



# Helping Family Members and Others Affected by Disability

Jeff McNair



# Points of discussion

- Stages of grief
- Being alone...not just feeling alone
- Uncertain future...new normal
- Special education and human services
- But what of the local church?

# Stages of Grief

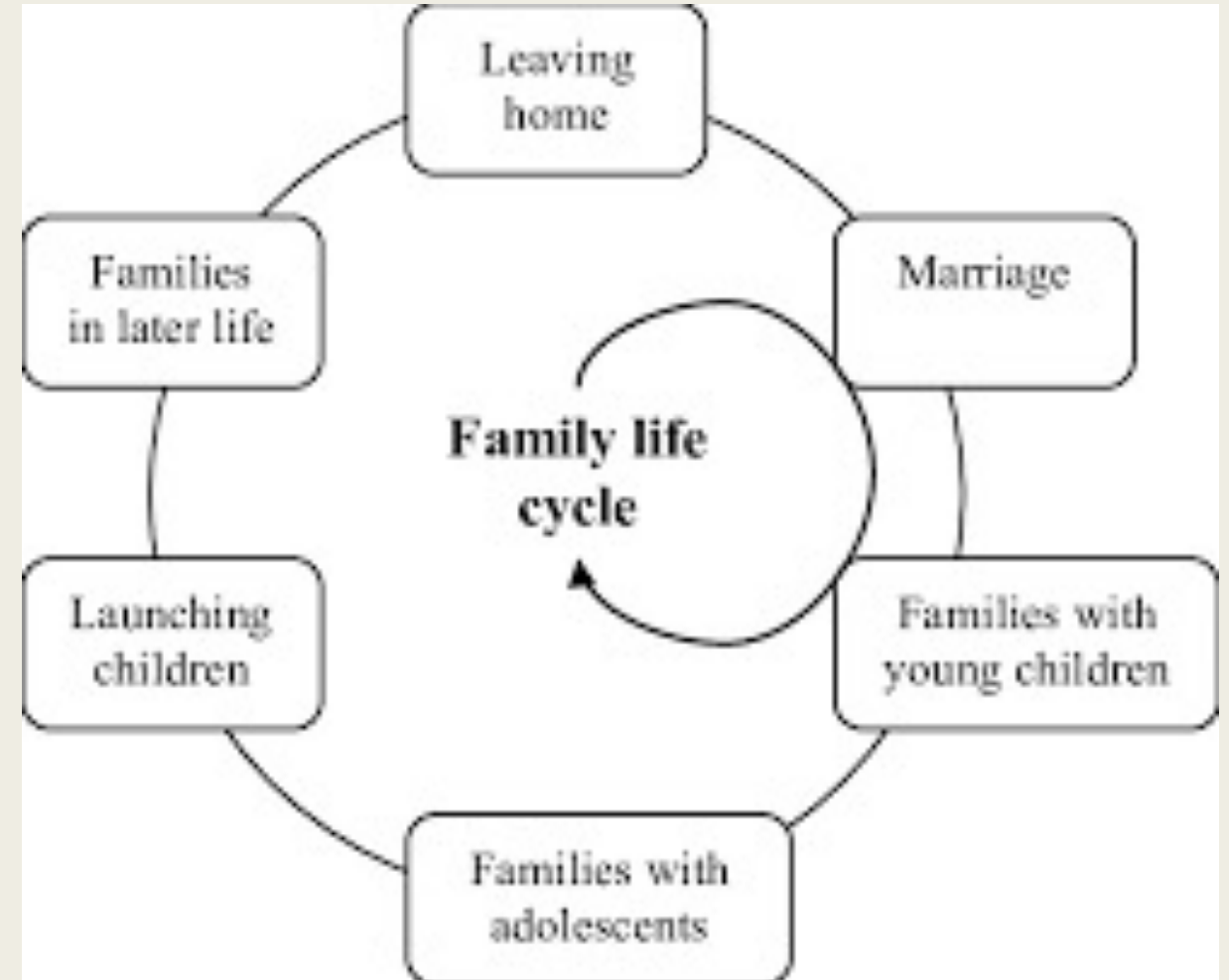


# Being alone...not just feeling alone

- Social isolation
  - *Distancing*
  - *Self-isolation*
- Corporate faith vs. individual faith

# Uncertain future

- Family life cycle
- “New normal”
- “Welcome to Holland”



# Special education and human services

- Identification of child as disabled
- Seeking appropriate services and supports
  - *Not always what is best...pedagogy vs. administrative convenience*
  - *Curriculum leading to adult outcomes*
    - Employment, independent living, social relationships
- Moving into adulthood and adult services
  - *Which services?*
  - *How to receive them*
- Long term support

# But what of the local church?

- God's sovereignty (Exodus 4:11)
- The Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12)
- How might we support families and others affected by disability?

