

DISARM

OVERCOME

# shame



HEBREWS 12:1-2

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2024

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# Preface

Shame.

Even just hearing the word shame can stir all sorts of emotions, fears, and worries.

“What would people think about me if they knew\_\_\_\_\_?”

“What would happen if someone found out\_\_\_\_\_about me?”

Shame can be debilitating, isolating, and agonizing.

Yet, while shame may feel like being trapped in an underwater cave—hard to breathe, alone, and hopeless—ultimately, Jesus has disarmed shame. He has completely broken the power of shame through His death and resurrection. (**Hebrews 12:1-2**)

Though we often still struggle with shame in our lives, “God doesn’t want you to carry around the shame in your soul that He has already paid for on the cross.”<sup>1</sup> Jesus has made a way for us out of the cave to the surface of the water, which is bathed in light and brings fresh breath to the soul.

Through Jesus, we can experience freedom from shame. While shame tells us we are not enough, Jesus tells us we are made in His image and we are His beloved children. When we live in our true identity and, with vulnerability, bring shame out of darkness into the light, we can experience freedom. In experiencing freedom from shame we can live a life of abundant joy (**John 10:10**), and we become light to those around us who also live in shame.

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<sup>1</sup> Reimer, Rob. *Soul Care: Seven Transformational Principles for a Healthy Soul*. Carpenter’s Son Publishing, 2016. 93

# The Story of Shame

## Lesson 1



What's the first thought, feeling, or image that comes to your mind when you hear the word "shame"?

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How would you define shame?<sup>1</sup>

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Brené Brown describes one difference between shame and guilt: shame says "I am bad" (focus on self), and guilt says "I did something bad" (focus on behavior).<sup>2</sup> In your own words, how would you describe the difference between shame and guilt?<sup>3</sup>

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Why do you think that distinction is important?

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<sup>1</sup> A good summary definition of shame is: "the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love, belonging, and connection." Brown, Brené. *Atlas of the Heart*. Random House, 2021. 137

<sup>2</sup> Brown, Brené. *Atlas of the Heart*. Random House, 2021. 134

<sup>3</sup> Shame is also distinguished from humiliation and embarrassment. Humiliation is when you are belittled and put down by someone, but your sense of worth is still secure. Embarrassment is when you have done something that made you uncomfortable but you know you are not alone in it; we all do those kinds of things. Embarrassment is typically fleeting. Brown, Brené. *Atlas of the Heart*. Random House, 2021. 135

Let's take a look at where shame is first mentioned in the Bible. As we read the well-known story of the creation of humanity, we see that, our identity is rooted in the truth that each of us is an amazing creation of the Father. We are all designed perfectly to be in relationship with Him and others, and to be fruitful, multiply, create, and live fully. This is what is true about us. Then sin and shame entered the world caused us to forget who God has created us to be and believe the lie that there is something intrinsically wrong with us.

Jump into the story below. Read **Genesis 1:26-2:4**.



*26 Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."*

*27 So God created human beings in his own image.*

*In the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.*

*28 Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground." 29 Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. 30 And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life." And that is what happened. 31 Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.*

*2:1 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. 2 On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation. 4 This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.*

Let's first think about identity.



As you read through **Genesis 1:26 - 2:4**:



What are some of the words, phrases, or actions in this passage that speak about who God is?

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What are some of the words, phrases, or actions that speak about who we are?

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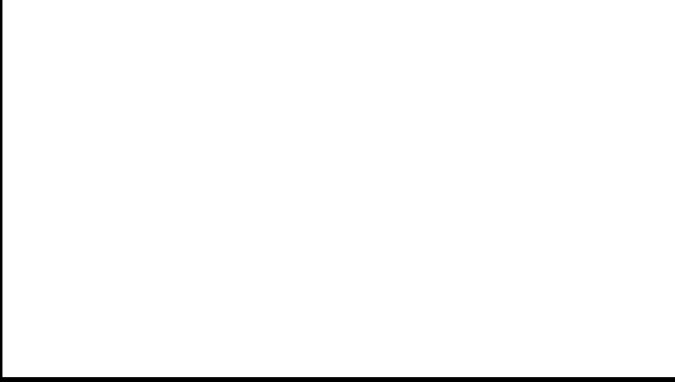
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Meditate: Think about what it means to be made in God's image.

Invite God to cause the words of Genesis 1:27 & 31 to come alive in your heart, mind, and spirit.

Think about people in your life and sphere of influence and enjoy the ways that God's image and goodness is reflected in them.



Let's continue the story. Read **Genesis 2:4-25** below.

*... When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, 5 neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the Lord God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. 6 Instead, springs came up from the ground and watered all the land. 7 Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person. 8 Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. 9 The Lord God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10 A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. 11 The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. 12 The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. 13 The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. 14 The third branch, called the Tigris,*

flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates. 15 The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. 16 But the Lord God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden— 17 except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die."

