



## PART FOUR: PURITY

Where do mushrooms grow? On top of decay and in the darkness. Our secrets are like that. Our secrets create shame that decay our souls and grow in the darkness of secrecy. Secrets between a husband and wife build a wall of guilt and shame right down the middle of your relationship. Wherever secrets live, intimacy dies. As long as you keep the secrets in the dark, they will keep you from giving and receiving intimacy in relationships.

Yet the inverse is true—wherever intimacy lives, secrets die. Today’s message is a call to wide-open communication. To love our spouse with an authentic and transparent intimacy.

**BIG IDEA:** Where secrets live, shame grows and intimacy dies.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe a time when you or someone you know had a relationship damaged by a secret. What happened when the truth was revealed?
2. With your Bible or YouVersion, read Genesis 3:1-10.

*Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves, and they hid from the Lord. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”* Genesis 3:7-10



3. Adam and Eve apparently hid out of embarrassment or shame. Different people ‘hide’ because of different reasons. What struggles do you have with being transparent in your relationships?
4. One of Satan’s weapons is the ‘shame game.’ It starts with your experiencing something deeply painful or sinful. You then connect what happened to who you are. Finally, you believe the only way to be safe is to hide. How has Satan used the ‘shame game’ in your own life? Were you able to overcome the shame? If so, how did you overcome it?
5. With your Bible or YouVersion, read Ephesians 5:8-13.

*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.* Ephesians 5:8-11

6. Why is it difficult to expose our secrets, sin and shame to the light?
7. What are some consequences to keeping secrets in the dark?
8. Who can you trust and confide in to hold you accountable?
9. With your Bible or YouVersion, read James 5:16.

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.* James 5:16

10. Describe a time when you confessed a secret or a sin to a fellow believer. How did that confession start the process of healing in your life?
11. With your Bible or YouVersion, read Revelation 3:1-3.

*You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent.*

Revelation 3:1-3

12. What is one area of your life that you are still striving for purity in? Be honest. Share with your group how they can pray for you.
13. What is your most valuable take-away from the past four weeks of studying *Happily Ever After*?

## MOVING FORWARD

If you are married, take a few minutes to pray together. Ask God to empower you to love your spouse with an authentic and transparent intimacy. Commit to confess any secret sins or shame.

If you are single, commit to sharing any secret sins or shame with a close same sex friend, pastor or counselor. Pray with your community group that you will all encourage each other to pursue only God's best in all areas of life.

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Most people choose to keep their sin and shame a secret out of fear of embarrassment. On the one hand, exposing things to the light can make you feel very vulnerable. On the other hand, keeping things in the dark will eventually have much more significant consequences. Which would you prefer—embarrassment now or death and destruction later? Creating some accountability may be a difficult decision, but if something's got to change, then you may find that exposing your dark secrets to the light might be one of the best decisions you ever made.

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves, and they hid from the Lord. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."*  
Genesis 3:7-10



## GOING DEEPER

1. How much do you think people's view of purity is influenced by what they watch on television, see in movies or hear in music?
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12.

*Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more. Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12*

3. What did Paul urge his audience to do? (4:1)
4. By what authority did Paul give his instructions? (4:2)
5. How is the Christian's sexual conduct to be different from that of the non-Christian? (4:4-5)
6. How did Paul characterize the heathen (people who don't believe)? (4:5)
7. When people ignore or reject God's instructions on sexual behavior, what are they rejecting? (4:8)
8. What command of God were the Thessalonians known for obeying? (4:9-10)
9. What ambition were the Thessalonians to pursue? (4:11-12)
10. What is the result of living a quiet, respected, and responsible life? (4:11-12)
11. How often do we need to be reminded about God's instructions for our lives?
12. How would you respond to someone who says it is possible to be a good Christian while also being sexually immoral?
13. How can we wrong a person through impure, sexual behavior? (Chris said in week one that one of the definitions of dishonoring people is that we create regret in their lives and in their story.)
14. What is a holy life?
15. What motivates you to live a life that is pure and holy?
16. What are some things you can or currently do to maintain purity in all of your relationships?

## HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS YOU MAY WANT TO USE FOR YOUR TIME WITH GOD THIS WEEK:

**Day 1:** Read Genesis 3:7-10. Spend time praying about any shame you may be dealing with in your life. Pray for those you know who are dealing with shame. Ask for healing.

**Day 2:** Read Ephesians 5:8-14. Focus your prayer on asking God to assist you in dealing with any areas of impurity in your life. Ask for His forgiveness in these areas of your life.

**Day 3:** Read James 5:16. Confess to God any sins you have been holding back. Have an open and honest conversation with God regarding these sins.

**Day 4:** Read Revelation 3:1-3. Spend time in prayer thanking God for what he has done in your life. Thank Him for his forgiveness and strength to live a life of purity. Praise Him during this time.

**Day 5:** Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12. Pray for those you know are struggling with impurity in their lives.