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# Foreword

by Tim Timberlake

**AMID THE FRENETIC PACE OF OUR MODERN WORLD,** where hustle and grind often feel like badges of honor, the concept of “soul care” may seem foreign, even impractical. But as you hold this book in your hands and prepare to embark on a journey toward more profound understanding and practice, I implore you to pause for a moment. Take a deep breath. Reflect on your own life and the moments when you felt most alive, most connected, and most at peace. Chances are that those moments had something to do with your soul’s well-being.

*Soul Care* isn’t just another self-help book. It’s a lifeline, an invitation to rediscover the rhythms that make you whole and connected to your most authentic self. It’s a call to embrace the wisdom of the ages and integrate it into your modern, fast-paced life. It explores the delicate balance between the spiritual and the physical, the profound and the practical, and the eternal and the everyday.

Through a journey of personal discovery and transformation, Debra realized a fundamental truth: In the pursuit of spiritual growth and resilience, we often overlook the importance of taking care of our physical bodies. This subtle yet profound revelation can reshape how you view your well-being. It’s the understanding that sometimes, the answer to your struggles and suffering might be as simple as drinking more water. But it’s also more than that; it’s about recognizing your role and responsibility in your journey toward wholeness.

The Bible is a source of timeless wisdom, and in its pages, water is not just a metaphor but a tangible symbol of life, cleansing, and sustenance. It’s a testament to the idea that soul care is holistic, encompassing both

the spiritual and the physical. From the Old Testament to the New, water flows through the Scriptures as a reminder of God's provision and care. Just as God provided for the Israelites in the desert, He offers the same to us. Water represents life, salvation, and the Word of God itself.

In Jesus's humanity, we find a profound lesson. When He, fully God and fully man, uttered the simple words "I thirst" as He hung on the cross, it was an acknowledgment of His humanity, a reminder that even amid profound spiritual purpose, He had physical needs. His request for a drink was a call for refreshment, not just for His body, but for His soul. In His final moments, He revealed the intimate connection between physical well-being and spiritual fulfillment.

This book will guide you toward rediscovering your life-giving rhythms, reminding you that caring for your soul is not a luxury but a necessity. This journey involves acknowledging your physical needs, tending to your spiritual health, and understanding that the two are intricately intertwined.

As you delve into the pages of this book, I encourage you to approach it with an open heart and a willingness to embrace the practical and spiritual dimensions of soul care. The insights you'll find here are not just theoretical but deeply practical, designed to help you find rest during life's chaos, avoid burnout, and experience unshakable joy.

In a world that often emphasizes "more" and "faster," this book invites you to consider the counterintuitive power of "less" and "slower." It's a call to reconnect with your true self, embrace the rhythms that nurture your soul, and ultimately experience the peace and fulfillment that come from aligning your physical and spiritual well-being.

May the wisdom contained within these pages be a wellspring of inspiration and transformation as you embark on your own soul-care journey. And, like Jesus at the well, may you find not only refreshment for your body but also nourishment for your soul.

Pastor Tim Timberlake

Senior Pastor, Celebration Church

Author, *The Art of Overcoming* and *The Power of 1440*

# SOUL CARE



Living Filled to Fully Live



## Chapter I

# FUEL UP

### *How Full Do You Feel?*

#### **I'M ABOUT TO ASK YOU A REALLY IMPORTANT QUESTION.**

I know, I know, we just got past the title of the book. We barely know each other yet, we don't even know what this book is about or where exactly it's going, and here I am, about to throw a deep question your way. I didn't even bother to write an introduction to ease you into it. We're just diving into the emotional deep end, aren't we? I'll blame it on the counselor side of me. But here's the thing: The answer to this question will set the stage for the rest of this book. The answer to this question is what places you in either the category of people who are thriving or people who are surviving. The answer to this question will help me predict what type of person you are and what your life will look like one year from today. So, like I said, it's a really important question.

