

Five Reasons Soul Care Matters!

by Stephen W. Smith



1. We are living in perilous times that are unparalleled in history. The tectonic plates of the world are shifting to make this THE most fearful time in the history of our nation. Political melt downs in Congress. Recession. Inflation. Wars on several fronts. All and more make this an unsteady and nervous time. Fear is now the predominate emotion people feel and from the looks of things, we are not going to improve quickly. We need Soul Care because we need a foundation to stand upon with so much erosion around us. The soul absorbs so much stress around us; and the stress harbors—making us fearful of what our lives might become and the lives our children will have to face.

2. We've lost our way. Today we are unsure about which way to turn and who can really help us. Without direction, we are tossing and turning in our beds without rest and left to wonder, fret and live in fear. Is it the Democratic way? How about the Republican way? Is it the church way, the city way or the country way? Soul Care offers direction for not only HOW to live but offers us a sustaining way to live. Soul Care embraces *rhythm* rather than seeking to live in the myth of balance. Balance is bunk in a world where survival is the name of the game.

3. Jesus said that caring for our souls is vital and important. He asked, "And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?" (Matt 16:26). We can lose our soul. Sometimes along the way of life, we have to ask ourselves the question, What are we losing with all that we have gained? The American Dream is becoming a nightmare. We are now forced to rethink everything. Caring for our soul, guarding our heart and watching our lives are all commandments in the Scriptures. Through a practice of caring for your soul, we can live in unsteady times because our anchor is not tied to the stock market or the debt crisis in Europe. Our joy is found in a Kingdom perspective. Our security is in a perspective that says, "I'm a citizen of the Kingdom; and I choose this day to live with a long-term view of reality." We learn to care for our souls by watching the ways Jesus and the early church leaders cared for their souls. They knew hard times. Yet they lived above circumstances. We can do the same. We must do the same.

4. Soul care helps us navigate the white water of life. We can get killed in whitewater that can drown us and leave us exhausted from the fight. Yet in the midst of perilous times, followers of Jesus can learn how to rise about circumstances; how to redefine contentment, how to find a sure foundation in the midst of cultural quicksand when everything changes. We learn to live in a rhythm that sustains—a way that energizes us within. We gain a perspective that is life-giving, not life-draining.

5. We have one life to live and this is not a dress rehearsal. Jesus spoke more about life than he did other subjects, yet we are confused about what this "abundant life" really consists of. Most folks I know do not use the word "abundant" to describe their one and only life. Yet, this one word "abundant" is precisely the word Jesus chose to offer us to cast a vision of what a deeply satisfying life could look like. We need to get it right or we will find ourselves waking up to the fact that the life we wanted is not possible at all. We will mistakenly relegate Jesus as a master storyteller who seemed to over-promise and under-deliver.

By taking time for yourself, you can regain a perspective on life that is true. Busyness robs us of life. The busy life is not the abundant life. Through learning how to implement practices such as silence and solitude into our lives, we can learn to listen to God's voice calling us to the right or to the left. We will not be left to our own impulses.

For more help in learning how to care for your soul, please consider reading *Embracing Soul Care*. It's one of my favorite books I've written. With short, daily entries, I lead you on a 360 degree walk around your life. I ask you three questions to ponder about your own life and to reflect on the lives of those you love.