



home groups

Discussion Guide



Learning To Let Go Of Shame

Psalm 51

Ice Breaker

(5 minutes)

Discuss

- The organizers of the TED conferences have just called to invite you to give a talk at their flagship event. You have 10 minutes to share your best idea with the world. What do you talk about?
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Lesson Review

(40 minutes)

Discuss

- Barry said his goal for his sermon was not to make us feel shame, but to help us let go of it. Do you think God shares that goal? Isn't church more often associated with creating guilt than with releasing from it?

Read Genesis 3:1-21

Discuss

- What were the consequences of the first sin? What did Adam and Eve do, say, and feel?

Barry said that there are three steps to letting go of shame.

1. Face what is true about ourselves.

This means being honest with ourselves and others about those parts of ourselves that we really don't want to think about.

Read all of 2 Samuel 11 and Psalm 51

Discuss

- What stands out to you about this story and David's confession?
- In Psalm 51:1-2, David uses three words for his behavior: transgressions, iniquity, and sin. Using a Bible dictionary, look up these three words and see how they differ. What was David confessing to?

Notice that Barry didn't say it's important that we face what is *awful* about ourselves, but rather what is *true* about ourselves. It is true that you were created in the image of God. It is true that you are worthy of love and belonging. It is true that someone loves you. But it may also be true that you love comfort more than Jesus, or that you're apathetic, or that status is your god, or that, like David, you have surrendered to a sexual fantasy rather than surrendering to God. The power of authenticity is letting our whole selves be seen, not just our edited-for-news-feed selves.

Discuss

- So it's time to answer the big question: if the members of your group could see all of your heart, what parts of it would surprise them? What about yourself do you most often keep hidden?

2. Embrace what is true about God.

Discuss

- Psalm 51 gives three descriptors for God: mercy, love and compassion. Using a Bible dictionary, look up these three words and see how they differ. And how to they compare to the three words David used to describe his own behavior?

Barry noted that the three men who wrote more Christian scripture than any others were all complicit in murder. Moses, David and Paul all had blood on their hands. Barry said "God is not stingy with his grace."

Barry said, "Today at IBC, they have given the microphone to an adulterer and murderer. But I take comfort in the fact that I stand before a whole room of adulterers and murderers. This is why Jesus came."

Read Exodus 34:6, 1 John 1:5-9, and 1 John 4:16

Discuss

- Lots of things are true about God. After all, he is more deep, beautiful, wise and complex than we will ever understand. But given our limited abilities, what is most *deeply* true of God? What do these verses say?

3. Allow God to do what only God can do.

David prayed:

- Cleanse me, (because I can't cleanse myself.)
- Give me a pure heart, (because the one I have is full of impurity and I can't make it pure.)
- Restore my joy, (because my shame has stolen it from me and I can't get it back.)

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Application

(20 minutes)

You've likely shared some pretty heavy truths this week. Take some extra time to pray for one another. It may be appropriate to follow up with something you heard this week, or to gather around and lay a hand on the shoulder of someone who shared a particularly painful confession as you pray for them. At the end of your prayer time, confess this to God in unison:

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed, and grant us grace to grow more and more in Your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Amen.