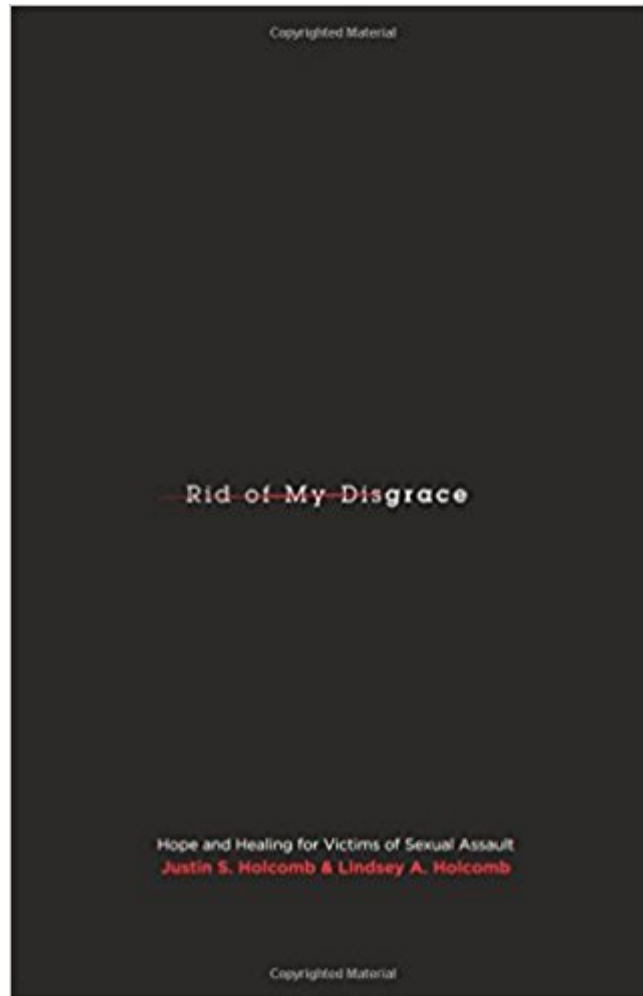




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# Rid Of My Disgrace: Hope And Healing For Victims Of Sexual Assault



## Synopsis

The statistics are jarring. One in four women and one in six men are or will be victims of sexual assault in their lifetime. But as sobering as the statistics are, they don't begin to speak to the darkness and grief experienced by these victims. Because sexual assault causes physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual pain, victims need clear help, hope, and healing. In *Rid of My Disgrace*, a couple experienced in counseling victims of sexual assault explains how the grace of God can heal the broken and restore the disgraced. Justin and Lindsey Holcomb outline an approach for moving from destruction to redemption. While avoiding platitudes and shallow theology, *Rid of My Disgrace* combines biblical and theological depth with up-to-date research. This book is primarily written for those who have been assaulted (either as children or adults) but also equips family, friends, pastors, and others to care for victims in ways that are compassionate, practical, and informed. Part of the Re:Lit series.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Careful research, lots of Scripture, and a demonstration that the work of Christ says you are washed clean to those who feel like outcasts, which will speak to victims of sexual abuse." •Ed Welch, a counselor; faculty member, The Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation; author, *Shame Interrupted* and *Side by Side* "I can't express how grateful I am that someone is tackling this subject with both a pastoral heart and an understanding of how the devastating effects of sexual assault can wreak havoc for

decades after the abuse. It is an epidemic issue where resources are scarce. There isn't a weekend that goes by where we aren't told a gut-wrenching tale of innocence stolen and left trying to help a man or woman make sense of their pain. I praise God for the gospel that can heal and restore and for the Holcombs that had the courage and wisdom to write this book for us.

•Matt Chandler, lead pastor, The Village Church, Dallas, Texas; president, Acts 29 Church Planting Network; author, *The Mingling of Souls* and *The Explicit Gospel*

“God sees, knows, heals, restores, and redeems. This is the message of hope this book offers, to all who have suffered from abuse. How desperately needed this message is in our culture today! In my interaction with teens and young adults, I have heard many stories of sexual abuse. I am so thrilled that there is a resource like this book that offers relevant, practical, biblical hope and healing words of life.

