

FIELD-TESTED SERMON RESOURCES

SERMON SERIES

TRUSTED | BIBLICAL | FIELD-TESTED

Thank you for downloading this sample PDF from our Sermon Series line of resources.

When you stand up in front of students proclaim the Word of God, you need trusted, creative, Biblically solid content. YM360's Sermon Series is exactly what you're looking for.

Field-tested, from-the-trenches of youth ministry, YM360 Sermon Series are complete sermon outlines and graphic packages designed to help you lead students closer to God through proclaiming His Word.

SERIES OVERVIEW FOR *GOD IS NOT*

Everyone has a burden. And for some of us, our burden is God. Is God ashamed of us? Is He clueless? Useless? Silent? The burdens we feel from questions like these make us feel like God weighs us down. But God is not any of these things. In this series, we'll question our ideas and assumptions about God so that we can let go of the burdensome pictures of God that weigh us down, so we can see God as He really is.

- **SESSION 1:** Is God Ashamed? You'll help students understand that God is not ashamed to be called our God; therefore, we do not have to live in shame.
- **SESSION 2:** Is God Clueless? Students will learn that God is available and present in our lives, and His ways will not be mocked.
- **SESSION 3:** Is God Useless? You'll show students that God is not useless because He is the God of the living, not the God of the dead.
- **SESSION 4:** Is God Silent? Students will learn that God speaks the truth, and because we are His followers, we cannot keep Him a secret.

BACKGROUND SLIDES, PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK, AND MORE . . .

Each YM360 Sermon Series comes with title and background slides, promotional art (including Instagram images), and logo treatments. Here is what to expect.

BACKGROUND AND TITLE SLIDES



PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK



INSTAGRAM IMAGES



LOGO TREATMENT



NOTE: Each YM360 Sermon Series also comes with the native files of the logo in case you want to replicate the design for other uses.

God Is Not Sermon Series Overview

The Sermon Series Overview is a one-page glimpse of the stuff you need to know to begin preparing to preach.

- **Session 1 Purpose:** To understand that God is not ashamed to be called our God, therefore we do not have to live in shame.
- **Scripture Passage(s):** Hebrews 11:13-16
- **Session Snapshot:** Does God care about us? Is God ashamed of us? Does he overlook us? These are deep questions that affect our views of God and our relationships with Him. In this session, we'll learn that not only is God not ashamed to be called our God, but He also reaches out to us to claim us so that we can be His children.
- **What You May Need:** Optional supplies or clips for "Carry On" illustration; Optional clips of fanatical sports fans for "Hooligans" illustration; Optional clip or image for "She's With Me" illustration.

Details on *God Is Not* Sermon Series Outlines

Everyone has a burden. And for some of us, our burden is God. Is God ashamed of us? Is He clueless? Useless? Silent? The burdens we feel from questions like these make us feel like God weighs us down. But God is not any of these things. In this series, we'll question our ideas and assumptions about God so that we can let go of the burdensome pictures of God that weigh us down, so we can see God as He really is.

- **Session 1:** Is God Ashamed? You'll help students understand that God is not ashamed to be called our God; therefore, we do not have to live in shame.
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When we finally choose to honestly face tough questions about God – questions about whether God is ashamed, or clueless, or useless, or silent – we discover that God is not burdensome. His yoke really is easy, and His burden really is light. We discover that, thankfully, there are many things that God is not.

How To Use the *God Is Not* Sermon Series

This sermon series outline is designed for use by a communicator in a large group setting. It provides various elements such as suggestions on illustrations or images, Scripture passages, background information, and application points that you will need to prepare your lesson. It also includes discussion questions that could be used in a small group following the message, and artwork for promotion or message support.

These sermons are designed to be useful for all types of groups and churches, and you should feel free to make adjustments that benefit your particular circumstance.

I. Optional Intro: Carry On

There are many strange sports in our world, but few are stranger than the Finnish sport of wife-carrying. In this sport, a man hoists his female partner (usually his wife) over his shoulders and then attempts to run through an obstacle course.

There are several ways the man can carry his wife: a traditional piggy-back carry; a fireman's carry in which the man holds his wife over his shoulder; or the Estonian carry, in which the wife hangs upside down off the man's back with her legs around his shoulders. The sights of this contest get pretty strange pretty quickly, as a man with a woman hanging off his back tries to climb over fences, swim through pools, and speed around corners.

[Tip: Do a search for a video clip of the world championships of wife-carrying. Or, if you're feeling brave, film some of the adult leaders in your group partaking in a wife-carrying contest of their own, or set up an obstacle course live in your meeting area.]

It's a bizarre sight seeing these men race while bearing the burden of their wives on their back. Wife-carrying contests are bizarre because the husbands are bearing such an unwieldy burden while they run. It just doesn't make sense to run a race with someone hanging off your back. If you wanted to run in a regular race, you would never do it with a person hanging off your back. Instead, you would get rid of the burden.