# Responding to God's sovereignty... in Others



## From the Lord of the Rings trilogy

“Come, Mr. Frodo!” he cried. “I can’t carry it for you, but I can carry you and it as well. So up you get! Come on, Mr. Frodo dear! Sam will give you a ride...”

Frodo opened his eyes and drew a breath... “Thank you, Sam” he said in a cracked whisper. “How far is there to go?”

“I don’t know,” said Sam, “because I don’t know where we’re going.”

(J.R.R. Tolkien, 1965, p. 218)



# How do we “carry” others?

## **1. We can pray for change**

Hebrews 4:16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy and find grace to help us when we need it most.

### **Jesus in the garden Matthew/Mark/Luke**

Mark 14:35-36 He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by. “Abba, Father,” he cried out, “everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

How do we “carry” others?

## **2. We can suffer with, wade into the suffering of others**

### **We are a body**

1 Corinthians 12:25-26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

### **We are called to suffer for doing good**

1 Peter 2:20-21...But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you. For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.

# How do we “carry” others?

## 2. We can suffer with others

### **Jesus gave an example of how he wanted to be helped**

- Mark 14:34 He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”
- He came back twice and they were sleeping.
- Mark 14:41 When he returned to them the third time, he said, “Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest...”

Luke 22:43 Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him.

How do we “carry” others?

### **3. We can help people to hold onto their faith**

**Matthew 11:2-3** John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about the things the Messiah was doing. So, he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?”

# Who was John the Baptist?

## **Predicted**

Isaiah 40:3 “He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming! Clear the road for him!’”

## **The angel Gabriel appeared to his father Zechariah**

Luke 1:5-23 V17 He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly.”

# Who was John the Baptist?

## **Zechariah to the boy John**

Luke 1 76-77 “And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins.”

# Who was John the Baptist?

## **He baptized Jesus**

John 1:32-34 Then John testified, “I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. I didn’t know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.’”

Luke 3:22 ...And a voice from heaven said, “You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy.”

# Who was John the Baptist?

## **Jesus affirms John**

Matthew 11:11 “I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist.”

## **Reminds him of what he knows hold to faith**

Matthew 11:4-6 Jesus told them, “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen- the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor. And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.”



# Who was John the Baptist?

## **Verse Announcing verse...in your hearing Quoting Isaiah 61**

Luke 4:18-19 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.”

How do we “carry”  
others?

#### **4. We change**

1 Corinthians 12:22-23 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. (NIV)

If the sovereignty of God is not difficult in your life, reach out to those for whom it is and “carry” them.

If God’s sovereignty is difficult in your life, ask the Lord to help you to trust him.



Thank you for listening!

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# DISABILITY MINISTRY

Jeff McNair, Ph.D.

A story...



**Stage 1** Intuitive-Projective faith

**Stage 2** Mythic-Literal Faith

**Stage 3** Synthetic-Conventional faith

**Stage 4** Individuative-Reflective faith

**Stage 5** Conjunctive faith

**Stage 6** Universalizing faith



**Stages of faith development  
(Fowler, 1995)**

Some mistakes we may make...





# The Miracle approach

Isaiah 55:10

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.



# The juvenile approach

“Mental age”

Would you see other adult classes doing the same activities?

Leviticus 19:14

Programs for adults do things that children’s programs would do...

