

## WEEK 9—DAY 1 THE WORD OF LIFE AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (1)

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.

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.

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. [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.

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.

How was your calling on the Lord over this past weekend? With any habit it takes some time to develop it. Practice everyday to call on the Lord to breath Him in.

## WEEK 9—DAY 2 THE WORD OF LIFE AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (1)

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

### *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!"



## WEEK 9—DAY 3 THE WORD OF LIFE AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (1)

1 Peter 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.

2 Corinthians 3:6b For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

### *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.

## WEEK 9—DAY 4 THE WORD OF LIFE AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (1)

Jeremiah 15:16a Your words were found and I ate them...

Matthew 4:4 ...man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.

### *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 tastel / 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.



## WEEK 9—DAY 5 THE WORD OF LIFE AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (1)

**Ephesians 6:1-18** 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. [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 [parents]...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.

## WEEK 9—DAY 6 THE WORD OF LIFE AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (1)

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

[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.

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.

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WEEK 10—DAY 1 THE WORD OF LIFE  
AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (2)

2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed...  
John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life...the words which I have  
spoken to you are spirit and are 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].

*Tune: When Johnny comes marching home*

*Breath by breath we breathe Lord. Amen, Amen.  
Breath by breath He quickens us. Amen, Amen,  
Yes, He breathes out and we breathe in,  
And deeply flows His life within.  
For we've all learned how to deeply breathe the Lord.*

WEEK 10—DAY 2 THE WORD OF LIFE  
AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (2)

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes  
to Me shall by no means hunger...  
John 6:57 He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

*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.

**BREAKFAST**

All the physical things in nature have their spiritual significance. For the health of our bodies, we need to eat a good breakfast. In the same way, for our spirit, we need to have the best spiritual breakfast. When we wake up in the morning we should call on the Lord. The first thing we should think about is the Lord. After that we should enjoy some of the Lord's words.



**WEEK 10—DAY 3 THE WORD OF LIFE  
AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (2)**

**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 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.

**MODERN WEAPON**

We need to learn to use the telephone to...keep morning watch. Today the telephone is a "modern weapon" we can use. Anyone who is not having a morning watch with the Lord is defeated....practice having morning watch with others on the phone ....do this with others six days a week.

**WEEK 10—DAY 4 THE WORD OF LIFE  
AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (2)**

**John 15:5** I [Jesus] am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

**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.

***When We Take His Word into Us, Having the Lord  
Abiding in Us and Being Filled with the Spirit (1)***

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.

**DON'T GO THE WAY OF FEELINGS**

Let me warn you to beware of excitement when you contact the Lord. Don't go the way of feelings. Whether you feel high or low, just come to contact your Lord for ten minutes every morning. Do not allow yourself to be played upon, directed, and even fooled, by your untrustworthy feelings.



WEEK 10—DAY 5 THE WORD OF LIFE  
AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (2)

Colossians 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 (2)*

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.

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WEEK 10—DAY 6 THE WORD OF LIFE  
AND PRAY-READING THE WORD (2)

Ephesians 5:18, 25-26 Be filled in spirit....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.

*Learning to Pray-read with Our Spirit*

When we strike [the match]...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.

*Accomplishes a Work of Transformation*

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...[and] 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, "O 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.



## WEEK 11—DAY 1 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (1)

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

## WEEK 11—DAY 2 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (1)

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

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. 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. 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.



## WEEK 11—DAY 3 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (1)

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

[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]. 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. 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.

## WEEK 11—DAY 4 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (1)

Deuteronomy 12:30 says, "Be careful...lest you seek after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods?" John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

This (Deuteronomy 12:30) shows us that we should not even inquire how the Gentiles worship their gods. Some who are curious like to study how the nations worship and serve their gods. But God forbids us to inquire about such matters. If we inquire about them, the next thing we will do is worship their gods. Hence, we are forbidden from being curious.

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.

We must deal with this matter thoroughly. Otherwise, we will be distracted to follow another way. We are those who serve not in the flesh but in spirit. God is seeking those who serve Him in spirit, not in the flesh. God is Spirit, not an image. If all the brothers and sisters take care of this matter, they will not fall into the hands of Roman Catholicism in the future.

In the Bible, the first thing one has to do in dealing with this past is to reject all former idols. We must turn away from idols and wait for the coming of the Son of God. We should not even keep any picture of the Lord Jesus. Such pictures are not the real image of the Lord Jesus; they are worthless. In the museums in Rome, there are over two thousand different images of the Lord Jesus. All of them represent the imagination of the artists. In some countries artists often look for people who resemble their idea of Jesus and then pay them to pose for portraits of Jesus. This is blasphemous. Our God is a jealous God, and He will not tolerate such things among us. There should not be any kind of superstition.



## WEEK K 11—DAY 5—CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (1)

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

In my youth I had the impression that Americans did not have any idols. There were many idols in China, but my concept was that the United States was a land free of idols. But when I came to this country as an older person, I realized that there are idols everywhere. The idols in China were outward, but the idols in the United States are hidden, concealed. In their intense love of pleasure and entertainment, many in this country are worshipping idols. It is true to say that the United States is a land of entertainment. When many pursue certain forms of worldly amusement, they act without restraint, seeming even to forget their own names. In this way, their pursuit of entertainment becomes the worship of idols. The Lord's Day was ordained by God for His people to worship Him. But what do most people do on this day of the week? In one way or other, they worship idols. How many genuine worshippers are there of the true God? Surely many more people worship idols today than worship the true God.

