

RENAISSANCE

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An open letter before you begin...

⁵ One man was there who had been disabled for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and realized he had already been there a long time, he said to him, ***“Do you want to get well?”***

John 5:5-6

When Jesus went to Jerusalem, he did not spend his time in elite accommodations; nor did he give attention to the rich and famous who could help him politically and financially with his ministry. He concentrated on people in need, and in this story he visited a pool below the temple where the helpless dregs of society lay in a pathetic state. Most “proper” people probably avoided places where they had to pass among the sick and suffering both because it was an uncomfortable setting and because of the potential for violation of ritual purity rules. But Jesus went out of his way to visit such a place, and he found there a paralytic, helpless man, who had experienced the wilderness of abandonment for what seemed to have been an eternity: thirty-eight years.

Jesus asked the man a simple question that anyone who wants to seriously fight against sin must hear, ***“do you want to get well?”*** The man’s response to Jesus’ question, revealed both his poor understanding of God and his sense of hopelessness. Instead of answering the question, he gave his gloomy testimony and his perception of how God works. He was hopeless.

What does this have to do with racism? A few things, actually:

1. Racism is one of the things in our society that makes us largely “untouchable”. Jesus doesn’t avoid things in people that make others recoil in disgust.
2. Jesus went out of his way to meet this man in his condition.
3. People are often unaware of the depths of healing that Jesus offers.

As you embark on the journey to discover the depths to which racist thoughts, ideologies, and patterns have been nurtured in you, it is vital that you trust in a Jesus that does not avoid the real things in you that might make you or others recoil in disgust. If you fail to trust this, then you’re likely to minimize the truth about where you are.

The good news of the gospel is that not only does Jesus not recoil from us ***in our sin***, but Jesus will go out of his way to meet you right where you are, not where you think you should be. My prayer for you as you embark on this journey is that you allow Jesus into the depths of your soul—there you will be brought face to face with some ugly things, but keep going. As John reminds us in 1 John 1, ⁸ *If we say, “We have no sin,” we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* ⁹ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Be honest, commit to the **long** journey ahead of you (these sessions won’t eradicate it completely), and trust in our gracious savior, Jesus.

Grace and peace,

Jordan

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Session 1: Diagnosis, going inward.

“take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, 23 to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, the one created according to God’s likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.” Ephesians 4:22-24

Begin with two minutes of silence and stillness before God

I’m fascinated by accents. To hear my oldest son speak like a true New York brings my heart joy. But accents are not limited to New York (although it is my favorite), Memphis, Baltimore, Jamaica are some others that are strong and recognizable. It’s almost impossible to grow up in one of those places and not have an accent. This is because people who live in close contact grow to share a way of speaking which will differ from the way other groups in other places speak.

These accents are formed in us without our knowledge or permission. More importantly, they are not erased by time or proximity to different cultures. My Jamaican mother-in-law has been in America for longer than she’s been in Jamaica and her accent (which I love!) is as strong as it was the day she left Jamaica for college in America decades ago.

When we talk of racist thoughts and ideas nurtured in us, in many ways they’re like accents. No one had to intentionally tell us to think in certain ways-- due to the pervasive and strong nature of it in our culture for the past 400 years in America, we just pick it up. It would be almost impossible to grow up in America and not be formed by it in some way-- albeit unintentionally in many ways. Additionally, proximity to a different culture, even for a long time will not undo what was formed in us. Surrounding yourself with a different people group won’t work-- we have to actively work to suppress it.

Accordingly, if there’s anything Christians need in the conversation of race and racism is to understand the depths to which racist ideas, notions and thoughts have been nurtured in them as subtly and innately as an accent.

This following exercise aims to help you identify the “old self” that needs to be “put off”. The above scripture in Ephesians was written to Christians who’s eternity was already secured in Christ, but there were still sinful patterns in them that they needed to do something to “put off”.

This is not to “earn” your salvation or favor with God-- we’re saved in an instant, but changed over our lifetimes. Christianity teaches two major doctrines that should never be confused or placed in the wrong order. The first is that we are “*justified by faith and have peace with God through Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1). “Through Jesus Christ” is the crux of this statement. We are not justified based on our lives, our behavior, our progress, but rather we are justified through Christ.

