

SHAME TALK



TIMING: Talk – Saturday AM, Burning of Shame – Saturday PM

ENERGY: instructive, interactive, supportive

PURPOSE: to teach about the destructive nature of holding onto shame

EXPECTATIONS

The Speaker is expected to:

- Know the content well and not rely on the notes too much. In other words, do not read the notes. You should begin your preparation immediately.
- Listen to the audio files of this talk at the beginning of your preparation. You can access this audio in the Staff Resources section of the website [crossinministrygroup.org]. The password is “Bestrong”.
- Attend the Speakers Meeting, prepared to give the talk and receive feedback to help you in your presentation.

SET-UP AND PREP FOR THE TALK: The speaker will need the following materials:

1. Large Blue Cloth
2. Large Black Cloth
3. Two sets of 5x7 cards with the following words: LOVE, FORGIVENESS, ACCEPTANCE, CONNECTION
 - a. Set one will be just the cards with the words.
 - b. Set two will be the cards with the same words but with double sided tape on the back of each card.
4. One set of 5x7 cards with four False Selves written on them. These cards must have double sided tape on them. Examples: PEOPLE PLEASER, ISOLATOR, JUDGE, UNFORGIVING ONE
5. Models:
 - a. Cloth model
 - b. Shame Models: Two people model. Please prepare ahead of time with the models to be sure they are prepared and able to go deep and be real and honest during their modeling.
6. Before the talk, obtain the “Shame Handout” copies for the attendees from the Document Coordinator.

NOTE TO SPEAKER: This talk should take no more than 20-25 minutes. It does not allow for deviations from the script.

SHAME TALK PART I: Talk and Model - Saturday AM

Well done with Anger. Thank you for pressing into that emotion even if it was difficult for you.

At this time, we want to address another one of our emotions...shame.

[Ask them] “A couple of you, how do you define shame?” [Let several answer.] Thank you.

What is shame?

Shame has to do with our dignity, our value and our worth. The message of shame is:

*“I am not good enough. I don’t belong. I do not have what it takes.
There is something wrong with me. I am bad.”*

The message of shame is all negative; it is directed on the inside. Shame causes me to run and hide and not expose myself to God and others.

“Shame is an acid that strips us of our dignity and dissolves hope. No other emotion better portrays hell – the utter loss of intimacy, wonder, and joy. Its corrosive effect is so strong that it can mold our souls and shape the direction of our lives. Shame is so painful that we react against it perhaps more than any other difficult emotion – but we must face the dread of shame if we are to grow in hope and joy” [Dan Allender; counselor and author]

Shame, if not dealt with properly, will become a barrier to wholeness in our lives. Living in shame separates us from the things we long for and desire. It becomes a wall that keeps others from seeing you in your reality - your humanity, your need, your weakness, your limits.

[Ask the attendees] “How many of you are aware of shame in your own life? What can you imagine might be the impact of facing your shame and bringing it into the open?”

HERE ARE THREE STATEMENTS ABOUT SHAME - (if you have a notebook, go ahead and pull it out)

1. Shame is resistant to love, and thus forgiveness and connection to God and others.

How many of you have struggled with receiving love, forgiveness or acceptance?

This may be why.

- a. [Invite model to come up and stand in front of everyone uncovered.]



In the Garden, there was no shame. Adam and Eve were without shame. They were open and free. Able to receive God's love and acceptance. Dependent on God and each other.

- b. Then the Fall took place and now shame comes. **[Place the black cloth around the model.]**

As fallen, broken human beings, we are wounded, and we wound one another, sending messages which are contrary to love and acceptance. We carry these wounds and messages with us, and now we are afraid, so we create ways to hide.



This is where the false selves got created - by trying to cover our shame.

Now covered in darkness, we live in shame, and there is running and hiding.

[Have two sets of 5X7 cards: LOVE, FORGIVENESS, CONNECTION, ACCEPTANCE written on them. One set will have double sided tape on them and the other no tape.]