Furthermore, we would never make an image to worship as an idol. We would make neither visible images nor invisible ones. Sometimes we make invisible images in our imagination or in our daydreams. For example, someone may think that in the future he will become a very wealthy doctor, a millionaire who owns vast properties. This daydreaming causes him to make an invisible idol, an invisible image. Then he may try his best to fulfill this dream. This is the worshipping of an invisible image.

It is easy for young people especially to make idols in their imagination. A brother may dream about the wonderful young woman he will marry someday. Then he may search for someone to be the fulfillment of his dream. When he comes to the church meetings, he may be seeking the perfect wife he has in mind. This dream is this brother's invisible idol. If we walk according to the Spirit, we shall condemn any such dreams. However, those who do not walk according to the Spirit may spend much time lingering in their dreams and enjoying them. By walking according to the Spirit, we spontaneously fulfill the second commandment.

## WEEK 11—DAY 6 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (1)

1 John 5:21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.  
Philippians 3:19 Whose end is destruction, whose god is their stomach, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

The first characteristic of the Christian life is that we turn to God from idols. Some people claim to be atheists. They say that they do not believe in God or worship Him. Actually, every human being worships something. Everyone has a spirit, a spiritual stomach. In our physical stomach we are hungry for food, and in our spiritual stomach we are hungry for God. We would not have a physical stomach if it were not necessary for us to eat in order to live. Our spirit, our spiritual stomach, is for worshipping God, contacting Him, receiving Him, and containing Him. Both our physical stomach and our spiritual stomach were created by God. During the day we must eat a number of times to satisfy the hunger of our physical stomach. In the same way, everyone worships something in order to satisfy the hunger in his spiritual stomach, the spirit. For this reason, all people worship something. Whether we worship a false god or the true God is another question. The point we are making here is that everyone, including atheists, worships something. Whether the food we eat is proper or improper food, we all eat some kind of food. In the same principle, everyone worships something, even if it is a false god.

Do you know what atheists worship? They worship themselves, for they are their own god. In Philippians 3:19 Paul speaks of those whose god is their belly. Others worship education, fame, or position, all of which are idols. God alone is the proper object of worship. Any person, matter, or thing that we worship other than God is an idol.

*Topics for New Believers*, Volume 1 and *Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, Vol. 48, pp. 34-37, *Life-study of 1 Thessalonians*, p. 16; *Life-study of 1 Corinthians*, p. 254, by Witness Lee and Watchman Nee and published by Living Stream Ministry, 2431 W. La Palma, Anaheim, CA, 92801. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



## WEEK 12—DAY 1 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (2)

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.

### *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.

[Today many movies, video games, songs, books, and comic books contain demonic things such as sorcery and magic. As Christians we should have nothing to do with these things. To read or listen to these things is to "eat" them. Satan's diet is popular today just as in Daniel's day. Eventually, what we digest becomes us; it becomes our very constitution. We should pray that the Lord would strengthen us to "eat" (read and listen to) things that will constitute us with God. We should not read, listen to, watch or contact persons or things related to Satan's realm. If we have these things in our homes we should get rid of them right away. The Christians in the New Testament burned their books of magic. Their burning of these things was a testimony concerning what the Lord had done in them to separate them from Satan's kingdom and what the Lord will do with Satan and all things related to him. The believers testified that they were a holy and undefiled people unto God, who loved and worshipped only Him.]

## WEEK 12—DAY 2 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (2)

Deuteronomy 18:9-14 When you enter the land which Jehovah your God is giving you, you shall not learn to do things according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any....who employs sorcery, or cast spells...For everyone who does these things is an abomination to Jehovah.

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.

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.

[Set aside some time this week to thoroughly go through your belongings. We should ask the Lord about all the things we have. We shouldn't love anything more than the Lord. Here is a simple prayer, "Lord supply me and attract me to Himself. I want to love You more than anything. Make me willing to let anything go that would frustrate my relationship with You. Lord, I do love You."

Write in the day and the time when you will go through your belongings: Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Hour/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some examples of demonic and dirty things that need to be destroyed.

1. Ornaments and clothing with the image of the dragon.
2. "Sacred" writings of heathen religions.
3. Items, such as books, comic books, movies, music or board and video games involving demons, dragons, horoscopes, magic and sorcery.
4. Things related to gambling.
5. Utensils related to drinking alcohol and pipes for smoking.
6. Improper and obscene books and pornographic pictures.]



## WEEK 12—DAY 3 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (2)

Leviticus 13:52 For he shall burn the garment...for it is a malignant leprosy; it shall be burned in the fire.

The garments of the lepers in Leviticus 13 and 14 are a good illustration. Garments which have become leprous and cannot be washed must be burned. However, those which can be washed should be washed and reused. If the style of our clothes is unbecoming, we can alter them. Some garments may be too short, and we can lengthen them; others are odd-looking, and we can make them more inconspicuous. Some objects cannot be salvaged; they have the element of sin in them, in which case we have to burn them. Those that can be sold should be sold and the money should be given to the poor.

