

SHAME OR JOY? | 11-6-16

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Shame is fear based on the belief that our brokenness defines us. But the truth is...In Christ, there is no shame. While this is true, we still wrestle with shame every day whether we realize it or not. Shame is humiliation and hiding when we do something wrong or something is done wrong to us. Shame is believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging. How do you feel and what do you do when you experience shame?

READ: *Genesis 2:25*

Adam and Eve lived in a world without shame. They were exposed, vulnerable, defenseless, but safe. They were completely connected with God and each other. How would our lives look different today if we were able to live this way? God created Adam and Eve without shame to enjoy connection, community, and wholehearted living. How can we get back to living like this?

READ: *Genesis 3:1-11*

What did Adam and Eve do when they disobeyed God and ate from the tree He told them not to eat from? Why do you think they hid? Why do we want to hide when we feel ashamed? What are we afraid of? What is the difference between guilt and shame? How does God use guilt to convict and change us? How does Satan use shame to condemn us and make us feel rejected?

READ: *Isaiah 61:7*

In this passage, God promises to trade our shame and disgrace for a double portion of blessing and everlasting joy. How would it feel to receive that? How does joy call us out of hiding? Shame makes us feel rejected. What does joy make us feel? What do you think God is saying about our identity here?

CHALLENGE

Make a commitment to not shame anyone (at work, at home, online, or at church). Decide to not allow shame to define who you are, but instead choose to let joy define you.

PRAYER

"Father, thank you for taking away my shame. Thank you for your heart toward me. You never reject me but instead pour out your blessing and joy in my life. Thank you for establishing my identity as your joyful child!"