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INTRODUCTION

Setting Apart the Early Morning to Enjoy Christ as the Real Manna

The moment we believe in the Lord, we should set apart the early morning for fellowshiping with God and for contacting Him.

Song of Songs 7:12 shows us that the early morning is the best time to fellowship with the Lord. To fellowship means to open up our spirit and our mind to God and allow Him to enlighten us, speak to us, impress us, and touch us (Psa. 119:105, 147). During this time our hearts are drawn near to God, and we allow God to draw near to our hearts.

The early morning is the time for us to gather the manna.¹ Manna is a type of Christ (John 6:31-35, 48-51, 57-58). As the real manna, Christ was sent by God the Father (v. 32) for God's chosen people to live by Christ (v. 57).² Just as manna sustained nearly two million people in the wilderness for forty years, so Christ as the real manna sustains the church today....On the one hand, the Lord Jesus is "the bread out of heaven"; on the other hand, He is "the bread of God," the One who came down out of heaven to be our food (John 6:32-33).³

What does it mean to eat the manna? It means to enjoy Christ, to enjoy God's Word, and to enjoy His truth early in the morning every day. After we eat the manna, we have the strength to journey in the wilderness. The early morning is the time to gather the manna. One will not be fed spiritually or be satisfied if he spends his early morning on other things.⁴

The Falling Dew Signifying Christ as Grace Reaching Man

Numbers 11:9 also tells us that manna came with the dew: "And when the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna would fall with it."...According to spiritual experience...the dew signifies daily grace, the grace we receive each day. In Psalm 133:3 we read of "the dew of Hermon that came down upon the mountains of Zion." The dew of Hermon signifies grace which descends from the heavens. Hermon, a high mountain, signifies the heavens, the highest place, from which the dew descends. The dew signifies the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dew is different from rain, snow, or frost. It is softer than rain and not as cold as frost. According to Lamentations 3:22 and 23, God's compassions, like the dew, are new every morning....Every morning the Lord's grace is as fresh as the dew.

[What is grace?] Grace is God reaching us. When God reaches us in a positive manner, full of mercy and compassion, He becomes grace to us. Manna always comes by means of this grace....Whenever we experience the dew in the morning watch, we know that God reaches us and visits us. This visitation of God is the Lord as our grace.... When we have dew as we read the Word in the morning, the Word truly is food to us. If we do not have the refreshing dew, we cannot have the manna that comes with the dew.

This picture of the manna and the dew is very precious. Truly a picture is better than a thousand words! The dew in the morning is refreshing. Without this dew, this grace, we are very dry. But with the dew we are watered and refreshed. Thank the Lord that manna comes not by itself, but with the dew.

Every Morning Having a New Beginning

[Furthermore], the manna was sent in the morning. Exodus 16:21 says that the children of Israel "gathered it morning by morning." The fact that manna came in the morning indicates that it gives us a new beginning. Because the earth revolves on its axis daily, every day we have a new beginning, a new turn....Thank the Lord that He sends the manna daily. Every morning we can have a new beginning.⁵

Revived Every Morning by Experiencing Christ as the Rising Sun

Since we all love the Lord, and we know that the Lord desires to build up His Body by our growth in life, we must have a daily revival. Every morning after we rise up, we have to have a new start with the Lord.⁶ In the morning when I wake up, I do not speak to man first. Rather, I speak to God. I would not open my mouth to any man before I open my mouth to God. I would say, "O Lord, I love You! Lord Jesus, I am coming to You!" Every morning, all I do are these two things: calling on the name of the Lord and pray-reading His word....If you

would exercise yourself in these two things every morning, surely you will be revived.⁷

I like Paul's expression in 2 Corinthians 4:16—"day by day." The Christian life does not only have one day. We are being renewed day by day. This means that day after day we have to be revived by the Lord. Yesterday morning we may have had a revival, but this morning we need another one, and tomorrow we need another one. Every year we need three hundred sixty-five revivals to be renewed day by day.⁸

Every morning we should experience Christ as the rising sun [Luke 1:78] to be revived by Him.⁹ The Christian revival does not occur in the afternoon or at sunset. Rather, it occurs in the morning. The Christian life is not a sunset. Rather, it is a dawning of the sun. In fact, we ourselves are the sun. Judges 5:31 says, "May those who love Him be like the sun / When it rises in its might." Proverbs 4:18 says, "But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day." A Christian's life should be one that follows the moving of the sun. When the sun rises, we should rise with it. We keep rising until the perfect [full] day, which is noon. The Christian life does not have afternoons.¹⁰ Sometimes, however, we experience a going down from noon. But when we go to bed, the dawning of the sun is awaiting us. We can have a new start with the Lord. Every twenty-four hours there is a new start.¹¹ We Christians who are seeking after the Lord should live a life in which we have a new revival, a new sunrise, every day. Every day Christ has to be our rising sun.¹²

WEEK 1 – DAY 1

Scripture Reading

Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved...

John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, who were begotten...of God.

Knowing That You Are Saved

Among today's Christians there are many different views concerning salvation. Some people consider that it is impossible to know today that we are saved, while others think that after we are saved we may still perish. The Bible shows us, however, that our salvation is not a matter of speculation nor is it a matter of uncertainty. Rather, it is something which can be confirmed with assurance and which we may know with full confidence.

Receiving Salvation at the Moment of Believing

Many people consider that believing is a present matter and that receiving salvation is a future matter, that is, that a man believes today and will be saved in the future. However, the Bible tells us clearly and definitely that at the moment a man believes, he is saved (Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:10). It is not that he will be saved in the future, but that he is already saved today. He is saved at the very time that he believes. Salvation immediately follows believing, for there is no space of time between the two.

Being Redeemed

When a person believes, he is saved. The Bible clearly reveals that when a person believes, he is forgiven of his sins (Acts 10:43; 1 John 2:12), freed (John 3:18; Gal. 3:13), washed (1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 15:9), sanctified (1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 26:18), justified (Rom. 5:1; 3:28, 30; Gal. 3:8, 24; Acts 13:39), and reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10). Therefore, when we believe, we are redeemed and we are saved.

Being Regenerated

When a person believes, he is not only redeemed but also regenerated. John 1:12-13 clearly points out that anyone who believes in the Lord is born of God and becomes a child of God. Hence, as long as a man believes into the Lord Jesus, he is regenerated, he has God's eternal life, and he will not perish forever (John 3:15-16); that is, he is saved.

Passing out of Death into Life

When a person believes, he passes out of death into life. John 3:16 and 5:24 tell us that he who believes has eternal life, and he will not be judged nor will he perish; he has passed out of death into life. Hence, as long as we believe, we have eternal life, and we are no longer condemned or judged; we have passed out of death into life.

The above three points clearly prove that we need only to believe, and we are saved immediately.¹³

The Assurance of Salvation

If you recently have had the experience of receiving Christ, you may have had times when you doubted the reality of that experience; that is, you may have questioned whether you were really saved. Without the real assurance of salvation as a solid foundation, it is difficult for a new Christian to grow and experience the deeper things of the Christian life. Nevertheless, the Bible says it is possible to know absolutely, unreservedly, that you are a saved person. How can this be? Let us read 1 John 5:13: "I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God."¹⁴ Brothers! The Bible does not say, "I give these happy feelings to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God." If the Bible were written in this way, one would not be saved if he did not feel anything. But the Bible says, "I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).¹⁵ It is not, "that you may think," not, "that you may hope," but "that you may know." We do not need to wait until we die to find out; this assurance is for us to enjoy today.¹⁶

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 1 — DAY 2

Scripture Reading

1 John 5:13 I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death.

By the Word of God

How can we have the assurance of salvation? There are three means: Our first means of assurance of salvation is God's Word. While man's word may be untrustworthy, God's Word remains sure and steadfast. It is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18; Num. 23:19). Whatever God says stands firm forever (Psa. 119:89).

What God has said is not a matter of conjecture. His Word is neither vague nor intangible. It comes to us today in written form, the Bible. The Bible is God's very Word, inspired by Him (2 Tim. 3:16). We can take this Word, believe this Word, and trust this Word.¹⁷

Man acquires an inheritance by a testament [a will]. The written words of the covenant in the Bible were left to us by the Lord as a testament (Heb. 9:15-16), by which we may inherit the blessings of His salvation.¹⁸ What then does God say about salvation? He says that the way of salvation is a person, Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 14:6; Acts 10:43; 16:31). He says that whoever believes that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and confesses with his mouth that Jesus is Lord is saved. He says that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Rom. 10:9-13). Have you done this? Have you believed in Christ and confessed openly that He is your Lord? Have you called on His name? If so, you are really saved. God says so. That settles it.

By the Spirit's Witnessing with Our Spirit

[Second], what the Bible speaks to us from without, the Spirit confirms within. First John 5:10 says, "He who believes into the Son of God has the testimony [witness] in himself."¹⁹ The assurance of our salvation is based on the Spirit's witnessing with our spirit (Rom. 8:16)...Everyone who believes in the Lord enjoys addressing God as "Abba, Father."...Moreover, every time we call Him "Abba, Father," we feel sweet and comfortable within. This is because we are children begotten of God, we have God's life, and the Spirit of God's Son has entered into us. Concerning our father in the flesh, it is spontaneous and sweet for us to call him "Father." Therefore, since we enjoy calling God "Abba, Father," and do it spontaneously, even with a sweet and comfortable sensation, this proves that we have God's life and are children begotten of God. Hence, by the Spirit's inner witnessing with our spirit we can know with certainty that we are God's children and that we are saved.²⁰

By Our Loving the Brothers

[Third], the assurance of salvation is based on the fact that we love the brothers. First John 3:14 says, "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers." Since God is love (1 John 4:16) and since we have His life, we surely have the divine love. Furthermore, since we have been begotten of God, we certainly love those who have been begotten of Him (1 John 5:1). When a saved one sees a brother in the Lord, he has an affection for him and even loves him in such a manner that is incomprehensible to himself. Therefore, our love toward the brothers in the Lord is a proof by which we know that we have been saved. This is a proof of our experience of life, which we may call the proof of love. By our believing—believing in the Lord—we have life and have passed out of death into life; by our loving—loving the brothers—we know that we have life and that we have passed out of death into life. Therefore, by the clear words of the Bible, by the sensation in our spirit, and by the experience of love, we can know with certainty that we are saved.²¹

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 1 – DAY 3

Scripture Reading

James 1:17 ...The Father of lights, with whom is no variation or shadow cast by turning.

Rom. 11:29 For the gracious gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

The Security of Salvation

Now we will go on to see the security of salvation. Our salvation not only can be proved with assurance, but it is also secure. [Once we have it, we have it eternally. It can never be shaken or changed.] According to the revelation of the Bible, the security of salvation is demonstrated by the following twelve items:

By the Invariable God

First, our salvation is secured by the invariable God. James 1:17 says that with the Father there is “no variation or shadow cast by turning.”...He is not like the heavenly bodies, which turn and whose shadows also change, as seen in the waxing and waning of the moon while it revolves around the earth and in the eclipsing of the sun by the moon. God is secure; He is not variable, not changeable. Therefore, since He has saved us, our salvation can never be changed, and we shall never perish.

By God’s Unchanging Will

Our salvation is secured by God’s unchanging will. Hebrews 6:17 speaks of “the unchangeableness of His [God’s] counsel.” Since God’s counsel, that is, God’s will, is unchangeable, the fact that He chose us and predestinated us before the foundation of the world that we might receive His salvation (Eph. 1:4-5, 11) is also unchangeable. Since He chose and predestinated us in eternity past that we might receive sonship and become His inheritance, He will carry it out and will not fail.

By God’s Inseparable Love

Our salvation is also secured by God’s inseparable love. First John 4:10 says, “Herein is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins.” If we are saved because we love God, then our salvation is not reliable. However, we are saved because God loved us; that is, our salvation is of God’s love. Since God is unchanging, His love is also unalterable. Moreover, His love toward us is an inseparable love (Rom. 8:39)....Because of God’s inseparable love, His salvation within us will never fail; it is forever secure and unchanging.

By God’s Irrevocable Calling

Romans 11:29 says that the calling of God is irrevocable. Since God’s calling comes out of His invariable being and is according to His unchanging will, it is irrevocable and unalterable....Therefore, according to God’s calling, our salvation is eternally secure.

By God’s Unchallengeable Justification

After the Lord Jesus was judged on the cross by God’s righteousness on our behalf and thereby satisfied God’s righteous requirement, we who believe in Him are justified according to God’s righteousness to show forth God’s righteousness (Rom. 3:26)....[Moreover], since the Lord Jesus has satisfied God’s righteous requirement on our behalf, God can—and He must—forgive us and justify us according to His righteousness; otherwise, He would make Himself unrighteous....Romans 8:33 says, “Who shall bring a charge against God’s chosen ones? Shall God, who justifies?” (RcV, margin). Since God is bound by His righteousness, He must justify us; He cannot accuse us or condemn us any longer....Hence, our salvation is eternally secure.

By God’s Almighty Hand

In John 10:29 the Lord said, “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand.” Because God is greater than all, He is more powerful than anything. No one can snatch us out of His almighty hand. Hence, as far as God’s almighty hand is concerned, our salvation is secure.²²

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 1 – DAY 4

Scripture Reading

John 10:28 And I give to them eternal life, and they shall by no means perish forever, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

6:37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and him who comes to Me I shall by no means cast out.

By God's Eternal Life

In John 10:28 the Lord said, "And I give to them eternal life, and they shall by no means perish forever." Eternal life is God's life. The Lord has given this life to us and has brought us into an eternal relationship with God, a relationship in life, so that we can never be separated from Him. Today, God's eternal life in us maintains the eternal security of our salvation so that we shall never perish.

By God's New Covenant

Our salvation is secured by the new covenant which God made with us (Heb. 8:8-12). This covenant was consummated through the redemption accomplished by the shedding of the blood of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20). According to this covenant, God will forgive the sins of all those who believe in the Lord Jesus and will not remember their iniquities any longer; He will impart His laws into their mind and inscribe them on their hearts; He will be God to them and they will be a people to Him; and they all will know God and will not need others to teach them. At the same time, this covenant is an eternal covenant (Heb. 13:20), which will remain eternally and is effective eternally. Furthermore, because God is faithful and is One who keeps His covenant (Deut. 7:9), He will never break His covenant (Psa. 89:34) but will fulfill it in us accordingly. Hence, His covenant, which cannot be annulled, guarantees the eternal security of our salvation.

By Christ's Perfect, Complete, and Eternal Redemption

Our salvation is also secured by Christ's eternal redemption, which is perfect and complete. Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by one offering He has

perfected forever those who are being sanctified." By offering Himself on the cross without blemish as the one sacrifice to God, Christ has accomplished an eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12; 10:10, 12). Hence, this redemption is eternally perfect and complete, without any blemish or shortcoming. Through Christ's eternal redemption we, the sanctified ones, have been perfected eternally. No one can condemn us any longer (Rom. 8:34), nor can anyone nullify the perfect, complete, and eternal redemption which Christ has accomplished for us.

By Christ's Eternal Salvation

We are saved with security by Christ's eternal salvation. Hebrews 5:9 says that Christ "became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." The salvation brought to us by Christ is an eternal salvation, all the effects, benefits, and issues of which are of an eternal nature, transcending the limitations of time. Our salvation, therefore, is eternally secure.

By Christ's Almighty Hand

Just as God's almighty hand is powerful, so also Christ's almighty hand is strong [John 10:28]. Both are safeguards to our salvation. Eternal life shall never run out, and the hands of the Son and the Father shall never fail. Therefore, our salvation is eternally secure, and we shall never perish.

By Christ's Unfailing Promise

[In] John 6:37...the Lord has promised that He will never cast out those who come to Him. Such a promise guarantees the eternal security of our salvation. Therefore, God has shown us in His Word from different angles that once we are saved, we are eternally saved, we are eternally perfected, we shall by no means perish eternally, and we are eternally secure.²³

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 1 — DAY 5

Scripture Reading

Mark 16:16 He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned.

Acts 8:36 And as they were going along the road, they came upon some water, and the eunuch said, Look, water. What prevents me from being baptized?

Baptism

The Importance of Baptism

The first thing God did in the beginning of the New Testament dispensation was to send John the Baptist to preach the baptism of repentance (Acts 10:37; Luke 3:3).... This indicates the importance of baptism in God's New Testament plan and arrangement. We may say that baptism opens the New Testament dispensation. Just as the truth of baptism was God's initiation of the New Testament dispensation, so the practice of baptism marks the beginning of our enjoyment of the New Testament blessings.

In the New Testament, the verb form of the word baptism in Greek is baptizo, meaning to immerse or dip in water, to cover with water, or to put into water.²⁴

Many verses in the New Testament speak of the necessity and importance of baptism. In Mark 16:16 the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned."²⁵ Here the verse does not say, "He who does not believe and is not baptized." This indicates that condemnation is related only to not believing; it is not related to not being baptized. Believing, by itself, is sufficient in order to receive salvation from condemnation; yet for the completion of one's inward salvation, believing needs baptism as an outward affirmation.²⁶ To believe is to receive Christ not only for forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:42) but also for regeneration (1 Pet. 1:21, 23), so that those who believe may become the children of God (John 1:12-13) and the members of Christ (Eph. 5:30) in an organic union with the Triune God (Matt.

28:19). To be baptized is to affirm this by being buried to terminate the old creation through the death of Christ and by being raised to be the new creation of God through Christ's resurrection.