When I was growing up, I went to visit a good friend in Mount Vernon. My hometown of New Rochelle were rivals to Mt. Vernon, and if you were caught there, there was a good chance you would be beat up. I’ll never forget my anxiety as I drove to his neighborhood to see him. I pulled up and it felt like an eternity for him to come outside-- I waited anxiously to see if anyone saw me. He finally came outside and told me to park and we’d walk around. I got out, gave him a hug and we walked around. That night, relaxing on his corner was one of the funnest nights of my life. I stayed outside for hours, laughing with newly formed friends from the neighborhood, but make

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no mistake about it-- my standing there rested solely on my friend who had the experiences and relationships in the neighborhood that made him welcome. I, by extension of him, was welcome as well.

Though no analogy is perfect, when scripture says that we are justified through Jesus Christ, it is in essence saying that our standing is firmly secured by Christ, and his experiences on the cross and relationship with the Father allow our welcome to God's presence. When God looks at us, he looks to Christ and his performance, not ours. This is a vital truth to remember as you may unearth some ugly truths about yourself, that your security with God cannot be taken away from you because you did not earn it in the first place.

The other doctrine that's pertinent for this study is a word called sanctification. Sanctification is the process that you, over time "*take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires... and put on the new self*". This is made possible through the Holy Spirit who gives us the desire and power to do God's will (Philippians 2:13) ***in concert with*** our obedience to God to take off the old man.

NOTE: in order to do this exercise properly, you need to give it sufficient time, please do not rush through it. You may have to call family members to process things, and you may have to answer this over several days as you remember more things.

Questions for this session:

1. What were the ***explicit*** messages that you heard growing up about race from my parents and grandparents? (Don't consider what impact they've had on you yet, just list them.)
2. What were the ***implicit*** messages that you heard growing up about race from my parents and grandparents?
3. What were the ***explicit*** messages that you heard growing up about race from my community (friends, school, church)?
4. What were the ***implicit*** messages that you heard growing up about race from my community (friends, school, church)?

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5. What are the themes that you notice between my family of origin and community in the way they discussed and handled race?

6. Are there any "earthquake events" that you experienced surrounding race?

7. What are some of the things you've thought about people based on the explicit and implicit messaging you heard and deduced from your family of origin and community?

8. What are some of the things that you presently feel based on the explicit and implicit messaging you heard and deduced from your family of origin and community?

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Session 2: Grief and repentance

2 Corinthians 7:9-11 ⁹ *I now rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance. For you were grieved as God willed, so that you didn't experience any loss from us.* ¹⁰ **For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death.** ¹¹ *For consider how much diligence this very thing—this grieving as God wills—has produced in you: what a desire to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what deep longing, what zeal, what justice! In every way you showed yourselves to be pure in this matter.*

Begin with two minutes of silence and stillness before God

Grieving well to deepen our souls

As racism is revealed in us, it is likely that we will feel grieved and sorrowful. But feeling grieved and sorrowful, if experienced correctly can deepen our souls so that we can have real, lasting change.

As Paul says in the above scripture, *“godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret”*. Essentially, Paul is stating that one of the pathways to true repentance is the experience of grief. The world today wants nothing to do with sorrow. It drowns out its sorrow with busyness, overcompensating, denial, music, alcohol, and even medication-- you may be tempted to do the same. Paul writes to the Corinthians that, though he did initially, he does not regret having caused them sorrow (2 Cor 7:8) because they were made sorrowful to the point of repentance, according to the will of God (2 Cor 7:9). Notably, an essential component of true repentance is genuine sorrow over having **grieved God and belittled His holiness**.

So repentance begins with an intellectual recognition and confession of sin, but it does not end there. There is also a “change of heart”—an emotional component in which the genuine believer mourns over having sinned against God. With regard to racism, although it manifests itself against black and brown bodies, it is first a sin against God. Since everyone is created in the image of God, to regard or treat his image bearers in any way that is less than their worth is an affront to God Himself. It is to insult the very works of God because **you cannot insult the image bearer without first insulting the image in whom they were created**.

In essence, **racism is a failure to worship God as creator**.

God created every aspect of you and me. And when God created humans, *God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed (Genesis 1:31)*. He determined how tall you would be, whether your metabolism would be fast or slow, the color of your eyes, the texture of your hair, the shape of your nose, the size of your hands, the tone of your voice, your innate personality, your natural gifts, the tone of your skin, whether you're an introvert or an extrovert, whether you're a thinker or a feeler.

