

WEEK 4: THE BARRIER TO GOD'S LOVE (KEVIN BUTCHER)

Read this aloud: Just like last week, this was a deeply personal talk. We ask you once again to be willing to be vulnerable with each other. The more you open up, the more helpful each of you will find this discussion.

Kevin defined pathological shame as “the harmful belief that at the core you are a deformed human being, fundamentally unlovable and unworthy of membership in the human community, and uniquely and hopelessly different from all other people.”

- How have you seen this type of shame played out in our culture? Among your friends? In your own life?

Kevin contrasted guilt and shame.

Guilt is what I do	Shame is who I am
Guilt: I made a mistake	Shame: I AM a mistake
Guilt can be forgiven	Shame requires that I cease to exist

Why do you think feelings of guilt turn into feelings of shame?

Why is shame so much more destructive than guilt?

Read Genesis 2:25-3:13

- What did the serpent do to move Adam and Eve from innocence to shame?
- How did Adam and Eve respond to their shame? (make sure to note their blame for each other in addition to covering their nakedness)

Read Hebrews 2:1-2

- What are we called to do in these verses?
- How does the work of Jesus make this possible?
- Why is the destruction of shame so important to us living out these verses?

Mask Exercise

We encourage you to do this exercise. It will make people uncomfortable, but it can be very powerful. Use cut out face sized ovals or use full sheets of paper. Ask people to take some time on their own to answer the following questions on the two sides of the paper.

1. Outside: What you are trying to portray to people?
2. Inside: Who are you really?

Why is this kind of sharing so difficult? Do you feel able to share your mask in this setting right now? Please be honest. What would it take for you to be able to share your mask?

Pray for each other that you would move toward one other in loving community. Pray that Jesus would use your love for each other to move you beyond shame and to embrace his love.

Encourage students to consider reaching Kevin Butcher's book *Choose and Choose Again: The Brave Act of Returning to God's Love*.

