



Wise Up – Week 4 – Wise Up to Shame
Spiritual Formation Guide

Deep down, what do you believe about yourself? If it's an ugly, broken narrative with shame at the center, start believing this: "God covered my shame and calls me worthy." Say it. Repeat it. Believe it.

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

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."

Genesis 2:25-3:13

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.

Hebrews 12:2

For you say, 'I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.' You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe yourselves and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Revelation 3:17-18

Discussion and Reflection Questions:

- Icebreaker: What's one of your most embarrassing moments?
- What's one idea or truth from Sunday's message and worship service that made an impact on you?
- Chip shared, "Shame is the feeling of disconnection [from others] + the fear that it's permanent." Have you ever thought of or experienced shame in that way? How so?
- Read Genesis 2:25-3:13. For those familiar with the Bible, this is a story you've likely read and heard many times. Is there anything you notice this time that strikes you in a new way?
- When we feel ashamed, we often resort to hiding and blaming. Take a moment to write down a few times that sin has prompted you to hide (from others and from God) or blame (others or God). Share what you're willing to share with one another.
- Read Hebrews 12:2. The punishment for your sin has already been paid. Jesus took on our shame on the cross. What are some of your thoughts and emotions when you think about this aspect of his sacrifice on the cross?
- If you have time as a group, spend some time quietly using the prayer practices below on your own. Then have someone close your time with a short prayer.

Practices:

- When you find yourself misbehaving, ask yourself and ask God this question:
Am I trying to shield myself from shame? God what do you want me to do with this shame?
- Use a journal or paper/pen to use this prayer exercise around identifying and releasing shame to God.
 - Pray, "You, Lord, have brought me into your own presence, and I am holy and blameless as I stand before you right now without a single fault."
 - Pray for the grace to notice where you experience shame.
 - Wait quietly for God to remind you of scenes, incidents, and emotions.
 - Ask God to counter each memory or emotion with something new.
 - What might He say about this experience of shame you have?
 - How does He feel, hear and see you in this?
 - What emotions might be stirring in you?
 - Thank God for what you're shown and ask for the grace to fully receive it.