

4 Ways to Help Overcome the Struggle of Shame From Your Sexual Past

Recently I had the pleasure of being a part of an event called Loveology. It's actually the title of a new book that my friend, John Mark Comer, wrote.

I just sat on a Q&A panel for the event, but I endorsed the book and did so not just because JM is my friend but because I really believe in the book. It's a critical message for our time, to be sure.

There were 2,800 people packed into this theater for the night event. Phil Wickham led worship, and John Mark taught a couple messages before we had the panel. People texted in questions, and we responded. It went great. We laughed a lot, joked with each other ... and then I cried some.

I didn't expect to cry. There was just a question that came up that really got me. A person texted in a question about being sexually abused as a child and was asking for direction on how to break down the walls that had been built between her and God. Unfortunately, I don't remember her exact wording of the question.

I know it was a woman, because she emailed me this morning. I apparently addressed the question with enough grace and understanding to allow her to feel safe doing so. For that, I am very grateful.

She feels like she is not deserving of God's love. She struggles with doubt that she will experience redemption in this area. She wonders if she will feel whole enough to give herself to a husband the way she desires. In other words, she is wrestling with her identity in very real and,

unfortunately, painful ways.

It's amazing how much how we use our bodies—or how they are abused—affects our mind, theology and overall health. The truth is, we are human beings who are intricately designed with a complex mixture of body, soul and emotion.

I guess, to save space here, I would say the following four things to you if you struggle with shame because of your past sexual experiences (whether or not you were a willing participant):

1. Even though it can get very confusing at times, it's important to remember that God's definition of you is in no way affected by your sin or someone else's sin against you if you are in Christ. I cannot emphasize that enough. Sin always causes our view of God to be tweaked (Genesis 3:6-8 is a good example), and we must fight for an accurate view of God.

2. It is rarely easy, and it is rarely in our desired timing, but God does, in fact, redeem brokenness. There is limited hope apart from Jesus, but in Him we have much hope to cling to.

3. Cling to the church; don't run from it. God's grace is expressed best through His followers (or at least it should be). Find someone to reveal your brokenness to.

4. If you have shared with someone and have not been responded to the way you feel necessary, don't allow that to negatively affect your view of God or His people. People are people, and there can be a huge variety of reasons why the person you opened up to didn't respond in a manner you would deem appropriate. There is still hope, and that hope is best experienced among God's people.

Chuck Bomar *planted and is lead pastor of Colossae Church in Portland, Ore., and is founder of both CollegeLeader () and iampeople (). He is author of six books, with the most recent*

being the highly anticipated work titled Better Off Without Jesus.

For the original article, visit .