18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." 19 So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. 20 He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

21 So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. 22 Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

23 "At last!" the man exclaimed.

"This one is bone from my bone,  
and flesh from my flesh!

She will be called 'woman,'  
because she was taken from 'man.'"

24 This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

25 Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

As we reach the end of chapter 2, an odd detail is pointed out in **verse 25**: nakedness.



What's worth noting about how this Scripture describes Adam and Eve's experience of nakedness?

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What does **verse 25** communicate to us about God's original design and desire for us (emotionally, physically, relationally, spiritually, etc.)?

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We now continue into chapter 3. Read **Genesis 3:1-13**.

*1 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"*

*2 "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. 3 "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"* 4 "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman.

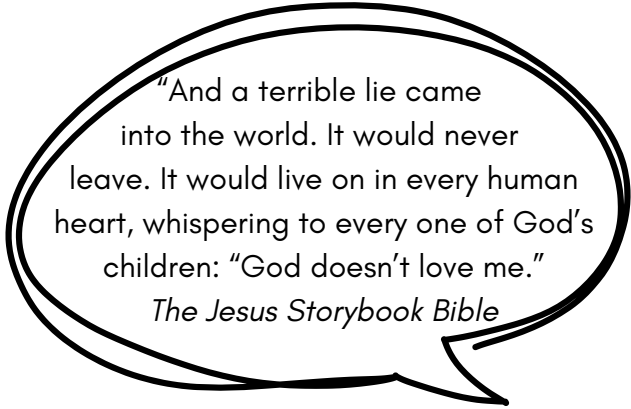
*5 "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."* 6 The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.

*7 At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. 8 When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees.*

*9 Then the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" 10 He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."* 11 "Who told you that you were naked?" the Lord God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

*12 The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."* 13 Then the Lord God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

*"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."*



Let's make some observations about the characters involved in the story of **Genesis 1-3** as well as their interactions with each other.



How did the serpent manipulate the truth about Eve's identity?

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What role do you think doubt played in Eve's response to the serpent?<sup>4</sup>

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How can doubt open the door for shame to enter?

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<sup>4</sup>His [the serpent's] initial query introduces the possibility for doubt to enter the woman's mental framework. Doubt not only about God ('Did God really say...?') but also about her recollection of history and by extension—and more importantly—doubt about the nature of her relationship with God." Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 101



As we look at **Genesis 3:7**, what was the result of Eve's action?

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The serpent's key message to Eve was "you are not enough."<sup>5</sup> This shame-filled message caused Eve to doubt her identity as God's child. It resulted in a break in relationship with God and left Adam and Eve hidden, naked, and ashamed.



As you think about our community and world, where do you see the "not enough" message showing up?

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How does this "not enough" message show up in your life? How does it impact your thoughts and behaviors?

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How do you respond to God when you feel like you are not enough?

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<sup>5</sup>"[The implication of the serpent's message is that] God does not want you to be like him. God does not want you to have what he has. He does not want you to be as close and as connected to him as you might think he does. And by further implication, therefore, you are not as important as you think. You, as it turns out, are less than you think. You. Are. Not. Enough." Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 103 & 107

Regardless of the lie Adam and Eve believed, from the beginning it has been God’s purpose for this world to be one of emerging goodness, beauty, and joy.<sup>6</sup> God doesn’t leave us in our shame. Even in explaining the consequences of sin, God made a way for redemption. God pursues us—God comes to find us. The whole rest of the Bible is the story of God pursuing us.



How is God’s goodness, beauty, and joy emerging in you? Through you? In your community?

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### Weekly Spiritual Practice

Each week, we will engage with a spiritual practice, sometimes known as the Prayer of Examen. You are invited to pay attention to the places in your life where shame shows up because until we pay attention to where shame shows up, we will continue to be controlled by it. The goal of this is not to analyze or judge yourself for feeling shame, but to simply become aware of when you experience it throughout your week. As you do, this is an invitation to bring those moments before your loving Father. Our shame is transformed not only as we recognize it, but also in knowing we are seen and loved by God in the very moments when we feel like we are not enough.

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<sup>6</sup>Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 13

# Spiritual Practice

Use the prompts below to help guide you through this spiritual practice. Go at your own pace. This could be done in as quick as 10 minutes or could take you 30 minutes or longer if you have time for it:

## Become Aware of God's Presence

Get into a comfortable position and let your body relax. Slow down your breathing and do your best to quiet your mind. Ask God to make His presence known to you in this moment.

## What Am I Grateful For?

Spend a few moments in gratitude, thanking God for one or two of the blessings, big or small, that you've received this week.

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## Review Your Week

Like a movie reel in your mind, take some time to replay moments from your week. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your thoughts. As you do, ask yourself the following questions:

- How has shame shown up in my life this week?

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- What situations have occurred that have made me feel like "I am not enough"?

