

Six Days · One Journey

- Talk 1** The ultimate secret of being human — we were made for connection.
- Talk 2** How we become home-builders, not home-breakers.
- Talk 3** Raising secure kids — resilience in the next generation.
- Talk 4** Navigating conflict — turning friction into intimacy.
- Talk 5** The power of forgiveness — healing the wounds we carry.

Today — the journey turns inward.

Because we love others out of who we have become.

CONNECTED · TALK 6 OF 6

Maturing in Love

Identity, Shame, and the Slow Work of Becoming Whole

Daniel Binus, MD · Beautiful Minds Medical

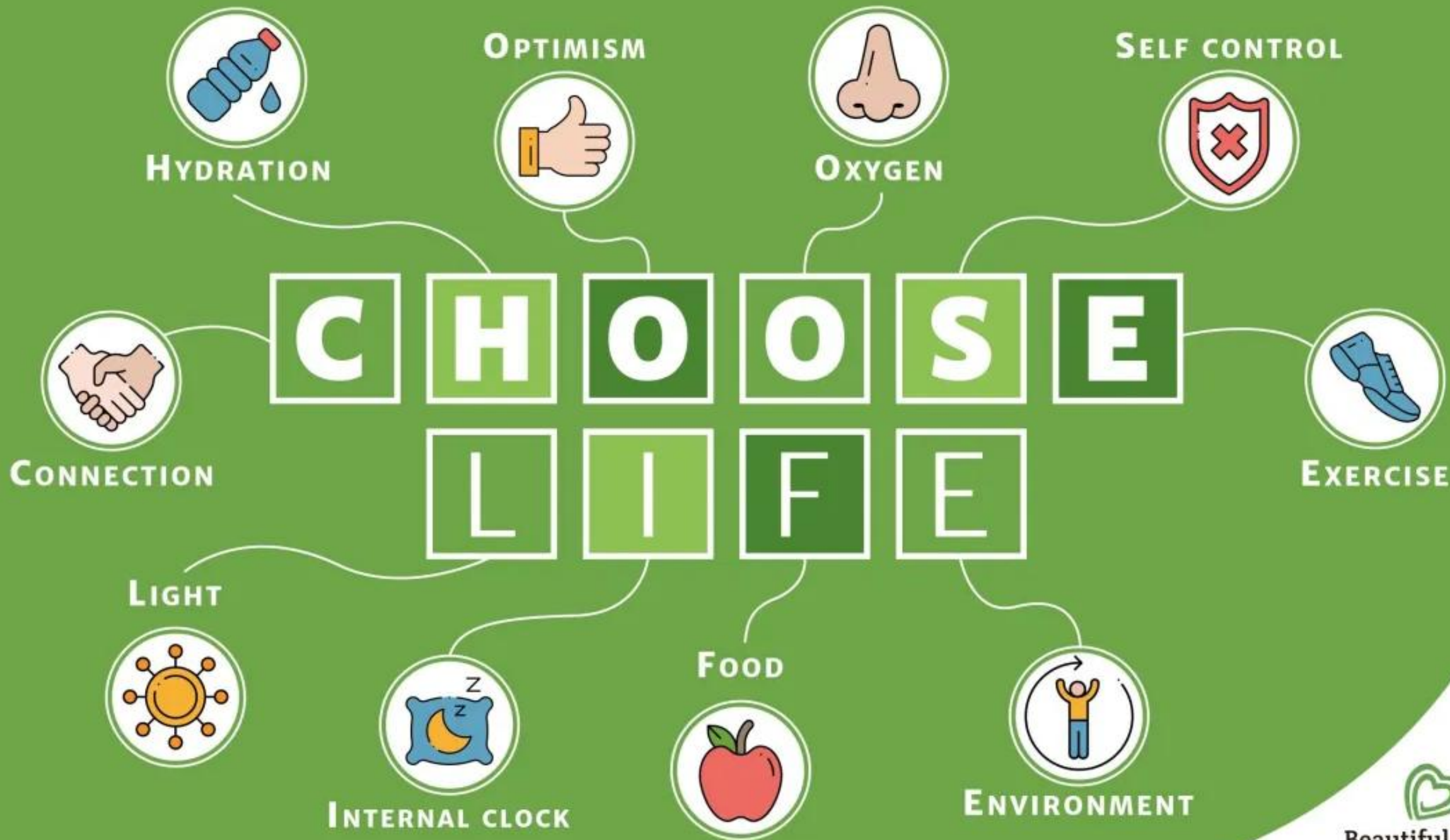


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Today's Journey

A different kind of love talk —

Not how to love others. How to become the kind of person who can.

