

Embodied Shalom: Our Worshipping Bodies

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. ² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. Romans 12:1-2

What is worship? “Spiritual, rational, or reasonable worship is the appropriate response to receiving God’s saving mercy.” - Michael Gorman

“Worship is an action taken to show reverence, awe, and dedication to something. It’s a lifestyle formed from our habits and the inward meditations of our heart. Everyone worships what’s most important to them.”

Embodied Worship is not a matter of personality type.

- Therefore → How we should live in light of what God has done.
- In view of God’s mercy, I urge you all – beseech, admonish, exhort, beg

Entrainment: The synchronization of rhythm releases chemicals in our brains that help us connect with other humans. Music specifically couples us with one another.

To take it a step further, music is actually good for our brains! A few effects:

- Jumps start creativity
- Helps us recall memories
- Has been shown to reduce anxiety, blood pressure, and pain
- Can relieve tension and boost your mood
- It builds your brain because music is structural, mathematical, and architectural
- Nurtures your emotional well-being

“The whole point of singing is to make truths in the head felt in the heart.” - Justin Whitmel Early

Over 400 references to singing in Scripture with at least 50 commands to sing

Sing to God! Sing praises to his name. Exalt him who rides on the clouds – his name is the LORD – and celebrate before him. Psalm 68:4

Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell about all his wondrous works! Psalm 105:2

Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. Colossians 3:16

Questions:

In your own personality, how do you engage with singing to God? What have been your experiences with musical worship?

What does embodied living look like for you at concerts, sporting events, and worship gatherings? How have you experienced entrainment? Do you see any discrepancies in your mind, heart, and body?

Do you believe God gives back to us as we sing to him? Why or why not?

Embodied worship forms in us a deeper sense of Christ's broken body and our participation in the power of Jesus' resurrected body.

- Offer your bodies: Our bodies are “implements of righteousness” (Rom 6:13) and “members of Christ” (1 Cor. 6:15). The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19).
- “Living” sacrifice as opposed to a dead sacrifice – participating in the power of the resurrection!

Worship is a preenactment of full participation at the feast Jesus is preparing for us – the entire cosmos, our full uninhibited bodily worship – nothing partial.

Let everything that breathes sing praises to the LORD! Praise the LORD! Psalm 150:6

Embodied worship shows that our bodies house the Lord and we want his radiance to shine through us.

- Holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship

We literally do this with our bodies:

*Let the whole earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world **stand** in awe of him. Psalm 33:8*

***Clap your hands**, all you peoples; **shout** to God with a jubilant cry. Psalm 47:1*

***Lift up your hands** in the holy place and bless the LORD! Psalm 134:2*

*Come, let's worship and **bow down**; let's **kneel** before the LORD our Maker. Psalm 95:6*

*I **lift my eyes** to you, the one enthroned in heaven. Psalm 123:1*

***The physical part of you** is not some piece of property belonging to the spiritual part of you. God owns the whole works. **So let people see God in and through your body.** 1 Corinthians 6:20 (MSG)*

*And sing, sing your hearts out to God! **Let every detail in your lives**—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way. Colossians 3:16-17 (MSG)*

Questions:

How comfortable are you with physical displays of affection toward God?

How is worship connected to participation in Christ's resurrection and his radiance shining through us?

Embodied worship enables us to be caught up in something bigger than ourselves.

- Do not be conformed to this age – an active verb, we make effort to learn, grow, and change

So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, ⁷being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.⁸ Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ. Colossians 2:6-8

- Be transformed by the renewing of your mind – a passive verb which indicates this takes submitting ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The renewing of our mind increases wisdom which helps us not be conformed to the world's way of doing things. As believers we can have Spirit-filled intelligence as we live our lives. This is the antidote for empty, mindless emotionalism.

Embodied worship releases us from the need to control our lives and frees us to love God, engage with the body of Christ, and love our neighbors.

- Discern the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—⁹ not from works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do. Ephesians 2:8-10

“Your habits of worship won’t change God’s love for you, but God’s love for you should change your habits of worship.” - Justin Whitmel Earley

Embodied worship makes space for the Holy Spirit to communicate with us beyond our intellect.

We experience spiritual unity together which binds us in the Spirit's bond of peace.

Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-3

Our bodies are instruments of peace to others – embodied shalom.

Our eyes look at others with compassion.

Our mouths speak words of encouragement or exhortation.

Our hands pass peace.

Our arms bring comfort in a welcomed embrace.

Our feet move us towards others.

Our physical bodies are joined with the Holy Spirit who unites us with one another.

Embodied worshippers offer whole-body devotion to him, expressing praise, thanksgiving, confession, repentance, joy, obedience, faith, lament, and love. When we gather together to worship God, we display bodily what is transpiring in our hearts and minds.

Questions:

How is emotion and intellect connected in embodied worship?

In what ways does the renewing of your mind help you not conform to this world? What practices do you have to make space for the Holy Spirit's renewing work in you?

Does embodied worship help you discern God's good, pleasing, and perfect will? Why or why not?

How is God using this series to change you? In what areas of embodied worship do you feel free and/or inhibited?