

Voices: Soul care for educators in the midst of war

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When I think about my soul, what comes to mind are songs like “It Is Well with My Soul” and verses like 3 John 2: “Beloved, I pray that in every way you may succeed and prosper and be in good health [physically], just as [I know] your soul prospers [spiritually]” (Amplified Bible).

As an educator, I wonder how we can know in the context of education that it is well with our soul. And just what is “it” anyway?

I recently learned more about soul care at the Bethlehem Baptist Church 2018 Fall Women’s Rally. I was taught to see my soul as my emotions or feelings, my thinking and my decision making.

There is a war going on for control of souls

Preaching from Joel 3:9-16, Pastor Michael Evans told us Sunday, “There is a war going on.” Joel was trying to get the people ready for war, and we can take several lessons from his words.

First, because the enemy—Satan—changes his tactics and tools to attack, we must be mindful to use everything we have and to retool as necessary. Joel 3:10 declares, “Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say ‘I am strong!’”

Second, depend on God alone. This war requires spiritual weapons to fight.

Finally, God has us. He is a refuge for his people (Joel 3:16). God’s people

must have weapons ready, God on their minds and the Holy Spirit in their souls—emotions, thoughts and decision making.

For teachers, this war can include things like an unbelieving or ill-mannered principal, anxiety about state testing, constantly changing curriculum mandates, and a wounded spirit due to stifled creativity, financial instability and low morale. For Christian teachers, God has given us what we need for this war.

Even so, I needed reinforcement. When the Fall Women’s Rally and the theme—Soul Care—was announced, I knew I had to be there. Sunday’s sermon affirmed I needed to be there because a war is going on against all believers, including me.

I sense a particular attack on educators because we get to mold minds and set students on a straighter path year after year. I need to care for my soul in the midst of this attack.

Knowing “it” is well with my soul

The “it” in the song “It is Well with My Soul” could be different things for different people. For educators, “it” may be the position we take as educators. “It” may be our faithfulness to all that *is* right about education, such as our steadfast care and passion to provide an education for children—especially [other people’s children](#),” our dedication to sending children on to the next grade, and our continuing to speak truth to power and standing in the gap to ensure the message of quality education is not lost.

Knowing what “it” is, let’s sharpen our spiritual tools for battle, let’s resist Satan by calling on God, and let’s remember God is always with us so that it may be well with our soul.

When I care for my soul by doing a few things—starting and ending my day with Jesus, daily meditation, reflecting on why I am called to be as an educator, and continually offering my gift of teaching back to God for his use—I am equipped better for knowing “it” is well with my soul.

When I walk in truth as an educator, not wearing a mask, it is well with my soul. When my emotions, feelings, thinking and decision-making spring from faith and not fear, it is well with my soul. When I can resist my fleshly temptations and call on the Holy Spirit for help, it is well with my soul.

When you do these things, may “it” be well with your soul, too.

The work of education can be overwhelming and the challenges seemingly impossible, but remember: we are seed planters. Fight the good fight by resisting negativity and complacency. Continue serving as you’ve been prepared and trained to do. Look to the Lord, from whom our help comes, while waiting with great anticipation to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant!

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