



*Strengthening the  
Soul of Your  
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### How Is It with Your Soul?

When the early Wesleyan bands of Christ-followers got together in small group meetings, their first question to each other was “How is it with your soul?” This is the best possible question for us as Christian leaders in light of Jesus’ warning and in light of what we witness in and around us. So how is it with your soul?

Some of us know that we are losing bits and pieces of our soul every day, and we are scared to death that we might go over the edge. Others of us are still hanging in there fairly well, but we are not sure how long we will last. All of us have watched ministry friends and colleagues endure heartbreak, failure or betrayal so profound that they left ministry and are now selling real estate.

Those of us who have been in ministry for any length of time at all are under no illusion that we are exempt from such outcomes. Even the young ones know better these days. One emerging leader wrote, “I feel the call of God to move deeper and deeper into service through preaching and leadership. At the same time I am keenly aware of what ministry is doing to the personal spiritual lives of almost everyone I know on staff or in key volunteer positions in the church. I am increasingly unsure about how one is supposed to navigate the time commitments of ministry and one’s personal journey toward growth and wholeness. I find myself wondering if the two aren’t mutually exclusive.”

These are uncomfortable admissions, and paying attention to them requires a certain kind of courage because we don’t know where such honest reflections will take us. However, if we are willing to listen to our uneasiness, it might lead us to important questions that are lurking under the surface of our Christian busyness. “How does spiritual leadership differ from other models for leadership?” we might find ourselves wondering. “And how can I be strengthened at the soul level to provide such leadership? What would it look like for me to lead more consistently from my soul—the place of my own encounter with God—rather than leading primarily from my head, my unbridled activism or my performance-oriented drivenness? What would it be like to *find* God in the context of my leadership rather than miss God in the context of my leadership?”

This seems almost too much to hope for!

—Chapter 1, “When Leaders Lose Their Souls”