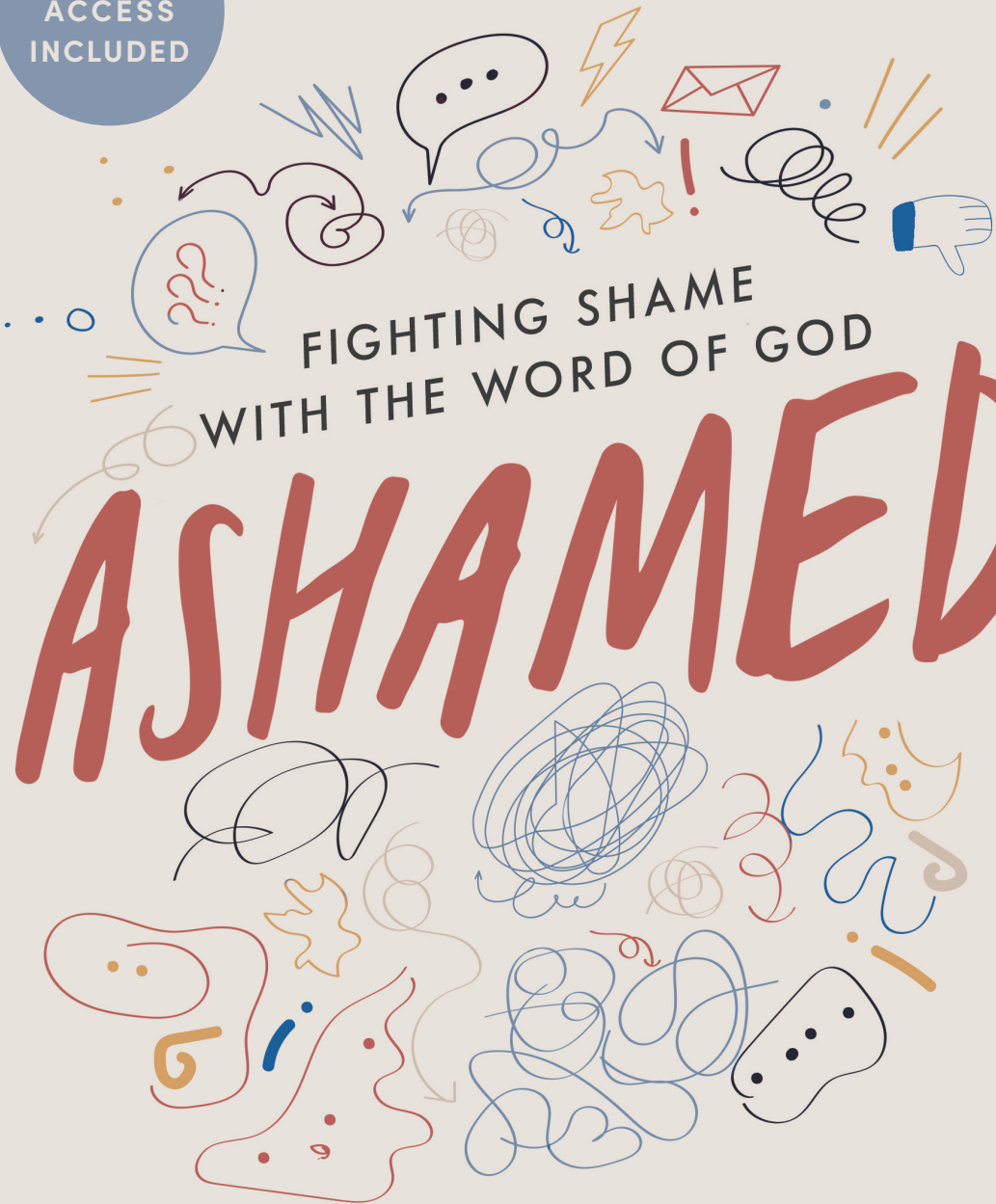


VIDEO
ACCESS
INCLUDED



SCARLET HILTIBIDAL

FIGHTING SHAME
WITH THE WORD OF GOD

ASHAMED

SCARLET HILTIBIDAL

Lifeway Press®
Brentwood, Tennessee

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EDITORIAL TEAM, LIFEWAY WOMEN BIBLE STUDIES

Becky Loyd
Director,
Lifeway Women

Tina Boesch
Manager

Chelsea Waack
Production Leader

Elizabeth Hyndman
Content Editor

Tessa Morrell
Production Editor

Lauren Ervin
Art Director

Sarah Hobbs
Graphic Designer

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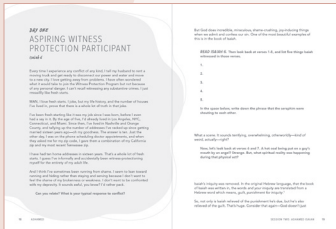
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Scarlet Hiltibidal is the author of *Afraid of All the Things, You're the Worst Person in the World, He Numbered the Pores on My Face*, and the Bible study *Anxious*. She writes regular columns for *ParentLife* and *HomeLife Magazines* and devotionals for *She Reads Truth* and enjoys speaking to women around the country about the freedom and rest available in Jesus. Scarlet has a degree in biblical counseling and taught elementary school before she started writing. She and her husband live in Tennessee where she loves communicating in sign language with her three daughters, eating nachos by herself, writing for her friends, and studying stand-up comedy with a passion that should be reserved for more important pursuits.



