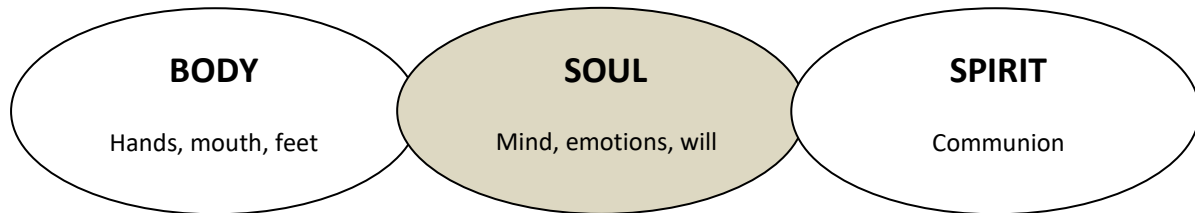


PRAISE & WORSHIP 5



Introduction

King David wrote in Psalm 103, 'Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.' We have been looking at ways in which we can express our praise to God, by using our bodies – our mouth, our hands and our posture or feet. These are the outward expressions of what is inside us – in our soul. Our soul, or inmost being, includes our will, mind and emotions. Let's now look at each one of these.



4. HOW DO WE PRAISE?

B. WITH OUR SOUL

1. Our Will

?? If we praise God when we don't 'feel like it', isn't that hypocrisy? Discuss.

Some people think it is being hypocritical to praise God when they don't feel like it, but however we feel, God is always worthy of our praise. Look at the following verses:-

Psalm 42:11 *'Why are you cast-down, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.'*

Psalm 119:108 *'Accept, O Lord, the willing praise of my mouth.'*

We are told to always give thanks. This is something we choose to do, however we feel! In fact the Bible calls praise a sacrifice. The word sacrifice means 'to give or do something that costs us something.'

Hebrews 13:15 *'Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name ... for with such sacrifices God is pleased.'*

There are times when we are going through difficulties and are discouraged. When we praise God in those situations we are bringing him a sacrifice of praise, and God is pleased with us.

2. Our Mind

?? What part does our mind have in praise? Discuss.

Our minds are very important. There is no value in singing praise if our minds are focused on our problems or what is going on around us. Look at the following verses:-

Colossians 3:2-3 *'Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.'*

Hebrews 3:1 *'Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus.'*

When you sing, think about the meaning of the words, and focus on Jesus.

3. Our Emotions

?? Some people think we should not show emotions in church. Is that true? Discuss.

The greatest commandment given by God, and repeated by Jesus, tells us to love God with all our soul, including our emotions.

Mark 30:11-12 *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'*

We are told to love God first of all with our hearts. This is the seat of our emotions. Have you ever read a verse that says, 'Praise the Lord with sadness!' No, it is always with joy. Perhaps when you begin to praise God you are feeling discouraged, but as you choose to praise, and focus on Jesus, you will find your emotions begin to change and you will sense God's peace and joy.

Psalm 30:11-12 *'You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent.'*

Psalm 86:12 *'I will praise you, O my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.'*

4. RESULT OF PRAISE?

1. It prepares us to draw near to God

As we have already seen, praise enables us to draw near to God. When we truly praise and turn our eyes from our problems to Jesus, it helps prepare us to enter into fellowship with God.

2. It prepares the way for God to move

Praise prepares the way for Jesus to move by his Spirit in our midst, bringing salvation, healing, deliverance and refreshment.

Psalm 50:23 *'He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.'*

Conclusion

There is a story in 2 Chronicles 20 about a time when Judah was under attack and King Jehoshaphat cried out to the Lord for help. God spoke through a prophet, telling them not to be afraid. The next morning the King sent out the army, with the choir in front, who were praising the Lord. Do you know what happened? As they began to sing and praise the Lord, God moved in power, and their enemies were defeated. God moved in response to their praise.

You can have expensive instruments and good singers, but the most important thing is that we welcome the presence of God into our midst, and glorify his name. There is nothing more wonderful than that!