



UNashamed

OVERCOMING THE SINS
NO GIRL WANTS TO TALK ABOUT

A Life, Love & God Book from JESSIE MINASSIAN

You may not agree with Jessie Minassian on every point, but I love her courage and compassion. If you need straight talk delivered with a loving voice, absolutely read *Unashamed*.

NANCY RUE

Author of The Merciful Scar and The Whole Guy Thing

Like a cold glass of water in a squelching desert, Jessie Minassian is a refreshing voice in a voiceless land. Authentic. Clear. Engaging. Biblical. Jessie cuts to the heart of what teenage girls need to hear in these turbulent times. If you're a teenage girl, or are trying to parent one, you absolutely cannot afford to pass up this book!

PRESTON SPRINKLE, PHD

Vice President of Eternity Bible College's Boise extension and author of Fight, Erasing Hell, and Charis

This is a vital book for parents and teen girls alike. Jessie Minassian's vulnerable, authentic call to live in freedom from the sins that so easily entangle will be a powerful encouragement to girls who think they can never break free from these "secret sins," and an empowering discussion-starter for parents wondering what in the world their daughters are going through. Read this book!

MARK GREGSTON

Founder and executive director of Heartlight Ministries

Working with teenage girls on a weekly basis and having dealt with some of the same issues Jessie Minassian discusses, I very much appreciate her honesty and detail as she hits big topics such as cutting, eating disorders, etc., bringing sin and shame into the light. Isolation in our struggles can be crippling, but she lets us know we are not alone. Teenage girls should read this, as should parents and mentors—and the discussion questions are a great asset. We have probably all been there or known someone

close to us in these situations. Now as parents and mentors we have more support through *Unashamed: Overcoming the Sins No Girl Wants to Talk About* to better understand these topics, pass on wisdom, and hopefully help our girls bypass some of the sin and shame that holds so many in bondage.