Racism and white supremacy does at least two things. First, it denies that God's creation is “very good indeed”. This may be one reason black men are disproportionately judged with harshness by our penal system-- there is not an underlying belief in the potential goodness in them, only their crime is visible. “They” are not “very good indeed”. Second, white supremacy creates a self-worship, where black people are told that their value and worth is found in being more like white people. This is the primary sin that we need to repent of in godly sorrow. Failure to worship God as

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creator.

This is very different than “worldly sorrow”. While those who are genuinely repentant will experience sorrow over their sin, sorrow itself is not repentance. There is a kind of sorrow over sin that does not produce repentance, and therefore does not lead to salvation.

Paul identifies this kind of sorrow as “the sorrow of the world [which] produces death” (2 Cor 7:10b).

The chief characteristic of worldly sorrow is that it is fundamentally self-centered.

- Self-pity – I can’t believe I did this.
- Personal embarrassment – What are others going to think about me now?
- Shameful regret – I will never be able to forget what I have done.
- Unbelieving guilt – I can’t forgive myself.

Worldly sorrow—simply put—is feeling sorry for yourself, but not sorry enough to turn to God in real life change. If you are unsure about your repentance, a functional assessment question for you would be to think through how often you fall into any of the traps above. Godly sorrow extends beyond a momentary twinge of conviction and results in a willingness to do battle for the long term. Worldly sorrow is fleeting and fades once the pain of what you lost fades away or you replace it with something else.

Questions for this session:

1. In what ways have you or are you experiencing “worldly sorrow”?
2. With respect to racism, how often do you experience self-pity, embarrassment, regret and unbelieving guilt?
3. How have you sinned against God in harboring racist thoughts and ideas?

Closing prayer: *Be gracious to me, God, according to your faithful love; according to your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion. 2 Completely wash away my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against you—you alone—I have sinned and done this evil in your sight. So you are right when you pass sentence; you are blameless when you judge. 5 Indeed, I was guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me. 6 Surely you desire integrity in the inner self, and you teach me wisdom deep within. 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. 9 Turn your face away from my sins and blot out all my guilt. 10 God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not banish me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore the joy of your salvation to me, and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit. Psalm 51:1-12*

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Session 3: Getting the heart right. As you embark on this journey to do the internal work necessary for growth, repentance and true change, it is vital that our hearts are in the right place. As you will discover in this session, resistance, shallowness and competing interests will prevent lasting change.

Begin with two minutes of silence and stillness before God

³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying, “Consider the sower who went out to sow. ⁴ As he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground where it didn’t have much soil, and it grew up quickly since the soil wasn’t deep. ⁶ But when the sun came up, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good ground and produced fruit: some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Let anyone who has ears listen.”¹⁸ “So listen to the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word about the kingdom and doesn’t understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the one sown along the path. ²⁰ And the one sown on rocky ground—this is one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. ²¹ But he has no root and is short-lived. When distress or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² Now the one sown among the thorns—this is one who hears the word, but the worries of this age and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²³ But the one sown on the good ground—this is one who hears and understands the word, who does produce fruit and yields: some a hundred, some sixty, some thirty times what was sown.”
Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells a parable about 4 different types of soil. In many instances, Jesus spoke of spiritual growth in organic ways, and in this parable, Jesus likens God’s words to us as seeds, and our hearts the soil.

The first soil: a hardened heart

Those who are hardened and believe that this is not an issue for them will not receive God’s words for them, no matter how persuasive an argument is presented. But it is worth noting that the path did not become hardened overnight. A spiritual hardening happens as the result of a persistent refusal to submit to God’s words.

Pride will also cause our hearts to harden. In the book of Exodus, the root of Pharaoh’s hard-heartedness was his pride and arrogance. Even in the face of tremendous proof and witnessing God’s powerful hand at work, Pharaoh’s hardened heart caused him to deny the sovereignty of the one, true God. Accordingly, when we’re determined to do it **our way**, thinking we can “go it on our own,” it would be wise to recall what King Solomon taught us in Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”

So, what then is the antidote for a heart condition such as this? First and foremost, we have to recognize the effect that this spiritual disease has on us. And God will help us to see our heart’s condition when we ask Him: “Search me O God, and know my heart...see if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23–24). God can heal any heart.

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The second soil: shallow roots

The second soil was soft enough to receive the seed, and initially showed signs of growth, but the rocks in the soil prevented the budding plant from developing deep roots. This represents someone with an emotional—joyful acceptance—but only because the circumstances are favorable.