A new believer must pay attention to the matter of clothing. If you have any doubt about any of your clothes, you should bring them to the priest for examination. The Lord is the High Priest today. You must ask Him whether or not you can wear this clothing. Do not think that this is a small matter. Clothing is a big issue to a new believer. If you do not know which clothes are plagued with leprosy, you should bring them to the Priest (the Lord) and let the Lord tell you whether they are plagued.

[Today many young people wear clothing such as T-shirts and sweatshirts that have words, pictures or drawings that are not becoming of a Christian. Some garments may be too short. You should bring each piece of your clothing to the Lord ask the Him to tell you whether you should wear it, alter it or get rid of it.]

## WEEK 12—DAY 4 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (2)

Romans 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.

New believers must present everything in their wardrobe piece by piece to the Lord and pray over each item. Do not expect others to come and tell you what is good and what is not. You must bring everything to the Lord yourself and let the Lord judge you. You must ask the Lord, "I have become a believer now. Is this clothing all right? Is this clothing right?" Some items of clothing have to be thrown away, while others must be altered. Let the Lord teach you what to do. Some garments cannot be altered at all. You must decide for yourself whether sin is involved in a certain garment. Your clothing has much to do with you. This matter must be dealt with soberly.

If every new believer will go through all his belongings thoroughly, he will have a very good start...Once we learn this lesson, we will never forget it for the rest of our life.

[Have you taken the time to go through your belongings with the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_]

What items has the Lord touched you about?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

We have to ask the Lord to show us how wonderful He is. How can we drop other things unless we see something, even someone who is much more excellent. "Lord open my spiritual eyes. I want to see how wonderful You are. I want You to be my treasure and my first love. Capture my heart from other loves."]



## WEEK 12—DAY 5 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (2)

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.

### *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. Due to this act of restoration, Zaccheus had a testimony before man. This was the basis of his testimony. This sets a good example, disclosing to us the way to deal with material indebtedness.

Brothers and sisters, did you wrong anyone in any way before you became a believer? Do you owe anyone anything? Have you taken things home which belong to others? Have you taken anything 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.

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.

*Topics for New Believers*, Volume 1, pp. 49-51 and *Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, Vol. 48 p. 40; Vol. 50, pp. 603-613, By Witness Lee and Watchman Nee and published by Living Stream Ministry, 2431 W. La Palma, Anaheim, CA, 92801. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

## WEEK 12—DAY 6 CLEARANCE OF THE PAST (2)

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

### *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....students; rather, it means that we can no longer be....students as we were in the past. Neither does it mean that from now on our (rooms)....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). 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.



## WEEK 13—DAY 1 CONSECRATION

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

2 Corinthians 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.

### *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. 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.

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.

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.

This week see if you can memorize *Hymn #473*. Sing verse 1 today.

## WEEK 13—DAY 2 CONSECRATION

2 Corinthians 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.

### *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."

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.

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## WEEK 13—DAY 3 CONSECRATION

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

Leviticus 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.

*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, /When doubt and fear are gone.*  
*Hymns 473 v. 3*

## WEEK 13—DAY 4 CONSECRATION

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

### *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, untended, 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.



## WEEK 13—DAY 5 CONSECRATION

Romans 6:13 Present yourselves to God...

Leviticus 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 (1)*

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 has 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.

## WEEK 13—DAY 6 CONSECRATION

2 Corinthians 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.

### *The Result of Consecration (2)*

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.

### *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.



## WEEK 14—DAY 1: PREPARING TO BE A USEFUL VESSEL

Acts 22:3 I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia but brought up in this city and trained at the feet of Gamaliel...

Matthew 13:52 And He said to them, For this reason every scribe disciplined to the kingdom of the heavens is like a householder who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old.

Saul was born in Tarsus, a highly cultured city, and received his Greek education at the university there. In 22:3 he says that he studied "at the feet of Gamaliel, having been trained according to the strictness of the law." This indicates that he received his religious education from Gamaliel, a great rabbi. No doubt, Saul was a scholar in both the Greek and Hebrew languages, and he was trained in both Greek culture and in Hebrew religion. Furthermore, he was a Roman citizen. (*Life-study of Acts*, p. 203)

If a person desires to be useful, he needs to receive an education for twenty-five years and then learn by his experiences for another twenty-five years until he reaches the age of fifty. Then in the third twenty-five years he should endeavor to serve and contribute to society. If he lives beyond the age of seventy-five, within him there will be many riches. He will have been educated, and he will have the experiences and the supply. He will then be very useful. (*The Living Needed for Building Up the Small Group Meetings*, p. 108)

Paul was not a Galilean fisherman. He was a scribe who had been disciplined into the kingdom. Therefore, he had a rich store, a rich treasure.

The Lord's recovery needs not only the unlearned Galileans, but also the scribes. After the Lord spoke the parables of the kingdom to the Galilean fishermen, He spoke another parable regarding the scribe disciplined into the kingdom of the heavens. The Lord seemed to be saying, "You Galilean fishermen must listen to this. You are not adequate to carry out God's New Testament economy. I can use you to make the turn, but...I need some scribes. I need one like Saul of Tarsus who studied at the feet of Gamaliel." In this matter we see the Lord's wisdom. Young people, you need to go to the best colleges and earn a degree. Then you will be scribes. Today the Lord needs not only the Galilean fishermen to make the turn, He also needs the scribes. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 491-492)

## WEEK 14—DAY 2: PREPARING TO BE A USEFUL VESSEL

Acts 7:22 Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in his words and works.