HOW TO USE THIS STUDY



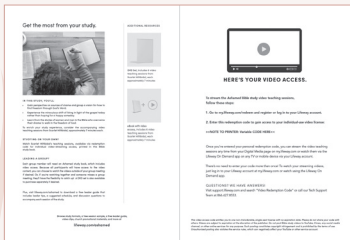
PERSONAL STUDY

Each week you'll have five days of personal study. You'll watch the video teaching after completing the five days of personal study. The first session is an introduction followed by the video teaching. If you're studying with a group, you can read the introduction together or on your own before you meet to watch the video and discuss.



VIDEO VIEWER GUIDE

Each session of *Ashamed* ends with a teaching video from Scarlet. The Viewer Guide page provides you with a place to take notes from the video teachings and from your small group discussion time. You'll want to begin your study by reading the Introduction and then watching the Session One video and taking notes on page 12.



VIDEO ACCESS

With the purchase of this book, you have access to videos from Scarlet that provide insight to help you better understand and apply what you study. You'll find detailed information on how to access the teaching videos on the card in the back of your Bible study book.



LEADING A GROUP?

A free leader guide PDF is available for download at lifeway.com/ashamed. The leader guide offers general tips and helps along with discussion guides for each week.

*SESSION
ONE*



INTRODUCTION



MEMORY VERSE

THEN SAID I, WOE IS ME!
FOR I AM UNDONE;
BECAUSE I AM A MAN
OF UNCLEAN LIPS, AND
I DWELL IN THE MIDST OF
A PEOPLE OF UNCLEAN
LIPS: **FOR MINE EYES
HAVE SEEN THE KING,
THE LORD OF HOSTS.**

ISAIAH 6:5, KJV

(EMPHASIS ADDED)

INTRODUCTION

We often hear or see affirmations from well-meaning people telling us we are worthy. "You are amazing! You are beautiful! You are worthy!" You can see the Instagram® post now, can't you? And I so want it to be true. I want to be worthy. I want to be worthy of love, of comfort, of success, of a day at the spa, of all the good stuff and none of the bad stuff, please. Don't you want that, too?

My first several years walking with Jesus were marked by a panicked desperation to obtain that worthiness. I thought being worthy would lead to comfort. It sounds so nice to be worthy. I still sometimes think that way.

Like, I may not be worthy in this moment, but I *could* be worthy if I tried hard enough, right?

At the moment I'm writing this, I'm on a plane, headed across the country to speak to a group of women about Jesus. Surely someone who writes for and speaks to women about Jesus and the Bible needs to be worthy, right? Especially by the time I stand on a platform and talk about the most important and definitely worthy Person who has ever lived.

Don't worry, guys. I'll get worthy by then. The conference isn't until tomorrow afternoon anyway. So, maybe not the end of this day, but surely worthiness will happen to me before tomorrow afternoon.

Here's the thing. It won't. We know that. Worthiness won't arrive just by me thinking about worthiness.

To think of myself as "worthy" is to forget the cross. It doesn't work. And every time I get caught up in a cycle of striving and failing, of focusing on what I do more than what Jesus does, I end up feeling short-lived self-righteousness or feeling devastated by shame. I so want to be worthy, but I so often feel shame.

WHAT IS SHAME?

I think of shame as that horrible sinking feeling you get when you say the wrong thing, when you hurt someone you love, when you realize you've done wrong and there's nothing you can do to fix it. That *if I could just turn back the clock ten minutes* feeling. That feeling of, *Oh no, I've blown it all. The thing or the people or the life I love is irreparably broken.*

Oftentimes, we feel shame because of things we've done, but there are other reasons we can find ourselves feeling ashamed.

What about the woman who struggles to find a job or who just lost a job (a job that consumed her thoughts and her minutes and her ambitions)? What about the women who battle infertility or wrestle with body image? I think of Elizabeth's story, which you can read in Luke 1. Elizabeth, who couldn't control her inability to conceive and yet it was a source of shame for her. Shame in these situations may be cultural; it may not be the result of anything we've done but of circumstances beyond our control.

Or what about the shame you carry, not because of what you've done or not done, but because of what was done to you? Not the shame of your own sin, but the shame you carry because of how others have sinned against you.

You don't necessarily have to be the villain to feel like you are, right?

Additionally and heartbreakingly, there is a deep and difficult kind of shame resulting from physical and emotional abuse. We see a biblical example of this kind of shame in the life of Tamar (2 Sam. 13), who was raped. If you've walked through this sort of trauma, we encourage you to get support.*

Life is so hard. From the most extreme to the most "minor," we have all felt humiliated, embarrassed, and ashamed.

Shame is a sad reality in our broken world, especially when it plagues those of us who are in Christ. We weren't meant to live in hopelessness, crushed under the weight of shame.