To believe and to be so baptized are two parts of one complete step for receiving the full salvation of God. To be baptized without believing is merely an empty ritual; to believe without being baptized is to be saved only inwardly without an outward affirmation of the inward salvation.²⁷

Baptism has two aspects: the visible aspect is the baptism in water; the invisible aspect, the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 10:47; 9:17-18; John 3:5). Water is the symbol of baptism, and the Holy Spirit is the reality of baptism. The visible aspect is the expression, the testimony, of the invisible aspect, whereas the invisible aspect is the reality of the visible aspect. Without the invisible aspect by the Spirit, the visible aspect by the water is vain; and without the visible aspect by water, the invisible aspect by the Spirit is abstract and impractical, without an expression. Both are needed.²⁸

In the case of Philip preaching the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)²⁹ water baptism was particularly emphasized, but no mention was made of Spirit baptism. This should give us strong instruction that we must pay attention to water baptism, which signifies the believers' identification with Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12), as well as to Spirit baptism [1 Cor. 12:13]. Spirit baptism produces the reality of the believers' union with Christ in life essentially and in power economically, whereas water baptism is the believers' affirmation of the Spirit's reality....All believers in Christ should properly have both, just as the children of Israel were baptized in the cloud (signifying the Spirit) and in the sea (signifying water)—1 Cor. 10:2.³⁰

In the sight of God there is only one baptism with two aspects—the aspect of water and the aspect of Spirit.... Whenever we baptize others, we baptize them in water and in the Spirit at the same time.³¹

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 1 – DAY 6

Scripture Reading

Matt. 28:19 Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

1 Pet. 3:20-21 ...While the ark was being prepared; entering into which, a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through by water. Which water...also now saves you, that is, baptism, not a putting away of the filth of the flesh but the appeal of a good conscience unto God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Significance of Baptism

To be baptized is to be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19).³² To baptize people into the name of the Triune God is to bring them into spiritual and mystical union with Him....The name is the sum total of the Divine Being, equivalent to His person. To baptize someone into the name of the Triune God is to immerse him into all that the Triune God is.³³ [Furthermore], baptism practiced in a proper, genuine, and living way puts the believers into...Christ, a living person (Gal. 3:27); into the death of Christ, an effective death (Rom. 6:3); and into the Body of Christ, a living organism (1 Cor. 12:13), that the believers may enter into an organic union not only with Christ but also with His Body.³⁴ Positively, we have been baptized into the Triune God and into Christ; negatively, we have been baptized into the death of Christ. This negative aspect of baptism clears away such negative things as sin, the flesh, the self, and the old creation. The ultimate issue of baptism is that we are put into the Body. We praise the Lord that we have been baptized into the organic entity of the Body of Christ for His expression.³⁵

Baptism—Typified by the Water through Which Noah and His Family Passed

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter told us that Noah's household of eight passing through the flood in the ark was a type of baptism [1 Pet. 3:20-21]. The waters of the flood separated those who were in the ark from the world in which they once were, that they

might be delivered from that corrupted age. This signifies that the water of baptism separates those of us who are in Christ from the world in which we formerly lived, that we may be delivered from this crooked and perverted generation. Therefore, just as Noah and his family were saved through the flood and delivered from that corrupted generation, so we also are saved through the water of baptism and delivered from this crooked generation. On the one hand, they entered the ark by faith and were saved through the ark, thus escaping God's judgment by the flood. On the other hand, they passed through the flood in the ark and were saved through the flood; that is, they were saved out of the former world and were brought into a renewed world.³⁶

The Reality of Baptism Being Christ in Resurrection as the Life-giving Spirit

Baptism itself does not and cannot put away the filth of our flesh [1 Pet. 3:21]—the dirt of our fallen nature and the defilement of fleshly lust. The erroneous teaching concerning baptismal salvation, a teaching based on this verse and Mark 16:16 and Acts 22:16, is corrected here. Baptism is only a figure; its reality is Christ in resurrection as the life-giving Spirit, who applies to us all that Christ passed through in His crucifixion and resurrection, making these things real in our daily life.³⁷

Baptism Being an Appeal to God

Baptism is the appeal to God of the baptized ones for a good conscience unto God (1 Pet. 3:21). When we were baptized, we were baptized into Christ to be identified with His death, burial, and resurrection [Rom. 6:3-4]; hence, through baptism we were able to obtain a good conscience.³⁸ All our sins, offenses, transgressions, and trespasses have been forgiven, and all the problems that estranged our life and our being have been buried in the water....Because of this clearance, we can have a good and pure conscience.³⁹

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 1 — HYMN

Hymns, #308

1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

1. This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

2. Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

3. Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Hymns, #330

1. My faith has found a resting place,
Not in device nor creed;
I trust the Ever-living One,
His wounds for me shall plead.

1. I need no other argument,
I need no other plea;
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me.

2. Enough for me that Jesus saves,
This ends my fear and doubt;
A sinful soul I come to Him,

He'll never cast me out.

3. My heart is leaning on the Word,
The written Word of God,
Salvation by my Savior's name,
Salvation through His blood.

4. My great Physician heals the sick,
The lost He came to save;
For me His precious blood He shed,
For me His life He gave.

Hymns, #936

1. In death's waters I am buried,
For with Christ my Savior, I have died;
Now the world cannot pursue me,
For its power here is nullified.
I with Christ have risen too,
Out of death with Him I walk and live;
Now the Spirit life supplies
And His strength exhaustless unto me doth give.

WEEK 2 – DAY 1

Scripture Reading

Gen. 1:27 And God created man in His own image...

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man...

The Mingled Spirit

God Created Man in His Image as a Vessel to Contain Him

The first crucial and striking point concerning God's creation of man is that God created man in His image and according to His likeness (Gen. 1:26a).⁴⁰ Who is God's image? The Bible tells us that Christ is the image of God [2 Cor. 4:4b; Col. 1:15]⁴¹....Romans 9:21 tells us that God created us and chose us that we might be vessels to contain Him. Hence, we were not only created according to the image of Christ, but we were also created as vessels instead of instruments....God did not create us as instruments to work for Him; instead, He created us as vessels to contain Him.⁴²

God Created Man with a Spirit

The second striking point in the creation of man is that God created man with a spirit....Genesis 2:7 says that God formed man of the dust of the ground. No doubt this refers to man's body as the framework of man's being....After God formed a body for man, God breathed the breath of life into man's nostrils. Dust does not have any life, but the breath of God has life....In Genesis 2:7 the word for breath in Hebrew is neshamah. It is used also in Proverbs 20:27, which says, "The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah." This indicates that the very breath of life breathed into man's body became man's spirit. This is confirmed by Job 32:8, which says, "But there is a spirit in man, / And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding." In this verse a spirit in man and the breath of the Almighty are in apposition, indicating that the spirit of man and the breath of God are one. The spirit of man is the breath of God, and the breath of God is man's spirit.⁴³ [Furthermore], man's body and man's spirit came together to produce a living soul (Gen. 2:7)....A human being is a soul with two organs. The outward organ is the body; the inward organ is our spirit,

which is the breath of life. Thus, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 we are told that a whole man is composed of spirit, soul, and body.⁴⁴

The tripartite man was created with a spirit to be the receiver and container of the divine life (Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27).⁴⁵ A radio has a receiver within it so that it can receive, contain, and express the radio waves from the air. The outward box of the radio is not good enough. It needs an inner recipient, an inner receiver. Within us there is also a receiver, and this receiver is our spirit.

Zechariah 12:1....ranks the spirit of man with the heavens and the earth. It says that the Lord is the One who stretched forth the heavens, laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him....This shows that only these three things are important and vital in this universe. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man has a spirit for God. Here you have the purpose of the universe, the meaning of the universe. The heavens with all the stars and planets are for the earth. The earth is not for the heavens but for man. Without the earth, man could not exist. The earth is just right for us to live to fulfill our purpose. Man is not for education, for clothing, for food, for housing, or for entertainment. Man is good only for God. Man is a God-bottle, a vessel to contain God.

As God-bottles, we need a God-receiver. God is Spirit (John 4:24). Since God is Spirit, we need a spirit to receive Him. Only our spirit can receive the Spirit. Only our spirit can touch the Spirit. Only our spirit can contain the Spirit.⁴⁶

If we did not have a spirit...we would become meaningless. Also, if there were no God in the universe, the whole universe would become empty....Without God being the Spirit and without us having a spirit to contact God, [to contain God], to be one with God, the whole universe is empty and we are nothing. By this we can see the importance of our spirit.⁴⁷

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 2 – DAY 2

Scripture Reading

John 3:6 ...That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

Regenerated in Our Spirit

When a sinner repents, confesses his sins, believes in the Lord Jesus, and calls on His name, at that very moment Christ as the life-giving Spirit enters into his spirit to enliven his dead spirit, that is, to regenerate him in his spirit. Immediately such a person becomes alive, happy, and joyful....A great change has taken place in his life. This sinner has been saved. He has been regenerated, and he is now a Christian.⁴⁸

The Divine Spirit and the Human Spirit

In order for us to experience the Christian life, we surely need to know God, the Lord, Christ, as the Spirit. Also, we have to know that for us to enjoy this Spirit, we have a spirit within us. [Hence], the foundation of the Christian life is the Spirit with our spirit.⁴⁹

In the New Testament...three verses that speak of both the human spirit and the divine Spirit [are: John 3:6; 4:24, and Romans 8:16]. John 3:6 says, “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” The first spirit in this verse is God’s Spirit, and the second is our spirit. This means that our spirit is born of God the Spirit....The birth of the spirit in John 3:6 is not the first birth, the natural birth; it is the second birth, the spiritual birth. All the saved ones have been born twice....The first birth, from our parents, is the birth in the flesh; the second birth, from God, is the birth in our spirit....Hallelujah for the second birth! We are the second-birth people. Never forget the two spirits in John 3:6—the human spirit and the divine Spirit.

Another precious verse about these two spirits is John 4:24. This verse says, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.” Here again we see that God is a Spirit and that we have a spirit. If we would worship God, we must worship Him in our spirit. As human beings, we have many organs: eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, a mouth for speaking and eating, a nose for smelling and breathing, hands for working, and feet for walking. We also have our various inward organs, including a stomach for retaining and digesting food. In addition to all these organs, we have a spirit with which to worship God.

Man was made by God and for God. He was made to worship God, to contact God, to receive God, to retain God, and even to digest God. Your religious mentality may be offended at the thought of digesting God. Yes, we must digest God. The Lord Jesus said that He was the bread of life and that we must eat Him (John 6:35, 54-57). Jesus is edible! If we eat Him, we must also digest Him. The function of the organ of our spirit is to worship, contact, receive, retain, and digest God. We may call this organ our spiritual stomach....This is the organ for digesting God. We need to receive God into this part of our being.

The third verse concerning the two spirits is Romans 8:16. This verse says, “The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.” Here we see that the divine Spirit witnesses with our human spirit. Many times these two spirits talk to each other. Our spirit may say, “God is my Father,” and the divine Spirit will say, “Amen.” The divine Spirit may say, “You are a child of God,” and our spirit will say, “Hallelujah!”

We all need to become thoroughly familiar with these three verses on the two spirits. Remember, in John 3:6 our spirit is born of the Spirit; in John 4:24, our spirit worships the Spirit; and in Romans 8:16, the Spirit witnesses with our spirit. These three verses are virtually all-inclusive. In John 3:6 we are reborn, in John 4:24 we digest God and enjoy Him, and in Romans 8:16 we walk with God, live by God, and are one with God in our being. This is the Christian life, the Christian living.⁵⁰

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 2 – DAY 3

Scripture Reading

1 Cor. 15:45 ...The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

The Lord Spirit Being One with Our Spirit

We all need to see that our believing in Jesus and our being baptized into Him means that He comes into us and we are put into Him so that He and we become one. He is in us, and we are in Him. This is possible only because of the two spirits. He is the divine Spirit, and we have a human spirit. The divine Spirit is in our human spirit. Therefore, in our spirit we are one spirit with Him.⁵¹

First Corinthians 15:45b tells us that the last Adam, the Lord Jesus our Savior, became a life-giving Spirit. This Spirit has...come into our spirit. Therefore, 1 Corinthians 6:17 says that we have become one spirit with the Lord. Within us there truly is the fact that the two spirits are mingled as one spirit....In 2 Timothy 4:22 Paul says, “The Lord be with your spirit.” This implies that the Lord is Spirit; otherwise, He could not be able to enter our spirit and be with our spirit. This again proves that the Lord Spirit has become one spirit with our spirit.

Practicing Being One Spirit with the Lord

The highest Christian life is a life of the two spirits becoming one spirit. This surpasses ethics and morality. Today you and I do not merely have a conscience, the innate knowledge of good and the innate ability to do good,... nor do we only have a created spirit. Within our created spirit we also have the Spirit of God, who is our Redeemer and who became the life-giving Spirit. Today I want to help everyone to practice living by this mingled spirit, that is, to practice being one spirit with the Lord. Your being saved is not just a matter of your sins being forgiven, your being cleansed by the blood, or your being redeemed and regenerated. More than that, the Lord as the Spirit has entered your regenerated spirit and mingled with your regenerated spirit to become one spirit. This is the most precious point.⁵²

Christ has become the life-giving Spirit as the life and life supply in our spirit. Therefore, we must live in our spirit to experience the salvation and the bountiful supply of the Spirit. Man has a three-layer constitution: the outermost layer is the body; within the body is the second layer, which is the soul; and within the soul is the third layer, which is the spirit. Today Christ is the Spirit, and within us we also have a spirit; therefore, we can experience Him. The two spirits— the Lord’s Spirit and our spirit—are mingled and have fellowship with one another. This may be compared to metal conducting electricity. If we sin, an insulation comes between us and the Lord and then the “electricity” cannot pass through. At such a time we need to open up to Him in our spirit to repent and confess our sins. In this way the barrier of sin is removed; immediately we can have fellowship with the Lord Spirit and once again experience His salvation within us. Then the Lord Jesus is no longer a doctrine to us but a reality. As the Spirit, He now indwells our spirit so that we can daily experience Him as our salvation.⁵³

In order to contact God in spirit, sometimes we have to stop the activities of our body and our soul, and then we have to cry out to God and call on the Lord Jesus from our deepest part. If we do this, immediately there will be light within us. Whenever we stop the activities of our body and our soul, allow the Spirit to work in us, and call from our spirit, “O God! O Lord Jesus!” then, instead of being in our outward activities, we remain in our spirit, the innermost part of our being.⁵⁴

Many times I have been asked how I, as an elderly man, could be so active and so energetic. My secret is that I am one spirit with the Lord. Today, many toys are made to operate by electricity. It is electricity which makes them so active. Because we are one spirit with Christ, we have the heavenly, divine electricity energizing us continually.⁵⁵

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 2 – DAY 4

Scripture Reading

Isa. 12:4 ...Give thanks to Jehovah; call upon His name!

Rom. 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him.

Calling On the Name of the Lord

Beginning the Day by Calling On the Name of the Lord

After rising up in the morning, we should do everything by our spirit. We must begin our day by living and walking in our spirit. If we rise up in a loose way, we will spoil the whole day. The best thing to do after rising up is to call on the name of the Lord. When we call “O Lord Jesus,” we are in the spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). Calling in this way brings us back from everything to our spirit.⁵⁶

The Meaning of Calling On the Name of the Lord

What is the meaning of calling on the name of the Lord? Some Christians think that calling on the Lord is the same as praying to Him. Yes, calling is a kind of prayer, but it is not merely praying. The Hebrew word for call means to call out to, to cry unto, to cry out. The Greek word for call means to invoke a person, to call a person by name. In other words, it is to call a person by naming him audibly. Although prayer may be silent, calling must be audible.

Two Old Testament prophets help us to see what is meant by calling on the Lord. Jeremiah tells us that to call on the Lord means to cry to Him and to experience spiritual breathing. “I called upon Your name, O Jehovah, / From the lowest pit. / You have heard my voice; do not hide / Your ear at my breathing, at my cry” (Lam. 3:55-56). Isaiah also tells us that our calling on the Lord is our crying to Him. “God is now my salvation; / I will trust and not dread; / For Jah Jehovah is my strength and song, / And He has become my salvation. / Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing / From the springs of salvation, / And you will say in that day, / Give thanks to Jehovah; call upon His name!... / Sing...to Jehovah.... / Cry out and give a ringing shout, / O

inhabitant of Zion, / For great in your midst is the / Holy One of Israel” (Isa. 12:2-6). How may God become our salvation, our strength, and our song? How can we draw water with rejoicing from the springs of salvation? The way is to call on His name, to praise the Lord, to sing a hymn, and to cry out and shout. All of these match the calling mentioned in verse 4!

Calling on the Lord began in the third generation of the human race with Enosh, the son of Seth (Gen. 4:26). The history of calling on the Lord’s name continued throughout the Bible with Abraham (Gen. 12:8), Isaac (Gen. 26:25), Moses (Deut. 4:7), Job (Job 12:4), Jabez (1 Chron. 4:10), Samson (Judg. 16:28), Samuel (1 Sam. 12:18), David (2 Sam. 22:4), Jonah (Jonah 1:6), Elijah (1 Kings 18:24), and Jeremiah (Lam. 3:55). Not only did the Old Testament saints call on the Lord; they even prophesied that others would call on His name (Joel 2:32; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 13:9).

Calling on the name of the Lord was practiced by the New Testament believers [Acts 9:14; 22:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:22] beginning on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:21). While Stephen was being stoned to death, he was calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 7:59)....Saul of Tarsus received authority from the chief priests to bind all that called on the name of the Lord (Acts 9:14). This indicates that all the early saints were Jesus-callers. Their calling on the name of the Lord was a sign, a mark, that they were Christians.

Paul the apostle stressed the matter of calling when he wrote the book of Romans. He said, “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him; for whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:12-13). Paul also spoke of calling on the Lord in 1 Corinthians when he wrote the words, “With all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours” (1 Cor. 1:2). Furthermore, in 2 Timothy he told Timothy to pursue spiritual things with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2:22)....Today the Lord wants to recover calling on His name and to have us practice it so that we may enjoy the riches of His life.⁵⁷

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 2 – DAY 5

Scripture Reading

Rom. 10:13 For “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Psa. 116:13 I will take up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of Jehovah.

