

The Bondage of Shame

What is Shame?

According to Webster, it is: “*a painful feeling of having lost the respect of others because of the improper behavior, incompetence, etc. of oneself... a tendency to have feelings of this kind*”

- Although shame is painful, this can either be **healthy shame** or **toxic shame**
- When it becomes a “*tendency*” you can know you have built up a **stronghold of unhealthy shame**

Healthy Shame

According to Dr. Harold Dewberry, healthy shame is: “*the inner feeling that causes us to revere what is honorable*”

- The Greek word “*aischune*” used for shame means: “*feelings which lead a person to shun that which is unworthy out of a prospective anticipation of being dishonored or humiliated*”

Healthy shame is based on our **trust in God**

- It helps us set **moral boundaries** in conjunction with our **consciences**
- It keeps us from **self-exaltation** (Romans 12:3)

Toxic Shame

Healthy shame becomes toxic “*when it is internalized and becomes part of our personality*”

- When it becomes **internalized** it is **covered over and hidden** – but we **accept it** as **defining who we are**
 - The **shame festers** into a feeling of **inferiority**
 - **Guilt** says “*I feel bad*”
 - **Shame** says “*I am bad*”

The Bondage of a Shame-based Personality

Internalized shame then becomes a **foundational platform** from which our **actions and reactions** result

- We **easily accept shame** even as we **bitterly resent** those who **unfairly place this burden on us**
 - And, we tend to **give it back** to someone else as a **method of release** but which is only **fleshly retaliation** – and **perpetuates the cycle of shame** (i.e. **shame breeds shame**)
- As a **motivating force** within us, it is **not only a stronghold** which allows **demonic influence**, but it also **becomes an idol**
 - “*Idols of the heart include our negative emotions such as shame, fear, anger or guilt*” (Dewberry)
 - “*Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry*” (Colossians 3:5)
 - Such **idols** need to be **cast down** in our lives

Toxic Shame Leads to Physical Illness

When shame **festers** and becomes **internalized**, it is like a **spiritual cancer**

- All too often, this **spiritual cancer** manifests into **physical cancer** (or some other disease that **attacks our bodies from the inside out**)
 - “*What benefit (return) did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? None, for the end of those things is death*” (Romans 6:21, Amp)

- “*Shame covers the spirit, robbing the spirit of its inner power and strength. Hence, the person becomes despondent and timid, and becomes weary and exhausted.*” (Dewberry)
 - This **shame** then **fragments the soul** by pushing the **painful, shameful memories** into the **subconscious** while the **emotional pain** is buried **deep inside our souls**
 - This is **especially true** for cases of **sexual abuse** which leads to **dissociation**

The Blood of Christ Cleanses

It is the work that **Jesus Christ** did on the **cross** that gives us our **victory over shame**, who “*for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and has sat down at the **right hand** of the throne of God.*” (Hebrews 12:2)

- “*Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... but He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities... and by His stripes we are healed*” (Isaiah 53:4-5)

What is **our part** in **ridding ourselves of toxic shame**?

- “*But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the world of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*” (2Corinthians 4:2)
- “*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.¹² For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.¹³ But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.¹⁴ Therefore He says: “*Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.*” (Ephesians 5:8-14)*

Renounce All Sources of Toxic Shame

- All generational shame that came from parents, grandparents and great-grandparents”
- The curse of shame (and resultant **poverty**) and forgiveness for those who **caused the curse of shame**
- All personal shame caused by your own sin or by someone’s sin against you
- The cycle of shame that **perpetuates itself** over and over again
- All spirits of shame that **oppress you**
 - And then **thank the Lord** for releasing you from shame and its **toxic effects**