



# EMOTIONS AND PRAYER

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Discuss:

which Emotions are  
Inappropriate in  
Prayer?






# JOHN CALVIN

“the Book of Psalms  
is the Anatomy of  
all the Parts of the  
Soul”





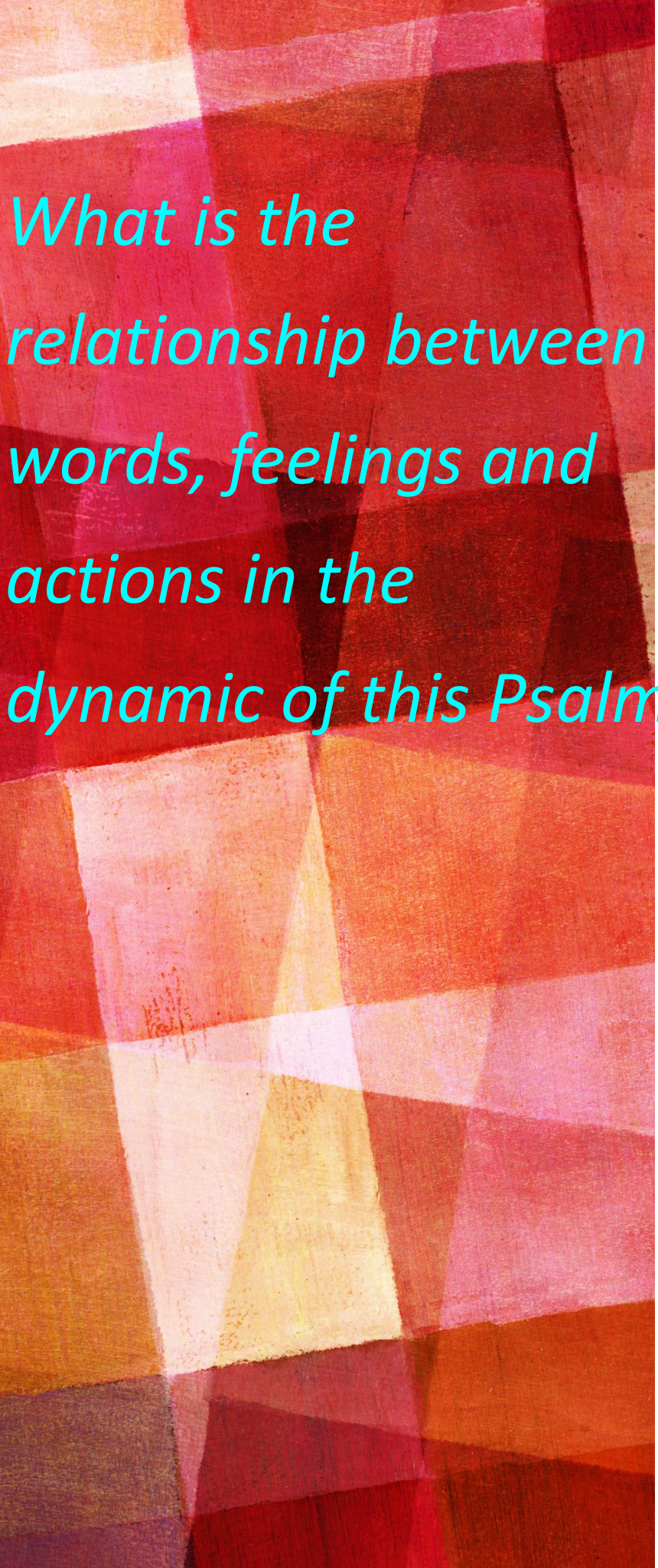
... there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn ... all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated.





The other parts of Scripture contain the commandments which God enjoined his servants to announce to us. But here the prophets themselves, seeing they are exhibited to us as speaking to God, and laying open all their inmost thoughts and affections, call, or rather draw, each of us to the examination of himself in particular, in order that none of the many infirmities to which we are subject, and of the many vices with which we abound, may remain concealed. It is certainly a rare and singular advantage, when all lurking places are discovered, and the heart is brought into the light, purged from that most baneful infection, hypocrisy.





*What is the  
relationship between  
words, feelings and  
actions in the  
dynamic of this Psalm*