Why We Need to Call On the Name of the Lord

Why do we need to call on the name of the Lord? Men need to call on the name of the Lord in order to be saved (Rom. 10:13). The way of praying quietly does help people to be saved, but not so richly. The way of calling loudly helps people to be saved in a richer and more thorough way. Thus, we need to encourage people to open themselves and to call on the name of the Lord Jesus. Psalm 116 tells us that we may partake of the Lord’s salvation by calling on Him: “I will take up the cup of salvation / And call upon the name of Jehovah” (v. 13). In this one psalm, calling on the Lord is mentioned four times (vv. 2, 4, 13, 17). As we have seen earlier, the way to draw water from the springs of salvation is to call upon the name of the Lord (Isa. 12:2-4). Many Christians have never called upon the Lord. If you have never called, even shouted before the Lord, it is doubtful that you have enjoyed the Lord in a rich way. “Call upon His name!... / Cry out and give a ringing shout” (Isa. 12:4, 6). Try shouting before Him. If you have never shouted about what the Lord is to you, try it. The more you shout, “O Lord Jesus, You are so good to me!” the more you will be released from your self and filled with the Lord. Thousands of saints have been released and enriched through calling on the name of the Lord.

Another reason for calling on the Lord is to be rescued from distress (Psa. 18:6; 118:5), from trouble (50:15; 86:7; 81:7), and from sorrow and pain (116:3-4). People who have argued against calling on the Lord have found themselves calling on Him when they were subject to a certain trouble or illness. When our lives are free from trouble, we may argue against calling on the Lord. However, when trouble comes, no one will need to tell us to call on Him; we will call spontaneously. Also, the way for us to participate in the Lord’s plenteous mercy is to call upon Him....(Psa. 86:5). Another reason for calling on the Lord is to

receive the Spirit (Acts 2:17a, 21). The best and easiest way to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to call on the name of the Lord Jesus. The Spirit has already been poured out. We simply need to receive Him by calling on the Lord.

Isaiah 55:1 says, “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, / And you who have no money; / Come, buy and eat; / Yes, come, buy wine and milk / Without money and without price.” What is the way to eat and drink the Lord? Isaiah gives us the way in verse 6 of the same chapter: “Seek Jehovah while He may be found; / Call upon Him while He is near.” Thus, the way to eat the spiritual food for our satisfaction is to seek the Lord and to call upon His name.

Romans 10:12 says that the Lord of all is rich to all who call upon Him. The way to enjoy the riches of the Lord is to call upon Him. The Lord is not only rich, but also near and available, because He is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). As the Spirit, He is omnipresent...When we call on Him, He comes to us as the Spirit, and we enjoy His riches.

If I call a person’s name, and if he is real, living, and present, that person will come to me. The Lord Jesus is real, living, and present! He is always available. Whenever we call on Him, He comes. Do you want to enjoy the Lord’s presence with all His riches? The best way to experience His presence with all His riches is to call on His name. Call on Him while you are driving on the freeway or while you are at work. Anywhere and anytime you may call.

Also, by calling on the name of the Lord, we can stir ourselves up. Isaiah 64:7 says, “And there is no one who calls upon Your name, / Who stirs himself up to lay hold of You.” When we feel that we are down or low, we can lift and stir ourselves up by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus.⁵⁸

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 2 — DAY 6

Scripture Reading

1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

3 ...And no one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.

Out of a Pure Heart Calling On the Lord Corporately, Daily, and as Long as We Live

How should we call on the Lord? We must call on Him out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22). Our heart, which is the source of our calling, must be pure, seeking nothing except the Lord Himself. Also, we must call with [purified lips] (Zeph. 3:9 [NASB]). We need to watch our speech, for nothing contaminates our lips more than loose talk. If our lips are impure due to loose talk, it will be difficult for us to call on the Lord...Furthermore, we need to call on the Lord corporately. Second Timothy 2:22 says, “But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” We need to come together for the purpose of calling on the name of the Lord. Psalm 88:9 says, “I have called out to You, O Jehovah, every day.” Hence, we should call daily upon His name. Furthermore, Psalm 116:2 says, “Therefore I will call upon Him all my days.” As long as we live, we should call on the name of the Lord.⁵⁹

Enjoying, Breathing, and Drinking the Lord

To call on the Lord is to enjoy the Lord, to breathe the Lord in. Calling is just breathing. Jeremiah was designated the “weeping prophet.” After the book of Jeremiah, he felt he was not finished, so he wrote Lamentations as a weeping book. In this weeping book there are two wonderful, joyful verses: “I called upon Your name, O Jehovah, / From the lowest pit. / You have heard my voice; do not hide / Your ear at my breathing, at my cry” (3:55-56). Our calling is our breathing...Sometimes our dear husband or wife or our children put us into “the lowest pit.” Whenever you get into “the lowest pit,” do not murmur or complain. Simply call, “O Lord Jesus,” and you will be in the third heaven. To call on the Lord is just to breathe Him in. Verse 56 says, “Do not hide / Your ear at my breathing, at my cry.” The Lord turns His ear

to our breathing. This spiritual breathing is our calling, “O Lord Jesus, O Lord Jesus.”⁶⁰

The secret to enjoying the Spirit is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13. We all must believe that we have experienced the first half of 1 Corinthians 12:13. In one Spirit, that is, in the Spirit, we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks. The Spirit and the Body are connected. We must believe that we believers of the Lord were in that one Spirit baptized into one Body...Since you believe that you are in the Body, then you must also believe that you are in the Spirit... We have all been baptized into the Spirit, and now we need to drink this Spirit.⁶¹

The way to drink is in verse 3 of the same chapter: “No one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.” This is similar to saying, “No one can breathe except that the air gets into him.” Can we say that we are breathing, but the air never comes in? When we breathe, the air comes in...If we say, “O Lord Jesus!” we are in the Spirit. This is drinking. The way we drink of the Spirit is by saying, “O Lord Jesus.”

Hymn #73 in Hymns was written by Miss M. E. Barber, an older sister who helped Brother Watchman Nee very much. Stanza 2 says, “Blessed Jesus! Mighty Savior! / In Thy Name is all I need; / Just to breathe the Name of Jesus, / Is to drink of Life indeed.”...To call on the name of the Lord is to breathe Him, and to breathe Him is to drink Him. The way to drink of the one Spirit is to call, “O Lord Jesus!”...If you are thirsty, call on the Lord. At any time or any place, even while we are driving, we may be thirsty. Then we may call on the Lord and receive the living water. Try it; it always works...This is very simple, and this is our Christian life. Our Christian life must be a calling life.⁶²

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 2 — HYMN

Hymns, #611

1. God's glorious substance Spirit is,
His essence, holy and divine;
To contact God and Him enjoy,
His Spirit I must touch with mine.
2. The spirit is the innermost,
The part of man most deep and real;
If he would contact God in life,
'Tis with the spirit he must deal.
3. The worship which the Father seeks
Is in the spirit's strength alone;
His Spirit into man's would come,
That His and man's may thus be one.
4. When Spirit unto spirit calls
The two commingle and are one;
Man's spirit is the Spirit's home,
The Spirit doth man's life become.
5. Man's spirit must God's Spirit touch
If in God's fulness he would live;
'Tis only with the spirit thus
That he to God may worship give.
6. In ministry and fellowship
Man to the spirit we must bring;
All ministry should turn to prayer,
Spirit to spirit answering.
7. In spirit we must pray and serve,
In spirit touch the life divine,
In spirit grow, in spirit build,
That Christ thru us may fully shine.
8. Lord, to the spirit I would turn
And learn to truly contact Thee;

Thy Spirit thus will flow with mine
And overflow eternally.

Hymns, #73

1. Glorious, mighty Name of Jesus,
Into Thy dear Name I flee;
"Set aloft," I praise and worship,
For Thy Name is victory!
2. Blessed Jesus! Mighty Savior!
In Thy Name is all I need;
Just to breathe the Name of Jesus,
Is to drink of Life indeed.
3. Glorious, mighty Name of Jesus,
Heav'n and earth its pow'r proclaim;
But forgiven sinners only,
Know the balm of Jesus' Name.
4. Jesus! Jesus! Name most precious,
Balm in pain or mighty sword;
In Thy Name, we live and conquer,
Blessed, glorious, coming Lord.

WEEK 3 – DAY 1

Scripture Reading

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning...concerning the Word of life.

The Word of Life

The Bible stands above all other books in the world. It is a unique book. The sixteenth President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, once said that “the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book.” It is the world’s most widely read book and has been translated into over one thousand languages, more than any other book in the world....The word Bible comes from the Greek word biblos, which means “the book.” This means that the Bible stands as the unique book among all other books in the world.⁶³

The Bible is inspiring because it is the Word of life, the living Word. It is living because it is the expression of the living God.⁶⁴

In the Godhead Christ is the Word of life....The phrase “the Word of life” in Greek indicates that the Word is life. In His person Christ is the divine life, the eternal life, which we can touch.⁶⁵ [Thus], the Word is living, a divine person, Christ the Son of the living God (Rev. 19:13). The eternal Word is our Lord Jesus Christ [John 1:1], and the living Word is also He [1 John 1:1]. Furthermore, Christ is the written Word, the holy writings, the Bible (Heb. 10:7; Luke 24:27, 44). Christ is also the spoken Word, the rhema, the instant word to be spirit and life to man (John 6:63). Therefore, Christ is the eternal Word, the living Word, the written Word, and the spoken Word.⁶⁶

God’s intention in His economy [plan] is to dispense Christ into us, and for this dispensing there must be some means. The Bible is the means that God uses to dispense Christ into us.

Two Ways to Touch the Bible

There are two ways to touch the Bible: the outward way and the inward way. The outward way to touch the Bible is by exercising our mind merely to understand it, while the inward way is by using our spirit not mainly to understand it but to touch the spirit and get the life supply.

John 1:1 is a wonderful verse. Suppose two brothers come together to read this verse. After reading it, one brother may ask, “What does in the beginning mean?” The other brother may say, “God is the beginning.” The first brother may respond, “I don’t think so. How can you say that God is the beginning? I don’t understand what you are talking about. And what is the Word? This verse says that the Word was with God and the Word was God....” This is an illustration of touching the Bible in an outward way. Touching the Bible even for only a few minutes in this way is deadening.

There is another way to touch the Bible, the inward way, the way of exercising our spirit. Suppose these same two brothers come to the Word in the following way, saying, “O Lord, in the beginning. In the beginning was the Word. Amen! Hallelujah for the beginning. O Lord, the Word. Hallelujah, for the Word! And the Word was with God. O God! And the Word was God!” When we exercise our spirit to touch the Word in such a living way, we may not understand much, but we are filled with the Spirit, and we get the life supply....This is true of any verse or chapter, from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation. Sometimes we may not understand what we read, and sometimes we may understand but not be able to utter what we see. We may even say, “Praise the Lord, I received something this morning, but I do not have the words to speak it!” This is the right way. The right way to touch the Bible is to touch the Lord Himself. We must never separate the Bible from the Lord. Whenever we open the Bible, we have to open our mouth and open our spirit to utter something to the Lord. We can say, “O Lord! O Lord Jesus!”⁶⁷

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 3 – DAY 2

Scripture Reading

1 Pet. 2:2-3 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation, if you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Matt. 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.”

Coming to the Word to “Taste” the Lord

In 1 Peter 2:2-3 we have a most important passage.... These verses are important to us because they tell us clearly how to taste the Lord: drink “the guileless [pure] milk of the Word.” If we would taste Christ, we must take into us the milk of the Word. Then we will be nourished for spiritual growth. Praise the Lord, the Bible says tasted! It does not say that we know this aspect or that aspect about the Lord, but that we taste the Lord. When we drink the milk of the Word, we are actually tasting the Lord. Therefore, the way for us to taste the Lord is simply by drinking the milk of the Word. The Word is not only for us to study or learn, but even more for us to taste. The way the Lord nourishes His Body is by His Word. If we desire to enjoy the Lord and be nourished by the Lord, we must come to the Word to taste the Lord.

However, the concept which most of us have of the Bible is that it is a kind of teaching, a book full of doctrines. Thus, we come to the Word with the intention of understanding and knowing something....We must not come to the Bible only to learn and to understand. The Bible is not the tree of knowledge; it is the tree of life! If we take the Word of God as the tree of knowledge, we misuse the Bible, because 2 Corinthians 3:6 tells us that the letter kills. We must never take the Bible as a book of letters, but as a book of life.

The Main Function of the Bible—to Impart God into Us as Life

The main function of the Bible is to impart God into us as life and as the nourishment of life. It is not only to give us knowledge about God

and His love, but to impart God Himself into us. Whenever we read the Bible, we should not merely try to know or understand it, but take something of God’s essence into us just as we take our food. Then, like food, this substance will be assimilated into our very being.

The Scriptures contain at least three examples of those who ate the Word of God. The first is Jeremiah, who said, “Your words were found and I ate them” (Jer. 15:16a). To eat something is not merely to receive it, but to assimilate it. To assimilate is to receive something into you, digest it, and make it a part of yourself. The second example of someone eating the Word of God is recorded in the book of Ezekiel, where the prophet Ezekiel ate the Word of God (3:1-3).

Jeremiah said, “Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart” (Jer. 15:16b). This is a kind of enjoyment. The Word, after being eaten, became a joy and also a gladness. God’s Word is an enjoyment; after it is taken into us and assimilated into our very being, it becomes joy within us and gladness without. [In the third example], David said, “How sweet are Your words to my taste! / Sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psa. 119:103). The Word is indeed an enjoyment; it is even sweeter and more pleasant than honey to our taste.

From these verses we realize that the Word of God is not only for us to learn, but even more for us to taste, to eat, to enjoy, and to digest. The Lord Jesus even speaks of God’s Word as spiritual food: “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God’” (Matt. 4:4). Every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God is spiritual food to nourish us. This is the food by which we must live.⁶⁸

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 3 – DAY 3

Scripture Reading

Eph. 6:17-18 And receive...the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit...

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Pray-reading the Word

When Coming to the Bible, Having to Prepare Ourselves to Enter into Fellowship with God

When we come to the Bible, we have to prepare ourselves. We are getting ourselves prepared to read the word of God, not a newspaper or any secular book. First, [we must pray, “O Lord, cleanse me with Your precious blood. Lord], I am sinful, forgive me. I am mistaken; forgive me. I do not love You; forgive me. Even I do not fear You; forgive me.”...We must confess all of our sins to make ourselves pure and clean, without any hindering thing between us and God. Then we are in God’s fellowship. At that time we are in the Spirit of God, and when we come to the Bible, it is different.

Receiving the Word by Means of All Prayer

Then we have to pray-read, not just read, the Word.... Throughout the centuries, all the devoted lovers of the Lord and students of the Bible practiced pray-reading in fact, though they did not have the term pray-reading. Some in the past pointed out that we have to read the Bible prayerfully. To read the Bible prayerfully is to pray-read.

We teach the practice of pray-reading based upon Ephesians 6:17-18.⁶⁹ [The apostle] Paul took in, received, the word of God by means of all prayer and petition. He not only prayed in a general way, but he also petitioned in a particular way. Prayer is general, while petition is particular. Not only so, Paul prayed with “all prayer and petition.” All includes a great number of ways. You can pray loudly, or you can pray softly. You can pray quickly, or you can pray slowly. You can pray-read not only in one way but in many ways: by yourself, with your spouse,

with a group, and in the meetings. Paul said that we should receive the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition. This tells us that we pray all prayer and petition to take in, receive, the word of God.⁷⁰

[What is the most profitable way to touch and deal with the Word of God?] First, there is no need to close your eyes when you are pray-reading. Keep your eyes on the Word as you pray. In all of the sixty-six books of the Bible I cannot find one verse which says that we must close our eyes to pray, but there is a verse telling us that Jesus looked up to the heavens, saying, “Father...” (John 17:1). He was looking at heaven while He was praying....[Second], there is no need for you to compose any sentences or create a prayer. Just pray-read the Word. Pray the words of the Bible exactly as they read. Eventually, you will see that the whole Bible is a prayer book!...Open to any page of the Bible, and start to pray with any portion of the Word.⁷¹

In John 6:63 the Lord Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” The words, the Spirit, and life are three items, but the Lord speaks of them here as one. When the words are merely words, they are only black letters printed on the white paper; they are not the Spirit. But when the words get into your mind through your eyes and you begin to pray with your spirit, then the words become the Spirit. When the words become the Spirit, they are life.

When we pray in our reading of the Word, we turn the verses we have read into prayer. When we pray, we must forget everything else and have only the Lord and His word. Hymns, #389 says, “From morning to evening my one world Thou art.” This means that when we seek the Lord, we have only one world: “O Lord, You are my world; I seek You.”...Once the word enters your spirit, it becomes the Spirit and life. However, if you do not pray, then the word that you read will not become the Spirit, nor will it become life.⁷²

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 3 – DAY 4

Scripture Reading

2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed...

John 5:39-40 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

The Bible Being God's Breathing Out

Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed." On God's side, the Scripture is His breathing out; on our side, it is for us to breathe in. God has already breathed out. The Bible is God's breathing out, and to this day it is still God's breathing out. Therefore, whenever you come to read the Bible, if you just read the dead letters and do not breathe in what God has breathed out, then the Bible will be dead letters to you. The Scripture is the breathing out of God, whereas our prayer is our breathing in. By this breathing out and breathing in, we breathe God into us. This is the meaning of the Scriptures. However, no matter how much God breathes out, if we do not breathe in, we cannot receive God as our enjoyment and supply. This is why many people come to the Bible but do not receive the life in it.

The words of the Bible are the breathing out of God, but when you turn them into prayer, they become your breathing in....What you breathe in is spirit and life. Therefore, the Lord said that the words which He has spoken to us are spirit and life [John 6:63].

God's Word Being Our Food

The Holy Bible is the word of God, and we live on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God. Therefore, the Bible also tells us that God's word is our food....In [John 6:35] the Lord Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger." He also said, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (v. 57). Because of His concern at that time that the disciples who listened to Him might not understand the meaning of His words, He added the words in verse 63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits

nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." Therefore, you can see that the Lord's words are the food of life to us.