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- Where was shame spoken over me? What did it sound like in my mind? Where did I feel it in my body?

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## Respond to God

In light of your review, take time to respond to God. You may find it helpful to ask Him some of the following questions:

- What is(are) the lie(s) I have come to believe about myself or about who You are because of shame?
- God, where have You been present in these moments of shame?
- What is the truth You desire to reveal to me now?

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Before moving on to the final section of this spiritual practice, take a moment to ask your heavenly Father, “what is it about me that reflects Your beauty and goodness?”

As you listen for His response (a word, verse, picture, feeling, etc.), we invite you to gaze at the artwork on the following page. Allow the Holy Spirit to use this piece to reveal more of God’s heart toward you.



“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

**Genesis 1:27**

“The Hand of God” by Herbet Mandel

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## Looking Ahead

As you anticipate the events of this coming week, how is God inviting you to respond to the moments where shame might show up—to walk in the truth and love He’s revealed to you during this time and to partner with Him in creating a world of goodness and beauty?

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## Prayer Requests



# *Sermon Notes*

# Shame Disarmed

## Lesson 2

As we saw in the last lesson, shame entered humanity's story in **Genesis 1-3** as the serpent interacted with Eve.

In stating flatly that Eve would not die, the serpent offered her a new rendition of the truth. To be told that you will be like God may seem like a good thing. But the subtle implication of this prohibition is God does not want you to be like Him. God does not want you to have what He has. He does not want you to be as close and as connected to Him as you might think He does. And by further implication, therefore, you are not as important as you think. You, as it turns out, are less than you think. You are not enough. And so shame led Eve to replace relationship with fruit.<sup>1</sup>

That isn't where the story ended though, as we continue reading we see that God's first question to Adam and Eve as He came to walk with them in the cool of the day was "Where are you?" This wasn't just a geographical question but rather a desire for relationship and intimacy. God created us to have a relationship with Him. "He is looking for us because he longs for us to be with him even as he is with us, for us to know his delight with us which is present at all times."<sup>2</sup>

Read **Matthew 1:20-23** below and answer the questions that follow.

*20 As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: 23 "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"*

<sup>1</sup>Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 103 & 107

<sup>2</sup>Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 123



What names are given to Jesus in **Matthew 1:20-23**?

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What does it mean for you, personally, that God came to be in relationship with us?

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In choosing to be with us, Jesus chose to be vulnerable. There is nothing more vulnerable than a newborn, unable to move, feed, or protect themselves. And yet, Jesus didn't hesitate to come to us in the form of a human infant. He experienced life in this broken world as He grew into a man with the purpose of redeeming us and the world. He faced scorn, shame, humiliation, and ultimately the cross.



As you think about the life of Jesus, what are some of the ways Jesus chose to make Himself vulnerable?

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The answer to our shame came in the form of Jesus' vulnerability. The disarming of shame is really the Gospel story, the Good News.<sup>3</sup> The word "disarm" can be defined as taking power away from a force or enemy, to make powerless, to deprive of the means to be hostile.<sup>4</sup> The ultimate way in which Jesus disarmed shame was through conquering death on the cross. "Crucifixion was intended not only to execute victims but to simultaneously humiliate them."<sup>5</sup> Jesus was aware of the pain, humiliation, and suffering that was coming, He even asked His Father if there was some other way.<sup>6</sup> Yet, evil didn't win. Rather, Jesus' death took the hostility of shame and made it powerless.<sup>7</sup>

Read **Matthew 27:26-44** below and answer the questions that follow.

*26 So Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified. 27 Some of the governor's soldiers took Jesus into their headquarters and called out the entire regiment. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. 29 They wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head, and they placed a reed stick in his right hand as a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mockery and taunted, "Hail! King of the Jews!" 30 And they spit on him and grabbed the stick and struck him on the head with it. 31 When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified. 32 Along the way, they came*

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<sup>3</sup> "... shame is not just a consequence of something our first parents did in the Garden of Eden. It is the emotional weapon that evil uses to (1) corrupt our relationships with God and each other, and (2) disintegrate any and all gifts of vocational vision and creativity. ... It is both a source and result of evil's active assault on God's creation..." Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 13

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Merriam-Webster and Oxford Languages

<sup>5</sup> Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 128

<sup>6</sup> **Luke 22:41-44** *41 He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." 43 Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. 44 He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.*

<sup>7</sup> This statement might seem unrealistic because in this broken world we still struggle and experience shame. This reality will be addressed in the next lesson. However, just as Christ conquered sin and death and we live with the hope of eternal life, shame is disarmed and we live in the hope of our true identity,

across a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. 33 And they went out to a place called Golgotha (which means "Place of the Skull"). 34 The soldiers gave Jesus wine mixed with bitter gall, but when he had tasted it, he refused to drink it. 35 After they had nailed him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. 36 Then they sat around and kept guard as he hung there. 37 A sign was fastened above Jesus' head, announcing the charge against him. It read: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." 38 Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. 40 "Look at you now!" they yelled at him. "You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well then, if you are the Son of God, save yourself and come down from the cross!" 41 The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders also mocked Jesus. 42 "He saved others," they scoffed, "but he can't save himself! So he is the King of Israel, is he? Let him come down from the cross right now, and we will believe in him! 43 He trusted God, so let God rescue him now if he wants him! For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 Even the revolutionaries who were crucified with him ridiculed him in the same way.



