

Prayer of Repentance of Shame

YAHUAH my FATHER, To the dishonoured and shamed women and children in our world . . . I am sorry!!

I'm sorry for the way that men have abandoned women.

To every little girl, whose daddy was too busy at work to notice her playschool art ... for every dance recital that we missed because of needing to work late one more night ... for every preacher's daughter whose father was out saving the world but didn't notice he was losing his own girl ... I'm truly sorry.

When the moment of battle rises, and the dragon rears its ugly head, we were meant to fight — to do something, even if it's the wrong thing. But we have been too silent, too passive, and we have left you to fight your own battle.

We've left our adolescent girls to find out about their sexuality in the backseat of the boy's car, rather than in the open conversation and sanctity of our home. I am sorry for our silence — that we haven't spoken to you more.

And I'm sorry that we have been so unable to show our daughters affection. You wanted to roll in the grass, to ride on our shoulders, to feel the whiskers on our cheeks, and to sit in our laps for long stretches of time.

But we've been uncomfortable with touch because we weren't taught it by our fathers ... I want to say I'm sorry for every little girl and every wife whose daddy or husband abandoned her for a bottle of alcohol. When you needed us, we just weren't there.

I want to say that I'm sorry for every little girl or wife whose daddy or husband left home and didn't come back. You were the hidden treasure and we didn't know it. We thought we could find it at the end of the rainbow, over some distant horizon ... but the rainbow had no end, and there was no other treasure, and for too many of us, it's now too late.

I'm sorry for the ways we have used you to our advantage. No, I am not the child molester, nor the rapist, nor the man sitting at the bar watching you dance around a pole, nor the John who was your last customer.

I have not, by the Grace of YAHUAH been that man. But what man in our midst has not sinned by looking upon a woman as an object rather than a person, putting expectations upon your waistline that we do not put upon our own.

We have bought the cars and the calendars that the bikini models modelled. I feel the

whole weight of the unthinkable ways that we have used women to momentarily soothe our deep inward shame.

May I tell you — if we could be honest with ourselves, with YAHUAH, and with you — how most men really feel? We marvel at who you are. You have discernment that we don't have. You notice tiny, subtle details when we see nothing at all.

We marvel at the way you make relationships, and we secretly long to be able to find friends the way you do. We're amazed at the way you pray, the way you sing, the way you smile, the way you laugh, the way you cry.

We're amazed at how deeply you feel things and how easily you express those feelings.

We are amazed at how multidimensional you are interweaving softness and strength — how you have endured so much, persevered through so much, and celebrated so much.

Every woman is a rose — lovely, mysterious, fragrant, and meant to be handled with care.

Its piercing thorns greet only those who recklessly grab the stem without taking time to appreciate its total beauty.

The most beautiful of flowers, the sweetest of fragrances, and the costliest in the florist's shop. You are beautiful from the moment of the first bud, but your beauty unfolds a petal at a time as you blossom and grow.

Today, we honour you. We do not seek to own you, use you, sell you, or control you — but to admire you. And thank you.

To every child who spilled her milk on Mommy's clean floor, or whose legs were too little to keep up with Daddy, or whose ordinary childish acts of irresponsibility were met with shame instead of understanding, I'm truly sorry.

Please forgive us. We parents often treat our children as if they are already adults. You were just acting the way a little child acts. You didn't have the dexterity to never spill your milk.

You didn't have the leg span to always keep up. We reprimanded you for breaking rules that you didn't even know were rules, and we acted disgusted with you for not understanding what no one had ever taught you. Forgive us.

To every school child who was teased on the school bus, or the playground, or laughed at in the classroom, I confess. The saying should be reversed: "Sticks and stones can break

my bones, but your words can really hurt me." For every nickname, every taunt, and every smirk from every bully or brat, I'm sorry. We didn't realize we were eroding your soul. We secretly felt so bad about ourselves that we had to put others down in order to feel worthwhile. Forgive us.

To every child of parents who were too busy, I'm sorry. We were busy making money or making a name or building a business, and we didn't realize that we had sacrificed you on the way. Forgive us.

To every child of parents who were too consumed with their hatred of one another to notice you, I'm sorry. While your parents fought, all you ever received was the table scraps of bitterness and the rinds of our rage. Forgive us.

To every child who never knew a father, I'm sorry. I knew how to sleep with a woman but not how to marry her and nurture her. I knew how to make a baby but not how to father a child. I have no idea what I missed. Please forgive me.

To every child whose father left, I'm sorry. I fooled myself into thinking I could leave your mother without it seeming like I was leaving you. I didn't know that you would lose sleep wondering what you did wrong. Please forgive me.

To every child who was born a girl but whose parents wanted a boy, I'm so sorry. I didn't know that my little jokes were like daggers to your soul. YAHUAH made you who you are because of His perfect plan. It wasn't you I was displeased with, it was really me. Oh, please forgive us. Be your beautiful self.

To every child of an alcoholic, I'm sorry. I can't believe that I let a bottle capture my attention more than you. It was not my lack of love for you that led me to drink — it was a lack of love for myself. While I was anesthetizing my anxiety, you were being abandoned. Forgive me.

To every school child who was shamed by a teacher. We wanted you to learn fast so that we would look like good teachers. We didn't have the patience to spend the time with you that you really needed. We didn't know that singling you out for scorn was cursing your life. Forgive us.

To every child from a performance-based home. Success and looking good meant everything to us. When we pushed you to excel we didn't realize that you thought you

were only valuable when you were succeeding. We're sorry for all the pressure we put on you. We hurried you up through childhood and put all our broken dreams onto you, for you to somehow magically fulfill. Forgive us.

To every employee who was belittled or mistreated by a supervisor, I'm sorry. The workplace was the place I shifted my shame. You had to take it, your job depended on it. I never stopped to think about your sleepless nights and gnawing anxiety that were the product of my pride. Forgive me.

To every church member who ever left church feeling worse than before. We thought that we were being bold and "really preaching the gospel" when we shamed you over and over. But we weren't.

It wasn't the Gospel at all. YAHUAH wanted you convicted, so you could be filled with the hope of change. We condemned you and left you with no instruction on how to change. You needed an encounter with the most winsome Person in the universe, Messiah Yahushua, and we gave you a set of rules. The rules were good, but they were impossible to keep without the Power of the Set-Apart Spirit. Forgive us.

To every victim of incest, rape, and abuse. My soul was diseased. I was famished for approval. I abused you as the ultimate shifting of my shame. You did not invite it, nor deserve it. The horror of my deeds demonstrates not the depth of a flaw in you, but the depth of disgust I had for myself. I left you to bear the weight of the shame because I didn't know how to give it to Yahushua. Forgive me.

AHMEYN!