1

Identity & Desire

Why love begins inside us

2

How We Form

Attachment, parenting, and the spirit

3

The Great Deformer

How shame distorts everything

4

Two Voices

Conviction vs. shame — and the devil's strategy

5

Jesus' Response

From Eden to Peter — He keeps coming

6

The Healing Path

Five movements toward wholeness

Why Look Inward?

*We've spent five days looking outward —
at marriage, parenting, conflict, forgiveness.*

But here is the uncomfortable truth:

Every relationship we have is shaped — invisibly — by who we are on the inside.

We can study every technique for healthy love.

We can know exactly how to listen, how to forgive, how to repair.

And still — we will love the way we have been formed to love.

Today is about that formation.

The Great Object of Life

*“To restore in man the image of his Maker,
to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created,
to promote the development of body, mind, and soul —
**this is the object of education,
the great object of life.**”*

Ellen G. White, Education, pp. 15-16

This is what “maturing in love” means — not a technique, but a restoration.

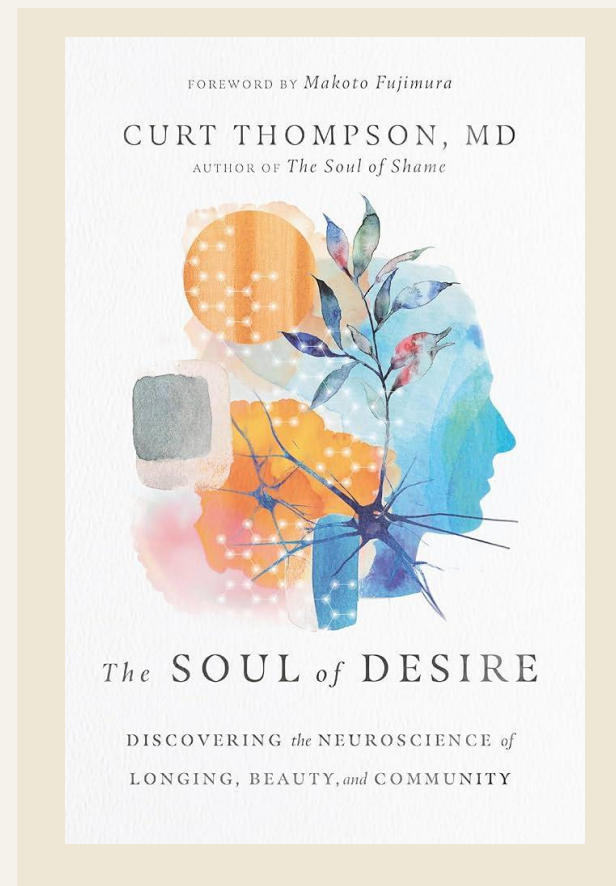
Curt Thompson & The Soul of Desire



CURT THOMPSON, MD

Psychiatrist · Interpersonal Neurobiology

Author of *The Soul of Shame* & *The Soul of Desire*



THE SOUL OF DESIRE

2021

Discovering the neuroscience of longing, beauty, and community.

“Where neuroscience, attachment, and Christian spirituality meet.”

What Is Identity?

Identity

Your sense of self — the inner answer to “who am I?” Formed from physical, psychological, and relational characteristics, together with the roles and affiliations you carry through life.

Identity is formed by an amalgamation of factors —

Internal & external

Genes and temperament · family, culture, experience.

Controlled & uncontrolled

Some we choose · much is given to us before we can choose.

Stable & in motion

A continuous self · yet always being formed.

Driven by Desire, Shaped by Relationship

So what drives identity formation?

Desire.

Desire is central to what it means to be human — it is the engine of the soul.

- We are constantly being shaped by what we long for.
- Desire drives us toward connection, meaning, and ultimately God.
- Our deepest longing: to be fully known and truly loved.
- Relationships then shape our identity — and our destiny.

DESIRE IS NOT SIN

*“Delight yourself also in the LORD,
and He shall give you the desires of
your heart.”*

Psalm 37:4 NKJV

God made us with desire —

the question is never whether to desire, but where
our desire is aimed.

The Deepest Desire

*To be fully known
and truly loved.*

Not just understood cognitively — but felt, experienced, received.