Most of us don't go through our everyday lives with another person hanging off our backs. It would be crazy to do that. But we do go through our lives with burdens. All of us have burdens. And some of the biggest burdens we carry are caused by the questions that plague us and keep us from having any peace. Questions such as: Do I live up to God's expectations? Are people who rebel against God living life however they desire and getting away with it? Am I alone because God's presence doesn't really make a difference in my life? Why do I feel like God is on my back?

We may not recognize it, but these questions weigh us down. They haunt us and keep us from living the life that God wants us to live. And sometimes, we even feel like God is the one who is burdening us and holding us back.

While we may not realize it, we often start to ask these burdensome questions about whether God is careless or clueless or useless or speechless because we have faulty ideas and assumptions about who God is. We need to shed these burdens so that we can move into the life God wants us to live. And as we experience four statements from Scripture that tell us what God is not, we'll be able to answer some of our big questions about God – questions like: Is God ashamed? Is He clueless? Is He useless? Is He speechless?

We begin today with the question of whether God is ashamed of us. And as we discover one thing God is not, we'll get a clear answer to that question that will free us from one of the biggest burdens in our lives. Let's get started.

II. Background

The book of Hebrews reads much like a sermon, and it unfolds around the theme of how Jesus is our High Priest. This was a new concept to Jewish listeners at the time: for thousands of years, they had a system of one high priest entering into God's presence and asking for forgiveness for their sins. Now, the author of Hebrews wanted to help them see how Jesus allows us to come into God's presence and relate to God in an intimate relationship with Him. They (and we) no longer need someone to talk to God for us.

In chapter 11, the sermon takes a long aside as it focuses on what faith looks like in light of this connection with God that Jesus makes possible. This chapter is full of pictures of faith from Old Testament characters. And amid this listing of what we could call the Faith Hall of Fame, we find an incredible statement of something that God is not.

III. Explanation

[Read Hebrews 11:13-16.]

Hebrews 11 recalls the stories of some of the great heroes of faith. But amid the tales of Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph, there's an aside that describes some of the common traits shared by all of these people. And in our passage today, we see that one of the common traits these people shared was suffering. They did not receive everything God had promised them during their lifetimes. They never had a true homeland, because possessing the Promised Land was either a future reality or in process for them. And because they felt like aliens and strangers, they longed for heaven. Their faith led them to live in a reality beyond themselves.

This description of faith is compelling, and it makes for a great sermon. But think about what these heroes of our faith must have felt like during their stories. God promised them great things, but they never saw these promises fully come to fruition.

For example, God told Abraham he would be the father of a great nation – and then Abraham had to wait until he was 100 years old to have his first child. God gave Joseph dreams of how he would rule over his family – and then Joseph spent more than a decade in slavery and then in jail. Not receiving the things promised meant that they had to spend many years in the pain of waiting and wondering if God really meant what He said.

And in this pain, these people probably had questions. We certainly would have. In their hardest moments, they probably wondered whether God really cared about them or if He had forgotten them. Alone in a jail cell, in the dark of the night, in the hidden places of their hearts. And even when they trusted God's heart, they might have wondered if God was too busy or too preoccupied and had become careless about fulfilling the promise He had made them. In other words, they probably asked, "Is God ashamed of me?"

This question resonates in our hearts, as well. We have heard all the sermons about God, but sometimes our circumstances lead us to wonder if God really, truly cares about us. We may not be in a jail cell, we may not be actively waiting for a baby to be born, but we have questions that whisper in our hearts as well. And even in the moments when we believe God does care, the state of our world

and the state of our lives makes us wonder if God has carelessly forgotten us or overlooked us amid everything else He is doing. This emotional question of whether God is careless rattles around in all of our hearts and souls. It makes us wonder if God couldn't care less about us or if He is even ashamed of us.

But in the face of this huge question, the author of Hebrews makes a stunning statement – one that applied to the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 and that applies just as much to us as well. These people weren't perfect, just like we aren't perfect, but they were trying to live by faith and follow God. And of these imperfect but sincere people, the writer of Hebrews said, "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them" (v. 16). The lesson that the author of Hebrews takes from the stories of these imperfect but sincere heroes of faith is, to use His words, that God is not ashamed to be called our God.

IV. Optional Illustration: Hooligans

[Tip: If possible, find images of hardcore sports fans, or locate a clip where they are showing their true colors.]

Every sports team has fans, but in some cases, these fans take their fanaticism to extremes. When this happens, fans become hooligans. Hooligans are so involved in the fate of their teams that they'll start fights with opposing fans or start riots when their team loses – or even when it wins. But while these hooligans think they are supporting their team, what they don't understand is that the rest of the team's fans are actually ashamed of them. While the hooligans are out front cheering and fighting and rioting, the rest of the team's fan base is slowly backing away because they're ashamed that their team is associated with these maniacs.

