

No More Guilt and Shame

Isaiah 61:7 Instead of your shame you will have a double portion [blessing], and instead of humiliation, they will shout for joy. Everlasting joy will be theirs.

Guilt and shame are often confused, resulting in potentially debilitating anxiety rooted in fear of punishment, abandonment, and rejection by God. Guilt is related to our behavior, and shame is related to our beliefs. Both adversely affect how we relate to God and others and how we esteem ourselves.

Defining Guilt and Shame

1. **True guilt: I DID something wrong. (It is a FACT that leads us to repentance.)**
 - a. Willful current sin: Sin you have not forsaken in your life.
 - b. Past sins: Past sin(s) that torment you or the enemy throws in your face.
 - c. God's solution for true guilt: See *All Your Sins are Forgiven* and *Repentance* handouts.

2. **False guilt: I FEEL like I did something wrong. (It is a FEELING rooted in beliefs.)**
 - a. We believe or have been told we are responsible for others' behavior or peace.
 - i. Since those are unrealistic and ungodly expectations, we can't meet their needs. People withhold unconditional love and acceptance as punishment and inducement to try harder, cementing the lie that I must earn love and acceptance from God and others. This vicious cycle results in the false-guilt belief that I am "not good enough."
 - ii. Once we feel responsible for others' needs or behavior, we may apologize for existing, assume we are their problem or at fault, walk on eggshells, try to please everyone, avoid, or escape to cover up the lie that "I am the problem." We do these things to avoid punishment or earn the love and acceptance from others we already have in Christ.
 - b. Non-verbal communications that produce false guilt:
 - The subtle message that you are not living up to my expectations communicated through looks of disgusts, disapproval, anger, sighs, rolled eyes, silence, criticizing, etc.
 - Your job is to make me feel happy, give me worth, and meet my needs.
 - Your job is to make the family look good and be a credit to our name.
 - Don't make waves, make us proud, don't let us down, what would the neighbors say?
 - c. Verbal statements that produce false guilt:
 - Who do you think you are? (Implying you are wrong.)
 - You think you are unhappy!? I wish I had your problems. Stop crying.
 - After all I have done for you or given you. Can't you do anything right?
 - Do I have to do everything myself? Do everything for you?
 - How could you be so dumb, stupid, incompetent, and weak?
 - You are disappointing God. (Everything but "perfect things" are hidden from others.)
 - This is for your good because I love you. (Harsh or overprotective)

False Guilt always leads to shame.

3. □ **Shame: I am something wrong. (It is a lie-based BELIEF, producing powerful emotions.)**

- a. False guilt always leads to shame.
 - i. The belief that my behavior contributes to or determines my worth. (I am the problem.)
 - ii. The belief that what others have done to me, or I have done, determines my worth. (Something is wrong with me.)
 - iii. The belief that what others have said directly or indirectly determines our worth. (I am not good enough.)
- b. Shame for false guilt results in negative self-talk. I should have done more. I should have done better. I should have known. I should not have. Always short of the glory. Always defeating. Potentially debilitating.
- c. Shame is one of the most powerful feelings. Blame shifting is our attempt to pass the shame to escape the unsettling feeling of shame.
 - i. Blame shifters and blame takers both struggle with shame.
 - ii. They blame themselves or others for **being** something wrong.
 - iii. God's solution is receiving His unconditional, no-strings-attached love and acceptance as the gift of forgiveness and new birth.

4. **God's solution for false guilt and shame.**

- a. Surrender unrealistic expectations to meet others' needs. You can't be their Jesus, and God does not expect you to keep others happy.
- b. Acknowledge that Christ defines you and determines your worth.
 - i. **1 Corinthians 6:17** [Your name] who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 3:16** [Your name] are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you [your name].
 - iii. **Romans 15:7** Accept one another [your name], just as Christ also accepted us [your name] to the glory of God.
 - iv. **Hebrews 11:16** God is not ashamed to be called [your name] God.

Father God,

- It is not, nor ever has been, my responsibility for other people's happiness or success. I renounce the unrealistic expectations of placed on me by [name(s)].
- I refuse to be ashamed of myself for not measuring up to unrealistic expectations.
- I refuse to agree with messages that I am the problem or not good enough or something is wrong with me.
- I agree with Your Word that I am made righteous and blameless in Your sight even though I do not always behave perfectly.
- Thank you for Your unconditional, never ending love and acceptance because You are good.
- I agree with Your testimony that You accept me, and I choose to accept myself.
- Thank You for taking all the guilt and shame unto Yourself and exchanging it for Your peace.
- In Jesus' name. Amen!

Note: For those who grew up in a shame-based family, we recommend reading *Shame and Guilt* by Jane Middleton-Moz.