However, it is necessary not only for the food to be prepared in the kitchen and set on the table; it is also necessary that you come to eat it. If you do not eat, you will not get the nourishment. Therefore, we all must learn to do one thing. Every good, living, and strong Christian must learn to do this one thing, that is, to eat the word of life.⁷³

The Bible Being the Embodiment of the Lord Himself

The word in the Bible is not only [the breath of God, the bread of life, and] the word of God; it is also the embodiment of God. When we touch the word, we must touch God Himself. It is short and even wrong to touch the word in the Bible and not touch God Himself. The Lord Jesus told the Jewish leaders, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (5:39-40). The word search in Greek means to research, to search and search again. The Lord Jesus seemed to say, "I am one with the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are one with Me. If you come to the Scriptures, you have to come to Me...You have to make the Scriptures one with Me; instead, you have made the Scriptures something separate from Me. Therefore, you are wrong. You may gain knowledge in letters from the Scriptures, but you cannot have life because I am life."

These two verses are a warning to us. It is possible to come to the Bible yet not come to the Lord. It is possible to separate the Bible from the Lord....All the time we have to take the Bible as one with the Lord. Whenever we come to the Bible, we have to come to the Lord. Whenever we read the Bible, we have to touch the Lord. The Bible is not merely a book of knowledge. The Bible is the embodiment of the Lord Himself.⁷⁴

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 3 — DAY 5

Scripture Reading

John 15:4, 7 Abide in Me and I in you....If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

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

When We Take His Word into Us, Having the Lord Abiding in Us and Being Filled with the Spirit

By comparing [verses 4 and 7 of John 15], we can see that the way the Lord abides in us is by His words abiding in us. The practical way to have the Lord abiding in us is simply by taking His Word in. Whenever we touch the Word and let the Word abide in us, we touch the Lord Himself and let the Lord Himself abide in us.

It is clear from the Scriptures that the Word of Christ is nothing less than Christ Himself. This is proven from the verses we have read in John 15. The only way to have Christ abiding in us is to take in His Word.

When I was young, I read John 15 many times and wondered how I could have the Lord abiding in me. Then I found the way from the Word of the Lord. To have the Lord abiding in us is simply to take His Word into us, because the Lord is in His Word and is the Word. When we take His Word into us, we have the Lord abiding in us. To be filled with the Word in our spirit means to be filled with the Lord Himself as the Spirit.

Also, Colossians 3:16 tells us that when the Word of Christ dwells in us, we will be filled with singing. Then Ephesians 5:18 and 19 tell us that when we are filled in spirit, we will be filled with singing. In other words, to have the Word of Christ dwelling in us simply means to be filled in spirit....The concrete way to be filled in spirit is to take the Word into you.

Let me illustrate this with some safety matches. We know that a match is the embodiment of phosphorus.... The phosphorus on a match will catch fire when it is struck in a proper way. But if you try to strike a safety match on

the paper cover, it will not catch fire, because you are striking the match on the wrong spot. If you strike the match on the striking area, it will catch fire immediately. First, there is the phosphorus; second, the phosphorus is embodied in the match; and third, there is the fire.

Likewise, the Bible is the embodiment of the Spirit of Christ. And within the Spirit, there is the fire, which is the life. On one hand, we have the match, the phosphorus, and the fire; on the other hand, we have the Bible, the Spirit, and the life. Whenever you read the Bible, do you really catch fire?...The problem is that we not only strike in the wrong way, but also at the wrong spot. Instead of striking the Bible in our spirit, we strike it in our troublesome mentality....If we analyze the match, we see that one part of the match is white, and another part is red. But do we get fire by knowing this? No, we must strike the match, and at the right spot. To study the match is wrong, and to strike the match at the wrong spot is also wrong.

Learning to Pray-read with Our Spirit

When we strike it at the right spot we get fire! We must forget our mind and learn to pray-read with our spirit: "Lord, I praise Thee, 'In the beginning...'" (John 1:1). Simply pray this three times, and your spirit will catch fire. "Hallelujah, in the beginning." Really, this is good enough. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Hallelujah, I don't know much what this means, but how it nourishes me!"

When we are truly filled with the Word, we cannot help but sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord. Whenever we pray-read the Word, it will become a singing in the spirit....Simply learn to strike the Word in the right way and at the right spot. Then there will be a real fire.⁷⁵

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 3 — DAY 6

Scripture Reading

Eph. 5:18 ...Be filled in spirit.

25-26 Christ...loved the church and gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word.

The Inward Washing of the Water in the Word Accomplishing a Work of Transformation

In [Ephesians] 5:18 Paul charges us to “be filled in spirit,” no doubt with the Spirit of God. But how can the Spirit of God get into our spirit? The answer is that the Spirit comes into our spirit through the Word. When our spirit is filled with the Word, the Word, having come into us, becomes the Spirit. This is proved by 5:26 which speaks of “the washing of the water in the word.” If the Word did not get into us, how could it wash us inwardly? The washing in 5:26 is not an outward washing, but a washing from within, a washing that removes spots and wrinkles, thereby accomplishing a work of transformation....The fact that we are washed by the water in the Word proves that it is possible for the Word to get into us.⁷⁶

According to the divine concept, water here refers to the flowing life of God typified by flowing water (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4; John 7:38-39; Rev. 21:6; 22:1, 17). The washing of such water is different from the washing of the redeeming blood of Christ. The redeeming blood washes away our sins (1 John 1:7; Rev. 7:14), whereas the water of life washes away the blemishes of the natural life of our old man, such as “spot or wrinkle or any such things” (v. 27). In sanctifying the church, the Lord firstly washes away our sins with His blood (Heb. 13:12) and then washes away our natural blemishes with His life. We are now in such a washing process in order that the church may be holy and without blemish.⁷⁷

If we read and pray-read the Bible in a proper way, even musing upon the Word, singing it, and dwelling in it, our inner being will be filled. We may say that we are filled with the Word, with the Spirit, or with faith. We may also say that we are filled with the anointing, with God, or with Christ. By this inward filling we have the power to defeat the darkness in the air. We

also have the living water flowing within us to wash away the old elements, the wrinkles and the spots, and to renew us. When we are filled in this way, we sense that Christ is settling Himself in our being, making our inner chambers the rooms for His dwelling place. Also, when we enjoy such a filling, we love all believers, no matter what their nationality may be. Moreover, our inner eyes are enlightened, and our vision becomes clear.

Oh, there is nothing more refreshing and cleansing than to be inwardly washed by the water in the Word! When we are filled with the Word and washed by it, our entire being is renewed and transparent, and we have a foretaste of the New Jerusalem.⁷⁸

If we would pray-read chapter by chapter and book by book, week after week, month after month, and year after year, gradually we will receive enlightenment, and all the things of Christ will spring up within us. All the riches of Christ will become our enjoyment....In this way all the riches of Christ are ministered and dispensed into us.... These heavenly elements and spiritual ingredients will cause us to have not only an outward change but a metabolic change, a change in life. All these new elements will replace and discharge all the old things. This is a metabolic change, transforming us into a new condition.

Pray-reading is wonderful, but we also have to pray, “Lord, clear a way within me. O Lord, have a free course within me.” Pray-reading does not help us to obtain mere knowledge; rather, it brings many things of the Lord into us. Therefore, we need to give the things of the Lord a free course within us. This affords us the best spiritual digestion, assimilating what we have pray-read. Never say no to the Lord; learn always to say amen.⁷⁹

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 3 — HYMN

Hymns, #811

1. My heart is hungry, my spirit doth thirst;
I come to Thee, Lord, to seek Thy supply;
All that I need is none other but Thee,
Thou canst my hunger and thirst satisfy.

1. Feed me, Lord Jesus, give me to drink,
Fill all my hunger, quench all my thirst;
Flood me with joy, be the strength of my life,
Fill all my hunger, quench all my thirst.

2. Thou art the food and the water of life,
Thou canst revive me, my spirit upbear;
I long to eat and to drink here of Thee,
Thyself enjoy through my reading and prayer.

3. Thou art the Word with God's fulness in Thee,
Thou too the Spirit that God my life be;
Thee in the Word I enjoy as my food,
Thou as the Spirit art water to me.

4. Thou from the heavens as food camest down,
Thou to be drink hast been smitten for me;
Thou as the food, my exhaustless supply,
Thou as the water, a stream unto me.

5. Thou in the Word art the Spirit and life,
Thus by the Word I may feed upon Thee;
Thou dost as Spirit in my spirit live,
Thus I may drink in the spirit of Thee.

6. Now to enjoy Thee I come to Thy Word,
On Thee to feed till my hunger is o'er.
Now in my spirit I turn unto Thee,
Of Thee to drink till I'm thirsty no more.

7. Feeding and drinking, Lord Jesus, of Thee,
Feeding by reading, and drinking by prayer;
Reading and praying, I eat and I drink,
Praying and reading—Lord, Thou art my fare.

Hymns, #812

1. I come to Thee, dear Lord,
My heart doth thirst for Thee;
Of Thee I'd eat, of Thee I'd drink,
Enjoy Thee thoroughly.

2. Just to behold Thy face,
For this my heart doth cry;
I deeply long to drink of Thee
My thirst to satisfy.

3. Thy glorious, radiant face
My heart delights to see;
Here I'd abide and ne'er depart,
Beholding constantly.

4. In such a fellowship
Thou, Lord, art grace to me;
My heart and spirit gladdened, filled,
I enter rest in Thee.

5. Lord, I would linger here,
Still seeking after Thee,
Continue in the Word and prayer
Till Thou dost flow thru me.

WEEK 4 — DAY 1

Scripture Reading

2 Cor. 5:17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away...

Rom. 6:4 ...Walk in newness of life.

Clearance of the Past

After a person is saved, his old way of living and his old conduct of the past should come to an end. Before he received salvation, he was a sinner living in sin. He was also a man of the old creation, behaving in the way of the old creation. But now, having been saved, he has become a man of the new creation with the life of the new creation; as such he should have a new beginning, a new start, and live a new life spontaneously.

In the Old Testament, when the children of Israel were saved by their keeping of the Passover, they immediately left Egypt, forsaking all Egyptian ways of living and fully ending, concluding, all the Egyptian things. From that day, the life they lived was new, the way on which they walked was new, and all the things they did were new. The things of the past and the living of the former days were completely ended. This is a distinct type of the clearance of the past.

Although the Bible contains no plain teaching concerning the clearance of the past, it does include some passages that are pertinent to this matter. According to these passages, we may extract the following four points: [1) the relationship between the clearance of the past and salvation, 2) the basis of the clearance of the past, 3) examples of the clearance of the past, and 4) the extent of the clearance of the past.]

[First], the clearance of the past is not a requirement for salvation. This is because God's salvation is complete. No matter how grievous or deep our sins might be, they are all under the precious blood. There is no need for us to do or add anything...before we can be forgiven by God. God's forgiveness is based upon the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, and it is also the issue of our repentance and faith.

Because of our enjoyment of God's salvation, God's life in us causes us to have a change in our mood, taste, and feeling toward the world. Even our taste toward daily necessities, such as eating and clothing, is changed. Therefore, we spontaneously put an end to our old way of living, that is, we clear away the things in our living which have evolved from the past to the present, no longer allowing them to persist or continue. Such a clearance is an issue of our enjoyment of salvation. [Hence], if we, the saved ones, desire to have a better Christian life, to walk properly on the way of the Lord, and to witness for the Lord, our past life must be brought to an end.

[Second], the clearance of the past is not according to the demand of outward regulations but according to the moving of the Spirit within.⁸⁰ The religions of the world are built on their various religious codes, and their followers live and behave according to these rules. But the Lord's salvation is not like that. The salvation of the Lord, through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, gives us a new life. Because we have a new life, the divine life, we can now live and behave in the presence of God through the sense of this life and through the moving of the Spirit within us. Hence, the clearing of the past is based on the move of the Spirit. The Spirit will move within a regenerated person and cause him to sense certain things from his past that need to be cleared, for such things are not compatible with his new life as a believer in Christ.⁸¹ Furthermore, this clearance is not a regulation in the church. The church has no such regulation or requirement. However, the life we have obtained is holy, and the Spirit in us is moving and working. Hence, the Spirit will definitely require us, by the holy life within us, to remove all [idols and things pertaining to idols], demonic and dirty things, [to restore what we owe], and to cut off the old way of living. Our responsibility is to follow the leading of the Spirit and to allow Him to move freely.⁸²

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 4 – DAY 2

Scripture Reading

1 Thes. 1:9 ...You turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God.

Acts 19:19 And a considerable number of those who practiced magic brought their books together and burned them before all; and they counted up the price of them and found it to be fifty thousand pieces of silver.

[Third], the New Testament contains distinct examples showing us that after a man is saved, the Spirit begins to move and work in him, causing him to clear the past and to deal with the improper things of the past.

Abandoning Idols

One example of the clearance of the past is seen in the case of the Thessalonians [1 Thes. 1:9].⁸³ To turn to God from idols is not only to turn away from false gods, with the devil and demons at their back, but also from all things that replace God.⁸⁴ After a person is saved, whether he is about to be baptized or has already been baptized, he must clear away from his living the idols and things related to idols....If he finds it difficult to do the clearing, he may find some brothers to pray with him in order to increase his strength and boldness and thereby to help him with the clearing. However, he must do the clearing himself, and do it thoroughly, the more thoroughly the better.

There are things related to the reading of facial features, fortune-telling, horoscopes, and divination. Since these things involve idols, they should be terminated. It is improper for a believer...to have idols or other superstitious things remaining in his home. We must abandon all things that are related to idols....Not only should we throw out other images, but we should give up even portraits or statues of Jesus....The Bible says that, when He was on earth, the Lord Jesus had no form nor comeliness (Isa. 53:2). However, the images of Jesus most commonly seen today look very beautiful....These pictures represent human superstitions, and in the eyes of God they are blasphemous; hence, they should be disposed of.

We should use our spirit to worship the Lord, who is Spirit (John 4:24); we should not use our physical body to worship a visible image. The Catholic Church teaches [heretically] that man should worship a visible image with his physical body in order to help him to worship the invisible God with his inner spirit....We should not follow such a teaching. We should worship the Lord in spirit and not have any outward images.

Destroying the Demonic and Dirty Things

A second example of the clearance of the past is seen in the case of the Ephesians. Acts 19:19 tells us that the Ephesian believers who practiced magic brought their books together and burned them. This is the basis for our practice of burning for the destruction of the demonic and dirty things, the improper things. Examples of these things are the candlesticks and censers used in idol worship, ornaments and clothing with the image of the dragon, sacred writings of heathen religions, books and charms pertaining to divination, and tablets related to ancestral worship. Other examples are gambling instruments, utensils for alcoholic drinking, pipes for smoking, obscene books, and pornographic pictures. [Unbecoming clothing also is in this category.] All these things are demonic and filthy. We all must follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to remove all such things from our lives and our homes.

In brief, anything related to idols and any demonic and filthy thing, however valuable it may be, should be burned. The biblical principle is that such things should be burned with fire. The Bible records, in particular, that the price of the items which were burned by the Ephesians was fifty thousand pieces of silver. This is to show us that, when they destroyed the demonic and unclean things, the early believers burned a number of valuable things. Therefore, when we destroy the demonic and dirty things, we should not count the cost or the loss.⁸⁵

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 4 – DAY 3

Scripture Reading

Luke 19:8 And Zaccheus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore four times as much.

Rom. 8:6 ...The mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Restoring What We Owe

A third example of the clearance of the past is seen in the case of Zaccheus, in his restoring of what he owed others. As soon as he was saved, Zaccheus said to the Lord that if he had taken anything from anyone by false accusation, he would restore four times as much (Luke 19:8). To restore four times as much is neither a law nor a principle, but an issue of the dynamic salvation of the Lord, the moving of the Holy Spirit, and the inner urging of the conscience.⁸⁶ Due to this act of restoration, Zaccheus had a testimony before man. This was the basis of his testimony.⁸⁷ This sets a good example, disclosing to us the way to deal with material indebtedness.⁸⁸

Suppose that before you became a believer, you had extorted or defrauded others, stolen from them, or obtained things by improper means. Now that the Lord is working within, you have to deal with these things in a proper manner. This has nothing to do with the forgiveness you received from the Lord, but it is very much related to your testimony.⁸⁹

After we are saved, it is not necessary to dig up our past life to see whom we owe and to repay them. But if the Holy Spirit in us makes us conscious of the fact that we owe others in material things, then we should follow His leading to properly restore them.⁹⁰

Ending the Old Way of Living

After we are saved, we should conclude our old way of living. Although we cannot find a definite example in the Bible concerning this point, we can see a hint of it from the revelation of the entire New Testament.

That is, after we are saved, God's desire is that we bring before Him every person, thing, and affair in our living and see if we still can be related to them as we were in the former days.

If we are willing to go before the Lord in this way, we will see that after we are saved through regeneration, we not only should abandon the idols, destroy the demonic and dirty things, and restore what we owe, but we also should conclude entirely our old way of living and have a new beginning....This does not mean that we cease to be husbands, parents, or students; rather, it means that we can no longer be husbands, parents, or students as we were in the past. Neither does it mean that from now on our homes should be devoid of decoration; rather, it means that the decorating should be different from before. Concerning these things, our inward taste, our mood, and our feeling have changed.

It is not a matter of asking ourselves about our [sins] in the past; it is a matter of asking ourselves whether we, as children of God, should be the same as before....This is not a teaching but the work of the Holy Spirit. It is altogether a matter of the new man with a new living, having everything of the past living ended. This is the clearance of the past.

[Fourth], the extent of the clearance of the past is the "life and peace" spoken of in Romans 8:6. We have seen that the basis of the ending of the past is the moving of the Spirit, which is the feeling given to us through the inner anointing of the Holy Spirit. If we walk according to the Spirit, the result will surely be life and peace (Rom. 8:5-6).⁹¹ Thus, life and peace are the degree to which we are required to clear up the past. If we follow the demand of our inner feeling to...confess our sins, [to abandon idols, to destroy demonic and unclean things, to restore what we owe], and to end our old way of living, we will surely feel strengthened, enlightened, satisfied, and enlivened; we will also feel peaceful, secure, and full of the presence of the Lord.⁹²

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 4 – DAY 4

Scripture Reading

1 Cor. 6:19-20 ...You are not your own...for you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.

2 Cor. 5:14-15 For the love of Christ constrains us...and He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

Consecration

The Basis of Consecration

After we have been born again, there is still much work for God to do in our lives, and there is also much service that we can render to God. But this calls for a complete surrender of our lives to Him.