Exodus 3:2 And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thornbush. And when he looked, there was the thornbush, burning with fire; but the thornbush was not consumed.

Consider also the example of Moses. Moses was born of a Jewish mother, but he was brought up in the royal family in Egypt. Acts 7:22 says, "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in his words and works." He was a scholar in Egypt. Paul was a scholar of religious knowledge, and Moses was a scholar of secular knowledge.

In Moses' time, no one could have understood God's plan for the tabernacle like he could, because no one else had gained all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Moses acquired the wisdom of the Egyptians before he was forty years of age. After gaining it, he thought that he was qualified to deliver his people out of the hands of the Egyptians (Acts 7:23-25), but he failed in this endeavor. After Moses fled from Egypt, he lived in the wilderness for forty years. By the time he was eighty years of age, he considered himself to be a dead man. In his Psalm, Psalm 90, Moses said that people may expect to live to be seventy, and that the stronger ones may live to be eighty (v.10)...As Moses was dying there in the wilderness, he one day saw the burning bush (Exo. 3:2). Although the bush was burning, it was not consumed. In the vision of the burning bush God seemed to be telling Moses, "Moses, I will make you burning, but I will not burn you. I don't need you to be the fuel. When you were forty years of age, you had a great deal of fuel, but now you are old, dried up, and have no more fuel. I have come to make you burning"...Later, as Moses led the children of Israel in the wilderness, what he had learned in the royal palace became useful. Because no one else had all the wisdom of the Egyptians, no one else could have done the work he did in the wilderness. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 1101-1102)



## WEEK 14—DAY 3: PREPARING TO BE A USEFUL VESSEL

**Matthew 25:23** His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things.

**Luke 16:10a** He who is faithful in the least is faithful also in much.

As those who are waiting for the Lord's coming back, we must have a proper living without being snared by anything. Our heart is on nothing but the Lord Jesus. However, this does not mean that we do not study...and take care of daily chores, such as cleaning. Do not say, "Why must I keep my clothes neat and clean? It is a waste of time and money to do the laundry. The Lord doesn't care for the flesh; He only cares for my spirit. As long as my spirit is clean, everything is fine." I have the assurance that many young people still have this attitude. They do not even make their beds in the morning, considering it to be a waste of their time. As long as they have a place to lie down, they are satisfied, thinking that they can spend their time reading the Bible or spiritual books. They do not know why they must work to keep their room neat, clean, and orderly. Their sloppiness may delay the Lord's coming back. The Lord may tell them, "You must learn to make your bed early in the morning, comb your hair, and shine your shoes. Then you must arrange all your books in a good order. Don't put the New Testament before the Old Testament."....We must learn to be diligent, keeping everything in good order. However, we should not dream about those things at night. Rather, when the Lord says, "Behold, I come quickly," we must be able to forget everything. Some keep their things in good order, but this becomes a snare to them. This is a test to determine where we are. We are here as the testimony of Jesus. We are normal people living a normal life, but nothing of this life can touch us. We are not sloppy, idle, lazy, or careless. Yet, nothing in this world has any control over us.

What is the meaning of rapture? It is to be taken into the Lord's presence. If you would be taken into His presence, you must be in His presence today. Much of your praising and fellowshiping may not be in His presence, but may simply be according to...your preference and taste. When you desire to fellowship, the Lord may say, "Get to work or study." (*Life-study of Revelation*, pp. 344-345)

## WEEK 14—DAY 4: PREPARING TO BE A USEFUL VESSEL

**Proverbs 1:5** That the wise man may hear and increase in learning, And he who has understanding may acquire sound counsel.

**Proverbs 10:4** A slack hand causes poverty; But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

I encourage all the young people to get a college degree. Do not make spirituality an excuse for not studying. Rather, study more diligently than the secular students, get the highest grades, and go on for advanced degrees. Do not stop with one PhD, but get two or three PhDs. Also learn to speak a number of other languages. Gain the "Tyrian" skills and the "Egyptian" knowledge. Become a doctor in biology, medicine, or nuclear physics. But then let the "Tyrian" father die. I have told you how I encouraged my grandson to study medicine. Now I will tell you what is truly on my heart. After he finishes medical school, I will say, "Forget about being a doctor and use your medical training to interpret the Bible." His medical training will make him very useful. Young people, gain all the up-to-date knowledge, graduate from college, and then say goodbye to your "Tyrian" father. Graduate from seminary and then say, "Seminary, thank you and goodbye. I have nothing more to do with you, but I will use the skill I have gained from you." (*Life-study of Genesis*, p. 1103)

Approximately ten years ago, many of the English speaking young people among us had an attitude of not wanting to study. They thought that the Lord would come back in a few years and that even if a person had very little education, he could still make a living. They thought that there was no need to be highly educated, and many did not even care to finish high school. According to their concept, they did not need to waste their time on studying. They felt that it would be sufficient to use all of their time to pray-read and fellowship with one another...In order to make a living, the brothers were content to do some gardening, swimming pool cleaning, or carpentry....I told [them] that their attitude was wrong, and that they needed to abandon their wrong concept and study diligently to receive an adequate education, even the highest education. (*The Living Needed for Building Up the Small Group Meetings*, pp. 108-109)



## WEEK 14—DAY 5: PREPARING TO BE A USEFUL VESSEL

1 Kings 15:18 And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebaites did fashion them, and prepared the timber and the stones to build the house.

