

Yearly Soul Goals by Sue Higgins 1-10-11

The question: Where is God desiring to be at work in transforming my soul this year?

Discerning Yearly Soul-Goals: Through the course of my routine spiritual practices I've regularly asked the Holy Spirit for His help in hearing God's heart for how I can grow into looking more and more like Jesus. *I began to observe that this request generally developed into a narrow and specific focus to collaborate and cooperate with Spirit-guided transformation throughout an entire year.* Identifying which area's for the yearly focus usually took place during the month of December.

As I gained clarity I formalized it by making a list. This list has generally developed into two main areas.

A. Character development:

1. ***Put-on qualities*** such as gentleness, humility, compassion, assertiveness, respectfulness, Godly anger, forbearance etc.
2. ***Put-off qualities*** such as greed, complaining, self-pity, self-justification, control of the tongue, superiority, entitlement, sarcasm etc.

B. Divine soul-wound healing:

1. ***Consolations (true self):*** such as God's affection, His tender nurturing, validation of past wrongs done "to" us, In-Christ identity and significance, trust.
2. ***Desolations (false self wounds):*** such as fear of rejection and abandonment, broken trust, black & white thinking, toxic shaming of self, anxiety, depression

Area's A & B often overlap with one another.

Living my year in awareness of the list, what are ways to cooperate and collaborate with the Spirit's work in me?

- a. Discern specific spiritual practices that would best facilitate growth in the identified areas of character development and soul-wound healing.
Adelle Calhoun's Handbook of Spiritual Disciplines is an excellent resource. Helpful tools for soul-wound healing might include, Life Story Mapping with special attention to Valleys, working with a counselor, psychological books such as Changes That Heal by Henry Cloud.
- b. A weekly review of the list of goals helps to keep it in the forefront. Over time it becomes more internalized which leads to a more heightened awareness on a daily basis.
- c. I create a simple notebook/journal mostly consisting of bullet points to record memorable moments of divine intervention, scripture, heavenly touches and intimacies.

When possible I share some of them with a spiritual director or close friend which adds to the strengthening and internalization of the growth areas.

- d. Because it's easy to forget in the "busyness" of the day I keep lots of sticky notes handy around the house, in my pants pockets and even in the car so I can later record into my notebook those special moments I've sensed: "There's God breaking through!"
- e. I also listen for opportunities where my ongoing work overlaps with where the Spirit may be at work in the life of someone I am serving. I've observed the freshness of my own work can be very powerful and empowering to others.
- f. I try to be sensitive and intentional to find books and articles that are around my targeted topics of focus.

End of year review:

Besides looking over a list of end of year questions, I also enjoy a review of notebooks and journals from previous years...***For me, it's become like looking through a cherished photo-album.*** I often have a precious and tender experience with the Lord as together we look at memories of those recorded intimacies with Him and once again His divine love floods my soul! I'm filled with gratitude for His gentle healing ways with me and the realization that little by little I'm living more in freedom of the soul and increasingly desiring to stay on the narrow pathway to become more like Jesus!