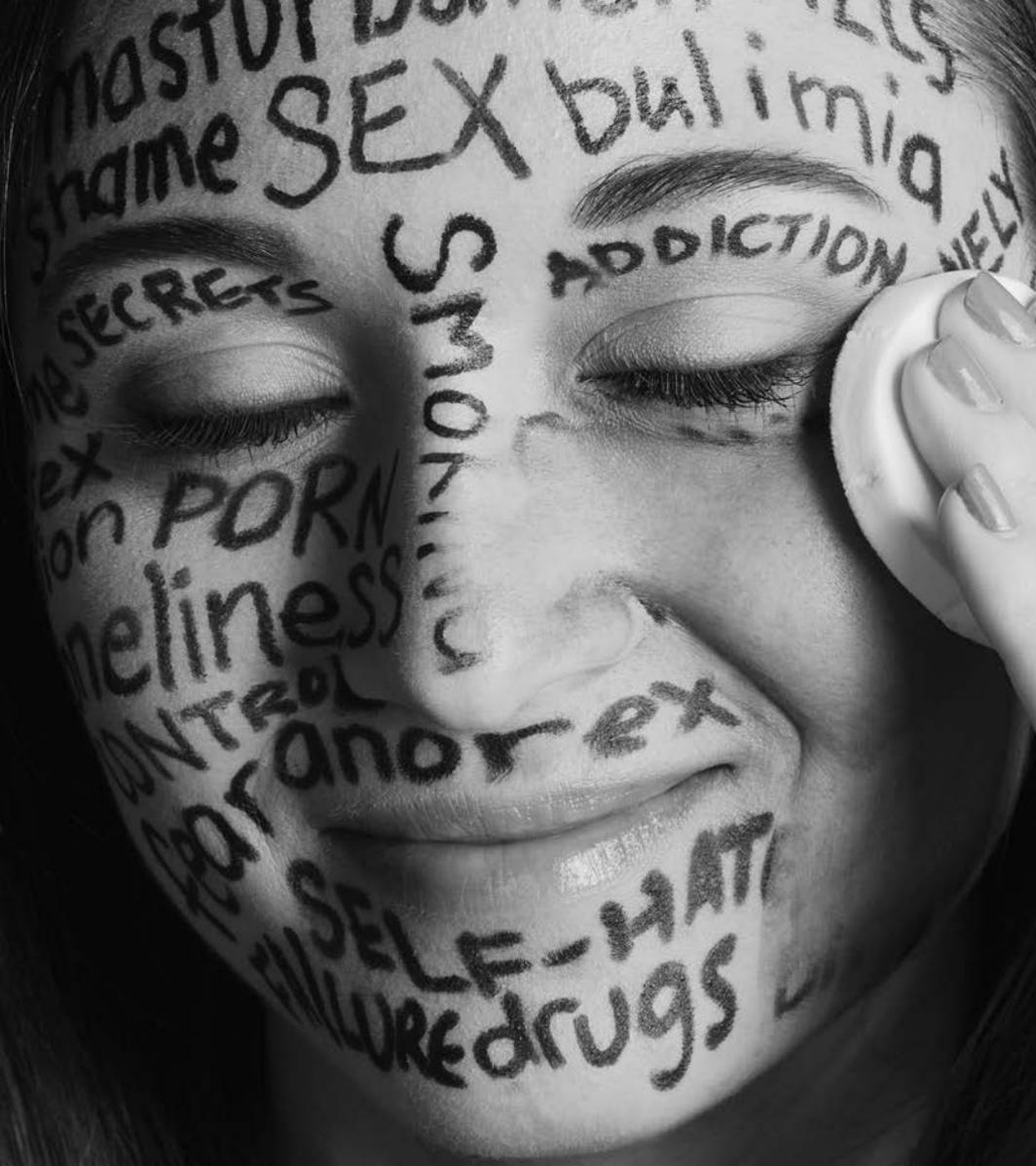
LAURA HAIRSTON

Executive director of Forge America

While you may not agree with everything written, this book is still very good. Jessie's encouragement to the reader to go to a parent, family member, or someone older to hold them accountable is very wise counsel. This book may serve as a great tool for many young women and moms to see the ugliness of "sins." Moms in particular, don't be too busy or ashamed of your daughter to help her deal with these issues. The world is seducing our girls. It is heart wrenching to think that there is such a great need for a book like this.

IRENE GARCIA

Author of *Rich in Love*, mother of eighteen



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WANTS TO TALK ABOUT

Jessie Minassian

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A NavPress resource published in alliance
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Unashamed: Overcoming the Sins No Girl Wants to Talk About

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Minassian, Jessie.

Unashamed : overcoming the sins no girl wants to talk about / Jessie Minassian.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-61291-628-6

1. Guilt—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Forgiveness of sin. 3. Women—Religious life. I. Title. BT722.M56 2015 248.8'33—dc23 2014034224

Printed in the United States of America

21	20	19	18	17	16	15
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

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A Note to Parents

Parenting daughters in the twenty-first century may be one of the greatest challenges ever faced by humankind. I know; I'm a parent of girls too. As guardians of our daughters' purity, you and I have to navigate a maze of media, friends, and other potentially harmful influences and teach our girls how to think, act, and love God on their own.

I wrote *Unashamed* because I care about your daughters and mine. I wrote it because sometimes, despite our best efforts, our daughters get trapped by sin they don't know how to ditch. Girls are really good at hiding their brokenness—so good, in fact, that most feel they are all alone in their struggles. The sheer number of girls trapped by “secret sins”—eating disorders, cutting, sexual addiction, substance abuse, same-sex relationships—might surprise you. In fact, it might blow you away. Statistically, there's a very good chance that either your daughter or someone she knows is caught up in something on that list.

If you're wondering whether *Unashamed* is an appropriate

read for your daughter, I applaud you for being careful. I've chosen to talk about sin in a frank and conversational way in this book because I know from personal experience that secrecy fuels shame and perpetuates addiction. If your daughter is exposed to secular media (TV, movies, music, magazines), I doubt anything in this book will shock or surprise her. However, as her parent, only you can decide whether the contents of *Unashamed* would be helpful. I care deeply for your daughter, and my goal is to see her (and equip her to help others to) live in freedom.

Introduction

I've read a lot of books—*lots* of them—and all my favorites have something in common. Each one made me feel as if I were talking with a friend or at least someone who cared about my life. I guess when it comes down to it, I don't like having someone I've never met tell me how to live. Wild guess here: maybe you don't either? It's easier to listen to advice when we hear it from someone we know and who we know cares about us, right? (And let's be honest, sometimes it's really encouraging to hear that an author is *human*, just like the rest of us!) So before we dig into this book together, it's only fair that we get to know each other a bit.

