

Soul Care – A Brief Introduction

Spiritual Formation, becoming the “little Christs” that we were created to be, is God’s work, usually through the community of believers. “Soul Care” as described by Larry Crabb¹ is one approach to this process. The following list provides a brief summary of several terms and concepts that will be helpful as we grow into a spiritually forming community.

- **First Thing vs. Second Things:**

- First Thing: Drawing near to God, finding our joy, fulfillment, satisfaction in Him and in revealing His character to others.
- Second Things: Every other legitimate blessing we desire from God – friendships, financial stability, fulfilling marriage, good health, godly children, satisfying work, etc., etc.

“Put first things first and second things are thrown in. Put second things first and you lose both first and second things.”²

- **Self-Obsession vs. God-Obsession:**

- Self Obsession: the conviction that I must protect myself from personal pain at all costs. My highest value becomes comfort, security, and a personal sense of well-being at any cost to those around me. I become increasingly dependent on second-things for my source of joy.
- God Obsession: the conviction that God is infinitely good and loving, and that seeking to know Him and to advance His purposes is the only source of lasting and genuine joy. Drawing near to God as the first thing in my life is my source of joy at any cost to myself.

- **The Battle**: At our core we all face the battle of Self-Obsession vs. God-Obsession, what the Bible calls flesh and Spirit, as the controlling factors in our life.

- **The Red Dot**: A reflective awareness of what is going on inside you at any given moment that is designed to open the door to:

- A deeper awareness of yourself and the real battle raging within you and
- A clear sense of dependence on God’s Spirit to empower you to win the battle

- **False Views of Life and Death**: True life is drawing near to God, and true death is separation from God. We often hold false views that influence or even control our response to the battle:

- False View of Death: An experience or emotion or painful event that we desire to avoid at all costs.
- False View of Life: An experience or emotion or pleasant event that we desire to recreate at any cost.

- **Think Beneath**: a genuine curiosity that longs to discover the real battle beneath one’s Red Dot that only the Spirit can empower you to win. The core battle common to all of us is the battle between Self-Obsession and God-Obsession. “Think Beneath” is the process of discerning that battle in people we relate to.

- **Think Passion**: looking into my own inner-world to see the battle between Self Obsession and God Obsession going on within me as I relate to others.

- **Think Vision**: seeking to understand what God is doing in another person, and asking Him if we can be a part of what He is doing.

- **Old Way vs. New Way (or Old Covenant vs. New Covenant):**

- Old Way: Get it right and life works. Keeping the Law, which no one can do.
- New Way: Trust God in every circumstance to advance His good purposes and thereby draw closer to God no matter what happens (nearness to God is our greatest good – Psalm 73:28).

[Adapted from Guide to Soul Care, NewWay Ministries, 2006]

¹ Larry Crabb, *Soul Talk* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2003), and several other titles by Larry Crabb.

² C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*, Volume 3 (New York: HarperCollins e-books, 2009) Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 1920 (p. 111).