

# **Voices: We've got holes in the souls of our shoes**

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Christmas is my favorite time of year! I have loved it my entire life. We were reminded again and again in our churches and homes that Christmas is indeed the time to celebrate the birth of our precious Jesus.

I hope the celebration of Jesus is not just a one-time event at a designated season of the year, but that we celebrate him all year long.

This year, though, Christmas seems like it was such a long time ago, despite being only about two months past.

## **Heavy words following after Christmas**

Our words have changed significantly in these weeks since Christmas. Words like sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, aggravated assault, starved, locked up, murdered, beaten and so many other heavy words have taken over the headlines.

The words describe people's horrible treatment of others. Behind each phrase are victims who will suffer—often in silence—for the rest of their lives.

Sadly, we have heard these words for a long time, and not just during the past two months. The heaviness of the words represents our incomprehensible violent treatment of each other. Such violence has resulted in movements like Black Lives Matter, #MeToo and many more that have become commonplace in our society.

The actions spawning the names, however, cannot continue to be

commonplace.

Can we just stop this horrible behavior, please?

## **Life-giving words to combat horrible deeds**

Sometimes, I wonder if our present-day actions and words have become so much a part of our daily lives that they have no shock value to us.

Or maybe we have lost our ability or desire to enter into conversations in our homes, in our congregations or in our communities because we really do not believe—deep down—things really can change.

Or maybe we have become so self-centered that we want what we want whenever we want it.

Or maybe, as some would suggest, we have lost our moral compass.

Every time I wonder about the possible reasons for our behavior, I am reminded of so many positive and encouraging Scripture verses that assure us God is our creator and loves us.

From the very beginning, we are told that after God created everything else, he was lonely and therefore created man and woman.

God made us each—male and female—in his image. We are each made in God's image. We are called to honor and dignify each other, not to take away from each other or to leave others damaged for the rest of life because of our behavior.

God loves us so deeply! That realization is not meant to be idealistic, but to influence the way we treat each other.

# We've all got holes in our souls

My entire adult life has been spent as a woman in ministry in a world full of male counterparts.

One day, we were at a monthly ministers' conference. We were sitting informally in our usual circle, getting ready for our meeting to start. As I looked around, I noticed how well-dressed each pastor was in his suit and tie, and I noticed all of their shoes were shined.

As the group became more comfortable, the pastors began stretching their legs in front of them, propping up their legs on the heels of their shoes. I was amazed at what I saw. Each man had a hole in the sole of one of his shoes!

The holes in their soles made me think of the holes in our souls.

For the hundreds and thousands of people who have been hurt through some abuse of power, I wonder how God is going to repair and fill the holes that undoubtedly are in the lives of so many victims.

Filling the holes in our souls takes a deep loving commitment, not only to God, but also to each other.

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