While we may not be hooligans, we all know the feeling of being ashamed of someone or having someone be ashamed of you. Maybe you feel your parents shaking their heads when they see your grades or your musical abilities or the way you perform on a sports field. Maybe you feel friends back away when you are wearing the wrong clothes or having a bad hair day or when they see you associating with the wrong people. Maybe you feel your teachers looking down on you because you're struggling in a class. Whatever the situation, we all know what it's like to feel like someone is ashamed of you.

It's hard to verbalize, but many of us wonder if God is ashamed of us. We don't feel good enough or smart enough or holy enough or helpful enough to be worthy of God, and so we feel like God is ashamed of us. And this nagging feeling makes us wonder if God is careless in His relationship with us, because of His shame of us.

But there is hope for us. We can look at our passage in Hebrews today and see that God cares deeply for us, and He is not ashamed at our attempts of faith.

V. Application

We know that God cares about us and that He will not forget or overlook us because God is not ashamed to be called our God. He claims us gladly as His people.

When we look at ourselves honestly, we see many reasons that God could be ashamed of us. We're proud like Joseph was. We're deceitful like Abraham was. We're manipulative like Jacob was. We have fits of rage, as Moses did. We're sinful and selfish. We give up in tough times. We can be hooligans. When we look at ourselves honestly, we sometimes become ashamed of ourselves and wonder how God could ever care about us. Even those of us who are sincere about following God is imperfect.

But the God, who sees every bit of sin and selfishness in us, claims us. The God who sees us give up when things get hard is preparing a homeland for us so that we don't have to be aliens or strangers anymore. Our Creator claims us. God is not ashamed to be called our God.

Not only is God not ashamed to be called our God – He reaches out to us to claim us so that we can be His children. That's what the cross is all about: Jesus died a shameful death to provide a way for us to have a relationship with God in which shame has no say and no sway. The God who is unashamed became shamed, so we no longer live subject to shame.

This truth has huge implications in our lives. No longer do we have to live under shame from ourselves or anyone else. God is not a God who shames us for what we've done or thought or said. Our faith in God tells us that God has faith in us. He hasn't given up on us or turned His back on us or forgotten us. Instead, He calls us into great things like what the people in this chapter did, believing that we can be heroes of faith just like they were. God is not embarrassed by you, and God is not ashamed to be your Father.

VI. Optional Illustration: She's With Me

Fourth-grader Kennedy Corpus wanted to skip school, but she had a good reason. She wanted to see President Barack Obama speak. During the town-hall meeting, Kennedy's father stood up to ask a question, and during the question, he mentioned that his daughter had skipped school to come to the event. Obama's response was to ask, "Do you need me to write a note?" Observers laughed, but the President was serious. So he tore a corner off of one of his sheets of notes and wrote, "To Kennedy's teacher: Please excuse Kennedy's absence. She's with me." After signing the note, the President stepped off the stage to hand the note to a shocked fourth-grade girl. Kennedy's summation of the event was pretty simple: "It was like the best thing ever."

[Tip: If possible or desired, find a clip from the news story about this incident.]

Imagine what this girl felt like when she received a note from the President of the United States excusing her from school. She must have felt important and noticed and valuable because the President said, "She's with me."

If you have ever felt like you couldn't live up to God's expectations, you need to hear God speaking to you today and saying, "She's with me. He's with me." He is not ashamed. He has not forgotten us. He is not embarrassed by us. He does not leave us. God claims us as His children because God is not ashamed to be called our God.

VII. Closing

Some of you have listened to this entire sermon, and in the back of your mind, there's a small voice that's saying: not you. Everyone else, God is not ashamed of. But you, you're different. God is embarrassed by you. He doesn't even like you.

Here's a tough truth: You're not that special. You are the ONLY person in the history of the world that God has ever been ashamed of. The people in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews were no better than you or me, but also no worse. We're all candidates for God's shame, but He made way for everyone to be claimed by Him.

Henri Nouwen once said that there were three lies of identity: "I am what I have, I am what I do, I am what other people say or think about me." Because God loves us, we can counter these lies with three truths: God has given me everything I have, I can only do anything because of Jesus, and I am what God says about me. And God says He is not ashamed of you.

No matter your circumstances, God is not ashamed of you. No matter your success, God is not ashamed of you. No matter your struggles, God is not ashamed of you. Your Creator claims you. You are loved by the God who is love. You are remembered and not forgotten. God chooses to identify with you. God is not ashamed to be called your God.

Small Group Discussion Questions

You can use these discussion questions to facilitate small groups after your sermon, or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go. These questions are designed to help students think critically about the sermon and what it means to them.

1. What kind of people was the author of Hebrews talking about in our passage today? How are these people like us?
2. What does this passage say that God is not? Why is this “God is not” statement significant?
3. Why is it important that God is not ashamed to be called our God? What does this phrase mean?
4. What are some things that cause us to be ashamed of ourselves? What does this verse say about those things?
5. What are some things that cause other people to be ashamed of us? What does this verse say about those situations?
6. What are some things that cause us to be ashamed of other people? What does this verse say about those situations?