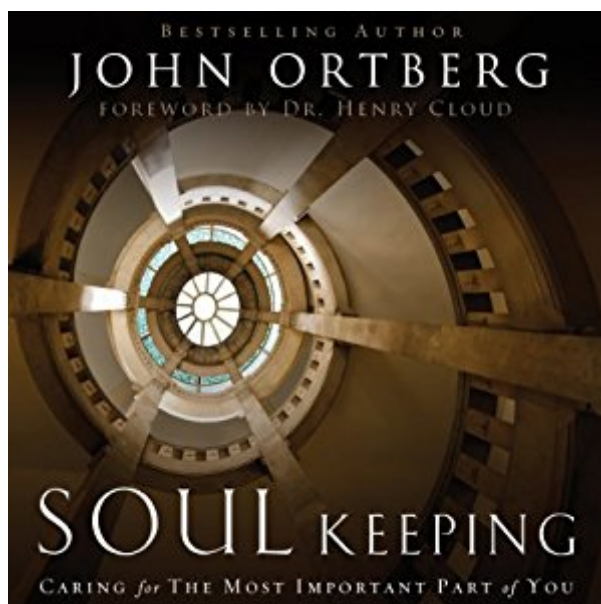


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Soul Keeping: Caring For The Most Important Part Of You



Synopsis

When is the last time you thought about the state of your soul? The health of your soul isn't just a matter of saved or unsaved. It's the hinge on which the rest of your life hangs. It's the difference between deep, satisfied spirituality and a restless, dispassionate faith. In an age of materialism and consumerism that tries to buy its way to happiness, many souls are starved and unhealthy, unsatisfied by false promises of status and wealth. We've neglected this eternal part of ourselves, focusing instead on the temporal concerns of the world - and not without consequence. Best-selling author John Ortberg presents another classic that will help you discover your soul - the most important connection to God there is - and find your way out of the spiritual shallow-lands to true divine depth. With characteristic insight and an accessible story-filled approach, Ortberg brings practicality and relevance to one of Christianity's most mysterious and neglected topics.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

[[...]]I'll be perfectly honest with you: my first thought when I finished John Ortberg's upcoming book Soul Keeping was, "Oh, I wish I'd written this book." • The second was, "but only Ortberg could have done it." • With his signature easygoing style and wry self-deprecating humor, John Ortberg has explained why our souls matter, what they actually are, and how we can help keep them "and ourselves" healthy and whole. If you care about the quality of your living and the kind of person you are turning out to be, this book is for you. But what makes Soul Keeping truly special is Ortberg's compelling portrait of his friend and mentor, Christian philosopher Dallas

Willard, and his extraordinarily practical interpretation of one of Willard's most challenging concepts: the nature and operation of the human person. If you are new to Willard's ideas, or didn't get a chance to know him, or just want to remember the grace and brilliance of the man through Ortberg's tender and grateful reminiscences, this book is for you. Following Willard, Ortberg explains the nature of the soul as the part of a person that coordinates and integrates the others—the body, mind, and will. When the soul is healthy and whole, the other parts work together, creating an integrity of the inner and outer lives. When the soul is whole, everything else runs smoothly: one experiences peace in the midst of chaos, ease during challenges, and hope in living. When the soul is damaged, the body, mind, and will are at odds, working against each other. When our souls are damaged, our minds believe an action is good, but our bodies do another: we eat the ice cream knowing the kale is better.

I have been familiar with John Ortberg's work through talks he has given at the American Association for Christian Counselors and his book *The Life You Always Wanted*, which surprisingly is not a book of prosperity theology. Because I have been favorably impressed with his work in the past, I was eager to read *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You* (2014). Ortberg is a pastor at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in California, though he also trained as a clinical psychologist. Each of those facts are important background in this book about caring for the soul. Additionally, Ortberg was profoundly influenced by the work of Dallas Willard who in May last year. In many regards, this book is a festschrift to Willard. Not only are Willard's influences deeply felt, Ortberg went out of his way to weave many stories about the man, a welcome addition. Essentially, this short book is a study in how we care for the most important part of us our souls. At the outset, Ortberg seeks to define the soul so that the reader is able to proceed from a place of common understanding. Once he establishes what the soul is, he moves on to reviewing what the soul needs and eventually how the soul is restored. There were a few things that I particularly appreciated about this book. First, Ortberg does a commendable job of differentiating between the soul and the self. So often in modern thinking about mental health, we think only about the self, which Ortberg suggests is misguided. Rather, we should focus on the soul, which defines who we are in relation to God. In the world of Christian psychology where I do some reading and writing, this is an important distinction.

Combining pieces of his own story with exhortations from his friend and mentor, Dallas Willard, and clear teaching from Scripture, Ortberg penned a must-read book for all who want to deepen their

faith. My copy is highlighted, dog-eared, and starred on nearly every page. The book was so encouraging and refreshing, that I don't even know where to begin a review. You'll just have to pick up a copy for yourself. Here are some of my favorite highlights and quotes:

The Soul Needs to be with God

In chapter 10, Ortberg reminds us that God wants to *be with* us, that our souls were made to walk with God. He points us back to the Genesis story where God walked with Adam and Eve each day. *But the man and the woman sin, deliberately hiding from God among the trees in the garden. Yet God would not be denied. He went after them* – in fact, the whole narrative of the Bible is all about God going after us. Relentlessly pursuing us. (page 113)

He gives examples throughout the Bible of God *being with* someone, and then points to Isaiah's prophecy that Jesus would be called *Immanuel*, God with us. He discusses how we can do the *with God* life all the time, no matter where we are or what we are doing. The *with God* life is not a life of more religious activities or devotions or trying to be good. It is a life of inner peace and contentment for your soul with the maker and manager of the universe. The *without God* life is the opposite. It is death. It will kill your soul. (page 117)

Chapter 10 alone is worth the price of the book. Eliminate Hurry

Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life. – Dallas Willard (p.

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