Crafts

Juvenile songs

Juvenile games

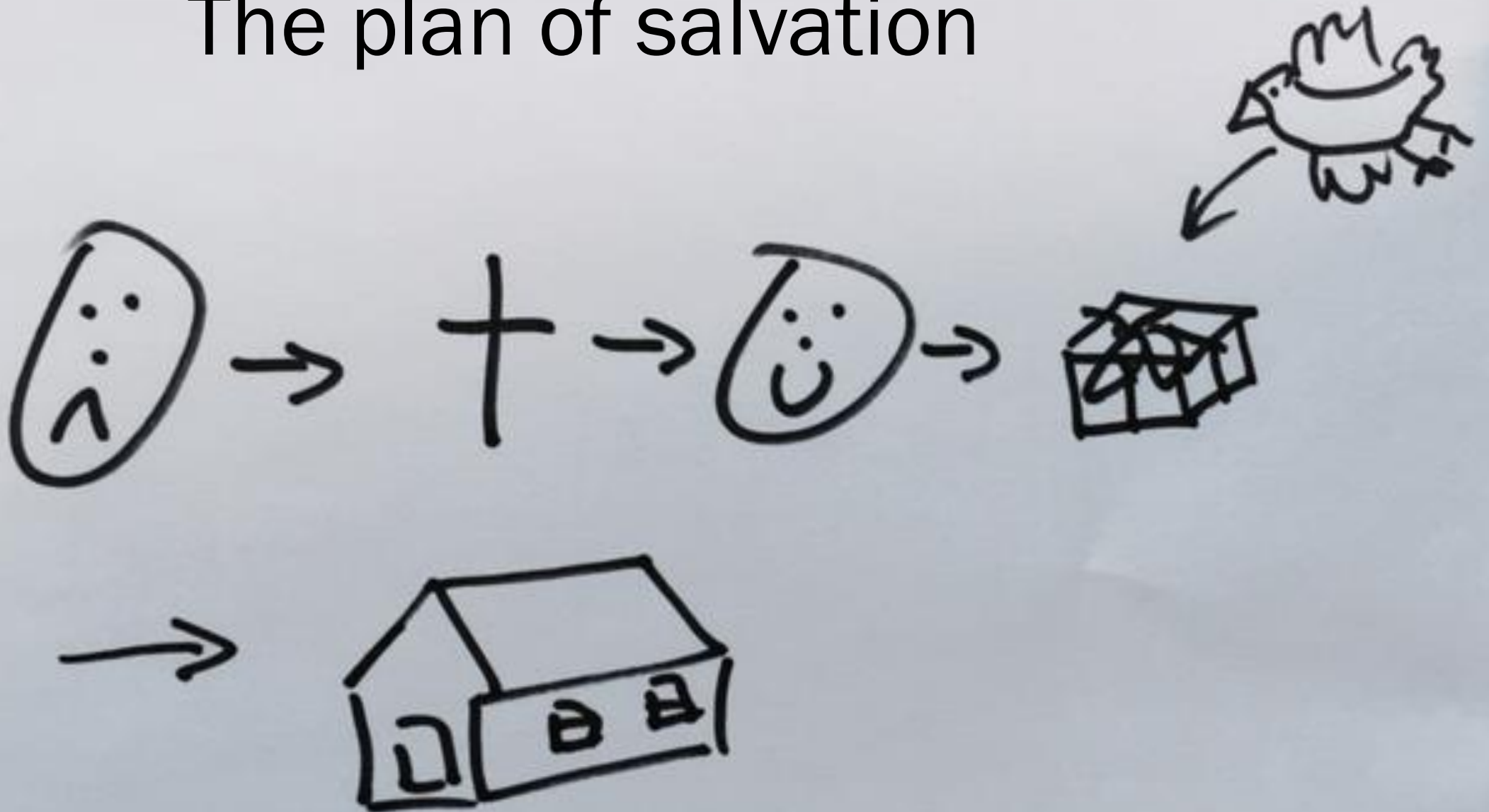




# IDEAS FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT

We are so glad you are here!

# The plan of salvation





EVERYONE  
GETS THE  
SAME  
BIBLE

# Faith development: Key memory verses

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the Lord with all  
your heart, don't lean on  
your own understanding.  
In all your ways  
acknowledge him and  
he'll make your paths  
straight.



# Faith development: Key memory verses

Romans 3:22

We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ, and this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.



# Faith development: Key memory verses

Philippians 4:6

Don't worry about anything but pray about everything.





# Faith development: Key memory verses

Hebrews 4:16

So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy and find grace to help us when we need it most



# Key concepts in teaching

Treat students  
according to their  
age...if adults



- *Adult concepts/topics*
- *Adult information*
- *Adult activities and class structure*
- *Only difference is vocabulary used*

# Key concepts in teaching

## Integration



# Key concepts in teaching

## Prayer

### “Help me”

- *Praying for others*
- *Commissioning*
- *Desiring prayer*



# Key concepts in teaching

Clarity vs. complexity

*Functionality – skills with a high probability of being required of someone*



Hopefully, you've gleaned some ideas you can use in your own ministry. Persons with intellectual disabilities are able to respond to the Gospel in a variety of ways.



# Thanks for listening!

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# CULTURAL CHANGES IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Jeff McNair, Ph.D.



