

Soul Food

Psalm 23:5–6 (NLT)

⁵ You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. ⁶ Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever.

- The key to a healthy soul starts with what we feed it
- How full is Your Cup?
- How depleted are you?

Tell Her to Help Me

Luke 10:38–42 (NLT) No Slide:

Aren't we a lot like Martha?

- Worried and upset about many things
- Overwhelmed, overscheduled, and exhausted
- He's not just there for the food but for the connection
- Jesus said, "there is only one thing worth being concerned about"
- Martha missed it – Mary got it!

Five things are key if we are going to live a replenished life

- Connect with God
- Spend quality time with Family
- Satisfaction in work
- Make time for recreation
- Exercise

3 John 2 (NKJV)

² Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

Matthew 11:28–30 (NKJV)

²⁸ Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

- Your soul must rest to prosper just like your body needs rest to be in good health
- Engaging in activities and taking on responsibilities initiated by man instead on the Holy Spirit is a recipe for failure

The key is to magnify the Lord in our soul

Luke 1:46–47, 49 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. ⁴⁹ For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

- Your soul is a magnifier
- Whatever your soul magnifies will determine what you experience in life
- The thing, person, or circumstance you set your focus on eventually will totally consume your entire being
- What you magnify is what becomes the most important thing in your life

Living from a Healthy Soul in the Seasons of Life

Our lives are not a string of random days on a calendar

- God is moving in each season of life
- We can learn to identify the season we're in
- Act accordingly and cooperate with God
- Recognize His guidance
- Follow His lead
- Accept the end of one season as we begin the next
 - All while maintaining a prosperous soul

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NLT)

¹ For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.

- Life is not a one-dimensional, steady trudge from cradle to grave
- It is an ebb and flow of seasons
- Life is not a linear path
- It is not predictable or controllable
- You and I enter seasons, weeks, months, or years in length – that have a beginning and an end
- You spend time in a season and move on
- The way we handle each season determines the success we have in every other season in life

No matter your age you have probably lived through several seasons

- It's not a matter of age
- Life is a matter of seasons

We even measure life in seasons

- We have newborns, toddlers, pre-teen, teenage, and college aged children
- We are in the honeymoon, minivan or empty- nesters seasons

Even in our jobs and careers we talk about seasons

- Past jobs
- Past bosses
- Past career decisions

Maybe you have a loved one who is in a difficult season with their health

- Maybe you've lost your job
- Maybe your spouse walked out on you or passed away
 - You are now adjusting to being single again
 - You are adjusting to a new level of income

Sometimes difficult seasons come in succession

The most accurate way to gauge your life is to discern what season you're in

- Each season is a subplot to the narrative of your overall story that God is writing

It's vital to remember the season you're in is not your whole life

- Identify your season
- Grow
- Move on
- Remember, it's just a season!

Ecclesiastes 3:2–8 (NLT)

² A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest.

³ A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up.

⁴ A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance.

⁵ A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away.

⁶ A time to search and a time to quit searching. A time to keep and a time to throw away.

⁷ A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak.

⁸ A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace.

Mourn or Dance

A Time to Mourn

Do you know someone in a time of mourning?

- Are you in one yourself?

Losing a loved one in death is not the only season of mourning

- Recently lost a job
- Maybe you've gone through a divorce
- Maybe you lost your home or another significant loss
- Give yourself an appropriate season of mourning

Several factors determine the duration and characteristics of seasons of mourning

- The depth of loss is certainly a factor
- The way we are wired is a factor
- Some of us grieve longer than others
- There is no “right way” to mourn
- Find a style that feels authentic to you while accepting that others mourn differently

Don't confuse different ways of grieving with non-grieving

- Non-grieving is not a style

If you are in a season of mourning but you are not actually grieving you are stuck

- Don't say things like
 - I will never get over this
 - I will never be the same
- You may need professional help
- The point in grieving is to move on through the season of mourning

If you are in a season of mourning put yourself in places where people can come along side you

- Attend church or a small group regularly
- If you isolate yourself it only augments your feelings of loss
- By coming into contact with others you give room for God to help bring hope to your situation
- Many people make new friends in seasons of loss who become their closest friends

A Time to Dance

Solomon says there is a season for dancing

- The long-awaited baby is conceived
- The adoption goes through
- You purchase your first house
- You get a job promotion
- The grad school letter of acceptance arrives
- The Lions win the Super Bowl – that would take faith!