- c. God comes to us when we are in this state. God and others come and offer Love, Forgiveness, Connection, Acceptance but they can't stick. Shame resists all of these things. Family, friends, God all come to us, but there is a failure to experience genuine relationships and all that is offered.

[Take the set of cards with no tape and, as you are talking, place them on the model with the black cloth and let the cards fall to the ground.]

- d. It is too shameful to live with our shame exposed. What do we do?

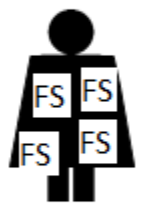
We cover our wounds and the shame with our false selves.

We want love, acceptance, connection, but shame blocks it.

The false selves are our efforts to obtain love or to protect and defend ourselves.

[Place the false self cards one by one on the black cloth. Stick them on the model as you talk about them and how they show up in your life.]

When I don't get love, I need to protect myself....Some of you might have a person in your life who struggles with receiving your love. It could be about their own shame. So, they create false selves to protect themselves just as you might do.



Now we are covered in shame and covered in our false selves.

2. Exposure is the doorway to freedom from shame

How does this work? We expose ourselves to God and *trusted* (the word trust is very important) others. It's what we are going to give you the opportunity to do this weekend. I take the risk to expose the truth about myself – my humanity, my weakness, my sin, my wounds, the sins of others against me. I remove the fig leaves, I come out from hiding and let you see me for who I am.

[Ask them:] “*Why is it that we don’t risk exposing our shame and instead choose to hide and cover our shame?*” [Fear of rejection, being judged, not accepted, familiar pain is better than risking the unknown....]

And so we live our lives covering up the truth of who we are in our humanity. And we cut ourselves off from love, connection, acceptance...all the things we deeply want.

3. Freedom from shame is experienced in our brokenness at the foot of the cross.

Think about when Christ came to us (walk to the cross)

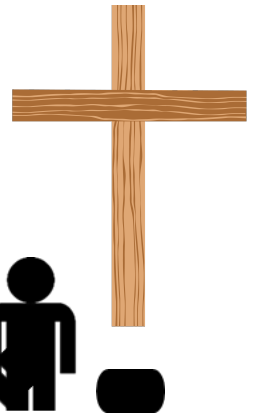
- Christ became weak and bore the fullness of our shame.
- How can Christ meet us if we remain covered?
He has exposed himself and he awaits our exposure that he might bear our shame and the weight of our sins.
- It is at the cross that we experience love.
- Once exposed, we trust in God’s love for us.

[Take the black cloth off the model with the cards wrapped up inside of it, and have her take it to the cross, kneel down, and lay the black cloth down.]

At the Cross we expose our fallen humanity. We confess our false selves. We expose our shame to God and trusted others. We embrace the truth about us that we are broken, afraid, and that we have deep longings for love and security.

[Last visual: Place the **blue** cloth over the model and help her stand up. Bring out the 5x7 cards with LOVE, ACCEPTANCE, FORGIVENESS, CONNECTION with the double sided tape on them. Place them on the model one by one as you say the following:]

“As we now come in humility to the foot of the cross, exposing our broken selves, our shame, our false ways of living, we come in faith in God, and we experience our new reality in Christ - we are covered in grace and what we could not receive before we can now receive.”



Through God's grace this becomes our reality, where we can step into the truth of who we are. That reality of In Christ I am loving, accepted, forgiven and connected.

[Ask:] *"As you see this image, what is stirring in your heart? What are you aware of?"* [Let a few answer.]
(Release cloth model to sit down)

"I've asked _____, on our staff, to come and share about her experience with shame. Let's honor our sister by listening with a posture of love and no judgment to her story."

SHAME EXERCISE

MODELS (2): Shame Talk leader should check in with the models before Saturday of the weekend to confirm that the models are prepared.

