

INTRODUCTION

Sitting on a runway after a plane has taken off and breathing the exhaust it left behind is extremely dangerous. The plane may be gone, but the harmful fumes remain. Shame can work the same way: The sin may have been forgiven, the debt paid, and the old identity replaced, yet we continue listening to the shame. Through the blood of Jesus, the door into God's presence is open, and we as believers no longer have to live under the weight of shame. Because Christ has paid for our sin once and for all, we can confidently draw near to God and live free from shame.

Christ offered one sacrifice for all time and then sat down at the right hand of God because the work was complete. Through His sacrifice, believers have full access into God's presence. Therefore, we can approach God with sincere hearts that have been cleansed and with full assurance of faith, rather than allowing shame to isolate us. Whether we stay faithful to the truth or we waver, God remains faithful. Since God has opened the way, the church is called not to humiliate people but to stimulate them toward love and good works through prayer, encouragement, discipleship, and sharing our testimonies.

Regardless of the past sins that have led to our shame, we are now invited to drop our "fig leaves," step out of hiding, and take off our filters. The gospel declares that shame does not have the final word. Because Jesus has cleansed our hearts and made us new, we can enter the presence of God with confidence. He calls us to remain faithful to our hope in Him because He will always be faithful. We also have a responsibility to share our testimony with others, thereby releasing our shame and giving someone else the garments of salvation to release their shame too.

GETTING STARTED

1. What's a smell that lingers WAY too long after the source is gone?
2. What is one embarrassing moment from your life you wish you could erase?

LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. How would you explain the difference between guilt and shame?
2. What "fig leaves" or filters do you use to hide your shame from others?
3. In what ways are you still trying to earn your way to God or are you avoiding God because you feel you still owe a balance?

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. If you truly believe you have access to God's presence, your sin is forgiven, and you no longer have to live under shame, what might change about the way you live this week?
2. Who can you share your testimony with this week to help them release their shame?
3. ***Want to dig deeper?*** Take a look at the following passages: Hebrews 10:4, 11-12, 14-18; John 18:10; Hebrews 4:14; Romans 6:10; Genesis 3:21; Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 9:18-22; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Timothy 2:13; Jeremiah 29:11; Revelation 12:11; Jeremiah 29:13; Psalm 34:4-5.

RENEW YOUR MIND

...and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. – 1 Peter 2:24