

6 Ways to Overcome the Enemy's Most Underrated Weapon

Shame is one of the most underrated and yet powerful weapons that the enemy wields against the children of God. Often, it melts in our thought lives until it encapsulates the lenses through which we see the world, dictates our decisions and slyly holds us captive to secret sin.

If you're wondering if the force of shame has, even in subconscious ways, slipped in and begun to influence your inner world, answer these questions honestly:

What is your knee-jerk response when you make a mistake—do you find yourself defending your behavior, minimizing its impact or anxiously scrambling to do whatever it takes to make the embarrassment go away?

Have you ever felt like everyone is against you, that you're not as good as others or that no matter how hard you try, you can't do anything right?

Have you ever heard that little voice in your head say, "You don't fit in. Nobody likes you." Or how about, "How could God love you? I mean He really knows everything about you."

If you answered "yes" to any of these statements, it's likely that shame is speaking to you.

Conviction Is From God; Shame Is From Satan

When Adam and Eve first sinned in the Garden of Eden, conviction was an appropriate symptom of their disobedience. That's right! Conviction is built into our conscience to let us know when we have done something that threatens our connection with God.

In other words, conviction is actually a good thing as it helps protect our intimacy with the Father. It's like a warning light on a car's dashboard that lets you know when something needs attention before the engine ignites and inevitably blows up.

Conviction says, "You did something wrong," like when the apostle Paul said, "All have sinned..." (Rom. 3:23). It speaks to something that you can repent from in order to find true connection again. Yet shame goes further: It speaks to who you are.

Shame is a core (even subconscious) belief of unworthiness. It says, "You are wrong. You are bad. You are not good enough."

But What if You're Not Perfect?

Shame always seems to seduce its prey into perfectionism. When we listen to shame, we will never feel secure in our identity. We will always need to do more to prove that "we are OK," while never actually appeasing shame's appetite for approval.

The pursuit of feeling worthy by being better, more successful, thinner, smarter, wealthier, accomplished or even in "good" business is a futile attempt at cultivating a godly sense of worthiness.

The apostle Paul states in Ephesians 2:10 that, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one should boast." That means you cannot earn worthiness. We are worthy of God's love because of His grace—nothing more.

Additionally, we were God's treasures before we ever became Christians—"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). When God created Adam and Eve, He said that they were "good"; they had intrinsic worth as His treasures.

Shame Attacks Your Identity and Destiny

Shame often mockingly begs the question, “Who do you think you are?”

This is the devil’s odious attempt to convince us that we do not have a supernatural identity as children of God. If the accuser can make his case and win, then he can derail us from our divine destiny.

When Jesus was baptized, He heard the Father say, “This is my son...” Identity. Interestingly, Jesus did not preach a message, heal a sick person or prophesy until He first heard of His true identity.

We can only fulfill our supernatural destiny to the degree that we believe our supernatural identity.

After His baptism, Jesus was led out into the desert to be tempted by the devil. Two times, the devil assaulted Jesus’ identity with contemptuous challenges, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones be turned into bread” (Matt. 4:3). And then, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down [off the temple’s roof]” (v. 6).

The devil was attempting to tempt Jesus into performing to prove His identity because he knew that if Jesus took the challenge, it would demonstrate that He did not really know who He was. Moreover, He would have to spend the rest of his life proving His identity over and over. What I’m getting at is that knowing our true identity in God prevents performance for approval.

6 Ways to Silence the Voice of Shame

If you find yourself in a constant struggle to prove that you are good, to perform for acceptance and to portray your “perfection” to the world, try these keys for getting free from the shackles of shame.

1. Learn how to recognize God’s voice from the devil’s

voice. Ask yourself, "Is what I'm hearing the truth or a lie?" Try writing down all of the times shame speaks to you during the day. You may be surprised at how often shame is speaking.

2. **Learn how to be vulnerable.** Shame loves secrecy. However, the truth will set us free. Being open and honest requires great risk, but also reaps great reward. Begin with yourself, God and then reach out to someone who can give you good feedback. Telling someone that you have been listening to shame will release you from the power of secrecy and silence shame.
3. **Learn to recognize your feelings.** Empathy is the antidote to shame. When we are able to discern and identify our feelings and the feelings of others, it creates a pathway to finding out what we need from God, others and ourselves. Ask yourself, "What am I feeling right now?" "What do I need?"
4. **Learn to take every thought captive.** It's normal to be tempted to believe and act in negative, hurtful and dysfunctional ways in response to the shame messages spoken to you. Shame is silenced when we take ownership of our mistakes; accept our limitations, deficiencies and limitations; as well as interpret other people's motives correctly. Take responsibility in submitting shaming thoughts and feelings to become obedient to Christ's perspective (2 Cor. 10:5).
5. **Learn how to listen through the ears of faith.** Ask yourself, "What does God want to say to me about my identity right now?" "What does He think about me?" Additionally, begin reading Scripture from the perspective that God is for you, that you are a good man or woman, that you are a saint saved by grace, an overcomer, the apple of His eye.
6. **Learn to be grateful.** The fact is that you are wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14). Being grateful for how God has made you in all of your limitations and imperfections will help you to replace shame with

acceptance and love. Every time you hear shame messages left on your mental voicemail, erase them with gratitude. Thankfulness prepares the way for breakthrough.

Let me know how this message has helped you silence the shame messages that have been spoken to you. I love reading your comments below! If you'd like to receive more messages like this directly to your inbox, you can sign up for my weekly newsletter by clicking [here](#). {eo}

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