

Finding Shame in Our Stories

Shame has been called the “swampland of the soul”. Uncovering and recognising shame in our own stories is often painful and difficult, but it is necessary for healing. Perfectionism, anxiety, depression and other problems are often driven by shame. Shame is often caused by traumatic incidents. We will explore how interacting with secular ideas about shame can help to both confuse or clarify, how shame is resisted and exposed in counselling, and finally how a gospel remedy can be offered and applied.

Richard Winter is one of the leaders of the European Christian Counsellors Network. He is currently Professor of Practical Theology and director of Covenant Seminary’s counselling program in St Louis, USA. He is also a psychotherapist and counsellor who was trained in medicine and psychiatry in England before being on the staff and a director of the English branch of the L’Abri Fellowship for 14 years. He has served in a variety of pastoral and teaching leadership roles in the church. He is the author of *When Life Goes Dark: Finding Hope in the Midst of Depression*, IVP 2012; *Perfecting Ourselves to Death: The Pursuit of Excellence and the Perils of Perfectionism*, IVP, April 2005; *Still Bored in a Culture of Entertainment: Rediscovering Passion and Wonder*, IVP, 2002; *Choose Life, A study of abortion and other reproductive technologies* (Out of Print), and professional journal articles. He is married, with four children and seven grandchildren.

I. Naming shame

A. Differences between men and women

B. Differences between cultures

II. Healthy and Unhealthy shame

A. My sin

B. Other’s sin

C. Living in the shadow of the fall

III. Secular ideas about shame

A. “Basic shame” and attachment

B. Toxic shame

C. Shame from trauma

IV. Avoidance of shame in life and counseling

A. Self-oriented

B. Other-oriented

C. Shame's hiding places

D. Honoring resistance

V. Remedies for Shame

Suggested Readings:

Shame Interrupted, Ed Welch

The Soul of Shame, Curt Thompson