There is a need in the Lord's recovery today for those with the highest education. Young people, you must endeavor to gain the best education. Arrange your daily schedule in this way: seven and a half hours for sleep, one and a half hours for eating, one hour for exercise, eight hours for study, and six hours for spiritual things. If you expend your energy in this way, by the time you are thirty you will be able to begin your ministry like the Lord Jesus did (Luke 3:23). Continue your studies until you are thirty. If many take this way, we shall have no shortage of...[those who can build up the church and others].

Do not get married too soon. I do not like to see the brothers getting married before the age of twenty-five. Do not be burdened down too soon with marriage and children. Rather, use your time and energy for studying....Furthermore, I do not like to see the sisters getting married before the age of twenty-two. If the sisters marry too early and have children too soon, they may be overburdened and even spoiled. Follow the schedule I recommend until you are twenty-five years old and see what will be the issue. This surely is good for God's recovery.

Do not stop your schooling too soon. You should get a master's degree, or preferably a Ph.D. All the church people must be learned ones. We are neither ignorant nor undereducated. Rather, we would have the highest education. We would acquire all the wisdom of the "Egyptians," but we would not work for the "Egyptians" - we would work for the holy tabernacle. We should be able to say, "I know medicine and nuclear science, but I am not working for that. I am working for the building up of the church. I have learned a trade, but I am not occupied with this. I am building the pillars for the temple of my God." (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 1104-1105)

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## WEEK 14—DAY 6: PREPARING TO BE A USEFUL VESSEL

Matthew 24:40-42 At that time two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left. Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes.

To be taken means to be raptured before the great tribulation. This rapture is a sign of the Lord's coming and a sign to the Jews. It is very interesting to see that the two men are working in the field and that the two women are grinding at the mill. Both working in the field and grinding are for eating. There is a difference between our eating and the eating of the worldly people. The worldly people study and work, and we also study and work. The worldly people, however, have been drugged. But we have not been drugged. Rather, we are simply fulfilling our duty to make a living. We are not for eating, drinking, and marriage; on the contrary, we maintain our existence in order to take the way of the cross to fulfill God's purpose. Our concern is not for our education, employment, or business.

When some of the young people hear this, they may say, "How glad we are to hear this word! Let's not care any more for study or for work. Let us spend all our time praying and having fellowship with one another." Such an attitude is wrong. Remember, according to verse 40 the brothers were farming, and according to verse 41 the sisters were grinding. Grinding grain is very hard work. This indicates that we Christians should not take easy jobs. We need to work hard in order to make a living. The eating and drinking in verse 38 is worldly, but the farming and grinding in verses 40 and 41 are holy. If the ones taken were not doing something holy, they could not have been raptured.

We should not have the attitude that it is good enough...to graduate from high school and work in a menial job. To be in the field means that we care that our children are fed well and educated in the best way. We should not be those who love the world and work to make money for ourselves. But we should be those who work diligently to earn money for our family. As those with a fallen human nature, it is easy for us to excuse ourselves for not spending so much time in the field or at the grinding. If you do this, you will not be raptured. I repeat, you will be raptured while you are working in the field or grinding out the grain. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 738, 740)



## WEEK 15—DAY 1 THE BLESSING OR THE CURSE

Ephesians 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, That it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.

### *God's promised blessing*

"That it may be well with you" is to be prosperous in material blessings and to live in a peaceful situation. By obeying and honoring your parents, "you will know how to be wise and how to behave. You will know what is the right way to have a normal life." (*Life-study Genesis*, p. 444)

"Live long on the earth" is to have longevity, to live long physically. "When a man honors his parents, he shall be blessed and shall live long on the earth. Many die early, probably because they did not honor their parents. Some brothers are at odds with their parents. Hence, they are often sick. Not until they become obedient will they get well." (*Authority and Submission*, p. 57)

### *To honor our parents*

"Honor your father and mother" To honor our parents is one of the first five commandments related to God showing us that our parents represent God as the source of our human life and should be honored even as we honor God.

Parents are God's deputy authority over us. "Let every person be subject to the authorities over him, for there is not authority except from God. So then he who resists the authority opposes God's ordination and those who oppose will receive judgment to themselves." (Rom. 13:1-2)

Parents help protect and safeguard us from the world, sin, and the flesh by their restrictions and limitations. "Keep the commandment of your father...do not reject the teaching of your mother...it will guide you...it will watch over you...to keep you from the evil..." (Prov. 6:20, 22, 24)

Parents help train us (in matters such as character) that we might be useful to society, to the Lord and to the church. "Parents train up a child according to the way he should go." (Prov. 22:6)

## WEEK 15—DAY 2 THE BLESSING OR THE CURSE

2 Timothy 3:2 For men will be lovers of self...boasters, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, unthankful...

Romans 1:30, 32 ...arrogant, boasters...disobedient to parents...those who practice such things are worthy of death...