EXPERIENCED

Not merely understood — felt
in the body.

VULNERABLE

Requires honest self-revelation.

RECIPROCAL

Fulfilled through attuned,
responsive relationships.

FRAGILE

Disrupted by shame, trauma, or
relational wounds.

How Desire Is Shaped

What we learn to reach for when we are distressed, lonely, or afraid becomes our default pattern. Three circuits do most of this early shaping:

1**Attachment circuitry**

WHO IS SAFE?

Safety, soothing, delight, belonging. Who reliably responds when I cry, reach, fear, fail?

2**Reward circuitry**

WHAT BRINGS RELIEF?

Dopamine pathways (VTA → nucleus accumbens). What I learn brings pleasure or relief.

3**Threat circuitry**

WHAT REDUCES ANXIETY?

Amygdala-driven shortcuts — what quickly turns down fear or shame, even at long-term cost.

Desire isn't merely temptation — it is a window into what we most need.

Disordered Desire

Disordered desire is not desire that is too strong.

It is desire that has been misdirected — reaching for good things in distorted ways.

HOW IT HAPPENS

- Early wounds teach the soul to reach for relief instead of relationship.
- Shame whispers, “you are too much, too little, too broken.”
- We aim a God-shaped longing at something smaller — substance, screen, status, sex, self.

WHAT JAMES SAYS

“Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin...”

James 1:14-15 NKJV

Sin is not desire — it is desire conceived in the wrong direction.

The goal of healing isn't to stop wanting — it is to have desire reordered toward love.

We Become Ourselves in the Presence of Others

“We become ourselves in the presence of other people.”

Curt Thompson, MD

Brains shaped by relationship

Our brains are wired — and rewired — throughout life by the relationships we are in.

Identity is embodied memory

Identity is not only thought — it lives in body, brain, and relational pattern.

Early attachment writes templates

First experiences with caregivers create neural patterns for how we expect love, safety, and self to feel.

The adult brain stays plastic

New experiences of safety and attunement can heal old wounds. Repair is real — at any age.

PART TWO

How We Form

Attachment, parenting, and the slow shaping of the soul

We Are Born Unfinished

Of all creatures, humans are born the most helpless and the most unfinished.

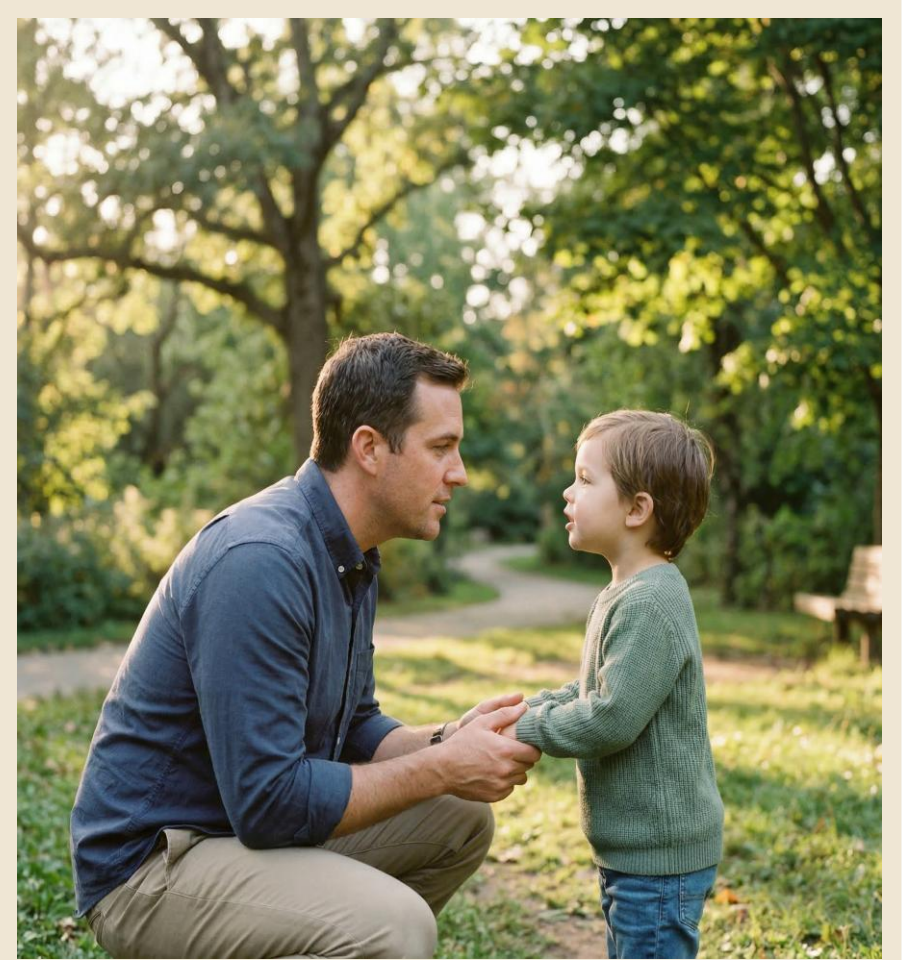
A foal walks the day it is born. A human baby will not walk for a year.

