



## S.O.S – Soil for Our Souls

The Way of Jesus – A Spiritual Path for Today

www.soilforoursouls.com

**U**plifted in daily prayer

**N**ourished through weekly rest and worship

**I**nspired by daily reading and memorization of Scripture

**T**estifying about God's love through service and hospitality

**E**ngaged in spiritual friendships and study

**D**edicating time, talent, and treasure in gratitude to God

## Rich Soil for Our Souls to Flourish

*It was you who formed my inward parts;  
I praise you,  
for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Psalm 139*

And yet, it is also true ...

*I realize I don't have what it takes to do what is right. I can will it, but I can't do it. I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My "decisions" don't result in actions.*

*Romans 7 (from "The Message")*

Jesus used many soil and seed images to describe how, in spite of our inability to be *perfect*, we might nonetheless *practice* ways of living so that our God-given souls might flourish in health, wisdom and fruitfulness.

One of the ones I like best is the description of a farmer who prepares the soil, scatters the seed, and then sleeps while the seed grows **all by itself**. (Mark 4:26-29)

Because we live in a culture that is frantic about results, and at the same time has pretty much lost contact with how plants and other wild things grow, we think we will either grow to become spiritually mature and healthy by doing everything, or by doing nothing - not giving any time, thought, or intention to nurturing our soul. Both alternatives are a mistake.

Our job is to prepare the soil and scatter the seed. It is **NOT** our job to grow the seed. We do need to do some of the work, but not all of the work. In fact, Jesus goes so far as to suggest it is best if take a rest while God is doing God's part.

For the next year, we will focus our attention on becoming good soil in which the seed of our soul can take root and flourish to health and maturity.

As a starting point, we'll use ancient teachings from the Christian past to learn about how to tend the roots of our soul so that it might produce abundant fruit in our life.

Emotional  
Social  
and  
Spiritual  
...  
Health  
Maturity  
Wisdom  
Sustainability  
Completion

Practicing  
not  
Perfection

Relationships  
not  
Rules  
nor  
Righteousness  
nor  
Results

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### The Way of Jesus - A Spiritual Path for Today

Over the past 1,900 years, the followers of Jesus have found the following practices have stood the test of time as being the best way to provide the good soil in which our souls might flourish. They called it, "**The Way:**"

- **U**plifted in daily prayer;
- **N**ourished through weekly rest and worship;
- **I**nspired by daily reading and memorizing of scripture;
- **T**estifying about God's love through service and hospitality;
- **E**ngaged in spiritual friendships and study;
- **D**edicating time, talent and treasure in gratitude to God.

*(Thanks to Richard Bott, Saint Andrew's-Haney United Church, for the acronym: U.N.I.T.E.D.)*

Exactly what we do and how we do each of these six practices is something we'll need to explore. But that we need to do them is not.

And so I invite everyone who is interested to be part of an "**S.O.S. - Soil for Our Souls**" process with me. This process can include everything from getting together for coffee, email, phone calls, visits, or forming a group who would like to get together. We'll take a look at each of the six practices and clarify what it means to do those today. For example, no one can memorize the whole Bible, so where should a person begin? What would be the first top 10 passages to memorize?

My vision is that by this time next year, we will have developed some, clear, simple, easy to follow, suggestions for what to do and how to do it for each of the above 6 practices. And that we will have begun to intentionally talk together and support each other to nurture our souls to greater health, wisdom and fruitfulness.

I look forward to growing with you all.

David Ewart,  
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