I'm Jessie. My given name is actually Jessica, and my last name is so hard to pronounce that I avoid using it when possible. (Just for kicks, it's pronounced min-à-see-in.) My single momma brought me into this world on a beautiful Californian March day just a *few* years ago (wink). She got married when I was five, and I grew up in a blended family of five kids. I played lots of sports in school and tried to figure out how

to love God with my whole heart when it seemed to be *way* more interested in boys. I liked school when I had friends, thought it was miserable when I didn't. I got good grades, ate too many Twix for lunch, and never got used to spending ten to twelve hours a week on a school bus. (We lived kind of in the boondocks.)

After high school graduation, I went to a Christian college in Southern California. I played volleyball there and then got into rock climbing. I studied abroad two semesters, one in Israel and the other in Costa Rica. I still liked school when I had friends and learned not to be miserable when I didn't. I got fewer good grades, stopped eating Twix for lunch, and traded the school bus for my first car (a ridiculously small, gold Toyota MR2). There were ups, there were downs, and then there was *him*.

I married my match made in heaven the weekend after college graduation. For now, let me just say that Paul (or "Paco," as most people know him) swept me off my feet and I have never looked back. Best friends make the best soul mates, and he was—and is—both. (*Awww!*) I didn't think I had room for any more love in my heart until God gave us two daughters, Ryan and Logan. They're sweet li'l blessings wrapped in two feisty packages!

Besides loving on my family, my greatest joy these days is to help girls find their identity, pleasure, and purpose in God. I'm the resident big sis for a website called LifeLoveandGod.com, where I answer girls' questions about . . . well, life, love, and God. (I know, pretty creative, right?) Now that I have two daughters of my own, I'm all the more passionate about seeing

girls understand their unique beauty, know how amazing God is, and hold their heads high in dignity.

That's where the LIFE, LOVE & GOD books come in. These books are meant to be the closest thing to just hanging out at my house, going for a hike together, or meeting for a small group in my living room. Each book covers different stuff you're facing, whether it's relationships with guys, body image issues, or making sense of your family life.

You'll want to have a notebook or journal handy for the discussion questions at the end of each chapter. Trust me, you'll get so much more out of this book if you take time to think through those questions. Even better, grab a couple of friends (or your mom or a youth-group leader) and go through the book together! My heart is to see you grow in your relationship with God and shine with confidence, and that happens most often when you're in community with others.

You can find out more about my random favorite things on the "Meet Jessie" page at LifeLoveandGod.com. I'd love to hear a little about you, too, if you'd like to send me an e-mail through the website!

Whether you're caught in a cycle of sin yourself or just want to know how to help the silent sufferers all around you, let this be the beginning of your journey toward health and healing. God longs for you to live in the freedom He died for, and I want to be here for you in that journey!

Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "jessie". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the word "Love,".

CHAPTER 1

The Silent Sufferers

I was a silent sufferer.

We might as well get this out of the way up front. Instead of leaving your curiosity spinning the entire book, wondering what juicy secret I'm hiding, I'm just going to air my dirty laundry on the first page. Sometimes it's best to tackle the hardest things first, right? Kind of like jumping into the deep end of the pool instead of inching in slowly, or pulling off a wax strip in one fell swoop instead of hair by hair. Why delay the pain? I'm just going to take a chance and lay it out there for you.

I was trapped by a sexual addiction for thirteen years.

It all started when I was seven. A friend showed me a

cartoonish “birds and bees” anatomy book her parents gave her and then pressured me to masturbate or she “wouldn’t be my friend” anymore. (Great friend, right?) Not long after, a bully of an eight-year-old made me lie on top of her and do the same. I was so ashamed and so embarrassed that I never told anyone, not even my mom, who I trusted with everything. I *hated* what they had made me do, but I became addicted to the feeling. And it didn’t take long for that addiction to cripple me inside. Their sin against me, wrong all on its own, introduced me to a sin that was wrong all on my own.¹ I hid the addiction well. By day I was an outgoing, God-loving girl, but by night I was a sin-crippled, shame-filled mess.

