

WHY THIS SERIES? WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

- There's so much depression, addiction, and mental illness in our community.
 - The story with Dr. Becky Meyer, Chris McDougal, Ryan... **What we are doing...**
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THE ISSUES: HOW DID IT GET THIS WAY?

“What's the Crisis? THE CRISIS COMES in two parts. The first part is the deteriorating mental and behavioral health of U.S. children. We are witnessing high and rising rates of depression, anxiety, attention deficit, conduct disorders, thoughts of suicide, and other serious mental, emotional, and behavioral problems among U.S. children and adolescents.

“What's Causing the Crisis? IN LARGE MEASURE, what's causing this crisis of American childhood is a lack of connectedness. We mean two kinds of connectedness — close connections to other people, and deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning. Where does this connectedness come from? It comes from groups of people organized around certain purposes — what scholars call social institutions. *In recent decades, the social institutions that foster these two forms of connectedness for children have gotten significantly weaker.* That weakening, this report argues, is a major cause of the current mental and behavioral health crisis among U.S. children.”¹

We are living in the results today.

- The journal of the American Medical Association cited a study that said “people of each generation in the twentieth century were three times more likely to experience depression than the people of the preceding generation.”²
- Why? There's variety of reasons—pace of life, the media, social media, the food we eat, genetic predispositions...

THE GOALS FOR THIS SERIES:

1. We will talk about the stigma of mental illness.
2. We will make people aware of the spiritual war that's going on.
3. We will discuss the truth and how it's used as both a defense and a weapon against the enemy.

THE UN-TALKED-ABOUT ISSUE: The enemy of our souls.

- People are concerned and are trying to come up with a remedy.
 - Remember last week we talked about the Spiritual Realm sphere? The enemy is being missed. (**Ephesians 6:10-12**)
 - o His desire is to steal, kill, and destroy. He is a murderer and liar. (**John 8:44, John 10:10**)
 - **The 2 ways the enemy works:** Slow inevitable death of every design/purpose of God's—in every sphere. (Satan's lies kill in every sphere.) And suicide.
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THE FIRST LIE: Thinking, “Life is meaningless. I don't matter. I am worthless.”

Where does it come from? The Enemy, through our society. Our society has created a lie through the education system. Our secular educational system pushes materialism, and the theory of evolution where our kids are the product of random accidental processes. If this faith statement is true, then there are ramifications.

- We live in a world where lies are taught, and these lies have consequences:
 - o There is no God. There's no heaven. Or conversely, everyone goes to heaven.
 - o We're all accidental random outcomes of accidental processes... that we're all accidents...
- The ramifications are:
 - o The life of a deer, a person, and a bug is all have the same value: they're all meaningless.
 - o There's nothing outside of time, space, and matter. There's no spiritual meaning. There's no right or wrong beyond subjective truth.
 - o We end up leading the kinds of lives that leave us empty emotionally... lives full of busyness.

The lie, and how it plays out in this life:

1. Human life is meaningless; there's nothing special about it, so...
 - o It's okay to kill it through abortion. It's okay to kill others—through violence, etc.
 - o I am worthless, and I have no value.
 - o I have tried to do what will give me value in the eyes of people, and I can't. I have tried to do what should make me feel better, but it didn't work. People don't see me as valuable, based on the way they treat me, so it's true.
2. There is no afterlife. If you permanently end your pain, you have nothing to lose, there are no consequences.
3. I have sought to feel better through busyness, buying things, binge watching, eating, workaholicism...

THE TRUTH:

1. **God made each of us in His image. You are special. Your life is meaningful. (Genesis 1:26-27)**
2. **He knows you individually. You are valuable to Him. He wants to be in relationship with each of us.**
 - God has been thinking of you before time began. (Psalm 139:1-18)
 - God sees you personally, and He is present. (Matthew 10:29-31)
 - God knit you together with purpose and abilities in mind. (Jeremiah 1:5)
 - Only with His help do we really live.
3. **You have a meaningful purpose.**
 - You were already known in the womb—you were you (a person with a self) even then. (Jeremiah 1:5)
 - You were made for a purpose. (Ephesians 2:8-10)
4. **Though we live in a world that is broken, we have a future. (John 3:16)**
 1. You must embrace the truth for yourself, this spiritual reality and the truth that you matter to God. Your value is questioned by the enemy—this truth is under attack.
 2. Determine to live a life that protects the truth in you. Our God-given defense is built around God's Spirit within us, God's Word guiding and protecting us, and God's people fighting with us.
 3. Become aware that the devil is working against the value of others around you. Do not allow him to use you to reinforce lies in others.
 4. Look for the people on the fringes—your kids, their friends, your friends, family, coworkers, etc.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

Passages to consider: John 8:12,44; John 10:7-11; Genesis 1:26-31; Psalm 139:1-18; and Matthew 10:28-31.

Icebreaker: Play Two Truths and a Lie. Each person shares two truths and a lie about themselves without telling which are the truths and which statement is the lie. Everyone in the group tries to guess which statements are true and which is it a lie.

- As you listened to the sermon, what was impactful to you?

Questions:

1. Read John 8:12, 44 and John 10:7-11. How do these passages describe Satan? A) What do they say about Jesus?
2. What are some lies you see Satan sowing in our culture? (NOTE: This is NOT a time to focus on politics nor the details of the pandemic. ☺) A) What lies are harder for you to shake?
3. How can the relationships in the Abiding, Church, Home, and Spiritual spheres be part of battling lies?
4. Read Genesis 1:26-31; Psalm 139:1-18; and Matthew 10:28-31. What do these passages tell you about how God sees people, and how He sees you? A) What truth stands out to you?
5. What does it mean to be known and valued? A) What has been your experience with these?
6. How can we communicate the truth that we are known, valued, and cherished to ourselves, to those in our Church and Family spheres, and to those we encounter in our world?
7. What is your response to what God is showing you?

Passages to prepare for next week, Irreplaceable (Week 2) Am I Accepted?:

Read these passages a couple of times this week: Romans 5: 6-8; Romans 8:1, 37-39; Hebrews 9:11-15; 1 John 1:5-9; Revelation 12:10

RESOURCES for the Irreplaceable series can be found at: www.reallifeministries.com/irreplaceable

¹*Hardwired to Connect*, published in 2003, sponsored by YMCA of the USA, Dartmouth Medical School, and Institute for American Values.

²As quoted in Max Lucado's *Anxious for Nothing* p.6, citing John Ortberg's *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Part of You*.

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