

# Soul Care | *Spiritual Basics for Hungry People*

## Week 1 – The Mystery of Relationship



Date	Subject	Experience
January 25	Introduction to Soul Care: <i>The Mystery of Relationship</i>	

### Prayer (*Keith*)

- 5 minutes; start 10:00 am
- Guided time of prayer for the group
- Presenting ourselves and our attention to God, allowing his Spirit to speak

### Dialog (*Nate*)

- 7 minutes, start 10:05 am
- Welcome to the class
- What has drawn you to this class offering? (personal consideration)
  - Feelings of desperation
  - Confusion about the soul and spiritual practices
  - Trying to find the magic method, or the right combination of activity
  - Tired and just want and need a refresher
- Evaluating your soul:
  - **Symptoms of Soul Neglect:** *self-absorption, shame, apathy, anxiety, physical fatigue, anger, strong temptation to sin, driven-ness, feelings of desperation or despair, panic, insecurity, callousness, judgmental attitudes, cynicism and lack of desire for God*
  - **Symptoms of Soul Health:** *sensitivity to the Spirit, comprehension of God's word, submission to his will, security in the promises of God, demonstrations of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control,*
- What is your personal experience with *soul care*
  - Conversations?
  - Opportunities like this? *Personal retreat, day of prayer, long drive in the car, a hike in the woods, day at home when all is quiet,*
- Naming your experience: *none, limited, skewed, beneficial, frustrating, etc.*
- Consider: What is a hope, or expectation that you have for this class/time together

### Sharing (*Keith*)

- 7 minutes, start 10:12 am
- Keith's Experience expanded:
  - Issues and indicators of *soul neglect*:
  - where we were then
  - what in our life revealed our need to tend to our souls
  - how it has shaped our thinking then and now
  - the change of my *spiritual reflex*
- Suggest keeping a journal for the time we are in the class together
  - What God is pressing on me

- Hopes for change
- What I am learning
- Ideas that strike me
- Confession, scripture, more...
- Indicators of *true change* (week two material)
  - how is life different as a result of soul care
  - fruit of the Spirit

## Unpacking (Nate)

- 15 minutes, start 10:20 am

### Hunger

This process begins by becoming aware of our need for God. We might call this a need, or desire, or hunger, but the idea is the same, just as our bodies need food, rest and exercise, so do our souls. And just like we are prone to stuff ourselves with chips and beer, or cookies and chocolate cake instead of a balance of meats, cheeses, grains, dairy, vegetables and fruit, and exercise... Like our physical bodies, our souls are just as likely to feel spiritually sickened and constipated by gorging on lesser things:

- Discovering our insatiable hunger for Jesus (the God-shaped hole),  
 “You have formed us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.”  
 Augustine, *Confessions*, AD 397
- Understanding our hunger and how we have filled ourselves with:
  - *false things/junk food*: (secular idols, things of the world), our idols, sinful tendencies, our Turkish Delight (Edmund in LWW, and the DCB song), or
  - *good things/good food*: that are inadequate (my children, my marriage, *more* quiet times, spiritual experiences, attending conferences, listening to podcasts and Christian radio), which in themselves are good, but may not truly address our relationship with Jesus, where we are at, and the need that we have to listen to what is happening inside.

### Growth

We can capture the idea of spiritual transformation in a number of different terms; we’ve used the following in our church in the classes we offer, or during messages. These are terms with which we might be familiar, or have heard a little about...or perhaps that we don’t really understand at all:

- Spiritual Formation;
- Growing in Christ; growing in grace
- Discipleship;
- Christ formed in us;
- A relationship with Jesus;
- Intimacy with God;

Mindy Caliguire has captured this so well in her book entitled *Soul Care*, page 39 [When full...greater resemblance to God]. She states that spiritual growth is more appropriately termed: “full devotion” and that *full devotion is a state of our hearts when our understanding of truth is equal to our level of surrender*. We will never reach full perfection here in this life, we will always fight against sin, Satan and our fleshly desires, **but we can grow in our responsiveness to the Holy Spirit**. The Spirit is constantly working in us and around us, in our homes, our workplaces, our children, in our spouses. He loves us so much that he teaches us and does not leave us alone. Caliguire says that we grow spiritually as we presently (moment to moment each day) submit to what we know to be true (what we see in scripture).