My heart was convicted that masturbation was wrong, so I fought against it.² Well, I tried to, ~~most~~ some of the time. But the truth is, I was way out of my league. I loved God, and I was a “good girl” in so many ways, but I was fighting a losing battle. Sexual addiction takes some serious ammo to slay, and I had no idea how to kill it. And my failure killed *me*. I tried—don’t get me wrong. In fact, I went through seasons where I “did better.” There were even times when I thought I was *all* better. But then I’d go back to my vice—like a dog to its own puke (see Proverbs 26:11)—and the fall would be twice as hard.

Hypocrite. Sicko. Dirty girl. The self-imposed labels stuck good and tight, glued to my heart with a nice big dose of shame.

The cycle went on for a long, long time: sin, repent,

try harder, sin, repent, try harder, over and over again. Life marched on: junior high, high school, college, boyfriends, missions trips, and dance recitals came and went. I played sports, won awards, started Bible studies—lived a completely normal life on the outside. I appeared to be just fine to everyone watching. But for all those years, inside I was caught in a sin cycle that spun so reliably that it would make a washing machine jealous. It affected my view of myself, but more important, it had a detrimental effect on my relationship with God.

But here's the good news—the *really, really* good news (and boy am I glad to finally get to this part!): I found freedom from my sin—real, genuine, not-going-back-to-that-mudhole-ever-again F-R-E-E-D-O-M. And can I just tell you that it's so good to be free? It's like nothing else on earth. Once you taste that kind of freedom, after years and years of crippling shame, it's like the feeling you get when you walk outside for the first time after being in bed puking your guts out for a few days. You walk feebly out the door, breathe in that crisp air, feel the sun on your cheeks, and then swear on your dead cat's grave that you'll never take another day of health for granted *ever* again. Freedom from a habitual, secret sin is like that—times ten.

So that's my story (at least the part of my life that applies to this book, and happily, there was—and *is*—much more to my life story than my secret sin!).

I was a silent sufferer, *and there's a good chance you're one too*. Maybe you try to numb your pain with a bottle, razor

blade, or pill. Maybe you're addicted to pornography or shoplifting. Maybe your insecurities get all up in your head so you starve yourself or purge to be thin. Maybe you're attracted to other girls. Maybe you're in a sexual relationship with your boyfriend. Maybe your struggle is with more than one secret sin. I could spout off all sorts of statistics that prove you're likely to struggle with at least *something* on that list, but I don't think it would be especially helpful or needed. For one, you likely already know just how many girls struggle with one or more of these issues. Two, if you don't, a quick Google search should bring you up to speed. And three, the statistics are rising so fast, my current data would be obsolete by Tuesday. So instead of wasting space here on stats, I'd rather just get to the point: *You're not alone.*

If you're a silent sufferer, there's also a good chance you're not getting help because you're too scared of what people would think if they "knew." Maybe you think, like I did, that you're the only one on the planet who struggles with something so shameful, so you go on suffering in silence—*trapped* in silence. But as long as you suffer and sin in silence, you will never find the freedom that Christ died to offer you—the freedom I found and the freedom I want to help you discover.

There is part of me that really, *really* doesn't want to start this book with an indelible record of my secret sin. I realize that putting all this on paper for the world to read means that everyone—from complete strangers to my best friends—are going to know about my past. They might judge me. They

might misunderstand me. They might think differently of me. And when I think about my two precious, innocent daughters reading this book someday? I'm not gonna lie: It makes me tear up just thinking about it. Someday my children will know that their momma struggled with *that*. Yeah, there's part of me that wants desperately to "select all" and "delete" right about now. But I'm not going to, and I'll tell you why.

From the world's perspective, I'd have to be crazy, drunk, or just plain stupid to volunteer information about my secret sins to the masses. But there's method to my madness, and it has everything to do with *you*. I care about you. The reason I chose to confess my sin at the very beginning of this book is so that you know you have nothing to hide. See, I've been helping girls overcome secret sins for a lot of years now, and the number one, biggest lie that Satan gets girls to believe is that they are rogue sinners—that they're out there sinning *on their own*. He wants you to think that you're the only one on the planet who struggles with something that gross or stupid or unforgivable. He wants you to cower alone in embarrassment. He wants you to hide out in fear. He wants you to wallow in shame. Why? Because he knows that if he can isolate you, his battle is half won. *That's* why I'm willing to risk vulnerability. I want to empower you with the truth that you are not alone!

