I picked up this book as part of my post Christmas reading - that time in the year after you eat so much you can't move so the only option is to read a couple of good books. This book had been promoted at my church as something we should spend time reading, to deepen our spiritual health and discipleship. I have always been fascinated by the soul. It seems ethereal, something that we can't see and find hard to explain yet the word ‘soul’ appears frequently in the Bible, we sing songs about it (“Bless the Lord, O my soul”) and seems to be really important!

Ortberg provides in this book an understanding of what our soul is, why it is important and how to keep it healthy. He balances the theoretical understanding (using his background in psychology) of the soul, interspersed with his own personal story of growth and the role that his mentor, Dallas Willard, played in helping to shape and regain health in Ortberg’s own soul. As Willard told Ortberg, our soul is “not just something that lives on after your body dies, it’s the most important thing about you. It is your life.”

I was immediately challenged and captured by Ortberg’s writing, particularly about his personal interaction with Dallas Willard (a well known writer on Christian faith and discipleship). However Ortberg also challenged me to consider the state of my own soul. He writes “If your soul is healthy, no external circumstance can destroy your life. If your soul is unhealthy, no external circumstances can redeem your life.” When everything in the culture around me tells me how successful I am by the clothes I wear, the car I drive, the career that I have or the house that I live in, this book cuts across the grain to help focus me on learning to be a disciple of Christ regardless of my life circumstances and a key to this is learning to keep my soul healthy.

A recommended read.