A FREE 7-DAY DEVOTIONAL

7 DAYS TO QUIET ~~shame~~

Seven short readings to help you hear a louder voice than shame

KRISTEN ALDERMAN

START HERE

Dear friend,

If you downloaded this, I'm guessing shame has been loud lately. Maybe it's an old voice you've heard for years. Maybe it's new, tied to something that just happened. Either way, I'm so glad you're here.

Shame is the voice that tells you to hide. It says you're too much, not enough, too far gone. It takes your worst moment and calls it your name. And it is very, very good at sounding like the truth.

But it isn't the only voice. Over the next seven days, we're going to learn to recognize shame for what it is, and to listen for the voice of the God who has never once been scared off by your mess.

Each day has a short reading, a verse, and a reflection page with a simple practice. It takes about ten minutes. You don't have to do it perfectly. You just have to show up honestly.

Your mess doesn't scare God. It never has. Let's find out together how much louder His grace can be.

With you on the journey,

Kristen

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read one day at a time, ideally first thing in the morning. Print the reflection pages or write in a notebook. If a day stirs up something heavy, slow down, and reach out to someone safe.

DAY 1 OF 7

Shame Has a Voice

> ***Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.***
>
> ISAIAH 50:7

Shame almost never introduces itself. It doesn't say, "Hi, I'm shame." It just sounds like your own thoughts. You're such a mess. Why can't you get it together? If they really knew you, they'd leave.

Because it sounds like you, you believe it. That's what makes shame so powerful. It hides in plain sight, narrating your life in a voice you've stopped questioning.

The first step toward quieting shame is simply noticing it. Naming it. Saying, "Oh, that's shame talking." You'd be amazed how much power a lie loses the moment you call it what it is.

Isaiah wrote about setting his face like flint. That isn't toughness. It's settled confidence that comes from knowing who stands with you. Because the Sovereign Lord helps you, shame doesn't get to have the final word.

Today, you don't have to fix anything. Just listen. Notice when that voice shows up. Notice what it says and how it makes you feel. And remember: just because a thought is loud doesn't mean it's true.

Reflect and Practice

1 When does shame's voice tend to show up for me?

2 What does it usually say?

Shame says...

The lie I've been hearing

Grace says...

The truth God speaks back

TRY THIS TODAY

Every time you notice a harsh thought today, quietly say to yourself, "That's shame talking." Count how many times it happens.

TRUTH TO CARRY

Just because shame is loud doesn't mean it's true.

DAY 2 OF 7

Guilt and Shame Aren’t the Same

> ***Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience.***
>
> HEBREWS 10:22

Guilt says, “I did something wrong.” Shame says, “I am something wrong.”

That difference matters more than you might think. Guilt can actually be healthy. It’s the ache that tells you something needs to change, and it points you toward a way forward: confess it, make it right, grow.

Shame doesn’t point forward. It points inward and down. It takes your mistake and turns it into your identity. You didn’t fail; you’re a failure. You didn’t make a bad choice; you are a bad choice.

God has a response to both. For guilt, there is forgiveness. Hebrews says our hearts can be cleansed from a guilty conscience, not because we cleaned ourselves up, but because of what Jesus did. For shame, there is a new identity. You are not what you did. You are His.

Today, when that heavy feeling comes, ask it one question: Are you pointing to something I did, or telling me who I am? Bring the first to God for forgiveness. Recognize the second as a liar.

Reflect and Practice

1 Is there something I feel guilty about that I need to bring to God?

2 What label has shame attached to me?

Shame says...

The lie I've been hearing

Grace says...

The truth God speaks back

TRY THIS TODAY

Write one mistake on a scrap of paper. On the other side, write: "This is something I did. It is not who I am."

TRUTH TO CARRY

I am not what I did. I am His.

DAY 3 OF 7

Out of Hiding

> ***If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.***
>
> PSALM 139:11–12

Shame's favorite instruction is hide. Hide what you did. Hide what was done to you. Hide how much you're struggling. Keep the smile on and the door closed.

And hiding works, for a while. But secrets don't stay quiet. They go underground. They show up as anxiety, numbness, irritability, exhaustion. Carrying a secret is like holding a beach ball underwater. It takes constant effort, and it's always threatening to pop up.

David knew this. He tried to hide in the dark, and then he realized something: there is no darkness dark enough to hide from God. That could sound frightening. But David wrote it as comfort. If God already sees everything, then there is nothing left to hide from Him, and He is still here.

You don't have to stay in the dark. Coming out of hiding doesn't mean telling everyone everything. It starts with telling God the truth. He already knows. He's just waiting for you to stop carrying it alone.

Reflect and Practice

1 What have I been hiding?

2 How has hiding affected me?

Shame says...

The lie I've been hearing

Grace says...

The truth God speaks back

TRY THIS TODAY

Take five minutes alone with God today. Tell Him the thing you've been hiding, out loud or on paper. Then sit quietly for one minute.

TRUTH TO CARRY

There is no darkness too dark for God, and He is still here.

DAY 4 OF 7

The Words Spoken Over You

> ***I will give them praise and honor in every land where they have suffered shame.***
>
> ZEPHANIAH 3:19

Some shame isn't about anything you did. It's about what was said to you or done to you.

You're stupid. You're too much. Why can't you be more like your sister? Nobody will ever want you. Words spoken over us, especially when we're young, have a way of sinking deep and staying there.

Children don't have the ability to say, "That adult was wrong." Instead, they decide, "Something must be wrong with me." And many of us have carried that conclusion for decades.

