Bob: A person whose life is controlled by shame—

Ed: And there are a lot of us around there; yes.

Bob: How is that going to play out? What are going to be the issues that that is going to create for that person throughout their day / throughout their week?

Ed: It depends if you’re a male or a female. If you’re a male, it's going to come out as boasting. It’s going to look like trying to build a reputation by what we do. It’s going to look like putting ourselves up and higher because we feel so low.

For a woman: “What's it going to look like?” It’s going to feel like: “There’s something wrong with me. No matter what I do, I can’t do it quite right.” There is a sense that: “I don’t measure up to the people who are around me. Who will accept me?”
For people who have been mistreated—I think one of the reasons that they live with that is because they—"They’re getting what they deserve." They feel like they’re unworthy women—so, they should be treated in unworthy ways. I think there are actually people who sin because they feel like they are such unworthy people that they have to act like unworthy people. It’s all over the place out there, Bob.

**Bob:** It’s interesting that there’s a difference between how men and women respond to shame—men trying to deny it by putting something else in front of you—hoping that you’ll look at that instead of the shameful part of them—women almost absorbing it more than a man will.

**Ed:** Yes.

**Bob:** Why do you think that is?

**Ed:** That’s a good question.

**Bob:** Is it culturally fine—do you think? I mean, is it just not culturally acceptable for a man to be publicly ashamed? That would be too much for a man to bear—so, he’s got to keep a façade in front of that?

**Ed:** I think so. It’s not just this culture. It’s probably any culture that you will find those same things. Men, somehow, believe they’re press reports—that they can be something; they can cover up shame, and they’re not going to be seen.

I think women, probably, more often, recognize that there’s no covering up this—this is the way they feel, and they’re going to have to learn how to live with the thing.

**Bob:** Is it important for us to be disclosing about the shame of our past? I ask that because my wife would say, “You know, in some circles, it just would not be appropriate for you to bring up some of your shameful past.”

**Ed:** I guess my particular interest is that there are no secret places before the Lord.

**Bob:** Yes.

**Ed:** If there is this cubby hole where we don’t want anybody—even God Himself—to move into that place. I would suggest that is a dangerous thing, and the beauty of Scripture will not have access to our entire being. So, in that sense, we would, at least, say: “Those dark places—they have to be put into words before the Lord. Then, we have to hear His response to those words.”

As to whether we speak to other people, that’s a slightly different question. Frankly, I think it’s a less important question. Whether we speak those things to other people or not is going to be secondary because once we’ve spoken to the Lord, and we begin to
understand His desire for the marginalized and for the unclean, to speak them to another human being is just not going to be the biggest deal.

**Bob:** But, you know, there are some people who will say: “I’ve got this shameful part of my past, and I’ve dealt with that with the Lord. So, it’s closed off.” I’m going, “I’m not sure you’ve dealt with it with the Lord.” When you talk about speaking it to the Lord, that’s not just going to God and saying: “Okay, I know I messed up here. Let’s just forget about that; okay?” That’s not dealing with it with the Lord; is it?

**Ed:** No. As you were talking, I was trying to think: “Do I know a person who’s like that? Have I heard things like that?” You must have heard things like that before.

**Bob:** Well, I’ll give you an illustration. I was sitting down with a guy, recently—he’s at a crisis point in his marriage. His marriage has been in isolation for more than a decade. He and his wife have been living in the same house, but they have not been husband and wife. He has, in more recent years, drifted and become unfaithful to his wife. It became exposed. As we were talking together about what was going on—and is he going to rebuild his marriage—and how all of this is happening—I was encouraging him that he needed to find someone that he could sit down with and unpack history—talk through issues—not just about his marriage—but issues that go way back in his life. He said to me—

**Ed:** In a sense, you’re practicing to speak that to another human being so you’re able to, then, speak it to the Lord.

**Bob:** Well, I think that is maybe a part of what I’m getting at here because in that conversation, he said to me: “There are some things in my life that I’ve never talked to anybody about. My wife doesn’t know anything about them; I’ve never talked to anybody about them.” Then he said, “And I’m not going to talk to you about them either.”

**Ed:** There’s a rule that is almost inviolable, I think. What we see in our relationship with other people, we’re going to see in our relationship with the Lord. If a person is saying: “No! Stay away from these places,” you can bet that they have said the same thing to the Lord—they have not spoken openly and honestly to the Lord. That’s not the way we were intended to be.

The way we were intended to be was openness—nothing to hide. It doesn’t mean we are perfect; but it means that we are so persuaded, that we rest in the reputation of another, that there’s nothing to hide. That doesn’t mean we necessarily air everything in our lives; but if we thought it would be helpful for another person, we’d be willing to do it.