•Rebecca St. James, singer; author; actress

“Justin and Lindsey demonstrate a unique level of compassion and concern for victims of sexual assault and the hope for them for healing. The gentle and empathetic tone, along with a sincere belief that victims can experience healing, makes this book indispensable for both victims and those who care for them.

•Craig Groeschel, Senior Pastor, LifeChurch.tv; author, *WEIRD: Because Normal Isn't Working*

“The world—and too often the church—encourages victims of sexual assault to do more. Self-help advice just adds more layers of guilt and a sense of powerlessness. The authors of this excellent book have good news: literally, a gospel that answers our disgrace with the grace of God in Christ. For anyone who suffers from abuse—as well as those who minister to them—*Rid of My Disgrace* is powerful, healing medicine.

•Michael Horton, J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology, Westminster Seminary California; author, *Core Christianity: Finding Yourself in God's Story*

“Where will you find a Theology of the Victim from a Reformed theologian? You just found it. If you've been the victim of abuse, you won't find yourself blamed in this book. You'll find yourself embraced by the love of a God who meets you in your pain. This will be required reading for all of my students.

•Chuck DeGroat, Academic Dean, Newbigin House of Studies; Director, City Church Counseling Center

“Some books are easy to read, but this isn't one of them. Its difficulty, however, is not a matter of style or prose but of substance. We don't like thinking about sexual assault and abuse. We'd rather pretend they don't exist. But the church can no longer afford to turn a blind eye to the extent of this problem or to ignore the devastation it brings to both body and soul. What makes this book so worthy of your attention, notwithstanding the discomfort it may cause you to feel, is the wealth of wisdom, gospel grace, and

pastoral sensitivity that the Holcombs bring to bear on those affected by this experience. No matter how deep the pain or sense of loss endured by the victims of sexual assault, God's healing grace and power are greater still. Highly recommended!

•Sam Storms, A lead pastor for preaching and vision, Bridgeway Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

“One can tell that the Holcombs have extensive experience working with victims of various kinds of assault because this book is so comprehensive in elucidating the types of healing necessary. Thoroughly researched, richly evangelical in theology, strongly assertive to deliver from blame and guilt, *Rid of My Disgrace* is heartily recommended for all who suffer from sexual exploitation.

•Marva J. Dawn, theologian; speaker; author, *Being Well When We're Ill*; *In the Beginning GOD*; and *Talking the Walk*

“As the President of Youth for Christ/USA, I am a first hand witness to thousands of lives that have been impacted and marred by sexual assault. Often the trauma is replaced by debilitating shame and despair. I was moved and inspired by the thoughtful, comprehensive and approachable way that Justin and Lindsey Holcomb unpack the power of grace. The pages of the book unwrap the gift of God, they unlock the shackles of guilt, and they unleash the Spirit of God to transform. *Rid of My Disgrace* is an important work, for a vital time, to a broken people. I praise God for the fruit that this book will produce.

•Dan Wolgemuth, President/CEO, Youth for Christ

“Written passionately from the agony that haunts victims, this book also offers a message of hope and healing. It is an invaluable resource for those who have been victimized and a must-read for family, friends, pastors, or counselors of victims to be equipped to serve and love them well.

•Jud Wilhite, author, *Eyes Wide Open* and *Uncensored Grace*; senior pastor, Central Christian Church, Las Vegas, Nevada

“This important book places the powder keg of gospel truth where it is most needed: on the frontline of pastoral ministry. A mixture of clear writing, real-life stories, and faithful Bible exposition makes this a powerful resource in the fight for redemption in the lives of those we are called to serve.

•Joel Virgo, Lead Pastor, Church of Christ the King, Brighton

“This is a sad and disturbing book. The darkness of it will keep you awake at night. But the light will cause you to sing with joy and hope. What a gift to the church and to those who have felt the shame of sexual assault or who love those who have! Read it and give it to your friends. They will rise up and call you blessed! It is the best book I've ever read on the subject of abuse and I've read a lot of them.

•Steve Brown, A Host, Key Life Radio Program; author, *Three Free Sins: God Isn't Mad At You*

“This compelling, disturbing and hopeful book written from the perspective of the Christian faith, has the potential to be a lifeline for many who have experienced

the horror of sexual violence.

