

Published based on [In the Face of Shame](#)

In the Face of Shame

Have you ever felt ashamed of something you did? Have you ever been embarrassed to look people in the eyes?

On Sunday I began to ponder the effects of shame. I was praying for a beautiful young woman whom I had not seen in a couple of years. The last time I saw her, she asked for prayer because of her marital situation. I had counseled with her, prayed with her and had given her a book as a resource. And here she was again, having a hard time looking into my eyes. The longer I spoke with her, the more obvious it was that she was very ashamed. I knew something of her story. An abusive husband whom she just literally caught in the act of being unfaithful. Not a new story with her. As she cried to me for help, she said, "I don't want to leave him." My heart was heavy for her. How I wished I could have taken her troubles away! I wished I could have made her marriage whole. But deep within, I knew that aside from a work of the Spirit of God, things were not going to change in this marriage. She was going to continue to be beaten and betrayed. If she continued to be a prisoner of her shame, she was never going to take the steps she needed to in order to experience acceptance and freedom.

I thought of the shame in her eyes. It was haunting. The tears. The grief. The heartache. I thought of the shame Christ experienced on the cross. The Word says that he despised the shame of the cross while focusing on the joy which was set before him.

Why was Christ ashamed on the cross? What brings shame into a human life?

My mind kept going to Romans 5.

Today, I did a little study on the original meanings of the words in Romans 5. Here is my translation: (MV – Mikki's version!)

Since we have been made just and innocent by faith, we have peace with God. This peace flows through the channel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This channel of access gives us admission by faith into the grace where we stand. We have confidence in the hope of the very apparent glory of God. Not only that, but we can also be confident during the pressures and trials of our life knowing that they will accomplish the purpose of teaching us to endure. This endurance brings to a maturity our trust in Christ. This trust helps us hope with anticipation, expecting and confidently believing. And hope does not make us ashamed. It does not disgrace us or cause us to be dishonored because God's love is poured out in our hearts, in our feelings and thoughts, and our minds, by God's Holy Spirit who has been given to us. The hope we have in God through Jesus Christ will never make us ashamed because the love of God pours into our hearts and minds.

Can you visualize having water poured over you –covering you from your head down? If God's love is poured over us and we find hope in Christ, we will never have to be disgraced or dishonored in our relationship with Christ.

Isn't that the source of shame –pain that comes from relationships? This young woman I prayed with was so ashamed – not because of what she had done but because of what had been done to her. She was never intended to be put to that shame in her marriage relationship. What was intended was for her husband to minister to her in such a way that one day he would present her to Christ as his bride who was beautiful – with no shame.

Shame makes us bow our heads in disgrace. We don't want to look into anyone's eyes. We want to avoid everything that makes us think of our shame.

Shame causes us to hide. Adam and Eve hid from God because of their sin. But God came after them. He always comes after us. He calls us out of hiding and asks us to allow Him to cover our nakedness just as He did Adam and Eve's. The first shame separated man and woman from each other and from God. But God called Adam and Eve into light and truth, and He covered them.

Christ became our ultimate covering. He covers us with his blood. His red blood washes us and makes us clean, and our life is in His blood.

As I studied the Greek word for shame, I found that one of the meanings is to disfigure. Dan Allender teaches that we can find the glory of God in the face of others. Is it any wonder that Satan would try to disfigure our faces with shame and the painful effects of sin?

This passage in Romans 5 talks about how we stand in grace. Shame or *disgrace* bends us low. *Grace* calls us to stand and look into Christ's eyes. When we do that, he promises that his hope will not disappoint us because he will fill our hearts with his love. A heart that understands God's love doesn't have a lot of room for shame. His love pours over us.

On the cross, Christ took our sins into his heart so that our hearts can be whole. We can know that when our hearts are broken, Christ has felt our brokenness. He has felt our shame, our disgrace. He has experienced the ultimate shame. Our sins on his sinless body. His body hanging naked as a public display so that our sins can be covered. Not excused, but covered.

How do we deal with shame in our lives?

Here is my simple list:

1. Identify it. Find the source of what makes you feel disgraced, dishonored, what makes you blush in shame.
2. Begin to think about the fact that Christ was "put to an open shame" so you could be free from shame. When he paid for our sins, he literally took onto his own body all the things that make you and me ashamed. Although he had never committed sin, he embraced our sins. He took them upon himself – into his heart and he bore them. He carried them all. Then he paid for them. He took their penalty.
3. Realize that God does not want you or me to live in shame. He doesn't want us to live in avoidance. He wants us to live in freedom. Not as a prisoner who is condemned because of his or her wrongdoing, but as one released from the prison of our own condemnation and the condemnation of others.
4. Take the first step of offering your shame to God and exchanging it for His acceptance and glory.
5. Do the hard work that is necessary to live free of shame. Enlist the help of those who can guide you in that work.

Christ always draws us to him. He always invites us to look into his eyes. He always pursues us. He always calls us to stand in his love unashamed. Satan always condemns us. He always bows our heads down in shame. He always pushes us away from the One who loves us most.

I guess my favorite Bible story is of the Samaritan woman. Some of you know that already. You are probably saying, "Does she know another story?" No, not really. I don't. The only story I know is that in my shame, he accepted me. He called me out of hiding and asked me to look into his eyes of love. Then he paid for my shame. Just as the woman came to Jesus in desperation, I found him the same way. I couldn't resist one who would offer me that kind of love.

Is there anything more irresistible than love? Is there anything that makes us feel safer than experiencing unconditional love? Is there anything more beautiful than feeling that we are loved in our weakness? In our imperfection? In our sin?

Our earthly relationships are designed to give us a glimpse of this kind of love. They will always fail us at some point. I don't say that to be discouraging. It is just that we humans are imperfect, and we all fail one another in many ways.

But God invites us into a place of hope that will never disappoint us. A hope that calls us to stand. A hope that gives us peace. A hope that will take us through troubles and trying times. A hope that will birth in us the character of God. A hope that pours His love on us.

I once heard that called "Living drenched".

The hope still pours out today. Will you stand under the flow? Lift your face to the One who will take all your shame. As his love pours over you, everything else will wash away.

You can also find this article published on [In the Face of Shame](#), and on the tag pages [Hope](#), [love](#), [redemption](#), [shame](#).