

# 03 Shame & Forgiveness

## PARENT GUIDE

---

### **BIG IDEA:**

Shame can be crippling, causing your child to feel isolated or even to isolate themselves. This lesson is meant to expose the lie of their shame. We know that if shame is not addressed early in this series, it can cause a fog to fall over everything they hear and see moving forward. Your child might be carrying a weight of shame surrounding the topics of sex and sexuality. It will become increasingly important for them to hear the words, “You are forgiven, you are beautiful, you are loved”—and to believe those words!

---

### 5 Minute Check-In with Yourself and/or Your Spouse:

1. How do you communicate shame or guilt in your household?
  2. How well does your child understand the truths found in Scripture related to shame? If you were to rank yourself from 1 to 10 in your own understanding of these truths, how well would you do? What needs to be done to improve this ranking?
  3. Do you feel like you are lecturing your child when having conversations about sex and sexuality? How does your child seem to experience these conversations? What impact could the tone of these conversations have on guilt vs. shame in your child’s life?
- 

### 5 Minute Check-In with Your Child:

1. What stood out to you in this week’s teaching and/or small group time?
2. Where have you experienced God’s forgiveness in your life?
3. What does shame look like in your friends’ lives? (If the conversation goes well, you might also want to ask if they’ve experienced shame and what the source of that shame has been.)

---

## Tips for Further Conversation:

The conversation you create surrounding shame and forgiveness can be foundational.

Children often respond to the story of sex (ALL of it) based upon the way their parent(s) respond and engage them in the good times and the times when they mess up. How you respond to your child could impact how they move towards guilt or shame.

### **Michael John Cusick, in the book “Surfing for God,” writes:**

“Guilt is the conviction we feel when we have violated some standard, when we have done wrong. For instance, if a person lies, steals, or commits adultery, they will typically feel some sense of guilt for having done wrong.”

Guilt causes us to move toward one another. It doesn't cause us to hide. Rather, it propels us to move forward, ask for forgiveness, and seek change. Guilt drives us to fix something immediately. It causes us to make amends and seek forgiveness, knowing that if we don't, we would create an even bigger chasm.

### **Cusick continues:**

“But while guilt says, “I have done wrong,” shame says, “I am wrong.” Shame is a feeling which quickly becomes a belief that we are defective, flawed, bad, or worthless. The lens of shame always focuses not on what a person has done but on how the person is. It focuses on one's self. The heaviness and torment of shame are unbearable. And the verdict is always the same – that at our core we are inferior, inadequate, or unacceptable.”

“But while guilt says, “I have done wrong,” shame says, “I am wrong.” Shame is a feeling which quickly becomes a belief that we are defective, flawed, bad, or worthless. The lens of shame always focuses not on what a person has done but on how the person is. It focuses on one's self. The heaviness and torment of shame are unbearable. And the verdict is always the same – that at our core we are inferior, inadequate, or unacceptable.”



Shame is the opposite of guilt; instead of moving us forward, shame makes us hide and turn our eyes away from the Creator. All we hear is an inner voice telling us that we are a mistake. Shame tells us that we don't make the grade—that we are a failure. It tells us we are not enough.

And what does it do to our children? It causes them to isolate—to run away from God and others.

Your role as a parent is to draw your child out, just like God did after his children first sinned. It is to help your child find their identity in the one that created us. This is where they will find true wholeness and healing that leads to freedom and flourishing.

In your conversations about sex and sexuality, take time to continue pointing your child back to Jesus, not just to some rule or boundary. Point to his forgiveness and grace. This perspective will yield a greater return in the long term than simply having a child who follows the rules. We want children to know their Creator and be willing to come before him when they feel the guilt of their mistakes, not to hide and run away in shame.

---

### Additional Resources:

**WEB:** [RAINN.org](https://rainn.org) - the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization

**VIDEO:** Full-length interview of Alex Lerza

**TOOL:** Weekly devotional