### *The seriousness and sinfulness of today's rebellious, disobeying, despising and unthankful young people*

"For men will be lovers of self...boasters, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, unthankful..." (2 Tim. 3:2) "...arrogant, boasters...disobedient to parents...those who practice such things are worthy of death..." (Rom. 1:30-31) "It is a very serious thing for a person to despise his parents. To despise our parents is to despise our source, our origin, especially when we realize that our origin is not actually our human father, but God Himself" (*Life-study of Exodus*, p. 596) "To honor is different from obeying. Obedience refers to an action, whereas honor denotes an attitude." (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 520) "Instead of honoring our parents, we may despise them. This is sinful." (*Life-study of John*, p. 54)

### *God's curse for those disobeying and despising their parents is the loss of the blessing of material supply*

Cain: "And now you are cursed from the ground. When you till the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you. You will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." (Gen. 4:11a, 12) Cain rejected his parents' speaking concerning God's way of salvation. Cain's own way of worship was rejected by God. Then out of jealousy he killed Abel, his righteous brother. Cain went out of the presence of the Lord and became a vagrant (a homeless person, with no rest, no goal and no satisfaction) and a wanderer.

Ham: "And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. ...Cursed be Canaan! A servant of servants." (Gen. 9:22, 25a) "Whether or not your father is right or wrong is a personal matter. Do not forget that he is in the position of God's deputy authority on the earth. If you expose his failure, you will involve yourself with God's government." (*Life-study of Genesis*, p. 446)



## WEEK 15—Day 3 THE BLESSING OR THE CURSE

Ephesians 6:2-3 Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, That it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.

### *God's curse for those disobeying and despising their parents is the shortening of their physical life*

"Those who fail to honor their parents commit suicide in a gradual way." (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 52)

**Samson:** "But his father and mother said to him, *Is there no woman among the daughters of your brothers or among all my people, that you must go and get a woman of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said to his father, 'Get her for me, for she pleases me.'*" (Judges 14:3) Samson cared for what he thought was good for himself, but he would not be restricted by the Word of God or by his parents' exhortation to marry one of God's people. He was deceived. He became a pitiful penniless blind slave who died a miserable early death of suicide.

**Absalom:** "So he (*Jacob*) took three staves in his hand and thrust them through Absalom's heart while he was still alive." (2 Sam. 18:14) Absalom rebelled against his father David and suffered the curse of death.

### *Examples of young people who honored and obeyed their parents (1)*

**Adam's son—Abel:** He listened to his parents and received God's salvation.

**Noah's sons—Shem and Japheth:** "And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark..." (Gen. 7:7a) "And Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father...blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem...May God enlarge Japheth..." (Gen. 9:23, 26-27) Shem and Japheth obeyed their father and entered into the ark, the salvation that Noah had built, and thus they escaped death and enjoyed the blessing of long life. They also covered their father's failure and received God's material blessing.

## WEEK 15—DAY 4 THE BLESSING OR THE CURSE

2 Timothy 1:5 Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded dwells also in you.  
Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

### *Examples of young people who honored and obeyed their parents (2)*

**Jacob's son—Joseph:** He honored and cared for his family. He was restricted and trained while in prison. Then at the proper time, when he was prepared he was released and became the ruler of the most prosperous nation on earth.

**Eunice's son—Timothy:** "Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded dwells also in you." (2 Tim. 1:5) Timothy received the Word of God from his mother and grandmother to become one of the most useful vessels to the Lord, to apostle Paul and to the churches.

### *How do we honor and obey our parents (1)*

**In the Lord:** "The phrase 'in the Lord' indicates obedience to the parents by being one with the Lord." It also indicates that this should not be done by self effort but by the Lord." (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, p. 1694)

"And He (*the Lord Jesus*) went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them" (Luke 2:51). Because the Lord passed through the process of death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus is the Spirit. His fine humanity with its proper submission is available to us. He knows what it is to be a teen-ager. The Lord, as a child, then as a young person and then as an adult was in submission in His poor home for 30 years. He was satisfied to stay in his home with his family. He was happy to labor and care for his family. For 30 years he was building up His humanity. If we will open to Him and the Word of God He will impart His proper humanity into us.



**WEEK 15—Day 5 THE BLESSING OR THE CURSE**

Ephesians 5:18-21 And do not be drunk with wine...but be filled in spirit, Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord, Giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father, Being subject to one another in the fear of Christ:

***How do we honor and obey [be subject to] our parents (2)***

***1. By being daily nourished spiritually***

"Be filled in spirit...being subject to one another." (Eph. 5:19 & 21) "Those who are filled with Christ will be filled with submission." (*Authority and Submission*, p. 40)

In the wilderness, those who weren't nourished by the morning manna and the water from the smitten rock were complainers and rebellious. Christ is our submission and our honoring to our parents—we can eat Him as our daily manna and drink Him. On the cross He was the rock smitten for us that living water would come out to satisfy us. Now we just need to call on His name and speak to Him to receive Him as the water of life!

"Many children of God lead a sick life, not because they have spiritual problems, but because they rise up too late. Many children of God have no lack in consecration, zeal, or love, but they cannot live a normal Christian life because they rise up too late. Do not think that this is a small matter." (*Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, Volume 48, Chapter 11) Have you discovered how rebellious and complaining you are toward your parents when you haven't eaten a good spiritual breakfast in the morning?

