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Soul Care Journal

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SF 770 – Dr Robert Reimer

Due: April 21, 2023

This is not my first time through Soul Care; I have attended several conferences, read the book (in whole and in part) a few times, and lead others through the video series several times. My first time through Soul Care, I quickly determined that my core lie is performance, and that is still true. The difference between now and then is that I no longer feel my value is determined by how well I do, at least not in the big picture. I used to worry about doing enough to hear God say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” The lie I believed was that even though Christ died for my sins, I needed to now prove myself worthy of his death. I could not let go of trying to do enough to earn my salvation. I knew it was not possible, yet I could not stop trying. I would get caught in repeating sin/repentance cycles and—filled with shame—I thought God was always disappointed with me. Thankfully, the issue of my value was settled at the cross. There is nothing I can do that will make God love me more. There is nothing I can do that will make God love me less. God’s love for me will never change. After 4 years, I think I have gotten that to sink in.

This time through I have been looking for next level stuff; trying to answer the deep “what’s behind that” question as I am at a point in my healing that there seems to be a piece missing to connect my present struggles with a memory or wound in the past. I know there are issues bumping up against a splinter in my soul, but it does not match the things I have previously identified although many of the manifestations are similar. I am not convinced it is a different core lie but will explore that possibility.

Soul Care Principle #1: Identity

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the lies that affect you. Which of these three lies discussed in the chapter impact your life the most? How do they manifest? How do you use these things to fend off your feelings of vulnerability?

Perfectionism is still an issue and one of my concerns coming back into school. I will probably never be rid of my desire to do well, but I think I have learned the difference between perfection and excellence. Once upon a time, in degree programs long ago, I worked on every assignment until the

absolute last minute, honing them as close to perfection as possible in the allotted time. I am not sure how much learning I retained much of the time though as the biggest goal was to get an A. I still want to do well, and I need my grades to be decent enough to qualify for scholarships, but I am focused on the things I take away from the courses that do not show up on the transcript. Spending multiple hours over several days and weeks to improve an assignment does not change my learning. The joy of a good grade does not make up for the stress or lost hours to do things other than schoolwork; things that bring me more peace and joy. I am learning to say, “good enough” and let it go even when I know I could make it better, and I am proud of myself for doing that on every assignment instead of obsessing over it until the last minute of the deadline. Is it wrong to still really want the A though?

Ok , so I already know about my performance lie. God, what do you want to reveal to me? Are there other lies I need to replace with your truth?

While there are a few behaviours that on the surface seem connected to people pleasing and control, the reason for those behaviours seems to come back to performance in the end. The lie of people pleasing really does not make sense to me. I cannot figure out what someone gets from bending their own desires to others just to be liked. Of course, I want people to like me and love me, but if I change who I am so they will, they are not liking ME. I care what people think not because I want them to like or love me, but because my success is often dependent upon other people being happy with my performance, particularly at work. I only care what other people think about me when it affects my ability to do my job. When people are not clear about their expectations for me, or expectations are divided among a group, I become frustrated, irritable, and angry; they are blocking my path to success. So no, I do not think I have an issue with people pleasing. That is still a performance issue.

I guess there is the fact that I want the approval of certain people; people that matter to me. But then again, there are people who matter to me that I know do not agree with my stance or calling and while it does bother me, it does not affect my perceived value or deter me from continuing in my call.

My family has not been outright rejecting, but they have been clear they do not agree with the idea of women as pastors. The result of this is that while we do discuss my brother's ministry, there is not much interest or discussion about what I am up to at the church or in my studies. Yes, this makes me sad as I would love to have the full support of my family in the same way they all rally around my brother, but I do not feel less valuable because of this. I would love to have my family enthusiastically behind me, but I have enough confidence in my call that I do not *need* the full support of my brother, sister, mother, or adult children in order to continue.

Others that I desire approval from? Men in ministry positions, particularly if those in positions of authority over me or are men that I look up to. I am not sure why this is.

On to the control lie:

I am a classic type-A personality. An overachiever, driven, in-charge type of person. I want to control the outcome of the things I care about. If I work hard and produce good results, I feel good. But if I work hard and things don't come around, I can feel irritable and angry. What's underneath that?" (pg. 56)

Ouch! This one lands. I could have written that myself. My need for control is certainly greater than it was before the car accident. I still think it goes back to performance. In fact, I am not sure I see a difference. I control in order to perform.