The question is this: How full do you feel right now?

I don't mean physically full, as in you just scarfed down a sandwich or a salad for lunch and you're feeling uncomfortable because you ate too fast.

I mean *emotionally* full. What I'm really talking about is the fullness

of purpose, energy, motivation, peace, joy, creativity, strength, hope, and connection. Maybe it will be easier for you to answer my question when you think about the opposite end of the spectrum. The opposite of fullness is emptiness. Emptiness means overwhelm, lack of motivation, low energy, fatigue, depression or anxiety, loneliness, hopelessness, apathy, tiredness, cynicism, and general burnout.

How full do you feel right now? Or maybe I should ask, how empty?

If I asked you to tell me on a scale of zero to ten (ten being *extremely full* and zero being *completely empty*) what number would you give yourself?

Think about that for a moment.

Don't answer right away.

In fact, put this book down for a moment and really think about your answer before you move on. Pause for a moment and tune out what might be going on around you, then try to tune in to what's going on inside of you. Because that's exactly what it's going to take to get an accurate answer to my question: the ability to tune out the external noise and tune in to what your body is telling you.

## FUELING STYLES

As a professional counselor, I'm often challenging and encouraging people to tune in to how they're feeling—but I would love it if somehow we could figure out how to get some of these answers in an easier, more objective way. Wouldn't it be nice if we had some sort of meter on our bodies that allowed us to accurately see how full we are feeling, like the gas tank gauge on a car? Imagine if we could see that little needle, starting at *F* when we're full, and slowly making its way down toward *E* as we're nearing empty? I guarantee you I'd have far fewer clients coming into my counseling office in a state of complete crisis and total burnout if that feature existed on the human body. We could just track our fullness as we went through life, stopping to fill up as soon as the needle started ticking below the quarter-tank mark on our emotional reservoir.

For a quick moment, let me detour from this conversation and acknowledge that some of you out there are utterly shocked right now that

I suggested filling up at the quarter-tank mark. Because when it comes to your “gas fueling styles,” you’re less like me and more like my husband: the type of person who likes to live on the edge when it comes to filling up your gas tank. You like to let that gas gauge get as close to *E* as possible before you fill up. You get some strange sort of satisfaction—a satisfaction that people like me will never understand—from seeing that gas gauge light up, warning that you have less than 20 miles left before Empty. (I would say *sick* satisfaction, but I don’t want to offend anyone quite so early on in the book.) You’re the type of person who coasts into the gas station on nothing but fumes, stopping to fill up only when you absolutely have to and not a moment before. Listen, I see you.

The truth of the matter is, I don’t know if our gas fueling styles have anything to do with our *emotional* filling styles, and I don’t know whether you’re a quarter-tank kind of person, like me, or a live-on-the-edge-until-I-hit-*E* kind of person like my husband. But no matter what kind of person you are, we all have an emotional tank that needs filling. We all have an emotional capacity that we need to be acutely aware of in order to avoid burnout, depression, anxiety, and significant emotional crisis. We all have a responsibility to stay filled in order to live a peace-filled, thriving, joyful life.

Jesus called it living a *full* life (John 10:10).

## LIVING FILLED

The contrast to living filled is living empty—and living empty is the exact way the enemy wants us to live. In contrast to the way of Jesus, which is to live fully and abundantly, John 10:10 tell us that “the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.” God’s Word is referring to Satan, our enemy, the thief who wants to empty out our lives completely and steal all our resources, time, energy, motivation, purpose, and joy. He wants to rob us and drain every ounce of our emotional and spiritual reservoir so we’re either unable or unwilling to live the full lives God calls us to live.

We are ineffective when we are completely empty because our level of impact has a direct correlation with our level of fullness. We cannot love

and serve others well out of a place of emptiness, which is exactly why the enemy wants to sieve every last drop out of our lives. But God's will is for us to live filled. Because we can't live fully until we live filled. If the enemy wants to steal, kill, and destroy, Jesus wants to fill us, restore us, and renew us. Take a look at the contrast in John 10:10 and see Jesus's desire for our lives in a few different translations:

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (NIV).

