

### 1: Creative Imagining | Well-Tended Spirit

*A Well-Tended Soul holds a mirror up to your life for a refreshing, unabashedly feminine look at spiritual formation. Valerie Bell shows how to start building a life of incredible richness as you become more internally focused, forming your soul to God's own heart.*

For me, soul care means rejecting the destructive lies about God, ourselves, and others that keep us from living out our true identities in Christ. Not the most succinct answer, I realize, but indicative of my journey. For my entire childhood, his work had him leaving every Monday morning and returning every Friday evening. But that was OKâ€”because when he was home, he was angry and hostileâ€”largely a result of his own dysfunctional upbringing. So my brother and I, unlike our friends, began to dread weekends and looked forward to Mondays. While attending a guided spiritual retreat last fall, I came to realize how these past events have influenced many of my thought processes, decisions, and behaviors. I have shied away from God-given opportunities for fear of failure. But rather than imprisoning us in past regrets, our redeeming Father gently shepherds us toward what He intended all along: Our part is simply to receive. It involves asking, seeking, and knocking. It involves being still and listening. It involves setting aside the Martha duties and accepting the Mary invitations. This is what soul care means to me. In this issue you will hear from those who are reclaiming their true identities in Christ. They are walking toward freedom and taking others with them. Imagine the impact we could have if we identified and eliminated the lies that keep us in a perpetual state of spiritual paralysis. Imagine if we took God at His word and trusted Him to work in and through us to do miraculous things. These are the fruits of a well-tended soul. Peter Burgo, Editor-in-Chief What does soul care mean to you? Many thanks for one of the best messages on a well-tended soul. I needed your reminder. Tremendous collection of stories this month! Leave a Reply Your email address will not be published.

### 2: The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: Planting Pruning Techniques by Tracy DiSabato-Aust

*A Well-tended Soul. By Peter Burgo "What does soul care mean to you?" This was the question as we prepared this issue. For me, soul care means rejecting the destructive lies about God, ourselves, and others that keep us from living out our true identities in Christ.*

Where is God in our Brain? The use of modern brain scanning equipment and techniques has shed light on how we experience God and what we think about God, as well as the long and short term effects of prayer and meditation on our brain. To be clear, neuroscientists cannot see God on brain scans so their research is not about proving the existence of God. What they can see is our reactions, thoughts, and beliefs about God by studying the structures of our brains and our blood flow patterns. Where does God, or more accurately our understanding, feelings and belief about God, reside in our brains? It turns out, not surprisingly, in many areas, but the primary regions are our frontal lobes and our limbic system. The frontal area is where our thoughts about God happen and the limbic area is where our feelings about God occur. Between the two is the anterior cingulate, connecting our thoughts with our emotions. Think of a seesaw with our thoughts on one side and our emotions on the other. The anterior cingulate is the fulcrum, what the seesaw rests on. When thought activity increases, emotional activity decreases. When emotions rise, thought and rationality go down. Simply put, when there is a good balance between the activity in the thought and feeling areas, and our anterior cingulate is strong, we have a positive perception and experience of God. When working well, the anterior cingulate both activates compassion and love and suppresses fear and anger. It helps with emotional self-control, with pursuing goals, with creative problem solving and error recognition. The God of the healthy anterior cingulate is experienced as benevolent. If both the thought and emotion regions remain relatively inactive when a person contemplates God, God will hold no meaning or value to them and they tend towards agnosticism and atheism. The God of low thoughts and feelings is non-existent. Those who show more activity in the thought region and less in the emotional region perceive God as distant. They think about God in more abstract ways without ascribing meaning, value, pleasure or discomfort. This generates fear and anxiety and brings up the fight or flight response. It also shuts down the anterior cingulate and suppresses rationality and thought. The God of the overactive limbic system is experienced as frightening. So our thoughts, feelings and beliefs about God have distinct neural patterns depending on whether we see God as benevolent, non-existent, distant or angry and critical. Other parts of the brain are activated with different spiritual experiences as well. The back of the brain helps us to understand the personhood, or human attributes, of God. We experience God as separate from ourselves in the parietal lobe. When parietal lobe activity decreases, we experience a feeling of oneness or unity with God. What we focus on increases activity in the thalamus and our beliefs become neurologically real. What is so interesting and encouraging is that we can increase or decrease activity in different parts of our brains through loving spiritual practices. Conversely, activities that focus on fear damage areas of our brain and we not only lose interest in the well-being of others, we can become aggressive towards those we perceive as outsiders. Being in an environment that emphasizes disdain encourages animosity and hostility. Even the simple act of anticipating a future negative event turns down the activity in our anterior cingulate, ramping up fear and anxiety. So it is important when we pray and meditate and engage in any spiritual practice, that we focus on what brings us love and joy and optimism and hope and what encourages compassion and unity; and that we be very careful and wary of what triggers negativity, anxiety or fear in us. Our brains reflect our thoughts, feelings and beliefs and our thoughts, feelings and beliefs affect our brains. We have a responsibility to ourselves and others to do what brings out the best in us, what encourages love, what promotes peace, and what produces a well-tended spirit. I am neither a neuroscientist nor a doctor. I am a writer with a keen interest in the connection between spirituality and the brain.