"If there is no prayer, and no willingness to know God's will, how can there be submission to authority?" (*Authority and Submission*, p. 11)

***If we live and walk in the Spirit***

"But if we live Christ, if we live and walk in the Spirit of life, spontaneously and unconsciously we shall honor our parents." (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, p. 255)

**WEEK 15—DAY 6 THE BLESSING OR THE CURSE**

Ephesians 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, That it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth."

***The extent of our submission and obedience***

"If parents ask their children to go to places that the children do not like to go to, and if there is no sin involved in the matter, we have a borderline case. Submission is absolute. But obedience is another matter. If your parents force you to go, then you have no choice but to go. But if they do not force you to do it, you do not have to go. If all children have this attitude, God will release them in their environments." (*Authority and Submission*, p. 98)

"I hope that all the young people in the Lord's recovery will honor their parents and not offend them. This does not mean, however, that they should follow their parents if their parents require them to deny the Lord or to worship idols. The Word of God must be our standard. As long as their parents do not require anything that is contrary to the standard of the Bible, the young people should obey them. According to Paul's word in Ephesians 6, this is the way to enjoy the blessing of long life." (*Life-study of Exodus*, p. 596)

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## WEEK 16—DAY 1 CONSCIENCE

Romans 2:15 Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness with it and their reasonings, one with the other, accusing or even excusing them.

Hebrews 9:14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONSCIENCE

Of all God's creatures, only human beings have a conscience. This is the part within that either accuses or excuses you (cf. Rom. 2:15). When you deal with your conscience, you are dealing with both your spirit and your heart. If your conscience has never been dealt with, you are of no use to the Lord. A radio has a little receiver, without which it will not work. The paint may be chipped, but the radio will still work as long as the receiver is good. The same is true of our conscience; it must be kept in good working order. When we first received the gospel, the Lord required that we confess our sins. Confessing our sins clears our conscience. Without repenting and confessing your sins, you could not have been saved. The Spirit of God could not have gotten into you. Once you repent and confess, the Spirit enters into you. The more thorough the confession is, the more Spirit you have within.

### PURIFYING THE CONSCIENCE (1)

The Spirit, then, comes into our being through our cleansed conscience. Without this cleansing, He cannot enter. Hebrews 9:14 says that the blood of Christ purifies our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Do you think that serving the living God means doing something for Him? In the Bible to serve Him means to contact Him, to receive Him, to have Him infused into us. The service or worship of God is that we give Him an opening so that He can infuse Himself into our being. This kind of serving requires a purified, or purged, conscience. The blood of Christ purges our conscience that we may serve, not the doctrinal God, but the living God.

## WEEK 16—DAY 2 CONSCIENCE

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

### PURIFYING THE CONSCIENCE (2)

In Matthew 5:3 the Lord says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Without a purified conscience, your spirit cannot be poor. Then in verse 8 He says, "Blessed are the pure in heart." Even more, a pure heart requires a purged conscience.

### CONFESSION

We need to go to the Lord to deal with our conscience. You may feel you have only one little, unimportant thing to confess. If you will just confess that one thing, that initial confession will be a little turn to lead you onto the highway. You may then find you need a long time to complete a thorough confession.

As soon as you attempt to deal with the Lord in this way, the phone may ring. Once you take care of that phone call, it will take some effort to get back on the highway of your confession. After you confess two more things, the phone may ring again, this time probably a wrong number. This is the subtle enemy. It is best to get away by yourself, away from the phone and everyone else, or at least take the phone off the hook. If you share a room with someone else, you may need to find another place so no one can disturb you.

Once you kneel or sit before the Lord and open up to Him, you will find you have miles of confession to make. You may need hours to confess all your shortcomings, weak points, evil doings, your sinfulness, your flesh. When you start cleaning your house, you may think you can finish in fifteen minutes. But when you get into it, you will find dirt and dust all over, in all the corners. You are like your house. In every corner of your being, in every room, on every shelf, there is dirt. Your eyes have been dirtied by the many sinful things you have looked at day after day. Your ears have been sullied by listening to gossip. Your mouth needs cleansing from the gossip you have spread.



## WEEK 16—DAY 3 CONSCIENCE

**2 Timothy 1:7** For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

### THE EFFECT OF A PURIFIED CONSCIENCE

After such a confession...You will be afraid you may hear more gossip. It takes a great deal of effort to clean a badly smeared window. Once it is clean, you will try very hard not to let it get dirty again. This is the way to keep a clear entry for Christ to come into you. This entry, your purged conscience, will keep you from gossip.

### EFFECT ON THE SPIRIT AND THE HEART

Thus, to abide in Christ we must first purify our conscience by making a thorough confession. Once your conscience is purged, you can be poor in spirit. You will no longer feel you know so much. You will be humble and hungry for the real experience of the Lord. If you are proud, your spirit is not open to the Lord and He has no way to abide in you. Purging your conscience will issue in an open spirit.

A further effect of making confession is the purifying of your heart. Your heart will be pure because your conscience is cleansed. I have traveled this way myself; these are not doctrines I have learned merely through studying the Bible. Rather, they are a map I have drawn for you, based on my travels through all these experiences.