Why a greater need for control now than before though? What is behind that? Part of it (maybe even all) is the accident and the skills and abilities that have changed since then. Are all the things that changed or were lost because of the accident permanent? It has been hard to address some of these through the lens of Soul Care because I am not sure what is soul issues, and what is a result of the injuries sustained. I really liked who I was before the accident, and I have spent time grieving the changes I see. I can also see how God works through my weaknesses and losses in a greater way than before though. For one thing, my pride is less of an

issue because I am very aware of the fact that it is not me who is successful when I get up to preach. Preaching is not something I am doing nearly as often as I would like yet, but prior to the accident, when I would preach, I did so from a script, fine-tuned and rehearsed. I remember after preaching only a couple of times hearing God tell me that someday I would preach not only without a script, but with only bare minimal notes. I could not see how that would ever happen. After the accident, one of my biggest struggles has been written composition. Each time I have preached since then I have done so with no more than the scripture passages I plan to use written down. It is not a method I would recommend! However, each time I try to write out what I will say, I feel God asking me to trust him to give me the words in the moment. (Just to clarify, this does not mean I go into preaching blind without studying beforehand; I just cannot organize my words on paper.) In some ways, I would much rather have the script, but I feel the filling of the Holy Spirit in a much deeper and different way now than I did when I was preaching from a script, and I love that!

I feel like I am way off topic... what else is new!

What makes you feel most vulnerable?

I feel most vulnerable when I cannot perform at the level of my “potential” more specifically, my old potential. Since the accident with the moose, I struggle a great deal with staying on task, forgetting things, being confused, or unable to understand things, or unable to express myself as I want, as I used to be able to do... these things drive me crazy. Recovery has been long, and some days things are not good. I have experienced healing, but I am not where I was before the accident. Headaches and migraines are a regular occurrence, which is better than the almost constant dizziness I had for a year after the accident, but they really impact my ability to stay engaged in the world. I get confused easily and my mental health has taken a big hit. Will I ever fully recover?

I also feel vulnerable when I feel I am being assessed or judged by other pastors or authority figures. I am settled in my value before God, but I take care to pay attention for times I step off that firm foundation onto an insecure one of performance. (Or is this people pleasing?) This becomes frustrating at times as it can be difficult to determine if I am jumping hoops because it is a requirement in the world to prove myself or if I am slipping into trying to earn approval (emotional ointment, so to speak). I hope to find the key to figuring this out more clearly.

What image of yourself are you most attached to?

I used to teach school on a Hutterite colony, and I loved the confident leader that I was in the classroom. The image of myself that I am most attached to though, is the confident, spirit-filled leader. I experience this when preaching and while discerning in deliverance ministry. It is different from when I was teaching because it is not about what I can do, but what the Holy Spirit does in me. I love that feeling more than any other. I feel like I step into the presence of God while in the presence of others, and then step back from myself and let him take over... if that makes any sense.

What are you most proud of?

I am most proud of my tenacity. I am not sure that quite ties into my performance lie the way the question is probably intended. Is it supposed to be my proudest moment? That memory definitely plays into my performance lie. There is a photograph of it—me and my dad—but I can still see that moment from my own eyes. It was taken after my graduation ceremony from AUC/NCU (now Ambrose). I am showing my dad my degree, and we both have tears in our eyes. One month before I began school, my dad was diagnosed with advanced colon and prostate cancer and given very low odds of survival. I was going to withdraw and move back to the same city so I could be close to family and help out however I could, but my dad would hear nothing of it. I was divorced after being in an abusive marriage and raising two kids on my own, desperately trying to pull my life together, and my dad's dream was for me to finish university and become a teacher as I had always dreamed. I remember him telling me to go to

school and do my best, and he would go to his cancer treatments and do his best. I completed my first degree in two years instead of three and graduated Summa Cum Laude. My dad not only attended my graduation but did so cancer-free. We hugged right after the ceremony and I handed him my degree saying, “We did it, Dad!”

What are you most defensive about?