We're going to look at a variety of secret sins in the next chapter, but before we get there, I want to talk about one common denominator between all of them. No matter what

your struggle, one of Satan's favorite kinds of ammo—one of his biggest missiles—is shame. That's why I want to begin our journey toward freedom by talking about it.

The Problem of Shame

I think I'm going to have to start out here by explaining exactly what I mean by the word *shame*. See, there's a type of shame we probably need a little bit more of in this world. There's a good kind of shame—a natural emotion that comes from doing something we know we shouldn't do. Here's an example.

In the fine city of San Francisco, they had to put an official citywide ban on nudity because of the excess number of “naturists” who would walk down the street sans pants, ride the bus in the buff, or chill in the city square getting some air down there. Seriously—that's just wrong. Who wants to sit on a bus seat that just had some old guy's sweaty cheeks rubbing all over it? Sick. Yet when the city voted (narrowly!) to ban public nudity except at certain festivals, a bunch of protestors angrily stripped down in the courthouse to let the whole world know how unfair the new “clothes on” rule was.³ Now, can we just say it together? *People, have you no shame?!* Healthy shame is the kind that tells us it's a good thing to keep our booties and ta-tas covered up. (I'm well aware that before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve were plumb naked and felt no hint of shame—and good for them! But sin *has* entered the world, and now clothes should be a part of our daily routine.)

God put a mechanism in the human heart that lets us know when we're in the wrong. It's called a conscience, and that little human feature sounds the alarm when we stray from God and His way of living. Just so we're clear, He installed it on purpose (so it's a good thing to listen to it and not stifle it). Your conscience produces a whole spectrum of emotions—regret, embarrassment, fear, and yes, *shame*—when we violate God's Law. By definition, shame is “a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety.”⁴ In other words, when we know we've done wrong, we feel it down deep.⁵ That can be a good thing! In chapter 6, we're going to see how feeling sorry about our sin can be beneficial and how you can use those emotions to your advantage. But for now, we just need to understand that there *is* a normal kind of shame that is (or should be) par for the course when we do stupid stuff (see Ezekiel 36:31-32).

That said, when we talk about shame in the context of this book, I'll be referring to a different kind of shame. It's a debilitating, overboard type of emotion that cripples and haunts you. It's the kind of shame that tells you you're beyond redemption—that you're too far gone and far too gross for even God to love. *That* kind of shame isolates, crushes, and leaves you for dead. That kind of shame allows Satan to win.

McKenna⁶ is one of the beautiful “little sisters” I've been blessed to counsel, pray for, and cry with. McKenna is a silent sufferer, allegorically and, for a time, quite literally. The sexual abuse she endured at the hand of an older coworker left her unable to speak for a long time. She came

to LifeLoveandGod.com consumed with shame over the abuse and also the fact that it led to a sexual addiction she still struggles with today. Sin and shame have a way of tearing us up and stealing our joy, and by the time I met McKenna, she was in a dark place. I recently asked her to think back to that time in her life. She shared,

After the abuse, I continued to [sin] because I believed that I was permanently dirty and sinful anyway. The sin caused me to push away from God for a while because I felt too sinful and ashamed. Even now, sometimes I feel like I'm irredeemable and figure that I can never heal from my sin even if I stop.

I appreciate her honesty so much! And it goes without saying that she's not the only one who feels that way.

Note: I'm happy to say that McKenna's story isn't finished yet! Even though she is still in the process of finding healing from the abuse and freedom from her addiction, she understands that God is at work in her life. Our most recent talk was filled with hope: "I do believe that I can break free, even though it will be difficult. I feel like God is staying with me through this and can help me overcome it." Amen! Don't give up, sister.

I share McKenna's story because she explains so well what happens when we allow shame to take over. It's as if shame closes our ears to God's forgiving voice but gives full volume to the Enemy's condemning lies. Are you familiar with

Satan's lies? Sheesh. I am! "You're too sinful, Jessie. God could never love a hypocrite like you. You're so far gone, you might as well just keep on sinning." Yeah, I know all about his lies. Ephesians 6:11 warns us to put on God's spiritual armor so we can understand and stand firm against Satan's strategies. Well, here's one military strategy we should definitely be aware of: Satan's arsenal includes excessive shame. He wants you to drown in it. He wants you to believe you're alone in your shame, because if you think that way, you won't get help. (Side note: Satan also tries to use shame to *get* us to sin. Have you ever felt embarrassed, left out, or too uptight because you didn't want to do what "everybody else" was doing? That's unwarranted shame in action!)

