



WORKING THROUGH OUR PAST DEALING WITH SHAME

Week 10 | Working Through Your Past: Dealing With Shame Exercises

Exercise 1 - Meditative Reading

Find a quiet, comfortable place. Take a deep breath and become aware of God's presence.

Read Luke 8:40-48, slowly allowing the words to resonate and settle in your heart. Linger on a word or phrase that catches your attention and lights up for you. Sit with the word or phrase for a moment and savor it as a word of God for you.

Read the passage again and listen to where the word connects with your life right now. Enter into this Gospel story in your imagination. Envision being in this scene. Carefully watch Jesus and His interaction with the woman. **How did she feel when she came Jesus? How did she feel at the end of the exchange? What do you hear and experience as you watch and listen?**

Read the passage one more time, listening attentively. **Has God addressed you in this word and invited you to respond?** Sit silently for a moment and listen for God's invitation. Respond in prayer to what you saw and heard from God in this Gospel story.

Deeply receive God's word and rest in His presence and love. Give yourself some time to wait and be still before you re-enter life as usual. Take God's word to you with you, return to it and remember it throughout the day.

Exercise 2: Being Forgiven

Forgiveness is integral in our discipleship to Jesus. We live in a world polluted by sin and shame, and relationships in this broken world are often marked by disappointment, loss, and pain. The call of God throughout the Scriptures is to release those who sin against us from our personal right to collect on the moral debt for their offense. We see this embodied best in the person of Jesus Himself, who, in the face of sin, chose not to look the other way nor to pay the person back, but to deal with the sins committed against him in the most compelling way: by forgiving them.

It's important to note that forgiveness does not mean forgetting. It is not the same thing as reconciliation; it is not the same thing as allowing someone who has hurt you to be back in your life. It is not always a one time event; oftentimes it is something we have to keep choosing.

If we're honest, forgiveness is one of the most countercultural practices of Jesus. By definition, forgiveness is an unmerited gift—it is given to someone who does not deserve it. The cost of forgiveness is great, but the outcome in the lives of those who forgive is greater still. Through the process of forgiving and being forgiven we can experience freedom, wholeness, and intimacy with God and others, all of which is part of life as Jesus intended. Today, we want to reflect on the gift of God's forgiveness and how it leads us to forgive others.

Read Luke 7:36-50

Spend some time prayerfully answering these questions:

- **What parts of the Pharisee's attitude do you relate to?**
- **What is so compelling about the way that Jesus interacts with this woman?**
- **How have you seen the correlation between forgiveness and love in your own life?**

Sit comfortably and become still in the Lord's presence. Reflect on the passage in Luke and on Jesus' words on forgiveness. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart as you ask these questions:

- **Is there anything in my life for which I need to repent?**
- **Is there anything in my life of which I haven't fully received God's forgiveness?**

Listen to what God places on your heart and respond to God in prayer. Be honest in confession and receive His forgiveness. Ask God to help you believe His forgiveness and walk in freedom. As your prayer comes to a close, remember Jesus' words, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Exercise 3: Forgiving



Read Matthew 18:21-35 and 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 and consider the following questions:

- **What do you think it looks like to forgive from your heart (Matthew 18:35)?**
- **When have you seen someone truly move beyond forgiveness to blessing others?**
- **What would it look like to transform a wound from your past into a blessing for others?**

Take a minute or two of silence and ask God to bring to mind a past hurt that He wants to transform for the good of others. If you can't think of one now, that's okay—this is a process that may take time. Often we want to help others the way we wish we would have been helped in the past. What would that look like for you?

Spend a few minutes in prayer sharing with God what He brought to mind and what is on your heart. Allow yourself to be comforted by His presence and love, and ask Him to help you share that comfort with others. End by giving Jesus thanks for His power to redeem all things – He is truly making all things new.

