



Small Group Discussion Guide: We Carry Shame

Series: *What We Carry*

Date: 10/12/2025

Scripture: Psalm 139:1–14; Romans 8:1 (NRSVUE)

Opening Prayer

God who searches and knows us, thank You for drawing near—not when we are impressive, but when we are honest. By Your Spirit, replace secrecy, silence, and judgment with safety, speech, and grace. Let Your word of “no condemnation” in Christ take root in us today. Amen.

Introduction & Context

We all carry things seen and unseen. This week we name **shame**—the heavy, quiet voice that whispers “I am unlovable; I don’t belong.” Psalm 139 declares the opposite: God fully knows us and does not turn away. Romans 8:1 seals it: *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

Note: Shame intersects with family systems, trauma, culture, and faith experiences. Professional care (counseling, medical support) can be a faithful part of healing.

Read Together

- **Psalm 139:1–14** (aloud; consider 1–6, 7–12, 13–14 in three voices)
- **Romans 8:1** (in unison)





Discussion Questions

1) Naming What We Carry

- Where do you notice shame show up (e.g., late-night replay, self-talk, withdrawal)?
- Using Brené Brown's distinctions, which have you felt recently and how did you respond?
 - **Shame:** "I am bad." (identity)
 - **Guilt:** "I did something bad." (behavior)
 - **Humiliation:** "I was belittled by someone."
 - **Embarrassment:** "I did something awkward, and I know I'm not alone."

2) The Fear of Disconnection

- Brown says shame is the *fear of disconnection*. What relationships or settings most trigger that fear for you?
- How does our church/community sometimes (unintentionally) reinforce shame? How can we do better?

3) God Knows—and Stays (Psalm 139)

- Which line in Psalm 139 most challenges the shame story for you? Why?
- "Even the darkness is not dark to You." Share a time God's presence met you in a dark place.

4) No Condemnation (Romans 8:1)

- What difference does "now no condemnation" make *today*—before you change anything?
- Where do you struggle to believe that verdict, and what truth could you speak back to shame?

5) What Grows Shame / What Heals Shame

- Brown: shame **thrives on** *secrecy, silence, judgment*. How have you seen these at work?
- Brown: the antidote to shame is **empathy**. What does empathy look like in practice (what you say/do—and don't say/do)?



6) From Shame to Shalom (Wholeness)

- Where might God be inviting you to move from avoidance to **vulnerability** this week?
 - Kintsugi highlights cracks with gold. Where might God be turning a “crack” in your story into a place of connection or ministry?
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P.A.R. (Pray • Act • Reflect)

- **Pray:** Breath prayer throughout the day—Inhale: “*You fully know me.*” Exhale: “*You fully love me.*”
 - **Act:** Take one step from secrecy to safe connection (journal + prayer, tell a trusted friend, schedule counseling/pastoral care).
 - **Reflect:** Each evening ask: *Where did shame appear? Where did I notice God’s nearness/shalom? What helped interrupt the shame script?*
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Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You meet us in our hiding places and speak, “No condemnation.” Thank You for knowing us completely and loving us fully. Grow empathy among us, truth within us, and practices that lead us into wholeness. Lead us from shame to shalom—for Your glory and our good. Amen.

Key Takeaway

Shame says, “Hide.” Jesus says, “Abide.” In Christ, you are fully known and fully loved—**now**. As we replace secrecy with safety, silence with truth, and judgment with empathy, we learn to live the “no condemnation” life together.

This guide was developed from original content with the assistance of ChatGPT.