* To find a professional counselor in your area, you might want to check out websites like aacc.net, focusonthefamily.com/counseling, and biblicalcounseling.com, or ask your pastor or church leader for their recommendations. If you are currently in an abusive situation, please reach out to your local authorities or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800.799.7233. There are people who can help you get into a place of safety.

HOPE FOR THE SHAMED

A long time ago, the prophet Isaiah stepped into the throne room of God, and he was “undone” by his brokenness in view of God’s holiness. His response was a cry of despair and a recognition that he shouldn’t have even been alive in the presence of such perfection. But then, a weird and beautiful thing happened—a terror-inducing angel, through the smoke and the shaking and the grandeur, touched Isaiah’s mouth with a coal and told him his sin was forgiven. Isaiah’s response? HERE I AM. SEND ME. I DON’T CARE. I’M YOURS! I’LL DO WHATEVER! That is the explosive beauty at the core of the Christian experience. Isaiah moved from death to life. He moved from being undone by shame to having a hopeful humility and an urgency to serve the Lord.

You guys, this is what Jesus does.

We were as good as dead, but the forgiveness of God gives us new life, new purpose, new confidence, new hope.

Unfortunately, many people never experience undoneness. Countless women and men move through life convincing themselves they are the source of grandeur and hope. That doesn’t work either. God’s design for the human heart is to encounter its own unworthiness, see God as glorious and gracious, and leave all self-sufficiency and shame behind as we trust in Him. Anything else leaves us hopelessly fighting to prove to ourselves and the world that we are worthy, when deep down we know we still won’t be when the plane lands.

So, what are we doing here? Why are you doing this Bible study?

Circle which of the two categories below you think you fall into.

IF YOU’RE UNDONE (OR NEED TO BE)

If you fear that you need to have your life together to participate in a Bible study, don’t worry. It’s actually the opposite. This is for undone people (and people who need to be undone). To be undone, in the case of Isaiah, is to realize your own unworthiness in the presence of the One who is worthy. The right amount of undoneness is good for us; it leads to humility and trust in God. I pray that this Bible study helps you see and remember that being undone in light of God’s goodness is the right place to start.

IF YOU'RE TOO UNDONE

Maybe that's not you though. Maybe you feel a bit too undone. I think a lot of Christ followers get stuck in the undone place. Sometimes we catch a glimpse of the train of God's robe and the depth of our sin, and we are crushed by how ridiculously we fall short. We fail to move on to the hopeful humility that flows from God's forgiveness.

If you've got the undone part down already, I want this Bible study to help you move beyond the shame of your sin to the joy-inducing, peace-producing thrill that comes from a lifestyle of repentance and a happy relationship with Jesus.

We were made to live in the light, confessing and repenting and renouncing our shame, because Jesus was shamed in our place. You can have that.

So, let's do this. Join me in Scripture for the next few weeks, and let's see the freedom available to us when we deeply experience the mercy of God. Let's study the Bible, do what it says, and enjoy what it gives.

I used to live life, doing my best, hoping and straining for wholeness and peace and perfection. I wanted so much to move past my mistakes and never again put my foot in my mouth. I longed for the day when Jesus would come through the clouds and fix me so that I wouldn't break anything else. I worked, hoped, and longed, without realizing that peace with God and joy in Jesus could exist for me today. Like, before I get off this airplane to go speak at this conference, I can be at peace. I can be shame-free. I can rest. Because this day, this weekend, this life, is not about how well I'm able to perform. It is always only about how Jesus performed in my place.

When I remember the good news of the gospel of Jesus, I remember that I can walk off this airplane not super perfect and polished, but rather, simply delighting in the truth and power of God's Word. Shame is a lie. Jesus is better. Let's discover this together.

WATCH

Write down any thoughts, verses, or things you want to remember as you watch the video for Session One.

DISCUSS

Fear and shame make people run away and hide. That’s sort of the exact opposite thing as going to a small group, so I hope you won’t run. I want you to stay. Quickly, let’s think about what we just saw in Genesis 3—Adam and Eve and the beginning of shame.

READ GENESIS 3:8-11, as a group, keeping in mind that this is after Adam and Eve, the first two created people, sinned against God, doing the one thing He had commanded them not to do. What did they do when they heard God coming?



In verse 10, what does Adam tell God he was feeling?

Adam was afraid because he felt exposed. Embarrassed, he wanted to run. Every single one of you, and everyone you know, and all of their aunts, uncles, and dental hygienists know this feeling well. When others see our shame, we want to hide. Don't feel like joining this group for six weeks is a commitment to spill your guts and compound your shame. This next six weeks is not about your past or exposing your guilt for all to see. It's about God and what He's done to free you from it. Stay, focus on Him, and share what you're comfortable sharing. The more this group helps you see the power and love of God, the more you will want to run to Him, not run and hide.

Get to know your group! Share names, jobs, hobbies.

Do you have a childhood memory of your first moment of shame or embarrassment? Share it if you're brave.

Do you feel like you've had an "undone" moment, like Isaiah? If so, discuss what it was like when you recognized your need for God.

