

Session Two: "A Crisis in the Era of Therapy" (chapter 2)

A. Secular Perspective (*Bad Therapy* by Abigail Shrier):

1. Quote: "Why don't therapists typically admit that their methods can cause iatrogenic harm? A group of researchers considered the question and concluded that, unlike the doctor, the 'psychotherapist is the 'producer' of treatment,' and is 'therefore responsible, if not liable for all negative effects.' **The therapist often doesn't want to acknowledge that the medicine isn't working - because she is the medicine.** The admission is a little personal...Most therapists have no idea who has been made worse by their therapy because they make no effort to track side effects. The profession does not require it...When iatrogenic risks go untallied, the harms pile up, threatening the well far more than the sick...What would we expect to find if we steeped a generally healthy population in a tea of unnecessary mental health treatments? **Unprecedented iatrogenic effects.**" (pp. 12 and 13)

2. Quote: "The mental health establishment has successfully sold a generation on the idea that vast numbers of them are sick. Less than half of Gen Zers believes their mental health is 'good.' They do not believe mental health is something that arises typically, in the normal course of a balanced life, but like a boxwood tree, requires constant tending by the gardener you hire to prune it. The rising generation has received more therapy than any prior generation. Nearly 40 percent of the rising generation has received treatment from a mental health professional - compared with 26 percent of Gen Xers. Forty-two percent of the rising generation currently has a mental health diagnosis, rendering 'normal' increasingly abnormal. One in six US children aged two to eight years old has a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder. More than 10 percent of American kids have an ADHD diagnosis - double the expected prevalence rate based on population surveys in other countries. Nearly 10 percent of kids now have a diagnosed anxiety disorder. Teens today so profoundly identify with these diagnoses, they display them in social media profiles, alongside a picture and family name." (p. 17)

3. Quote: "We have plied members of the rising generation with more antianxiety and antidepressant medication than any prior. We've afforded them more mental health accommodations in school and in sports. They face less stigma for receiving mental health treatments, and so much more emotional sensitivity from adults in their lives...Suddenly, every shy kid had 'social anxiety,' or 'generalized anxiety disorder.' Every weird or awkward teen was 'on the spectrum' or, at least, 'spectrumy.' Loners had 'depression.' Clumsy kids had 'dyspraxia.' Parents cease to chide 'picky eaters' and instead diagnosed the accommodated the 'food avoidant.' (Forma diagnosis: 'avoidant restrictive food intake disorder,' or ARFID" ...No chiding kids for messy handwriting (that was 'dysgraphia'). No telling kids with the blues that it takes time to adjust to a new town or new school (they have 'relocation depression')...We've all been swimming in therapeutic concepts so long we no longer note the presence of the water....Seventy-five years of rapid expansion in mental health treatment and services had landed us here, marveling at the unprecedented psychological frailty of American youth"...And yet as treatments for anxiety and depression have become more sophisticated and more readily available, adolescent anxiety and depression have ballooned." (pp. 18-20)

4. Quote: "Tic disorders, gender dysphoria, anorexia, dissociative identity disorder, trichotillomania, cutting: the parade of horrible induced by smartphones could fill a psychiatric manual of its own. If smartphones were a boy who wanted to see your daughter, a generation ago, parents would have taken one look at him and said: 'No way am I letting that kid in the door.'. The smartphone and the rise of social media offer a compelling candidate for an environmental cause of poor adolescent mental health...None of the psychological organizations issued any such call to arms. In the last decade, as the average age of child getting a first smartphone dropped to age ten, these organizations had little to say about it...In truth, the entire society has dropped the ball when it comes to kids and smartphones. Why have parents continued to supply these devices in even greater numbers to younger and younger kids? ...Why do parents continue to gift \$1,000 phones to kids knowing full well that they are linked to a rise in depression, anxiety, and self-harm?...At a minimum, smartphones take a teen further from the world of in-person friends and activity likely to bolster sense of well-being. They are undoubtedly responsible for exacerbating a variety of social contagions, from tic disorder to gender dysphoria...That we persist in handing these devices to young teens and tweens is itsTelf a symptom of a larger problem." (pp. 22-24)

5. Quote: "She may promise to understand you, but let's face it: your therapist will not be prized from her hourly billing to celebrate the birth of your child just because it feels so monumental that one of you had a baby...Therapists care about you in the practiced manner and to the precise extent any professional does a client - for the duration of a 'fifty-minute hour,' so long as she takes your insurance or you remain cash-flow positive...The social critic Christopher Lasch once observed that therapy 'simultaneously pronounces the patient unfit to manage his own life and delivers him into the hands of a specialist. As therapeutic points of view and practice gain general acceptance, more and more people find themselves disqualified, in effect, from the performance of adult responsibilities and become dependent on some form of medical authority.'"...Before we hand over the delicate psyches of every single child to their totalizing indiscriminate mental health interventions, it's worth scrutinizing the efforts already underway. At best, they have failed to relieve the conditions they claim to treat. **But far more likely: the methods and treatments mental health experts champion and dispense are already making young people sicker, sadder, and more afraid to grow up.**" (pp. 35-38)

