



Life Actually

By Kari Kampakis

A God-shaped hole

Have you ever heard the term “God-shaped hole”?

I heard it for the first time last year, and I knew immediately that I’d share it with my readers one day.

In essence, a “God-shaped hole” describes the spiritual space inside all of us that only God can fill. He created us for eternity, and our hearts innately desire to connect with Him. We yearn for this relationship, yet we try stuffing our God-shaped hole with earthly pleasures – work, family, passions, possessions, sports...the list goes on.

Sometimes the fit is completely off, like forcing a square peg in a round hole. Other times our earthly pleasures work like putty, filling the gap temporarily. We think we’re happy until one day, without warning, the void reopens, leaving us back at square one.

In thinking about my God-shaped hole, I’m reminded of a Bible study I did many years ago where the small group leader had us name the idols in our lives. Initially I thought I didn’t have any because I’d worshipped one God my entire life. Bowing to a false one had never crossed my mind.

But as women started spouting answers, I remembered how broad an umbrella “idol” can be. Anything that overshadows our relationship with God is game.

One woman in my group admitted, “My idol is my daughter. I worship the ground she walks on.” Although I didn’t have children at the time, I related to this. I could picture myself down the road, so wrapped up in parenting that everything else took a backseat. It was then I realized that even good things created by God—motherhood, for example—can become idols if they consume us.

And so I pose the question: What idols do you stuff in your God-shaped hole? What great loves do you pursue that, over time, still leave you with a nagging

dissatisfaction? For me, two things come to mind: my family and my writing. These are my passions, areas where I want to excel. They take up a lot of energy and time, often leaving me too drained for God. He gets what’s leftover – which is unremarkable, to say the least.

Of course, I fall victim to material idols, too, although I have grown to realize how meaningless “stuff” is. Rarely do I love anything as much as I do at the time of purchase. My infatuation with inanimate objects fades quickly, and the only way to get that thrill back is to buy something new – another piece of furniture, another dress, another bag or pair of shoes. It’s a dangerous cycle that’s easy to get caught up in, and it takes conscious effort to stay in check.

To me, a God-shaped hole explains why someone facing some terrible misfortune can be at peace while someone with abundant riches can feel hollow and alone. People with nothing have nowhere to put their trust except in God. Out of putty, they fill their hole with Him, inspiring others with their show of faith.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that God has “planted eternity in the human heart.” We were created to be with God, and no earthly idols can fulfill us like Him. Even our best relationships – with our spouse, our mom, our sister or best friend – will disappoint us and fail to measure up sometimes. Only one thing can fill the God-shaped hole, and that is a relationship with God.

As we prepare for Easter, may we all remember our God-shaped hole and rejoice in the Savior who died on the cross to fill this void inside us. Through Him we have a means to eternity. In Him, and only Him, we are complete.

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