Take time to enjoy the successes in life

God is celebratory by nature

- The Old Testament is full of occasions for celebrating and dancing
- There are detailed instructions for festivities and celebrations
- Not only did God permit it but He demanded it

Psalm 149:3 (NLT)

³ Praise his name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp.

Psalm 30:11 (NLT)

¹¹ You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy,

2 Samuel 6:14 (The Message)

David, ceremonially dressed in priest's linen, danced with great abandon before GOD.

Zephaniah 3:17 (NLT)

¹⁷ For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears.* He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.”

- “Rejoice over you” – literally means “dance, skip, leap, and spin around in joy.”
- God dances with shouts of joy over us!

During your lifetime, you will pass through countless seasons of dancing

- Don’t let them slip by unnoticed
- If you’re in such a season – Dance!
- Eat good food, drink good drinks and take photos to mark these moments
- Give words of blessing to those who are celebrating
- Above all else, give words of gratitude to God for His goodness towards you

Embrace or Refrain from Embracing

I am not naturally a hugger, but I love to give hugs

Hugging is not only physical

- When you have a deepening, trust-filled relationship with someone, it’s like a heartfelt hug

We also have permission to not hug or embrace

- There are times to refrain from allowing certain people into your life to get any closer
- It’s OK to have boundaries

Keep or Throw Away

Some of us are savers, and some are tossers by nature

Regardless of our nature, there is a time to throw away clutter in our lives

Maybe you're in a season of throwing away

- A time to throw away commitments that don't fit our values
- Throwing away financial habits of living beyond our means
- A time for tossing some shallow or harmful relationships in favor of deeper, more life-giving friendships
- Maybe you're in a season of self-evaluation
- A season of clearing out and clarifying

Maybe you're in a season of keeping

- Keeping new commitments to make time for family
- Keeping your daily prayer time with God
 - Holy and set apart
- Keeping your alignments at work
 - Passion, culture, challenge, and compensation
- There is a time for one and a time for another
- Everything has a proper season

2 Corinthians 6:10 (NLT)

¹⁰ Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

Be Silent or Speak

With the frantic pace of our culture and the growing popularity of social media, it is becoming harder and harder to hear the still small voice of God

- It can be a challenge to hear His gentle whisper of encouragement, guidance, or correction

There is a time for silence

- You don't have to fill the room with words just because no one is talking
- If you are going to enjoy the peace of God you have got to learn to have a time of silence, on a regular, daily basis

Is your life non-stop?

- When do you give God your full attention?
- When do you set aside time to think, read, pray or engage in a *meaningful* conversation?

There is also a time to speak

- Don't remain silent if the Lord is nudging you to speak wisdom or healing into a certain situation
- Do you have a friend that is about to make a self-destructive choice?
- Don't excuse yourself by saying it's not your responsibility
- Even if it's out of your comfort zone
- There is a time to speak – as well as a time to listen

Identify your current season and ask the Lord what He wants to teach you?

You aren't in your current season by accident

- No two seasons are identical

There is a reason for every season in your life

- Good or bad
- A season of success or loneliness
- Easy or challenging
- Rewarding or draining
- Don't just medicate or isolate yourself
 - Food, alcohol, distractions or busyness

Whatever season you are in, be fully in your season

- Be fully present and dive in
- Sometimes you can learn more about yourself in a season of hardship than a season of success

Job 13:15 (NLT)

¹⁵ God might kill me, but I have no other hope.* I am going to argue my case with him.

- Job had lost everything and he grieved heavily and appropriately – probably less than a year
- He lost his kids, his fortune, his herds, his lands
- His conclusion was – I still have God, He's my only hope

By the end of the story God doubled everything Job had because through this season he continually turned to God and remained teachable

When Paul the Apostle was facing a season of affliction he prayed, three times for God to remove the source of his trouble

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT)

⁹ Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

I’ve witnessed terrible times of trouble in people’s lives

- Some crumble under the pressure
- While others find the strength, they need to endure and move forward in life
- When you’re in a season of pain you can draw strength from the Lord
- When you do, it will mark you forever with the goodness and faithfulness of God

Recognize the season that you’re in

- Unhealthy relationships
- Addiction
- Unforgiveness towards others, the Church or God
- Have you become cynical?
- Are you in a season of abuse?

Remember whatever season you are in it is not your final season

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NLT)

¹¹ Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end.