

INTRO

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.

How would you describe identity? What identity(ties) are you known by?

IDEA 1

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.”

Josh asked the powerful questions: Do you trust and believe who God is to you? Do you trust and believe who you are to God?

How would you answer those questions?

How do you define your identity in God?

Sometimes it is easier to know the truth than to believe the truth. How do we get from knowing to believing?

IDEA 2

The journey of becoming like Jesus is moving from our false self into our true self. When we become like Jesus we can live with victorious vulnerability: learning to live in the light with God and others. **What could victorious vulnerability look like in your life?**

PRACTICE 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.

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?

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?

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

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?