I am most defensive about people getting in the way of or telling me I cannot do something I want or need to do. Most recently this is most connected to being a woman and my call to ministry. Nothing frustrates me or gets my defenses up more than when people say I should not or cannot be a pastor because I am a woman. I cannot change being a woman, nor can I ignore what I feel God calling me to. I have never been one to want to be the trailblazer. I am not out to prove anything to the world as far as women’s rights or anything like that. I get so frustrated when people stand in the way though. I know who I am in God’s sight, and feel pretty confident in that actually, but I hate having to prove myself—often beyond what a man needs to prove (or at least it so often feels that way)—to be allowed to obey God. So, even when I get past my own performance lie and issues, I am put right back to the task of proving myself to be enough to be a pastor or justify the call God has placed on me because I run into so many people who say he certainly does not call women to be pastors, or even if they do say it is ok, their actions do not follow suit.

The issue of my value is dependent on _____. Are there specific memories attached to those lies? What do I feel when standing on this faulty foundation? What do I say to myself? What are the imaginary conversations I have in my mind? What are the symptomatic expressions of this lie in my life? How does it manifest?

Put the lies in a sentence. Come up with a truth slogan or scripture to replace each lie.

Do you struggle with an identity wound or bent will? Do you know why? How does it manifest in your life?

Identity is what my first time through Soul Care was all about. I believed my value was dependent on pleasing God with my performance. I had to prove my worth of Jesus' death for me. I continually got caught in a sin-repent cycle and carried huge amounts of shame, unworthiness, and hopelessness. I most definitely had a bent will! I have worked hard to repair my view of the Father and how I thought he viewed me by focusing mostly on Psalm 139, then on Ephesians 1. Spending time in the presence of Jesus was essential to change my view of the Father. I saw the Father as an angry judge wanting to condemn me to hell and only grudgingly willing to not do so because Jesus had decided he loved me. I still felt the Father's final judgement would be dependent on my performance and ability to stay on the straight and narrow. However, now I see that the love of Jesus that made him willing to die for me originated with the Father. God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—loves me, as much as he has loved anyone else, and that love does not change based on what I do. I do not believe God's love is greater for those who choose to follow him and do it well, than for those who do not do it well, or even for those who choose not to respond to his gracious and merciful gift of salvation. I have felt the Father's tender love and compassion for me more in the last four and a half years than in the previous 47. This is still the area I struggle with the most, but now I usually quickly recognize when I distort the Father's view of me.

The wound I am trying to figure out is why I suddenly feel like I am less than enough because I am a woman and not a man. I have asked God several times in the last few years why he would not have just made me a man because it would be easier to live out his calling then. I know, why is the wrong question. The answer I got was not helpful in identifying what is behind that feeling. The answer was that he does not want just another pastor, he wants me the way he created me. That does not help me figure out why I suddenly struggle with being a woman.

I was incredibly affirmed growing up. I was very intelligent. Smarter than any of the girls in my school, and smarter than almost all the boys. This did not make me popular, but it was something my

parents seemed proud of, so it was something I was proud of and worked hard to maintain. My parents always told me I could be anything I wanted to be, and this was also reaffirmed by my teachers. I resented any kind of comparison between what men and women could do because I never saw it as a gender thing. For me the issue was if you wanted to do something, and had the skills, then do it.

However, there was a silent message that I was completely unaware of. It was never spoken that a woman could not be a pastor but looking back that message was clear. I remember my grandparents telling me that the highest calling I could attain in God's eyes was to be a missionary, or a pastor's wife. God had called me to ministry during a missions conference when I was 8 years old; I assumed that meant overseas missions. I excitedly went on a mission trip when I was 17 and ended up very sick, in the hospital, at risk of death, separated from my parents because they could not afford to come to me in Europe and I was not stable enough to fly home to Canada. Well, I made it, but I completely walked away from any idea of becoming a missionary because I was never going to be in that position again!

I still wanted to serve God with all my heart and with everything I had, so in my mind that meant pastor's wife. The problem was I was sexually abused by my pastor's son for 3 years and no one knew about it (well, another youth pastor did know, but he did not do anything about it, so I felt it must be my fault and never told anyone else). There had been a man pursuing full time pastoral ministry who wanted to marry me, but I turned him down (without ever telling him about being sexually abused) because I felt completely unworthy of the love of someone as holy as a pastor.