### 3: Rest and Renewal Just Between Us

*Instead of being well-tended and well-fed, our soul shrivels from benign neglect, leaving us tired, weary, and apathetic at best bitter, angry, and resentful at worst. Here are a few questions to assess the state of your soul in a rhythm of solitude, community, and ministry.*

Today, in this report, we want to first give an overview of our past decade of reporting on AWANA, and then we want to share some new information that should concern every parent and grandparent who has a child or grandchild in AWANA. It was just over ten years ago, in Feb of , that we posted our first article about AWANA after having contacted them about our concerns. In that article, we stated: Awana Clubs has been a respected and trusted Christian organization for many years. Countless children have been Cubbies and Sparkies and have memorized Scripture through the program. Few things are stable these days – is Awana the next to cave in? As moved forward, our concerns heightened as AWANA continued promoting contemplative materials and the Spiritual Formation movement and showed no signs of breaking away from Willow Creek. Two phone calls from us and sending printed materials had no apparent effect. Awana is showing signs that it is becoming a full-blown contemplative organization. Azcuna works in the main headquarters office of Awana. When we explained to him that Blanchard promoted the New Age and mystical meditation, he said that the program did not have these elements. The book gives a typical instruction on contemplative: Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know. When people return from their time of solitude, they have big smiles on their faces. While many of them found it difficult to quiet their mind, they say it was a powerful experience. The reality is most of us spend little if any time in solitude. A description of the book is as follows: How do you decide what direction you want your ministry to children to take? You will then be able to make a more informed decision on the way in which your ministry should take. But overall they believe that contemplative is a valid approach for all Christians, including children. Is it or is it not promoting contemplative spirituality? They are the contemplative tradition, the holiness tradition, the charismatic tradition, the social justice tradition, the evangelical tradition, and the incarnational tradition. Each of these has played an important part in the larger history of the Christian church. Each of these traditions has made significant contributions to Christian spirituality and each has weaknesses when isolated from other traditions. We share agreement with the Contemplative-Reflective Model in a number of areas – we have much to learn from the Contemplative-Reflective Model. If the Awana writers in this book are trying to persuade readers that they do not promote contemplative spirituality, they have done a terrible job in expressing this. On the contrary, they have given minor cautions and major affirmations. Their response to contemplative spirituality leaves one message to readers: And it is this attitude that is going to take Awana down a slippery slope of deception, unless they truly come to understand the underlying dangers of contemplative and then make every effort to rid Awana of its influence. Awana came out with new junior high curriculum. I reviewed one of the books and was not happy. The high school level curriculum too is in the process of being re-written with the help of a man named Josh Griffin. Griffin is associated with Doug Fields who was a speaker for Youth Specialties, then went on to be a youth pastor for Saddleback before returning back to work for Youth Specialties. Both Fields and Griffin have written books together and share a blog. Awana had a booth there. A link on the e-mail connects to a promotional video where you see many people including Tony Campolo. Josh Griffin was the M. The convention also offered spiritual directors for one-on-one sessions. It is truly sad to see Awana linking hands with the emerging church movement. This brings us to the present, Valerie Bell While Bell has some disconcerting resource links on her website , the one that stands out the most is Hungry Souls, the website of David and Karen Mains. For a number of years, the Mains have had affinity with New Age concepts and teachings as has been brought out by a number of different discernment ministries you can do a search on the Internet and see this for yourself. There is no question that Bell and Mains share a spiritual affinity. Among various teachings and practices included in the trip was instruction in the contemplative practice, Lectio Divina. In addition to promoting David and Karen Mains, Valerie Bell shares her own views on contemplative spirituality on her website. On a page with the

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subtitle Soul Care another way of saying contemplative , it says: Valerie has a strong interest in soul-care as a way to find spiritual well-being and relationship with a loving God. Her approach invites people to learn spiritual practices that can sustain them through the most difficult life challenges. Lighthouse Trails Articles on Willow Creek:

### 4: Full Well Tended Soul A Download EPub EBook Pdf FREE

*A Well-Tended Soul is a foundational resource for many of Valerie's ministry weekends, workshops and seminars across the U.S.â€”designed especially for church leaders as well as women's retreats and conferences.*

