

Chapter 1 : Practicing The Seasons Of The Soul | HuffPost

"Seasons of the Soul can be helpful for any Christian, but particularly for those who are relatively new in the journey and are experiencing the 'disorientations' that Demarest describes. Understanding that difficult experiences are normal parts of every Christian's lived experience, used by God to deepen our relationship with Him, will bring.

O Lord, why do you cast me off? Why do you hide your face from me? Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove; descend on us, reveal your love. Word of God and inward light, wake our spirits; clear our sight. Surround us now with all your glory; speak through me that sacred story. Take my lips and make them bold. Take hearts and minds and make them whole. Stir in us that sacred flame; then send us forth to spread your name. Have you noticed the cherry trees and the forsythia in bloom? The dogwoods and the azaleas are about to burst forth into color. The convertible top will be down—the sunscreen will be slathered on. Memorial Day will be here before we know it! The words that I associate with winter are words like: I know there are people who claim to love winter. But, I have never heard of anyone who spent all of their working days living in Florida, then retired and moved to Minnesota! But winter can be a season of the soul as much as a season of the year. For just as there are seasons in nature, there are seasons in our spiritual life: But there is also winter! This morning, I want to talk to you about the winter of the soul. Have you ever known the winter of the soul? Winter may arrive when word comes from your doctor that the test was positive. The winter of the soul can come when you feel as if you have failed as a parent. Or when your marriage is coming apart. Or it arrives the day the love of your life dies. But loss is not the only feature of the winter of the soul. The hardest part of the winter of the soul is that there are those times in our life when we feel as if God is distant from us, far off, out of reach. Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me? After the death of his wife, C. You —go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face and the sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, the silence. That winter of the soul that came at a time in our lives when we were just sort of tootling through life—everything was just fine and good, and then one day we wake up to the reality of an accident that permanently disabled our son. You know that story. So, yes, we can tell you about the winter of the soul. During that hard season, we found we needed a way of holding on to God when it felt as if God had let go of us. So, I want to share several observations out of our own experience of how to live through the winter of the soul. Can I organize my life or navigate my life in a way that I can be winter-free? Can you just give me three simple steps to avoid the winter of the soul? But if you read Scripture, it is not so. Second, in the winter of the soul, folks are tempted to isolate themselves. The winter of the soul often carries with it a sense of failure or shame or sadness and loss of energy that nobody else understands; nobody else really knows what it is that you are going through; nobody else really can identify with the pain of your life, the sadness of your life, the loss of energy that comes from those kinds of times. In the winter of the soul, I found I never desired community with other people less, yet I never needed it more. I was talking to Christina Burns this week, one of the counselors in our church counseling center, to see if I had this correct: Reactive depression is more tied to circumstances, environment, upbringing and coping skills, while bipolar depression and biological depression are caused primarily by a malfunction in your body chemistry, and occur at pretty much the same frequency for all groups, in all cultures in the United States. They experience manic-depressive and biological depression at the same rate as everybody else, although diagnosing the manic phase in the Amish is a challenge. The Amish have to diagnose the manic phase by things like when Amish people start driving their buggies too fast! Run, and get the Lithium. This is going to be bad. But one explanation is since they live with a strong sense of community, they are less vulnerable to depression. But, like the Amish, we were made for and need strong community. Because when you are going through the winter of the soul, you will never want community less, but you will never need it more. Join a Sunday School class or small group. And let me say this, you may not be in winter yourself, but you know somebody who is. What do you do? What do you say to someone who is in the winter of the soul? In Job, one of the great wintry books of the Bible, Job loses everything: He ends up sitting on the ash heap of life. But Job has a few friends who come to visit. They sit with him for seven days and seven nights. If you