EXPECTATION:

1. Models should be clear, succinct with no storytelling
2. Confirm that what they have on their lists fits the four sentences.
3. Example of # 3 that is oftentimes misunderstood: "What I am ashamed of about me is... [body, finances, employment, status in life, etc. It is not things you have done.]

PASS OUT THE SHAME HANDOUT TO ALL THE ATTENDEES.

[Document printed with the questions listed below on them. If the above document was NOT printed then tell them: *"On a separate sheet of paper write down these four statements. Leave a few lines between each statement."*]

At this time we are going to give you an opportunity to be honest with yourself, and God, by completing these same statements...

1. The three most shameful things done to me ...
2. The three most shameful things I have done ...
3. Three things about me that I'm ashamed of ...
4. Finish this sentence: "The way I cover my shame is...." [These are usually False Selves]

Give them 10-15 minutes to write their lists. Check in with them to see how many have finished after 10 minutes. Give them as much time as they need.

BREAK UP INTO SMALL GROUPS AFTER EVERYONE HAS FINISHED THEIR LIST

We are going to break up into your small groups now and give you an opportunity to face your shame and experience freedom from it. Remember the antidote to shame is love, and the way we get love is when we expose ourselves.

When you share, only share the first three sections. Wait to share d] “How I cover my shame ...” Keep your sharing to the basic things on the list. This is not a time for too much elaboration, story telling or for questions from group members.

This is important, we are not forcing any of you to share everything that is on your list. To do so would be to shame you. However, we encourage you to take a risk and possibly discover that exposing yourself may bring you what you have always wanted: acceptance and love, and not rejection.

Risk believing you are with trusted others and be trustworthy yourself.

Please go to your groups now in silence.

SHAME TALK PART II: BURNING OF SHAME (SAT PM)

MATERIALS:

- 1) Fire proof receptacle to burn papers in
- 2) Matches or Lighter
- 3) Containers of ashes for small groups
- 4) Something to place the receptacle on so the carpet won't burn underneath.
DO NOT place the receptacle on the carpet. Use the base for the cross and put it on the floor so it won't conduct the heat and burn the carpet. Then, put the receptacle on it.

[See the WATC Shame: Burning of Shame Materials Prep document for a detailed description]

THIS PROCESS IS LED BY THE SHAME SPEAKER

Good work on all that you did today. What we did this afternoon is what we call Rock Work. Each of you had an opportunity to take a look at one of the rocks in your bag and bring it into the light. It was great to see how you took risks, supported one another, and stepped into God's truth for you. As we said at the beginning of Rock Work, you were going to have an opportunity to step into certain truths about you today. We know that these truths are all rooted in Christ and his presence in you.

Today, you may have gained new strength and connection to God and His love and power. Now, we are going to give you an opportunity to use this strength to let go of an important issue. You have prepared yourself to go deeper into God's grace and healing

Something significant that many of you may have faced or witnessed today was shame. Shame about...

- Who you are
- What's been done to you
- How you see yourself....

[Ask them] Crumple up your Shame Journaling papers (not too tightly). **[Show them with your own.]**

THIS IS OUR REALITY

God has taken upon himself our own sins and the sins of others against us. Through Christ crucified, He has consumed it all.

We invite you now to step outside and add your paper to the flames, at the Foot of the Cross, as a symbol of your willingness to release your shame to Christ's finished work on the Cross. As you return to your seat, I encourage you to get your journal and reflect on God's sacrifice, His gift of Jesus. Take the time to express in prayer your thoughts, and your heart toward God as you become more aware of what He has done with your shame.

[Once the ashes are burned, bring out the other containers of ashes. Tell the attendees:]

Since 2007, there have been hundreds of women from around the country who have been through Women at the Cross. At each weekend we add ashes to the ashes of the women who have come before. Your ashes and their ashes. Your humanity. Their humanity. We are all equally broken in our humanity. I'm going to now join your ashes to those who have gone before you.

[Mix the ashes and pray over them.]

