GUILT AND SHAME

The terms shame and guilt are often used synonymously, but they refer to slightly different experiences. While both may result from acting in an inappropriate manner, shame is directed inward, while guilt is directed outward. Shame makes a person feel terrible about themselves, even questioning their sense of worth and value, whereas guilt makes a person feel terrible about what they did. Both involve a negative evaluation, but the difference is in the focus. The focus in shame is on oneself, whereas the focus in guilt is on the wrong action.

If you have ever felt as though you wanted to dig a hole and disappear into it after you said or did something inappropriate, what you were likely feeling in that moment is shame. On the other hand, if you felt sorry for how your actions affected others, that’s guilt. To the same situation, you may react with either response. One response inclines you to destructive behaviors in an attempt to escape the negative feelings about yourself. The other response inclines you to corrective behaviors to rectify the situation for the sake of others.

In a sinless world, neither shame nor guilt exist, because no one behaves inappropriately. And it is God’s desire to return us to a state devoid of guilt and shame. Until such a time, though, we will inevitably experience these two powerful emotions. How are we to navigate them, particularly with respect to our sexuality?
Write out Psalm 139 from the translation of your choice. If you are pressed for time, write out Psalm 139:1–6. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse from Psalm 139. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

How does the idea of having nothing hidden from someone make you feel?

What would make you trust someone enough to expose yourself to them?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/sex02-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?

What questions emerge after reading Psalm 139? What parts are difficult?

Can you think of times when God's intimate knowledge of you felt invasive?

In what ways has the church's interest in your sexual behavior felt invasive?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/sex02-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Genesis 1:26–31
Genesis 2:25
Genesis 3
Revelation 3:14–21

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with having nothing to hide?

Review your memorized verse from Psalm 139.
Meditate on Psalm 139 again and look for where Jesus is.

What is He saying to you through this Psalm?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

How can you give Jesus permission to access every area of your life?

Read more at
www.inversebible.org/sex02-6
inSight

Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study of the chapter, what personal applications are you convicted of in your life?

What are applications you must make in your interactions with others?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/sex02-7
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

How have you felt shame about your body?

In what ways, if at all, have you experienced guilt concerning your sexuality?

How can Christians develop a healthy view of sexuality?

Other than shame, what other types of knowledge can we be certain that God never intended for us to have?

How is it possible to have open conversations about private practices like sex?

Where does privacy end and secrecy begin with respect to sexuality?

Does the church have a compelling interest (to borrow the legal jargon) in your sexual life? And to what extent?