



Week 3 - Spiritual Care

Check-in

How are you? Where have you seen God working in your life in the last week? And... what's your favorite summer activity? Are you a pool-side, sippin' on a soda bum? Do you hit all the sporting activities... baseball games, soccer tournaments, croquet battle-royales? Or are you more the "I'm staying in the A/C, chumps!" type?

Opening Prayer

Compassionate God, remind us to focus on you, to care for our spirits and rest in you.

Introduction

We are in the middle of our Summer Speaker Series for 2025, and this past Sunday, we were blessed to have our very own Randy Rhyne bring the reflection. In what for many of you was likely a very timely

message, Randy spoke about the topic of **Spiritual Care**. That is, many of us fill our schedules to the brim, even on what's supposed to be summer "break." We run on fumes, multitasking and juggling responsibilities, and as Randy said on Sunday, taking care of our souls gets "pushed to to the bottom of the list." Today, we'll dive deeper into Randy's challenge to focus on spiritual health.

Review Question: The founder of the Methodist movement in the 1700s, John Wesley, had every small group begin with the question, "how is it with your soul?" Each person would have to answer before they moved on to anything else. So, let's do that... everyone answer the question, how is it with your soul? (No other prompts, just answer however the Spirit leads.)

Scripture

Randy began by talking about the importance of spiritual health, and how (surprisingly) Scripture and science agree! Let's start with the Scripture. The last section of the Bible is a collection of letters written by the early apostles to the churches they started around the Mediterranean Sea. We have writings from Paul, Peter, John, and maybe a few others. Today, we'll focus on John, who wrote a book about Jesus's life, the Gospel of John, but also three short letters near the end of the Bible, often titled 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John. Let's look at the greeting in his 3rd letter.

Read 3rd John, chapter 1, verse 2.

Randy pointed out that even in the introduction to his letter, John is highlighting the fact that our external well-being is linked to our internal well-being. John desires for his reader to have “physical health, but only as the soul is prospering.”

Question 1: If John was writing this letter to you, how would you feel reading this introduction? Would it be affirming? Would it be convicting? Would you feel worthy of the sentiment, why or why not? (It might help to read a few versions of this verse as various translators interpret this a little differently. For example, compare the NLT to the NIV.)

Reflection

Randy points out that care for our spirit is Biblical, as we have seen, but also that science supports this. A Mayo Clinic study in 2021 and a 2022 study by Frontiers in Psychology both concluded that there is an undeniable link between spiritual and physical health. They found links between engaging in spiritual practices like prayer and gratitude journaling, and physical benefits like improved coping mechanisms, faster recovery from illness, lower levels of stress and depression, and improved immune response. As Randy said, “God’s design works!” Moreover, Jesus modeled this by going off to pray by himself regularly. “If the sinless Son of God needed solitude and prayer, how much more do we need it?” Randy concluded by giving us some suggestions on how to care for our souls. He suggested daily devotional and/or scripture reading, Sabbath rest, setting healthy boundaries, community connection, and gratitude journaling.

Question 4:

Part 1) Do you notice a difference in your overall well-being when you're maintaining your spiritual practices? Are you happier, healthier, more balanced? What are the effects?

Part 2) What spiritual practices would you like to incorporate into your daily routine that could have the sorts of effects these studies suggested? What would it take to make that practice a habit?

Closing

So, as we close today, take Randy's challenge from Sunday: commit to (at least) one thing you can do every day this week to practice spiritual care. "Spiritual and physical care are not selfish; they're sacred. Make time for God. Make space for rest. And remember that in doing so, you are caring for the most essential part of you, your soul."

**Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations
and close in prayer.**