Here's what Zephaniah says God will do: give praise and honor in every place where His people have suffered shame. Not just remove the shame. Replace it with honor, right where it hurt the most.

If old words still echo in your head, you're not crazy, and you're not weak. Those words were real, and they hurt. But they were never the truth about you. Today, let God speak a different word over you. If this stirs up deep pain, please be gentle with yourself and consider talking with a counselor.

Reflect and Practice

1 What words were spoken over me that I still hear?

2 What do I think God would say instead?

Shame says...

The lie I've been hearing

Grace says...

The truth God speaks back

TRY THIS TODAY

Write one hurtful word or phrase that was spoken over you. Cross it out. Next to it, write a truth God says about you.

TRUTH TO CARRY

What was spoken over me is not the final word.

DAY 5 OF 7

He Reached Out and Touched Him

> ***Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"***
>
> MARK 1:41

In Jesus' day, a man with leprosy was the definition of an outsider. He had to live outside the town. He had to shout "Unclean!" so people would keep their distance. For who knows how long, no one had touched him.

Then he came to Jesus, knelt down, and said something heartbreaking: "If you are willing, you can make me clean." He believed Jesus could. He just wasn't sure Jesus would want to.

That's what shame does. It doesn't usually make us doubt God's power. It makes us doubt His willingness. Sure, God can forgive. But would He want to forgive me?

Look at what Jesus did. Before He said a word, He reached out and touched him. He could have healed him from a distance. He chose to touch the untouchable. Then He said, "I am willing."

Whatever makes you feel unclean today, Jesus isn't keeping His distance. He's reaching toward you. And His answer to your question is the same: I am willing.

DAY 5 · REFLECT

Reflect and Practice

1 Where do I doubt that God would want to help me?

2 What does it mean to me that Jesus touched the man first?

Shame says...

The lie I've been hearing

Grace says...

The truth God speaks back

TRY THIS TODAY

Place your hand over your heart for one minute and pray, "Jesus, You are willing. Thank You for not keeping Your distance."

TRUTH TO CARRY

Jesus isn't keeping His distance. He is willing.

DAY 6 OF 7

Tell Someone

> ***Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.***
>
> ECCLESIASTES 4:9–10

Shame grows in isolation. It thrives when we keep things to ourselves, because it gets to be the only voice we hear.

That's why one of the most powerful ways to quiet shame is to say the thing out loud to a safe person. Not to everyone. Not online. To one trustworthy person who can hear your story and not flinch.

Something happens in that moment. You say the thing you were sure would make them leave, and they stay. They might even say, "Me too." And the lie that kept you hiding loses its grip.

A safe person is someone who listens more than they lecture, keeps your confidence, and points you toward God without preaching at you. It might be a friend, a mentor, a counselor, a pastor, or a recovery sponsor.

You don't have to share everything at once. Start small. But please don't do this alone. Two are better than one, especially when one of you falls.

Reflect and Practice

1 Who is one safe person in my life?

2 What has kept me from sharing with them?

Shame says...

The lie I've been hearing

Grace says...

The truth God speaks back

TRY THIS TODAY

Send a text to one safe person today. It can be as simple as, "I've been having a hard time. Can we talk this week?"

TRUTH TO CARRY

I wasn't made to carry this alone.

DAY 7 OF 7

Grace Is Louder

> ***I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.***
>
> PSALM 34:4–5

You made it to Day 7. Take a moment to notice that.

This week, you've learned to name shame's voice. You've separated guilt from shame. You've started coming out of hiding. You've looked at the words spoken over you, remembered that Jesus is willing, and thought about telling someone safe.

Shame won't disappear forever after seven days. It may still show up, especially on hard days. But you're not the same person you were a week ago. You know its voice now. And you know there's a louder one.

David wrote that those who look to God are radiant, and their faces are never covered with shame. Shame makes us look down and hide our faces. Grace lifts our heads.

Here's what I want you to carry with you: Shame is loud. But grace is louder. It spoke first, in the garden, when God came looking. It spoke loudest at the cross. And it will speak last, over your whole life.

Your mess doesn't scare God. It never has.

DAY 7 · REFLECT

Reflect and Practice

1 What has changed in me over these seven days?

2 What truth do I most want to remember?

Shame says...

The lie I've been hearing

Grace says...

The truth God speaks back

TRY THIS TODAY

Look in the mirror today, lift your chin, and say out loud: "Shame is loud, but grace is louder."

TRUTH TO CARRY

Shame is loud. Grace is louder.

READY TO GO DEEPER?

Grace Is Louder
than your shame

If these seven days helped, I'd love to walk with you for thirty more. Grace Is Louder Than Your Shame is a 30-day devotional journal for every woman who has hidden, and every woman still hiding.

- 30 in-depth devotionals in four movements
- Daily Shame Says / Grace Says pages
- Three reflection questions every day
- 30 cut-out Truth Cards to carry with you

FIND IT IN MY SHOP

stan.store/kristenalderman

Your mess doesn't scare God. It never has.

About Kristen

Kristen Alderman is an author, speaker, and ministry leader who writes for women who feel like they don't quite fit in traditional church settings. She is the author of Messy Grace, Honest Prayers, Grace Is Louder Than Your Shame, and Come and See.

Her message is simple: your mess doesn't scare God, and grace is louder than your shame.

If you're in crisis or thinking about harming yourself, please call or text 988 (U.S.). This guide is not a substitute for counseling or medical care.

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