



SIX WORDS

Week 2

The Very Good Gospel by Lisa Sharon Harper
Chapters 4 and 5

SIX WORDS

October 16 -
November 20

*Reading Scripture
Through The
Language Of Jesus*

Jesus was not a Christian. He was Jewish. In this series we're going to look at the meanings of six words in the language that Jesus spoke, giving us a fuller picture of his message and his hope for the world. Our prayer is that by unearthing the meaning of these words, our church community is called to the action of living a more abundant life.

OPENING:

Watch Brene Brown's TED Talk on [Listening to Shame](#) (2012) together as a group.

DISCUSSION:

Have different members of your group read this excerpt from Lisa Sharon Harper's book *The Very Good Gospel* aloud.

*"According to [Brene] Brown, there is a direct correlation between our fear of being disconnected from one another and our level of shame. At its heart, shame is a fear that our failures, our shortcomings, our true selves make us unworthy of connection. The core lie of shame is **I am not enough.**"*

"In the beginning, God declared all of creation to be very good (tov me'od). As we have discussed, the writers of Genesis were speaking not only of the separate parts of creation but also of the connections between things. If God declares that overwhelming goodness looks like the abundant wellness of relationships, then sin is anything that breaks relationships. The counteroffer is sin, which bring separation, distrust of God, and a reliance on human protection rather than a dependence on God.

Shalom says we are all connected. Every relationship created by God is strung together in a web of intimate relationships. To affect one is to affect all. So when our distrust of God leads us to separate ourselves from God, we also are separated from ourselves. We govern ourselves in our own ways, not in God's way. We don't trust ourselves. We don't choose ourselves. Even the narcissist, who seems to choose only himself, does it because his fear that his inherent unworthiness will be exposed, He places the barrier of the appearance of perfection between himself and everyone else as protection from exposure.

This is the picture of shame and this is its outcome."

RESOURCES

Brene Brown's first TED Talk, from 2010, [The Power of Vulnerability](#)

Brene Brown, [The Gifts of Imperfection](#) (audio version as [The Power of Vulnerability](#))

Brene Brown, [Daring Greatly](#) (audiobook)

Brene Brown, [Rising Strong](#) (audiobook)

Richard Rohr, [True Self, False Self](#) (audio only)

UPCOMING EVENTS

11/6 - [FCQ 2016: Brian McLaren](#)

Visit forefrontnyc.com/calendar-mh for more events

"In the end, shame leaves us standing alone -- separated from one another. It causes us to lash out, then tells us to cover our sin, to deny it and defend it and spin it. And on the flip side, sham leads us to craft armor to protect our hearts from more disengagement and separation. This is what it looks like to sew a protective covering of fig leaves, to believe the foundational lie that this sin, ours or theirs, is confirmation that we are indeed, worth nothing behind the fig leaves."

- Discuss both Brown's TED Talk and this excerpt from Harper's book.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lead your group through this reflection exercise from Lisa Sharon Harper. Make sure everyone has a piece of paper and a pen. (Say aloud the parts in italics.)

1. Ask the group to sit quietly and close their eyes, then to contemplate silently: *Imagine a time you felt ashamed. What was that feeling like physically and emotionally?*
2. *Pray silently. Ask God to reveal the lie that shame told you about yourself and the related lie that you are unworthy of connection.*
3. Ask the group to open their eyes and write down the lie.
4. Ask the group to respond out loud: *How did you respond to the lie that was told to you? Did you reach for a fig leaf? Did you withdraw? Did you lash out?*
5. *Take responsibility. Pray silently: confess the ways your shame led you to break relationships. Ask for God's forgiveness.*
6. *Continuing to pray: ask God to show you how God sees you. Ask God to show you what living according to that truth will look like in the way you will now interact with others.*
7. *Write down what you hear.* Ask group members to share what they wrote.
8. Pray aloud for your group. Pray for God to grow your shame resilience and thank God for the truth that you are loved, you are wanted, and you are enough.