If you're convinced that no one will understand, everyone will think less of you, or others will shun you if you come clean about your sin, let's just say there's not a whole lot of motivation to be open about it! Who's out looking for abject humiliation? Me neither. So we go on trying to do this solo sin-slayer thing, which doesn't work very well (as you may have found). Satan may be damned, but he's no dummy! He knows that just as there is strength in numbers, there is weakness in isolation. And shame pushes us to isolate ourselves from potential help.

Second reason Satan loves shame: It simultaneously starves truth and feeds bondage. When we allow shame to rule our hearts, we become spiritually anemic and vulnerable to Satan's attacks. Put another way? Shame is like cancer. Did you know that cancer cells steal nutrients from healthy

cells? Cancer cells eat up the fuel intended for the rest of the body, causing the healthy cells to starve. As the healthy cells get weaker, some cancers then attack the organs and, if not treated, can eventually kill the person.

Shame is like that. A girl's shame eats up the spiritual nourishment meant for her body, leaving her weak and vulnerable. All her energy is spent just trying to survive, trying to cope. The shame attacks her healthy "organs"—her heart, mind, and relationship with God. If the shame isn't treated, she might even die—a slow, numbing, spiritual death. Shame's cancer-like nature explains how even a spiritually healthy Christian girl can eventually "starve" to death from unconfessed, secret sin. And that's why I'm so passionate about rooting out unhealthy shame! I don't want to see you die; I want to see you *thrive*.

Shame keeps us from getting help. It starves truth and feeds bondage (like cancer). But there's a third reason Satan loves shame: It actually perpetuates addiction. The words I shared earlier from McKenna touched on this. When we feel so ashamed and down and defeated that we can't imagine ever breaking free, we lose the motivation to try. We start rationalizing our sin—giving up and giving in. We sin. We're ashamed. We feel defeated, so we sin again. Shame is that spin factor on the sin cycle that keeps you whirling around like a crazy top!

For all three of these reasons, shame has got to go. Now, remember, I'm not saying we should ignore our conscience. We should feel badly when we sin! But there is a place to take that sorrow, and it's called the Cross. (In chapter 7, we're

going to spend some more time talking about healthy regret and godly sorrow.)

The Antidote to Shame

Good news: There *is* an antidote to shame! But before I share that secret, I need you to do something for me. I want you to take a look at Psalm 34. By the time this book is over, you're probably going to be sick of hearing me talk about it. It's my favorite psalm on the topic of pain and sin and God and growth and prayer and contentment and praise—oh yeah, and shame. So why don't the two of you get acquainted? Even though I'd prefer you read it in your own Bible (so you can highlight and make notes to your heart's content), I'm going to print the whole thing here in case you don't have a Bible handy. Enjoy!

¹I will praise the LORD at all times.

I will constantly speak his praises.

²I will boast only in the LORD;

let all who are helpless take heart.

³Come, let us tell of the LORD's greatness;

let us exalt his name together.

⁴I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me.

He freed me from all my fears.

⁵Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy;

no shadow of shame will darken their faces.

⁶In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened;

he saved me from all my troubles.

- ⁷For the angel of the LORD is a guard;
he surrounds and defends all who fear him.
- ⁸Taste and see that the LORD is good.
Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!
- ⁹Fear the LORD, you his godly people,
for those who fear him will have all they need.
- ¹⁰Even strong young lions sometimes grow hungry,
but those who trust in the LORD will lack no
good thing.
- ¹¹Come, my children, and listen to me,
and I will teach you to fear the LORD.
- ¹²Does anyone want to live a life
that is long and prosperous?
- ¹³Then keep your tongue from speaking evil
and your lips from telling lies!
- ¹⁴Turn away from evil and do good.
Search for peace, and work to maintain it.
- ¹⁵The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right;
his ears are open to their cries for help.
- ¹⁶But the LORD turns his face against those who do evil;
he will erase their memory from the earth.
- ¹⁷The LORD hears his people when they call to him
for help.
He rescues them from all their troubles.
- ¹⁸The LORD is close to the brokenhearted;
he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

¹⁹The righteous person faces many troubles,
but the LORD comes to rescue each time.

