

The Concurrently Companion



Episode 39: Family and mission in wartime Ukraine (with Doug Shepherd)

Topic introduction

Today we talk with Doug Shepherd, missionary to Ukraine, for his insight into the background, current context, and discipleship and missional response to the war in Ukraine.

Keywords and places: *Imperialism, democracy, ideologies, Soviets, Moscow, Crimea, Odessa, Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv, Kraków, Romania, Mariupol, trauma*

Questions for reflection and discussion

Doug spent time comparing/contrasting what ministry looked like before vs. what ministry looks like now. What did you notice? What did you learn? Where can you draw out the learning for your children as you seek deeper understanding of ministry life/the life of the church in Ukraine?

How does Doug and Masha's self-examination (Should we stay here? Is this worth dying for?) press into your growth in discipleship? How does hearing their story challenge you? Where does it make you examine your heart, your values, your action in the world?

What does faithfulness look like within a shifting culture (where an entire government or way of thinking is experiencing change on a grand scale) or a culture under threat from an external entity?

How do we wrestle with a parental instinct to prevent pain in light of the places the Lord puts children (schools, relationships, etc.) or even where he places us as families? What do we need to believe as we walk through those days and experiences?

How can you "calibrate conversations about the fallen world" in an age- and stage-appropriate manner? What do you need to observe in your children to determine what they can handle? Their level of emotional/mental health?

What helps did you take away from Doug and Masha's process with their children? What healthy structures and support did/do they seek to provide in high challenge? What does that need to look like in your home regarding your own challenges as you engage the world in which you live?

Pause and reflect on the response of the people of Mariupol: "Don't think of me, think of somebody else." How is persecution and trauma causing the church in Ukraine to express love in a way that covers a multitude of sins?

Where can I continue to build up myself, my children, my church in the promises of God for His people?

Questions to ask your kids or students

Spend some time locating Ukraine on the map. Compare it to a map of Texas. What are you curious about?

We talk a lot about the broken side of smartphones. How have smartphones had an impact for good in the course of the history of Ukraine?

How is democracy “threatening” to other types of government?

Imagine you have one bag to pack. What would you bring? Why?

How can we as a family serve people in contexts like Ukraine? How can we discover those contexts and what the needs are?

Which of God’s promises do you know and cling to?

Scriptural anchors/provision

Psalm 13:

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,” lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Romans 8:38-39:

Neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities or powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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