Have you ever felt stuck in your shame? What are some unhelpful (or only temporarily helpful) things you've turned to in those moments that didn't end up helping the way you hoped they would?

What hopes do you have in your personal walk with God as you enter into this study?

PRAY

Take time to come before God together and ask that He help each of you to understand His grace more deeply as you study and to extend that grace to one another.

*SESSION
TWO*



ASHAMED ISAIAH

JESUS REMOVES OUR SHAME

MEMORY VERSE

HE TOUCHED MY MOUTH
WITH IT AND SAID: NOW
THAT THIS HAS TOUCHED
YOUR LIPS, **YOUR INIQUITY
IS REMOVED AND YOUR
SIN IS ATONED FOR.** THEN
I HEARD THE VOICE OF THE
LORD ASKING: WHO WILL
I SEND? WHO WILL GO FOR
US? I SAID: **HERE I AM.
SEND ME.**

ISAIAH 6:7-8

(EMPHASIS ADDED)

DAY ONE

ASPIRING WITNESS PROTECTION PARTICIPANT

Isaiah 6

Every time I experience any conflict of any kind, I tell my husband to rent a moving truck and get ready to disconnect our power and water and move to a new city. I love getting away from problems. I have often wondered what it would take to join the Witness Protection Program but not because of any personal danger. I can't recall witnessing any substantive crimes. I just rrrreaalllly like fresh starts.

MAN, I love fresh starts. I joke, but my life history, and the number of houses I've lived in, prove that there is a whole lot of truth in that joke.

I've been fresh-starting like it was my job since I was born, before I even had a say in it. By the age of five, I'd already lived in Los Angeles, NYC, Connecticut, and Miami. Since then, I've lived in Nashville and Orange County, and now Nashville again. Tallying up the number of addresses I've racked up since getting married sixteen years ago—oh my goodness. The answer is eleven. Just the other day, I was on the phone scheduling doctor appointments, and when they asked me for my zip code, I gave them a combination of my Tennessee zip and my most recent California zip.

I have had eleven home addresses in sixteen years. That's a whole lot of fresh starts. I guess I've informally and accidentally been witness-protecting myself for the entirety of my adult life.

And I think I've sometimes been running from shame. I seem to lean toward running and hiding rather than staying and serving because I don't want to feel the shame of my brokenness or weakness. I don't want to be confronted with my depravity. It sounds awful, you know? I'd rather pack.

Can you relate? What is your typical response to conflict?

But God does incredible, miraculous, shame-crushing, joy-inducing things when we admit and confess our sin. One of the most beautiful examples of this is in the book of Isaiah.

READ ISAIAH 6. Then look back at verses 1-5, and list five things Isaiah witnessed in those verses.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

In the space below, write down the phrase that the seraphim were shouting to each other.

What a scene. It sounds terrifying, overwhelming, otherworldly—*kind of weird, actually*—right?

Now, let's look back at verses 6 and 7. A hot coal being put on a guy's mouth by an angel? Strange. But, what spiritual reality was happening during that physical act?

Isaiah's iniquity was removed. In the original Hebrew language, that the book of Isaiah was written in, the words *and your iniquity* are translated from a Hebrew word which means, *guilt, punishment for iniquity*.¹

So, not only is Isaiah relieved of the punishment he's due, but he's also relieved of the guilt. That's huge. Consider that again—God doesn't just remove the punishment; He removes the guilt. We've all felt guilt before, so we know guilt is a too-heavy-to-carry punishment in itself.

Just like that—*poof*—guilt is removed. When you were a kid, did you ever face trouble and get let off the hook?

Get that circumstance in your mind. Did you get away with something? Maybe your parents still don't know about that lie or that night or that mistake to this day. Maybe you carried shame for a long time but eventually got over it. Or maybe you're still not over it.

Here, with the angels and God and Isaiah, we see a man who is thoroughly guilty standing before the God who sees all and knows all. And instead of destroying him, God forgives him. It's hard to even imagine what that must be like, right?

READ ISAIAH 6:8-13, and answer the following questions.

What did God ask?

How did Isaiah answer?

What was the mission God had for Isaiah?

That mission sounds pretty horrible. Because not only was Isaiah being sent to deliver bad news from God, but God told Him how it was going to work out, and how it worked out was not great.

Has God ever called you to something that felt pretty horrible? Write about it below.

If you walked in obedience to that call, how did it work out for you and the people you were serving?

In those early figuring-it-out years of my faith, I wouldn't have had much to write in spaces like the one above. My fear and shame kept me from obedience. My fear and shame kept me from living for God, listening to God, and being blessed by taking part in the mission of God.

But the more I began to understand my own sinfulness and just how much it took for God to redeem me—just how much love and mercy was involved—the easier it was to take baby steps in the direction He led. As soon as I started taking those steps, the blessings He poured out on me and my family were overwhelming.

Blessings like purpose, peace, and joy.

Do fear and shame keep you from walking in obedience? If so, what does that look like in your life?