Could you imagine that? That’s the way humans were intended to live. Christians and non-Christians are all begging for the same thing. This person you’re talking about—the image is sort of a door being slammed shut—and that is *not* the imagery in Scripture.
We open the door of our hearts to the Lord; and He, obviously, has opened the door of His character to us.

**Bob:** I think, if I went to my friend and I said: “Okay, this stuff that you don’t want to talk to me about—and that’s fine—but have you talked to Lord about this?”

**Ed:** I think he’d say, “Yes.”

**Bob:** That’s the point I’m getting to—that these folks say, “Yes, I’ve dealt with this with the Lord.” But they haven’t dealt with it the way you’re encouraging us to deal with it; right?

**Ed:** Absolutely. What would be a potential follow-up would be: “What has He said? What has the Lord given you, that’s been sweet and liberating, in light of the things that you’ve wrestled with?”

**Bob:** Because if you’ve talked to the Lord about this, He is not going to speak condemnation to you, if you’re in Christ; right?

**Ed:** Absolutely.

**Bob:** So, if you’ve really gone before the Lord and dealt with this before the Lord, your response should be a liberated response.

**Ed:** Perhaps, I should have many more of these illustrations in my life; but when I am really excited about something, I can’t shut up. [Laughter] Get me talking about my grandkids or whatever it might be—

**Bob:** Right.

**Ed:** —and that’s the experience we’re looking for—for someone who has known shame—who has experienced union with Christ in such a way that they share in His reputation. In such a way that they’ve read Scripture and they have realized that Jesus has said, on page, after page, after page: “You belong to Me.”

**Bob:** Yes.

**Ed:** Okay? “People who were not My people are now My people.” That’s the kind of thing you want to shout out to everyone around you.

**Bob:** One of the great privileges of what Dennis and I get to do, here on *FamilyLife Today*, is that we are often talking to people who have shameful experiences in their past—

**Ed:** Right.
Bob: —who have experienced the liberation and are able to be transparent about it for the benefit of others. In that—the experience of God’s redeeming work in their life—Dennis and I have often commented: “There’s nothing more exciting than to hear a redemption story.” We love talking to smart guys, like you; but to talk to somebody who can give us a testimony of redemption—that’s the radio we walk out of and go, “That was a great radio program—right there!”

Ed: Absolutely.

Bob: You know what I mean?

Ed: Yes.

Bob: Because there is something in staring into the reality of redemption that is just overwhelming.

Ed: It is. The Scripture just calls us to hope over and over again. There’s something better than you think in front of you. That’s what those stories are—they’re stories of hope. Occasionally, I’ve had people, who’ve wrestled with shame, say to me, “Could you introduce me to one other person—who has experienced these things and is on this road that is hopeful—where the shame is not nipping at their heels all the time?” That’s often the kind of person you have on your radio.

Bob: The person who is daily assaulted by the reality of his shame—does that person not fully understand the love of God in Christ?

Ed: I would put it a slightly different way. The Lord responds to that person and says: “Why don’t you just sit down and just listen? I’m going to tell you a story. I’m pretty sure that story, in itself, is not going to leave your life transformed; but then, I’m going to tell you another story. Then, I’m going to take shame on Myself.”

The story of Jesus is a story of shame—from start to finish. The story of the crucifixion—the horror surrounding the events of the crucifixion—are trying to say, “This was a shameful crucifixion,”—the One who was spit on, the One who was naked, the One who was rejected by all the people—Jews and Gentiles. Jesus is saying, “Keep listening to the story.”

I’m thinking of Hebrews 2:10—where it was appropriate for our Redeemer to go through suffering. It wasn’t just simply because He was the Passover Lamb, who was going to be slain, and He bears everything that was ours. It was also appropriate so He could be fully man—to know the pain that we experience.

That’s where the story goes—where Jesus says, “Just let me tell you My own story of shame.” Then, we begin to find: “He’s my people. He knows what I’m talking about.”
Bob: Yes.

Ed: That’s a little bit different than: “We don’t know the love of Christ.” In a sense, it’s really very tender. It’s just: “I know that, if you struggle with shame, you feel like an utter outcast. You feel like these words, especially words from the Holy One Himself, could not be directed to you. So, let me tell you, over, and over, and over, and over again—and I don’t mind saying it again,—”

Bob: Right.

Ed: — “And tomorrow, when you forget all these things—“

Bob: “I’ll say it again.”

Ed: — “and you feel like” —and Jesus says, “You feel like I have turned My face from you—well, I will tell you the stories again.”

