

Spiritual Functions

Introduction

- Examining the human spirit, we've seen that it's:
 - source of human life, can mature & strengthen, interacts with God, source of our basic character, thinks, has knowledge & memory, source of intuition, receives revelation, source of our will
- Examining the human psyche, we've seen that it's:
 - source of personality (expression of oneself), also thinks, also has knowledge & memory, makes decisions (decisiveness, in contrast to will)

Spiritual Functions

- Worship
 - Lk 1:47, “. . . and my **spirit** rejoices in God my Savior.”
 - Jn 4:24, “God is **spirit**, and his worshipers must worship in **spirit** and in truth.”
 - Worship is an expression of great love, devotion or adoration
 - 1 Co 14:16, “If you are praising God with your **spirit** . . .”
 - Praise is an expression of admiration or approval; typically commends someone for their qualities, behavior or accomplishments
 - Is it possible to praise someone without worshipping them?
 - What do these verses reveal about the human spirit's ability to praise and worship God?
- Relationship
 - Ro 1:9, “God, whom I serve with my whole **heart** . . .”
 - literal Gk text: “whom I serve in my **spirit**”
 - 1 Co 7:34 “Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and **spirit**.”
 - According to these verses, how is the human spirit involved in our relationship with God?
- Communion
 - Communion is an interchange of such things as thoughts and feelings; a form of communication
 - Rom 8:16, “The Spirit himself testifies with our **spirit** that we are God's children.”
 - The Holy Spirit testifies along with our spirit; biblical principle of 2 or 3 witnesses

- Jn 4:24, “God is **spirit**, and his worshipers must worship in **spirit** and in truth.”
 - What does this verse imply about our spirits’ ability to communicate?
- Our spirits exist in and interact with the spirit realm
- God is Spirit, interacts with our spirits; typically doesn’t talk to our minds or ears
- Courage
 - Josh 2:11, “When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone’s **courage** failed because of you”
 - “courage” (Heb, *ruah*); (Septuagint, Gk, *pneuma*)
 - Ps 77:3, “I mused, and my **spirit** grew faint.”
 - Ps 143:7, “Answer me quickly, O LORD ; my **spirit** fails.”
 - Isa 19:3, “The Egyptians will **lose heart**, and I will bring their plans to nothing.”
 - literal Hebrew text: “the **spirit** of the Egyptians will be demoralized”
 - Eze 21:7, “Every heart will melt and every hand go limp; every **spirit** will become faint and every knee become as weak as water.”
 - These verses directly associate courage with the human spirit
 - If courage is a trait of the human spirit and the spirit normally is stable and consistent, then how much impact do circumstances **normally** have on a person’s courage?
 - Can severe circumstances cause a person’s psyche to alter the condition of their spirit?
 - These references to people’s courage or spirits failing show how severe their circumstances are
- Vitality
 - Vitality is energy, vigor, the capacity to live
 - Gen 45:27, “But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the **spirit** of their father Jacob revived.”
 - How do you think Jacob’s countenance and vigor changed when his spirit revived?
 - Job 17:1, “My **spirit** is broken, my days are cut short, the grave awaits me.”
 - Pr 15:13, “A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the **spirit**.”
 - Pr 18:14, “A man’s **spirit** sustains him in sickness, but a crushed **spirit** who can bear?”

- Isa 38:16, “Lord, by such things men live; and my **spirit** finds life in them too.”
- How do you think a person reacts when their spirit is crushed or broken?
- On the other hand, how is a person’s vitality affected when their spirit is healed?

Spiritual Disciplines (Spiritual Exercise)

- Praying with your understanding
 - Christianity is not a lifestyle or system of behavior, but a relationship with Almighty God.
 - If you don’t maintain that relationship, what value will it have?
 - How do you maintain a relationship?
 - Prayer is more than launching requests into space; it’s dialog with Almighty God
 - 1 Th 5:16-18, “¹⁶ Be joyful always; ¹⁷ pray continually; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
 - “continually” (Gk, *adialeiptos*): continuously, constantly
 - Rom 1:9, “God ... is my witness how **constantly** I remember you [in my prayers].”
 - 1 Th 1:2, “We **always** thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.”
 - 1 Th 2:13, “And we also thank God **continually** because”
 - Paul is stating that he does this frequently or consistently
 - Prayer or dialog with God takes time
 - Prayer or dialog involves speaking *and* listening
 - How can praying with your understanding be considered a spiritual discipline?
- Praying with your spirit
 - 1 Co 14:2, “For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.”
 - 1 Co 14:14, “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.”
 - When we speak in tongues or pray in tongues, that’s our spirit speaking
 - A “tongue” is an unknown language, either human or spiritual
 - 1 Co 14:4, “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.”
 - “edify” (Gk, *oikodomeo*): (1) build, construct; (2)

- strengthen, make more able
- Speaking or praying in a tongue makes you spiritually stronger and increases your spiritual ability
- Meditation
 - The Bible teaches us to meditate *on* specific things; to focus our minds, not empty them
 - Meditate on good things
 - Php 4:8, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”
 - “think about” (Gk, *logizomai*): (1) think or reason about, ponder; (2) keep mental record, bear in mind; (3) hold a view or opinion
 - We can and must choose what we think about, what we meditate on
 - Meditate on the Bible
 - Josh 1:8, “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”
 - 2 Tim 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
 - What does this indicate about scripture’s potential for changing us?
 - Jn 16:13, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.”
 - Reading and meditating on the Bible is an intellectual activity that nourishes and strengthens your spirit
 - Meditate on God
 - A key element of worship
 - Meditate on God’s specific words to you
 - Need to test these words
 - Are they compatible with scripture and God’s nature?
 - Has God confirmed them through other means?
 - Do you have a definite, internal peace about them?

- If you've tested the word and you're convinced it's from God, meditate on it
- Meditate on God's works
 - Rom 1:20, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."
 - Jn 9:3, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."
- Worship
 - Essence of worship: preoccupation, meditation
 - To worship God is to give careful attention to his nature and acts
 - Ps 63:6, "On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night."
 - Lk 4:8, "Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.''"
 - Worship is a function of the human spirit, so what affect will worshipping God have on our spirits?

Closing

- Today we examined several functions of the human spirit: worship, relationship, communion, courage and vitality
- We considered disciplines of spiritual exercise, which include praying with our understanding, praying with our spirit, meditation and worship
- Worship is a function of our spirit; meditation and worship are important spiritual disciplines

Daily Activity

- Meditate several minutes on **one** of the following:
 - God's nature
 - God's works: creation, nature
 - God's works: humanity as his likeness and image
 - God's works: salvation, healing, deliverance
 - A passage from your daily Bible reading
 - Good things (see Php 4:8)

Blessing

May you become increasingly aware of your human spirit and satisfy its appetites for nourishment and strength.

Proposed Model for Human Structure

Human Spirit	
<p>Description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● eternal ● exists in spiritual realm ● stable 	<p>Traits or functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● source of human life ● matures, strengthens ● interacts with God ● basic character (true self) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ aptitudes (spiritual gifts, natural abilities) ○ traits (fruit of the spirit, other godly traits) ● thought, knowledge & memory ● intuition, revelation ● will ● worship, relationship, communion ● courage, vitality
Human Psyche	
<p>Description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● eternal ● exists in spiritual realm ● volatile/dynamic 	<p>Traits or functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● personality (expression of oneself) ● thought ● knowledge & memory ● decisiveness
Human Body	
<p>Description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● exists in physical realm ● temporal 	<p>Traits or functions</p>