SHAME EXERCISE CONTINUED... PUTTING ON AND WASHING OFF THE ASHES

Purpose: Owning how we show up false in our lives at times. At this time the Attendees will be sharing the last item on their list - "How I cover my shame is..." (These are their false selves.)

Energy: sober, reflective. Respect the ritual. This is not a time for laughter or humor. Small Group Leader models the appropriate energy here.

Materials: The following materials should be delivered to the Small Group Leader on a tray:

- Facial wipe for each person
- Hair ties
- One small mirror

SAY: Now go back into groups and your leader will direct you on what to do next. You will not be sitting down in chairs, but standing in a circle for this ritual. **[Leave chairs in a big circle. Each group gathers in its own circle and remains standing.]**

Putting Ashes on their Faces

The Small Group Leader goes first. Keep the energy sober, connected to the gravity of living falsely.

1. Have the person on your left hold the container of ashes for you.
2. Take the ashes and rub on your forehead and say, "The way I cover my shame is.... (example...by pretending I'm too busy to meet with friends). Take your time with this. Don't rush it. Don't just put a little bit of ashes on your face. Get a good bit on your hands each Get time.
3. more ashes on your hands and rub on one cheek and say, "The way I cover my shame is... (example...by doing everything by myself to make people think I'm capable.)
4. Get more ashes on your hands and rub on the other cheek and say "The way I cover my shame is...(example...by using humor to stay away from intimacy).
5. Have the woman holding the ashes pass the container to the woman on her left. Repeat until all women have gone.
6. The Small Group Leader says with sober energy, "*Sisters, look around at each other. This is how we live our lives - covered, masked, hidden from ourselves and from those we love most.*"
7. Without saying anything the Small Group Leader picks up the mirror. Gaze at your face for about five seconds. Then, without saying anything, pass the mirror around so that each Attendee can see their face.

Washing off the Ashes:

1. Group leader takes a "wipe" (use more than one if necessary) out of the box of "wipes" and turns to the woman to her left and begins to wipe the ashes off her face and hands. As you are doing

this model this statement: “In the name of Christ, I, your sister, wash and cleanse you of your shame.”

2. Pray over the woman while you are washing her face and hands. Speak words of encouragement to the woman. Go with the flow here and say whatever else comes to mind and heart as you wash off the ashes.
3. Then, have the person whose face you just washed wash the face of the person on their left. Encourage each attendee to repeat the line” “In the name of Christ, I, your sister, wash and cleanse you of your shame.” And also, encourage her to speak any words of encouragement or a prayer over the woman.
4. If a someone forgets to say anything over the person they are washing, then remind them to do so and coach them if necessary. If a person still feels uncomfortable praying or speaking over the one who is being washed, ask the Attendee who is washing: “May I say a few words too?” Then, speak and pray while they are being washed.
5. Continue around the circle. The Small Group Leader will be the last person to have their face washed.
6. Once this is done take a moment and pray for one another. Sometimes Attendees like to tighten the circle and lock arms over shoulders during this moment.
7. When finished praying, instruct the Attendees to get their journals and to sit down back at their seat in the large circle and to journal about their experience. Have them maintain silence during this time.

NOTE TO SHAME TALK LEADER:

It is the Shame Leader’s responsibility along with any Weekend Leader or Team Leader to monitor how the groups are going.

- Discreetly observe each group and see if the group leaders are following the protocol as described above.
- If a small group leader diverges from the protocol then discreetly whisper in their ear and help them get back on track.
- If a small group leader is not directing the group to maintain a sense of the ritual [i.e., they are laughing or cutting up] then gently remind the group leader to refocus the group at that moment. It is our goal that the groups maintain a sense of respect for the ritual and that we help people to learn how to be present in moments like these.
- When the groups are finishing and individuals are going to their seats for journaling, pay attention to keep everyone focused and not talking amongst themselves.

DISMISSING THE ATTENDEES

Check with the Weekend Leader or Assistant Weekend Leader about where they would like the attendees to gather after the shame exercise.