"My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life" (NLT).

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (ESV).

"I came so everyone would have life, and have it fully" (CEV).

"I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness (GNT).

Life *in all its fullness*. Doesn't that sound so good?

Why is it, then, that so many people aren't feeling full? Why are so many Christians I interact with on a regular basis feeling the exact opposite of full? Why are most of the people I meet with in my counseling office—and many of the people I connect with as I travel the country on speaking trips—good, spiritual, God-loving people, yet their lives are marked by burnout, depletion, emptiness, stress, and busyness? They're living on *E*.

Our level of impact has a direct correlation with our level of fullness.

We must be doing something wrong.

Maybe in our best attempts at serving God, loving others, caring for our families, and winning souls for Jesus, we've actually forgotten what it means to check in with our own level of fullness—to get a healthy measure of how we're doing spiritually and emotionally, to stop and take the time to nourish and nurture our own souls. Maybe while we've been distracted with our full schedules and our to-do lists, our many goals and agendas, our important ministries, and our meetings, we've allowed ourselves to slowly tick toward *E* without noticing. We've come to live in a place of emptiness rather than a place of fullness. Or maybe, just maybe, we've never actually learned *how* to fill up. We've never learned how to truly care for our souls.

Some of my biggest inspirations for this book, and specifically for the upcoming sections of this book, are the life and rhythms of Jesus. As I studied the Gospels in preparation for my time of writing, one thing that stood out to me was the fact that Jesus, though He was fully God, was also fully man. He understood the limitations of His human body. He was acutely aware of the fact that His body had a capacity. And He was so intentional about staying filled so He could pour out for the people God had called Him to fill up. What if we could live with this type of awareness? What if we could honor our own capacity, learn to fill up and stay filled, long before we reached the point of empty?

Over the next few chapters of this book, we're going on a journey of filling up. We'll not only assess our level of fullness, but we'll also keep track of our level of emptiness. We'll learn the purpose and meaning and value of caring for our souls, and then we'll discover exactly how to do it in six different categories: Nourish, Rest, Connect, Protect, Savor, and Tune In. It's a six-part process that I like to call *Soul Care*.

Step-by-step, I'm going to help you discover some of the most important rhythms that I have been inspired by and learned so much from, all through the life of Jesus—rhythms I not only apply in my own life but also teach my clients, as well as the thousands of church members, pastors, and leaders I have the privilege of serving and teaching across the country.

Empty people can't pour out because they have nothing left to give. That's why we're going on a journey of filling up, so we can keep pouring effectively and indefinitely into those whom God has called us to pour into: our spouses, our children, our families, our friends, our churches, our communities, and our ministries.

I don't know how you answered my initial question above—How full do you feel right now?—but I hope you have an answer by now. And whether your answer is a zero or a ten, a four or a six, or somewhere in between—no matter what level of fullness or emptiness you're feeling

Empty people  
can't pour out  
because they  
have nothing  
left to give.

today—it's time to take seriously the importance of fueling up. It's time to take seriously the call of living life in all its fullness. I'm so ready and excited and privileged to help you get there. If you're ready, too, let's do it together.

### Verse for Reflection

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;  
I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10).*

*Today's Rhythm:* **HOW FULL DO YOU FEEL?**

1. How full do you feel in this season of your life (zero being “I feel completely empty,” ten being “I feel extremely full”)?
2. List out some of the things that tend to drain you of your energy, motivation, and joy.
3. In contrast, list out some of the things that tend to fill you up and give you energy, motivation, and joy.
4. Think of a time when you felt like you were “living on empty.” What was going on in that season? What were some of the signs and symptoms you were on *E*? In what ways did the emptiness impact your life and the lives of those around you?