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Subject: **The Somewhat Infrequent Newsletter from The SoulCare Project**
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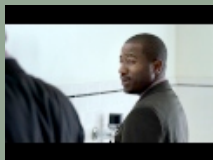
November 2010

The SoulCare Project Newsletter



Ever Find Yourself This Distracted?

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This commercial is an absolute hoot and perhaps sadly reveals more about human character and the world we live in than many of us may care to admit. The reason this commercial is so funny is because we all have been that person with the cell phone or been around people who get sucked into the technologically overloaded existence like this.

Related to this modern day inclination and the sometimes furious pace of our lives Thomas Moore notes, "Culturally we have a plastic esophagus, suited perhaps to fast food and fast living, but not conducive to soul, which thrives only when life is taken in a long, slow process of digestion and absorption."

The
SoulCare
Project

Retreats

"Well heck, I would be a good retreat leader if all I did was tell people to be quiet." I've actually had these words spoken to me a few times in the past year, and I have really put some thought into those words. Most of my life I have wrestled with receiving approval from others and so when I lead or facilitate retreats for people to be quiet, I'm often fighting some of the following thoughts: "You need to have something good to say and what will people think if I'm not working hard? And do I really believe God will work if I'm not doing anything?"

These lies run rampant in my head, but somewhere in the quiet and the settling down during retreats, I'm able to hear God speak "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17 / NIV). And not only are these words from my Father, but they are words spoken from the

If you find yourself caught up in this "fast living," consider taking some time away to reflect and to listen to God.

Interested In Retreats?

Please feel free to check out our website (<http://thesoulcareproject.org/>)

As we've offered retreats in 2010, there will also be some wonderful retreat invitations in 2011. Come and join us!

One-On-One

Soul Care/Spiritual Direction

In our engagement with others, and acknowledging the reality of life as it meets us, we want to offer opportunities to journey deeper. Consider the link below on how you might be individually cared for.

<http://thesoulcareproject.org/consulting.html>

Join Our Mailing List!

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Partner With Us Today!

Partnering is often a fancy way of saying "please give us money" - But when we ask you to partner with us, we are asking for so much more than financial support.

Partnering to us means you are "for" us and stand by our mission. It means you are telling others about your experience or interaction with the Soulcare Project. And it means you are praying not just for leaders attending our retreats, but you are praying for specific individuals and their own spiritual journey and renewal.

The SoulCare Project is privately funded and we are very grateful for the support that a few financial partners committed for our work in 2010. This support was vital, as we have and are increasingly becoming aware of opportunities to serve the hearts of leaders.

Our desire for 2011 doesn't necessarily mean just having more retreats. That said, we continue to encounter more

Father to Jesus, at his baptism, prior to Jesus having accomplished or done anything.

Often our lives do not reflect that we believe these words. I tend to only believe them if I do something great or make others proud. We are so used to scratching and clawing our way through life as if we really don't believe Jesus died for us. His love for each of us is available despite how bad or good we are.

Peter Hiett, a pastor who wrestled with his own attempts at not believing he is dearly loved by God contends:

"When we lust, lie, retaliate, we can't believe in God's love. For God is love. And not believing in God's love is not just a sin, but the sin. So I'm convinced your deepest problem is not the cigarettes you smoke or the alcohol you drink in secret. It's not the slander you speak or the gossip you cherish. It's not the pornography you pleasure yourself with when no one's looking. It's not the baby you aborted; it's not that you betrayed your brother... Your deepest problem is that somewhere deep down inside, you believe Jesus the Messiah rose from the dead just to kick your butt when, in fact, He rose from the dead so you would believe all is forgiven. It is finished. Justice is accomplished. And the Father is pleading, 'Come home, come home, come home.'"

So as I move forward in leading people into quiet I can be assured of one thing; God's voice, "come home" can be heard through quieting my heart. And I find I am able to lead people into stillness and quiet if I am willing to practice the discipline of slowing down myself. So my answer is yes to all of the skeptics: anyone can lead a retreat and tell people to be quiet, but I don't use these words flippantly. I want retreats for you and me in order for us to slow down enough to hear God speak.

