

On Saturday night, Susan and her friends approached the scene of a party. The music was blaring, and as soon as girls would enter the room, guys grabbed their hands and spun them onto the dance floor. One by one, Susan's friends were each asked to dance, until Susan was left standing all alone. A wave of humiliation washed over her. "I shouldn't be surprised that no one wants to dance with me. Why would they? I'm not pretty like they are. I'm not very good at talking to guys. I'm ugly and fat and destined to be alone." Susan retreated to a quiet corner and continued to spiral down into self-contempt as the condemning voices got louder in her head.

The weekend was quickly approaching. It was already Thursday night. John felt anxiety as he picked up his cell phone. All semester he had been wanting to ask Rachel out. They had met in biology class and were lab partners. Now was his moment to take the plunge! He went to his contacts, looked up her name, and just stared at the screen. He felt paralyzed. "What is wrong with you? Can't you even make a phone call? What kind of man are you? Your roommate, Todd, wouldn't have any trouble making this call! You are a coward!" The accusations continued and so did his sense of shame. He felt helpless as he stared out the window, unable to press "Call" and prove the voices wrong.

I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

MY EXPERIENCE ...

YOUR EXPERIENCE ...

As a result of the fall, we all experience a sense of being broken, or not whole. When that brokenness is exposed, we feel shame.

STEPPING

FROM

BROKENNESS

TO

WHOLENESS

SHAME = the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are deeply flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging.

IN OUR SHAME WE FEEL: isolated, hated by others, mocked, humiliated, scorned, ridiculed, self-hate

IN OUR SHAME WE HEAR: I am too much, I am not enough, I am unworthy, I am too far gone for redemption, I am defectively designed

2. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

How do you know when you feel shame? What does it feel like?

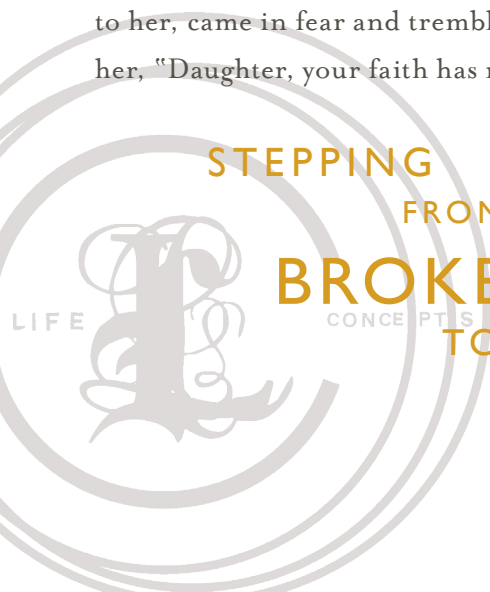
How do you respond to feelings of shame?

How do these feelings affect your relationships?

How do they affect your view of God and view of yourself?

MARK 5:24B-34

24 ...And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. 25 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, 26 and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. 28 For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." 29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 And he looked around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. 34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."



STEPPING FROM BROKENNESS TO WHOLENESS

3. EXPLORING THE SOLUTION

In Jewish culture a woman with this type of condition would be considered ceremonially unclean. To be unclean meant that she couldn't worship in the temple. Anything she touched was also considered contaminated and unclean. This meant an existence as a social outcast. She would have had no role in her community. She couldn't cook, clean, or carry out the roles of a woman without touching things, therefore contaminating others. And an existence without community in that culture was like suicide. She had no means of making money, and would be totally dependent and at the mercy of others for her survival. She couldn't get married and would be a source of shame to her family as she would bear no children.

THE WOMAN

1 - How would you feel in this if you were this woman?

2 - What do you think it took for her to reach out and touch Jesus?

3 - How would you have felt, in the middle of the crowd, when Jesus brought attention to you?

JESUS

4 - What can we know about the character of Jesus from this passage?

5 - While Jesus did expose the woman in her shame, how did He ultimately restore her?

SHAME

The woman's source of shame is her bleeding.

6 - What do you think is a source of shame in your own life? (relationship status, academic abilities, family background, etc.)

7 - How do you allow this shame to have power or control over you? Why do we often choose to stay in the place of shame?

8 - What situations come up that cause you to hide from others and God?