Will not speak in sentences for two.

Will not form a stable sense of self for years.

This is by design.

Because identity is not installed — it is grown, in the soil of relationship.



Attachment — The Architecture of the Self

From our earliest moments, we are scanning one question:

“When I reach out — will someone be there?”

Predictable warmth

Secure attachment

“I am worth showing up for.”

Inconsistent response

Anxious or avoidant

“I must work hard / pretend not to need.”

Threat or rupture

Disorganized

“I am alone, and the world is unsafe.”

Four Parenting Styles

Maccoby & Martin (1983) — crossing two dimensions:

Warmth (responsiveness) × Structure (demandingness)

Authoritative

warmth: high · structure: high

Warm + clear. Highest secure outcomes.

Permissive

warmth: high · structure: low

Warm but unclear. Anxious, entitled.

Authoritarian

warmth: low · structure: high

Cold + harsh. Compliance, hidden shame.

Neglectful

warmth: low · structure: low

Absent. Highest dysregulation risk.

What Gets Formed In Us

These early patterns shape four things that follow us into every adult relationship:

Emotion regulation

Can I feel hard things without falling apart — or do I numb, explode, or shut down?

A sense of safety with others

Is closeness welcome — or does it feel like a threat I must manage?

A working model of myself

Am I worth showing up for? Am I a burden? Am I bad?

A working model of God

We tend to imagine God the way our most important caregiver felt to us.

None of this is destiny. But it is the soil we start in.

When Development Is Disrupted

Adversity in childhood — abuse, neglect, chronic chaos, loss — changes the brain.

These are not character flaws. They are real, measurable adaptations to unsafe environments.

Amygdala

Enlarged + hyperreactive — the threat alarm stays loud.

Hippocampus

Reduced volume — memory and context impaired.

Prefrontal cortex

Slowed development — harder to reason and regulate.

Telling a person with a wounded nervous system to “just trust God” is like telling someone with a broken leg to walk it off.

PART THREE

The Great Deformer

How shame distorts identity, relationships, and our image of God

Developmental Disruptions Distort Identity & Desire



Adverse experiences don't only cause symptoms.

They reshape the architecture of self —

How we see — self · others · the world · God.

What feels safe — to want.

What feels dangerous — to feel.

What feels impossible — to receive.

THE FRAGMENTED ADULT

Many adults become highly functional but internally fragmented —

Good on the outside. *Chronically ashamed, lonely, anxious, compulsive, resentful inside.*

From Distortion to Shame

DISRUPTION

What happens TO us

Neglect, abuse, harshness, abandonment, chronic invalidation — anything that breaks the safety of formation.

DISTORTION

What happens IN us

Identity and desire warp. We learn to reach for relief instead of relationship, to hide instead of be known.

SHAME

What we come to BELIEVE

“Something is wrong with me.” Not “I did something bad” — but “I am bad.”

THE QUIET LIE

This is how the enemy works — not always through dramatic temptation, but through quiet, early wounds that whisper:

“You are too much. You are too little. You are too broken to be loved.”

Eden — Where It Started



*“And they sewed fig leaves together,
and made themselves coverings.”*

Genesis 3:7

The first emotion after sin wasn't fear, or sadness, or even guilt.

It was shame.

And the first behavior?

Cover. Hide. Disappear.

That is the fingerprint of shame, and we have all touched it.

Shame's Signature in the Brain and Body



Shame is not “just” an emotion.

It is one of the most physically powerful experiences in the human catalog.

- **Activates social pain network**

The same brain circuits as physical injury (anterior cingulate, insula).