# Traditions vs. the Commands of God



- Mark 7
- You ignore the commands of God
- You skillfully sidestep the commands of God
- You refuse to obey the commands of God
- ...and you do many things like that

## 12 Potential areas for Cultural Change

1. Facilitating presence
2. Who is invited to friendship?
3. Religious education/faith development –  
Practice/Goals/Outcomes
4. Affirming what should be affirmed in our culture
5. The typical worship service
6. Providing opportunities for involvement/roles
7. Creating platforms for prophetic voices
8. Seeing needs and addressing them
9. Programs versus relationships
10. Evangelize people with disabilities and disciple them
11. Broadening acceptable social skills
12. Ecumenical cooperation in supporting people with disabilities  
and their families

## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

### 1. Facilitating presence

Good Samaritan

“I feel like I am not ignored”

## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

2. Who is invited to friendship?

Chicago Church

## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

### 3. Religious education/faith development – Practice/Goals/Outcomes

What specifically are we trying to achieve?

Our “paradigm”

What does our history tell us?

## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

4. Affirming what should be affirmed in our culture

What things are we doing well that don't need to be changed?

## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

### 5. The typical worship service

What must stay the same?

What things are culture/traditions that can or should be changed?

## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

### 6. Providing opportunities for involvement/roles

Who serves in what ways in the church?

What roles might be developed for those with more limited abilities



## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

### 8. Creating platforms for prophetic voices

Grandmother example

Love God and love your neighbor

## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

### 9. Seeing needs and addressing them

Does loving our neighbors cost us anything?

What demands are we willing to place on our members?

## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

10. Evangelize people with disabilities and disciple them

- Are people with disabilities a priority for ministry?
- What is the evidence that they are a priority for ministry?
- If they aren't a priority for ministry, why aren't they?

“Whose people” are those who attend with disabilities?

## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

### 11. Broadening acceptable social skills

What might be acceptable changes in expected social skills within the church?

Are social skill traditions causing us to exclude persons whom we should be including?

## 12 Areas for Cultural Change

12. Ecumenical cooperation in supporting people with disabilities and their families

Could the support of persons with disabilities be something that could bring different denominations together?

From the Lord of the Rings

Haldir an elf says something to the effect

“The power of the enemy is seen in the disarray of those who oppose him.”

THANK YOU FOR  
LISTENING!

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# A Christian Model of Disability: The 5 Relationships

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# A Biblical Perspective on Disability

*All scripture applies to all people*

The individual with  
impairments in  
relation to God

The individual with  
impairments in  
relation to themselves

The individual with  
impairments in  
relation to the  
community

The community in  
relation with itself

The community in  
relation to God



- ▶ Created in God's image (Genesis 1:26)
- ▶ In need of salvation (Romans 3)
- ▶ Not the result of personal sin (John 9:3-5)
- ▶ Are a priority (Luke 14:21-22)
- ▶ Not due to a lack of faith (2 Cor 12:8-10)
- ▶ Made right with God (Romans 3:22)
- ▶ Complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10)
  - ▶ "Through the roof" (Mark 2:1-12)
  - ▶ Bartimaeus (Luke 18:35-43)

The individual  
with  
impairments in  
relation to God

- ▶ Created with a purpose (Exodus 4:11)
- ▶ Specifically created (Psalm 139:13)
- ▶ Evidence of the works of God (John 9:3-5)
- ▶ Indispensable (1 Cor 12:22)
- ▶ When I'm weak, I'm strong (2 Cor 12:8-10)

The individual  
with  
impairments in  
relation to  
themselves

- Sovereignty for community (1 Cor 12:18)
- Indispensable (1 Cor 12: 22)
- Worthy of special honor (1 Cor 12:23)
- Reveal neighbors (Luke 10:25-37)
- Desirable community members (Luke 14:21-23)
- To whom much is given (Luke 12:48)
- Suffer for doing good (1 Peter 2:20-21)

The individual  
with  
impairments in  
relation to the  
community

- **The Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-31)**
- **Love your neighbor (1 Cor 13:1-13)**
- **Greatest commandments (Luke 10:27)**
- **Who is not my neighbor? (Luke 10:29)**

The  
community  
in relation  
with itself

## The community in relation with God

- Sovereignty for community (1 Cor 12:18)
- No favoritism (James 2:1)
- Jesus and traditions (Mark 7:8-13)
  - Matt 9:19-22 – Woman who was bleeding
  - Matt 23 – Jesus confronting religious leaders
  - Luke 7 – Roman officer
  - John 4 – Samaritan woman
- Love brother you've seen (1 John 4:20)

# So the **individual** is...

- Created in the image of God
- Created with a purpose
- As they are that the works of God might be seen
- Impairments not the result of personal sin
- Impairments not due to a lack of faith
- A priority for ministry independent of personal characteristics
- Complete in Christ
- Seems weaker but actually indispensable
- Thought less honorable but actually worthy of special honor
- Reveals character of those around