4. EXAMINING THE SKETCH

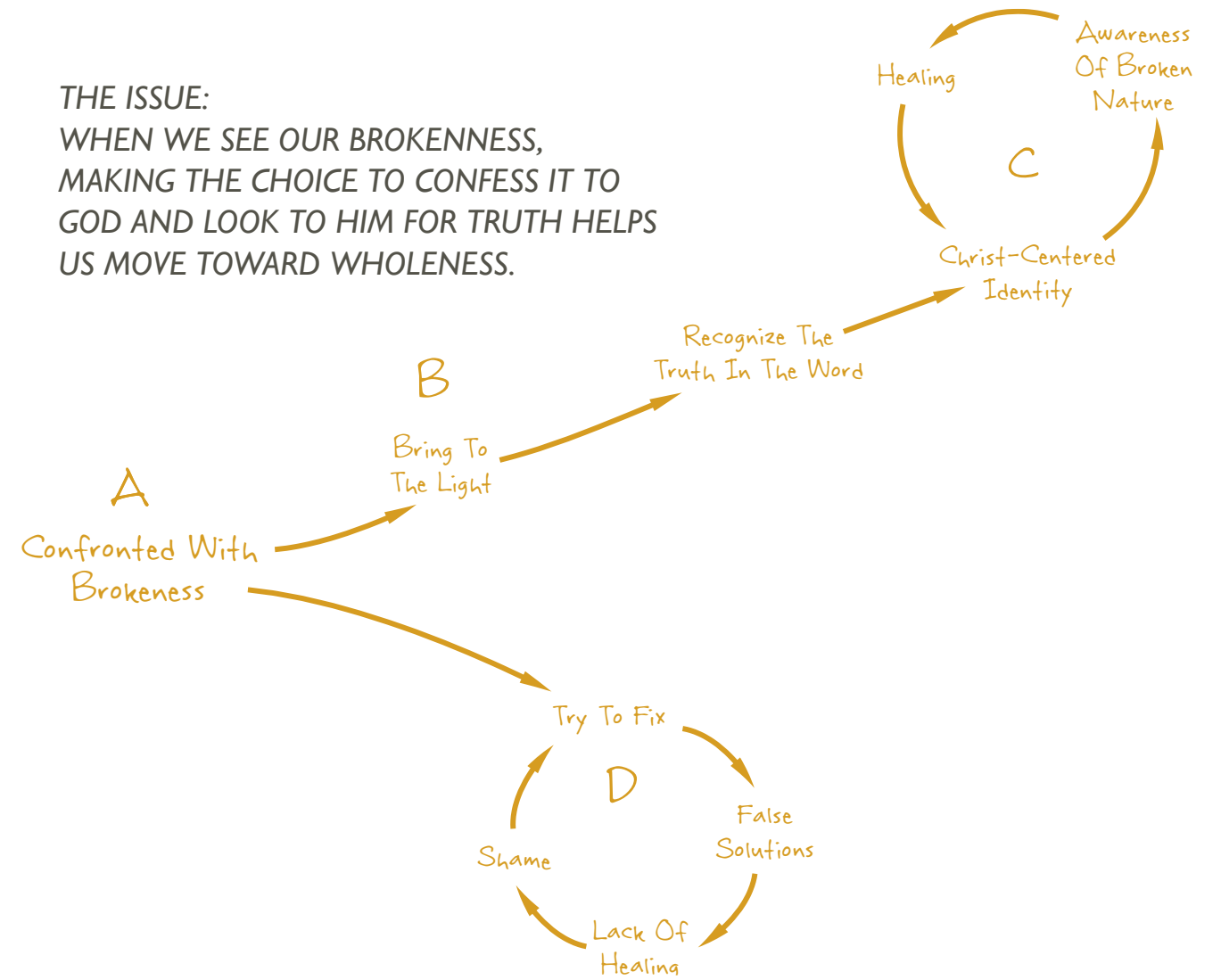
A. When we are confronted with our brokenness, we can either choose to believe God and look to Him for our identity OR we can try to fix our brokenness on our own.

B. However, if we are resistant to giving up control, we will try to fix ourselves. We will work at solutions which inevitably fail, resulting in a lack of healing and more shame and hiding because we cannot seem to overcome this brokenness.

C. This helps us form a Christ-centered identity, where we will receive healing in the broken parts of our lives, which will then cause a change in our behavior because of the freedom we experience in Christ.

D. However, if we are resistant to giving up control, we will try to fix ourselves, we will work at solutions which inevitably fail, resulting in a lack of healing and more shame and hiding because we cannot seem to overcome this brokenness.

THE ISSUE:
WHEN WE SEE OUR BROKENNESS,
MAKING THE CHOICE TO CONFESS IT TO
GOD AND LOOK TO HIM FOR TRUTH HELPS
US MOVE TOWARD WHOLENESS.



SUMMARY

This journey to wholeness is lifelong and will involve many opportunities to turn from hiding our brokenness and towards God, letting Him take away our shame. As we continue in this pattern, though, we will begin to recognize our security in Christ and find freedom in Who He says we are. Our sin will no longer define us.

5. TAKING STEPS

The woman in the crowd was weighed down with shame from her brokenness. When she moved toward Jesus in faith, He honored her and removed her shame and helped her begin to experience wholeness, physically and spiritually.

THIS WEEK

1 - EXAMINE your own areas of brokenness and consider how Jesus wants to take away the resulting shame. What steps can you take this week toward trusting God with your brokenness instead of being controlled by shame?

2 - SHARE Share what the Spirit reveals to you with someone else. This helps you bring it out into the light and provide an opportunity for healing (James 5:11). Often, by confessing the brokenness and shame to a trusted friend or mentor, we will discover we are not alone in our struggles!

3 - FIND SCRIPTURE that speaks truth about your identity in Christ. Memorize this and keep it close so that you can refute the lies of shame as they come back up.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

“What Shame Does” by Jim Coffield