

PRAISE & WORSHIP 2

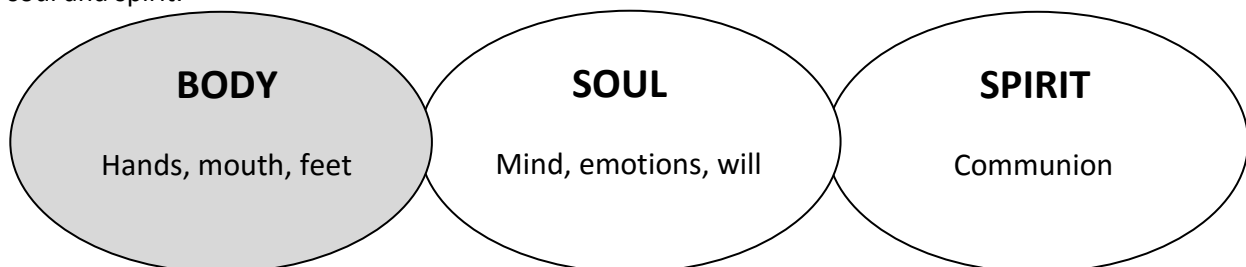


Introduction

Many different languages are spoken around the world, but there is one word that sounds the same in every language, and that is the word 'hallelujah'. We may not be able to understand what someone of another race is saying, but if we hear the word 'hallelujah', we know they are praising the Lord. Hallelujah literally means 'praise the Lord'.

4. HOW DO WE PRAISE?

We are told in Psalm 103:1 to praise the Lord 'with all our being'. Each one of us live in a body, but within us we have a soul and a spirit. We are to praise and worship the Lord with every part of our being, our body, soul and spirit.



First of all we are to use our bodies to praise the Lord – our mouth, hands, and in fact our whole body. This is the outward expression of our praise. However praise should not only be outward, or it will be meaningless, praise should come from within us. Our soul is to take part in our praise and thanksgiving, and the soul includes our mind, emotions or feelings and our will. Praise prepares us to enter into worship, and worship comes from within our spirits and draws us into communion or fellowship with God.

A. WITH OUR BODIES

1. Our Mouth

In the Old Testament times the people of Israel brought sacrifices of sheep and goats to the Lord to express their thanks and worship. We are no longer required to bring animal sacrifices as Jesus has given his life as a perfect sacrifice, once and for all. Praise the Lord! Aren't you grateful! However there are spiritual sacrifices we can bring to the Lord. What is one of those sacrifices?

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

There are different ways that we can use our mouth and lips to praise the Lord. Let's look at three of these.

i. Singing Praise

Most people enjoy singing, and this is the most common way in which we praise the Lord. In fact there are over 120 references to singing in the Bible. What are two ways of singing?

1 Corinthians 14:15 *'So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.'*

?? What do you think it means when it says 'sing with your mind'? Discuss.

Singing with our mind is singing words that we know and understand. However, it is important that when we sing songs we know, we sing them from our hearts! If our minds wander when we are singing, then it is just as if we are performing a religious duty and our praise will not affect our lives. As we sing we need to think about the words and their meaning, and then our singing will honor the Lord and draw us closer to him.

?? What do you think it means when it says 'sing with your spirit'? Discuss.

Singing with the spirit can mean two things. First of all, it means to sing in tongues. This is the language a person receives when they are baptized in the Holy Spirit. You may ask, "do you understand what you are singing?" No, you don't, but in your heart you know you are singing praise to God. However at times you may sing in the Spirit and then move into singing in your own language and the Holy Spirit gives you the interpretation of what you have just sung. God has given us this wonderful gift, so that we can express our praise to him, beyond the limitations of our own language.

Secondly, singing with your spirit includes singing new songs. How do we receive a new song?

Psalm 40:3 *'He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.'*

The Holy Spirit can give us a new song that we have never heard or sung before. This may be in tongues or in the language we understand. We can learn to do this during our time alone with God, but also be available for the Holy Spirit to use us during our services.

1 Corinthians 14:26 *'What then shall we say brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.'*

ii. Speaking Praise

What is another way we can use our mouth to praise the Lord?

Psalm 145:21 *'My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name forever and ever.'*

We can praise the Lord by speaking praise. When a young man is courting a young lady, he speaks words to win her heart. He tells her how beautiful she is and how he loves her. We have come into a love relationship with Jesus and he longs to hear us speak these kinds of words. At the beginning we may only know how to say 'praise the Lord', but gradually our vocabulary will expand. The book of Psalms will help us learn what to say to the Lord.

iii. Shouting Praise

There are three ways mentioned in Psalm 66 to use our mouth to praise the Lord. What are they?

Psalm 66:1-3 *'Shout with joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious! Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds."*

We are told to shout, sing and say! It is easy for us to sing and not too difficult to speak praise, but do you ever shout praise?

?? Why do you think Christians are reluctant to shout praise? Discuss.

Many Christians have thought that they should speak softly in Church to show their reverence for God, however there are many verses that tell us to shout for joy and to shout to the Lord. When people go to a sports event, such as football or basketball, they shout and cheer. Everyone gets excited. Shouldn't we get excited about what God has done? There are two main reasons given in the Word of God for shouting praise.

a) Shouting is a sign of triumph

Why were God's people told to shout aloud?

Zephaniah 3:14-15 *'Sing O daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart ... the Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy.'*

When we shout we are expressing our joy and excitement that we have a great God who has defeated the enemy. It is a shout of triumph.

b) Shouting is a weapon of war

Shouting also releases the power of God. When we shout praise our faith rises and the powers of darkness tremble. We see this in the Old Testament when the Children of Israel entered the Promised Land. They had to destroy the enemies living in the land and the first city to be taken was Jericho. Look at the instructions God gave them.

Joshua 6:16 The people had to march around the city every day for seven days, and then on the 7th day they were to march around 7 times. On the 7th time after the trumpets had sounded they were told, *"Shout! For the Lord has given you the city!"*

When the people obeyed what God had told them to do, the walls of the city of Jericho fell. This story, and others, teach us spiritual truths. We are to learn to pull down the enemy's strongholds over people's lives and over our towns. Shouting praise in faith is a powerful way to destroy the works of the enemy. Why not try shouting praise when you are on your own?

Conclusion

How can we praise the Lord? In this session we have learnt that we can use our mouths to praise the Lord. We can do this by singing, or by speaking, or by shouting praise. Let's do it!