If you answered yes to that last question, remember what Isaiah's coal-meets-lips scenario means for you. Like Isaiah, we are unworthy when faced with the purity of our perfect, all-powerful God. But that hot coal reminds us that God is so loving that He offers us forgiveness. While Isaiah's forgiveness was symbolized with a burning coal, our forgiveness is offered through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What baby step can you take as you seek to live the mission God is calling you to? How can you say, "Here I am; send me," this week?

I think Andrew Davis sums this up powerfully. In *Exalting Jesus in Isaiah*, he writes:

What a beautiful sequence in this narrative: a vision of the enthroned Lord in his glory leads to overpowering heavenly worship, and it also leads to Isaiah's awareness of his sinfulness, which leads to him crying out against himself, which leads to the atoning work for his sin, which leads to hearing the Lord call for a messenger, which leads to Isaiah presenting himself for service. In this sense, Isaiah 6 stands as a lasting paradigm for all who would enter the Lord's service.²

In short, awareness and repentance of sin leads us to offer ourselves up to the Lord for His work.

Close out this day meditating on this beautiful paradigm and praying that the Lord will help your mind release the shame of your failures, that He'll help you remember His Son's payment for your sins, that He'll help you renounce your fear of the future, and that you'll feel His nearness as you do something eternal today.

DAY TWO

COWERING FROM CONSECRATED COUSINS

Luke 14:7-14,25-33; Isaiah 6:7

The times I've felt most ashamed happen to have been the same times I was witnessing someone else's apparent act of altruism or sacrifice. Someone else's "Here I am; send me" moments often point out my lack of them.

Before we started the process of adopting our middle daughter from China, I will never forget running into some distant cousins at a family function and avoiding them like I avoided germs in 2020. Note: They are lovely cousins, but the thing is, they were fresh off the heels of two international adoptions for a couple of sweetheart girls with special needs.

How wonderful, beautiful, and noble, right?

Well, rather than asking questions or commending their beautiful family or offering to help hold a baby so the mom could make herself a plate, I had this weirdly timed urge to go stand in the bathroom and check my hair really quick. Coincidentally, that happened every time they came near.

In my mind, the adoption-loving cousins were in the throne room with the shouting seraphim, and I was unworthy and unwilling—the opposite of all the good things they were.

Their selflessness shined an incriminating spotlight on how selfishly I was living.

Their courage reminded me of how comfortable I'd become hiding from my purpose in the world.

Enter the restroom. Check hair. Feel shame. Repeat.

Their evident fruit reminded me of how fruitless my life looked. And I didn't like it.

Woe is me! I am unworthy of having small talk with these superhero humans, and I'm not sure I want to do what it seems to take to be worthy.

Though my comfort-craving heart lies to me and tells me that a good life is an easy one, God has never skirted around the reality of His own holiness, and the very legitimate cost of being one of His followers.

Can you think of a time in your own life that being around holiness or goodness shined a light on your guilt and made you want to run away? Reflect on that in the space below.

READ LUKE 14:7-14.

In this passage of Scripture, Jesus was eating at the house of one of the leading Pharisees, a religious leader of the time. After observing their behavior, He taught them about humility.

How would you define *humility*?

How is humility demonstrated in this example from Jesus?

The Bible talks about humility a lot. We must humble ourselves to know God. We must humble ourselves to recognize our need for Him in the first place.

READ LUKE 14:25-33. What is the cost of following Jesus?

Why do you think this teaching came after a teaching on humility?

The cost of following Christ is great. We must be willing to bear our own crosses—ready to give up everything to follow Him. This is including, but not limited to, giving up our pride. When we recognize our need for Jesus, when we realize we can't save ourselves or earn holiness, when we understand we will never be worthy on our own, that is humbling.

It might even sound humiliating. Well, one of the coolest things I ever learned was about how different "humility" and "humiliation" are.

Here are some synonyms for the word *humiliate*: dishonor, disgrace, mortify, shame, degrade, abase, debase.

On the contrary, here's a list of synonyms for *humility*: modesty, meekness, lack of pride, lowliness.



Those are pretty different lists for two words that sound so similar and are so often mixed up.

One word suggests a sort of self-loathing, and the other looks a lot like Jesus.

Do you struggle with equating the two? Do you feel holier when you are beating yourself up? Take a minute to write out what this struggle looks like (or has looked like in the past) in your personal life.

In the table below, write down what God's Word says about true biblical humility.

<i>SCRIPTURE</i>	<i>WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT HUMILITY</i>
Micah 6:8	
Proverbs 18:12	
Isaiah 57:15	
1 Peter 5:5	

Whew. The Bible has a lot to say about humility, doesn't it? And that list is nowhere near exhaustive. Looking over all this Scripture, one thing I noticed is how frequently God's people are commanded to be humble.

Commands like these can be hard to wrap your mind around, because with any fruit of the Spirit or Christlike way of being, if you pursue said good thing for the wrong reasons, you never find it. Like, if I say to myself, *I WANT TO BE HUMBLE SO THAT I AM AWESOME AND APPLAUDED BY GOD AND PEOPLE*, I'm doing it wrong.

LOOK BACK AT ISAIAH 6:7. What was it that caused Isaiah's humility?