What part of this description of Christ's death stands out to you? Why?

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Where do you see the shame that Christ endured?

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Jesus knows exactly what it means to wrestle with shame, “He does not require anything of us that he does not first do himself.”<sup>8</sup> He allowed Himself to be completely vulnerable, trusting Himself to the Father. Knowing exactly who He was, Jesus endured the shame of the cross, and then conquered it (**Hebrews 12:2**).



**Hebrews 4:14-16**

*14 So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. 15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”*

Take some time to sit in the reality that Jesus has conquered shame. Thank Jesus. Worship Jesus. Come boldly to the throne.

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<sup>8</sup>Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 129

## Romans 8:1-4<sup>9</sup>

*1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. 2 And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. 3 The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. 4 He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.*



Because Jesus has disarmed shame, what is now true for us based on this Romans passage?

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How can this knowledge impact how we live in a world that is broken by shame?

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<sup>9</sup> While we no longer live under shame's condemnation, we can still experience healthy conviction from the Holy Spirit, which helps us become more like Christ.

From the beginning it has been God's purpose for this world to be one of emerging goodness, beauty, and joy.<sup>10</sup> God doesn't leave us in our shame.

Who in your life do you desire to see set free from shame. Take some time to pray for them.

A large white rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing names of people to pray for.

As you think about God's emerging goodness, beauty and joy, take some time to bless our city. Be specific about areas of our community that suffer under the weight of shame.

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<sup>10</sup>Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 13



# Spiritual Practice

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Get into a comfortable position and let your body relax. Slow down your breathing and do your best to quiet your mind. Ask God to make His presence known to you in this moment.

## What Am I Grateful For?

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## Review Your Week

Like a movie reel in your mind, take some time to replay moments from your week. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your thoughts. As you do, ask yourself the following questions:

- How has shame shown up in my life this week?

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- What situations have occurred that have made me feel like "I am not enough"?

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- Where was shame spoken over me? What did it sound like in my mind? Where did I feel it in my body?

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In light of your review, take time to respond to God. You may find it helpful to ask Him some of the following questions:

- What is(are) the lie(s) I have come to believe about myself or about who You are because of shame?
- God, where have You been present in these moments of shame?
- What is the truth You desire to reveal to me now?

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Before moving on to the final section of this spiritual practice, take a moment to ask King Jesus, "how do you empathize with me in my weakness and shame?"

As you listen for His response (a word, verse, picture, feeling, etc.), we invite you to gaze at the artwork on the following page. Allow the Holy Spirit to use this piece to reveal more of God's heart toward you.



"Jesus and Our Shame" by Akbar Nemati

"So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses..."

**Hebrews 4:14-15**

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## Looking Ahead

As you anticipate the events of this coming week, how is God inviting you to respond to the moments where shame might show up? To walk in the truth and love He's revealed to you during this time? To partner with Him in creating a world of goodness and beauty?

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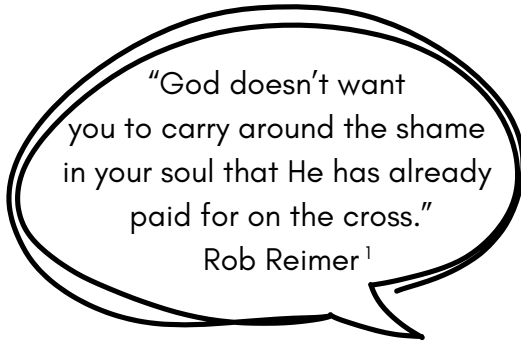
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## Prayer Requests

# *Sermon Notes*

# Shame Exposed

## Lesson 3



Jesus broke the power of shame on the cross. Yet, we can still struggle with shame in our lives. In this lesson we will explore how exposing shame can help us live in the reality that Jesus has completely disarmed shame.

Merriam-Webster defines "expose" as: to make something known, or to bring something to light.

**?** When you think about exposing shame, what are some of your thoughts and reactions?

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Jesus was no stranger to helping people expose and overcome shame. Take some time to read the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well in **John 4:1-30** below.