know the story, you know his friends go on to say lots and lots of words and give lots and lots of well-meaning advice and explanations, and everything they say is wrong. They were at their best when they said nothing and just stayed with him. I think one of the most often violated commandments in all of scripture are the words written by Paul to the Christians at Rome. It comes primarily through presence—just being there with someone, sitting with them and mourning for awhile. You just go to people and you mourn with them. Why, some of the greatest Christians in history who have marked this world struggled with depression. Charles Spurgeon, who was probably one of the greatest preachers of the 19th century, battled with depression until the day he died. The famed missionary Hudson Taylor contemplated the awful temptation to end his life because of his severe depression. Yet, they all held on and had amazing faith. And I would say to those of you in the congregation this morning who are going through that kind of dark night of the soul, that winter of the soul, a time of depression, if there is a need in your life, come and talk to one of us or go to Christina or Dwaine in the counseling center because we want to help. Make the decision not to do winter alone. The last observation is this: When you go through the winter of the soul, cling tenaciously to the hope that is yours in Christ. The Psalmist understood the power and reality of hope. Do you remember the story of Terry Anderson? He was the Chief Middle East Correspondent for the Associated Press when he was kidnapped in Beirut in and he was held captive for almost seven years. It was an incredibly difficult ordeal, but Terry Anderson came through it. Of course, I had some very blue moments, times of despair, but fortunately, right after I became a hostage, one of the first things that fell into my hands was a Bible. Faith helps you to do what you have to do. I spent a lot of time with the Bible and it reminded me to do the best that I could each day and to trust God for the future. Vernon Baptist Church, a man who had helped lead the civil rights movement in Memphis and a former member of the Memphis City Council. But few knew the private agony of Jim Netters. In , Jim learned that his daughter, Wynn, then a sophomore at the University of Memphis, was consumed by drugs and alcohol. Jim stood before his church and asked for prayers and support, but privately he asked himself what he had done wrong. Then in , his youngest daughter, Chandra, turned to the highs of cocaine to soothe the lows of a divorce. In time, hundreds left. Jim kept the light of faith burning, even though sometimes it was just a flicker. And he made it through those awful years. And with the help of rehab and love of family and the healing work of Christ, all three are clean and sober and faithful disciples. Vernon church is a vital congregation with an exciting, healing ministry in the Westwood community. Though I faced many adversities, I was never without a friend; and though I may be badly hurt, I was not destroyed. So send us your blessing, for we pray in Christ, Amen.

Chapter 2 : The Winter of the Soul - The Living Well Network

The Seasons of the Soul is a very reflective collection--which is representative of the majority of Hesse's entire corpus. The presentation of this book coordinated by Ludwig Max Fischer framed the reflections and spiritual wisdom fragments of Hesse in an accessible way, particularly with an introduction to each part.

The questions never cease. In fact, on this day in particular I remember the last lines of a poem by the late Welsh priest, R. Thomas, in which he describes the experience of sitting alone in the tyrannical quiet of his church one Good Friday: The uneasiness of the pews Ceases. There is no other sound In the darkness but the sound of a man Breathing, testing his faith On emptiness, nailing his questions One by one to an untenanted cross. Let them stay there for now: Religion is all about practice, after all. There is a profound tale from the Desert Fathers of Christian antiquity that explains why spiritual practice makes sense even in spite of questions without answers: A young monk approached an older, more adept one and asked, "Father, I am having trouble remembering the instructions that I have been given about living the spiritual life. What is the point to trying to learn if I am so simple-minded? Why should I practice when I do not know for certain what is true? Maybe I should just return to my worldly life. A good occasion to say to the youngster, "Buck up! Accept what you do not know. Or, be more diligent! Like a Zen master, he asks the younger man to do something in order to discover for himself the answer to his questions. He points to two empty bottles on a nearby table. Fill one completely with the oil that we use for our lampstands. As for the other, leave it empty, as it was. Then the old monk said, "Now, take the bottle full of oil and pour it back where it was. This went on for more than an hour, over and over. Meanwhile the empty bottle sat empty. With patience, the young man kept doing as he was told. He knew all about bottles and oil. After a while, as they sat together looking on the two bottles now empty, the old monk said, "Please tell me, my son, what you see. Whether you realize it immediately or not, over time they will change you. Filling yourself with these oils will leave you fragranced.

