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Guided by Your Secret Life

Homer Massey
Liberty University, homassey@liberty.edu

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A Devotional by Homer Massey

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In 1997 Keith Miller wrote a book, *The Secret Life of the Soul*, published by Broadman and Holman, in which he dealt with the sometimes difficult to define life principle known as the soul. *Trichotomists* say humans are made up of body, soul, and spirit; *dichotomists* say the body and soul are human, but the spirit is God's presence in the soul. I'm not going to get into that debate today.

In Genesis it's recorded that God created Adam, and breathed into him the breath of life, and "*man became a living soul.*" On a more personal level, approximately 9 months before you were born, and before the doctor held you up by your heels and whacked your behind, you became a living soul.

We often talk about "*soul food*" which refers to food of African/American, Jamaican, or Caribbean cultures (which I sometimes like), or "*soul music*" which combines elements of gospel and rhythm and blues (which I also like). In each case the idea can have to do with something that touches the innermost being in some unique way - helping the individual to express something he or she feels. I would suspect that the foods you like and the music you listen to can say a lot about who you are.

In the Bible there are at least 240 references to "soul" or "souls," and in about 90 percent of the uses there are possibly *four different meanings*. Most often this is simply the seat of a human being's deepest feelings.

Second is referring to the soul as the seat of a particular spiritual part of our personality that relates to God or things of God.

Third is the view that one's highest values are processed by a particular part of the personality - this would indicate that what we call "conscience" is an integral part of the soul.

Finally, the most frequent use of soul in the Bible points to that part of us that is thought to continue after this life. Our body may die but our soul will continue.

What I want to focus on in these few minutes is the third one of these: *our soul's highest values, or the conscience*. Now I hope you know that *you are right now who you have been becoming*. Everything you've collected in your persona from birth to the present, has made you who you are.

Often I deal with people who are grieving or fretting over things in their past – many times it eats away at them and makes them feel defeated or inferior. These are more often than not students, both undergraduate and Seminary. So the first thing I need to remind you about is that Jesus' blood shed on Calvary covers or atones for those sins of your past. Don't let Satan constantly bring these up and harass you with them. God's Holy Spirit dwells within us to give us victory over these attacks of Satan. John reminds us *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9).

In fact, you need to remember that, while the mistakes you may have made are, as we say, "under the blood," they are part of your history, and as such you need to learn from them - always be logging these experiences into your secret memory bank and making a determination that, by God's grace and help, you will build on them in a positive way. You've used the word "enthusiasm" which is from *en* and *theos*, which combined mean "God inside." If you're a believer, trusting Jesus for your soul's salvation, John tells us *"greater is He that is within you than he that is in the world.* You have inside you every day a great secret power source at your disposal.

The second thing I want to remind you about is that although at your age your value system is largely established - you are already putting into practice what you believe about right and wrong, what you will and won't do in a business transaction, what you believe about moral ethics, about human relationships, raising a family, who you'll vote for and why, and so on - although these secrets of your soul have taken root and made you who you are today, God isn't finished with you.

Third, future decisions will always be crucial for you. You'll make them based on those values imbedded in your inner being that you've been collecting and acting upon for years now. So if there are things in there that are not good and wholesome and part of God's will for your life, you should decide to change or eliminate them now, since they will affect those future decisions. God's Word gives us a formula for this in Philippians, *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things"* (Philippians 4:8).

Thinking or meditating on things is what we do in that secret place of the soul. And the things we think about and meditate upon in secret will sooner or later make or break us. J. Vernon McGee called this our *"sanctuary of power."* Some of the worst things in history have been the result of someone's meditation on evil things too long and too often, and some of the greatest and most powerful things that have come along have

likewise been the result of someone thinking and meditating on a great thought or principle long enough for it to translate into something wonderful.

Let me close with at least *two things to meditate on in your secret sanctuary*. First is to think on the *Lord Jesus Christ*. Speaking of Philippians 4:8, McGee said it is the briefest biography of Christ. Jesus is true (whatsoever things are true), and He is honest (whatsoever things are honest), He is just (he is called the Just One; He is pure, the only truly pure individual who walked the face of this earth; He is lovely (or gracious), and He has a good report. Paul said "if there be any virtue" (which has to do with strength and courage), and "if there be any praise" (Revelation tells us He is worthy of our praise), we are to "think on these things."

The second thing is to meditate on the *Word of God*. Don't become biblically illiterate. God's Word is food for our soul, and wisdom for our mind and heart. The Psalmist said "*Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.*" (Psalm 119:11). If it finds its way into our heart, it will serve to guide us in life's most important decisions. I can't imagine your focusing, meditating on the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Word of God in your "sanctuary of power," that secret place of your soul, and not being successful in what you believe God's will is for your life. Combine these with prayer and you have an unbeatable combination. I pray you will purpose this in your heart.