Forgiveness! Isaiah's experience and awareness of the undeserved and dramatic forgiveness he received from the holy, perfect, true God is what humbled him.

As you close out this day, ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify where you might be stuck in humiliation. Ask Him to help your heart move toward humility.



DAY THREE

A SWEET, SHAMELESS REDHEAD

Isaiah 50; Luke 7:36–50; Psalm 103:11–14

Isaiah 50 is about listening to God. Listening to God, even when it means suffering. After His encounter with God in chapter 6, Isaiah was a willing prophet who obediently delivered tons of bad news about God’s coming judgment. Isaiah listened and obeyed. Good job, Isaiah! But remember, Isaiah was also “a man of unclean lips.” Isaiah was a sinner.

Other than being the bearer of bad news, Isaiah is known for prophesying about the coming Messiah. If you’re new to Christianity, and you don’t know what any of those words mean, prophesying, in this context, means foretelling the future. “Messiah” means “Savior.” Isaiah was, yes, telling the nation of Judah a whole lot about God’s coming judgment, but he was also sharing the ground-breaking, globe-shaking news that God, in His mercy, was going to send a Savior (Jesus)—the One who would, quoting the *Lord of the Rings* series here, “make everything sad come untrue.”³

And here, in Isaiah 50, we get to hear more from Isaiah, a sometimes obedient, but flawed and imperfect servant, writing about the coming of a perfectly obedient, perfectly unselfish Servant. He was writing about Jesus before Jesus came.

LOOK UP ISAIAH 50, AND READ VERSES 4-10 from the perspective of the perfectly obedient Servant to come (Jesus). What does verse 4 say God has given Him?

What does Jesus say He did not do, in verse 5?

**What future thing does it sound like Jesus is describing in verse 6?
(Hint: read John 19)**

I want you to pay such special attention to Isaiah 50:7. So, go ahead and copy it down in the space below.

In this verse, we can see the nature of Jesus displayed—He is one hundred percent man, but He is also one hundred percent God. The math doesn't add up, but it's true. He is the Son of God, sent to live a sinless life on earth by the Father, to die on the cross for our sins, and to be raised again, defeating death.

For most of us humans, the events described by Isaiah in verse 6 would be humiliating. To be beaten and mocked and spit upon? Can you think of anything more humiliating?

However, verse 7 tells us Jesus will not be humiliated. Why? Because He is God, and He knows the end. He knows the results will not be humiliation but vindication.

Because of this heaven-touching-earth moment, we can echo our Savior and say, "I have not been humiliated . . . I will not be put to shame." That is true for us in Jesus. Hallelujah.

So, what can our lives look like when we remember and embrace this reality?

I used to work at a church in my twenties. This was before I'd spent much time with Jesus or much time in His Word, and I remember the sweet redhead who worked at the front desk just exploding with love and happiness. She was truly the quintessential front desk person as she made everyone who came to her feel completely greated with care and kindness. I remember commenting on it one day and she said, "Oh, the one who's been forgiven much loves much!"

How brilliant! I thought, not realizing that she was literally quoting Jesus.

***READ LUKE 7:36-50.* How did the woman in this story behave around Jesus, and what did the Pharisees think about it?**

In verses 44-47, Jesus explains why her behavior was appropriate and beautiful. Put His explanation into your own words in the space below.

Is there someone you have encountered in your life who possessed what looked like genuine humility? Describe how that person lived and how they made you feel.

What a beautiful thing that the Spirit of God in the lives of believers leads to humility. But, people, even the ones who look a lot like Jesus, will let us down in this life. Thankfully, we can study the life of Jesus, and in Him, we see and know and hear from the only One who perfectly humbled Himself (Phil. 2:8) even though He had every reason not to.

In seasons when I've suffered with depression or grief or anxiety, when I've spent hours awake in the middle of the night cycling through the worst moments on my "shame reel" (more on the shame reel later), the thought of being someone like Sweet Redhead feels impossible.

In the space below, quickly jot down the mindsets or negative thoughts you carry with you.

***READ PSALM 103:11-14.* What point is the psalmist making about our sins (or transgressions)?**

What point is he making about God?

Okay, spend more time on this part please. 😊

Go back over the list you wrote on the previous page of your negative thoughts and scribble out those things with passion and pressure like your life depends on it, so you can't make out a single word you wrote.

Jesus is better and stronger than anything you can ever write. He is and gives His best and His strength to you. Because of Jesus's sacrifice, our compassionate God has removed our transgressions "as far as the east is from the west."

Now, close off this day, and take all the time you need, to write down as many things as you can think of that remind you of the goodness of God. When you are tempted to replay your shame reel or tell yourself lies about who God is and who you are, remember what the Bible says—our God is good and compassionate. Use the following verses to jog your memory and write down ways that you've noticed this goodness in your own life.

- Exodus 34:6
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 145:8-10
- John 3:15-18
- Philippians 1:6
- James 1:17



DAY FOUR

BROKEN CARS AND IPAD DEBTORS

Isaiah 53:1-12

When I was a poor newlywed, I worked at a school and shared a car with my pastor-husband who worked about thirty minutes from my job. I often had to carpool or wait for rides. One day, the kindergarten teacher at my school noticed my plight and said, "I have an extra car sitting in my garage that's not being driven. My husband and I want to loan it to you."