- **Triggers gaze aversion, freeze**

The body wants to disappear — flushed face, lowered eyes, slumped posture.

- **Largest cortisol response known**

Social-evaluative threat produces the biggest, longest stress reactions.

- **Recruits the amygdala**

And quiets the prefrontal cortex — thinking, reasoning, perspective shut down.

Shame in the Brain: What fMRI Shows

Key Brain Regions Activated by Shame

Dorsal anterior cingulate (dACC) + medial thalami

“Social pain” network — overlaps with physical pain circuits.

Anterior insula

Emotional awareness, interoception, arousal.

Medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC)

Self-referential processing — “I am bad” vs. “I did bad.”

Premotor cortex

Behavioral inhibition — the freeze/withdrawal impulse.

THE CLINICAL INSIGHT

Shame literally hurts — the brain processes it on the same circuits as physical pain.

SHAME vs. GUILT

Two emotions, two networks

SHAME activates —

- Pain network (dACC, thalami)
- Inhibition circuits (freeze)
- Self-focused withdrawal

GUILT activates —

- Temporo-parietal junction
- Perspective-taking regions
- Other-focused repair

Shame collapses inward. Guilt turns outward to repair.

What Shame Deforms

Chronic (toxic) shame doesn't stay still. It rewrites four things in us.

Identity

“I did something bad” becomes “I am bad.” Behavior gets fused with the self.

Relationships

I hide — even from people who love me. I curate. I perform. I disappear.

Image of God

I imagine God as constantly disappointed in me. Or as someone I must impress.

The body

Chronic activation — hypervigilance, gut symptoms, fatigue, sleep disruption.

Two Words We Confuse: Guilt vs. Shame

G U I L T

“I did something bad.”

- About behavior
- Preserves the self
- Drives toward repair
- Specific, hopeful
- Moves toward people

“I made a mistake — and I can make this right.”

S H A M E

“I am bad.”

- About identity
- Collapses the self
- Drives toward hiding
- Global, hopeless
- Moves away from people

“I am defective — and there is nothing I can do.”

Guilt says I did something bad. Shame says I am bad.

The Spiritual Lens: Conviction vs. Shame

Two voices speak when something is wrong. Both feel similar at first — but they do opposite things to the soul.

	H O L Y S P I R I T (C O N V I C T I O N)	S H A M E
What it says	“What you did wounds love.”	“You are wrong, broken, beyond hope.”
Direction	Toward God, toward repair	Away from God, into hiding
Specificity	Specific — names the act	Global — attacks the whole self
Tone	Hopeful, kind, firm	Crushing, accusing, relentless
Result	Repentance, restoration, freedom	Despair, isolation, paralysis

Conviction has a destination. Shame just has a dungeon.

Paul's Diagnostic: Two Sorrows

*“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation,
not to be regretted;
but the sorrow of the world produces death.”*

2 Corinthians 7:10 NKJV

Godly sorrow

→ leads to life

- Walks toward Jesus
- Carries hope
- Ends in restoration

Worldly sorrow

→ leads to death

- Walks away from Jesus
- Carries despair
- Ends in isolation

Same tears — but one walks toward Jesus, the other walks away.

Is All Shame Bad?

A fair question — because Scripture sometimes rebukes the absence of shame.

“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?

Nay, they were not at all ashamed,

neither could they blush.”

Jeremiah 6:15 KJV

No — not all shame is bad.

But we use one English word for two very different things.

HEALTHY SHAME

A signal.

Awareness that something sacred has been violated and needs change.

TOXIC SHAME

A sentence.

A verdict over the whole self — “I am bad and alone.”

The Signal vs. The Sentence

Healthy shame functions like physical pain — it tells us something is wrong and needs attention.

The problem in Eden was not that Adam and Eve felt shame.

The signal was healthy. The problem was what they did with it —

they hid from God instead of running to Him.

Three ways the signal becomes a sentence:

1. Refuse the signal

Conscience silenced.

“They were not at all ashamed.” — Jer 6:15

2. Absorb into identity

“I did bad” becomes “I am bad.”

Behavior fuses with the self.

3. Carry shame not ours

Shame from abuse, others' sin, religious systems.

It was never ours to carry.

Test: Healthy conviction always has Jesus in the next sentence.

There Is an Accuser

*“...for the accuser of our brethren,
who accused them before our God day and night,
has been cast down.”*

Revelation 12:10 NKJV

Scripture names the strategy.