-Russell

"Just Hold On Loosely, but don't let go - If you cling too tight babe, you're gonna loose control, Your baby needs someone to believe in, And a whole lot of space to breathe in" - 38 Special

I am certainly not offering up the lyrics from 38 special to you because it was the pinnacle of 80s music . . . or maybe 70s, I'm not quite sure.

But I do share this lyric with you because it typifies some of the thoughts I've considered of late, in part as a reminder to myself. And while the songwriter wrote about a girl and a relationship, it definitely seems to hold some relevance for the life we live and relationships as well.

I've experienced a few instances and situations in my life where some wonderful people have held a very tight grasp on some things. And yup, I've fallen prey to some of this tendency as well when I reflect back. After all, we are very human and certainly prone to get shaped by fear and place priority where it doesn't always serve ourselves and others well.

In October, The SoulCare Project had the privilege of co-sponsoring with Richmond Graduate University a retreat for pastors, led by Dr. Larry Crabb. I'm still chewing on the marrow that he offered us in those two days. Of particular remembrance for me, was a suggestion he had for us that we hold the True First thing first and remember that all the 2nd things - as wonderful as they may be - are truly that.

Now I am no theologian and just a man on a journey, so I want to be

opportunities to offer retreats and substantial avenues to serve the hearts of ministry and marketplace leaders. The need we encounter is significant and so we do desire to be diligent within a modest planned 2011 budget.

If partnering with us financially is how you would like to and can support us and would like to discuss this with Russell or Dan, we are available to do so and thankful.

God Forming Us

Keith Meyer passed on some wonderful wisdom to me recently, that may seem antithetical to much of what the soulcare project offers. He shared (and this may not be verbatim so, my apologies Keith) that he believes that:

God forms us and our hearts not so much at retreats, but more in our daily interactions and relationships. He also added that God may form us most when we engage with 1) those that He has given us to be with in our lives, particularly the ones that live and think differently than we and 2) those who are oppressed and forgotten.

BTW - Keith's recent book is a wonderful read! - here is his blog below to learn more. Russell and I have had the privilege of getting to know him as a friend and a spiritual mentor -

<http://www.keithmeyer.org/blog/>

careful offering a definitive answer on what the true First thing is. But I do know this: it doesn't have a whole heck of a lot to do with me and has much more (actually, all) to do with my Creator.

Now with regard to the 2nd things - there is an exhaustive list of what those 2nd things can be. And in spite of how wonderful some of those items might be, we are well served to remember that these things are truly that: 2nd things.

I do not intend to unsuspectingly shoot any sacred cows out there in the pastures of life, but I believe that there are some wonderful 2nd things that we should hold dear that are related to our Creator . . . but even these things are truly 2nd things.

Dr. Crabb shared with the group that, in his time as a clinician with people, he's seen some strife and some difficult relationships when his client's placed 2nd things in place of the One True Thing. Even when it's well intentioned and in keeping with some wonderful desires or priorities, it can carry some negative fallout if not properly held in balance as a 2nd thing.

So, net/net, we all can crank up some 38 Special. But even better, we can seek God in our time and prayer and thought that we bring to Him to discover how we can best follow the One True Thing. And perhaps ask Him to allow our actions and pursuits outside of that to be directed by just that. How wonderful it is that He gives others to us and gives us to others, so that we can be discerning with a few around us to help us unpack our lives, gauge our perspective & weigh in our priorities. I am thankful to have these "others" in my life. You know who you are I am privileged to be journeying with you.

Hold on Loosely my soul - and to you my friend, Dan



"The Soul Care Project has this annoying habit of asking you to take time out of your very busy world and to be quiet and reflect for a bit. Funny thing. I responded and found it wasn't so annoying. It was in fact precisely the antidote that I needed for my busyness. How necessary their work is whether you are a business leader, ministry leader or just a regular person trying to sort out meaning and truth. May your work continue to rise above the din!"

William F. High,
President/General Counsel
Servant Christian Community Foundation

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