Chapter 3 : Seasons Of The Soul Poem by Allen Tate - Poem Hunter

"Seasons of the Soul can be helpful for any Christian, but particularly for those who are relatively new in the journey and are experiencing the 'disorientations' that Demarest describes. Understanding that difficult experiences are normal parts of every Christian's lived experience, used by God to deepen our relationship with Him, will bring hope, encouragement, and direction for those who.

Dean Snyder Ecclesiastes 3: The Preacher says there is a season and a time for everything. We like to think in absolutes. If something is good, it is always good. If something is bad, it is always bad. But the Preacher of Ecclesiastes says differently. There are things that are good in one season and bad in another. There are things that may be appropriate in one time or era but inappropriate during another time. The Preacher suggests life is best lived in harmony with the seasons and the times. Life is best when it follows the rhythms of the seasons and times when it is attuned. Seasons are universal in nature. Even the North and South Poles have seasons. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association identifies four seasons at the poles – winter, spring, summer, fall. But there are seasons even at the North and South Poles. The tropics have seasons – usually a dry season and a wet or rainy season, but even the tropics have seasons. Haiti, Jean Paul, has two rainy seasons and two dry seasons. NASA has even identified seasons on other planets in the solar system. Each planet has a winter, spring, summer, fall. The only difference is the length of each season. On earth each season lasts 90 to 93 days. On Jupiter, each season lasts 3 years. On Uranus, each season lasts about 20 years. For most of history the seasons shaped human life. The seasons determined when we went to bed and when we got out of bed. The seasons controlled our activities and our work. The seasons determined when we planted, when we reaped, when we ate our fill and when we rationed our portions, when we worked 80 hours a week and when we worked short days and rested more. There is a religious group that sets up a stage at the Chinatown Metro mostly on Friday afternoons and they preach to the people going into and coming out of the Metro stops and others of us passing by. Their preaching seems to have become angrier lately. They used to be more light-hearted. They used to kid commuters that they were not supposed to be working long hours like they do in winter. Spring and fall are the time for long days of hard work. Winter and summer are supposed to be times of rest. You are supposed to put on some weight in winter and work it off in spring and fall. They may not be totally wrong. There are seasons in nature to which human beings have had to attune their lives for thousands of years before there were thermostats and electric lights and transportation systems that supply us with the same foods winter, spring, summer, fall. These things may not have erased the impact of the seasons on our bodies, psyches and souls. The seasons may still impact us more than we realize. What is good and appropriate for us in winter may not be the same thing that is good and appropriate for us in spring, summer, or fall. This is worth thinking about in and of itself. Deepak Chopra and the rest of the Oprah crowd are right, I think, when they tell us to listen to our bodies, which are more attuned to nature than our minds. If your body sends a signal of comfort and eagerness, proceed. Winter, spring, summer, fall. We plant in spring. I spent part of yesterday filling and seeding the pots we keep in the tree box outside our home. We hoe, water and nurture in summer. We harvest in fall, and let the soil rest and renew itself in winter. What is good and appropriate to do is shaped by the season we are in. Of course, the Preacher of Ecclesiastes is talking about more than the annual cycle of the seasons of the natural world. Beth Norcross who teaches green studies at Wesley Seminary believes that we would treat the earth better if we spent more time closer to nature. She is teaching a course on reconnecting with the natural world. It may be true that part of the environmental crisis we face is caused by our alienation from nature. Living attuned to the natural seasons may be important for our spiritual connection to creation and Creator. Behavior that is cute when we are two may not be so cute when we are What is winsome when we are 16 may become tiresome when we are What is good and healthy at 30 may not be such a good thing at Although I am not sure about this yet, what is appropriate at 55 may not be appropriate at This is not ageism. This is to recognize that life has seasons, times, and stages. We might choose to age according to a different drummer, but we ignore the seasons of life at our own peril. I doubt that anyone should be a sage and wise man or wise woman at There are seasons in nature. There are seasons in our life