The concept of your soul *nepesh* in Hebrew, *psuche* in Greek refers to the self, life, breath, the heart; the very essence of a person. To care for your soul means that you draw on God at all levelsâ€”mentally, emotionally, relationally, physically, and spirituallyâ€”and that you are being consistently transformed, renewed, and freed through the life of Jesus. It means to incorporate healthy rhythms into your life so that you are able to truly be yourself and pour into others out of a full tank. We see patterns of Jesus pulling away from the crowds to be alone with the Father, drawing life from unhurried, uninterrupted intimacy. We see Him interacting in authentic community, gathering around the table, sharing day-to-day life with friends and family. And we see Him pouring out His power in the ministry, taking His marching orders from His Father instead of being pulled in every direction by the manipulation and control of others. Instead of being well-tended and well-fed, our soul shrivels from benign neglect, leaving us tired, weary, and apathetic at bestâ€”bitter, angry, and resentful at worst. We become incapable to giving our full attention to our spouse, our children, our friends, our work, and especially to God. For many, the thought of solitude is equated with loneliness instead of joyful, refueling connection with Jesus. Is there enough silence and stillness in my life to hear the voice of God through the noise? Is there space in my life for God to act? Do I systematically study the Word, pray, and spend time with God on my own? Should I set aside a block of timeâ€”an afternoon, a day, a weekendâ€”to just be with the Lord? Am I afraid of being alone with God? Community God designs us to connect on a vertical plane with Him, and on a horizontal plane with others. Let him who is not in community beware of being alone. Each by itself has profound pitfalls and perils. One who wants fellowship without solitude plunges into the void of words and feelings, and one who seeks solitude without fellowship perishes in the abyss of vanity, self-infatuation, and despair. Sadly, most people in ministry have few or no genuinely life-giving friends. Is my spouse one of my best friends? Has ministry taken a toll on my marriage? Do I have any spiritually deep connections? Do I have any soul friends? Are there people in my life who know and love God and know and love me enough to give me the hug and slug I need? Which friends provide mutual, reciprocal support and encouragement? Who in my life consistently points me toward Jesus? When did I last laugh until my face hurt? How do I have fun? Do I have anyone to play with? Ministry I truly want to be able to say, as Jesus did: But there is so much work to do. I get sidetracked by the demands and I feel inadequate to the task. Soul care ensures that your ministry flows from the Lord, not from your own limited strength. Am I taking in without giving out? Am I giving out without taking in? Does my ministry flow out of my communion with God and my connections in the body of Christ? Am I serving out of gratitude, love, obedience, and freedom? Is there a root of self, guilt, performance, pride, competition? Am I coming to God with my availability alone for His plansâ€”rather than my own agenda? It may be very challenging, but is there joy in ministry? Am I working out of my spiritual gifts? Do I know what my spiritual gifts are? Am I doing what God has assigned? Or do I run myself ragged trying to meet the expectations of others as well as my own? Well-tended souls are alive toward God, enjoy true community with others, and are comfortable in their own skin.

### 5: News & Stories Â» A Well-tended Soul

*And just as a well-tended peach tree produces peaches, the Holy Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-controlâ€”the life of Christ lived outâ€”through a Christian.*

When you click on them and make a purchase, I receive a small commission. See my full disclosure here. Designed to help you think through what matters most to you and your family, this resource will help you plan for your entire holiday season! Do you struggle with the heart issue of keeping a clean home? This prayer for the messy homemaker is for you! Pray and ask God for these four specific requests for your heart for the home. My lack of natural homemaking skills used to make me insecure and frustrated. And while my home will never be magazine worthy, my heart for my home is changing. This prayer is for those of you right there with me â€” trying to keep a home as a type-B, sometimes overwhelmed mess. We come before you as imperfect, disordered women. Our homes are a mess, and our hearts are even worse off. We are longing for the peace that comes from a well-managed home and a well-tended soul. So we ask of you. Rid Us of Pride Search our hearts, Lord. We confess to worrying about what others would think of our homes and of us. We have let pride stop us from inviting another in. And, sometimes, our pride tells us that we are too good to do menial tasks. Rid us of it all. Help us to not look at homemaking as something to dread, but, instead, as a gift. Let us not get so wrapped up in perfection that we miss the beauty of inviting others into our mess. Let us see small and cozy as just as beautiful as big and pristine. Remind us, daily, of the blessing of shelter, food, and clothing. Help us not lose focus on the why behind our endeavors â€” we make our homes to love others well. And may we never be so consumed with organizing and cleaning our stuff that we forget the greatest blessing â€” eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. Grace, Always More Grace And when we stumble and mess up, when the pride slips in, when we feel like will never get ahead of the laundry or the dishes point us back to your endless grace. We know you made each of us unique â€” with different callings â€” and ours is something other than natural homemakers. Help us to embrace our strengths and accept grace for our weaknesses. Thank you for loving us, refining us, and pouring out grace upon grace. If, like me, you are wanting to transform your home and your heart, our next steps are continual prayer and a plan. No idea where to start with a plan? A renewed heart towards our home and others is a much better goal than a squeaky clean house. Does creating a Christ-Centered home feel overwhelming? Plus, when you join the Creative Home Keeper community you will join over 5, other women just like YOU who are becoming equipped to create a Christ-centered home and are transforming their hearts towards homemaking once and for all! Now check your email to confirm your subscription. There was an error submitting your subscription. First Name Email Address We use this field to detect spam bots. If you fill this in, you will be marked as a spammer. When subscribing you will be receiving encouragement, practical advice, and occasional sale notices. You may unsubscribe at any time. Powered by ConvertKit You might also like:

