

# Recognizing and Responding to Shame

## Getting Started

1. Can you remember a time when you were feeling shame? What does shame feel like?
2. What are some common responses to shame? How does it affect us?
3. Is it possible for our “shame sensors” to be broken and fallible? In other words, are there times when we feel shame when we shouldn’t? And are there times when we don’t feel shame but we should? Give an example...
4. Are guilt and shame the same thing?
5. Is shame ever a good thing?

## Shame Defined:

“A painful (guilty) feeling due to having done or experienced something disgraceful.”

“The feeling of being exposed, vulnerable, and in desperate need of covering, protection, or cleansing.”

Potential Signs of Shame (How does shame speak to us?)	
Varying degrees of self-pity	Self-sabotage or self-injury
Perfectionism or legalism	Mental and/or verbal self-deprecation
Anxiety and worry	Escapism or pursuing relief in pleasure-seeking or
General irritability	Social discomfort and/or withdrawal from people
Indulging vengeful thoughts/actions, anger, bitterness	Rejecting God
Wallowing in despair and persistent self-doubt	Doubting God’s existence, love, and/or acceptance
Addictive behaviors	Questioning God’s goodness and/or sovereignty

## Two general categories of shame: Sin-Shame and Provoked-Shame

Sin-Shame	Provoked-Shame
Follows your sinful actions (self-inflicted)	Follows accepting blame or failure that is unrelated to your sin
Should be believed	Should be rejected
The consequence of <i>actual guilt</i> – it is right and true	Wrongly condemns you for something you are not guilty of
A mercy from God designed to drive us to God	Can be from accepting the blame for the sins of others
Leads to receiving God’s free pardon in Jesus	Can be from accepting the blame for something done to you
No longer necessary after repentance	Can be from broken “shame sensors” and nothing sinful at all
Requires a solution outside of us: look to Christ	Requires a solution outside of us: look to Christ

## Sin-Shame Case Study: Adam & Eve (Genesis 2:15 - 3:13)

6. What does it mean that Adam & Eve “were both naked, and the felt no shame” (Gen 2:25)?
7. What does it mean in Gen 3:7 that they “realized they were naked”?
8. Why are they feeling this way?
9. How did Adam and Eve try to solve the problem of their sin-shame? (Gen 3: 7-8) ... They tried to make their own coverings and they hid...
  - a. What’s wrong with these attempts to solve the problem?
  - b. What are some examples of how we might try to solve the problem of our sin-shame in similar ways?
10. How did Adam & Eve respond when God pointed out their guilt? (Gen 3:12-13)
  - a. What are some of the ways we face a similar temptation when our sinfulness is exposed?
  - b. What’s the result of blame-shifting?
11. Consider Genesis 3:15 & Genesis 3:21... what did Adam & Eve need for their shame problem?

## Further discussion of Sin-Shame

12. We often error by not listening to our sin-shame... why is it important to believe and respond to sin-shame?
13. How is sin-shame a good thing or a “mercy” used by God?
14. Consider Hebrews 9:24-28 and 1 John 1:8-2:2... How can we experience the removal of our sin-shame?
15. How do we know we’re on the right path in our beliefs/ thinking?

