

ALIVE

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WEEK 4

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with a group or Bible class.

We were created for a world without shame. However, our world is dominated by shame, and the presence of shame always means an absence of freedom. The bondage of shame almost always accompanies all other bondage; but thankfully, God does not want us to be chained to our past mistakes.

1 What insight, story or observation from this week's lesson did you find to be most helpful, or eye-opening? Explain.

2 The reality is that many heroes in scripture had serious skeletons in their closet. Share a few examples. With that in mind, why can we believe their redemptive narratives and not our own?

3 One of the lies that incarcerate us is **"I am what I did."** There is a difference between shame and guilt. Shame says what we did is who we are—"I am a mistake". Guilt says "I made a mistake." Guilt can be healthy if it leads to confession and repentance. Shame isn't healthy. How can listening to the voice of your Father drown out the other voices telling you who you are? Share some practical examples of how this has played out in your life.

4 Another lie that incarcerates people is **"Hiding is helping."** When Adam and Eve felt shame, their first response was to cover up. Most still use the "fig leaf" approach to deal with shame today (some hide through **isolationism** refusing to commit to

vulnerable, transparent relationships; some hide through **judgmentalism**, comparing themselves to those they deem even more shameful; and many hide through **legalism**, which is religion's attempt to pay back God.) How have you experienced these ways of hiding in your life? What has helped you to overcome this lie? Where do you still need help in this area?

5 Read Romans 7:24-25 and 8:1-3. Rick reminded us of two truths that liberate: **The purchase of NO!** and **the promise of NOW!** Which of those promises resonates the most with your life today? Why?

6 Read Hebrews 12:2. Why is it important to remember that Jesus took your sin and your shame to the cross? Why do we try to take it back instead of leaving it at the cross?

ACTION STEP If you are still being chased by what heaven has already erased or if you are settling for a mediocre gospel that can promise hope for someday but no help for this day, remember this truth: the greatest wrong **is to not leave my greatest wrong with Jesus**. Shame thrives in secrecy but loses its power when exposed. So, leave it with Jesus today, let a close friend or family member know and rejoice in the fact that you are **ALIVE + FREE!**