

JOURNEY FROM DESPAIR TO HEALING PART 4: SHAME



**Where does shame come from?
How can we be healed of shame?**

INTRODUCTION TO JOURNEY FROM DESPAIR TO HEALING PART 4: SHAME

Thanks for your interest. I pray these teaching materials will lead you into a deeper understanding of yourself and of God.

This series on Abuse Recovery is divided into five sections. Each covers an aspect of the journey, including preparation and advice, hindrances and helps, shame, fear, and hope. You may find benefit in studying any or all of them.

The teaching portions are divided into sections short enough to read during any brief time period. They are designed to provoke thought and introspection and to direct you to more study as needed.

You will find a study guide at the back of each piece. It is also divided into sections that correlate with the teaching portions. The study questions can be used on your own or with a group for discussion. Like the teaching, they are meant to stimulate soul-searching, as well as God-seeking.

Each teaching and study guide section may be removed and perused separately. Reorganize them as you wish!

The materials are taken from my own experiences, study, and understanding. They are not intended to take the place of teaching or counseling, but to supplement them. If you are seeing a counselor, you may consider them as a part of your healing journey.

Blessings—

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Part 1 Shame on You!

Didn't that phrase just make you cringe?

Do you think you might be living with shame?

I have yet to see an abuse survivor who doesn't wrestle with shame. It is a paralyzing emotion. It makes you feel as though everything that happened was your fault—or at least a good part of it was.



Ask yourself what you could possibly have done as a young child to invite all that abuse. A child literally cannot do anything to ask for sexual molestation or rape. A child can certainly misbehave, but does not invite beatings and bruises.

What does Jesus say about children? When the disciples wanted to shoo the kids away as nuisances, Jesus spoke up and invited them to stay (Matthew 19:14). He understands children and loves them. He said we are His children and He loves us.

Ask Jesus about your shame. What do you think He will say? I don't know exactly how He will phrase it for you, but I know shame from my past is not to be part of my life. He died on the cross to take away our shame.

I heard a good explanation of shame versus guilt. It seems that **guilt is the feeling that you've done something wrong** (we all have, haven't we?). There is hope for redemption from guilt.

However, **shame is the feeling that we are something wrong.** No hope of redemption.

When shame rears its ugly head, ask Jesus to tell you the truth.

And don't forget to listen for the answer.

PART 2 What Does Shame Feel Like?

Shame covers me
like an old wool coat,
Heavy, rough, it even smells musty.
It doesn't let me breathe . . .
I can't get out from under it.



I let them do it. Nothing can ever change that.
There is no hope . . . I can't get rid of it.
Nothing I do will ever wash it clean.
There's no power that can change it . . .
Even Jesus won't accept me.
But now I see Him . . .

Beaten, jeered and leered at, spat upon . . .

Shamed deeply.



He was innocent . . . but so was I.

I let them do it . . . but so did He.

He was shamed . . . so was I . . .

But He let them shame Him

so my shame could be taken away.

The shame belongs to those who hurt Him,

And to those who hurt me.

Just as it does not belong to Him,

It does not belong to me.

And it does not belong to you.

Never did.

Let it go.

Part 3 Do You Feel Like You Hate Your Own Soul?

A definition of shame:

S– Soul

H– Hatred

A– At

M– My

E– Expense

Do you hate your soul?

We know the soul comprises the mind, will, and emotions.



- People who live with destructive shame tend to ***hate their own feelings*** and mistrust emotions.
- They try to live in their mind, where reasoning can protect them from feeling. But they know ***they can't think their way out of the shame*** because they've tried and failed.
- They don't like their own will, because they feel ***they don't deserve to have needs and wants.***

Maybe you wouldn't go so far as to call this hatred, but it sure isn't love.

There is a type of shame that's positive. You feel it when you do something wrong and your conscience acts up. I prefer to call this **guilt**, just for clarity.

However, **destructive shame is as a result of you and me agreeing with a lie.** We take that lie inside us, nurture it, and it becomes shame. And we become emotionally wounded.

How many times did you hear, “This is all your fault!”? As a child, you had no way of knowing the truth. It wasn’t *all* your fault. You more likely made a mistake that turned out badly, and part of the blame could belong to you. **But not all of it.**

Or did you receive the lie that you are worthless? Lots of kids do. Parents and others can say the cruelest things in anger, and the child accepts it—oh, maybe not the first or even the fifth time, but eventually he gives up the fight.

Did you grow up with the feeling that you had to be perfect? Could you ever measure up? Of course not, and shame was the result.



We grow up with so many word curses hurled at us. Hurtful things like how stupid or fat or clumsy we are. Maybe we’re told that we’ll never amount to anything, that we are a great disappointment to our parents or grandparents.

When our minds mature and we are able to reason logically, we understand that those things aren’t true. But how do we tell our hearts that truth? Somewhere, deep inside, parts of us remains convinced of the lies. And those parts pump out shame like the heart pumps blood.