•Rob Morris, President and co-founder, Love146  
 “Rid of My Disgrace reminds victims of sexual assault that they are not alone and it is not the end of the story. From King David’s daughter Tamar to the courageous survivors telling their stories today, the Holcombs take sexual assault out of the shadows of shame and isolation and into the light of the gospel. With a solid grasp on both the effects of sexual assault and of redemptive history, the Holcombs thoroughly identify sexual assault and its aftermath while calling the reader to let even such a painful, hideous act be a part of their story of redemption through Christ’s sufficient work on the cross.

•Monica Taffinder, co-founder and counselor, Grace Clinic Christian Counseling  
 “This book helped us understand the painful emotions that go along with the particular suffering of sexual assault. But more than that, it showed us how to respond to our twelve-year-old son who was assaulted.

•Parents of a child victim  
 “I thought I had gotten over the abuses in my past. I had forgiven my abusers, stopped feeling like a victim, and felt like I was a stronger person. After reading Rid of My Disgrace, I realized there were still underlying issues I hadn’t dealt with that were preventing me from getting close to other people and, worst of all, preventing me from having a deeper relationship with God. Each chapter not only discussed each emotion that had been secretly weighing on me, but also showed me that those emotions don’t have to rule me.

Jesus’ death and resurrection apply not only to my sins, but also to the burden of someone else’s sin against me. My identity is no longer as “damaged goods.” It is “child of God” and with that comes God’s unending love. I highly recommend this book for anyone who has experienced not only some form of sexual abuse, but other abuses as well.

•Adult female victim

Lindsey A. Holcomb counsels victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Previously, she worked as a case manager at a sexual assault crisis center and a domestic violence shelter. Lindsey provided crisis intervention to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence and conducted a variety of training seminars to service providers. She earned a Master in Public Health with a focus on violence against women. Lindsey and Justin are authors of *Is It My Fault?* and a children’s book, *God Made All of Me*.

Justin S. Holcomb is an Episcopal priest and professor of theology and Christian thought at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Reformed Theological Seminary. He and Lindsey are also authors of *Is It My Fault?* and a children’s book, *God Made All of Me*. Justin has also written or edited numerous books, including *Know the Heretics*, *Know the Creeds and Councils*, *On the Grace of*

God,Ã Â What Do You Do For a Living?,Ã Â Acts: A 12-Week Study,Ã Â For the World, andÃ Â Christian Theologies of Scripture. HeÃ Â serves on the boards for REST (Real Escape from the Sex Trade) and GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in Christian Environments).

Wow. That is all I have to say about this book...Okay that's a lie, that's not all I have to say...This book was wonderfully written. I bought this book years ago for myself and like many people do I tried to avoid it and hid it on my bookshelf. Just recently did I start talking to a therapist about my past experience and we did EMDR therapy and it brought up a lot of things I tried so hard to keep deep inside me...With all that swirling inside I thought it was time to pick up this book...Inside it I was not surprised with what it said... It's things I know to be true such as I'm still clean, I did not deserve nor ask for what happened! We all know it but when it's you, when it's happened to you we seem to forget. I know I was hurt beyond words and really started to fade away from the good things in my life...I was able to still live my life and told very very few people. I believe I only told 3 people the year it happened. With time I've told more people about what had happened to me and now I speak freely about it. It is something I'll never forget. It is something that will haunt me for ever. It is something that will keep me pressing on- because I know I am RID OF MY DISGRACE. For anyone looking at this book I recommend it 110% even if you need to get it and hide it for a few weeks or a few months until you're ready...This book isn't just for victims or someone who is full of disgrace it's for anyone. My husband was interested and really wanted to read it- it is currently on his night stand.

