

INTRO

Rob started his sermon by sharing a phrase that makes the enemy shudder: “I’ve never shared this with anyone before.’ As a pastor, one of the roles I occasionally find myself in is that of hearing people’s confessions. Sometimes, these are sins they have committed in the past—sometimes, these are intrusive thoughts or lies, or at times, these are fears.”

Why do you think this statement is so powerful?

Have you ever said these words to someone else? Would you be willing to share them with the group?

IDEA 1

We can move from hiding from Him to hiding in Him. That’s the goal. As we talked about in week one, Shame causes us to hide. We were created to be perfectly vulnerable and honest with our creator, God, but shame disrupted that. We were known and knew God, but shame disrupted that.

Why do you think it is easy to hide instead of being known?

What are some ways we often hide from others?

Has shame and the response of hiding affected your previous relationships w/ others?

So, how do we come out of hiding and reverse this? How do we expose shame, bringing it to attention and placing it at Jesus' feet so that we can experience greater levels of freedom?

IDEA 2

Vulnerability and honesty equal Freedom and intimacy. Being known in those subtle, hidden areas that have carried shame, sometimes purposefully—sometimes without our conscious awareness—unlocks new depths. And confession is key—confession with God and others.

What does it mean for you to be known?

Why is it important for us to confess not only to God but also to others?

How have you reached new levels of freedom and intimacy in your confession?

PRACTICE FOR THIS WEEK

Memorize Hebrews 12:1-3 and meditate on the truth that Christ us disarmed our shame and brought us freedom

EXPERIENCING GOD TOGETHER

As part of the Experiencing God Together section for this series, 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.

We encourage Life Groups to take 5-10 minutes during group time for members to engage with the prompts below. (You can print off the pages below for your group or provide them with the Shame study guide which also includes this spiritual practice)

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.

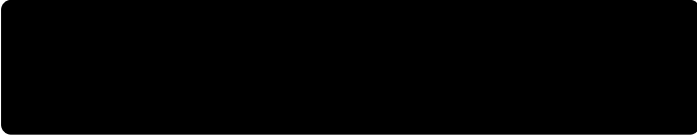
Review Your Week

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?

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

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



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?

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

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?