### EFFECT ON THE MIND

If your conscience is not purified and your spirit is not open to the Lord, if you are not poor in your spirit and pure in your heart, what kind of mind will you have? It will be sloppy and dull. You may come to the meetings and listen to the messages, but after a time you will conclude all the messages are about the same. To you, a "b" is about the same as a "d," an "m" is about the same as a "w." You have no discernment.

But once your conscience is purged, your mind will be keen and your discernment clear. No one and nothing can deceive you. This is what the Scripture calls a sound, or sober, mind (2 Tim. 1:7). Whenever you hear a message, your mind will be sharp to grasp and confirm what is being said.

## WEEK 16—DAY 4 CONSCIENCE

**Philippians 2:12** So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.  
**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.

### EFFECT ON THE EMOTION AND WILL

A purified conscience will also affect your emotion. Before you make a thorough confession of your failures and weak points, your emotion is just lukewarm. (If your emotion were cold, you would be going to places of entertainment rather than coming to meetings.) But once you have confessed, your lukewarm emotion will catch on fire. You will declare, "Lord Jesus, I love You! I am on fire for You!" Your will also will be changed from being stubborn to being submissive. You will enjoy obeying (cf. Phil. 2:12). Whatever it is, big or small, you will be willing to obey.

### THE KEY TO ABIDING

With such a purified conscience, open spirit, pure heart, sober mind, loving emotion, and submissive will, there will be a flow of the Lord within your whole being. You will surely be abiding in Him and He in you. This is the way to have the Lord added to your being all day long. The key is the thorough confession. Without it this message is just doctrine.

### THE BLOOD OF JESUS CLEANSSES US FROM EVERY SIN

Whatever sin you confess before God is cleansed by the blood of Jesus. God is faithful and righteous to forgive us. This is not only a promise but also a speaking of the fact; whenever we confess a sin, we must believe that it was cleansed by God.

Many believers are bothered by sins they have already confessed. Then they confess again. Once you do this, you fall into a snare. If you confess the same sin a second time, it means you do not believe the blood has cleansed you.



## WEEK 16—DAY 5 CONSCIENCE

**Matt. 5:23** Therefore if you are offering your gift at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, Leave your gift there before the altar, and first go and be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. **Acts 24:16** Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

### A CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENSE TOWARD GOD AND MAN

There is a principle in the Bible (**Matt. 5:23-24**) that if we offend another, we must go to that one and confess. Not only do we confess to the Lord, but also to the offended one. Suppose I have gotten angry with one of [my parents, or brothers or sisters]... When I go to contact the Lord, my conscience condemns me, and I must say, "Lord, forgive me. I was angry with [\_\_\_\_\_]." I must also go to [them]...and ask [them]...to forgive me for getting angry with [them]...on that occasion. By keeping this principle our conscience is clear and void of offense.

### SHOULDN'T WE CONFESS AS SOON AS WE DO SOMETHING WRONG?

Whenever your hands are dirty, you wash them. After you confess in the morning, you do not need to confess again until something sinful arises. Then you immediately confess.

Some of the saints are applying the Lord's blood in a wrong way. They say, "We apply the blood to our situation," without making any confession. The Bible says if we confess, then the blood cleanses. In other words, our confession is a condition to the Lord's cleansing. Without our confessing the Lord does not have a way to cleanse us.

Once we confess, we get cleansed. As soon as we get dirty again, we again confess and again are cleansed. In this way all day long we keep our conscience clean and pure. Then we can contact the Lord at any time.

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## WEEK 16—DAY 6 CONSCIENCE

**1 Timothy 1:19** Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith

### WHEN WE CONFESS WE OPEN THE GATE FOR CHRIST

Besides legally getting into the Word and legally spending time in prayer, we also need to legally take care of our conscience. If you do not want to be bothered by your conscience, stay away from the Bible! Many times when you are reading the Word, you will be enlightened and your conscience will condemn you. You may be reading Romans 12, for example, and come to verse 5 where it says that we are "members one of another." Your conscience may then accuse you that you have not been a proper member to your brothers. You will have to confess and get forgiveness. Had you not been in the Word, you would not have experienced such an accusation.

When you confess, you open the gate for Christ to come in. The more you confess, the more Christ you will gain. This is the way to enrich your abiding in Christ.

If you think you are enjoying the Lord but are not dealing with your conscience, you are deceiving yourself. The enjoyment of the Lord comes from abiding; abiding in the Lord is based on dealing with your conscience.

### THE RESTORATION OF OUR FELLOWSHIP DEPENDS ON OUR CONFESSION

God is faithful in His word (v. 10) and righteous in the blood of Jesus His Son (v. 7). His word is the word of the truth of the gospel (**Eph. 1:13**), which tells us that He will forgive us our sins because of Christ (**Acts 10:43**); and the blood of Christ has fulfilled His righteous requirements that He might forgive us our sins (**Matt. 26:28**). If we confess our sins, He, according to His word and based on the redemption through the blood of Jesus, forgives us because He must be faithful in His word and righteous in the blood of Jesus; otherwise, He would be unfaithful and unrighteous. Our confession is needed for His forgiveness. Such forgiveness of God, which is for the restoration of our fellowship with Him, is conditional; it depends on our confession. (*RV 1 John 1:9, note 2, p. 1179*)