Bob: And I love the fact that you brought up the “turning of the face.” That’s a motif in Scripture—in Deuteronomy 28—where the blessings and the cursings are laid out. The real blessing of God is for His face to be turned toward you—for it to shine on you. I mean, we have all of these expressions: “God’s attention;” “God’s face is with us.” But when we are cast out—when we sin—what Jesus experienced on the cross—the Father turning His face away—

Ed: That’s what you do with shameful people—you don’t even want to see them.

Bob: You don’t want to look at them. What we need to understand is, because the Father turned His face away from Jesus, He never turns His face away from us again; does He?

Ed: Well, let’s take that Numbers 6 benediction that you were talking about. Here’s Numbers 6, for a shameful person: Here’s the way God Himself has said you’re to be blessed. Okay, are you listening? “May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord shine His countenance on you and be gracious to you,”—No, stop! Stop! You’re not paying attention—you think this is for somebody else and it is not for you.

Bob: Yes.

Ed: No, stop! This is God Himself speaking to you. He is on the prowl for people who experience shame because He knows our shame, and the shamed are His people. So, listen! Listen again—He turns His face to you. When He turns His face to you, it means that it is strictly to show favor to you. That’s what it means to have His face just turn to us.
Then, to link it to that Second Corinthians, Chapter 3 passage: “And, oh, by the way, when He turns His face toward you, it means that your face is going to shine to the world.

Contrary to your experience of being this disgusting outcast, the face of Jesus is going to make your face shine. In contrast to you thinking you should be on the shelf, and that you certainly are unworthy to be a representative of Jesus, He prefers His ambassadors to be weak. Somehow, that’s the way His glory is most pronounced.”

**Bob:** Well, we’ve been listening to the second part of a conversation I had with Dr. Ed Welch on the subject of shame. We have to be reminded, regularly, of the fact that God has forgiven our sin and that He no longer condemns us because there is the voice of one in our ear, condemning us, regularly.

**Dennis:** Yes. Early in our marriage, one of the conversations that Barbara and I had—I just remember talking about it because it had to do with my shame and her shame—both of us—coming into our marriage and starting our relationship together—of a passage in Isaiah, where God talks about—if you come to Him, He’ll make “streams in the desert.”

**Bob:** Yes.

**Dennis:** He’ll make roadways where there are none. He’ll give you a path out of it. God delights in taking broken people—in the midst of their shame and in the midst of all the ways they’ve failed—His forgiveness—His grace is more powerful than our shame.

Our issue is: “Can we believe that is true? Can we trust Him and not believe our feelings that we kind of allow to hang onto us like baggage; and instead—cling to the reality, and the promises of Scripture, and what He says about us—that we are forgiven. We are in His family. We’re His children, and He loves us.”

**Bob:** Ed has written a book on the subject of shame called *Shame Interrupted*. It’s a book that I think helps people explore the issue. It helps them understand how shame can come to control our lives and how Jesus came to liberate us from our sin and from our shame.

We’ve got copies of Ed Welch’s book, *Shame Interrupted*, in our *FamilyLife Today* Resource Center. Go to FamilyLifeToday.com for more information on how you can order the book. Again, the website: FamilyLifeToday.com. You can order online if you’d like, or you can order by phone. Our toll-free number is 1-800-FL-TODAY; 1-800-358-6329. That’s 1-800-“F” as in family, “L” as in life, and then, the word, “TODAY”.

Now, keep in mind as Dennis mentioned earlier, we have something special going on here in the last few weeks of 2013. Some friends of the ministry have promised that they will match every donation we receive this month three-to-one.
If we get a donation from you for $100, they're going to match it so the benefit to FamilyLife is $400. In recent days, they have agreed to match a total of $800,000 coming into FamilyLife. So, if we're able to take full advantage of that, it means more than $3 million-worth of benefit to this ministry.

Can you help us out? Would you consider making a year-end contribution to support this ministry—to help cover the cost of producing and syndicating this program, and to help us reach even more people in 2014—to help strengthen marriages and families all around the world? We appreciate your support. You can make a year-end contribution when you go to FamilyLifeToday.com. Click the button that says, “I CARE”, to make an online donation; or call 1-800-FL-TODAY. You can make a donation by phone. Or, you can mail a check to FamilyLife Today. Our mailing address is P O Box 7111, Little Rock, AR, and our zip code is 72223.

We do hope to hear from you, and we hope you'll pray for us. Pray that we can take full advantage of this matching-gift opportunity and that God will provide all we need to do ministry effectively in 2014.

We hope you can join us back again tomorrow when we'll continue to interact with Ed Welch on the subject of shame. I hope you can tune in for that.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, and our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our host, Dennis Rainey, I'm Bob Lepine. We will see you back next time for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

*FamilyLife Today* is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

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