

Spiritual Healthcheck: Extra resources

At the start of a new year, when many of us make resolutions and lifestyle adaptations to improve our physical and mental health, this series prompts us to run an MOT on our spiritual health. These studies are offered for individual or Lifegroup study and accompany the teaching at the 9am and 10.45am services.

Study 1: Identity

Begin by watching this 5 minute video:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/image-of-god/>

Starter for ten:

- What, if anything, was new to you/struck you when watching the video?
- What questions do you still have?

Read Galatians 3:23-29

- What is your understanding of being 'in Christ'? (v26) and what might Paul have meant by this?
- Why was/is it significant that 'all' are called children of God? (v26)
- Why does Paul use the metaphor of being 'clothed in Christ' when he speaks about Christian identity? (v27)
- What are the implications of v.28 for the Church? Have you encountered Christian fellowship where people have been 'all one' in Christ Jesus? Or perhaps where this hasn't been the case? Discuss your experiences.
- What does it mean for us to be 'heirs' in Christ? (v29)

Respond

- Consider the things that define you – perhaps your family / work circumstances or past experiences. Is there any extent to which these things have come to define you more than you would like?
- Pray individually or in a group, asking that God remind you that your identity in him is more important than anything else.
- Read through this resource and see if there are any particular sentences God wants to remind you of: <https://practicalpages.wordpress.com/2013/03/05/who-i-am-in-christ/>

Study 2: Priorities

'If we give priority to the outer life, our inner life will be dark and scary. We will not know what to do with solitude. We will be deeply uncomfortable with self-examination, and we will have an increasingly short attention span for any kind of reflection. Outwardly, we will need to project confidence, spiritual and emotional health and wholeness, while inwardly we may be filled with self-doubts, anxieties, self-pity, and grudges.' **Tim Keller**

Starter for ten:

- Which part, if anything, of what Tim Keller says do you relate to?
- Do you find it easy to give attention to your inner life?

Read John 15:1-11

- How does 'Remain in me' (v4) link with what Tim Keller is saying about the inner life?
- Jesus made it clear that fruitfulness comes from prioritising time spent 'remaining in him'. Can you give examples from your own life, where time spent on your inner life has been fruitful?
- How do you nurture your inner life? How could you grow in this?
- There is plenty in this passage about pruning / burning away unfruitful branches. In either your inner or outer life, what could do with pruning? How might you do this?
- In v8 the implication is that as we prune back our lives, we become more fruitful. What additional fruit do you long for in your life? How might you prioritise this?

Respond

- Make a list of your life's top 5 priorities. How easy was it to identify them?
- Spend some time in listening prayer – asking God what he wants your priorities to be: in the short, medium and long term.
- What changes would help you be more consistently focused on these priorities?

Study 3: Time

Time is your most precious gift because you only have a set amount of it. You can make more money, but you can't make more time. When you give someone your time, you are giving them a portion of your life that you'll never get back. Your time is your life. That is why the greatest gift you can give someone is your time. Rick Warren

Starter for ten:

- Do you find it helpful or stressful to think about time as your 'most precious gift'?

Read Ephesians 5:8-15

- Do you ever spend time on 'fruitless deeds'? (v11) Might there be a moment to confess this to one another? Or to God in prayer?
- What does it mean to 'be careful' about how you live? (v15) How does this speak to the management of your time?
- Paul encourages the church in Ephesus to 'make the most of every opportunity', probably meaning when speaking to people who may not yet know Christ's love for them. What would it look like for you to grow in this?
- Rick Warren speaks very highly of time, describing it as 'precious'. Are you valuing your time correctly or do you need to place more value on it?
- Are there any dangers of viewing our time as the greatest gift we have?

Respond

- Explore the question – 'Who am I becoming by what I'm doing with my time?'
- If you'd like to explore this further – this is a great tool. Why not you and friend work through it together and discuss?

<https://careynieuwhof.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/At-Your-Best-Masterclass-Application-Guide.pdf>