The Difference Between Shame and Sorrow

Shame

Shame robs us of dignity. When we feel shame, our sense of personal worth disappears.
Shame also triggers hypocrisy. It's inevitable. A sense of worth is so precious that when we feel our worth threatened, we almost automatically perform in futile attempts to regain a sense of personal worth. Underneath every showoff lies a fear of shame.

If others shame or condemn us, particularly if they are people important to us, we may buy into their view, end up shaming and condemning ourselves, and conclude that we indeed *are* less valuable than the person who's treating us so badly.

The Basis of Shame

Shaming is based on arrogance. People who shame or condemn others operate under the false assumption that they are better than the people they're shaming. If we feel ashamed of ourselves, we've bought into the false assumption that others are worth more than we are. The Bible contradicts these falsehoods with two great equalizers that undermine both shame and arrogance. 1st: Every one of us disobeys God and falls short of His glory (Romans 3:23), and 2nd: Every one of us is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and so bear an inherent dignity that can't be diminished no matter what we do.

Sorrow

Sorrow is quite different from shame. Sorrow for our own wrongdoings allows us to truthfully acknowledge our wrongs without losing our sense of dignity. Sorrow for another's wrongdoings, allows us to truthfully acknowledge their wrongs without losing our respect for their dignity.
dignity and sorrow can comfortably walk side by side.

A Prayer

Lord, teach us to sorrow for the times when we blindly lose sight of the dignity You have given each of us. Teach us to imitate Jesus who told the truth with sorrow and compassion but without condemnation. May we all follow in His footsteps. Fill us with compassion towards each other and towards ourselves.

Shame triggers hypocrisy and ignores dignity.
Sorrow triggers compassion and dismantles condemnation