

Series: Below the Surface.

Scripture and Background Information for April 25-May 01.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

The global pandemic has affected all of us. Although the pandemic started over a year ago, it is still one major topic in the news and general conversations. Simultaneously, there is a second global pandemic about which no one talks, yet all of us are experiencing it. With our series: *Below the Surface*, we as a church want to address the whole person and talk about the spiritual mental-health pandemic no one talks about. Today, we will look at **John 21:15-22** and talk about the pandemic of “Shame and Guilt.”

Background for John 21:15-21:

After Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected from the dead, he appeared to his disciples on several occasions. In our passage today, Jesus appeared to his friends and prepared some breakfast. Here we find Jesus asking Peter three times if he loves Him. Peter was ashamed by those questions, remembering his threefold mistake of denying Jesus. Note, Matthew reports that Peter was so adamant in his denial that he was cursing to convince his questioners that he does not know Jesus, which was the highest form of distancing oneself from another person in ancient Israel (Mt 26:69-75). Now, Jesus’ questions remind Peter of his denial, and Peter is confronted by his shame once again. Before Peter denied Jesus, Peter claimed that he would never abandon Jesus and that his love was more significant than the other disciples’ love (Mt 26:33-35). The questions are not questioning to receive an answer; instead, they are reflective questions. Peter was confronted and examined by Jesus.

Some questions to engage with the text:

1. Why do you think Jesus confronted Peter with the three questions? Was Jesus interested in repaying Peter the way he did to Him? (The next question might help you with the answer)
2. Although Jesus confronted Peter with His questions, what part of the text has grammatically and syntactically more weight ◊ Question or Instruction/Command? Even if Jesus shows us our weaknesses and failures, what is his ultimate goal with us?
3. How does Jesus’ response to Peter and his shame give us hope as we think about our own failures and the shame we experience as a result of them?

Note: Jesus promised Peter that he would deny and betray him before Peter acted. Jesus is God and knows everything about us; we cannot surprise him! Although, knowing our weakness, He wants to use us for His kingdom. What he wants from us is our total dependence on Him!