The cost of commitment is not yet obvious. This person's commitment is not deeply rooted. We might say that the truly committed "pay their dues up front," but the marginally committed cancel their membership when payment comes due. This soil might represent people who are excited to dive into this work, but that is because you have yet to count the cost of what this entails. The cost of commitment to the Messiah comes in the form of **trouble** (*thlipsis*, "tribulation") or **persecution** (*diogmos*) that come **because of the word**. Aside from the spiritual principalities waging war to prevent you from receiving and growing in freedom, there may also be trouble and persecution coming to you.

What if your discoveries of the racism in you, the confessions of your sin and turning in repentance disrupts your life, relationships or your employment? What if "*distress or persecution comes because of the word*"? A shallow spirituality will not maintain you through this process. As a result, more than anything, **before** you embark on the exercises to unearth racism in you, you need to "clear the rocks" and create a space where God can work.

The third soil: sown among thorns

The third soil that Jesus lists in this parable is ... *the one sown among the thorns—this is one who hears the word, but the worries of this age and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful (Matthew 13:22)*. In Luke's telling of this scripture, he adds that in addition to the worries of this age and the deceitfulness of wealth, there are also the "*pleasures of life*".

Specifically, this soil is able to receive God's word, and it produces fruit, but there is one problem. There are weeds next to the healthy plant that are competing for sunlight, water and nutrients. And those weeds choke the word and it becomes unfruitful, or prevents it from becoming mature.

With respect to racism, some of the "worries" or "pleasures of life" might relate to your reputation, relationships, or sense of self. Left unchecked, these will prevent mature lasting growth for you.

Questions for this session:

1. Which soil most resonates with you right now? Why? Spend some time reflecting on why that specific soil stuck out and list the words from the scripture that describe your life right now.
2. **The hardened soil:** If you sense that there may be some resistance to the idea and/or confusion as to whether you may have racist thoughts, attitudes and ideas presently in you, try praying these words from David in Psalm 51:6,10 "*Surely you desire integrity in the inner self, and you teach me wisdom deep within... God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*"

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Practical step: write down all of the instances that you can remember minimizing, covering-up or explaining away racist thoughts and ideas in you.

3. **The shallow soil:** One of the ways we can deepen the soil of our hearts is through grief. In order to grieve well, we need to **pay attention to it**. There is an entire Old Testament book called Lamentations. Ezekiel lamented. Daniel grieved. Jesus wept over Lazarus and cried out in grief over Jerusalem (see John 11:35 and Luke 13: 34). Biblical grieving calls us to pour out our feelings and losses to God.

Practical step: set a timer and spend 10 minutes dwelling and writing down the negative emotions associated with those losses, anxiety and sadness you're experiencing right now. At the end of the 10 minutes, you can allow the logical you back into the conversation. This prevents both avoiding, and drowning in negative emotions. When you are done, repent of the ways you have sinned against God.

4. **The thorny soil:** spend some time thinking about some of your "worries" or "pleasures of this life" you're afraid to lose as it pertains to digging up and confronting racism in you? Write them down.

After you've written them down, spend some time praying that God would uproot those competing interests in your life, and give you the resolve to persist in spite of the obstacles in your way.

Closing prayer:

At the end of your time reflect on Paul's words in *Romans 8:31* *What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? 33 Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. 34 Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us. 35 Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Amen.

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Session 4: The daily struggle.

15 For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate. 18 For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. 19 For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one that does it, but it is the sin that lives in me. Romans 7:15,18-20

24 Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. 25 Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown. 26 So I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air. 27 Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Begin with two minutes of silence and stillness before God

The Christian life isn't neat. It's a constant battle of noticing, unearthing, repenting and fighting against sin that lives in us. Romans 7, properly understood is a sobering scripture. In essence, it reveals to us that we do not get to choose whether or not we will have sinful temptations. For far too long, Western Christianity has placed neat statements denouncing racism as if sin operates like that. If Paul, perhaps the most disciplined follower of Jesus of his time had things inside of him that he *hated*, yet were still in him, it logically follows that the same can be true for us. Despite how ugly it is, and despite how much you hate it, racism can be inside of you. Does that make you a racist? No, not necessarily, it means that you have racist thoughts, ideas in your head.