If God requires that we surrender ourselves to Him, on what does He base His requirement?...The Bible shows that the question of consecration is settled on the ground of purchase.⁹³ First Corinthians 6:20 says, “You have been bought with a price.” Our consecration is based on this purchase of God....God has bought us with none other than the precious blood shed by His beloved Son on the cross (1 Pet. 1:19). How great “a price” (1 Cor. 6:20) is this precious blood! God used this precious blood as the price to buy us, that we may belong to Him.⁹⁴

By virtue of His having bought us, the authority over our lives is neither the world’s nor our own; it is His....In the sight of God, our consecration is not an optional matter; its legal basis is established....The right to your life is not yours, but His, for He has acquired it by purchase.⁹⁵

We need to experience this basis practically in our daily life. Each time something occurs that causes us to argue with God, we must bow before Him and say, “Lord, I am the slave You bought. My right of ownership has been purchased by You. I here and now declare Your right. Even in this matter I will let You be the Lord and decide for me.” ...Whenever we are confronted with the opportunity to make a

choice, we should consider this basis of consecration, this purchase, as the foundation rock under our feet. We must stand securely thereon, never daring to depart from it. If we experience consecration in such a sincere way, we have truly laid hold of the basis of consecration.

The Motive of Consecration

The motive of consecration is the love of God. Whenever the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, we will naturally be willing to become the prisoners of love and consecrate ourselves to God.⁹⁶

You may remember that we are told in Exodus 21 of a slave who at the end of six years’ service could have become a free man, but he declared, “I love my master...I will not go out free” (v. 5). Thereupon his master led him to the doorpost and bored his ear with an awl. By submitting to this, the slave said in effect, “For love of my master I want to be his slave forever.” He could have entered into liberty, but for love’s sake he repudiated his freedom. This is true consecration.

There is a verse which says,... “The love of Christ constrains us” (2 Cor. 5:14a). But why should we yield to the constraint of love? Because “One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised” (2 Cor. 5:14b-15). Everyone who has had a true experience of consecration has at least once, but possibly many times, known the touch of the love of God. Without that touch of His love upon us, consecration is a bitter thing; in fact, it is hardly a possibility. The security of our consecration depends upon its basis; but the vitality and sweetness of our consecration depends on its motive power, i.e., the love of God. Consecration is the effect of the Lord’s touch upon a life. You do not need to plead with a person who has known the Lord’s love to surrender to Him. Surrender is spontaneous....When we really meet the love of God, we feel that our all must be offered up to Him; yet at the same time we feel that our richest offering is as refuse in the light of His love. Let but the love of God touch us and consecration will become spontaneous.⁹⁷

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 4 – DAY 5

Scripture Reading

Rom. 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice...

Lev. 3:11 And the priest shall burn [the sacrifice] on the altar; it is the food of the offering by fire to Jehovah.

The Meaning of Consecration

Romans 12:1...shows us that the meaning of consecration is to be a “sacrifice.” What does the phrase “to be a sacrifice” mean? What is a sacrifice? The Scripture shows us that whenever a thing is set apart from its original position and usage and is laid on God’s altar, specifically for Him, this thing is then a sacrifice. In the Old Testament men offered bullocks and rams as sacrifices. The principle is this: The bullock originally lived in a corral and was used for plowing the field and drawing carts. Now it is taken out from the corral and brought beside the altar. There is a change in its position. Then it is killed, placed on the altar, and consumed by fire to be a sweet-smelling savor unto God. This is a change in its usage. Thus, this bullock becomes a sacrifice. A sacrifice, therefore, is none other than a thing which is set apart for God and laid on the altar, with a change in position and a change in usage. Whether it is a bullock or a ram, whether it is fine flour or oil, once it is offered as a sacrifice, it leaves the hands of the offerer and can no longer be used for his own advantage and enjoyment.

When we thus present ourselves to God as a sacrifice, we become food for God; we are for His satisfaction. Among the offerings of the Israelites, some were for God’s use, such as gold, silver, precious stones, threads of all colors, wool, and sheepskin (Exo. 25:2-7); and some were offered to God for food, such as the bullock, ram, pigeon, and turtledove used in the burnt offerings. When these were offered as a burnt offering, they were burnt on the altar and became a sweet savor, food for God (Lev. 3:11). When God accepted the sweet savor of these sacrifices, He was satisfied.⁹⁸

The Purpose of Consecration

Since the meaning of consecration is to become a sacrifice, the thing offered is something which is entirely for God. The purpose of consecration, therefore, is to be used by God, to work for God. But in order that we may work for God, we must first let God work....Therefore, when we consecrate ourselves to God, although it is to work for God, yet from our standpoint the emphasis is to let God work. The purpose of consecration then is to let God work in order that we might reach the stage of working for God.

The offering of the sacrifices in the Old Testament also sheds light on this matter. When the bullocks and rams were killed and offered to God as burnt offerings, it was first necessary for God to do His thorough work upon them, that is, to consume them by fire, if they were to be pleasing and acceptable to Him. If the sacrifices were not consumed by fire, they would be raw and foul-smelling and could never be acceptable or pleasing to God. Our consecration today is just like that. We have already offered ourselves, yet if we do not allow God to work first, but go out to work for Him and serve Him directly, that work and that service will be raw, untempered, and foul-smelling. It can never be accepted by God, let alone satisfy Him.

If we want to touch spiritual things...we must first allow God to work on us that we might be broken, subdued, and disciplined by Him....We must...be severe with ourselves and ask whether our consecration to God is for working for God directly or for allowing God to work in us first....Consequently, after our consecration we must not first be anxious to accomplish something for the Lord. We need to remain on the altar and allow God to work on us and consume us. The result of this consuming work will enable us to work for the Lord. This consecration, this service, is ripe and resurrected; it is acceptable to God and satisfies Him. In conclusion, the object of consecration is to let God work in us that we may work for Him.⁹⁹

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 4 — DAY 6

Scripture Reading

Rom. 6:13 ...Present yourselves to God...

Lev. 1:9 ...Then the priest shall burn the whole [offering] on the altar, as a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

The Result of Consecration

We need to consider this matter...in the light of the offerings of the Old Testament. When a bullock was taken for sacrifice and offered upon the altar, he was immediately cut off from all his previous relationships. He was severed from his master, his companions, and his corral. After he was consumed by fire, he even lost his original form and stature. All his choicest parts were changed to a sweet-smelling savor to God, and all that was left was a heap of ashes. Everything was cut off, and everything was finished. This was the result of the bullock being offered to God. Since our consecration is also an offering to God, the result must also be the same. There must be the giving up of everything to be burned to ashes by God to the point where all is finished....Some brothers and sisters still have hopes after their consecration of becoming such and such a person. This proves that their future has not been given up.

The future we are speaking about includes not only our future in this world, but also our future in the so-called Christian world. We all know how the world naturally attracts us and offers the hope of a future in it, but even the so-called Christian world holds an attraction to us and offers a hope of a future in it....All these hopes, however, never exist in a consecrated person. A truly consecrated man is a man who has given up his future. He abandons not only his future in the world, but also his so-called spiritual future. He no longer has hopes for himself in anything; all his hope is in God. He lives purely and simply in the hand of God; he is what God wants him to be and does what God wants him to do. Whatever the outcome may be, he does not know and does not care. He only knows that he is a sacrifice, wholly belonging to God. The altar is forever the place where he stands, and a heap of ashes is forever the result. His future has been utterly abandoned.

This giving up of the future is not a reluctant act after something has already occurred to wreck your future hopes; it is a willing surrender before such an event....If our consecration is not sound, sooner or later problems will arise in our service and in our spiritual condition.

Brothers and sisters, this result of abandoning all our future prospects always needs to be kept fresh within us. Never let our consecration become old. If it grows old, it is the same as if we had never consecrated ourselves. We should always be as ashes on the altar, always entirely for God to enjoy, always without any future.¹⁰⁰

A Concluding Word

We must realize that it is not possible to hit the climax of any experience of life by experiencing it just once. We need to pursue continuously, so that our experience will increase gradually and become fuller, until it reaches the stage of maturity.

When we first consecrate ourselves, our experience is similar to an embryo in the mother's womb—one cannot distinguish the ear, the eye, the mouth, and the nose. As we grow in life, however, these five points related to the experience of consecration gradually become formed in us. Then we really have a feeling that we have been bought by God and that all our rights are in His hand. We become a prisoner of His love because His love has pierced our hearts. We become a sacrifice indeed, laid on the altar for God's enjoyment and satisfaction. We will be those who have been thoroughly worked over by God and are then able to work for Him. Our future will truly be as a handful of ashes. All our ways of escape outside of God's will shall have been cut off; God only will be our future and our way. At that time the experience of our consecration will indeed have become matured. May we all, by the grace of the Lord, pursue and go on together.¹⁰¹

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 4 — HYMN

Hymns, #309

1. What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought
Since Jesus came into my heart!
I have light in my soul for which long I had sought,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

1. Since Jesus came into my heart!
Since Jesus came into my heart!
Floods of joy o'er my soul like the sea billows roll,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
2. I have ceased from my wand'ring and going astray,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And my sins which were many are all washed away,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
3. I'm possessed of a hope that is steadfast and sure,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And no dark clouds of doubt now my pathway obscure,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
4. There's a light in the valley of death now for me,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And the gates of the City beyond I can see,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
5. I shall go there to dwell in that City I know,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And I'm happy, so happy as onward I go,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

Hymns, #436

1. Thy Life was giv'n for me,
Thy blood, O Lord, was shed,
That I might ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead;
Thy Life was giv'n for me, for me;

What have I giv'n for Thee?

2. Long years were spent for me
In weariness and woe,
That through eternity
Thy glory I might know;
Long years were spent for me, for me;
Have I spent one for Thee?
3. Thy Father's home of light,
Thy rainbow-circled throne,
Were left for earthly night,
For wanderings sad and lone;
Yea, all was left for me, for me;
Have I left aught for Thee?
4. Thou, Lord, hast borne for me
More than my tongue can tell
Of bitterest agony,
To rescue me from hell;
Thou suff' redst all for me, for me;
What have I borne for Thee?
5. And Thou hast brought to me
Down from Thy home above
Salvation full and free,
Thy pardon and Thy love;
Great gifts, great gifts
Thou broughtest me;
What have I brought to Thee?
6. Oh, let my life be given,
My years for Thee be spent;
World-fetters all be riven,
And joy with suff'ring blent;
Thou gav'st Thyself for me, for me,
I give myself to Thee.

Hymn, #473

1. No mortal tongue can e'er describe
The freedom of the soul,
When passed beyond all earthly bribe
To God's complete control.
All things are his, yes life, and death,
Things present or to come;
In Christ he draws in peace each breath,
In Christ he finds his home.

2. When such as we the King can choose,
To share with Him His throne,
'Tis passing strange that we refuse
To be our Lord's alone.
O never speak of sacrifice!
A privilege untold
Is to be His at any price,
In Calv'ry's hosts enrolled.

3. Arise! the holy bargain strike—
The fragment for the whole—
All men and all events alike
Must serve the ransomed soul.
All things are yours when you are His,
And He and you are one;
A boundless life in Him there is,
Whence doubt and fear are gone.

WEEK 5 – DAY 1

Scripture Reading

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2 Cor. 7:1 ...Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit....

Prov. 28:13 He who covers his transgressions will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

Dealing with Sins

“Dealing” implies that we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to purge away all the difficulties which hinder the growth of life.

Once we have consecrated ourselves to God that He may use us, God must cleanse us, deal with us, and purge away all our problems so that we may be fit for His use. If we wish to use a glass, we would first want it to be washed. When it is completely clean, it is a glass which we can use. Before we consecrate ourselves, or when we depart from a consecrated position, we do not realize that we need to be dealt with....Therefore, if we desire to fulfill the purpose of our consecration, we need to have all our difficulties dealt with one by one....Among all the difficulties which need to be dealt with, sins are the crudest, the most defiling, and the most evident. After having consecrated ourselves, the first thing we need to deal with is sins.

The Scriptural Basis

The following references give the scriptural basis for dealing with sins: Matthew 5:23-26....Here, “reconciled” and “be well disposed...toward” refer to dealings concerning our relationships with others. [Then in] 2 Corinthians 7:1... “cleanse” also refers to a kind of dealing. [Similarly, in] 1 John 1:9... “confess” is again a kind of dealing. [Finally, in] Proverbs 28:13...“confesses” and “forsakes” speak also of a dealing.

We see from the above scriptures how we are to deal with sins: towards men, we must be reconciled with them and be well disposed toward them; towards God, we must confess our sins; and concerning sin, we must forsake it. These kinds of settlement of sin are what we mean by dealing with sins.

The Object of Our Dealing with Sins

The object of our dealing with sins is the sins themselves. There are two aspects with regard to sin: the nature of sin within and the action of sin without....The dealing with sins of which we are speaking is our dealing with the sins which we commit outwardly, the sins in our actions. What are the sins in our actions? First John 5:17 says, “All unrighteousness is sin.” First John 3:4 says, “Sin is lawlessness.” Both references show that in our actions all acts of unrighteousness and lawlessness are sins.

Romans 2:14-15 says that those of the nations which have no law are a law to themselves; they show the work of the law written in their hearts. Their conscience is the law within them which bears witness, and their thoughts either accuse or else excuse them. All deeds which are right and lawful are justified by our conscience; all deeds which are not right and lawful are condemned by our conscience. All actions, therefore, that are contrary to our conscience are actions of sins and the object of our dealing.

The external action of sins has two aspects: the record of sin and the fact of sinning. The record of sin denotes the unrighteous and lawless deeds which offend the righteous law of God and result in our having a record of sin before the law of God. In the future, God will judge us according to this record. The fact of sinning is the very act which establishes the record of sin. These sinful acts always fall short of the glory of God and, in either a perceptible or an imperceptible manner, hurt others. For example: stealing is an act of sin. By so doing, not only do we put the name of God to shame, but we also cause damage to others. This constitutes the fact of sinning. At the same time, we have offended the law of God. Henceforth, before His law we have a record of sin....On one hand we need to deal with our record of sin before God, and on the other hand we need to deal with the fact of our sinning.¹⁰²

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 5 – DAY 2

Scripture Reading

Matt. 5:23-24 ...If you are offering your gift at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you,...first go and be reconciled to your brother...

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

The Basis of Dealing with Sins

Our object in dealing with sins includes all the sins we have committed. In carrying it out, however, God does not require us to deal with all the sins at once, but to deal with all those that we are conscious of while in fellowship with Him. We do not mean to say that we must deal with all the sins that we have actually committed, but only with those we are conscious of while in fellowship with God. The basis, therefore, of dealing with sins is the consciousness we have while in fellowship with God.

We read in the Scripture concerning this in Matthew 5:23 and 1 John 1:7....Offering the gift [Matt. 5:23] is for fellowship with God. Therefore this means that when we are having fellowship with God and are conscious of any discord between ourselves and others, or vice versa, we should immediately endeavor to rectify this situation lest our fellowship with God be affected or hindered. First John 1:7 indicates that if we have fellowship with God, we can see our sins in His light; then, according to what we have seen in His light, we are to confess this to God and deal with it before God in order to obtain God's forgiveness and cleansing. Matthew 5 speaks of our problems with others, 1 John 1 about our problem with God....Both indicate our consciousness while in fellowship with God.

Our dealing with sins is based only on the consciousness while in fellowship with God, not on all the facts of all the sins we have committed. Therefore, the realm of the basis is much smaller than the realm of the object....If we are aware of only ten percent, we deal with ten percent; if we are aware of twenty percent, we deal with twenty

percent. In other words, we deal only with the number of sins which we remember....Practically speaking, dealing with sins is not an ordinance of the law, but a requirement of fellowship.

If we are not conscious of the sins which we have committed, we do not need to deal with them. If however, we are aware of them, we should deal with them quickly; otherwise, our conscience will accuse us, our faith will become shipwrecked, and all spiritual things will thereby leak out (1 Tim. 1:19).

The consciousness of fellowship upon which we base our dealing with sins is not absolute, but differs according to the degree of depth of fellowship the individual has with the Lord....If the degree of our fellowship is deep, our consciousness will be keen and strong. If, on the other hand, the degree of our fellowship is shallow, our consciousness will be dull and weak....Hence, we should never measure others by the yardstick of our consciousness, nor should we accept the consciousness of others as a yardstick by which to measure ourselves. Everyone should learn to deal with sins only according to his own consciousness at the time he is in fellowship with the Lord.

The Limit of Our Dealings with Sins

The limit of our dealing with sins is similar to that of our clearance of the past. It is life and peace. When we deal with sins, we should do it until we have life and peace within. If we follow our consciousness in dealing with sins, we will feel inwardly satisfied, strengthened, refreshed, and quickened; we will also feel joyful, restful, comfortable, and secure. Our spirit will be strong and living, and our fellowship with the Lord will be free and without hindrance. Our prayers will be releasing and with authority, and our utterance will be bold and powerful. All these senses and experiences are the conditions of life and peace. This is the limit of our dealing with sins, and this also is the result of our dealing with sins.¹⁰³

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 5 – DAY 3

Scripture Reading

Acts 10:43 ...Everyone who believes into Him will receive forgiveness of sins.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The Practice of Dealing with Sins

There are two aspects with regard to the object of dealing with sins: one is the record of sin before God, and the other is the actual deed of sin.

Our Lord bore for us the righteous judgment of God. His blood satisfied the requirement of God's law on our behalf; therefore, all our record of sin before God has been abolished. However, if this objective fact is to become our subjective experience, there is still the need of application. We will speak of this application by dividing it into two stages: before we are saved and after we are saved.

[According to Acts 10:43] the abolishing of our record of sin before we are saved depends upon our believing.

[The words in] 1 John 1:9 were written by the apostle to those who are saved, and they refer to all the sins we commit after we are saved....The abolishing of our record of sin after we are saved...depends upon our confession. Here the application is through our confession.