spans. There are also season and times in history. For 20 years I have been fascinated by the work of William Strauss and Neil Howe, who wrote the book *Generations* in . They believe there are saecula, or seasonal cycles of history. They have applied their theory to Anglo-American history. They say that a saeculum, one sweep of history, is about 90 years long. Each generation raised during a turning will be shaped by the season into which it was born. Each saeculum has an awakening and an unraveling and a crisis and a high. I remember that when I read their book *Generations* in , they predicted that sometime within a few years after the year , some major event would happen to throw America into a great crisis. And what may be right and good in one season of history may not be so good in another season. The Preacher of Ecclesiastes says our lives are shaped by the season and time in which we find ourselves dropped into human history. I often think about my parents and how the dominant historical context for their lives was two world wars. My older brother reacted by later in his life joining the army. I wonder how the lives of our children and grandchild, nieces and nephews and grandnieces and grandnephews will be shaped by the historical season in which they live. There are seasons of nature. There are seasons of our lifetimes. There are historical seasons. And there are I am convinced, spiritual seasons. Seasons of our spirit. There are seasons of spiritual growth and seasons of spiritual dormancy. There are seasons of spiritual intimacy and seasons of spiritual distance. There are seasons of spiritual awakening and seasons of spiritual maturing. There are seasons of spiritual crisis and seasons of spiritual steadiness. There are seasons of doing and seasons of waiting. Seasons of prayer and seasons of action. Seasons when believing and trusting are easy and season when they are very hard. The Christian year tries to capture this. The Christian year covers a lot of the bases of spiritual seasons. The only problem is that our own spiritual experience does not always match the calendar. That was no fun. I had at least one year that was Christmas almost all year long. I suspect that the people who are the most spiritually proficient are the people who develop the ability to discern what spiritual season they are in. I think by listening to our own souls and to God we can learn how to do this. Deepak Choprah is right about the importance of listening to our bodies. Christianity in its beginnings was not an anti-physical, anti-body religion. Easter is about the resurrection of the body. There was this big debate last year whether Christians should do yoga since yoga is based on another religious system. It might be better to ask whether we can be very good Christians without paying attention to our bodies.

Seasons are not only realities that occur outside and around us, in the skies and in the trees. I believe seasons are also internal and personal, interwoven into the fabric of human life. We are designed to transition, to change, and to vary.

Monday, September 24, Seasons of the Soul The calendar has driven us, once again, into the bracing arms of autumn. Just like every other damn day of the year. For a century, people have moved to Santa Barbara precisely for the therapy of sun and salty ocean air. Yet, while I am happy to call this place home, I miss seasons, sometimes desperately. No doubt retailers play a role in my angst; they have conditioned me, rather brilliantly, to associate dates on the calendar with particular products and activities. Most of it is influenced by nostalgia. I grew up in Seattle, and autumn evokes childhood memories of driving with my dad past the sprawling local pumpkin patch on drizzly Saturday evenings and returning home to the fire after University of Washington football games. But it goes even deeper. Seasons are not only realities that occur outside and around us, in the skies and in the trees. I believe seasons are also internal and personal, interwoven into the fabric of human life. We are designed to transition, to change, and to vary. Our souls have seasons. When there are few changes in the outward seasons, it is easy to neglect the shifts required by our internal seasons. External seasonal cues can remind us to transition into something new and to live differently. They knew their daily lives were going to change along with it: My longing for seasons feels like a desire for the permission to change, to slow. Humans, just like the natural world, are meant to cycle through seasons of dormancy and new life, activity and contemplation, celebration and sadness, blossom and harvest, openness and closedness, austerity and abundance. I believe the seasons serve as a lesson book for the soul, instructing us when to move fast and when to slow down, when to act and when to rest, when to focus on the world outside and when to hibernate and go down deep. We may find ourselves restless and exhausted without having any idea why. Living in a climate of seemingly endless summer has taught me some valuable lessons. First, the seasonal changes are there, but you have to discipline yourself to pay attention to the subtleties. Seasons are exercises in attentiveness. The marine layer persists just a little bit longer in the mornings, and the air warms up a little slower in the morning and cools down a little faster in the afternoon. The clouds linger on the peaks of the Santa Ynez Mountains into the afternoons. Second, seasons are now something I choose. Here, autumn is something you resolve to do. I love that the word deciduous has the word decide embedded in it. Although I live in an evergreen climate, I have resolved to lead a deciduous life, for the sake of my soul. I allow the encroaching darkness of the fall to drive me inside earlier in the evening to read, to write, to reflect. I want to let the seasons, and their inherent gifts, rhythms, and offerings, teach me how to live and to be more human. There is a growing trend in our country of eating in season, enjoying the produce that particular season has to offer rather than trying to eat a plastic tomato in the middle of February. What if we extended that idea to living in season? What if we stopped trying to live the year at a dead sprint and instead let the seasons teach us about how to move and how to live?

