

Wesley's question of old is our question today.

How is it with your soul?

A leader's spiritual assessment

Wesley's question of old is indeed our question today - *How is it with your Soul?* Without conversations in which we ask ourselves and God some hard questions, our transformation will be short changed. *Self-awareness is central to transformation* because it shows us what we truly treasure, how self-absorbed, preoccupied, and self-serving we are. Throughout the ages, the devotional masters have stressed the twin themes of *knowing God* and *knowing ourselves* as central to how the Spirit works within us.

The goal of this spiritual assessment is you help you honestly reflect upon the state of your soul.

The 'soul' this assessment is concerned with is not the technical theological or philosophical soul. Rather, the term used here is intended to be more metaphorical. It is used to refer to persons in their depths and totality, with particular emphasis on the inner life—the raw, unvarnished self. The very essence of “you” that God knew and knitted in your mother's womb—and spoke forth in physical form.

This is the “you” that exists beyond any role you play, any job you perform, any relationship that seems to define you or any notoriety or success you may have achieved. It is the part of you that longs for more of God than you have right now. It's the part of you that longs to proclaim *all is well with my soul*.

The following soul assessment questions are a first *step* toward ensuring that you find your soul rather than lose your soul in the context of your life in ministry. The tendency for most of us when we encounter stuff that creates dis-ease and frustration in our souls is to push it away. And fast! We feel the discomfort of holy discontent coming on and *reflexively* we want to medicate it. We want to *recoil* in disgust at the dreadful realities surrounding us. Both reflection and recoiling hamper our living The Easy Yoke “with God” life Jesus intended for us.

You are invited to reflect on each question quietly in God's presence, asking God to help you to see yourself *as you really are and your life as it really is*.

If you become aware of indications that you might be losing your soul in the context of ministry, do not try to fix things or problem solve just yet.

Instead, simply ask God, “What are *we* going to do about *that?*”

1. I find a sense of delight, joy, play, humor in ministry

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

2. I am aware of a nagging sense that something is not quite right, but I don't seem to be able to take the time or make the effort to look into it. The truth is, I'm not even sure I know how.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

3. I find myself rushing from one thing to the next without time to really pay attention to what's going on in and around me.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

4. I am keeping up with what my ministry requires, but deep down I feel that I have lost touch with who I am in God and what He has called me to do.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

5. Take a moment to reflect on a time in your personal life --- outside of the professional ministry --- when you experienced (were aware of) the love of God. Write a few words to help you remember this experience.

6. I am tired--not just physically, but spiritually and emotionally. I don't really know how to get rested.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

7. I can't stop working even when I know I need to.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

8. I find myself increasingly giving in to escapist behaviors (eating, mindless television viewing, excess substance use, shopping/spending, etc.) or escapist fantasies --- dreaming about being somewhere else or having a different life.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

9. Even though I know that practices such as solitude, prayer, personal reflection on Scripture, etc. are life-giving, I find I don't have time or energy for them.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

10. I feel isolated with no one to fully confide in who fully understands my situation.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

11. My ministry team and I are very good at strategic planning and "thinking our way" into solutions, but we do not have a "clearly articulated process for discernment." Aside from rote prayers to bookend our meetings, we don't have a way of seeking God together.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

12. It has been a long time since I have felt connected with the presence of God in my own life beyond what I am doing for others. Sometimes I suspect that my vision for ministry has become more important to me than my own relationship with God.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

13. I practice some form of personal prayer or meditation, but find my mind swimming with yesterday's worries, today's work or the dread of tomorrow's commitments.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

14. I study, search and reflect on the Scriptures *to be personally shaped* rather than to "check it off" or prepare to teach or preach.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

15. I practice a *real* "Sabbath" as a period set aside for deep rest and renewal.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

16. I receive spiritual direction from a spiritual guide or mentor.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

17. I meet regularly with an accountability peer group for personal as well as ministry growth.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

18. I am pulled in so many directions that I do not feel at home in my own skin.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

19. My plate of obligations is so full that I feel frozen, unable to move.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

20. I go on spiritual retreat for renewal and refreshment.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

21. List some of the ways you experience delight, joy, play, humor in ministry:

22. I am willing to seek support for myself in ministry by individual spiritual direction, counseling, group spiritual direction with peers, School of the Spirit, etc.

Often true Sometimes Rarely Never

23. What have you noticed when you have sought support for your own spiritual and psychological health?

24. If you have never sought such support, what prevents you from reaching out to others?

25. Now that you have been honest with yourself and God about the state of your soul, sit quietly and listen to the One who knit “you” together in your mother’s womb. Give thanks for your discoveries whether you are pleased with them or not.

Meet with a spiritual director to review the results of your assessment.

Consider one step you will take or one practice you will continue so that you can respond to that part of you that longs for more of God than you have right now --- the part of you that longs to proclaim to all *it is well with my soul*.

- Go on a spiritual retreat
- Centering Prayer Group
- Spiritual Direction
- Group Spiritual Direction
- Attend School of the Spirit

- Counseling
- Hiking
- Lectio Divina
- Journaling
- Establish a Sabbath keeping practice

Other spiritual practices: _____

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