

1. The Soul

- a. The Urn of Whispering Warriors, “Kung Fu Panda 4.”
 - i. The souls of the noble warriors of Tenshu live inside the vase.
 - ii. Different characters broke the vase in the first, third, and fourth movies.
 - iii. When it broke, you could see a green mist emerge and hear ghostly moans from the escaping souls.
 - iv. Ancient Greek philosophy posited the soul as a non-physical, immortal human essence trapped inside the living body and released upon death.
 - v. This Greek idea of the soul is the mind existing alongside and separate from the body.
- b. The Biblical idea of the soul is entirely different.
 - i. It is the Hebrew word “nephesh.”
 - ii. This Hebrew word is used over 100 times in the Old Testament.

2. The Whole Person

- a. The most basic meaning of nephesh is ‘throat.’
 - i. Numbers 11:6: “But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”
 1. The NASB95 translates it as ‘appetite.’
 2. The Amplified Bible translates it as ‘soul.’
 3. “But now our throat is dried up.”
 - ii. Psalm 105:18: “His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron;”
- b. Nephesh also refers to the whole person.
 - i. Your life depends on what you put into your ‘nephesh.’
 - ii. Genesis 46:15: “These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, together with his daughter Dinah; altogether his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three.”
 1. Nephesh is between “altogether” and “his” but is not translated.
 2. The people (nephesh) in Jacob’s family numbered 33.
 3. Genesis 46:18: “These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob—sixteen persons.”
 4. Nephesh is translated as ‘persons’ in Genesis 46 verses 18, 22, 25, 26 (twice), and 27.
 - iii. A murderer is someone who has killed a ‘nephesh.’
 1. Numbers 31:19: “Encamp outside the camp seven days. Whoever of you has killed any person and whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves and your captives on the third day and on the seventh day.”
 2. A kidnapper is a ‘nephesh’ thief.
 - iv. In the beginning, God refers to humans and animals as ‘nephesh.’
 1. Genesis 1:20: “And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.”
 2. The creatures that fly and walk are also referred to as ‘nephesh’ (living) in verses 21 and 24.
 3. In Genesis 2:7, man became a living ‘nephesh.’
 4. Genesis 2:7: “then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”

5. Leviticus 17:11: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.”
 - v. The dead are also referred to as ‘nephesh.’
 1. Leviticus 19:28: “You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves: I am the Lord.”
 2. Leviticus 21:1: “And the Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them, No one shall make himself unclean for the dead among his people,”
 3. Their soul did not depart; they are called dead nephesh, or corpses.
 4. We think that the Bible affirms the soul survives apart from the body after death.
 5. The biblical concept of life after death does not include ‘nephesh.’
 - c. People don’t HAVE a nephesh (soul); they ARE nephesh, a living, breathing, physical being.
 - d. ‘Nephesh’ refers to the whole living, physical organism
3. With All Your Soul
- a. God wants us to love him with all our ‘nephesh.’
 - i. Psalm 119:175: (NASB95) “Let my soul live that it may praise You, And let Your ordinances help me.”
 1. Let my ‘nephesh’ live that my ‘nephesh’ may praise you.
 2. Let my entire being, life, and body offer praise and thanks to God.
 - ii. Song of Solomon 3:1: “On my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not.”
 1. The one my ‘nephesh’ loves.
 2. My whole person and body.
 3. Love is the emotion that activates your whole person (nephesh).
 - iii. Psalm 42:1–2: “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?”
 1. As the deer’s throat is dry and thirsts for water, so my entire being, my ‘nephesh,’ thirsts for the living God.
 2. Physical thirst becomes a metaphor for our whole physical being longing to know and be known by our Creator.¹
 - b. To love God with all your nephesh means to devote your whole physical existence to your Creator.²
 - i. We are supposed to offer our entire being with all its capabilities and limitations in an effort to love God and our neighbor as ourselves.
 - ii. That is a bit overwhelming!
 - iii. God loves us with all his heart, soul, and strength.
 - iv. Luke 14:33: “So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”
 - v. God has given us everything we are.
 1. God formed our DNA in the womb.

¹ Mackie, T., & Collins, J. (2017, November 9). *What it means to love God with “All your soul.”* YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_igCcWAMAM

² Ibid

2. God already knew what we would be like.
 3. Psalm 139:13–16: “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”
- vi. God has given us everything we have.
1. Any wealth, power, or strength we have originated from God.
 2. Deuteronomy 8:18: “You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”
 3. James 1:17: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”
 4. 2 Corinthians 9:10–11: “He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.”
 5. 2 Peter 1:3: “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,”
- c. We have the ability to love God with all our nephesh.
 - d. The question is, “Do we want to?”
 - e. God has given us our ‘nephesh.’
 - f. Are we going to spend it glorifying and honoring YHWH?