While I have dealt with the issues surrounding my unhealthy marriage choices and feel complete healing in that area, I think there may still be a connection somewhere here to my current issues. That is what I am looking for. After an abusive marriage ended in divorce, I sought counseling and healing from my abuse in the marriage and as a teenager, completed a degree at AUC/NUC and another at University of Calgary, and finally started back into trying to live out the call God placed on me as a child (after 20 years of running from it).

Shortly after I was hired as the Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator at my church, I was introduced to Soul Care, and that is when everything changed, and the real pursuit of what God called me to began. My lead pastor, Ron, who was the one who introduced me to Soul Care, began to push me outside my comfort zone as he saw something in me that I could not see in myself. I remember him asking me to preach, and I was like, “No way! I can’t possibly do that!” That night the Holy Spirit informed me that it was not in fact a dumb idea, but his plan for me. I returned to work the next day and said I would give it a try. Sometime in the following weeks, as Ron handed me books to read and encouraged me to step fully into my calling, I began to see the silent message of my upbringing... the one thing I cannot be is a pastor. I had to first address how I got that message and very quickly came to see that I did not hold that position theologically. I completely believe that men and woman are equally gifted and called without a division of roles; gender is not a factor for God’s calling into ministry. I just had to get over how I had internalized the opposite message for myself. It was in this time that I very clearly heard God tell me that I did not make the wrong choice when I turned down the man seeking to be a pastor who wanted to marry me, what I felt was one of the biggest mistakes of my life. The words I heard God say were “I never wanted you to be a pastor’s wife. I’ve always wanted you to be the pastor.”

Now my struggle is not so much about how God sees me, but in trying to live out the call to be a pastor in an environment that still often has a problem with that. While my church has technically voted to affirm women in positions of leadership, has women on the board, and changed my title to Associate Pastor, there are still many issues when it comes to women as pastors, and I have received many wounds from people in my own church...it is ok for women to be pastors for children, youth, or women, but not pastors who preach regularly, and certainly not lead pastors. I know there are denominations that are much more open and affirming that way and moving to another denomination is a possibility at some point, but until I finish the M.Div, I am pretty much stuck in the C&MA. Honestly though, the C&MA is where I want to be. I realize that larger churches in the cities do not have the same... narrow

mindedness?... as small-town churches, but I also need to be respectful of my husband's career and lifestyle; Dean is not a city guy at all. Living in Yorkton instead of out on the farm is a stretch for him and giving up farming is something between him and God, not something I can ask of him. I respect that and would therefore rather serve in a church in a small community than move to a large city.

Soul Care Principle #2: Repentance

Is there any unconfessed sin in my life? (Psalm 139:23,24)

No. I bring anything that ever comes up into the light as soon as I am aware of it.

Are there areas of my life where I have confessed sin but don't feel the release of forgiveness?

Not anymore; that was taken care of the first time I did Soul Care.

Where do I see worldly sorrow in my life instead of Godly sorrow?

Nowhere. If there is, God is not pointing it out to me.

Am I willing to do a total life confession with another?

I have done a total life confession with my husband, Dean, and with one friend, Jenn. I am willing to do it with another person when an opportunity presents itself, but at this point I do not have another friendship at that level. I do have several other people who I share things with as they come up, but more on a spiritual director level than friendship. I keep my confessions current with Dean and Jenn. I am careful with who I reveal certain things to, but in general I am far more comfortable with living in the light than having secrets.

Soul Care Principal #3: Overcoming Family Sin Patterns

What are the sin patterns in my family?

Sin and wound patterns I see in multiple generations of my family: abandonment/rejection, sexual abuse, victimization, sexual immorality, fear, pride, guilt/shame, performance/perfectionism, legalism, anxiety/depression, suicide, worthlessness/self-rejection, favouritism.

How do those family sin patterns manifest themselves in my life?

Each one of these patterns has touched my life in some way. However, these have been thoroughly answered in previous portions of this journal and even more extensively in my personal and family inventory paper; this journal is going to be long enough without inserting that paper here.

What actions do I need to take to overcome them?

