

How The Soul Runs Our Life



“What is running your life at any given moment is your soul.” Dr. Dallas Willard

If we are honest, what most seems to run our lives are the pressures of staying up with the *outer* world: coping with our hurried lives without collapsing from all the demands! We labor to keep up with our work, manage our homes, struggle with bills, pressures at school, handling conflicts in relationships, and the ever growing to-do lists. At Genesis, we see the evidence of these bottomless demands and exhaustion all around with those we serve. Underneath that frantic *outer* world pressure people feel, there is a desperate *inner* world of our soul seeking to be understood. What if we focused on that *inner* longing of our soul? We may finally find a deep place of spiritual rest.

I recently asked a new class full of bright, gifted Bible students how they understand the soul: *“Just what is our soul?”* *“And how does soul affect us, if at all?”* The students’ collective silence produced an awkward moment, which made it clear that the soul is not easily understood. Jesus made it clear that in order to love God from this inner world, the soul is central to us. Jesus answered the religious leaders’ question about the greatest commandment: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind”* (Mathew 22:37a). Jesus taught the religious leaders of his day that to fully love God (and others); the love must originate from a person’s inner world that includes the soul. We are to deeply care about the human soul because God does.

**“You are not just a self,
but a soul.”**

Dallas Willard gives a powerful understanding of the meaning of our lives and the running of the soul: *“[Each of you have] this tiny, fragile, vulnerable, precious thing about you called your soul. You are not just a self, but a soul. ‘The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul’. You’re a soul made by God, made for God, and made to need God, which means you were not made to be self-sufficient.”* No wonder when we stubbornly attempt to run our outer lives with finite self-sufficient resources, we simply run out of ‘spiritual fuel’ as we constantly break down along life’s road. To quote C.S. Lewis, we are sadly running our lives on “bad gas.”

So where is real rest of soul to be found in our troubled world? Jesus had this winsome invitation for our overwhelming burdens, a balm for our fatigue: *“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls”* (Math. 11:28-29). We must come to Jesus and we learn from him the way of rest. Only then can our souls find the comfort, healing, and release of our burdens as we allow our souls to be truly running in harmony with God, with us progressively rested in his grace. Lord, help us come and learn to run on you.

Warmly in Christ,

Dave

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