

Shame vs. Honesty

By Brenda Spina, M.S., LMFT, LPC

His eyes pleading, his voice desperate, his face red with intensity, he asked "...what do you really think of me?" This question had come after animated discussion around his difficulty in seeing how he works in order to maintain an image. He would then punish (with his anger) when those around him failed to recognize his efforts. His thoughts, filled with shame, brought great suffering. We had talked about how easy it is to worry about the thoughts of others when we feel ashamed of who we are on the inside...about how easy it is to blame than to see choices we have made...or...how this behavior helps us avoid the pain in our souls. His question was a risk. My answer to him was honest. He welcomed it. Hope replaced desperation on his face.

God is like that with us. He never trivializes the suffering we go through with flippant or dishonest replies to our cries. Hebrews 6:17-19a says, "Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability (unchangeability) of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation.... This hope we have as an anchor of the soul..." (NKJ) God's answers to my questions may not always be pleasant to the ear but they will be honest and given out of his determination to reveal His unchangeable character. It is this fact that provides hope to us all and anchors our souls in times of need.

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