The shame infiltrates our whole being.

Believe it or not, many of the word curses can be broken off. You can come out of agreement with them, just like you sever unholy soul ties or break a contract. But the shame can remain. The lie hasn’t been countered with God’s truth.

Only God can speak truth to the heart.

And only He can heal shame.

Part 4 Getting Rid of Shame

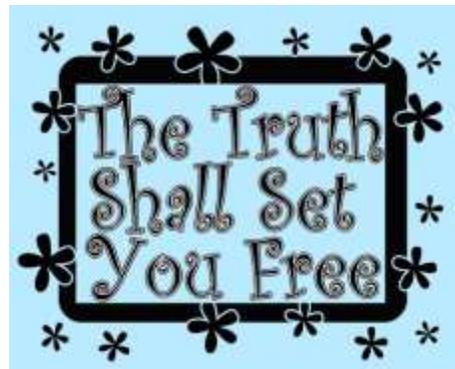
We've been talking a lot about shame, haven't we? There's a good reason for that—**it's the most common result of abuse.**

Since shame is a feeling of "*I **am** something wrong*" while guilt is the feeling of "*I've **done** something wrong*", shame permeates our very soul. We feel as though we can't get past it, can't get over it, or can't get rid of it.

Talk about an impossible situation!

Au contraire, my friend! Shame comes from the lies we believe about ourselves. Lies that are planted and perpetuated by our enemy who doesn't want us to live the full and victorious lives God created for us.

Don't forget that getting rid of shame is imperative for healing. However, all of the positive self-talk in the world can't remove it. We can bury it (kind of) and we can ignore it (for a little while) but we can't get rid of it. **The only one who can do that is Jesus.**



Jesus declared that He is our Healer. He also said that healing belongs to God's children. Don't you qualify? Of course, you do. Once you turn yourself over to Him, you are an heir to all His promises.

Let's get started.

First, ask Jesus to reveal what lie you believe about yourself. That could be lots of different things. Let's use this common one: I am too bad for Jesus to ever love me.

Now ask Him where that lie started. (This can get a little scary, so do this with a strong friend or a counselor if you want to.) Jesus might say the lie started when

your father said he didn't love you. We all put our own fathers in the place of God when we're little, so this lie gets changed into God not loving us.

Next, ask Jesus what the truth is. *And that isn't the truth you think about, it's the truth He tells you.* We can have the entire Bible memorized, but until He speaks to our heart that knowledge stays in our head.

Wait for the answer. It may be in a second or two, or it may be the next day. Don't think He is refusing to answer you. He won't. His truth might be something along the lines of "I loved you then and I love you now."

| LIES: | TRUTH: |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Pain | Healing |
| Accusation | Grace |
| Discouragement | Hope |
| Captivity/Bondage | Freedom |
| Feelings-based | Kingdom-based |
| Powerlessness | Power |
| Fear | Peace |

When His truth reaches your heart, you are probably ready to release the shame to Him. Tell Him. Then do it. And anytime you are picking it up again, put it back into His hands.

Keep your eyes and your heart turned to Him.

Shame is not who you are!

Never was.

Let it go.

STUDY GUIDE

Part 1 Shame on You!

1. Do you remember hearing the phrase “Shame on you!” as a child? How did it make you feel? Do you ever tell yourself the same thing as an adult? When?
2. If you remember being abused, do you think you deserved it? Why or why not?
3. What do you think about the definitions of guilt and shame? Do they make sense? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever asked Jesus about your shame? What did you ask? What was His answer? Does He love you?

Part 2 What Does Shame Feel Like?

1. Describe what shame feels like to you. Write a description of your feelings.
2. With all the shame you carry, can Jesus ever truly accept you? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever thought about how Jesus was shamed? Read the trial and crucifixion accounts in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and make a list of the ways they shamed Jesus.
4. When you realize just how much Jesus suffered for you, not just His death but His shaming, does it help you realize that shame is not part of who you are? Why or why not?

Part 3 Do You Hate Your Own Soul?

1. Does the acrostic definition of shame make sense? Do you see yourself “hating” your soul (mind, will, and emotions)? When? What aspect of your soul bothers you the most?
2. Do you remember things you were told that caused shame in you? Describe them.
3. Have you tried to reason your way out of shame? What was the result?
4. Do you understand the effects of “word curses”? Can you identify some that were spoken to you? If so, write them down and break them off by repenting for agreeing with them. Then ask Jesus for the truth about them.

Part 4 Getting Rid of Shame

1. Have you ever tried “positive self-talk” to remove your shame or other bad feelings? Was it successful? Why or why not?
2. Identify and write down a lie you believe about yourself. How do you know it’s a lie? Where did it come from?
3. Have you asked Jesus for the truth about a lie you’ve believed? What happened? If you did not receive His truth, ask Him what’s in the way.
4. Study the list contrasting lies and truth. Can you see the destruction caused by lies? The benefits of receiving God’s truth for you? What can you add to each list?