I have done a total life confession and recognize the need to stay current with my confessions, not just with God, but with Dean and Jenn. I need to educate my children and be open about family sin patterns in age appropriate ways. I spend time with Jesus daily in a variety of ways. Not being religious about it is extremely important as the legalism is something I know I can tend to fall into... checklists are comfortable.

What gracious prayer partners can help me?

Dean, Jenn, Ron and Jan. To some extent other family members (mom, siblings)...maybe?

What spiritual disciplines would be most important to me?

Silence and solitude, celebration, simplicity, some form of fasting, scripture reading and meditation.

What Scriptures do I need to meditate on?

- Psalm 139 will continue to be an important scripture as I meditate on God's intention in creating me as I am.

- Jeremiah 29:11 reminds me that God is not out to get me but has good in store.
- Romans 8. For so very many reasons, I need to study and reflect on this chapter.

Soul Care Principle #4: Forgiveness

Who do I need to forgive?

The big forgiveness issues have been dealt with: I no longer hold any unforgiveness toward my abusers, or my ex-husband.

There are not any current pressing forgiveness issues. I do continue to pray blessings over people who have recently wounded me (and continue to do so on a regular basis) whenever I feel that splinter has been bumped. I don't feel unforgiveness toward them, just hurt at times and I quickly pray blessings over them and ask God to give me any needed forgiveness for them.

What are the losses I need to grieve?

Other than the losses sustained in my accident. I am not aware of any losses I need to grieve at this moment. I have been conscious in the last couple of years to allow myself time to grieve disappointments and hurts and not just ignore them.

Unhealthy passions vs. healthy passions. What are my comfort sins?

I am trying to rediscover my healthy passions. So many were taken off the table after the accident and I am trying to figure out what those things are now. I also realize that many of the things I enjoyed as a teenager and young adult are things I have forbidden myself to do out of legalism. I know my comfort sins involve escapism tendencies. One of those used to be reading Christian fiction. I gave up non-fiction reading because I recognized it as a way of escaping, and it is not that I want to go back

to that, but I had replaced some of that reading time with reading scripture and found it very enjoyable. Since the accident however, enjoyable is the last word I would use for any kind of reading.

Another escapism for me was binge-watching shows with characters I could feel a connection to in exchange for relationships with real people. I dealt with this by cutting off our cable and only allowing myself to watch shows or movies if it was done with others, like a movie night with friends, or my family. This is the area that I probably feel most conflicted about and am trying to find balance in. When I completely restrict myself from watching anything, I feel legalistic and find myself more prone to judgement of others, particularly household members who have no problem with sitting in front of the tv or their phone for hours on end. I would like to find a happy medium where I can sit down, relax and enjoy a show without becoming so sucked in that it becomes obsessive.

Soul Care Principle #5: Healing Wounds

What are some of the major wounds in my life?

Major wounds (already addressed and healed) include:

- sexual abuse when I was a teenager; at least three different abusers (four if you count the man I ended up marrying)
- an abusive marriage; extreme emotional, sexual, and some physical
- death of my father
- a complicated job loss a week before moving to start the job, but after my husband had already quit his job and had been replaced

The most recent wound that I am still dealing with happened in August last year. The vote for women in leadership had passed by a one vote margin in our church in March. In June, the board approved changing my title to Associate Pastor as of July 1. One family in particular did not like these

changes. They were going to see how things at church were affected by the vote results that they did not agree with, but the last Sunday they attended our church was the first Sunday my new title was in the bulletin and used in the service. Six weeks later they asked to meet with the board to officially terminate their membership and explain why they decided to leave the church. They said it was nothing against me personally, but that they did not agree with women as pastors theologically. Although it still felt personal, because there is nothing I can do about my gender, I did not have hard feelings toward them; they have their reasons and are sticking to their principles, found another church more aligned to their beliefs and went about terminating their membership without just disappearing. I cannot fault them for any of that. I could have easily taken my sorrow at the loss of this family that was heavily involved with the ministry at the church and my hurt feelings to Jesus and dealt with them quite quickly. However, the board did not act in a board-like manner. Instead of simply sticking to the fact that they are board members of an egalitarian church, two of the four board members expressed to the family leaving that they too had voted no and believe the vote went the wrong way. They said they decided they have to stick with the majority, even though they feel it is unbiblical. I was already well aware of the fact those individuals voted against the motion. Having them express their personal opinions in a forum where personal opinion should have been put aside hurt. I felt like they threw me under the bus in that moment. They also could not understand why I would take any of this personally. I took it personally because this family, heavily involved in the weekly ministry of the church, and significant financial supporters, would still be part of the church if it was not for me. I love my church. I love all the members. One thing God gave me in the last few years has been a love for those that I do not always agree with. Having a family leave because of me really hurt. The knowledge that I did not have the support of the board even when they were supposed to be acting as a board, not individuals, hurt even more. It broke my trust and solidified the decision that it was time to leave. It has been a very slow departure because I wanted to do

