



When Life Feels Empty
7 Ancient Practices to Cultivate Meaning

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Isaac Serrano (ThD, Evangelical Seminary) serves as lead pastor at South Valley Community Church in Gilroy, California. He also serves on the leadership team of the ReGeneration Project and is an adjunct professor teaching theology and ministry at Western Seminary.

We Were Made for More Than the Material

What motivated you to write this book?

Isaac Serrano: I serve as a pastor and teacher, and for the last two decades I have listened to both Christians and non-Christians articulate a common feeling. A feeling that something is missing from their life. Most of the time, it's hard to pinpoint and even harder to articulate, but time and time again they say they have everything they need but nevertheless feel something lacking. There is an enduring feeling that life is empty and without meaning and purpose.

This feeling is especially pronounced with younger people, but I have seen it across the board. My hope is that whether someone finds themselves feeling this way or knows others who have expressed similar sentiments and wants to help, this book will aid them.

Why is your approach to the topic of life feeling meaninglessness distinct? What is your main message?

Serrano: Materialism says there is nothing outside the physical world, nothing transcendent, no loving Father above. Humans need and long for meaning and purpose and that cannot be found in the confines of materialism. We are left feeling empty. We were made for more than just the physical.

The remedy: reject materialism and embrace belief in God.

The unique approach the book takes is making a case that although belief in God is good, mere belief will not sustain individuals as they live inside the world materialism created. Belief must be buttressed by the rites, rituals, and practices of our spiritual ancestors. The first Christians gave us the means by which we not only believe in a different story, but we embody and inhabit it. In learning to live inside of the true story of ourselves, the world, and God, we can discover a life of meaning and purpose. We can move from emptiness to fullness.

What are the five main things you want readers to take from *When Life Feels Empty*?

Serrano:

1. Materialism is false and robs humans of meaning and purpose.
2. Materialism is the ecosystem/story we live in, and it leaves the modern individual miserable and empty.
3. The truth is there is a God; you have a loving Father above.
4. Your belief in him will be strengthened in and through the ancient rites, rituals, and practices given to us by the first Christians.
5. You can find meaning and purpose as you learn to live inside and embody the Christian story.



Eva Pankratz, book reviews, excerpts, and original articles
epankratz@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com

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Tangible Answers for Soul-Consuming Questions

Have you been searching for something deeper—a sense of belonging, purpose, or peace that the world seems unable to give? When you're told that the world is just physical, life has no higher meaning, and fulfillment comes from chasing temporary pleasures, it's no wonder emptiness creeps in. But what if there's a way to replace that hollow feeling with fulfillment, purpose, and hope? What if you could awaken to a more meaningful story—one written by a God who loves you and knows you?

When Life Feels Empty covers these questions, and more:

- What is missing from my life?
- Why am I unsatisfied with my faith?
- How do I fill my hollow feelings with fulfillment?
- Where do I find the answers to the “whys” of life?
- What is the meaning of life? Is it all purposeless?
- Where do I go when my problems, pain, and suffering seem too great for this world?
- Why do I feel so empty?
- Where is the source of life found?
- How can beauty help us find what is larger than life?
- What does it mean to “borrow” meaning and purpose from religion, and why is it a danger?
- How do I know that Christianity isn't another failed grabbing for meaning?

“We live in an age of perpetual dissatisfaction. What ‘is’ always feels disappointing when compared with what ‘could be,’ and we find ourselves exhausted on the hedonic treadmill, always chasing, never arriving. But the answer to our angst is found in what ‘always has been.’ With cultural precision and pastoral wisdom, Isaac Serrano guides us across our history as the people of God and leads us into a future of meaning, purpose, and joy. For any and all seeking a life of fulfillment, When Life Feels Empty is the guidebook you’ve been searching for.”

—Jay Y. Kim, pastor and author of *Analog Christian*



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