²⁰For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous;
not one of them is broken!

²¹Calamity will surely overtake the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

²²But the LORD will redeem those who serve him.
No one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.

Great psalm, right?

Okay, I promised to let you in on the antidote to shame, so let's get to it. Take another look at verse 5:

Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy;
no shadow of shame will darken their faces.

What is the antidote to shame? *Look to God*. Don't accuse me of being overly simplistic just yet! There's a lot of good stuff packed into those three little words. The Hebrew verb *nabat*, translated "look at" or "look to," means more than gazing up at the sky toward heaven wishing for a miracle. *Nabat* means to show regard for, pay attention to, or consider.⁷ Don't let the simplicity of that sentence numb you to the truth wrapped up in it. The girl who is willing to honor God, pay close attention to Him and His Word, and keep Him in mind throughout every decision and every circumstance is "radiant with joy." She *shines*. I *love* that! This psalm promises that the girl who turns to God for help with her secret sin won't be disappointed. No shadow of shame will darken her

face (in the Hebrew, her “face” meaning her “presence”) if she is willing to embrace His love, savor His forgiveness, and follow His guidance.

Can you imagine what it would be like to be free of shame? Shame certainly has a way of “darkening” life, doesn’t it? Maybe it’s been so long since you *didn’t* struggle with a secret sin that you can’t even remember how bright and vibrant life was before shame entered the picture. If so, let me refresh your memory: A girl who isn’t darkened by shame has the freedom to be herself. She doesn’t feel the pressure to keep up appearances or hide the truth from others. A girl who is radiant with joy brings life to those around her and offers grace at every turn. She smiles, enjoys helping others, and has hope for the future. A girl who is radiant with joy trusts God, believes God, follows God, and honors God. Know anyone like that? If you do, then you know that those kinds of girls are a joy to be around. Do *you* want to be like that? If so, then look to God.

How? How can you look to God when you can’t physically see Him? We said earlier that looking to God means to show regard for God, to pay attention to or consider Him. Psalm 34 gives some practical ways we can do just that. We can look to God by:

- Praising Him—constantly!—for who He is, for what He has done, and even for what He’s going to do (verses 1-3)
- Talking to Him in prayer (verse 4)

- Fearing Him, which means respecting Him (verse 9)—taking His instructions to heart, seeing Him in the world around us, and getting excited to share Him with others
- Trusting Him with our lives, which includes our circumstances (verse 10)
- Telling the truth (verse 13)
- Turning from evil and doing good instead (verses 14, 19-20)
- Trying to be at peace with others (verse 14)
- Calling to Him for help first (instead of to our friends, our boyfriends, or even the Internet) (verse 17)
- Serving Him by serving others (verse 22)

And that's just from one psalm! The Bible has lots more to say about turning to God. As you study His Word, you'll see more connections between looking to God and kicking shame to the curb.

Look, I know that you might be so entrenched in sin that “looking to God” sounds at best like a Sunday-school answer and at worst like you just wasted your money on this book! Can getting rid of shame really be that simple? Well, yes and no. Remember, this is a journey, not a three-step process. Understanding and putting into practice that list from Psalm 34 isn't going to happen by the weekend. But trust me, God knows how to mend us because He's the one who made us! If He tells us that looking to Him will rid us of shame, that's where we're going to begin. As for practical

advice on *how* to regard God, break a cycle of addiction, and so on, don't worry—we'll get there, too.

So what do you think? Are you tired of the sin-shame-despair cycle? God *wants* you to be radiant with joy. He wants you to look to Him so that His light can chase away those shadows of shame. It's *His* light that reflects off our unashamed faces, making us radiate joy. But He is always the gentleman. He'll never force you to turn to Him, even if He knows that His love and His ways are in your best interest. He wants you to *choose* Him, freely, all on your own. Will you do that with me now?

Father God, I need You. It's pretty obvious I can't do this on my own! Shame has been eating away at me, stealing my joy and darkening my world. I'm scared to come clean, but I know I can trust You. So I'm turning to You today—right now—because I know You're the only One who can help me find true freedom. Free me! Free me from my sin and shame. Give me the strength to begin this journey of healing. Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. *Are you a silent sufferer? Do you know any other girls who struggle with sins they're ashamed of?*