*1 Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). 3 So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. 4 He had to go through Samaria on the way. 5 Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that*

<sup>1</sup>Reimer, Rob. *Soul Care: Seven Transformational Principles for a Healthy Soul*. Carpenter's Son Publishing, 2016. 94 28

*Jacob gave to his his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. 7 Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." 8 He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some*

*food. 9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"*

*10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."*

*11 "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? 12 And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?" 13 Jesus replied, "Anyone who*

*drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."*

*15 "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."*

*16 "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her. 17 "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband— 18 for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!"*

*19 "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. 20 So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?"*

*21 Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans know very little*

*about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. 23 But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. 24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” 25 The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”*

*26 Then Jesus told her, “I am the Messiah!” 27 Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?” 28 The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, 29 “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?” 30 So the people came streaming from the village to see him.*



What was Jesus’ demeanor toward the Samaritan woman?

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As you think about Jesus, how do you imagine His demeanor is toward you?

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How did the Samaritan woman react to Jesus?

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Once her shame was exposed and acknowledged, it opened the door for the woman and Jesus to have a conversation and relationship at a much deeper level. What were some of the deeper things they talked about?

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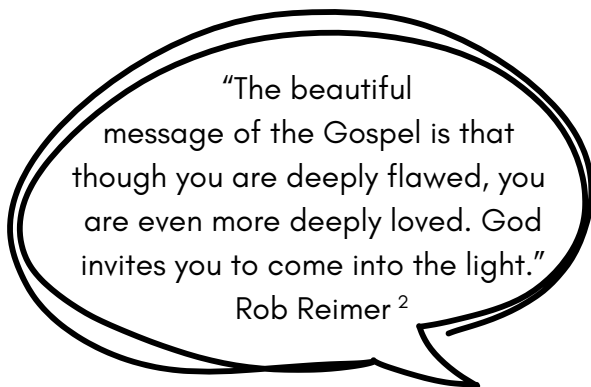
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This was the first time that Jesus publicly declared his Messianic identity. How did the woman react to Jesus’ revelation and what was the result? (**John 4:28-30**)

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It's important to note that this woman was at the well during the middle of the day, which was not the normal practice. This indicates she was not a welcomed and included member of society. The upstanding citizens of the village would not have kept company with her. She probably didn't feel welcome, included, known, or loved. Her encounter with Jesus so changed her that she was willing to rush back to her village to tell others about the Messiah. In turn, the change in her caused them to follow her back to Jesus to see who He was.

<sup>2</sup> Reimer, Rob. *Soul Care: Seven Transformational Principles for a Healthy Soul*. Carpenter's Son Publishing, 2016. 83



Her confession of shame to Jesus did not take all of her problems away.<sup>3</sup> On paper her life was the same, and yet, something had changed. Why do you think this encounter with Jesus was so impactful?

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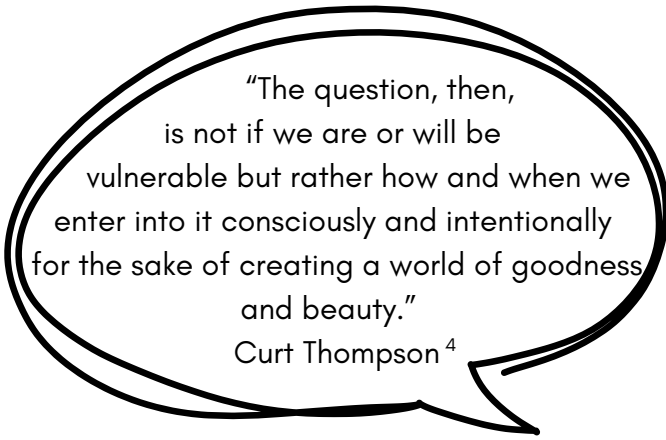
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Imagine you are with Jesus at the well. What kind of things is Jesus saying to you? What are you saying to Him? He wants all of you—bring your shame, worries, fears, etc. to Him. He can handle it, He wants to hear from you. He longs for you to experience light and freedom.

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<sup>3</sup>“Sometimes healing can be significantly advanced through an encounter. But sometimes God brings healing over time. We need to be open to that. We all want God to heal us instantly, but much healing takes place over time. It is a process.” Reimer, Rob. *Soul Care: Seven Transformational Principles for a Healthy Soul*. Carpenter’s Son Publishing, 2016. 171



**?** As we sit next to Jesus at the well, who can we invite to join us? How might we declare to our community—"Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! He is the Messiah!"

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**?** What are some ways we can actively work to expose shame—bring it to light in a healthy way?

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**?** What are ways we can stand against shame in our community for the sake of creating a world of goodness and beauty?

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<sup>4</sup> Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 120

# Spiritual Practice

Use the prompts below to help guide you through this spiritual practice. Go at your own pace. This could be done in as quick as 10 minutes or could take you 30 minutes or longer if you have time for it:

## Become Aware of God's Presence

Get into a comfortable position and let your body relax. Slow down your breathing and do your best to quiet your mind. Ask God to make His presence known to you in this moment.

## What Am I Grateful For?

Spend a few moments in gratitude, thanking God for one or two of the blessings, big or small, that you've received this week.