right by the church and not leave them in a worse situation than they already were, but that meeting in August was the day the decision to leave was made.

Soul Care Principle #6: Overcoming Fears

What are my root fears?

I have finally been able to articulate my current root fear! I fear missing out on or not fulfilling the call God placed on my life.

How do they manifest themselves?

I think the most significant manifestation of this fear is the need for approval from men in ministry because they hold the majority of control. I begin to second guess myself when faced with people who do not agree with women in pastoral positions, and find myself more likely to step onto the performance platform to try to prove myself capable, enough, and equal to men. The fear is not about my standing with God at all; my identity with God feels secure. It is about people in positions of power—able to approve and support or block and deny—having influence on my following God however and wherever he calls me. I think it is tied to performance lie, and not a people pleasing lie because it is not about if people like me; they do not have to like me to approve, and there are already plenty of people who do like me that do not approve of women as pastors.

How are my fears affecting my relationship with God? How are my fears connected to the lies I believe?

This fear ties back to the lie that I need to earn or pay God back for my salvation, and the belief that I am a disappointment to God. Spending time in silence with Jesus daily is a constant reminder that this is a lie, though, and I do not find myself struggling to prove myself to God.

What are the wounds beneath those fears?

God showed me how my core lie, current wounding, and fears are connected!

I am the first born in my family, and the first grandchild on my mother's side; her parents were in the ministry (missions and pastoral) for over 50 years. When my mother was pregnant with me, her brother committed suicide by driving his car off the road (she would be very angry at me for saying that, but combined with things I knowing in the natural, the Spirit revealed to me when going after family sin patterns years ago that this was a suicide). I have always been told that he was super excited to be an uncle and was really hoping for a nephew, but my mom always said I would have had him wrapped around my little finger immediately. I also knew that she wanted me to be a boy so she could name me after him. None of this ever bothered me. On Friday night after the conference and dinner, as I was seeking the Lord, he showed me the missing piece. My brother, four years younger than me, was given my uncle's name. He also had the mantle of ministry hopes placed on him, as I stated in in my family inventory paper. As soon as he turned 18, he was named as power of attorney and executor of our parents' will. Without a conscious knowledge of it, I have spent my whole life trying to prove myself as enough and worthy to carry expectations that no one would ever deem me worthy of having because of my gender. I have always been very proud of my brother and his ministry with Hockey Ministries International, but I realize I have also been very jealous of the support he has always had going into ministry. When I think of the thousands of prayers my grandparents prayed over his future ministry (long before he ever felt called to ministry) and the pride with which my parents support him (my dad died in 2016, so it's just my mom now)... I need those prayers too! I need that unwavering support of hearing "you've got this because God has called you and is always with you." I understand he felt it as a burden, but I am jealous of something my brother had from the day he was born and spent much of his life not wanting. I love him so much and support him and his ministry as much as I possibly can, but he

would not even approve me as an elder, never mind a licensed worker and pastor. He has never listened to one of my sermons or asked me about my ministry stuff. In fact, none of my family have been overly supportive; my mom and my daughter have each listened to one sermon, and it has only been since I told my family that I am resigning to focus on school full time that my mother seems to be warming to the idea of me as a pastor, though she does not seem to think I could be a lead pastor.

This connection is so fresh as I write this. I am definitely going to have to sit with Jesus on this one several times. In some ways I wonder how I could have missed it. I wish my dad was still around. He died before I started at the church and began this journey into full-time ministry. I think he would approve of me pursuing being a pastor, even if no one else does. I am sure he would have supported me with as much enthusiasm as he supported my brother. Perhaps that is why I so much want the approval and support of a man in authority over me. I had that while Ron was pastoring the church, and while I know he still supports me, he is so far away now.