The enemy of our souls is, by job title, an accuser. He doesn't merely tempt — he prosecutes.

Day and night. Quiet. Relentless. Personal.

Toxic shame is not just a feeling. It is, often, a voice — and that voice has a source.

A Picture from the Throne Room

Zechariah 3 — Joshua the high priest stands before God in filthy garments. Satan stands at his right hand to accuse him.

*“And the Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan!
The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!’...
Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments...
Then He answered... ‘Take away the filthy garments from him.’
And to him He said, ‘See, I have removed your iniquity from you,
and I will clothe you with rich robes.’”*

Zechariah 3:2-4 NKJV

Satan accuses. God re-clothes. The pattern of the whole Bible in five verses.

The Enemy's Pattern

From the earliest pages of Scripture, the strategy is the same — misrepresent God to His people, and misrepresent His people to Him.

In Eden

Genesis 3

Misrepresents GOD to people: “God is holding out on you. He doesn't love you. You must take.”

In Job's story

Job 1:6-12

Misrepresents PEOPLE to God: “Job only worships You because You bless him. Take it away, and he'll curse You.”

In Joshua's vision

Zechariah 3:1-5

Stands at the right hand to accuse — highlighting the filth, demanding the verdict.

In Revelation

Revelation 12:10

Named outright: “the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night.”

Toxic shame often wears a religious accent. But its source is the accuser — not the Father.

PART FIVE

Jesus' Response

From Eden to the empty tomb — He keeps coming for the hiding

Eden — God Comes Seeking



They hid.

And the most beautiful detail in the entire Bible:

“And the LORD God called to Adam and said to him,

‘Where are you?’”

Genesis 3:9 NKJV

He didn't wait for them to clean themselves up.

He didn't wait for them to feel worthy.

He came looking — while they were still in the fig leaves.

The Woman Caught in Adultery

John 8 — dragged into the temple court, exposed before a crowd, used as a weapon by religious leaders.

“Woman, where are those accusers of yours?

Has no one condemned you?”

She said, “No one, Lord.”

And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

John 8:10-11 NKJV

Notice the order:

“Neither do I condemn you” — first. “Go and sin no more” — second.

He does not minimize the sin. But He never lets the accusation become her identity.

That is how Jesus handles shame — every single time.

He Bore Our Shame



*“...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,
who for the joy that was set before Him
endured the cross,
despising the shame,
and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

Hebrews 12:2 NKJV

He didn't just bear our sins.

He bore our shame.

The nakedness. The mockery. The exposure. The “I am bad and alone.” He absorbed all of it.

*“There is therefore now
no condemnation
to those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

Romans 8:1 NKJV

Not “less” condemnation. None.

The healing doesn't happen because we suddenly feel worthy.

It happens because we discover we are loved before we are worthy.

Shame-Based Religiosity vs. Mature Faith

Two operating systems can both produce churchgoing behavior — but they produce very different people.

SHAME-BASED FAITH

“I must be good to be accepted.”

- Motivated by fear and performance
- Hides struggle; curates image
- God as inspector
- Anxious, brittle, easily ashamed
- Struggle pushes me OUT of community
- Burnout or rebellion downstream

MATURE FAITH

“I am loved, therefore I grow.”

- Motivated by love and gratitude
- Honest about struggle; safe with weakness
- God as Father who comes seeking
- Resilient, empathetic, stable
- Struggle pulls me INTO community
- Endurance and capacity to love

Grace does not lower the standard. It changes the soil the standard grows in.

PART SIX

The Healing Path

Five movements toward wholeness — body, mind, and soul

Five Movements Toward Wholeness

Not a checklist. A rhythm. We return to all five — over and over — for a lifetime.

1

Safety

Find places where it is safe to be human.

2

Attention

Notice what desire is whispering — with curiosity, not contempt.

3

Confession

Tell the truth to a safe person and to God.

4

Embodiment

Pair truth with attuned presence — the body has to feel it.

5

Repair

Move toward repair with others — and let God repair our image of Him.

Movement 1: Safety



Shame cannot heal in isolation.

It needs the steady presence of another human being who has earned the right to be safe.

WHAT SAFE LOOKS LIKE

- Doesn't flinch at hard truth
- Doesn't rush to fix or moralize
- Holds confidence
- Returns the next week
- Their love doesn't change with your performance

“Tell one safe person one true thing.”

Movement 2: Attention

You cannot change what you cannot see.

