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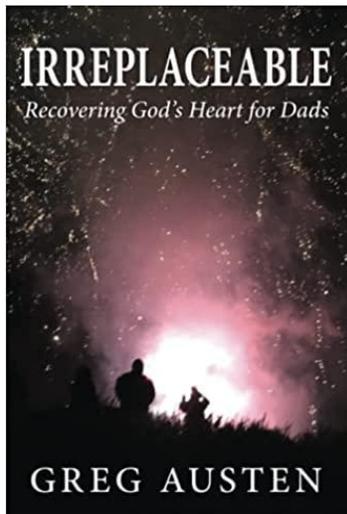
FATHERHOOD EXPERT SPEAKS TO CRITICAL CULTURAL ISSUE IN HIS LATEST BOOK

Greater Philadelphia-based Author Says Dads Are “Irreplaceable”

OCEAN CITY, N.J. (Feb. 10, 2023) – Theological. Cultural. Personal. With his latest book, *Irreplaceable: Recovering God’s Heart for Dads*, Greg Austen weaves three compelling approaches into a narrative that speaks to fathers of all ages.

For Austen, *Irreplaceable* is the culmination of a unique journey that includes pastoral, social-service, and doctoral work, including eleven years at National Fatherhood Initiative, as well as being a parent of three children who are now adults.

“One of the greatest joys in my life was fathering my children,” said Austen, 57. “Parents and especially fathers—more than any other people on the planet—are in a strategic position to introduce their children to the possibility of friendship with God!”



In *Irreplaceable*, he combines a theological foundation with a rich social understanding of the issue of father absence, along with the challenges faced in contemporary culture, notably in chapters such as “James Bond and the Trinity,” “Irreplaceable Moms and Marriage,” and “Patriarchy, The Nuclear Family, and the LGBT Movement.”

“Fatherlessness is our most consequential and damaging social trend, linking to poverty, incarceration, school dropout rates, gun violence, substance abuse, etc.,” Austen said.

Whether expounding on the topic of “Knowing God as Father,” or teaching readers to properly understand Malachi 4:6 (*He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children...*), Austen drills deep to the heart of the matter: fathers are simply vital and irreplaceable.

“Without question, the most important ‘pastor’ a child will ever have in their life is a parent,” he writes. “If you are a dad who loves God—you are the primary conduit for passing on His heart to your kids.”

In praise of *Irreplaceable*, Rob Denler, Men’s Services Director at Life Network in Colorado Springs, CO, said, “Greg digs deep into the core of God’s love for fathers and family and then explores how to apply it in a society that, at times, seems opposed to those ideals. What’s more, *Irreplaceable* is balanced with incredible transparency about his personal experiences with his own father, as well as his own journey as a dad.”

In a section entitled “The Father Wound,” Austen writes humbly and candidly about the brokenness in the relationship with his dad.

“The father wound is a pervasive theme in many of our stories. Healing and personal growth are messy and not easily packaged. As theologian and author Henri Nouwen observed, each of us—even at our best—are still ‘wounded healers.’”

In his current role as Director of Church Outreach and Engagement for Care Net, a support organization for 1,300 pregnancy centers, Austen is deeply connected to the issue of fatherhood. Previously, at the National Fatherhood Initiative, Austen was the lead for a successful, multi-year project, *Engaging Fathers for Successful Reentry*, which was funded by the Department of Justice.

Austen, who calls fatherhood “a great calling and sobering responsibility,” is hopeful his book will encourage and empower fathers to engage emotionally and spiritually with their families in view of passing on an irreplaceable legacy. *Irreplaceable* includes study questions and chapter takeaways that make it ideal for men’s small groups.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Greg Austen is the Executive Director of Church Outreach & Engagement for Care Net and a part-time church planter with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Before coming to Care Net, he worked with National Fatherhood Initiative for eleven years. A seasoned communicator and community strategist who has worked with a variety of denominations, Austen holds a D.Min. from Westminster Theological Seminary, an M.Div. from Southern Seminary, and a B.S. from Cairn University. Austen has a special heart for fathers and families, millennials, and those who’ve been hurt by the church or are on a path toward “deconversion.” He writes a weekly blog at carpentertheologian.com and previously wrote *How I Became a Christian Despite the Church*. Austen lives in the Greater Philadelphia area with his wife, Pam, near their three children and seven grandchildren.