Chapter 5 : Seasons of the Soul: Stages of Spiritual Development by Bruce A. Demarest

Seasons of the Soul, Heath and Reach. likes Â· 19 talking about this. Soul Journeys ~ guiding, supporting and illuminating the way.

Our curriculum was rather interesting and allowed for some flexibility in the choice of authors and themes. We read two books by Hesse - *Beneath the Wheel* and *Steppenwolf* - and both have remained favourites of mine over the past 20 years. I like poetry but it is not something I would pick up easily and am only doing so now because it is a format I have neglected for some time and really want to get to know better. I guess it is in the nature of poetry to evoke associations like that. The book is not, however, a comprehensive biography and it would be worthwhile to look at some biographical notes whilst reading *The Seasons of the Soul*. Stages each youth fold into the mold of age. Wisdom and virtue never last forever. Your heart must always be ready to leave and ready to begin again, must form new bonds with courage and without regret. Every beginning offers a magic power that protects us and helps us to endure. This journey through the realms of life was not meant to end in one home only. World spirit does not want to tie us down, wants us to soar into the open. When we stay too long in one place, get stuck in norm and habit, we wear out. Only embarking on new, unknown journeys can free us from the prison of stagnation. Maybe the moment of our death too is just another gate to new dimensions. The call of life to us will never end. Well, then, my heart, take leave and heal. Reading such a confession is not easy! Seeing two parents, you may imagine the easy-going life, the well-raised children but life was never that straight forward.. Let us take leave from our love. This fateful night ends our season too. Your love helps me remember the honey core of all life. Death walks with us everywhere. Death is within me and within you every time we betray life.

Chapter 6 : Lyrics containing the term: seasons of the soul by michael omartian

To ask other readers questions about Seasons of the Soul, please sign up. Be the first to ask a question about Seasons of the Soul Demarest writes this book to elucidate readers on some of the seasons of spiritual formation in a person's life. It is different than Ashbrook's Mansions of the Heart or.

Chapter 7 : Seasons of the Soul | Foundry United Methodist Church

Seasons of the Soul. Sunday, April 15, Rev. Dean Snyder. Ecclesiastes "For everything, there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven."

Chapter 8 : Seasons of My Soul - Wikipedia

Find album reviews, stream songs, credits and award information for Seasons of the Soul - Michael Omartian on AllMusic -

Chapter 9 : Seasons: Learning the Seasons of the Soul â€¢ May 15, â€¢ Sermon Archive

Time is important to us. When you were in school, you spent a lot of time trying to learn how to tell time. Now, a lot of you are at a disadvantage because you've grown up in the digital age and clocks tell you what time it is.