

Soul Care 101

Spiritual Conversations by the Crackling Fire

Core Question: Am I Loved?

Key Verses:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. Lamentations 3:22

You sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. John 17:23b

Study Guide:

1. As you look back at your journey and story, how have you tried to answer the question “Am I Loved?”

2. Why is love so vital for a soul to thrive?

3. Gwen said, “Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the soul.” What do you think about this statement and how has self-rejection showed up in your own life?

4. How does knowing God’s love actually help us in the care of our soul and in our life in general?

How does a person come to understand that God loves them? What is involved?

5. Read the story of the baptism of Jesus in Mark 1:9-11. What does it mean for Jesus to be called “the beloved?”

What does it mean for you to call yourself the beloved?

6. Steve reminded us that we *are* the beloved but we also need to **become** the beloved. What does this mean and how does this happen?
7. Gwen shared that silence is one way to learn about being and becoming the beloved. How does silence help us in this journey?
8. Steve suggests reading the story of Jesus blessing the children in Mark 10:15-17 every day for 30 days. How can you begin to meditate on this story to help you form a healthy view of Jesus’ love for you?

Suggested Reading:

The Life of the Beloved by Henri Nouwen

The Gift of Being Yourself by David Benner

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Core Questions: Am I Safe? Do I Belong?

Study Guide:

1. As Steve and Gwen discussed “Am I safe?” what stirs in you as you sit with this question?

2. What makes a safe person? (Think of qualities, attributes and personalities.)

3. When you sense a fear of being condemned, judged, shamed or criticized, what really happens inside you?

4. How would you define your own image of God?

How have you seen your own image of God change, develop, or mature through the years?

5. Gwen shared that a key to being a safe person is to listen. What does it mean and look like to really listen well to someone?

6. How have you experienced the need to belong in your life? (Think of teams, churches, clubs, organizations, neighborhoods).

7. Read Mark 3:14. Jesus expressed his desire to be “with” the disciples. What do you think being “with” the disciples looked like?

8. What would it look like to be in a safe community, small group, etc?

Suggested Reading:

Embracing Soul Care by Stephen W. Smith. Answer the three questions at the end of Chapter 64.

Soul Custody by Stephen W. Smith. Work through the questions at the end of Chapter 10.

The Jesus Life by Stephen W. Smith. Work through the questions at the end of chapter 7.