

Holy Help to Shake Off Your Shame and Trust God

The Biblical Perspective

Take Naomi. And Ruth.

Naomi (the one who told everyone to just call her Mara, short for “bitter”) felt covered in shame. Shame for God’s lack of provision that forced her family to move to a foreign land. Shame for the death of her husband and her sons. And those daughters-in-law? Hardly someone she would want to bring back home with her. The judgment she would feel for bringing unbelieving daughters-in-law back to her home was yet another burden on top of everything else. But that stubborn Ruth just would not let go of her commitment to Naomi, no matter how many times Naomi tried to shake her off. In the midst of the deep shame Naomi felt, she hoped that somehow God would still have a plan. As she journeyed back to her people when the famine had ended, she arrived right as the harvest was coming in.

What a beautiful entrance to the next scene, as God set the stage for restoration with a bountiful harvest! Sometimes if we are patient, right around the corner is a bigger blessing than we could have ever imagined, if we will just hold on to God and His promises. And that pesky daughter-in-law? She ended up ushering in a restoration of Naomi’s honor and a new season of grace. Sometimes what we think is a source of shame becomes a blessing when we trust God with the outcome instead of doubting Him.

Part of how God rolls away the stone of shame in our lives is through revelation. As God exposes the myths we believe and reveals truth, we are set free. All the faces and places of shame woven in our culture might be loud, but they are not

truth. Shame is propaganda. It is influence propagated by a culture intent on pleasing man. When we live for an Audience of One, the voices of shame all around us get quieter. We don't have the same goals or standards as the surrounding culture. The perspective of a world bent on living to please self will always end up in shame, but the Christian rises above that shame when our hearts are fixed on God's Word and standards instead.

Have you, like Naomi, gone through grief so great that you feel shame about it? Maybe you have wondered that if God allowed it into your life, then you really must have done something wrong. This kind of shame is once again formed from looking to man for favor. When we look to God in our shame, He is able to roll shame off us and restore honor all for His glory.

Truth

Even when shame is all around us, our God and His promises are greater.

Humility

The source of our shame is flawed, focusing on our weaknesses. In our weaknesses, we are strong. We don't have to be afraid of being exposed anymore. We never were enough, but our God is. When we trust God in our shame, He is able to remove it.

Grace

Whether the shame fits or not, God gives us grace to walk through it. He is faithful and will not leave us in our shame.

Let's Recap

The circumstances of life can be overwhelming or just frustrating, but shame rears its ugly head in unique ways in all of our lives. Being embarrassed by our circumstances—from slipping on the floor in the grocery store to something as

horrendous as discovering sexual abuse in your home—doesn't make sense, though, because we have no control over these things. Yet we give circumstances that power. Shame lurks everywhere in our culture: in our social status (or lack of it), when we experience personal failure or make a mistake, within our cultural subcultures in which we hope to shine, in comparison and jealousy when we feel we fall short or when our expectations are not met or cannot be met. Life is full of shame-inducing "opportunities," but sometimes what we think is a source of shame becomes a blessing when we trust God with the outcome. {eoa}

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This article is an excerpt from Shame Off You: From Hiding to Healing (Abingdon Press, 2018).