

RESISTANCE

GROUP GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you grow in your relationship with God and develop meaningful, lasting relationships with others. Get together with friends, or visit brookwoodchurch.org/groups to find a group of people already meeting. *Let's seek God together!*

Message Series: Resistance

Topic: Spiritual Warfare

Message 6: Victory from Shame

March 2, 2025

The years that lie behind you, with all their struggles and pains, will in time be remembered only as the way that led you to your new life.

Henri Nouwen

Connect

What's something you wish was more true of you?

Pray

Spend a couple minutes quieting your heart and drawing your attention toward God.

Consider these prayer points:

- God, I pray you'd reveal to me places I'm still feeling shame. I pray you'd give me courage to go there with You.
- I pray You would replace my shame with forgiveness and love.
- I pray You'll help me experience new life that comes only from Jesus.
- Please, Father, help me hear Your voice and sense You being with me.
- Father, today I pray you would father me.

Read

John 11:17-27 (NIV)

¹⁷ On His arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet Him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

Explore and Discuss

Insight: Jesus likely waited four days because of the Jewish superstition that a soul stayed near the grave for three days, hoping to return to the body. It was believed that after four days there was absolutely no hope of the person being brought back to life.

1. What’s the difference between how Mary and Martha reacted when Jesus arrived on the scene? Why do you think the writer included this detail when telling the story?
2. How would you have felt if you were Mary or Martha? One of the crowd?
3. Jesus assured Martha that Lazarus would *rise again*. What did she understand that to mean?
4. What does it mean that Jesus is the *resurrection and the life*?
5. What does this mean for you personally?

John 11:33-44 (NIV)

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴ "Where have you laid him?" He asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ "Take away the stone," He said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." ⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴² I knew that You always hear Me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that You sent Me."

⁴³ When He had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

6. What was Jesus feeling? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
7. Satan attacks (often in subtle ways) our view of Jesus. In this story, some people recognized Jesus' love, others were a bit more skeptical. Which of these can you relate to the most?
8. In what ways has Jesus helped you experience new life?
9. In what parts of your life do you still need freedom?

Insight: Many believe Lazarus' grave clothes represent the attitudes, habits, guilt and shame people continue to wear, even after becoming followers of Christ.

10. Lazarus came back to life... there's no way he would continue to wear his grave clothes! If Jesus brings people back to life, spiritually, why do people continue to carry the baggage of guilt and shame? How does this help you understand spiritual warfare?
11. Shame has plagued us since Adam and Eve bit into the fruit and realized they were naked. Their first instinct was to hide from each other and God (Genesis 3:7-11). What are ways people try to hide their shame?

12. Which of these can you relate with?

13. Jesus brought Lazarus back to life then told the disciples to take off his grave clothes. Has anyone ever helped you experience forgiveness and find healing from shame?

14. How does this encourage or change your view of what it means to have or be a good friend?

15. From this week's study, what do you think the enemy doesn't want you to see?

We don't rise above shame by refusing to be wounded by words; instead, we need help. The only antidote to shame is the word and touch of someone who delights in us. We need an alliance of love, one that knows our shame and suffering and refuses to look away, and offers the kindness of God instead of pity or mere sympathy.

Dan Allender, theallendercenter.org

Make a Move

Spend a few minutes in silence and ask God what He wants you to know and remember from this week's study and discussion. Is there an emotion or thought He's stirring in you? Is there a specific step God is leading you to take? Jot down some thoughts and share with your group or with a close friend.

Memorize

One of the best ways to hear God throughout the day is to store His words in your heart and mind.

Based on this week's theme, commit these words of Scripture to memory:

The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

John 11:44 (NIV)