Great, now I am crying. I think I have figured out a loss I need to grieve; the wound I need to heal from.

What are the courageous actions you need to take to overcome your fears?

I think I have taken the first steps I need to overcome my fears; enrolling at ATS, and now resigning my position at Yorkton Alliance to fully focus on pursuing God's call. I am not afraid to step out in faith, and I am sure there will be many trials ahead, but I am confident (or at least acting like I am) that he will provide for our financial needs despite giving up my salary and fill in the deficits left by the accident so I can complete the necessary schooling to move on to what he has next. I need to remember that it is never too late to finish well and continue to listen and step into whatever God brings my way. At 51, I am much older than I would like to be and it so often feel like I do not have enough

time to do all I want to for the Lord. I wasted many years running from God's call due to feeling unworthy. I cannot make up the lost time, but I can focus on doing what he asks now and doing it with my whole heart. I may not know the exact specifics he is calling me to yet, but I do know there are so many others asleep in the pews of our churches who need to be awakened to the presence and power of Jesus, and I feel this is the area where my calling lays. If I stay in tune with the Holy Spirit, I will not miss it, and while others may throw obstacles in my way, I am only responsible for remaining obedient and willing to walk through the doors he opens.

Soul Care Principle #7: Deliverance

I have always been spiritually sensitive and fascinated by the spiritual realm. Already as a child, I had seen and heard demons and angels frequently and wanted to know more. While drawn to investigate, I also felt a great deal of guilt over my interest. I knew things like Ouija boards were not a toy despite what any of my friends said, but there was definitely an interest. I was scared of them because I could feel "them" on the shelf of my friend's playroom. The one time I mentioned it to her she pulled the Ouiji board out to show me it was "just a game." It felt very dark and evil—anything but a game—and I went home crying just from seeing it. I don't think I went back into her house ever again. Thinking back now, I see other indicators that perhaps this family was actually into the occult: they were the one family I knew who did not go to church on Sundays; while they had a Christmas tree and did gifts and stuff, they never talked about baby Jesus; Easter was only about a bunny and chocolate; and she did not attend the 5 day club we had in our backyard one summer, even though I know she was home because we played together at other times in the day, she just was not allowed to come. It was just odd for the area I lived in at that time.

It did not take long to realize the things I saw and heard were not things that everyone experienced, and I soon stopped mentioning them to anyone. My parents had said what I now know

were nighttime visitations were just nightmares, and I was told many times by Sunday School teachers and such that we cannot see angels, demons, or Jesus now adays. For many years I tried to ignore the things I saw and experienced, but that left me feeling more fearful than ever. All I ever really needed was for someone to understand what I was seeing, hearing, and experiencing, and tell me there were things I could do. When my ex-husband was manifesting demons regularly, I tried talking to the pastor of the church we were attending. Not only did he not do anything to help, but I was no longer allowed to teach Sunday School because he thought I was crazy.

Watching deliverance at my first Soul Care conference was the most wonderful experience of my life. I felt like I had just been handed a toolbox and instruction manual to go with the spiritual gift I had had from 6 or 7 years old and never really figured out how to use.

Rob did my deliverance in 2018 and when going through the test at the end, I still “failed” at the question, “do you have any resistance to God the Father?” Despairing because I thought I would never get free, I was a little shocked and put off when Rob said I did not need any more deliverance but needed to work on my identity and overcoming lies I believed about who Jesus says I am. He told me I needed to walk in the truth not in what I feel, then walked away from me. I decided to do what he said, believed I was free and acted upon that by joining deliverance teams to discern and help others get free. There has been no going back since that day. I am not so much a Soul Care groupie as a deliverance junkie... I just want to help others get free, and I do not have much opportunity coming to me, so I will go to where I know I can help others whenever I am able. Although doing deliverance on Zoom became a thing because of covid—and I am so grateful for every opportunity to serve in that capacity—there is nothing like doing it in person.

Resources

Reimer, Rob. *Soul Care: 7 Transformational Principles for a Healthy Soul*. Franklin, TN; Carpenter's Son Publishing. 2016.