What a gift! I was so grateful. Married life with two cars? What would that even be like?

But almost immediately, car-borrowing-tragedy struck. The loaner was an older convertible Mazda®, and one day, I rolled down the window to find that it wouldn't roll back up. I parked the car in front of our little shack. (Our first "house" is what we now affectionately refer to as "The Shack." You can read more about this delightful home in Chapter Two: Worst Poor Person of my book, *You're the Worst Person in the World.*)

Anyway, I parked in front of The Shack in a panic, as a few rain droplets threatened the interior leather of my borrowed car. The next few moments are a blur. We had no garage and no way to shield the car from the elements, so I ran inside and found black trash bags and duct tape (things you always keep on hand when you're broke), and I duct taped the sweet kindergarten teacher's car up.

It was so horrifying and humiliating having to tell her that we broke her car. We ordered the broken window part but couldn't afford to have it put back together. I told her we were working on it, and in an act of sheer mercy, she said, "Scarlet, don't worry about it. We will fix the window. Just leave it in the parking lot."

Humiliating, yes. Relieving? So much yes.

Have you ever had someone take the fall for you? Someone pay your debt? Write about it below.

Fast forward a decade, and we found ourselves in a new city with new jobs, two fully functioning cars and enough extra income to buy an iPad® but not enough to be able to replace it if something were to happen.

A family from our church with a bunch of young kids had my husband's iPad, and when I went to pick it up at their house, the mom approached me with shame in her eyes and a hilarious sentence to share. "My son threw your iPad against the tree. I'm so sorry."

She handed me the rectangle of broken glass and I said, "Don't worry about it."

And it was easy to say that. Not because we had money to replace it, but because people had done the same for us. God had done the same for us.

When you personally know how it feels to have a debt paid, it's a joy to do the same for others.

When I think of that family and the broken iPad, I'm so grateful we were able to treat them the way the kindergarten teacher treated me.

It should work the same way for us as followers of Christ.

We can have the joy of living out each day we're given in light of this overwhelming debt we've been relieved of. We can be the most gracious people in the world because we know what it is to be ashamed and humiliated and panicked because we've broken something and don't have the means to fix it.

READ ISAIAH 53:1-12. Who is this “guilt offering” that Isaiah is writing about, and what does this passage tell you about Him?

It’s amazing to me, the detail we are given about Jesus hundreds of years before His birth. God’s people were told what He’d be like, how He’d arrive, and about the shame He would carry.

LOOK BACK AT ISAIAH 53. What does verse 6 say about us?

How did God respond to our actions, according to that verse?

Look up the following verses, and write down what they say about our debt.

<i>SCRIPTURE</i>	<i>WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT DEBT</i>
Romans 6:23	
Ephesians 1:7	
Hebrews 7:27	
1 Peter 1:18-19	
1 Peter 2:24	
1 John 2:1-2	

We are so indebted to our Creator and Rescuer, it would break our brains to fully grasp it. A. W. Tozer has much more eloquent language than “break our brains” to explain how very different, holy, and high God is, and how very needy, poor, and dependent we are.

He wrote, “We must not think of God as the highest in an ascending order of beings, starting with the single cell and going on up from the fish to the bird to the animal to man to angel to cherub to God . . . He is as high above an archangel as above a caterpillar, for the gulf that separates the archangel from the caterpillar is but finite, while the gulf between God and the archangel is infinite.”⁴

Spend a few moments praying, thanking God for sending His Son to die in your place. Thank Him for His forgiveness and love.

DAY FIVE

ISAIAH ALL OVER THE PLACE

John 12:37–41; Luke 4:16–19; Isaiah 61:1–2

The book of Isaiah is the most frequently quoted book elsewhere in the Bible. Why? Why is it so important that other biblical authors kept sharing it? What about Isaiah is so fundamental to our faith?

Well, put simply, Isaiah kept saying that Jesus was coming. Guys, Isaiah clearly presented the message of the gospel seven hundred years before the gospel was fulfilled. He predicted it in great detail—detail that turned out to be completely, hair-splittingly accurate.

I just watched *The Gray Man* on Netflix twice in a week. It's rare that my husband can talk me into a "boy movie," but if there's some sort of heartwarming love thread, I can look past the dark weapon-y stuff and get sucked in.

In short, the movie was about a CIA guy (Ryan Gosling) and a bunch of bad guys trying to kill him. My favorite relationship in the movie was the big bro/little sis dynamic between Gosling and a tweenaged girl with a heart condition that he was looking after.

I think I loved the movie so much because of his relationship with this girl who had a heart problem. She was kidnapped and leveraged, and he always showed up. He'd wink at her and then take out a bunch of bad guys for her. "Just another Thursday," he said.

Doesn't that do something to you? Don't you want to believe that your Rescuer is going to pluck you out of all the pain? Don't you feel to the depths that you're a little girl with a heart condition, and Jesus is fighting the world to save you?