### 6: Fruit of a Well-Tended Soul | Time with God

*A well A Well-Tended Soul holds a mirror up to your life for a refreshing, unabashedly feminine look at spiritual formation. Valerie Bell shows how to start building a life of incredible richness as you become more internally focused, forming your soul to God's own heart.*

Friday, Nov 18, Galatians 5: I recently asked my youngest son this question. It was interesting to hear his answer—two of his closest friends—and to discuss the source of their joy. Both are Christians who pursue Jesus in all areas of their lives. They spend time in the Word, are intimately involved in their church community, and love serving and ministering through Young Life. Who is the most joyful person you know, and what is the source of their joy? Read the Word Galatians 5: I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. English Standard Version, copyright by Crossway Bibles. Looking back at verses , who accomplishes the works of the flesh? Who produces the fruit of the Spirit? What is the fruit of the Spirit? What does the fact that fruit is singular as opposed to works, which is plural , tell you about the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit? God crucified the flesh for us through Jesus Christ, and now we participate in crucifying the flesh, according to verse Is it possible to live by the Spirit and not keep in step with the Spirit vs. Why or why not? Respond to God Paul encouraged the Galatians to be led by the Spirit so that the Spirit would bear fruit in their lives. As Christians walk with the Spirit, making time for studying the Bible, worship, service, and fellowship with other believers, the Spirit pours water and fertilizer on the soil of our souls. He prunes the fleshly desires and allows room for his fruit to bloom in our lives. And just as a well-tended peach tree produces peaches, the Holy Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—the life of Christ lived out—through a Christian. Thank Jesus for crucifying the desires of your sinful nature, and ask him to produce the fruit of his Spirit in your life.

### 7: About Valerie — Valerie Bell

*Filled with anecdotes, humor, and myth-busting honesty for women desiring to see the "half-full" side of life at mid-life and beyond! Displaying the same spunk and spirit as that of Izzie in "Fried Green Tomatoes," Valerie Bell offers a Christian spin on resolving life's issues, along with deep spiritual reflections and basic truths suitable for women of all ages.*

### 8: News & Stories » Issues » Sept/Oct

*A well-tended soul is a woman's beautifier. Soul-care weeds out what is malignant and false and builds in what is lovely, worthy, and redemptive. With refreshing.*

### 9: Well-Tended Spirit | Flourishing in Chaotic Times

*You can go to a mirror to find out how your body is doing, but how can you get a picture of your soul? A Well-Tended Soul holds a mirror up to your life for a refreshing, unabashedly feminine look at spiritual formation.*

*Betty Friedan It Changed My Life Irish Stone Walls Esophageal Function Testing, An Issue of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Clinics (The Clinics: Internal Medicine Pulpit Prayers By Eminent Preachers A Trope Substitute for the Resemblance of Universals Monhegan Memories Alternative Waste Treatment Systems (Proceedings of the International Conference Held at Massey University Illustrated Textbook of Pediatric Emergency Critical Care Procedures Rehabilitation of the Crimean Tatars Shall We Go to War? By Barry Bingham. Phat Death, or, The Last Days of Noir Soul There Have Always Been Foxes Missale Romanum Mediolani, 1474 (Volume II) Rostow Five Stages of Development Ghouls Blood-Spattered Sex The Song Books Score (1970) Garman and Worse (Dodo Press) Selection and Use of Engineering Materials The Haunted Tracks Thomson Advantage Books: Abnormal Psychology Infection, Immunity and Serum Therapy Details in Architecture 5 (Details in Architecture (Image)) MCSE Windows 98 Study Guide (Exam 70-98) Developing a Strategic Cultural Plan Problems with Publications Related to the Clinch River Breeder Reactor Project Crazy Little Thing Called Love Piano A World Full of Women Local Economic Development Definition Advice Encouragement Never on My Knees Kipling, R. The Elephant's Child. Select Bibliography (p. [ix]-xii) My Fab Years! Sylvia Anderson Signed Imam Jalaluddin Suyuti Books in Urdu Democracy, the Threshold of Freedom Of Hot Dogs and Heroin Physical Thinking Tamil Baby Boy Names Country in the Region. The Many Myths Surrounding the Viking Era are Discussed and Pilgrims Feather*