Your obligation is not to deny it, but to do what Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. To bring the members of your body under strict control as an athlete competing in the Olympics would. This means a series of intentional and external actions, things you abstain from in order to not let sin "reign" in your body. And this is what maturity is—maturity is *not* being free of any sinful desires or thoughts, but rather to acknowledge your thoughts and behave in a godly way despite your desires. It means to behave in anti-racist ways even if the thoughts are still there. We are called to put our bodies under strict control.

This leads some people to confusion in the way they understand freedom and sin. Doesn't Jesus say that I have been "set free"? Why would I have to struggle so much then? Steve Cuss gives a good explanation why in his book "Managing Leadership Anxiety". "Why do I still sin when I have been set free from sin? Paul explains that it all comes down to where we offer our energy and time. Paul is implying that sin gains power over us the more we engage in it. But so does God, so it all comes down to where we give our energy and time. I think Paul's principle states: where we put our attention defines our spiritual growth. If we make a habit of offering ourselves to sin **or hiding**, then sin becomes our master—it gains power and control over our lives—but if we habitually offer ourselves to God [through acknowledgment, confession and repentance], his power takes over and frees us from sin's grip. Whatever we give ourselves to is what has our attention and devotion."

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Recommended reading: How to be antiracist by Ibram Kendi.

https://www.amazon.com/How-Be-Antiracist-Ibram-Kendi/dp/0525509283/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=antiracist&qid=1592741643&sr=8-2

This book will give you skills to practice and things to do to “put your body under subjection”.

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Session 5: Evicting shame

8 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, ² because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law could not do since it was weakened by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering, ⁴ in order that the law's requirement would be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Begin with two minutes of silence and stillness before God

Repeat after me: **I am** not what I do. I am **not** what I do. I am not what **I do**.

The good news of the gospel is that you are not what you do, you are more than that. Take these truths to heart. If you are in Christ, there is no judgment, verdict, disapproval or condemnation coming to you.

The reason that there is no judgment or verdict against you is because of Christ. Paul mentions two laws at work-- the law of sin and death and the law of the spirit of life. The law of sin and death is this: when you sin, something dies. It could be in a relationship when someone lies about something-- when the lie is discovered, a little intimacy and trust in the relationship dies. Relationships can be rebuilt, but the truth remains, when you sin, something dies. As it pertains to racism, we need to look no further than the latest examples of George Floyd's death to see this law at work. Because of the sin of racism, he (and countless other women and men) are dead-- there's a direct correlation. Sin leads to the erosion of relationship with God primarily, and our neighbors as well.

But Paul mentions another law simultaneously at work—"the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus". This law of the spirit of life in Christ is greater than the law of sin and death although they operate simultaneously. Those who are in Christ are set free from the law of sin and death. I think air travel is a good example of how this works. There is a law of gravity that governs our planet, but those that are in the airplane can relax at 30,000 feet in the air traveling 500 miles an hour. Has gravity ceased to exist? **No, it is overpowered.** In our lives, the law of sin and death hasn't ceased, it is overpowered by Christ and through no effort of our own, we can relax and rest in him.

Consequently, shame has no place in the life of the Christian because though our sins deserve death and a cessation of a relationship with God, *the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.* Brene Brown defines shame as "the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging – something we've experienced, done, or failed to do makes us unworthy of connection." If you are in Christ, although we should be grieved and repent of sinful behaviors, we are **not** unworthy of love or belonging. The judge has already declared you as His beloved. You are set free from the law of sin and death.

The key to breaking the power of pride-fueled shame is the superior power of humility-fueled faith in the work of Christ and the promises of Christ. Shame pronounces us guilty and deficient. Jesus pronounces us guiltless and promises that his grace will

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be sufficient for us in all our weaknesses ([2 Corinthians 12:9–10](#)). As we trust Jesus as our righteousness ([Philippians 3:9](#)) and our provider of everything we need ([Philippians 4:19](#)), shame will lose its power over us.

Questions for this session:

1. How did God speak to you through the scripture today?
2. Living with shame never allows us to feel the freedom of God's grace or the healing power of His forgiveness. In what ways do you hide so people won't know the real you?
3. Do you equate what you do with who you are? In what ways are you not believing in Christ and his power to declare us righteous (right with God)?
4. Do you believe something is wrong with you? Try to identify lies are you believing about yourself. List three.
5. Read John 1:12 Romans 8:1, Romans 5:1 Colossians 1:13-14 Jeremiah 31:3 1 Corinthians 3:16. Choose one as a memory verse for this week. Spend 5 minutes meditating on it as soon as you wake up, before you eat lunch and before you go to bed.