How should we deal with the actual committing of sin? If we have offended God we must deal with it before God and ask His forgiveness. If we have sinned against man, we should deal with it before man by asking man's forgiveness....When we deal with sins before man, there are four basic principles we should remember and by which we should abide....Irrespective of the sin with which we are dealing and regardless of how we deal with it, we should always take care of these four principles by asking: [1] Will this dealing dispel the discordant

condition between others and ourselves? [2] Will it cause our conscience to be clean and void of offense? [3] Will it enable us to testify to the salvation of God and thereby give Him glory? [4] And can we benefit others by it? If the answers to these questions conform to the four principles, we may bravely proceed then to deal with the sin. If, however, one of the answers does not conform to one of these principles, we should be careful; otherwise, the enemy will take advantage of our dealing and use it to produce an opposite result. In order that our dealings be properly and soundly carried out to the end that God may be glorified, that we obtain grace, and that others be benefitted, we shall now discuss a few technical points in accordance with the four principles we have mentioned.

First, the object of our dealing. We should go to whomever we have offended and deal with the matter. If we have sinned only against God, we deal with God alone. If we have sinned against God and man, we deal with both God and man....It is not necessary to deal with those against whom we have not sinned....Our dealing should not exceed the sphere of the sin which we have committed. This is the safe way to obtain peace within and not harm others....Second, the circumstance of our dealing with sins....If we have sinned openly, we deal with it openly; if we have sinned secretly, we deal with it secretly. The sin we have committed in private does not require our dealing with it in public.... Third, the responsibility of our dealing with sins. When we deal with sins, we should only deal with that part for which we are responsible; never involve others....I should not expose what others have done and cause them difficulty. Fourth, the reimbursing of others. If the sin we have committed involves material things or the gain of others, we should make restitution. When we restore what we have taken, we should pay according to the original value and add a little more to compensate for the loss. In the Old Testament, in Leviticus 5, it is stated that one fifth should be added. In the New Testament we have the example of Zaccheus (Luke 19) restoring fourfold to those whom he had cheated. These are not laws or regulations, but principles and examples to show us that whenever we make restitution, we should add something to the original value.¹⁰⁴

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 5 – DAY 4

Scripture Reading

2 Tim. 4:10 For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age....

James 4:4 Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever determines to be a friend of the world is constituted an enemy of God.

Dealing with the World

The Difference between Sin and the World

Immediately after our consecration, sin should first be dealt with and then the world. Because both are defiling in our lives and are abominable unto God, they need to be dealt with and purged. However, the defilement of these two aspects differs. The contamination of sin is savage, rough and ugly, while the contamination of the world is cultured and refined, often appearing beautiful in the sight of man.

Furthermore, the damage caused by sin and the world upon man differ greatly: sin contaminates man, whereas the world both contaminates and possesses man. It is far more serious for man's life to be possessed by the world than to be contaminated by sin....Satan corrupts man by using sin, but he gains man by employing the world, thus causing him to depart from the presence of God and become lost. A study of Genesis makes this difference apparent. Although Adam was corrupted by sin, he had not left the presence of God. It was not until Genesis 4, when man invented civilization and formed the worldly system, that he was not only corrupted but usurped and gained by Satan through the world. Hence, man no longer belonged to God.

Although Abraham had repeatedly failed in the matter of claiming his wife as his sister, that was but a sin which merely contaminated him but did not usurp him. He could still be one who served the Lord and prayed for others in a heathen land (see Gen. 12 and 20). However, Demas, a co-worker of Paul, was deprived of his usefulness before God

because he loved the present world and became usurped by it (2 Tim. 4:10).

Generally, people feel only the damage of sin, but not that of the world, because sin is against morality, whereas the world does not oppose morality but God Himself. Man is destitute of the concept of God; he has only a moral concept within him. For this reason he has a little knowledge concerning sin, that which is against morality, and is conscious of its contamination. But as for the world, which is in opposition to God, he has no knowledge of it, neither is he conscious of its usurpation. For example, a drunkard— licentious, wanton and lustful, fearing neither God nor man—is considered immoral and condemned by men. But if someone is daily occupied with poetry and recitation and steeped in literature, being completely indifferent to the things of God and unwilling to be gained by Him, men will praise him, having no feeling that he is usurped by literature. This is due to the fact that men neither know God nor have the concept of God, and therefore are ignorant of Satan's usurpation of man by the world.

When we see the differences between sin and the world, we will perceive that the world's damaging scope is greater, its harmful effect more serious, and its opposition to God more hostile than that of sin. Because the world is in direct opposition to God Himself, it has become God's enemy. Sin is contrary to God's law and His procedure, that is, His righteousness, whereas the world is contrary to God Himself and His divine nature, that is, His holiness. Sin opposes the law of God, and the world opposes God Himself. For this reason the Bible states that the friendship of the world is enmity with God (James 4:4).

Sin is the primitive, superficial, and initial step of the fall. The world is the final, serious, and last step of the fall. Many people stress only victory over sin, but the Bible stresses even more the overcoming of the world (1 John 5:4)....If we desire to grow in life and be gained by the Lord, we must make an effort to deal with the world that enslaves us.¹⁰⁵

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 5 — DAY 5

Scripture Reading

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Eph. 2:2 ...You once walked according to the age of this world...

The Formation of the World

At the creation of man, there were only the universe, the heaven and earth, and all things; the world did not exist. The world was formed after the fall when man became independent of God and forfeited His care. Therefore, in studying the formation of the world, we must first consider the daily requirements of man's existence.

The Bible...divides man's needs into three main categories: provision, protection, and pleasure. In order to maintain his existence, he needs not only the various provisions, such as clothing, food, etc., but also a means of defense to protect himself from being hurt and a form of amusement for his happiness....In the beginning these three great needs—supply, defense, and amusement—were planned and prepared by God....Adam in the garden of Eden had no need to worry, plan, or prepare anything for himself, for God was responsible for everything. Since God supplied all man's needs, then in reality God was his life and his all.

When he lost God, man naturally lost God's provision, protection, and pleasure. When man lost God's care for his livelihood...he feared poverty, danger, and boredom with life. Therefore, in order to meet the necessities of life and survive, man used his own strength and devised means of supply, defense, and amusement. From this time, man created a godless civilization.

When mankind lived a godless life, Satan immediately disguised himself and utilized these [three] avenues as a means to possess man....Later, Satan

organized these into a more tangible and systematized world, thus entangling mankind in a tighter web.

The Definition of the World

Originally, man belonged to God, lived by God, and relied entirely upon Him. Now Satan has systematized the world to replace God in providing for man's need....Therefore, the world consists of everything that replaces God and all that usurps man. When people, activities, or things—whether good or bad, beautiful or ugly—enslave man, they comprise the world. Anything that causes man to disregard God, be removed from Him, or be independent of Him is the world.

The Greek word for world is kosmos, which means system or organization....The world denotes the enemy's scheme, system, and organization to usurp the place of God in man and finally to gain full possession of man.

Concerning the definition of the world, the Bible gives some explanations:...First, the difference between the world and the things in the world (1 John 2:15-17)...Here the things in the world contradict the will of God....All that does not come from the Father, all that originates outside of God, and all that comes from the world are things of the world and are contrary to the will of God....Second, the difference between the world and the age.¹⁰⁶ [In Ephesians 2:2] this world refers to the satanic system, which is composed of many ages. Hence, the age here refers to a part, a section, an aspect, the present and modern appearance, of the system of Satan, which is used by him to usurp and occupy people and keep them away from God and His purpose.¹⁰⁷ So, age means...the world which is revealed before us today, or the things in the world. In Romans 12:2, the age, not the world, is in opposition to the will of God; this corresponds to 1 John 2:17....Thus, we see that the world is in opposition to God, and the age or the things in the world are in opposition to the will of God.¹⁰⁸

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 5 — DAY 6

Scripture Reading

Rom. 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world....

The Scriptural Basis

[The following references give the scriptural basis for dealing with the world: James 4:4, Romans 12:2, and 1 John 2:15-17.]

The Objects of Dealing with the World

The world in our daily living consists of people, activities, and things which usurp the place of God in us. Therefore, these objects are the aim of our dealings.

How do we know what objects are usurping us, and what is the standard of measurement? First, we need to see whether these objects exceed the necessities of our life. We can say that anything that goes beyond our daily necessities is taking the place of God and possessing us; thus, it needs to be dealt with....For example: clothing as a necessity is not worldly, but if one pays too much attention to apparel and ornaments, or squanders money in order to comply with present-day fashions, he has already exceeded the scope of his daily necessities. Consequently, these excesses have become his world.

What is the standard that regulates our daily necessities in regard to people, activities, and things? In the Bible there is no uniform or specific standard governing these matters. God has ordained us to be born in different families, to receive different educational training, to have different professions, and to contact different social environments....These various standards of living are sovereignly permitted.... Therefore, the standard of our living necessities must be determined by ourselves through prayer and seeking the mind of God. We cannot measure our standard according to that of others nor demand that they agree with our views and feelings....From the divine viewpoint there is a certain measuring rule regarding the world. This rule is God Himself. As we measure sin by the law of God, so we measure the world by God

Himself....All that is unfitting and incompatible with God and all that does not measure up to God is worldly and unholy.

The Basis of Dealing with the World

The basis of our dealing with the world is the same as dealing with sin....We should deal with the world upon the basis of the inner feeling gained through fellowship. [Moreover, our dealing should be to the extent of life and peace within (Rom. 8:6).] Besides these...principles, there are two factors which greatly influence our inner feeling toward the world: our love for God and our spiritual growth in life.... [First], when our love for God causes us to meet God, who is light, He enlightens and exposes the world. Whenever this light appears, it shines away the world in us. [Second], our inner feeling towards the world also depends upon our spiritual growth. The more we advance in the spiritual life and knowledge of God, the deeper we will be in knowing the world.

The Practice of Dealing with the World

If we wish to practice dealing with the world, we should pay our attention to one point—that is, to close our mind to the world....Of course, it is very difficult to close our mind toward the thoughts of sin, because sin lives within us. Not until we are raptured will be delivered from this inward difficulty....The difficulty of the world is something of an outward nature. The Bible states that sin dwells in us, but it never mentions that the world lives in us. Since the nature of the world is outward, it is easy to shut off thoughts of the world....When we endeavor to deal with the world, we should be determined and violent to shut out any thoughts of the world. Not only should we close the door, but we should also bar it and even make this door into a wall. In this manner we can thoroughly solve the problem of the world.¹⁰⁹

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 5 — HYMN

Hymns, #162

1. With praise and thanksgiving there
stands a great throng
In the presence of Jesus and sing
this new song.

Unto Him Who hath loved us and
washed us from sin,
Unto Him be the glory forever!
Amen!

2. All these once were sinners, defiled
in His sight,
Now arrayed in pure garments,
in praise they unite.
3. He maketh the rebel a priest and a
king,
He hath bought us, and taught us
this new song to sing.
4. How helpless and hopeless we sinners
had been,
If He never had loved us till cleansed
from our sin.
5. Aloud in His praises our voices shall
ring,
So that others, believing, this new song
shall sing.

Hymns, #438

1. I've turned my back upon the world
With all its idle pleasures,
And set my heart on better things,
On higher, holier treasures;
No more its glitter and its glare,

And vanity shall blind me;
I've crossed the separating line,
And left the world behind me.

Far, far behind me!
Far, far behind me!
I've crossed the separating line,
And left the world behind me.

2. I've left the old sad life of sin,
Its follies all forsaken;
My standing place is now in Christ,
His holy vows I've taken;
Beneath the standard of the cross
The world henceforth shall find me;
I've passed in Christ from death to life,
And left the world behind me.

Far, far behind me!
Far, far behind me!
I've passed in Christ from death to life,
And left the world behind me.

3. My soul shall ne'er return again
Back to its former station,
For here alone is perfect peace,
And rest from condemnation;
I've made exchange of masters now,
The vows of glory bind me,
And once for all I've left the world,
Yes, left the world behind me.

Far, far behind me!
Far, far behind me!
And once for all I've left the world,
Yes, left the world behind me.

4. My choice is made forevermore,
I want no other Savior;
I ask no purer happiness
Than His sweet love and favor;

My heart is fixed on Jesus Christ,
No more this world shall blind me;
I've crossed the Red Sea of His death,
And left the world behind me.

Far, far behind me!
Far, far behind me!
I've crossed the Red Sea of His death,
And left the world behind me.

WEEK 6 — DAY 1

Scripture Reading

1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

Col. 2:19 ...Holding the Head, out from whom all the Body...grows with the growth of God.

The Body of Christ

The Body of Christ Being the Expression of Christ

The New Testament tells us emphatically that the church is the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12).¹¹⁰ The function of the Body is to be the full expression of Christ. We cannot manifest our personality through any one member of our body—the ears, mouth, eyes, hands, or feet—alone. Similarly, Christ cannot manifest His personality through any one member of His Body. It takes His whole Body to manifest Him.... Today He is revealing Himself through the church. This is the corporate Christ. Formerly, Christ was expressed individually; now He is expressed corporately.¹¹¹ Thus, not only is the Head Christ, but also the Body is Christ. First Corinthians 12:12...clearly tells us that the Body is Christ.¹¹² All the believers of Christ are organically united with Him and constituted of His life and element to become His Body, an organism, to express Him. Hence, He is not only the Head, but also the Body. As our physical body has many members yet is one, so is this Christ.¹¹³

The Body Growing with the Growth of God

If we have the light from the clear revelation in the New Testament, we shall see that the church is...a living organism, the Body, with Christ as the unique Head.¹¹⁴ In [Colossians] 2:19 Paul speaks of “holding the Head...” Holding the Head is equal to abiding in Christ. Of course, to hold the Head implies that we are not detached, or severed, from Him....To hold the Head is to remain in Christ without any insulation between us and Him.

The words out from whom in verse 19 indicate that something is coming out from the Head to cause the Body to grow. The growth of the Body depends

on what comes out of Christ as the Head, just as the growth of a plant depends on what comes into the plant from the soil. If a plant does not absorb nutrients from the soil, the plant cannot grow. Likewise, if we do not receive what comes out from Christ as the Head, the Body cannot grow. Holding the Head is, therefore, equal to being rooted in Christ [2:7] as the soil.

[Furthermore], in 2:19 Paul says that the Body “grows with the growth of God.”¹¹⁵ In Himself God does not need to grow; He is altogether complete and perfect. But in us, He needs to grow. The measure of Christ in us is too short, and the quantity is too little. We need more Christ. We need God to be increased within us.¹¹⁶

Now we must go on to ask in what way God gives the growth....God gives the growth by giving Himself to us in a very subjective way. Since God gives growth in this way, we need to take time to absorb Him....Our contact with the Lord should not be rushed. If we are in a hurry, we shall not be able to absorb much of His riches. We need to allow adequate time for prayer.¹¹⁷ If we would grow, we need to get into the Word, feed on the Word, and exercise our spirit to pray and to receive the Lord each day.¹¹⁸ Every morning we need to take an adequate amount of time to absorb the Lord. Although even ten minutes is good, it is best to spend thirty minutes to enjoy Him at the start of each new day. If you spend thirty minutes to absorb the Lord and to enjoy Him in the morning, you will not be bothered by negative things during the day. The “flies” and “scorpions” will not pester you, for the elements in the soil will repel them.¹¹⁹ Do not spend so much time in your mind, emotion, and will, but spend more time in your spirit to adore the Lord, to praise Him, to offer thanks to Him, and to speak to Him freely.¹²⁰ Forget your situation, your condition, your failures, and your weaknesses and simply take time to enjoy the Lord.... Let us...open ourselves to the Lord, exercising our spirit to say, “O Lord Jesus, I love You....Lord, I give myself to You. I give You my heart and everything concerning this day.”¹²¹

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 6 — DAY 2

Scripture Reading

Eph. 4:15-16 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

Building Up the Body of Christ by the Growth in Life

The church as the Body of Christ is absolutely a matter of life....The Body of Christ is not a doctrine; it is a realm. It is not a teaching, but a life.¹²² This life is the divine life, the life of the Triune God....The building up of the Body of Christ altogether depends upon our growth in this wonderful life.¹²³

The growth of the Body of Christ is through the members growing into the Head, Christ, in all things by holding to truth in love (Eph. 4:15).¹²⁴ The word truth in verse 15 denotes that which is real. In this universe the real things, the true things, are Christ and the church. Only by speaking concerning Christ with the church do we actually handle the truth. This means that although we may refrain from telling lies, we still may not be speaking the truth....Anything apart from Christ with the church is a vanity and a falsehood....The book of Ecclesiastes says that all is vanity (1:2)....Day by day, we may talk about many things. But if we do not speak concerning Christ and the church, we are handling vanity; we are not handling the truth.¹²⁵ In God's sight, whenever we speak something that is not necessary, whether it is good or bad, that is gossiping. The biblical term for gossip is idle words (Matt. 12:36). Idle words are words that we do not need to speak. An idle word is a non-working word, an inoperative word, having no positive function, useless, unprofitable, unfruitful, and barren.¹²⁶ [In Ephesians 4:15] Paul tells us that we must grow up into the Head in all things....According to my experience, the most difficult matter in which to grow up into Christ, the Head, is in our talking. Psalm 141:3 says, "Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth; / Keep the door of my lips." Because it is so hard for us to control our speaking, we should make this our prayer also.¹²⁷ We should speak those things that bring us into contact with Christ and that build us up as the Body of Christ.¹²⁸

We do not need to conduct ourselves in a certain way because we are forced to do so by outward regulations. We need to grow to the extent that we are in Christ.¹²⁹ Some of the sisters spend a great deal of time to style their hair, and yet they say that they do not have time for morning revival. This shows that they need to grow up into Christ in combing their hair.¹³⁰ We need to grow until we reach the level of being in Christ in all things—in shopping, in buying a pair of shoes, in spending our money, and even in choosing a pair of eyeglasses.¹³¹

First, all the saints have to grow up into the Head in all things.¹³² [Then] out from the Head in whom we have grown we have nourishment, as indicated by the word supply [Eph. 4:16]. Through the supply which comes out from the Head, the Body grows and builds itself up in love.¹³³ Paul emphasized our need to grow.¹³⁴ If we do not grow, there can be no building.¹³⁵ [Furthermore], this growth is caused by the Body being joined together through the rich supply of the joints and being knit together through the operation of each part.¹³⁶ The joints are the specially gifted members of the Body, such as the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers (v. 11). The parts are all the members of the Body. Through these two kinds of members the entire Body is joined together and knit together for the building.¹³⁷ For the joining of the joints and for the knitting of each one part, we need to minister, to dispense, the rich supply to all the joints and to each one part. By this rich supply of Christ, all the members of the Body will get the nourishment with which they will grow in life [issuing in the building up of the Body].¹³⁸

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 6 — DAY 3

Scripture Reading

1 Cor. 14:3 But he who prophesies speaks building up and encouragement and consolation to men.

4 ...He who prophesies builds up the church.