B. Biblical Perspective (*The War on Children by John MacArthur*): (Introduction and Chapter One) page 4

1. **Quote:** "Our children are born with a significant disadvantage: Their parents are sinners. Of course each child starts out fallen, with a sin nature of his or her own. and they are born into a world in which they will endure the impact of the sins of their parents, grandparents, and all the sinful generations that existed before the. They have to live with the cumulative effects of all the wickedness that preceded them. Their world is cursed by sin, and the culture in which they live has been shaped by generations of evildoers. The Lord describes this reality as part of His righteous judgment. In Ex. 20:5, He admonished the Israelites not to follow the idolatrous ways of the pagan nation, warning them, 'I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.' ...The prophet Jeremiah likewise notes that God 'repays the iniquity of fathers in the bosom of their children after them' (Jer. 32:18)...That doesn't mean God personally punished children for the specific sins of their parents. Those statements are all qualified by the closing words of Ex. 20:5: 'of those who hate Me.' It's speaking mainly of people who are participants in the same sins as their fathers and grandfathers. God does not arbitrarily transfer guilt across the generation. The 'woke' notion of ethnic or generational guilt is a fallacy. (Ezekiel 18:20)

2. **Quote:** "What ever a parent's sinful proclivities are, his or her children will invariably have to live with damage left in the wake of those sins. In other words, children inherit a world that is shaped and defined by the sins of their parents, and they must navigate their way through the corruption that prior generations have left to them. Our culture today is the product of centuries of vile and horrific sins. It has been shaped by the wretched desires and wicked intentions of hell-bent hearts. It is a universal reality that each generation passes on to the next a more corrupt world than the one they inherited. In my lifetime alone, the world has rapidly grown more comfortable with sins and more eager to celebrate its pervasive influence. I shudder to think, should the Lord tarry, how future generations will sink further into sin... But what disturbs me most about the twenty-first-century world- what grieves my heart more than anything else - is the way our media, educational institutions, and other influencers in our culture (including government officials and government agencies) are waging war on children...Every day, on a multitude of battlefronts, Satan is deploying weapons of mass corruption against our children. Modern culture has been systematically designed with an agenda that is aggressively anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Scripture, intended to corrupt and consume young, impressionable hearts and minds. Preoccupied, foolish parents offer little resistance."... "God's people need to be aware of the specific threats this world poses to our children. We need to understand the enemy's battle plan and be ready to spot where the next assault is coming from. And we need to prepare our children for the attacks they will inevitably face from a culture intent on their destruction. This world has declared war on children. Are you ready to fight?" (pp. xv- xviii)

3. **Quote:** "It is encouraging to know that despite the difficulties presented by our culture, Christian parenting - rooted in the Word of God and godly living within a faithful church community - is God's design for raising the next generation to love and follow Jesus. That goal is achievable, and although cultural trends may appear to place insurmountable obstacles in the way of biblical parenting, all the strategies employed by the evil one to corrupt our children can be overcome by the power of God when we faithfully align our lives and families with His revealed will...A Chinese proverb wisely states, 'One generation plants the trees, and the next generation enjoys the shade.' That sums up the crucial role each generation should play in shielding our children from evil influences and thus securing a better future for them. It is a reminder for all of us to recognize our duty in shaping the character of the children God has given us." (pp. 1, 2)

4. **Quote:** "Today we face formidable challenges...virtually every aspect of our culture is being weaponized to harm and corrupt children systematically. The destruction starts before birth with murder in the womb. The staggering number of abortions since Roe v. Wade in the 1970's, totaling 62.5 million, is a heartbreaking statistic....beyond even that, we are seeing the deliberate breakdown of traditional family structure. A child's chances of even being born to a married couple now hover around 50/50...The book of Judges describes the end of Joshua's life, and how Israel quickly fell away from following God (see Judges 2:6-8, 10). In just one generation, Israel turned away from God. In just one generation they forgot who He is and all He had done for them. What a disaster to not pass on the rich history of His covenant promises and His faithful provision! What a catastrophe not to impart that spiritual truth and wisdom to the next generation of God's covenant people!" (pp. 2-10)

5. **Quote:** "Believers must understand that we live in hostile territory, surrounded by satanic ideologies designed to lead hearts away from God and the truth of His Word. Christian parents today face an extreme challenge, in many ways far more difficult than most of our immediate ancestors ever had to contend with. Ironically, some of the things that supposedly make our lives more convenient - television, the Internet, text messaging, and smart phones - add to the difficulties we face in trying to protect our children from this world's assaults." (p. 14)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Abigail Shrier believe that therapists have difficulty in admitting that their methods can bring harm?
2. What are the dangers of successfully selling the idea that vast numbers of this generation are 'sick'?
3. What are the dangers of smartphones and easy access to many social media platforms and what can you do about it?
4. How does John MacArthur explain Ex. 20:5 in the light of Ez. 18-20? Explain "generational effects of sin."
5. Positively, what steps are you taking to protect your children and grandchildren from their hostile environment?