

100 Soul Care Questions Every Minister Should Be Asking

- Jim Baker

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flows the springs of life. Proverbs 4:23 NASB

The greatest need of the hour for today's minister may very well be a more intentional approach to their own soul care, to paying attention to their "inner spiritual life."

The minister's inner person must be constantly renewed and without regular introspection and self-examination minister's run the risk of a fruitless ministry or "sudden failure." The good tree, Jesus said, "bears fruit" (Matthew 7:17 NASB). If we tend to the tree the fruit will take care of itself.

The questions below are intended to help the minister come face to face with the realities of their inner life, their thoughts, feelings, heart and will with all of its intents and choices.

"So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit."

-Matthew 7:17 (NASB)

- 1.** What were the most powerful practices and habits that were a part of your life as you grew up, negative or positive?
- 2.** How did these influence your life and figure into who you were becoming, the quality of your life? How have these influenced who you are now and your life now?
- 3.** What are presently the most powerful practices and habits in your life, negative or positive?
- 4.** How do these influence your life and figure into who you are becoming, the quality of your life?
- 5.** In view of who you want to become, what practices or habits need to be eliminated, changed and what practices or habits might need to be added and developed?
- 6.** What is the nature of your practices/habits in various areas such as work, leisure, exercise, self-care, soul care? Are they restorative, self-destructive, hit or miss or missing?
- 7.** What three habits/practices are you drawn to develop/change?
- 8.** What were the most powerful relationships, as you grew up, negative or positive?
- 9.** How did these influence your life and figure into who you were becoming, the quality of your life and who you ultimately became in young adulthood?
- 10.** How have these influenced who you are now and your life now?
- 11.** What are presently the most powerful relationships, in your life, negative or positive?
- 12.** How do these influence your life and figure into who you are becoming, the quality of your life?
- 13.** In view of who you want to become, what relationships need to be changed and what positive relationships need to be added and developed?
- 14.** What roles do you play and what kind of life do you have in the lives of others: spouse, children, parents, best friend, co-workers, boss/supervisees, lay leaders, neighbors, enemies?

- 15.** What one or two relationships are you drawn to develop/change?
- 16.** What were the most powerful of your experiences, as you grew up, negative or positive?
- 17.** How did these influence your life and figure into who you were becoming, the quality of your life and who you ultimately became in young adulthood?
- 18.** How have these influenced who you are now and your life now?
- 19.** What are presently or in the last few years, your most powerful life experiences, negative or positive?
- 20.** How do these influence your life and figure into who you are becoming, the quality of your life?
- 21.** In view of who you want to become, what experiences need to be eliminated or changed and what positive experiences need to be added and developed?
- 22.** How does this relate to having downtime, recreation, outdoors enjoyment of creation/nature, service to others, the least, the lost, suffering with others, celebrating others?
- 23.** What two experiences are you drawn to develop or change?
- 24.** What were the most powerful responses to your life's circumstances, as you grew up, negative or positive?
- 25.** How did these influence your life and figure into who you were becoming, the quality of your life and who you ultimately became in young adulthood?
- 26.** How have these influenced who you are now and your life now?
- 27.** What are present responses to your life's circumstances, negative or positive?
- 28.** How do these influence your life and figure into who you are becoming, the quality of your life?
- 29.** In view of who you want to become, what relationships need to be changed and what relationships need to be added and developed?

- 30.** What is your posture towards God, others and what is happening in your life? Thankful, unthankful, trusting, mistrusting, honest, hiding, in denial, drawing nearer, drawing away, patient, enduring, irritable, touchy, numb, jealous, envious, bitter, compassionate, excited, sympathetic, apathetic?
- 31.** How are you responding to sufferings, to successes, to set-backs, to pressures, disappointments, to unpleasant surprises, with humility, grandiosity, shrinking back, barging ahead, stuck, tentative, decisive?
- 32.** What one attitude or response to life circumstances are you drawn to develop or change?
- 33.** Who am I? Who Am I becoming? Do I like it?
- 34.** What do my habits or practices, relationships, experiences and responses to life circumstances reveal about my formation?
- 35.** What vision of life am I leaving? Entering? Imitating? Modeling?
- 36.** Who knows me well enough to call me out?
- 37.** Is my spiritual community one where we I can trust others with the risk of being honest about my need for transformation?
- 38.** Do I trust them to speak into the critical areas of change needed in my life?
- 39.** How vulnerable am I to submitting to God's shaping of me through the influence of others?
- 40.** How open am I to let others help me discover areas of need that are unaware to me but clearer to my spiritual community?
- 41.** What relationships with the lost do I have that are true friendships?
- 42.** Do I hear the cries of the least, last and lost, overlooked, vulnerable? Do I know who they are in my neighbors, workmates, in my city, my church?
- 43.** What relational experiences have I had recently with the lost, least and last?

- 44.** What one or two areas you'd like to see significant change in by 2015?
- 45.** What would it look like to live without anger, lust, worry, contempt, gossip, lying? List 5 ways how life for you and others would be better?
- 46.** What causes anger, lust, worry, contempt - what can I "add in" to push these out? What does scripture say about these?
- 47.** What will be my toughest challenge in facing change in this area? What can I do to keep myself accountable for sticking it out?
- 48.** Am I becoming legalistic, proud, performance obsessed or becoming more surrendered and abandoned to God and dependent on God's grace for change?
- 49.** Am I becoming harder to live with, holier than thou, judging of others or more loving to others?
- 50.** Am I able to love those who don't treat me well?
- 51.** If I were out of control in spending and full of greed, what would it be like to be content and free to be generous with what I have?
- 52.** If I were to go through my day without much of God's presence, what would it look like to know his voice, to sense his mind on things, to know that he is with me ready to engage me at a moment's notice?
- 53.** What would it be like if I became certain that every problem was only an opportunity to rely on God's showing up to work good for others and me?
- 54.** If I were angry and controlling, what would it look like to be able to put away anger quickly and to trust others and God for outcomes rather than manipulate things or people to my idea of what is best?
- 55.** If I were living in fear or worried about some matter, what would it be like to be able to trust God's provision for that area and be peaceful, no matter what was happening?