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## Review Your Week

Like a movie reel in your mind, take some time to replay moments from your week. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your thoughts. As you do, ask yourself the following questions:

- How has shame shown up in my life this week?

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- What situations have occurred that have made me feel like "I am not enough"?

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- Where was shame spoken over me? What did it sound like in my mind? Where did I feel it in my body?

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## Respond to God

In light of your review, take time to respond to God. You may find it helpful to ask Him some of the following questions:

- What is(are) the lie(s) I have come to believe about myself or about who You are because of shame?
- God, where have You been present in these moments of shame?
- What is the truth You desire to reveal to me now?

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Before moving on to the final section of this spiritual practice, take a moment to ask your heavenly Father, “how do You feel about me when I bring my shame to You?”

As you listen for His response (a word, verse, picture, feeling, etc.), we invite you to gaze at the artwork on the following page. Allow the Holy Spirit to use this piece to reveal more of God’s heart toward you.



“While he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.”

**Luke 15:20**

“The Prodigal Son” by Kelly Latimore

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## Looking Ahead

As you anticipate the events of this coming week, how is God inviting you to respond to the moments where shame might show up—to walk in the truth and love He’s revealed to you during this time and to partner with Him in creating a world of goodness and beauty?

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## Prayer Requests

# *Sermon Notes*



# Shame Overcome

## Lesson 4

We saw in Lesson 2 that Jesus disarmed shame by being completely vulnerable, and in that vulnerability, He revealed Himself throughout His time on earth.

The answer to shame is to be vulnerable with others, to be truly known by them—which results in a strong grounding in one’s identity.<sup>1</sup>



Look at the story of Jesus’ baptism found in Matthew, and note what God says about Jesus’ identity.

### **Matthew 3:13-17**

*13 Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?” 15 But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.” So John agreed to baptize him.*

*16 After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”*



Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. How does the reality of Jesus’ humanity impact how you read this interaction between Him and His Father?

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<sup>1</sup>Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 123

Jesus was fully grounded in His identity. We also have an identity given to us by God. Even while we still live in this broken world, we can remain completely secure in our identity as sons and daughters of the Most High, created in His image. Our identity is not dependent on us, on who we think we are, or what we do. "God loves us because of who He is and what He has done, which makes God's love, and our foundation, unshakable."<sup>2</sup>



Read the Scriptures below. Take time as you read them to underline, circle or highlight what is true about your identity.

### **Romans 8:15-17**

*15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." 16 For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. 17 And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.*

### **Ephesians 1:3-8**

*3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. 6 So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. 7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood.*

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<sup>2</sup>Reimer, Rob. *Soul Care: Seven Transformational Principles for a Healthy Soul*. Carpenter's Son Publishing, 2016. 36



In the passages on the previous page, what stood out to you the most?

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Optional: What other verses do you know that speak about your identity?

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What does God say about you?

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Not only does God love us and claim us as His children, He knows us intimately.



Read **1 Corinthians 8:3** in the New Living Translation and New International Version translations as well as **1 Corinthians 13:12** and answer the questions that follow.

**1 Corinthians 8:3**

*But the person who loves God is the one whom God recognizes. (NLT)*

*But whoever loves God is known by God. (NIV)*

**1 Corinthians 13:12**

*Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just*

*as God now knows me completely.*



According to these 1 Corinthians passages, if we love God, we are known by Him. What does it mean to be known by God?

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What feelings, emotions, or thoughts does that stir in you?

Sanctification is the process of becoming like Jesus, or becoming who we already are in Jesus. During our life on earth, we are working out what is already true through the work of Christ (**Hebrews 10:14**).<sup>3</sup> But, what is the practical way to do that—to join with Jesus in living out the truth that our shame is overcome?

**Romans 12:2**

*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

<sup>3</sup>Reimer, Rob. *Soul Care: Seven Transformational Principles for a Healthy Soul*. Carpenter's Son Publishing, 2016.



What does **Romans 12:2** say about how to live in our identity?

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In order to live in our identity, we have to disregard the lies of shame that tell us we aren't good enough. Dr. Reimer says the two key tools of renewing your mind are:

- holding on to the truth.
- spending time in the presence of God.



What does holding onto the truth currently look like for you? What could it look like for you?

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What verses or truth might you rehearse in order to combat the lies of shame—of not being enough?

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While we no longer live under the burden and condemnation of shame, when we live in relationship with Jesus and allow Him to transform our lives, the Holy Spirit continues to shed light on our sins and struggles in order to bring greater freedom and health. How do you differentiate between healthy Holy Spirit conviction and shame?

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What are a few ideas you have about spending time in the presence of God?

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It is valuable to hold onto and rehearse truth. God's truth is even more impactful when we can hear it from God Himself. Listening prayer is quite mysterious in nature but worth the endeavor. Take some time to ask God the question—who do You say that I am? As you wait and listen, pay attention to anything that comes to mind. A particular Scripture, word, phrase, song, picture, and/or vision.