Shame thrives on autopilot. The first move is to slow down and notice.

THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What am I feeling — in my body, not just my head?

Heat in the face? Tightness in the chest? The urge to disappear?

What am I afraid will happen?

If I'm honest, what's the worst-case story playing under this moment?

What am I telling myself about who I am?

Listen for global statements: "I always... I never... I am..."

Curiosity, not contempt. We notice in order to bring it to God — not to flog ourselves.

Movement 3: Confession

Confession is shame's kryptonite.

Not self-punishment. Not performance. Just telling the truth about ourselves to a safe person — and to God.

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Psalm 139:23-24 NKJV

This is confession as being known. He already sees. We are just inviting Him into what He already sees.

And the same with a safe friend, counselor, or pastor: one true sentence to one safe person. That's how the light gets in.

Movement 4: Embodiment

Shame is stored in the body — so healing must reach the body.

“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2) — a transformation that happens in three layers working together.

Truth

Scripture, sound teaching, accurate self-knowledge

Felt experience

Repeated moments of being known and still loved

Embodied practice

Slow breathing, prayer-with-body, sabbath rest, repair

This is why memorizing verses alone often doesn't heal shame.

Memorize them in community. Speak them aloud with someone safe. Pray them with your body, not just your mind.

That's when “I am fearfully and wonderfully made” stops being a slogan and becomes a settled reality.

Movement 5: Repair

As we are healed, we move outward — not because we have to, but because love overflows.

Repair with people

Make amends where we can. Tell the people we love what we have learned about ourselves.

Repair our image of God

Slowly let Him be the One who comes seeking, not the One we must impress.

Repair how we relate to others

Become a safe person for someone else — the love you received becomes love you give.

Repair the next generation

Children inherit our healing or our hiding. Both are passed down. Be brave enough to break a pattern.

Identity isn't rebuilt by trying harder. It's rebuilt by being known and still loved — over and over — until the truth reaches the body.

Why the Sanctuary Service Matters Here

Long before the cross, God gave Israel a picture of how He deals with sin and shame.

1

The sinner brings the offering

*He admits the wrong. He doesn't hide. He comes
— with hands on the head of the lamb.*

2

Substitution at the altar

*The lamb dies in his place. The shame is
transferred to the offering.*

3

He walks home forgiven

*Not pretending nothing happened. Not crushed.
Cleansed. Restored. Sent home.*

The whole system teaches one thing:

God does not handle our sin by humiliating us. He handles it by absorbing it.

Every lamb pointed forward to the One who would “despise the shame” for us. (Hebrews 12:2)

But the Offering Was Not the End of the Story

The lamb died at the altar. But once a year — on the Day of Atonement — the High Priest carried that blood all the way in.

STAGE 1

The Altar

Substitution

The lamb dies in the sinner's place. The shame is transferred. He walks home forgiven.

STAGE 2

The Holy Place

Daily Walk

Word, prayer, witness. Getting to know the One who absorbed our shame.

STAGE 3

The Most Holy Place

Day of Atonement

The High Priest goes all the way in — to finish what the altar started. This is the Investigative Judgment.

*The altar tells us He absorbs our sin. **The Most Holy Place tells us He finishes the work — all the way in.***

So what actually happens in there? That is what we call the Investigative Judgment.

The Investigative Judgment: From Fear to Invitation

Few doctrines have been more loved — and more distorted.

WHAT MANY FEAR

A courtroom of accusation.

God scanning for what disqualifies me.

Every hidden failure dragged into the light.

Probation closing while I'm still not enough.

So I hide. So I perform. So I stay ashamed.

WHAT IT ACTUALLY IS

A heart-searching for healing.

Jesus our High Priest — not our prosecutor.

An open invitation to be fully seen and fully loved.

His righteousness covering ours — the only verdict that matters.

Not 'will I be found out?' but 'will I let Him in?'

THE VERDICT WAS NEVER IN DOUBT

“Judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High.”

Daniel 7:22 — the courtroom Scripture itself describes.

The Great Physician's House Call

PSALM 139:23–24 — OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE JUDGMENT

“Search me, O God, and know my heart ... see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

1 DIAGNOSE

He shows me my true state.

Not to shame me. To help me see what I cannot see — and the beautiful identity He created me to bear (Ps. 139:13–16).

2 COME TO THE BROKEN PLACE

He enters where the wound actually is.