- Are you a *fully devoted follower*, or are you persuaded that the things of this life are worth more than knowing Christ and him crucified (Phil 3)?
- Confessing the idolatry of our heart and its appetite for lesser things seeking to find satisfaction, purpose, completeness, joy, hope, happiness in anything BUT God.
- Having an awareness that ALL of life is spiritual, that every moment is an opportunity to respond to the Spirit, and to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

## Being

But growth, or what we might call *true spiritual change* (which we will explore more next week) happens not as a result of doing more things, adding more practices and doing more activities. We can be bogged down by adding more and more to our lives, and the spiritual life—instead of being liberating and freeing (Galatians 5:13)—becomes an oppressive and burdensome law for how we (and others) can grow in our relationship with God. We feel more and more guilty about *not doing* the things that we “ought”.

This class is not intending to give you more tasks to do, but **provide ideas and participate in spiritual practices which open ourselves to the *already-present* Spirit whom we have because of Jesus’ death and resurrection. The spiritual life is much more about being, than doing** – now this might sound like literary or theological gymnastics, and some have used this very logic to avoid all spiritual practices, or at least the difficult ones like fasting, or being silent, or giving up material things for the benefit of others and for spiritual growth, what we might call poverty.

Being is more of a mind-set and heart-set as opposed to a description of our activity or non-activity. This is not an impotent passivity doing nothing, rather, it is the whole person’s (heart, soul, mind and strength; Dt. 6:5; Mt 22:37; Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27) way of engaging with life. Being, is a spiritually-transformed awareness of how we *are* in Christ, how we are united with him, it is the very nature of our relationship with Jesus. Consider your marriage or a close friendship...

How do we compare and contrast *doing* and *being*?

- The *Doing* approach believes that soul transformation happens through actions and the will, it *defines* the spiritual life by doing more “spiritual things”.
- The *Being* approach defines the spiritual life by a deepening relationship with God, and subsequently *expressing* itself through spiritual practices, being will inevitably lead to action, but action or the volition of the will can do little to change one’s heart toward God

## Mystery

The contrast of being and doing begins to unpack the *mystery* of our relationship with God: *God has created us for relationship with him, yet that relationship is mysterious, it is gracious and merciful, we are not treated as our sins deserve; the Most High has condescended to us in order that we might be in relationship with him.* We are known and loved by God, he loves us so much that he’s done what was necessary to be in relationship with him. We see this in Romans 8:31-39, a passage often stated over and over again, without real consideration of what this might mean!

- Genesis 3:8ff – the presence of God in the garden of Eden, he walked/talked with them
- John 10:10 – I have come that you might have life
- John 15:12-17 – we are friends with God through Jesus, he has revealed to us all that has been given to Jesus from the Father
- Romans 8:12-17 – we are in relationship with God through Jesus, we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ

This relationship already IS, it is not something we attain to, or gain/acquire, We bring our knowledge and experience in line with what God has already done and is doing through Jesus, we have it, we have Jesus, we have a relationship with him, we have the ongoing presence of the Spirit with us (John 17); We are not aiming at something that is out there, over there, or that someone else has, we are rather cultivating, responding to, nurturing our relationship with God. He is near to us, he is not far away from us.

It is a mystery because it is hard to name and to articulate how this mystery works. The relationship is not transactional (I do this and God does that), it is not for any other purpose (to be a better person). The purpose is *to actually have Christ*, to (as Paul writes) be found in him (Philippians 3:8-9), to be in union with him (Romans 6).

World Harvest Mission who produces the material that we know as *Sonship* is based in this truth: *that we ARE presently the sons and daughters of God*. The material calls our attention to our tendency to leave the castle of our heavenly king, of whom we are royal sons and daughters, and instead we live like orphans, as if we had not parents at all. Like the prodigal son we have wandered away from the home, and we have squandered the wealth that was ours. Sonship, rooted in the book of Galatians (and to a lesser extent Romans) calls us back to our identity as sons and daughters of the Most High God.

We are connected to an infinite God, the depth of this relationship continues to grow.

Elements: (Spiritual Practices/Habits/Disciplines) >>>

Mystery: the machine that blends the gas, air and spark, the explosion >>>

Result: the result is the fruit of the spirit (namely love), love for God, love for others

## Conclusion and Practice *(Keith)*

### *Guided Reflection*

On Hunger – getting in touch with our hunger, we often cover over our hunger, with something less

1. What are the junk foods in your diet?
2. What are the good foods in your diet, that are inadequate?
3. Speaking to God about:
  - a. needing the Spirit to reveal those things to us
  - b. confessing our tendency to fill our soul with things other than God
4. Scriptures: taste and see that the Lord is good, Isaiah 55