# So the **community** is...

- The Body of Christ is God's design for people
- People are the way they are under the sovereignty of God for both themselves and for the community
- Within the Body of Christ there should be no favoritism shown to one group or person over another
- Inside or outside of the Christian community, everyone is a neighbor
- Should focus on relationships over programs
- If the community truly was as it should be, disability would be very different
- We are in need of cultural/tradition change

# So God is...

- Is love and loves people
- Has purpose in disability
- God makes people “deaf, dumb or blind”
- Additionally, because God is all powerful, he either causes or permits disability
- God may heal people, however, it is related to his sovereign purpose, not to someone’s faith
- Promises his grace and that it will be sufficient in difficult times
- Reveals things about himself through disability, e.g. His power is made perfect in weakness

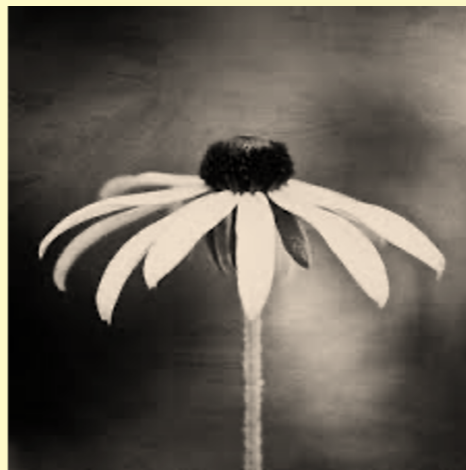


Thank you for listening!

<http://www.Jeffmcnair.com>  
go to articles section to find article  
about the Christian model

[disabledchristianity.blogspot.com](http://disabledchristianity.blogspot.com)

# WHAT IS DISABILITY?



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# disability

- What words come to mind when you hear this word?



# Models of Disability

- The Moral Model
- The Medical Model
- The Social Model
- The Christian Model



# The Moral Model of Disability

- Sin of parents, family or individual
- Being "cursed"
- "You have done something to deserve your life experience"



# The Medical Model of Disability

- Disability is housed in the individual who has the characteristic called “impairment”
- Focus is on "repairing" the individual
- May be evidenced in the desire for physical healing
- "Perhaps we can fix you."



# The Social Model of Disability

- The problem is not the individual with impairment it is the society around the individual that is the problem
- Disability, therefore, is a form of social discrimination
- "You have nothing 'wrong' with you, it is *all* due to society"



# The Christian Model of Disability

- We will unpack this more in a different session
- God's sovereignty
- God's image
- All people are equal and of equal value





# "Wounds"

The Social Consequences of Disability  
(Wolfensberger, 2001)

- 1-Bodily impairment
- 2-Functional impairment
- 3-Relegated to low social status
- 4- Systematic rejection
- 5-Historic deviancy roles

Not human/menace/waste  
material/object of pity/eternal  
child/sick/death related roles



# "Wounds"

(Wolfensberger, 2001)

6-Juxtaposition

7-Scapegoated

8-Distancing

9-Loss of control

10-Discontinuity with  
physical places and things

11-Social/relationship  
discontinuities

12-Absence of freely given  
relationships



# "Wounds"

(Wolfensberger, 2001)

13-Deindividualized

14-Material poverty

15-Im impoverishment of experience

16-Cut off from religious life/value systems

17-Have their lives wasted

18-Brutalization to point of death





# Effects of being wounded

- disturbed relationship with the world
- think themselves worthless and unlovable
- see themselves at fault for their treatment
- become self-destructive
- grieve over being a disappointment to others
- become more impaired as a result of their treatment

(Wolfensberger, 2001)

- Godly sorrow brings repentance...See what this Godly sorrow has produced in you;
- what earnestness,
- what eagerness to clear yourselves,
- what indignation,
- what alarm,
- what longing,
- what concern,
- what readiness to see justice done.”

# Godly Sorrow

## 2 Corinthians 7:8-11



# *Biblical/Cultural Replacement Narrative*

➤ Romans 12:2

➤ “Do not be conformed any longer to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

## Social Healing:

The feeling of healing that a person with an impairment knows through the elimination of the social consequences of disability from the environment

- The presence of people with disabilities will change the church
  - *more emphasis on service*
  - *worship will change*
  - *social skill dynamics will cause more openness*
  - *new ideas about what faith development means*
- Setting direction for the future of ministry to and with people with disabilities

Thanks for listening!

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