It feels too good to be true now, so can you even imagine the hearers of Isaiah's words back in those days—those pre-Rescuer days?

All this to say, the book of Isaiah is important and massively quoted because it pointed to the reality of the Rescuer who was to come. And then He came, and He and the people around Him were like, "Remember what Isaiah said? Open your eyes!"

OPEN UP TO JOHN 12:37-41. In my Bible, there's a subheading that says, "Isaiah's Prophecies Fulfilled." Read through the verses, and in the space below, write down the verses from Isaiah referenced in this passage in John. (Hint: look at the footnotes or cross references in your Bible.)

Rewrite the prophecies from Isaiah in your own words.

It's hard to really capture the significance by pulling little pieces of Scripture out like this, so if you have the time today, I'd really encourage you to flip back, even if it's just to the beginning of John chapter 12.

Right there at the beginning, we're reminded that Jesus just raised Lazarus from the dead. The Gospels are so incredible. Miracle after miracle is performed. And in John 12, we see Jesus's triumphal entry, where He rides a young donkey to fulfill a prophecy from Zechariah 9:9. Even the words the people are shouting at Him are quoted from Psalm 118:25-26. It's amazing.

So here in John, we see Jesus in real time living out the calling that Isaiah prophesied about all the way down to the state of the hearts and ears and eyes of the people He was around.

READ LUKE 4:16-19. What town was Jesus in, and what did He read from?

What Jesus read there in His hometown was not random, at all.

READ ISAIAH 61:1-2. Which specific phrases do you see here that you just read in the gospel of Luke?

Isn't that incredible? And it's just one of many examples of this. Jesus was the long-awaited hope, the way-better-than-Ryan-Gosling Hero. He didn't provide temporary safety to a girl with a heart condition. He bled and died and rose again, giving eternal hope to our broken hearts.

Raise your hand if you forgot you were doing a Bible study about shame? Looking at intricate fulfillments of this hope makes it hard to think about lesser things—even our own shame. And that's the whole point.

God is so wonderful, so compassionate, so loving. He overwhelms lesser things in our lives and gives us what we need. He has given us signs and wonders and details and miracles—as if salvation wasn't enough! We can look through this alive and active book (Heb. 4:12) and see His provision and His hand, throughout history, on every page. Why do we so often doubt His hand in our own lives?



This may look a little daunting, but it's going to be really cool. On the left, you'll see a New Testament reference and what the reference is referring to. Pretend you're in school, and being the very scholarly person you are, as you read these passages, pay very close attention to the little letters, numbers, and footnotes. In each of these verses, you can see which verse of prophecy it is fulfilling and where that's found in Isaiah. And by the way, this is just the smallest sampling of examples. There are so many more, it's absurd. I'll do the first couple for you. Okay, here we go.

MATTHEW 1:23 – A virgin will become pregnant	<i>Isaiah 7:14</i>
MATTHEW 12:21 – Jesus is hope for the Gentiles	<i>Isaiah 42:1-4</i>
MARK 9:48 – What eternal separation from God is like ("Fire is not quenched . . . ")	
LUKE 4:17-19 – Jesus is anointed to preach	
JOHN 12:39-40 – Blinded eyes and hardened hearts	
ACTS 8:32-33 – Jesus led like a sheep to the slaughter	
ROMANS 9:33 – Believers will not be disappointed	
1 CORINTHIANS 15:54-56 – Death swallowed up	

Okay. No shame to the homework slackers, but if you didn't look up all those passages, just look at that very last one. I'll even put some of it here in the book for you.

. . . then the saying that is written will take place: Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

1 CORINTHIANS 15:54-56

And the call back in Isaiah 25:8: "He will destroy death forever."

What better news do we have than that? Jesus is good news. The gospel is good news. Death has been "swallowed up in victory." Your shame from failures—past, present, and future—shrivel up in that kind of hope, right? How should you close off this day? Believe it. Memorize it. Cling to it. Jesus has swallowed up our shame and given us the victory. Take the day off, Ryan Gosling. We can have true and lasting peace.



WATCH

Write down any thoughts, verses, or things you want to remember as you watch the video for Session Two.



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DISCUSS

On Day One, we read about when Isaiah was forgiven in the throne room of God. Have you ever experienced awe and undoneness over the holiness of God? How so?

This session's main idea is "Jesus removes our shame." If you are open to sharing, tell your group a brief testimony of shame you carried and how the Lord is helping you release it.

In the chart you filled out on Day Four (p. 36), which verse about debt was most meaningful to you? Why?

What is one new habit you can add to your life to help you fight shame with God's Word?

PRAY

Thank God for sending Jesus to make a way for sinful people to be near to a holy God. Spend the remainder of your time in prayer. Pray specifically that God would help you and each member of your group fight feelings of shame and guilt by filling your minds with the truth of His Word.

FROM THIS WEEK'S STUDY

Review this week's memory verse.

He touched my mouth with it and said: Now that this has touched your lips, your iniquity is removed and your sin is atoned for. Then I heard the voice of the Lord asking: Who should I send? Who will go for us? I said: Here I am. Send me.

ISAIAH 6:7-8