A large, empty white rectangular box is centered within a black frame, intended for the user to write their reflections or notes.

Reminder: It is as we spend time with Him that we learn what His voice sounds like. His voice sounds like love. God's voice is patient and kind, it is not easily angered and brings encouragement and hope. In Scripture, God is described as Savior, Redeemer, Provider, Healer, Counselor, Prince of Peace, and more. God's primary desire is to build relationship with us. He promotes abundant life and reconciliation. He brings healing, rescues us, and speaks words of reconciliation and restoration.

# Spiritual Practice

Use the prompts below to help guide you through this spiritual practice. Go at your own pace. This could be done in as quick as 10 minutes or could take you 30 minutes or longer if you have time for it:

## Become Aware of God's Presence

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## Review Your Week

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- Where was shame spoken over me? What did it sound like in my mind? Where did I feel it in my body?

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## Respond to God

In light of your review, take time to respond to God. You may find it helpful to ask Him some of the following questions:

- What is(are) the lie(s) I have come to believe about myself or about who You are because of shame? God, where have You been present in these moments of shame?
- What is the truth You desire to reveal to me now?

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Before moving on to the final section of this spiritual practice, take a moment to ask your heavenly Father, “in what ways do I bring You joy?”

As you listen for His response (a word, verse, picture, feeling, etc.), we invite you to gaze at the artwork on the following page. Allow the Holy Spirit to use this piece to reveal more of God’s heart toward you.





"Baptism of Christ" by David Zelenka

"And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."

**Matthew 3:17**

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## Looking Ahead

As you anticipate the events of this coming week, how is God inviting you to respond to the moments where shame might show up? To walk in the truth and love He's revealed to you during this time? To partner with Him in creating a world of goodness and beauty?

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## Prayer Requests

# *Sermon Notes*

# Power of Healing Communities

## Week 5

As followers of Christ, we are empowered by the knowledge that shame has been disarmed and vanquished by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Throughout His ministry, Jesus worked miracles that restored the dignity of those who were shamed and downtrodden. The story of the blind man in **John 9:1-34** shows us the layers of shame he must have experienced since birth. Read his story below and carefully examine how shame affected the community's response to his healing. As you read, underline how the community (the crowd, his parents, and the religious leaders) responded.



*1 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. 2 "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"*

*3 "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. 4 We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. 5 But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."*

*6 Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. 7 He told him, "Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!*

*8 His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!"*

*But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!"*

*10 They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?"*

*11 He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see!"*

*12 "Where is he now?" they asked.*

*"I don't know," he replied.*

13 Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees,  
14 because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud  
and healed him. 15 The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So  
he told them, "He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it  
away, I could see!" 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man Jesus  
is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath." Others said,  
"But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?" So  
there was a deep division of opinion among them.

17 Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been  
blind and demanded, "What's your opinion about this man who  
healed you?" The man replied, "I think he must be a prophet."  
18 The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been  
blind and could now see, so they called in his parents. 19 They  
asked them, "Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he  
now see?"

20 His parents replied, "We know this is our son and that he was  
born blind, 21 but we don't know how he can see or who healed  
him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself." 22 His  
parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders,  
who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah  
would be expelled from the synagogue. 23 That's why they said,  
"He is old enough. Ask him."

24 So for the second time they called in the man who had been  
blind and told him, "God should get the glory for this, because we  
know this man Jesus is a sinner."

25 "I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I  
know this: I was blind, and now I can see!" 26 "But what did he  
do?" they asked. "How did he heal you?" 27 "Look!" the man  
exclaimed. "I told you once. Didn't you listen? Why do you want to  
hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

28 Then they cursed him and said, "You are his disciple, but we  
are disciples of Moses! 29 We know God spoke to Moses, but we  
don't even know where this man comes from."

30 "Why, that's very strange!" the man replied. "He healed my  
eyes,

*and yet you don't know where he comes from? 31 We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. 32 Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it."*  
34 *"You were born a total sinner!" they answered. "Are you trying to teach us?" And they threw him out of the synagogue.*



Looking at what you underlined, why do you think the three communities (the crowd, his parents, the religious leaders) responded in those ways?

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Where do you find elements of shame in their responses?

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How do you tend to respond when you face shame within yourself or in others in the context of community?

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Seeing how the blind man's community's response affected the situation, what does that say to you about the power of community?

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It's important to recognize that community is one of the greatest tools God can use to combat our shame. As believers, we are all one body of Christ. Paul addresses our need to care for the most vulnerable within that body.

Read **1 Corinthians 12:22-26** to see what he has to say.



*22 In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. 23 And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, 24 while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. 25 This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. 26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.*

Answer the following questions using **1 Corinthians 12:22-26**.



How is the body of Christ meant to respond to those who feel weak, least important, not seen, shameful, or without dignity?