This review first appeared at TGC ReviewsÃ Â , an online publication of The Gospel Coalition. In a fallen world where unspeakable evil occurs, the church must be a place that shines the hope of the gospel into the darkness. One dark corner of our world is sexual assault. The statistics are astonishing. One in four women and one in six men have been or will be victims of sexual assault. The effects are horrific. And the world is not short of remedies: self-help, self-love, and self-heal. Unfortunately for the victims, these answers are "horrible news." Justin Holcomb, a pastor at Mars Hill Church in Seattle, Washington, and his wife, Lindsey Holcomb, equip the church to rise and meet the challenge of helping victims of sexual assault, not by the empty hope of self-help, but by grace, redemption, and restoration in the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Let me be up front with the matter. I really liked this book. Pastors should read it, and victims of abuse will be encouraged by the authors' honesty and care. So to briefly comment on the book's content and its usefulness to pastors, counselors, and victims, let me give four brief reflections on its value to the local church's

ministry to the afflicted. First, *Rid Of My Disgrace* deals honestly and directly with sexual assault. It presents a clear and full definition, giving victims, churches and pastors clarity on what constitutes sexual assault. They describe in vivid detail numerous effects the assault brings upon a person. Victims will feel like they are not alone, while pastors and counselors will have an invaluable resource for learning what is going on inside the victim when their own words cannot express the inner turmoil. We need an honest and direct book because "surveys and studies indicate that most people know almost nothing about the dynamics of sexual violence and have little or no experience in dealing with it." Second, *Rid of My Disgrace* displays the prevalence of sexual assault and its effect on the victims. "One in four women and one in six men will be sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime. These statistics are probably underestimates . . . every two minutes someone in the United States is sexually assaulted." These numbers are overwhelmingly high, even considering the problem of under-reporting, and it knows no boundaries of "color, race, religion, nationality, lifestyle, sexual preference, education, class, occupation, ability, or disability." No matter where we live or minister, there are hurting people all around us, even on Sunday mornings. The only thing more sobering than the numbers is its effect. Sexual assault can affect every aspect of your life: "your faith, your daily attitudes and emotions, your-self image, your relationships, and your sexuality." Our churches, along with their pastors, ministers, staffs, and volunteers, can discover new avenues for gospel proclamation and transformation if we can begin to grasp the prevalence of sexual assault and its devastating effects. Third, *Rid Of My Disgrace* is gospel-centered and immensely practical. The foundation for healing from the first pages is the gospel. The Holcombs never stop returning to it, continually pointing people to the grace found in Christ alone. God's way of redeeming his people was through Christ's suffering on the cross, but the cross is also where our disgrace is transformed. This a practical theology of grace applied to the disgraceful experiences and effects of sexual assault. Our counseling ministry will have this book on hand and will be used in our training seminars classes. Fourth, God is glorified in every chapter. One of the phrases you hear at Mars Hill Church is "It's all about Jesus," and this book is no exception, as Jesus is exalted on every page. God's grace, his "one-way, unconditional love expressed through, and founded on, the person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ" is marveled at from cover to cover. Even if you have never been sexually assaulted or have never ministered to someone who has, this book will cause you to contemplate the depths of the riches of the grace of God in the person and work of Jesus. Sin is devastating. Maybe more than we realize most days. But the wretched nature of sexual assault gives us a glimpse of sin's deep darkness. However, the Holcombs show that even if sin goes deeper than you could ever imagine, God's grace goes deeper still.

When despair, anguish, and the weight of guilt of shame are too heavy, pick up this book. This book speaks from experience, and that sometimes makes it really hard to read... But this book is about bringing darkness into light. To bravely and boldly deal with sexual abuse, instead of running from, or denying it. For the abused, it's what you've been looking for to end your nightmares. For those who shepherd the abused, it will open your eyes, and your heart to feel the pain, and the hope for those under your care. The facts on sexual abuse are devastating, but the memories and experiences from those abused are even more so. I think that is why, at every possible turn and through every possible tear, this book points you to a greater Gospel. For me, it gave a deeper understanding and affection for a God who is angry at corruption, injustice, and violence, right along side me, and it made the cross of Jesus so much bigger... To see Jesus naked, betrayed, publicly shamed, disgraced, humiliated, and utterly destroyed on the cross... and to know He did all that to remove my disgrace, so I might be free to take joy in Him, and joy in life and marriage... has actually brought healing. So I just encourage you, if you sought out this book, please go through with it. Be brave, consider that there is hope, and pick this up.

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