

## LOVE IN ACTION NEWSLETTER

January 2012

### Releasing the Bondage of Shame II - Relationships and Finances

The previously three Love in Action Newsletters focused on shame - what it is, where it comes from, and releasing the bondage of shame. January's newsletter focuses on releasing the bondage of shame in relationships and finances. The concepts in the October, November, and December 2011 newsletters need to be understood before reading this article. These newsletters are archived on my website at [Newsletter Archives](#). Other than spirituality, I find that shame-based people significantly struggle in these two areas. Spirituality will be discussed next month because it deserves the attention of one newsletter.

Relationships determine the quality of our life. Bruce Perry, MD, (Trauma, Brain, & Relationships - Helping Children Heal) states: "Everything that is important about life as a human being, you learn in context of relationships." That's a very powerful statement. Think about it. When person complains or have a problem it usually has to do with another person. Even if it's a job issue, personalities are usually involved. We may want not want to admit, but we are in a relationship with our job or our career. Here are five qualities or characteristics necessary for a successful relationship. There are many more qualities that are part of relationships. I perceive these to be important. You need to believe that intimacy is desirable. Intimacy is necessary for you to have a quality relationship. Intimacy is a kind of closeness that comes from having warm, nurturing, and loving relationship. Secondly, you need to see yourself as worthy of being loved. You need to value yourself enough that you believe someone would care about you. That doesn't mean that you need to be without flaws, but that you are lovable. Next of all, you need to believe that you can achieve having a successful relationship. Fourthly, you must be able to trust another person. You must believe that trust for another person is possible. Finally, you need to be able to celebrate the good in the relationship and you need to be able to work through hard times.

There are numerous reasons why shame-based people fail at relationships. There are chapters in books devoted to this topic. I'll provide an overview of how shame causes failure in relationships. Shame-based people fear intimacy. They are afraid of being hurt again because that is the blueprint of their previous relationships. You need to heal from past hurts is necessary in order to be intimate again. Otherwise, getting close to another person will trigger past hurts. Not seeing yourself worthy of being loved is a setup for failure. Some shame-based people will turn into caretakers to "fix" their self-worth. This is an exhausting and un-fulfilling task. Other shame-based people want to be taken care of by their partner. This fails because their partner cannot do enough for them. Not believing that you can be successful always causes failure. You will give up too easily. You may believe that what happened to you in the past will surely happen again. You may believe you may do again what you did in the past to fail in a relationship. Trust for shame-based people is hard to come by. Our ability to trust is based on our previous secure attachments. Shame-based people usually have many interrupted attachments early in life. This blueprint needs to be changed and the hurts healed. Shame-based people have experienced a lot of abandonment. Therefore, finding good and working through

hard times is nearly impossible. You may believe the other person will leave regardless of how good it is. You may not even believe what you have is truly good. I truly believe that the biggest thing that causes to fail in relationships is our fear. I've written several articles on fear and how fear affects all areas of our lives. You can find them at [Ken's Articles](#).

Shame interferes with a person's ability to manage their finances successfully. Financial responsibility is not necessarily a function of how much money a person makes. Financial responsibility is based on a person's attitude about money. Financial responsibility consists of effective and efficient use of resources. The manner in which shame affects finances may not be as obvious as it is in other areas of a person's life. Shame-based people doubt that they can be financially responsible. They usually don't believe they deserve success financially. Many times a shame-based person does not have enough money because they are underemployed. Why are they underemployed? Because they don't believe they can get or deserve a better paying job. Shame-based people usually reject discipline. Therefore, it is hard for them to follow a budget. Saving on a regular basis can be nearly impossible for shame-based people. The same thing goes for investment. Delayed gratification is not a strong characteristic of a shame-based person. If you buy to feel good or to make up for a loss, then you are probably spending out of your shame. Your performance based blueprint tells you to spend more and more. It tells you to buy bigger and bigger.

Generally speaking, you can apply the principles discussed in the first three newsletters on shame to relationships and finances. As you gain more understanding of yourself and your shame, you will begin to make changes in your relationships and in managing your finances. I want to focus on the spiritual principles. It's not that the previously discussed concepts aren't important. They are very important because you need to understand yourself. You also need to make certain behavioral changes. As I've stressed before, these behavioral changes cannot take place until you've started doing the emotional work involved. I firmly believe that a very necessary component of releasing any bondage is God's grace. Shame-based people place too much emphasis on relationships and money to make them feel better. You expect your partner to make you feel better. You expect your paycheck to make you feel better. There will never be a good enough relationship to make you feel better. There will never be enough money to make you feel better. However, God's grace is necessary and sufficient to take release us from the bondage of shame.

The apostle Paul tells us that ..."in great endurance; in troubles, hardship and distresses; . . ."yet we live on". We are alive not dead, we are rejoicing and possess everything. Read more on this in 2 Corinthians 6 NIV I'll begin by explaining what grace is. Grace is God's favor upon you that you will never deserve. You cannot earn it. You cannot buy it. Anything you do to earn God's grace, makes it less than it is. God loves you even though you are undeserving. God loves you even though you are unworthy. God loves you when you are unlovable. This is probably not congruent with how you feel on the inside. It goes against every shame-based blueprint you have developed. God views you through the blood of Jesus. God favors and blesses your life. The world tells us to measure ourselves by achievements and material worth. This is just another form of legalism. Remember that the law kills and the spirit gives life. When you are born again, you put off the old and put on the new. The new is Christ's new life for you. You are redeemed and freed from the bondage of shame. You don't have to carry the

old of the past with you. Why would you choose to live in the shame and guilt and ugliness of your past life? Why would you when you have been given grace for free. Found in [Romans 5:15 AS](#)

You may be in a desperate place in life regarding a relationship. You may be in a desperate situation in regards to your finances. You may be desperate in both of these areas. If you are there now, it is because you have relied on yourself. Even though self-reliance hasn't worked in the past, you have continued to do so. That is all part of your self-defeating, shame-based cycle. There are numerous accounts in the Bible of people being in desperate places and situations. When they stepped out of the way, God's grace took over and provided the victory. God defeated Goliath through David. Read the entire account [1 Samuel 17 NIV](#). Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days, did battle with the devil, and when he came out began his work - the redemption of the world. As told in [Matthew 4 NIV](#). What are the Goliaths in your life? What are the desert experiences you are facing? I realize that the pain of life is overwhelming. You probably are experiencing many disappointments. You may be walking with disillusionments. Your days may be dark and long. You think things will never change. I implore you to take a risk. This may be the biggest risk of your life. Trust in God and receive the full measure of his grace. Ignore the false promises of the world. Trust in the truth, which will set you free. John 8:32 (NIV) - "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." This truth is grace. It is grace that will set you free from the bondage of shame.

Next month I will write more on how shame interferes with your spirituality.

In Christ,

*Ken Thom, LPC*