

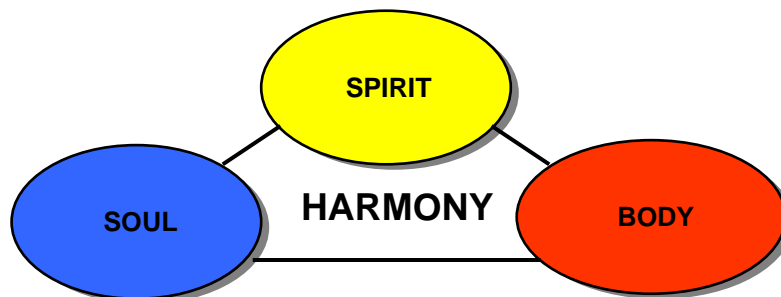
KNOWING GOD'S VOICE - PART XI



HOLY HARMONY

Each of us lives in three dimensions. The human personality has three distinct components and they all must function in harmony if a person is to be fulfilled and happy. These three aspects of the personality are the spirit, the soul and the body.

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him and the son of man, that thou visitest him? Psalm 8:3,4



Paul identified these components in his first letter to the Thessalonians when he said, "May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Thessalonians 5:23)

In order to understand how a person finds Holy Harmony, we need to study, in detail, these three dimensions of the personality. This study will reveal the problems encountered when a person lives a disjointed life, with the three aspects of his or her nature at odds with one another. It will also show that God intends us to be whole, harmonious persons.



We neglect the body, perhaps more than we neglect any other component of our personal makeup. Yet, God created our bodies, just as He made our souls and spirits. He has a purpose for our bodies and if we ignore that purpose, we sin against God.

The body is your physical form. Scripture says, "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." (Genesis 2:7) He made us as lovingly and carefully as He made the majestic Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean.

God created our bodies to perform all the tasks He intended His children to do in the world. He wants us to have healthy, whole bodies to serve and please Him.

But often we, even as believers, abuse our bodies. We get tense, anxious, and overwrought. We eat junk foods that make us flabby and weak. We expose ourselves to disease and disability by smoking, by overeating, by taking drugs or by indulging in promiscuous sex. This ruins the bodies God created for us. When the body is "all messed up," because of neglect and abuse, it is difficult to know the joy of living in fellowship with God.

God can heal broken bodies. That in itself shows how important

He considers the body to be. He can restore disabled arms and legs, bring sight to blind eyes and rid the body of cancer, AIDS or any other disease. Obviously, He values the bodies He gave us.

God cares for our mortal bodies because they are a vital aspect of our being.

Many years ago, a Canadian man named Henry Harvey agonized over his wife's diagnosed incurable disease. She was twenty-three years of age with no hope of medical recovery. A man at the factory where he worked suggested that they take her to a gospel tent meeting on the outskirts of town, where his aunt had been healed of cancer the week before. Henry was doubtful. But that night, as he and his wife were reading the Bible during their regular devotional, they came to Romans 8:11, "He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies by His Spirit who dwells in you."

"That's strange," Henry said, "I always thought that verse referred to our spirits or souls. But it says God will quicken our mortal bodies."

This confused him, because he had been taught that God no longer performed healing miracles. But after he prayed for God's guidance and meditated on that Scripture verse, Henry took his wife to see the evangelist. The preacher shared with her several Bible passages about healing and prayed with her.

But a week later she started to hemorrhage again. They decided not to call the doctor and to pray instead. She began to improve that very night, in fact, she later bore another son, Richard, who became a leading evangelist with the Christian and Missionary Alliance of Canada. She lived to be eighty-one years of age.



Your soul is your human nature, your creativeness, and the sum of the qualities that identify you as a human being. The Bible says

that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7) The Hebrew word for "soul" liberally means, "created life." Your soul is made up of the mind, will and emotions and it is within your soul that the enemy can do the most damage. God gave your soul the freedom of choice.

Many people use the words spirit and soul interchangeably, as if the two words refer to the same thing. But those who do this misunderstand the nature of these two important facets of the human personality. Both the spirit and the soul are invisible and both live after the body dies. But there the similarity stops.

