

GOD'S LOVE AS THE ANTIDOTE FOR SHAME

Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame. (Romans 10:11)

Shame is a deeply painful feeling of humiliation and the belief that because we are sick or in pain, we are unworthy of connection, belonging, and love.

For many of us, the emotional vulnerability of illness and pain has raised questions about what we did to cause it and what we are not doing to cure it. Over time, we internalize the belief that illness and pain aren't something that happened to us but, instead, are the result of profound character flaws. If only we had enough faith, if only we could pray with enough conviction, if only we would humbly repent, if only we were more other-focused, if only ...

Over time, shame begins to reshape our identity, speaking words of fear, inadequacy, incompetence, inconvenience, and unworthiness over us. Irene Rollins writes, *Shame keeps us overwhelmed and afraid of reaching out and sharing the truth of our story.* Shame shuts us down. We stop telling anyone what and how we feel, and we often withdraw completely.

Yet, feeling shame for the illness and pain we did not cause and cannot cure isn't Biblical. God doesn't consider us inconvenient, inadequate, incompetent, or unworthy. He loves us deeply, perfectly, and completely *simply because we are His.*

SCRIPTURE HAS MUCH TO SAY ABOUT SHAME

- *Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours.* (Isaiah 61:7)
- *I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.* (Psalm 34:4-5)
- *Let me not be put to shame, LORD, for I have cried out to you...* (Psalm 31:17)
- *Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated.* (Isaiah 54:4)

- *I will rescue the lame; I will gather the exiles. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they have suffered shame.* (Zephaniah 3:19)
- *Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.* (Genesis 2:25)
- *But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.* (1 Corinthians 1:27)
- *Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.* (Joel 2:27)
- *However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.* (1 Peter 4:16)
- *In you, LORD my God, I put my trust. I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemiestriumph over me. No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shamebut shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause.*(Psalm 25:1-3)
- *Let us lie down in our shame, and let our disgrace cover us. We have sinned against the LORD our God, both we and our ancestors; from our youth till this day we have not obeyed the LORD our God.* (Jeremiah 3:25)
- *And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.* (Romans 5:5)

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT SHAME

- Shame says that because I am flawed, I am unacceptable. Grace says that though I am flawed, I am cherished. (Michelle Graham)
- The healing of shame takes place through the process of being known, through vulnerability in community. (Curt Thompson)
- Shame dies when stories are told in safe places. (Ann Voskamp)
- Prolonged pain can become shame, a hidden hurt that says God might not love us after all. (Taylor Joy Murray)
- Pride and shame...appear so different...Pride boasts. Shame hides. Pride seeks to be seen. Shame seeks to be avoided... The emotions have the same impact: they keep you from your Father. (Max Lucado)
- Lord Jesus, you're the only one who can break the binding power of our shame because you have completely broken the condemning power of our guilt. (Scotty Smith)
- Shame was stripping away every earthly support that Jesus had: his friends gave way in shaming abandonment; his reputation gave way in shaming mockery; his decency gave way in shaming nakedness; his comfort gave way in shaming torture... (John Piper)