On Growth – reflection on naming on how they would grow,

1. If you could name it, describe what spiritual growth might look like in your life
  - a. Spiritual transformation
  - b. Relationship with Christ
  - c. Intimacy with God
2. Are you a fully-devoted follower what does that look like for you? Recall the definition of Caliguire
3. Speaking to God about: your heart's desire for transformation and asking for the Spirit's help to being these things to reality
4. Scripture: he who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it

On Being – reflection on

1. If you had to chart your life on a continuum between being and doing, where would you fall on the line?
2. What needs to change in your life that you may be able to move on this continuum toward being rather than doing? *How I read the Bible for example, working out, practicing, etc.*
3. Speaking to God about: changing my heart toward being with God, rather than simply doing more practices or activities.
4. Scripture Promises: be still and know that I am God, we focus on being, and we get GOD himself

On Mystery – reflection in worship, awe, wonder at this infinite God

1. How do I define the experience of my relationship with God
2. What dreams do I have about how this relationship continues, furthers, deepens
3. Speaking to God about: his majesty and grandeur, our awe of him
4. Scriptures Promises: see references below

Closing: *O, the Deep, Deep Love*

*THE LORD'S PRAYER*

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name.**

**May your kingdom come, and your  
will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive  
those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation, but  
deliver us from evil; for yours are  
the kingdom and the power and the  
glory forever and ever.**

**Amen.**



# The Morning Office

*January 25, 2009*

*THE PRAYER APPOINTED FOR THE WEEK*

Almighty and everlasting God, you govern  
all things both in heaven and on earth:  
Mercifully hear the supplications of your  
people, and in our time grant us your peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives  
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one  
God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

*THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH*

**Lord God, almighty and everlasting  
Father, you have brought us in  
safety to this new day: Preserve us  
with your mighty power, that we  
may not fall into sin, nor be  
overcome by adversity; and in all  
we do direct us to the fulfilling of  
your purpose; through Jesus Christ  
our Lord.**

**Amen.**



*THE CALL TO PRAYER*

I will sing of mercy and justice; to you, O LORD, will I sing praises.

*Psalm 101:1*

*THE REQUEST FOR PRESENCE*

**But as for me, O LORD, I cry to you for help; in the morning my prayer comes before you.**

*Psalm 88:14*

*THE GREETING*

Your testimonies are very sure, and holiness adorns your house, O LORD, for ever and for evermore.

*Psalm 93:6*

*THE REFRAIN FOR THE MORNING LESSONS*

**Happy are they whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD!**

*Psalm 119:1*

*A READING*

Jesus taught us, saying: "...if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering."

*Matthew 5:23-24*

*THE REFRAIN FOR THE MORNING LESSONS*

**Happy are they whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD!**

*Psalm 119:1*

*THE MORNING PSALM*

Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the LORD.

"This is the gate of the LORD; he who is righteous may enter."

I will give thanks to you, for you answered me and have become my salvation.

The same stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the LORD'S doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

On this day the LORD has acted; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

*Psalm 118:19-24*

*THE REFRAIN FOR THE MORNING LESSONS*

**Happy are they whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD!**

*Psalm 119:1*

*THE SILENCE*

*[In the silence we offer up our individual prayers and petitions to the Lord...]*

Amen.

*THE GLORIA*

Glory be to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, so it is now and so it shall ever be, world without end. Alleluia.

**Amen.**



# *Hunger...*

*Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.*

Isaiah 55:1-2 (NIV)



# *Growth...*

*In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 1:4-6 (NIV)



# *Being...*

*"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

Psalm 46:10-11 (NIV)



# *Mystery...*

*Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens; your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep.*

Psalm 36:5-6 a (NIV)

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:38-39 (NIV)



# *Oh the Deep, Deep Love*

*Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
vast, unmeasured, boundless, free  
rolling as a mighty ocean  
in its fullness over me*

*Underneath me, all around me  
is the current of Your love,  
leading onward, leading homeward  
to Your glorious rest above*

---

*Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus.  
Spread His praise from shore to shore,  
how He came to pay our ransom  
through the saving cross He bore;*

*How He watches o'er His loved ones,  
those He died to make His own;  
how for them He's interceding,  
pleading now before the throne*

---

*Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
far surpassing all the rest  
It's an ocean full of blessing  
in the midst of every test*

*Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
mighty Savior, precious Friend  
You will bring us home to glory,  
where Your love will never end*

*Oh the deep,  
deep love,  
All I need  
and trust  
is the deep,  
deep love  
of Jesus.*

Original words by Samuel Trevor Francis (1834-1925)  
Chorus and alternate words by Bob Kauflin  
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