God created the soul; it is the unique package of human characteristics that makes you distinctive. The spirit is given by God to aid your soul; we might say it is your soul's window to heaven. **The spirit is subject to the decisions of your mind and inclinations of your soul, so the spirit can be disregarded altogether because the soul has freedom of choice.** But if you do this, you wreck the destiny of your soul. For just as the divine spirit within you returns to God when you die, your soul will stand before God on Judgement Day and give account of all you've done in life. If you've ignored your spirit and its promptings, you will be punished accordingly. Jesus said that Satan **"is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."** (Matthew 10:28) And the prophet Ezekiel warned, **"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."** (Ezekiel 18:20)

But if the soul chooses to serve God, it finds joy in life here and now, and the prospect of happiness forever. Even the sorrowing sage who wrote Lamentations knew that this is so, **"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him."** (Lamentations 3:24, 25)

So we see that the soul has the power of choice. If it uses that power wisely and chooses to serve the Master of Life, it will be joyfully rewarded now and forever!

In a way, the soul is independent of God because it makes its own choices. At the same time, it is dependent upon God because God created it and gives it the freedom of choice. It is like an airplane

that soars and loops through the air, seeming perfectly free and independent, but at the same time depending on the buoyancy of the air to keep it aloft.

At some time or another, everyone has felt an inner emptiness, a sense of worthlessness, which is the sign of soul hunger. It means that you need to focus your soul upon the Will of God. If you do anything less, you are cheating your soul-your personal identity-of the purpose for which it was created.

Soul satisfaction comes from reflecting in your own life the qualities of God. It comes from living as a child of God, with a family resemblance to the Creator.



The spirit is the God-sensitive aspect of the human personality. The psalmist said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalms 51:10) He knew that his spirit could hear God even when his soul was distracted by sin. We might say one's spirit is the rudder God uses to steer one's life toward Him.

The spirit is like an antenna that receives impulses of the Father's Will. A radio antenna receives signals twenty-four hours a day, but we hear them only when we turn on the receiver and tune to the station we are seeking. In much the same way, the human spirit is always aware of God's Will, but we may not realize it because the choice the component of the soul makes.

As believers, our spirits assure us that our sins have been forgiven and we belong to God. When a person hears the gospel, his spirit rejoices with him because the message confirms what the spirit has sensed all along. When you heed what your spirit tells you and accept the truth of Christ, you open the door to a life of joy and delight forever!

The writer of Proverbs says, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly." (Proverbs 20:27)

Here we have a clear picture of the spirit and its function. It is the "candle of the Lord," illuminating the deep recesses of the human mind. A Greek philosopher, Diogenes, walked the streets with a lantern, searching for an honest man. Similarly, the human spirit is searching for an honest response to the gospel. Spirit seeks a response from the Soul.

Notice what happens to the spirit when the body dies. The Bible says, **"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccl. 12:7)** The body is temporal; it will grow old and die. But your spirit (the real you) will never die and when your physical life is ended your spirit will return to God. Absent from the body present with the Lord.



The total human person-spirit, soul and body must be what God wants it to be. When all components of our personality work together in serving the Lord, we will experience joy. That's how God meant us to live. As you read in Part X of this series, once the soul is sanitized, the spirit can be trusted. God communicates with the spirit; the spirit guides the mind and mind directs the body. When the personality is so ordered, it is harmonious and happy.

Have you ever watched a college football team in spring training? Periodically I use to park along the campus on my way home from work and watch the new team practicing. Usually the line is full of fresh recruits, young men who are not accustomed to playing together. Contrary to popular belief football players are not supermen; each one has certain strengths and weaknesses. So a seasoned team makes the best of it players' strengths and covers for their weaknesses. But a team in spring training can't do that. The players don't know what to expect of each other. So, they miss each other's signals. They leave gaps in the defense. They fumble the ball.

Many people go through life that way. They're always in "spring training." They don't make the three components of their

personality work together. So the soul misses signals from the spirit; the body charges ahead of the soul; and the person makes an utter mess of their life.

I've got good news for you; it doesn't have to be that way. Christ can coordinate all three members of your "personal team." He can train them to work together and set their sights on the goal of eternal life. When our personalities have this holy harmony, we will experience success in every area of our lives.

Of course, the key is, we must cooperate with Christ in this process. We must **practice** the meditation process and heed our spirit's guidance. We must **conform** our souls to the godly nature that the Holy Spirit reveals to our spirits. And we must **keep** our bodies pure and strong to fulfill God's plan for our lives. This unified vision of the **self** should guide every facet of our lives.

To find complete joy, we need to have a proper relationship with God, a proper relationship with our fellowman and a proper relationship with ourselves. You have seen how to bring order and harmony to your inner being to "yourself." Now let's put it into practice.

- ◆ Practice the Meditation Process by submitting every thought and decision to God's perfect insight. Go straight to Step 2B.
- ◆ Spend quality time in prayer and the Word
- ◆ Set your goal on the perfect Will of God

Then you'll know what the psalmist meant when he penned these words, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him and the son of man, that thou **visitest** him?"
Psalm 8:3, 4