

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday July 28, 2019. "Soul Keeping: Practices for a Healthy Soul"

I. Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

II Recap.

We hit our final teaching in our July series on the book "***Soul Keeping***" by John Ortberg. There's entirely too much material to cover here, but we want to bring you up to speed. John's premise is the soul is the essence of all we are. It encapsulates our other centers of who we are, our heart, mind, body, and because of the soul's connection to God it helps us live a more balanced and fulfilling life. Thru difficult times, and all that we deal with, our soul is the stabilizing force in our life. And if we can care for it well, rest, stay close to God, find freedom from the temptations of the world, and do good, we can have a balanced healthy soul.

III Sunday.

So in our final installment on "***Soul Keeping***" we talked about practices that we can work into our daily life that will help us maintain and grow a healthy soul. Some behind the curtain truths of what church staffs struggle with. It's finding that balance between not making our relationship with God and our salvation based on works, (that's in the scriptures you know), and that growing a relationship with God does require work and effort. It's not to earn God's favor or any special status, but just the truth that all growth has to come from actually doing the work.

So, at the risk of getting way too philosophical, how do you understand and practice, or at least try to, that balance between grace and works?

Kal highlighted we have to have this self-aware, (a constant message from him), understanding that most of what we say and do is out of our conscious awareness. And we have to intentionally grow the ability to know ourselves, what motivates and moves us. And to do the work to use that self-awareness to build better habits into our daily life. The scripture was **Jeremiah 6:16**, where the prophet was instructing the Israelites to go back to the old tried and true path that kept them close and aligned with God. So read the passage first and then we'll talk about those 'practices'.

Three practices to care for our soul.

1. Practice of Grace.

“The greatest saints are not those who need less grace, but those who consume the most grace, who indeed are the most in need of grace - those who are saturated by grace in every dimension of their being. Grace to them is like breath.”

-Dallas Willard.

Grace is the conduit that opens the door for a growing relationship with God, and grows perspective within you to understand everything else. It increases your awareness of God, AND your relationship with him. Finding ways to practice your understanding of grace will grow the health of your soul.

How **grace** is seen and lived out in our centers.

Will/Heart- is undivided and obeys God with joy.

Mind- thinks thoughts of truth and beauty.

Body- is filled with appetites that lead to excellent living.

Soul- desires what is wholesome and good.

2. Practice of Gratitude.

“God has yet to bless anyone except where they actually are. It is here we can be grateful.”

-Dallas Willard.

Gratitude is one of the most basic of all spiritual attributes. If we start here, then something supernatural happens to our soul. Gratitude is born out of ‘enough’ and ‘content’. Gratitude, real humble thankfulness, will destroy; selfishness, entitlement, arrogance. Reminding us all of what we are and have is not because we’re so awesome.

How **gratitude** is seen and lived out in our centers.

Will/Heart- wants only the things of God, and to build his kingdom.

Mind- is filled with the simple things/pleasures of life.

Body- wants for nothing it doesn’t possess.

Soul- desires to share it’s own plenty with everyone.

3. Practice of Growth.

“If God is pleased with anything it is with the growth of the soul.”

-Dallas Willard - St John of the Cross.

An intentional life of finding and doing things that work towards growth. This is living a life biased towards action and growth. This will NOT happen if you don’t have the desire, the ‘*want to want to*’.

These three practices, (understandings), are not the only ways to consider growing and caring for your soul. There are countless of other truths. But these three are important for the life we all want. It’s up to you to develop the specific ways you can live each one of these out.

Where could you work these into your life and how would you practice them?

What would your soul look, feel, be like if you did these three practices well?