

Lifting the Soul to God

"Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." – Psalm 25:1

Summary:

True devotion is more than lifting our hands, eyes, or voices; it is lifting the soul into communion with God. Because we are naturally sluggish and earthbound, spiritual worship requires an engaged heart. The sincere believer may not always enjoy freedom and fervour, but mourns their absence and seeks God himself rather than resting in outward performance. When the soul draws near to God, wandering thoughts are restrained, worship becomes delightful, and communion with the Father and the Son becomes visible in a life that influences the family, the church, and the world.

Outline:

1. True devotion reaches beyond outward actions

- Hands, eyes, and voices may be lifted while the soul remains distant from God.

2. The spiritual worshipper seeks communion

- A believer values the means of grace but is dissatisfied without fellowship with God.

3. Heart engagement brings spiritual enjoyment

- Religious duties become living and delightful when the heart participates in them.

4. Drawing near to God gathers the thoughts

- God's presence restrains distraction, removes weariness, and sweetens Scripture and worship.

5. Communion with God becomes a visible witness

- A worshipper who has met with God carries a gracious influence into every sphere of life.

Text

It is difficult to lift the soul to God, for we are naturally sluggish and earthbound. We confess with shame and sorrow, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust" In worship, lifting our hands, eyes, and voices is easy; entering God's presence, approaching his seat, and communing with the God of heaven is another matter.

Yet without this, what is devotion? How inadequate are our services before him who is Spirit and seeks those who worship him in spirit and truth! Without this communion, the true Christian is no more satisfied than God is. Though duty keeps him from undervaluing the means of grace or neglecting private and public devotion, he remains disappointed unless they enable him to lift his soul to God.

This desire marks the spiritual worshipper—not by always enjoying liberty and fervour in holy exercises, but by mourning their absence. The formalist focuses only on performance, leaving God's house without asking whether he has enjoyed communion with Him. True religion seeks heartfelt engagement; duties are dull when the soul remains absent.

But it is good to draw near to God. His sacred charm keeps our thoughts from wandering, allowing us to attend to the Lord without distraction or weariness. We call the Sabbath a delight, find God's words, eat them, and sweetly meditate on him.

When such a worshipper comes forth, he is ready to tell everyone he meets, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

His recommendations will likely influence others, for his spiritual progress will be evident to everyone. His face, heart, life, and character speak. Impressive and influential, he will affect his family, church, and the world. Without pretension or effort, he cannot help doing good. Fellowship with God leaves a fragrance others perceive.

This sermon is taken from William Jay's devotional, *Morning and Evening Exercises* (January 15, Morning), first published in 1854.