- 56.** If I am bound up in bitterness and loathing contempt for an enemy, what would look like to genuinely be able to pray and bless them, wish for their best, empathize with whatever they are suffering with and projecting on me without being condescending, smug, or seething inside?
- 57.** What would it be like if I was so sure of God's purposes, protection and care for me that I could wish for other's success over my own?
- 58.** What individual has marked or help form your life?
- 59.** What was it about that person, your relationship, your response to the person that marked you?
- 60.** What community marked and formed you? How?
- 61.** Who are you marking? What individual? What community or group? How?
- 62.** Do those in my church want the kind of spiritual life I have?
- 63.** Am I the kind of leader our people want to follow or have to follow?
- 64.** In your life these days: What is heavy? What isn't fitting well?
- 65.** In your ministry these days: What is heavy? What isn't fitting well?
- 66.** How often am I in God's word data mining for preaching and teaching versus for my own growth and engagement with God?
- 67.** Am I going to God when I am at my best mentally and physically or do I try to add or squeeze it into my schedule?
- 68.** Is my prayer life primarily perfunctory quiet time or more a conversation with God throughout my day?
- 69.** What are my first thoughts upon waking and my last upon sleeping? Do I have a time to offer myself and my day to God and a time to review my day with God and my spouse?
- 70.** Is my body trying to speak to me through illness, aches, pains and exhaustion?

- 71.** Do I spend time praying for what I am hoping God will do in me, my family, my friends and enemies and those I minister to and do I carry that prayerfulness for others with me during my day?
- 72.** Does God have enough of my attention that he can interrupt me and my agenda and am I present enough to others that they can too?
- 73.** Do I memorize God's word, meditate & reflectively pray to master it in my body and life?
- 74.** Is my knowledge of scripture embodied in obedience or just theoretical or head knowledge?
- 75.** Can I tell the difference between my thoughts and those from the Spirit of God or the enemy?
- 76.** Do I know of a blind-spot, besetting sin, unaddressed addiction or strong hold of the enemy that is keeping me from God's best for me and others?
- 77.** Do I have a clear and compelling vision of what and who I could be in a specific area of my life that God has called me to develop?
- 78.** Do I have practices that put my body, mind, heart, soul and relationships into God's hands for transformation or am I just trying harder and harder at the moment of temptation?
- 79.** Am I just "managing" my sin or is my sin being mortified to become boring, uninteresting and disgusting to me?
- 80.** Do I really believe that obedience to Christ is "the best possible way to live" rather than what the world, my flesh and the enemy and their lies say makes for happiness?
- 81.** Do I believe that obedience makes for a life that is easier and that sinning is actually harder on me than obedience?
- 82.** Do I really believe that through Christ's transforming power in me I can do everything Jesus says I can do?
- 83.** Is there anyone in my life who knows everything about me and regularly listens to me and speaks truth into my life?

- 84.** Are there any areas in my life that I have given up hope to change?
- 85.** What is God teaching you? What are you wrestling with before God?
- 86.** What questions are you living in?
- 87.** What spiritual desires are emerging in you?
- 88.** In what ways has my busy life of service masked or even enhanced dysfunctional behavior?
- 89.** How have you experienced ministry success as a “ravenous people-pleasing monster”?
- 90.** What are the signs that you are headed for a crash landing in ministry and life?
- 91.** How have you experienced busyness (including busyness at church) to be barrier in seeking closeness with God?
- 92.** When you think about who you are as a person, is your identity centered in what you do, in God, in family, or in some other source?
- 93.** What does it mean to “cast your cares” on Jesus? What spiritual practice might help you deal with your worries?
- 94.** What does it mean to grow as a Christ-follower by “training rather than trying”?
- 95.** What is your current pace of ministry? Is the pace you are going sustainable?
- 96.** When has God’s creation prompted a response of worship and awe towards God?
- 97.** How do you recognize and identify the image of God in yourself?
- 98.** How do you fill your life with Christ so you can love others freely?
- 99.** Who is your true self, what God designed you to do and be? How does living within your purpose change your life? How is God using your uniqueness?
- 100.** What is God saying to you these days about your calling?

About Sacred Structures and Jim Baker



For the past 10 years Jim has served as Executive Pastor at Brentwood Baptist Church outside Nashville, Tennessee serving alongside Senior Pastor Mike Glenn to lead one of the largest and fastest growing churches in the nation.

During Jim's tenure Brentwood Baptist Church has doubled and tripled every significant metric of church growth and health and has grown from a staff of 14 ministers to over 50 with a support staff of over 100. Jim is also a certified Model-netics Instructor, a nationally recognized training system of organizational and management concepts and principles.

In his spare time Jim exercises his passion for both creativity and structure through his hobby of reclaiming vintage bibles, hand made pieces and broken and cast away items and repurposing them into crosses and representations of biblical metaphors. Jim sees these "sacred structures" as representative of how Christ "makes all things new" through God's Word and his Spirit and can repurpose our mistakes and our lives for his purposes.

Information on Jim's coaching, consulting, training and speaking services as well as purchase of his art structures is available on his website, SacredStructures.org.