

TAKEAWAY

Fighting Shadows: Shame

In line with our goal to be a church of disciples who make disciples, this session is focussed on action, so that we are 'doers of the word' and not just hearers/people who enjoy a good discussion! It encourages focussed practical outcomes in the lives of the individuals in the group so that our discipleship as followers of Jesus is deliberately pursued.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- To consider the difference between shame and guilt
- To discuss some of the causes of shame
- To discover that the teaching of Christianity is uniquely able to deal with our shame

Note for leaders: *Shame is a very sensitive topic, it may be helpful for people to share some of their experiences with the group, but equally nobody should be pressured to share.*

SHARE

- What's the difference between guilt and shame?
- What are some common sources of shame?
- In what way might guilt be good to reflect on? Why is shame unhelpful?

DISCUSS

What do we learn about human nature, origin and shame through the creation story? (if you want to revisit the key verses mentioned on Sunday, they were: Gen 1:1-4, 26-28, Gen 2:7-25, Gen 3:8)

What unhealthy ways do people try to deal with shame (apart from through Christ)?

READ & DISCUSS

Hebrews 2:6b-8a: *"What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him? You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honour and put everything under their feet."*

Reflect on this part of the passage by itself, how does it make you feel?

Discuss to what extent does it align with your experience of life?

Hebrews 2:8b-9: *'Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. But we do see Jesus...'*

What does it mean that 'we do not see everything subject to us'?

How is it crucial that in our lack, we look to Jesus?

Hebrews 2:9b: *'...He suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.'*

What does this mean? How does this help us deal with shame?

Hebrews 2:11: *'Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.'*

How amazing is that?!

Thinking back to the ways people try to deal with shame apart from Christ, in what ways is Christ uniquely able to deal with our shame?

SHARE

Shame can almost always be traced back to believing a lie about yourself and then making an agreement with that lie. What lies are we most tempted to believe about ourselves?

If you feel comfortable, share how you have experienced shame in your life either presently or in the past.

QUOTE

'To be eradicated, shame requires light and exposure, and that only happens through relationship and presence – the very thing shame makes us run from.' – Jefferson Bethke and Jon Tyson

What are the 'tools' that help us break out of the lies that shame tell us?

How can we support one another and create the space to tackle the shadow of shame in our lives?

PRAY

Pray for one another according to anything that came up in the discussion.

TRY OUT

Spend some time reflecting on where the shadow of shame impacts your life using the 'Shame Audit' from Jefferson Bethke and Jon Tyson (authors of *Fighting Shadows*).

Shame Audit

Are there any areas in your life where you are scared to be bold or creative?

Are there any areas in your life where you spend a lot of time and energy hiding the real you?

Take some time to ask God what lies you are believing about yourself. Have you made agreements with those lies? Journal whatever comes to mind.

What does God have to say about this? Renounce the lie you have been believing about yourself and ask God to reveal His truth about you and how he sees you.

Spend some time this week opening up to another group member, friend, mentor, or spouse about what you processed in the questions above. Remnants of shame often disappear when we choose to be vulnerable and allow ourselves to receive empathy from those we trust and love.