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What is the outcome when we do respond in this way?

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What is the outcome when we don't?

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“The process of being known in the context of vulnerability within the church becomes one of the most powerful means of evangelism and healing.”  
Curt Thompson<sup>1</sup>



What might Thompson mean by “evangelism” in this context? How could a community that lovingly exposes and disarms shame together be attractive to those who don’t yet know Jesus?

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Jesus taught that the most important thing is love (**Matthew 22:36-40**). One way to express love is to be vulnerable with ourselves and others. Take a moment to process where you currently are in this vulnerability journey and invite the Holy Spirit to reveal what needs to come into the light so that you can receive love and give love to others.

<sup>1</sup> Thompson, Curt. *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 156





In your own words, how would you describe the power that love has or could have in a community?

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What would it look like to give and receive love in your own community or spheres of influence? How do you think that could help bring healing in areas of shame?

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Imagine the power of coming into the light together and exposing our shame, trusting one another, loving one another. How can we create loving spaces to allow others to bring things into the light?

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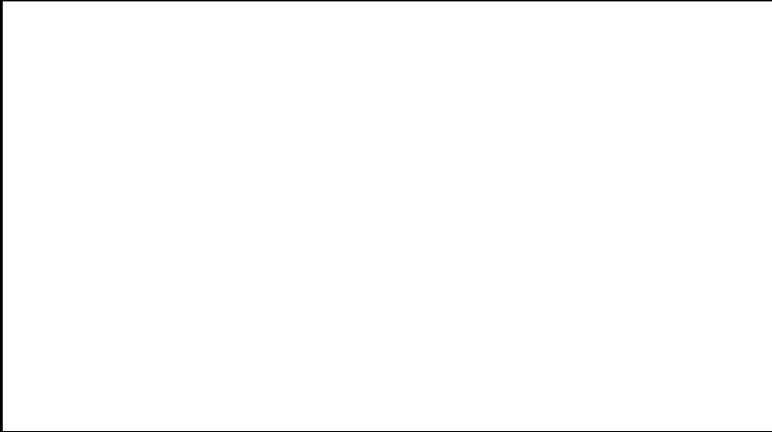
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## **Hebrews 12:1-2**

*1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.*

Spend some time meditating on **Hebrews 12:1-2**. What is God teaching you through His Word? You may want to consider memorizing this powerful passage.



# Spiritual Practice

Isolation is one of shame's primary tools. That's why one of the ways to combat shame is community. As we bring our shame into the presence of loving community, we find healing and freedom.

Scripture tells us, it's as we "*confess your sins to each other and pray for each other... [that we] may be healed.*" (**James 5:16**)

The spiritual practice below invites you to bring to light your areas of shame to others in your Life Group. Confessing these areas to one another can bring healing.

## Before You Begin

Read through the reminders below together:

- What is shared during this time is confidential and will not be repeated outside of the group.
- Confession is an affirmation of the Gospel—we are saved by grace alone.
- Sharing shame is also an opportunity to deepen our relationship with others—to be seen, known, and loved by them. As John reminds us in **1 John 1:7**, "*If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another*"
- We reflect the image of God as we listen and respond to other's shame with empathy, love, and acceptance.
- God loves you and He likes you.

## Share with One Another

- Break into groups of 3 (it may be helpful to plan this out ahead of time. Groups of 2 or 4 work as well).
- Decide on who is going to share first.
- For the person sharing, look back at the spiritual practices that you've been engaging with over the last 4 weeks. Share what you wrote in one of your "Review Your Week" sections.
- Next, share how God responded to you in your shame. (The "Respond to God" section.)

## Respond in Love

- For those listening, take some time to respond—to share love, empathy, and acceptance.
- Things that are helpful to respond with:
  - Affirmation of the courage to share.
  - Affirmation of love for them in light of their confession.
  - Affirmation of how God sees/feels about them.
- Things to avoid in response:
  - Trying to fix.
  - Minimizing how they feel; e.g., "you shouldn't feel bad about that."
  - Sharing an experience that takes the focus away from them and onto someone else.

## Pray Together

- End by praying for the person who just shared.
- Pause as a group to ask if God might have anything to say specifically about this person. You might want to ask God, “what is your heart toward \_\_\_\_\_ right now?” Listen for His response.
- Some Scriptures you could include in your prayers are:
  - *“There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus”*  
(**Romans 8:1**)
  - *“This is my beloved son/daughter, with whom I’m well pleased”*  
(**Matthew 3:1**)

Repeat this process until each person in the group has had a chance to share. Allow those who don’t want to share the ability to pass.

## Debrief

Finally debrief this experience in your group of 3 (you may also like to open this debrief time to the whole group.)

Discuss the following questions:

- How did you feel sharing your area of shame?
- How did you feel listening to someone else’s?
- How does it feel now that you’ve shared with one another?

## Prayer Requests

# *Sermon Notes*