



How Christ **Handled Shame**

During His earthly life, Jesus Christ often faced provoked-shame. And don't forget that His very purpose for entering into the brokenness of the world, was to deal with the problem of mankind's sin-shame. Take some time to thoughtfully work through this study to learn from Christ how to handle your shame, perhaps looking at one of the six specific ways Christ handled shame each day. Use the space provided below or your own personal journal to answer the guided questions.

Read Hebrews 12:1-2.

What does this passage say about how Christ handled shame? Christ _____ shame.

Let's consider six specific ways that Christ handled shame:

- 1. Christ rejected the lies that said He was at fault for the sins of others. He refused to accept their accusations as true or take responsibility for their sins.**

What statements or accusations are people saying to you that make you feel ashamed? Write them in the space below. Next, put an X by the statements that are lies, or that are partial lies.

Let's do some extra practice on identifying wrong thinking. Read through the examples below. Look up the passages next to those statements. How does God's Word correct each lie?

- *I blame myself when _____ becomes angry with me, even when I did nothing to provoke that anger.* Read **James 1:19-20** and **Matthew 12:34**. According to these verses, who is responsible for unprovoked anger?
- *I think other people are better/smarter/more 'together' than I. I think I am a failure in comparison to them.* Read **2 Corinthians 10:12**. What does God say about comparing myself with others?
- *I want to disappear. I don't want anyone to notice me.* Read **Psalm 18**. What does God say about my safety in this passage? Read **Psalm 37**. What does this psalm teach about what God wants me to do, and what He will do for me? Read **John 15:12**. What does God want me to do when I feel like running away or hiding?
- *I am afraid of what people will think of me.* Read **Proverbs 29:25**. What does this verse say about the "fear of man"? What does this verse offer as the alternative to being enslaved to the opinion of others?

Think of some specific ways you can choose to despise shame. What lies do you need to reject? How will you show love and kindness to others, instead of focusing on yourself and fearing what they think of you?

2. Christ always focused on truth in His thoughts and actions.

Every time Christ was threatened with shame, He prayed, rejected lies, and chose to act by faith. You can follow His example.

Read **Philippians 4:8** and **2 Timothy 3:12-17**.

When shame threatens you:

- **Pray** Colossians 1:9-12, Philippians 2:5, and 2 Corinthians 10:5. (Write them out so you will have them nearby when needed.)

- **Think about the reasons you feel ashamed.** Is shame telling you the truth (sin-shame) or lies (provoked-shame)? Look at the statements you wrote down on page 1.

- **Replace each lie with truth.** You must learn to *think Bible!* Here are some examples:
 - Tell yourself the truth about who God says you are: as a believer you are loved, forgiven, chosen, adopted, redeemed, blameless, and holy. (See Ephesians 1). Write down every truth God says about those who are *in Christ* in the space below:

 - Tell yourself the truth about God. Read **John 10** and **Ephesians 2-3**. Write down what these passages say about Christ:

 - Look back at your list of lies on page 1. For each lie, write out a specific truth from God's Word you need to begin believing.

- **Refuse to let your feelings tell you what to do.** By faith, will you choose to accept what God says about you as His child? He has a good plan for your life, and His plan will not fail (Philippians 1:6). When you feel shame, how will you tell your feelings the truth, using the verses above? Use the space below to write out what you will tell yourself:

3. **Christ remembered the truth: God accomplishes good purposes through suffering.**

Read the following passages and make a list below of what God says He is doing through the believer's experience of suffering: **Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-8; 1 Peter 5:10.**

- What good things has God accomplished through your suffering?
- What makes you think He has rejected you, or will stop doing good things now?
- Read **1 John 1:8-2:2**. What does God say He will do if we confess our sins?
- Confessing sin means we agree with God and turn away from that sin. Is there any sin that you need to turn away from? Name it below.
- What does 1 John 2:1-2 say about Christ's role when you sin? Is He seeking to punish or shame you? What is He doing?
- True repentance means that you have decided to side with God against your sin. Have you made a plan to help you make it hard to sin and easy to do right? You can use *A Plan for Killing Sin* to work out a detailed battle plan to help you walk in repentance.¹

¹ See <https://lifelineforteens.com/book/help-i-want-to-stay-pure/>.

4. **Christ acted out of love for the people who hurt Him.**

Read **1 Corinthians 13:1-8**. The Bible teaches that love is not primarily a feeling, but rather, a choice to seek the true well-being of the other person. How did Christ show love for us (the ones who hurt Him)? He sought our greatest good by providing the way for our relationship with God to be restored. In fact, demonstrating this kind of love for us was a higher priority to Christ than His own life!

- While you may not *feel* like loving someone who hurt you, God wants you to be like Christ in putting on a heart of love and forgiveness. Forgiving means you won't hold the offense against the offender any more. Is there anyone you need to forgive? Write their names here:

Because love seeks the well-being of the other person, forgiveness may require you to cooperate with the consequences of sin. That may mean that relationships and activities have to change in hard ways. You may need help to know how to forgive in a complicated situation. If you need help knowing how to forgive, please talk to your pastor or another trusted adult.

5. **Christ did what He could do, no more and no less.**

Read **Romans 12:9-21**. In Romans 12, the apostle Paul is helping the church apply what he has written about the good news of salvation through Christ in the first eleven chapters of this letter. The gospel changes everything about a person. Because of God's grace in their own lives, believers can now live out that grace in their relationships with others. Make a list below of what Romans 12:9-21 calls you to do in your relationships:

Think about the relationships where you are struggling with shame:

- What steps have you taken to restore your broken relationships?
- How have you dealt with your feelings of shame?
- How have feelings of shame led you to avoid some of your responsibilities in relationships (such as failing to talk to someone about a conflict) or activities that you find intimidating at home, school, or work?

- How have you sought to take on someone else's responsibilities for them? What effect has this had on your relationship?
- Whose responsibility is it to change people?

You are only responsible for your choices. Sometimes you do all that you can to restore a relationship, but other people don't want to change. When this happens, you must trust God to work in the other person's life, just as He has worked in your life.

6. Christ had faith in God alone.

Think about where you are placing your faith when you allow shame to control you:

- When you feel ashamed, what do you feel is missing in your life?
- What do you think that thing will give you?
- When you hide from others or attack others, what are you most afraid of, and why?
- Read **John 15:12**. What do you think God wants you to believe about Him and about those around you?
- Read **Philippians 1:6**. What does God want you to believe about your future, even though you don't know what the future will bring?

Shame can be difficult to overcome. And yet, Christ shows us the way to be free of both sin-shame and provoked-shame. Take some time to read back over what you have learned in this study. What one step, by God's grace, will you purpose to take in loving obedience to what He has shown you in His Word? Consider talking through this study with a trusted adult. God uses other believers to help us in our Christian growth. It may feel vulnerable to open up to others, but when you invite help from a godly adult you get to benefit from one of God's very special gifts of grace to His people!