He doesn't treat from a distance. He comes — into the deepest recesses of the heart — to where the healing must happen.

3 HEAL

He cleanses with His righteousness.

Not to condemn the sin. Not to condone the sin. To heal the sin — by covering me with what I could never produce in myself.

ISAIAH 9:6 — “HIS NAME WILL BE CALLED WONDERFUL COUNSELOR”

Jesus is not the prosecutor at the door. He is the Counselor inside the room.

From Courtship to At-One-Ment

The Day of Atonement is not the day of greatest danger. It is the day of greatest nearness.

HOLY PLACE

Courtship

We come to know Him.

Through His Word (shewbread), our prayers (incense), and witness in the Spirit (lampstand) — we learn He is safe. Trust is built.

THE VEIL

Piercing

We let Him in deeper.

Heart-searching is not exposure to a stranger. It is opening the inner room to the One we have come to trust.

MOST HOLY PLACE

Intimacy — At-one-ment

We become one with Him.

“I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (Heb. 8:10)

HIS PROMISE TO THE ONE WHO COMES IN

“I will completely purge you of all fear and shame ... now you are just like Me, and My image is restored in you.”

ONE LAST STORY

Peter on the Shore

Where shame met restoration

The night before the cross, Peter said three times: “I do not know the man.”

And then —

“And the Lord turned and looked at Peter...

So Peter went out and wept bitterly.”

Luke 22:61-62 NKJV

The Look That Saved Peter

THE MOMENT — DESIRE OF AGES, pp. 712–713

“The Saviour turned from the frowning judges, and looked full upon His poor disciple.”

*“In that gentle countenance he read deep pity and sorrow, but **there was no anger there.**”*

*“That look of **compassion and forgiveness** pierced his heart like an arrow. Conscience was aroused. Memory was active.”*

*“Unable longer to endure the scene, he rushed, **heartbroken**, from the hall.”*

*“If the look that Jesus cast upon him had spoken **condemnation instead of pity** ... how dense would have been the darkness that encompassed Peter!”*

WHY THIS MATTERS

Two disciples. Two failures. Two endings.

The look was not condemnation.

Pity and sorrow, not anger — Peter saw shame's mirror replaced by a face of love.

It pierced him — but with hope.

A broken heart that still had somewhere to go. Conscience awakened without crushing.

This is what Judas never received.

Same betrayal. Same guilt. Without the look of hope, despair became self-destruction.

Shame heard a voice of love — and lived.

Breakfast on the Shore

After the resurrection. After the empty tomb. Peter has gone back to fishing — maybe back to who he was before everything fell apart.

And on the shore, in the early morning mist —

Jesus stood on the shore. There was a charcoal fire.

*(The same kind of fire Peter had warmed himself by
the night he denied his Lord.)*

John 21:9 — the only two charcoal fires in the entire New Testament

Jesus does not pretend it didn't happen.

He builds the same fire — and invites Peter to come and have breakfast.

He does not handle Peter's shame by ignoring it. He handles it by walking him back through it — with love.

Three Questions to Undo Three Denials

“Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me...?”

“Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”

“Feed My lambs.”

A second time. A third time.

“Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’

And he said... ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’”

John 21:15-17 NKJV

Three denials. Three restorations. Same number. On purpose.

Jesus does not erase the memory. He overwrites it — word for word — with love.

What This Means for You



Whatever your three denials are —

the words you wish you hadn't said,
the relationships you walked away from,
the parts of your story you keep hiding —

Jesus is on the shore.

He has built the fire.

He has cooked the breakfast.

And He has one question:

“Do you love Me?”

WHAT WE'VE SEEN TONIGHT

Maturing in Love

1

We love the way we have been formed. Identity is embodied memory — grown in the soil of relationship.

2

Shame is the great deformer. It hides what most needs to be known and loved.

3

Healthy shame is a signal. Toxic shame is a sentence. Healthy conviction always has Jesus in the next sentence.

4

There is an accuser — but his work was broken at the cross. Jesus bore our shame.

5

From Eden to Peter, God's pattern never changes: He comes seeking. He overwrites our worst moments with love.

CONNECTED · SIX NIGHTS · ONE INVITATION

*“To be fully known
and truly loved
is, well, a lot like
being loved by God.”*

Timothy Keller, The Meaning of Marriage, p. 95

May He find you on the shore. — Dr. Daniel Binus

Thank you

Daniel Binus, MD · Beautiful Minds Medical

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