**1 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.**

**2 Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.**

**3 Know that the Lord is God.**


**It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people,  
the sheep of his pasture.**

**4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.**

**5 For the Lord is good  
and his love endures for ever;  
his faithfulness continues  
through all generations.**

**Psalm 100**





*How are  
the writer's  
negative emotions  
and thoughts  
expressed here?*

**1 Listen to my prayer, O God,  
do not ignore my plea;**

**2 hear me and answer me.**

**My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught**

**3 because of what my enemy is saying,  
because of the threats of the wicked;**

**for they bring down suffering on me  
and assail me in their anger.**

**4 My heart is in anguish within me;  
the terrors of death have fallen on me.**

**5 Fear and trembling have beset me;  
horror has overwhelmed me.**

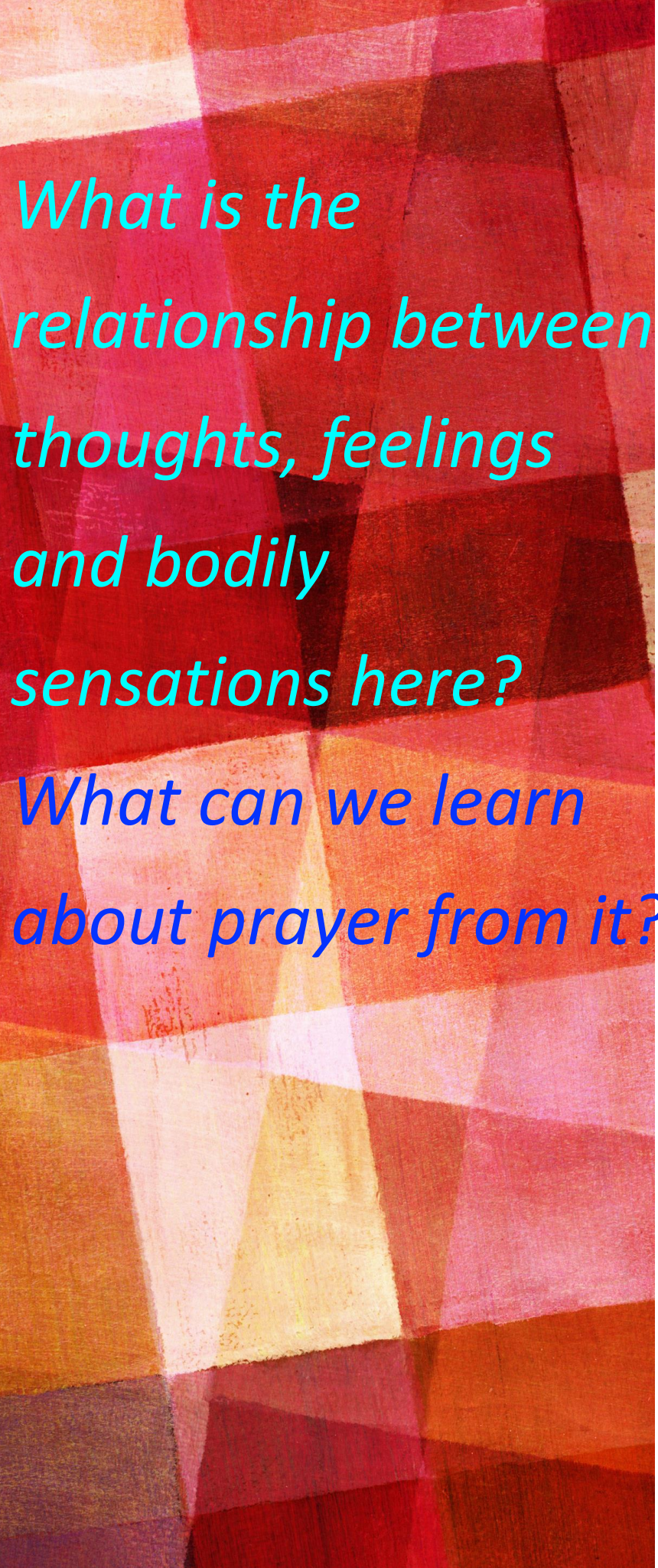
**6 I said, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove!  
I would fly away and be at rest.**

**7 I would flee far away  
and stay in the desert;**

**8 I would hurry to my place of shelter,  
far from the tempest and storm.'**

**Psalms 55:1-8**





*What is the  
relationship between  
thoughts, feelings  
and bodily  
sensations here?*

*What can we learn  
about prayer from it?*

- 1 Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger  
or discipline me in your wrath.**
- 2 Your arrows have pierced me,  
and your hand has come down on me.**
- 3 Because of your wrath there is no health in my body;  
there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin.**
- 4 My guilt has overwhelmed me  
like a burden too heavy to bear.**
- 5 My wounds fester and are loathsome  
because of my sinful folly.**
- 6 I am bowed down and brought very low;  
all day long I go about mourning.**
- 7 My back is filled with searing pain;  
there is no health in my body.**
- 8 I am feeble and utterly crushed;  
I groan in anguish of heart.**
- 9 All my longings lie open before you, Lord:  
my sighing is not hidden from you.**
- 10 My heart pounds, my strength fails me;  
even the light has gone from my eyes.**
- 11 My friends and companions avoid me because of my  
wounds; my neighbours stay far away.**
- 12 Those who want to kill me set their traps,  
those who would harm me talk of my ruin;  
all day long they scheme and lie. Psalm 38:1-12**





*Trace the  
progression  
of feelings here*

**1 How long, Lord? Will you forget me for ever?**

**How long will you hide your face from me?**

**2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?**

**How long will my enemy triumph over me?**

**3 Look on me and answer, Lord my God.**

**Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,**

**4 and my enemy will say, 'I have overcome him,' and my foes will rejoice when I fall.**

**5 But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.**

**6 I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.**

**Psalms 13**





Discuss:

How has this  
session helped you  
in thinking about  
your praying?





## Exercise

Take the 'temperature' of your thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations.

Based on what you have observed, write (or say) a prayer using what you have learned today





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**How long will you hide your face from me?**

**2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?**

**How long will my enemy triumph over me?**

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