31 For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

Building Up the Body of Christ by Prophecy

The enjoyment of Christ develops the believers' spiritual gifts through the growth in life.¹³⁹ First Corinthians 14 stresses that the top gift, the gift that excels all other gifts, developed by our enjoyment of Christ is prophesying [v. 12].¹⁴⁰ This is the excelling gift because it builds up the church (14:4b-5).¹⁴¹ Without prophesying, there is no possibility of building up the Body of Christ.¹⁴²

To prophesy in 1 Corinthians 14 is not in the sense of foretelling or predicting. To prophesy is to speak for the Lord, and in our speaking for the Lord, we have to speak forth the Lord and speak the Lord into others. To prophesy is to dispense the very Christ whom we have experienced into others.¹⁴³ [That it does not denote foretelling or predicting] is proven by the words building up, encouragement, and consolation in verse 3; by the words convicted and examined in verse 24; and by the words all may learn and all may be encouraged in verse 31. Speaking the Lord into people builds them up, encourages them, and consoles them. When we speak for the Lord, others are convicted and judged. The fact that all may learn and all may be encouraged also shows that this is not predicting but speaking for the Lord.¹⁴⁴

The apostle Paul taught that we all can prophesy (1 Cor. 14:31).¹⁴⁵ This verse is one of the clearest verses in the entire Bible. It says that all the believers have the capacity to prophesy. Capacity denotes an ability by birth....[Nevertheless], many saints among us may feel that all can prophesy except them. However, there are no exceptions. We may not be eloquent, but we can still prophesy....The Lord wants all of us to speak.¹⁴⁶ To build up the organic Body of Christ, all of us need to speak.¹⁴⁷

In order to prophesy, there are a few things which are indispensable. First, we must love the Lord and have fellowship with Him. We must live before the Lord and be a person who is joined to Him as one. Second, we must spend the effort to learn the truth. We need to read much of the Bible and the spiritual publications....Third, we must be flexible, walking according to the Spirit, and receiving instant and fresh inspiration all the time. Fourth, we should learn to have a heavenly, enlarged view, to know Christ and the church, and not to have our own opinions or view, but to have the view of God....Fifth, we should be prepared to prophesy in our daily life.¹⁴⁸

The Consciousness of the Body

In the church life, we should learn to have the consciousness of the Body....Some Christians are like butterflies; they act independently. Others are like bees; they live and move together. The butterfly flies from flower to flower, going its own sweet way; but the bee works for the hive. The butterfly lives and works individually, but the bee has a body-consciousness. We should all be like bees, having the consciousness of the Body so that we can live together with other members in the Body of Christ. Wherever there is Body-revelation, there is Body-consciousness, and wherever there is Body-consciousness, individual thought and action are automatically ruled out. Seeing Christ results in deliverance from sin; seeing the Body results in deliverance from individualism....It is not a matter of changing our attitude or conduct; revelation does the work. We cannot enter the realm of the Body by anything other than seeing. A real inward seeing settles the whole problem.¹⁴⁹

The real significance is that we have become the members of the Body of Christ, possessing the same one life and needing one another....Therefore, whatever we do must be in the Body, joined to the Body, and regulated by the Body, because we are one Body.¹⁵⁰

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 6 — DAY 4

Scripture Reading

Matt. 18:20 For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst.

Rev. 1:10 I was in spirit on the Lord's Day...

The Meeting Life

Hebrews 10:25 says, "Not abandoning our own assembling together."¹⁵¹ [One characteristic of the life of God we believers have received] is to flock together, to meet together....The Bible says that we are not only the Lord's sheep, but even more, His flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).¹⁵² Our Christian life is not like the life of a butterfly, which does well on its own; our life is like the sheep's life, requiring that we flock together and live a meeting life. Consequently, we need to meet. The meetings are crucial to us, and we should not forsake them.¹⁵³

The basic principle of the meetings of the church is that the meetings are a gathering of the believers by the Lord into His name [Matt. 18:20]....In gathering us together in His name, the Lord rescues us from all kinds of worldly and earthly distractions and occupations....We especially need to be brought out of the self...For every church meeting we need the Lord to bring us out of everything other than Himself and to gather us together into His name.¹⁵⁴

The Seven Categories of Gathering

According to the New Testament, there are [only seven kinds of gatherings of the church.] These categories include the gathering for the Lord's table [the bread-breaking meeting (Matt. 26:26-30; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 20:7a; 1 Cor. 11:20, 23-26; 10:16-17, 21)], the gathering for prayer [Matt. 18:19-20; Acts 1:14; 4:31; 12:5, 12], the gathering for edification by exercising the spiritual gifts [1 Cor. 14:26-32], the gathering for reading the Word of God [Acts 15:30-31; Col. 4:16], the gathering for listening to messages [Acts 20:7b], the gathering for preaching the gospel [2:14, 40-41; 5:42], and the gathering for fellowship regarding God's move [14:27].¹⁵⁵

Consecrating the First Day of the Week to the Lord

The Lord has purposely set aside one day out of the week and has called it the Lord's Day.¹⁵⁶ We need to say a little word here about the difference between the Lord's Day and Sunday. Sunday is a heathen, idolatrous term adopted by Catholicism and maintained by our tradition. Actually, it is idolatrous to say a day belongs to the sun. The Bible refers to this day as the first day of the week. Revelation 1:10 calls this day "the Lord's Day."

Today the whole world takes Sunday not mainly for worship but for pleasures, for sports, and for all kinds of entertainment. This is more evil than idol worship, but this tide has flooded many Christians....We, however, should consider the first day of the week as a day for the Lord.¹⁵⁷ The Bible emphasizes three things that we should do on the first day of the week: [First, we should exult and rejoice, because it is the day of the Lord's resurrection, the day Jehovah has made (Psa. 118:24). Second, we should gather together to break bread in remembrance of the Lord (Acts 20:7a; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). Third, according to 1 Corinthians 16:1-2], on the first day of every week, every one should offer to the Lord according to his income....On one hand, we remember how the Lord gave Himself for us, and on the other hand, we also have to give to the Lord on this day.... Offering material goods to the Lord on His day is something that we should start practicing the moment we believe....We should...tell the Lord, "Lord, You have given to me richly. Lord, I bring to You what I have gained and offer it to You." You have to fix the amount that you will set aside. If you have much, you should offer more. If you have less, you can offer less.

This day is not our day; this day is the Lord's Day. This time is not ours; this time is the Lord's.... We hope that new brothers and sisters will pay attention to the Lord's Day from the very beginning. Consecrate the first day of the week to the Lord and say to Him, "This is Your day."...If we do this, we will see God's blessing being showered abundantly upon the church.¹⁵⁸

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 6 — DAY 5

Scripture Reading

Exo. 5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.

1 Cor. 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

The Called-out Assembly

In the Bible the church is first called the assembly [Matt. 16:18; 18:17]....The Greek word translated church in these verses is ekklesia, composed of two words: ek, out, and kaleo, called....Hence, according to the literal sense of the word, the church is the assembly of those called out of the world by God.¹⁵⁹

When did God's people begin to meet together?...In all of the fifty chapters of Genesis there is no meeting, no assembly....But when you come to the second book of the Bible, Exodus, there was the meeting of God's people. In Exodus when God's salvation was brought in, right away there was the demand of the assembly of God's people.

A Feast unto the Lord

Of course, according to the appearance of the wording in Exodus, you couldn't find a word like assembly. Yet when God called Moses and sent him to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt, He spoke in this way: "And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness" (5:1). My people is collective; it is not just one person. This is a collective people. Moses was to tell Pharaoh to let God's people go to hold a feast unto Him. You have to realize that the thought of assembling, the thought of gathering, is implied in this word feast.¹⁶⁰

A rich feast is composed not only of one dish. The more courses of food there are and the more variety there is, the richer the feast is....Such a feast is a real enjoyment, and a rich meeting should be just like this. Each saint should bring

a different "dish." Our meetings need to be a real feast to both God and man.¹⁶¹

This meeting in mutuality may be compared to the feast of tabernacles in ancient times. In that feast the children of Israel brought the produce of the good land, which they reaped from their labor on the land, to the feast and offered it to the Lord for His enjoyment and for mutual participation in fellowship with the Lord and with one another.¹⁶²

The good land typifies Christ. Today Christ is the good land to us, so we must labor on Him. The rain, the sunshine, the air, and the fertile soil come from the grace of God, but we need to labor to till the ground, sow the seed, and take care of the harvest. This is to cooperate with God's grace. We need to pray and deal with many things. We need to learn how to trust in the Lord, abide in Him, fellowship with Him, and deal with Him and be dealt with by Him. This is a spiritual labor, not human struggling; it is not human effort but a spiritual coordination with the Lord. Day by day we all must learn to live in this way. Then we will know Christ in a practical way and experience Him in our spirit, and when we come to the meetings, we will have something of Christ.¹⁶³ First Corinthians 14:26 does tell us that whenever we come together, each one should have something....Now the Lord wants us to enter into the full reality of such a wonderful meeting life.

The Goal of Our Meeting—to Exhibit Christ

The goal of our meeting is to exhibit Christ, and the Christian meeting is an exhibition of the Christian daily life. The Christian daily life is just Christ. Paul said, "For to me, to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21a). Christ must be our daily life, and our meeting is an exhibition, a display, of our daily life. The center of this display is Christ Himself. Whatever we pray, speak, or sing must be with Christ as the center.¹⁶⁴

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 6 — DAY 6

Scripture Reading

Acts 2:46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord...and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart.

Heb. 10:24-25 And let us consider one another so as to incite one another to love and good works, not abandoning our own assembling together...but exhorting one another...

God's Ordained Way for Christian Meetings

God's ordained way for Christian meetings is¹⁶⁵ first to meet from house to house (Acts 2:46; 5:42). Acts 2:46 tells us that the believers broke bread "from house to house," and 5:42 says that "from house to house, they did not cease teaching and announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ."...The Greek indicates that they met according to houses, which means that every house had a meeting.¹⁶⁶ Thus, the New Testament indicates that each one of us should have a meeting in our home. Of course, these home meetings should not be just with our own family; they should also include others. [Second], the New Testament also shows us that in addition to having the group meetings in the homes, the entire church should also come together in one place (1 Cor. 14:23).¹⁶⁷ In the beginning of the church life [in Acts]...the larger gatherings were needed, but the larger gatherings were not a daily need. The daily need was the group meetings.¹⁶⁸ Thus, the church should have regular separate home meetings and should gather together in one place as the need arises.¹⁶⁹ However, we need to see that the group meetings are more basic.¹⁷⁰ The big meetings can attract the people, but only the small meetings can build people up....The small meetings are the foundation of the building of the church; this is an unshakable law. If we do not keep this law, we will not have any building.¹⁷¹ [Hence], the group meetings are the "lifeline," the "pulse," of our church life.¹⁷²

The group meeting is eighty percent of the church life, and the church life is a life in the Body. In our physical body, it is impossible for a problem in one member to be hidden from all the other members. The circulation of life in our body carries the feeling in one member to all the members. Thus, we should not hide our problems from the other members in the church life.¹⁷³ In saying this, I do not mean that we should open everything to others without

restriction.... But we do need to learn to open our ordinary, daily matters to our fellow believers. Without the proper opening of ourselves to one another, it is difficult to practice the group meetings.¹⁷⁴

Among all the meetings in the church life, no other meeting is as intimate, as practical, and as all-inclusive as the group meeting. It includes fellowship, interceding, mutual care, and shepherding.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, if we do not have these things, it is difficult to have the mutual teaching through asking and answering questions.¹⁷⁶ For the perfecting of the saints, there is the need of teaching in the group meetings, and in the group meetings all are teachers.¹⁷⁷ Everyone is both a teacher and a learner.¹⁷⁸

The scriptural basis for the group meetings is in Hebrews 10:24 and 25.¹⁷⁹ In these verses there are three crucial words: consider, incite, and exhort[ing]....To consider one another implies to remember, to have a sincere, loving concern for one another. It implies that the saints are in our heart.¹⁸⁰ [Verse 24 goes on to say] we must also incite them, stir them up. They might become cold. If so, we have to fan the fire for them.¹⁸¹ Good works here refers to giving something to others freely or doing something freely for others. To give a financial gift or to care for a sick brother is a good work. There is the need for many such good works in the Body. We need to incite one another to love and to this kind of good work. Verse 25 also says that we are to exhort one another.¹⁸² You exhort me and I exhort you; you learn and I also learn....According to this portion of the Word, we must [consider], incite, and exhort one another mutually.¹⁸³

Enlightenment and inspiration:

HYMN

Hymns, #824

1. The Church is Christ's own Body,
The Father's dwelling-place,
The gathering of the called ones,
God blended with man's race;
Elect before creation,
Redeemed by Calv'ry's death,
Her character and standing
Of heaven, not of earth.
2. New man of new creation,
Born through her risen Lord,
Baptized in God the Spirit,
Made holy by His Word;
Christ is her life and content,
Himself her glorious Head;
She has ascended with Him
O'er all her foes to tread.
3. Christ is her one foundation,
None other man may lay;
All that she has, as Christ, is
Divine in every way;
Her members through the Spirit
Their death on Calv'ry own;
They're built in resurrection—
Gold, silver, precious stone.
4. One God, one Lord, one Spirit—
Her elements all one—
One faith, one hope, one baptism,
One Body in the Son;
The Triune God is in her,
One Body members own,
By faith they are united,
In hope of glory shown.

5. From every tribe and nation
Do all the members come,
Regardless of their classes
United to be one.
No high there is, nor lowly,
No Jew, nor Gentile clan,
No free, nor slave, nor master,
But Christ, the "one new man."
6. One Body universal,
One in each place expressed;
Locality of dwelling
Her only ground possessed;
Administration local,
Each answ'ring to the Lord;
Communion universal,
Upheld in one accord.
7. Her local gatherings model
The New Jerusalem;
Its aspects and its details
Must show in all of them.
Christ is the Lamp that shineth,
With God within, the Light;
They are the lampstands bearing
His glorious Image bright.

Hymns, #864

1. Whene'er we meet with Christ endued,
The surplus of His plenitude
We offer unto God as food,
And thus exhibit Christ.
 1. Let us exhibit Christ,
Let us exhibit Christ;
We'll bring His surplus to the church
And thus exhibit Christ.
 2. In Christ we live, by Christ we fight,
On Christ we labor day and night,

And with His surplus we unite
To thus exhibit Christ.

3. Our life and all we are and do
Is Christ Himself, the substance true,
That every time we meet anew
We may exhibit Christ.
4. In meetings Christ to God we bear
And Christ with one another share,
And Christ with God enjoying there,
We thus exhibit Christ.
5. The risen Christ to God we bring,
And Christ ascended offering,
God's satisfaction answering,
We thus exhibit Christ.
6. The center and reality,
The atmosphere and ministry,
Of all our meetings is that we
May thus exhibit Christ.
7. The testimony and the prayer,
And all the fellowship we share,
The exercise of gifts, whate'er,
Should just exhibit Christ.
8. The Father we would glorify,
Exalting Christ the Son, thereby
The meeting's purpose satisfy
That we exhibit Christ.

WEEK 7 — DAY 1

Scripture Reading

Lev. 25:55 For the children of Israel are My servants; they are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; I am Jehovah your God.

Rom. 12:1, 2, 11 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice...which is your reasonable service. ...Be transformed by the renewing of the mind. ...Be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.

Serving the Lord

Who Are the Servants of God?

Who are the servants of God?...The Bible tells us that all of God's redeemed ones are servants of God. Every child of God is a servant of God. In Leviticus 25:55 God says, "For the children of Israel are My servants; they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; I am Jehovah your God." This tells us clearly that as long as a person was an Israelite and was brought out of Egypt, he was a servant of God. Not only were Moses and Joshua the servants of God, but all the Israelites who were led out of Egypt were the servants of God as well. As long as we are saved and as long as we are children of God, we are servants of God. We need two kinds of understanding about the blood of the Lord, and we need two kinds of knowledge about the Lord Himself. The blood of the Lord Jesus washes away our sins. At the same time, His blood also purchases us. The Lord Jesus is our Savior. At the same time, He is also our Lord. We have to see that Jesus is our Lord and we are His servants; we are purchased by His blood.¹⁸⁴

The Motive of Serving the Lord

When a believer receives the life of God, he has the disposition to serve God; his nature wants to serve God.¹⁸⁵ The more [he] receives grace and is led by the Lord, the more he is delighted to serve the Lord. A saved person wishes to serve the Lord, not out of others' encouragement or compelling, but out of an inward motive. This motive is his love for the Lord. His love for the Lord constrains him and impels him to serve the Lord. [Exodus 21:5] describes a slave in the Old Testament who, due to his love for his master, would not go out free at the end of his days of slavery; he would rather be a slave to serve

his beloved master. This typifies the New Testament believer who should love the Lord and serve Him in the same manner.¹⁸⁶

Exodus 21:6 speaks of the slave being brought to the door or to the doorpost. In ancient times slaves were to stand by the doorpost waiting for the master's orders. Instead of doing anything on their own, they were to act only according to the word of the master. Today our position as slaves of Christ should also be at the doorpost. Furthermore, in 21:6 we are told that the master bored his slave's ear through with an awl. This indicates that the slave's ear was opened to listen to the master.

