



The Trump Card Battle

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Focus The secrets, sin, and shame in our lives can give Satan an advantage over us if we allow him. Satan knows our weaknesses and will use them against us if we do not take these weaknesses to the cross. When we go to the cross and turn over our secrets, sin, and shame to the Lord, we gain victory and freedom.

Fun Name a game that you enjoy playing or one you often played during your childhood with your family. Who was usually the winner? When did you play?

Review Key Scriptures: Genesis 25:29–34; Hebrews 12:1–2

The Trump Card of Secrets

Luke 15:11–13; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Proverbs 23:7

Secrets are thoughts or images we allow to build a case in our minds. According to Proverbs 23:7, we can become what we picture in our minds. The prodigal son did not have the right thoughts in his mind and had secret plans to leave his father. Secrets need to be brought out of the darkness and into the light.

The Trump Card of Sins

Genesis 25:29–34

Sin starts in the heart, and it always requires more than you want to give. The sin of the prodigal son came from the image already established in his heart that caused him to abandon self-control. Like Esau, who gave up his birthright for a meal, a person can easily give up everything for one moment of gratification. We should be careful to avoid what we think are little sins because they will inevitably grow into large and costly ones.

The Trump Card of Shame

Hebrews 12:1–2; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Proverbs 23:7

Shame is the result of the fall, but we no longer carry shame once we accept Jesus. We have been forgiven even though the consequences from our fall may still remain. Satan will try and shame us with the past, but we should not fear because we know that God is pleased with His Son who lives in us. When the enemy wants to shame us, we can look to the cross because it is the power of God. After salvation, we need to continue taking our secrets, sin, and shame to the cross, and the Lord will claim the power of Jesus over the accusations of the enemy.

Group Dynamics Idea Consider conducting a service project in addition to your group meeting. Ask your group for suggestions or create one that reflects the talents and interests of your group (delivering meals or groceries, fixing a car, painting a room, sending cards, praying for missionaries, etc.). Select a coordinator and volunteers to take ownership and make it happen!

Discuss

1. Give an example of an if/then statement one might say in a very casual manner that could be used against them by the enemy. What would be an alternate statement to use that would declare God's power over the situation? *(Leader: You may want to give an example to start.)*
2. We have victory when we bring a secret out of the darkness. What are ways a person can bring a secret from darkness to light?
3. Once we allow an imagination to take root and then act on it, we can become a prodigal (or one without restraint). Little sins grow into big ones, starting as secrets in our heart. How would you challenge a friend who is demonstrating these actions? How would you want to be approached if it were you?
4. How would you encourage a person who has verbalized the feeling of shame? What scriptures come to mind that would encourage a person expressing shame? *(Leader: Have some available to share if needed.)*
5. *Close discussion with this exercise. Pass out notecards to each person and ask them to take 5 to 10 minutes on their own and return back for closing prayer. If possible, spread out so each person can sit alone. Another option*

is to ask them to do this at home. Directions: Take this time to ask the Lord if there are any secrets, sin, or shame you need to bring to the light and write it on the card. This will not be shared with the group. You may already have something in mind or there may be something that needs to be revealed to you. *Upon their return, ask them to take the time outside of your group meeting to give those things to the Lord and destroy the card in the process. Offer to pray after group with anyone who is in need of prayer.*

Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- Satan will look for ways to trip us up or tear us down.
- Make statements that will bring blessing and not give the enemy an advantage.
- Recognize when your mind is focusing on or imagining something immoral.
- Sin can be stopped by going to the cross and repenting.
- Even the little sins are dangerous because they will inevitably grow into bigger sins.
- Shame is not intended for us to carry. Jesus took our shame on the cross.
- We can have forgiveness and victory when we take our secrets, sin, and shame to the cross.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank You for the cross. Thank You for bearing our sins and shame so we can be free of them. Lord, we lay at Your feet anything hidden in our hearts that is not worthy or holy. Please forgive us for what we have allowed to build up in our minds that is not of You. We ask You to refresh our minds with things that are pure and holy and protect us from the enemy's lies and accusations. Forgive us of our sin and teach us to live without shame. Thank You that we can come to the cross boldly in freedom as Your children. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Silence during discussion can be a good thing. Don't be afraid to let silence work proactively within your discussion. Some questions may take a while to answer. It takes time for a person to hear a question, comprehend the concept, and then prepare a response. Give it time. If needed, rephrase the question and try again. Keep in mind that some questions may go unanswered. In that case, simply move on to the next question.