As those who believe in Christ, we all must be His slaves. We should say, "O Lord, I love You. Even if I have the freedom to go out, I do not want to leave. I love You, I love Your church, and I love Your children." On the one hand, we may testify of how enjoyable and glorious the church life is. On the other hand, in the church life we all must become slaves.¹⁸⁷

[Moreover, in Romans 12:1], the apostle Paul exhorts us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to serve God. His exhorting us is through the compassions of God, proving that God's compassions, which are out of God's love, should be our motive in serving God, stirring us up to love God and to serve Him.

Serving the Lord with Our Whole Being

Our entire being is of three parts: spirit, soul, and body [1 Thes. 5:23]. To serve the Lord with our whole being means that the spirit, soul, and body all participate in the service of the Lord. First, we must present our bodies to the Lord [Rom. 12:1]; second, the mind, the main part of our soul, must be renewed and transformed [v. 2]; third, our spirit must be burning [v. 11].¹⁸⁸

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 7 — DAY 2

Scripture Reading

Rom. 12:1 ...Present your bodies a living sacrifice... which is your reasonable service.

5 So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

7 Or service, let us be faithful in that service...

11 ...Be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.

Only a Heavenly Vision of the Body Being Able to Bring Us into the Genuine Service of the Lord

God's intention in the whole universe is to gain a Body for Christ...When we come to the matter of serving the Lord, we all need to be very clear that we need the Body, and we need a heavenly vision concerning the Body. May the Lord grant us all such a vision that will bring us into a full realization that we need to be in the reality of the Body, even that we cannot serve without the Body, and, in fact, that we cannot live, we cannot exist spiritually in life, outside the Body. Only by such a heavenly vision of the Body can we be brought into the genuine service of the Lord.

Strictly speaking, in the New Testament the service is not touched clearly and definitely until Romans 12. In this chapter both the words service and serving are used. In Romans 12:1 Paul exhorts us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is our most reasonable service. In verse 7 he mentions the service, and in verse 11 he speaks of serving the Lord as a slave. It is not until Romans 12 that the matter of service is so definitely revealed to us. From this chapter we can realize that, as Christians, our service to the Lord must be in the Body. The Christian service is not something individual; it is something corporate. The Christian service is something of the Body, in the Body, with the Body, and for the Body.¹⁸⁹

Service in the Body

Every believer is a member of the Body, a part of the Body. An individual is not the Body. A member of the Body cannot function without the Body. The hand is good, quite useful, but if it is cut off from the body, it becomes not only dead, but also ugly, terrible, and even terrifying...Today many Christians are detached, separated from the reality of the Body. It is as if they are disembodied members... How could they serve the Lord? How could we serve the Lord without being built up together as members of the Body? It is impossible...But if we do have a sincere heart to serve the Lord, we need to realize that the service is in the Body.¹⁹⁰

What does being a member mean? It means that all of our work and living are based on the Body; the Body is the unit of operation. When my hands work, it is not my hands that are working, but my body that is working. When my feet walk, it is not my feet that are walking, but my body that is walking. Every move of the members has the Body as its unit of operation. What one member does is what the whole Body does...Nothing that the members do is for themselves. Everything that the members do is for the Body. Every move of the members is based on the Body, not on the members. We are happy if God puts us in the first place, and equally happy even if He puts us in the last place. Only the ones who do not see the Body can be proud, and only they can be jealous of others.

The meaning of serving the Body of Christ is to receive life from the Head for the supply of the Body. It is to transmit the life that is in the Head to the church. When the eyes see, the body sees. The eyes supply the body with their seeing; this is what it means to serve as members. The hands cannot detect the smell of an object; it takes the nose to serve the body with its smelling function. Smell is the specific ministry of the nose. The ears serve the body with their hearing. Hearing is the specific ministry of the ears. The result of the work of every ministry is the growth of the stature of the Body. In other words, it is the Body gaining more of Christ. The ministry of the members is the ministry of Christ to the church; it is to dispense Christ to others.¹⁹¹

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 7 — DAY 3

Scripture Reading

1 Pet. 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood...

Rev. 1:6 And made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father...

The Service of the Priesthood

In the Christian life there are always two aspects, the matter of life and the matter of service...The proper Christian service is a matter of life, and it is in the Body. Such a spiritual service is presented as the priesthood in 1 Peter 2:5...According to the spiritual reality, the priesthood is the building up of the priests, the coordination, the cooperation of all the priests. Not one of the priests serves individually, but all serve in coordination.¹⁹²

It is a great matter that we, who were once sinners, sons of disobedience,...are now priests of God serving Him. As to our person, we are sons of God. As to our spiritual occupation, we are priests of God (Rev. 1:6; 5:10). Some of us may be teachers, doctors, or lawyers, but our real occupation is that of priests...Since we are priests, we should be serving the Lord all day long in whatever we do.¹⁹³

What does it mean to serve God? Today's Christians would answer that to serve God is to work for God. This answer is wrong! To say that a priest is a person who serves God is right, but to say that to serve God is merely to do something for God is wrong.

To realize what a priest is, we must first see God's eternal plan. God is a God of purpose. He has a purpose which He wants to accomplish. According to the revelation of the Scriptures, God has a plan to work Himself into a group of people, that He might be their life, and that they might become His expression.

God has no intention of calling us to do something for Him. His intention is that we answer His call by opening ourselves to Him and saying, "Lord, here I am, not ready to work for You, but ready to be filled and possessed by You, and to be one with You."...Then He will do something through us. Whatever He does through us will flow out of Himself. This is the real service which God is seeking today.¹⁹⁴

Holy Priests and Royal Priests

We are the holy priesthood [1 Pet. 2:5] on the one hand, and the royal priesthood [v. 9] on the other hand. In the Old Testament types there are two different orders of priests, the order of Aaron and the order of Melchisedec. The order of Aaron is the holy order. To be holy is to be separated from the common things, the worldly things, unto the Lord...To be holy simply means to be sanctified, and to be sanctified simply means to be separated from the common things unto the divine things. This is the holy order, the holy priesthood. The order of Melchisedec is the royal order. Melchisedec was a king, and he was a kingly priest.

When we as a Body go to the Lord and remain in His presence, we are the holy priests, the holy, separated ones before God. After we pray and are burdened by the Lord and equipped with the heavenly authority, we come out of the presence of the Lord to the people, serving them, even ministering the Lord to them. At that time we are the kingly priests, the royal priests, the heavenly ones with the heavenly authority as heavenly kings to minister the Lord to others...The priests of the order of Aaron always bring the need of the people to God. They are holy. But a priest of the order of Melchisedec brings something from God to supply others, to meet the need of others. This is the kingly priesthood.

The coordination, the separation, and the authority— these three are the qualifications, the equipment we need to minister, [to serve]...We need the reality of the Body, we need the holy priesthood, and we need the royal priesthood.¹⁹⁵

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 7 — DAY 4

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:10 ...For behold, I announce to you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people.

Acts 5:42 ...Every day...they did not cease teaching and announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ.

Rom. 15:16 That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable....

Preaching the Gospel

Every saved person, having believed in the Lord, must preach the gospel and delights to preach the gospel. The life of God in us, which we have received, is such a life. The more we preach the gospel, the more this life is released, and we will grow in this life accordingly.

The Definition of the Gospel

The gospel is the glad tidings and the good news of great joy, which God asked His servants to announce to men.¹⁹⁶[Moreover], the gospel is Christ, who is the very embodiment of the processed Triune God, reaching us as the consummated Spirit, who is the consummation of the Triune God for our enjoyment. According to the truth, [the gospel is the entire divine revelation of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. God's New Testament economy is the gospel.] Christians are used to saying that there are four Gospels: [Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John], but Paul told us that the entire book of Romans is the gospel of God (1:1, 15). It includes the preaching of God, the condemnation of God upon fallen man, and the Body life, including the local churches in chapter sixteen. Have you ever received such a broad view of the definition of the gospel? Personally, the gospel is a wonderful person,¹⁹⁷ the most wonderful person in the whole universe. He is an unlimited, all-inclusive, and all-extensive person. In Ephesians 1 we are told that this all-inclusive and extensive person fills all in all in the universe (v. 23). The measurement of the universe has no end. No one can tell how big the universe is or how many things are in it. But Ephesians 1:23 tells us that Christ is the One who fills all in all. Such a person is the center of the gospel

of God. The gospel is concerning Jesus Christ the God-man; hence, Jesus Christ the God-man is the center of the good news and the glad tidings of God to men.¹⁹⁸ Of course, forgiveness, salvation, etc. are included in the gospel, but they are not the central point. The gospel of God concerns the person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. This wonderful person has two natures—the divine nature and the human nature, divinity and humanity.¹⁹⁹

God's New Testament Priesthood of the Gospel

In order to carry out [the God-ordained way], God's New Testament priesthood of the gospel, we have to take care of four steps: [begetting, nourishing, perfecting, and prophesying]. Each step is a must. The first step is to get sinners saved to make them members of the living Christ. In other words, we have to preach the gospel as New Testament priests.²⁰⁰ In the Old Testament, the priests offered cattle sacrifices as types of Christ.²⁰¹ The main sacrifices that a New Testament priest offers to God are not his praises or good works. The main sacrifices he offers to God are living persons, sinners who have been regenerated [begotten of God] to become members of the living Christ (1 Pet. 2:5; Rom. 15:16).²⁰² The second step is to nourish and cherish the newborn babes in Christ in home meetings as nursing mothers (1 Thes. 2:7).²⁰³ The third step is to bring these new ones into the group meetings. The group meetings will have the fellowship, the interceding, the mutual care, the shepherding, and the mutual teaching. This will spontaneously perfect [equip, supply the functions of] these new ones, carrying out the perfecting of the saints revealed in Ephesians 4:11-12. The fourth step, as a result of such perfecting, is to usher these ones into prophesying. In other words, we have to perfect them to such an extent and to such a level that they can speak for the Lord and speak forth the Lord to minister and dispense Christ into others...for building up the organic Body of Christ.²⁰⁴

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 7 — DAY 5

Scripture Reading

Rom. 1:14-15 I am debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to foolish; so, for my part, I am ready to announce the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

The God-ordained Way Carried Out by Vital Groups

We saw that [the] God-ordained way revealed in the Scriptures is of four steps: [begetting, nourishing, perfecting, and prophesying]...To take the God-ordained way is by these four steps, but how do we carry them out?...The way to carry out these four steps is by the vital groups.²⁰⁵ The vital groups should be composed of people who are overcomers.²⁰⁶ This is the reason that the groups are called the “vital groups.”²⁰⁷ With all the four steps of the God-ordained way mentioned above, we need to pay the price.

Now we need to consider how we can be vital. First, we must have a time to contact the Lord. Then we will be enlightened by Him to see all our defects, mistakes, wrongdoings, shortcomings, trespasses, and transgressions. We should make a thorough confession to the Lord to have a thorough forgiveness and a thorough clearance of all these negative things before Him. Then we should ask the Lord to give us a companion with whom we can labor in the gospel. We should not say that we do not have the time. Everybody is busy. We have to redeem and budget our time. We should reserve two hours every week for contacting sinners by many ways.²⁰⁸ We may contact people by personal visiting, by telephone, and by written correspondence. There are many ways to contact people.²⁰⁹ Then we can get some saved and baptized to be our spiritual babes. We have to feed them, perfect them, and build them up to prophesy. We must pay the price to take the biblical way, the God-ordained way in the New Testament.²¹⁰

Paying Off Our Debt of the Gospel

As the members of the vital groups, we need to pay off our debt of the gospel...Paul said in Romans 1 that he was a debtor to those who had not heard the gospel from him (vv. 14-15).²¹¹

Thousands of people in our localities were chosen and predestinated by our Father God, but without any prayer, without any concern by God’s children

for His chosen ones, He will not save anyone. He cannot save anyone until we pray. In principle, all of us have been saved through someone’s prayer. I was saved through my sister’s prayer.

We do not need to pray long prayers...The Lord desires to hear our genuine prayer, without our explanations and teachings. We should cry to the Lord in a simple and direct way for the salvation of all our relatives, one by one. This is the way to clear up our debt of the gospel with our relatives, our first circle of responsibility. Our neighbors should be considered as our second circle, and our classmates and colleagues as our third circle. The Lord told His disciples that they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem (the inner circle), in Judea (the second circle), in Samaria (the third circle), and to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8).²¹²

Preparing a Record Book

In order to pray for people in a proper way, you should keep a record book...You have to ask God specifically for a few names...A few names will spontaneously come to your mind. You will have a feeling for them, and you will want them to be saved first.

A record book should have the following columns: The first column should be a number; the second column, the date; and the third column, the name. This will remind us of the number we have assigned to a person and the date we began to pray for him. The fourth column should also be a date—the date when the person is saved...One should persist and not give up once a name is in the book...It is not certain when a person will be saved. Some are saved in a year, and some in two to three months. Perhaps one or two of them may prove to be very difficult, but in the end they will still be saved.²¹³

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 7 — DAY 6

Scripture Reading

Rom. 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers.

Acts 4:31 And when they had so besought,...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

Much Prayer Needed

For the preaching of the gospel we need much prayer ([Rom.] 1:9). We need to pray for souls and to pray for the gospel. In preaching the gospel, prayer is more needful than any kind of effort. If we are prayerless, we will be fruitless in the gospel preaching.²¹⁴

The Lord Jesus said, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and him who comes to Me I shall by no means cast out” (John 6:37). According to Acts 2:47, the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. The first thing that we must do is ask God for people, asking Him to give men to the Lord Jesus and to add them to the church. In order for men to be saved, we need to ask God and implore Him. It is very difficult to deal with man’s heart. It is not easy for us to turn a heart toward the Lord. We must first go to God and pray for these people, asking God to bind the strong man (Luke 11:21-22). Afterwards, we can talk to them at length. We have to present these people one by one to the Lord and pray for them fervently before we can effectively lead them to Christ.²¹⁵

Preaching the Gospel by Speaking the Word

Based upon our prayer, we need to speak....In order to speak, however, you need the proper material. In 1980 the Living Stream Ministry published Gospel Outlines, containing two hundred sixty-six outlines for gospel messages. These outlines cover God, man, the fall, Satan, redemption, justification, and many other topics. The outlines are quite detailed. This book will provide you with something to say.²¹⁶ [In addition], the booklet we have published entitled The Mystery of Human Life really works. Thousands have been saved through this booklet.²¹⁷ You should fill yourself up with all the materials related to the truth of the gospel.

There are many gospel truths in the Bible. The apostle Paul had a great deal to speak because the Old Testament was a rich source of light and truth to him. You have to learn the truth as Paul did. When you are equipped with the truth, you will be like a doctor who has a dispensary full of medicine. When you contact a young person, you will know what medicine he needs. The medicine is the word of the truth. However, do not wait until you know everything. Start speaking right away. There is a principle in the Bible that the more you speak, the more light you will receive.

Before we speak, however, we have to pray. We must fulfill our priestly service by praying to bring people to the Lord. We should put them on our breast and shoulders (Exo. 28:29-30), bearing them in love and in power into the presence of the Lord. After we pray in this manner, we will be authorized and filled with the word. The word is our authority to go to the people as kings. We are both priests and kings (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6)....Firstly, we bring sinners to the Lord, and then we bring the Lord to sinners. When we go to the Lord with sinners by praying, we are priests. When we come to sinners with the Lord by preaching, we are the kings.

If you do not pray and speak the holy word from the Bible, your speaking will not have any weight....Weighty speaking comes only from prayer and the use of the holy Word. You must be filled with prayer and the Word. Then you will be saturated with the Word. Eventually you will be the embodiment of the Word. Our being needs to be constituted and composed with the Word. The Word should be in every fiber of our being....The Word is the Spirit and the Word is life (John 6:63). Only the Spirit and life are powerful.²¹⁸

Enlightenment and inspiration:

WEEK 7 — HYMN

Hymns, #912

1. Christ to minister is service
Both to God and others too,
Christ, the surplus, e'er supplying,
Off'ring Him as service true.
1. Christ to minister is service
Both to God and others too,
Christ, the surplus, e'er supplying,
Off'ring Him as service true.
2. As the Israelites did offer
From the surplus of their land,
Thus some produce reaped of Jesus
Must be in our serving hand.
3. We on Christ, as land, must labor,
Harvest Him for all our fare,
Tasting Him to overflowing,
Christ with others we may share.
4. Holding Christ, as members growing,
Each his function must observe;
Christ receiving, Christ partaking,
To His Body Christ we serve.
5. Fellowship and testimony,
Ministry and worship too,
In all helps and ministrations
Christ is all our service true.

Hymns, #913

1. Serve and work within the Body,
This the Lord doth signify;
For His purpose is the Body,
And with it we must comply.

1. Serve and work within the Body,
Never independently;
As the members of the Body,
Functioning relatedly.
2. As the members we've been quickened
Not as individuals free;
We must always serve together,
All related mutually.
3. Living stones, we're built together
And a house for God must be,
As the holy priesthood serving,
In a blessed harmony.
4. Thus we must be built together,
In position minister;
For the basis for our service
Is the Body character.
5. In our ministry and service,
From the Body, our supply;
If detached and isolated,
Out of function we will die.
6. 'Tis by serving in the Body
Riches of the Head we share;
'Tis by functioning as members
Christ's full measure we will bear.
7. To the Head fast holding ever,
That we may together grow,
From the Head supplies incoming
Thru us to the Body flow.
8. Lord, anew we give our bodies;
9. May we be transformed to prove
All Thy will, to know Thy Body,
And therein to serve and move.

“Rise! Preach the Gospel Now!”

(tune: Hymns, #921)

Rise! Preach the gospel now!
Rescue the fallen!
Lo, millions perishing, daily in pain!
Quench not your heart of love,
Count not possessions:
Rise! Preach the gospel while moments remain!

Rise! Preach the gospel now!
Rescue the fallen!
Your heart of love for them,
Can you restrain?

“Bringing In the Sheaves”

1. Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve;
Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves;

1. Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.
2. Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,
Fearing neither clouds nor winter’s chilling breeze;
By and by the harvest and the labor ended,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves;
3. Going forth with weeping, sowing for the Master,
Tho’ the loss sustained, our spirit often grieves;
When our weeping’s over, He will bid us welcome,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves;