

PRAYING THE WORD OF GOD

Lesson One

Praying the Word for the Building Up of the Church

Scripture Reading: John 4:24; 6:63; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 3:2a, 6, 9, 16; 1 Pet. 2:2-5; Eph. 5:25-27; 1:22-23; 3:8; 6:17-18

- I. **Since we have seen such a high peak of the divine revelation, we need to put into practice what we have seen; our practice will have a success, and that success will be a new revival—the highest revival, and probably the last revival before the Lord's coming back:**
 - A. We need a corporate model, a Body, a people who live the life of a God-man; from today our practice should be to live the life of a God-man by realizing the power of the resurrection of Christ to take His cross as He did, to be crucified, to be conformed to His death, every day to live another One's life—Phil. 3:10; 1:21; Gal. 2:20.
 - B. A revival should always be the practice of the vision we have seen; if we practice what we have heard, spontaneously a model will be built up; this model will be the greatest revival in the history of the church.
 - C. We should try faithfully to practice living a God-man's life by contacting Him through calling on His name, pray-reading His living word, praying unceasingly, not quenching the Spirit, and not despising prophesying.
- II. **We must realize that the proper way to deal with the Lord's Word is by pray-reading:**
 - A. We need to see the nature of the Word of God:
 1. God is Spirit; Spirit is God's nature, God's essence—John 4:24.
 2. The word of the Scripture is the breath of God, and whatever is breathed out of God is spirit; hence, the essence, the very nature, of the word of God is spirit—2 Tim. 3:16.
 3. God's word is the embodiment of God as the Spirit; it contains the very essence of God—John 6:63.
 4. Consequently, whenever we touch the word of God, it is not just a matter of touching the thought, revelation, teaching, or doctrine of God; it is a matter of touching God Himself in His essence, that is, the Spirit.
 - B. We need to see the function of the Word of God:
 1. The main function of God's word is to impart God Himself into us as the nourishment of life; the Bible is the means that God uses to dispense Christ into us—v. 63; 1 Pet. 2:2-3; cf. Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:16.
 2. When we come to the Word, we must come not merely to understand, to know, or to learn but to enjoy, to receive, to eat, and to drink; the purpose of our reading must be to take God's essence into us—*Hymns*, #814, #816.
 - C. Since God's word is His breath, the proper way to receive it is to inhale it; as God breathes out, we should breathe in—2 Tim. 3:16.
 - D. We can breathe in the word by exercising our spirit to pray-read the Word; if we want to receive the Lord's words, we must use our spirit, because His words are spirit—Eph. 6:17-18.
- III. **Pray-reading is the best way not only to enjoy the Lord but also to defeat the enemy and to build up the Body:**

- A. We need to pray-read to be nourished with the riches of Christ for the building up of the Body to be Christ's fullness:
1. The Body is the fullness of the unlimited and unsearchable Christ, the One who fills all in all; whatever Christ is as the Head is transmitted to the church as His Body—Eph. 1:22-23.
 2. The church becomes the fullness of Christ by being nourished with the unsearchable riches of Christ; what the church needs today is nourishment—3:8; 5:29.
 3. The Lord nourishes His Body through His Word—1 Tim. 4:6; 1 Pet. 2:2:
 - a. The unique way for the Body to be nourished is to receive the Lord in His word; therefore, we need to read the Word prayerfully, that is, to pray-read the Word in a living way in the spirit; pray-reading the Word paves the way for the Lord to nourish us—Eph. 6:17-18.
 - b. By enjoying the riches of Christ through pray-reading, we will become the fullness of Christ; He will make His home in our heart, saturating and occupying every part of our being, and we will be one with Him and with one another—Col. 3:16; Eph. 3:17a.
- B. It is by pray-reading that we are purified from all our spots and wrinkles to be the glorious church to satisfy the Lord—5:25b-27; *Hymns*, #1310:
1. Spots signify something of the natural life, and wrinkles are related to oldness; the church today bears the spots and wrinkles from many centuries of its history—v. 27.
 2. The spots and wrinkles of our natural being can be washed away only through a metabolic cleansing by the inward water of life, the water that is in the Lord's word; when the water of life flows within us, all our spots and wrinkles are washed away—v. 26:
 3. The Lord's word is all-inclusive and able to impart glory to the church; by being washed in the water of the word, the church becomes fresh and refreshing.
- C. We need to pray-read to be equipped to fight the spiritual battle—6:17-18:
1. Ephesians 6:17 speaks of "the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God"; this indicates that the sword is the Spirit, and the Spirit is the word.
 2. If we receive the word by reading without prayer, the word cannot be the Spirit as the sword to us, but the more we pray-read the Word, the more the words in the Bible become not only nourishment to us but also a weapon within us—v. 18:
 - a. The Lord Jesus defeats the enemy through our pray-reading, for through pray-reading we receive the sword of the Spirit, and our self, our concepts, and our dissenting opinions are terminated; this is a real victory, gained not only by the Lord directly but by our being equipped through pray-reading to fight the battle.
 - b. By our being equipped in this way, there is a sword in our spiritual hand, and many things are spontaneously killed by it; the more we pray-read, the more the Lord Jesus gains the victory.
- D. In order to realize and practice the built-up priesthood, the priestly body, we need to pray-read the Word—1 Pet. 2:2-5:
1. According to the regulations of the Old Testament, an apprentice to the priesthood had to be twenty-five years old, and a full priest needed to be thirty (Num. 8:24; 4:3); this indicates that in order to serve as a priest, we need to be mature.
 2. We must realize that as newborn babes, we need to drink the milk of the word so that we may grow; the more we pray-read the Word, the more we are built up and coordinated with others in a spontaneous way; in this way we will become the genuine priesthood, the one priestly body—1 Pet. 2:2.

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Lesson Two

Praying the Word Personally

Scripture Reading: Matt. 4:4; John 1:1; 5:39; 2 Cor. 3:18; Psa. 119:147-148; Lev. 11:26;
Rom. 8:4-6; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16

- I. **Pray-reading is the foundation of the Christian living—Matt. 4:4; John 6:57, 63.**
- II. **Just as we need to take our meals daily at set times, so we need to come to the Lord at set times every day to feast on and be filled with God through His word and His Spirit—cf. Psa. 55:17; Dan. 6:10:**
 - A. To pray-read the Word is to eat the spiritual food; others can do many things for us, but they cannot eat for us; we all need to pray-read.
 - B. It is not healthy to stuff ourselves with food for three days and then go without food for the next three days; all healthy people eat at set times and eat a fixed amount of food.
 - C. The most important time to receive Christ as food is the time of the morning revival; we need to spend twenty to thirty minutes every day to pray-read three to five verses; when we pray-read in this way, we are eating, drinking, and enjoying God—Psa. 119:147-148; 143:8; Lam. 3:22-26.
 - D. In addition, during our morning break, our lunch hour, our afternoon break, and when we return home in the evening, we can take out the Lord's Word and enjoy it in this way.
 - E. If we do this, we will become one who enjoys and receives the Lord through His word, and our spiritual life will surely be healthy and living.
- III. **True morning revival is one in which you take the Word of the Lord as the Lord Himself, and fellowship with Him face to face through His Word—John 1:1; 5:39; 2 Cor. 3:18; Hymns, #812, #813:**
 - A. Whenever we come to read the Lord's Word, we need to realize that the Lord's word is not only living; it is a living Person, the Lord Himself, who is waiting to come into us and dwell in us; for us to come to the Word of the Lord is to come to the Lord Himself—John 1:1; 5:39.
 - B. Prayer is your communication with the living Lord; while you pray-read you are converting the words of the Bible into your prayer; you are speaking to the Lord with His word; this is the proper way to fellowship with the Lord—Psa. 27:8.
 - C. Every time we have our morning revival, we should have the deep sense that we are there to speak to the Lord and to have the Lord speak to us—Exo. 33:11a.
 - D. If we have the right attitude—that the word we are reading is the speaking of our beloved Lord—our whole being will be brought into the shining of His face; deep within our being we will feel like we are bathing in God Himself—cf. *Hymns*, #784, stanza 6.
- IV. **Musing upon the Word is even richer, broader, and more inclusive than pray-reading; if we muse upon the Word of God, we shall delight ourselves in the Word—Psa. 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 99, 148:**
 - A. Rich in meaning, the Hebrew word for *muse*, or *meditate*, implies to bow down, to converse with oneself, and to utter; we muse upon the Word by talking to God, worshipping Him, enjoying Him, receiving grace from Him, and conversing with ourselves in the Lord's presence—1:1-3; 19:14; 104:34.

- B. Musing upon the Word includes prayer, worship, enjoyment, conversation, bowing down, lifting up our hands to receive God's word, rejoicing, praising, shouting, and even weeping before the Lord.
 - C. Usually musing upon the Word will be slower and finer than pray-reading the Word; in all our musing upon God's Word we should be spontaneous and full of enjoyment.
 - D. To muse upon the Word of God is to enjoy His Word as His breath; by musing upon the Word in this way, we shall be infused by God, breathe Him into us, and receive spiritual nourishment—2 Tim. 3:16.
- V. **At any time—day or night, morning or evening—we can open up the Bible and pray-read a few verses; when we do, we receive the Spirit—Col. 3:16; Psa. 119:97; cf. 1:1-3; Deut. 6:6-9:**
- A. We need to chew the cud, eating the word of God by chewing it again and again—Lev. 11:26:
 - 1. Chewing the cud signifies receiving the word of God with much consideration and reconsideration; just as a cow chews its cud, we should consider and reconsider the word of God—Psa. 119:95, 97; cf. 2 Tim. 2:7.
 - 2. To chew the cud is to masticate the words of the Bible:
 - a. All day long we may repeat a verse, such as Romans 8:1, saying, “Hallelujah, there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. When I am in Christ, who can condemn me? I am in Christ, and I can never go out. Hallelujah, I am in Christ. Hallelujah, I am not in Adam.”
 - b. This verse can supply, nourish, and water us throughout the day.
 - B. We Christians should never be without the Word; we need to either carry a small Bible in our pocket or purse or memorize many verses; beside spending time in the Word in the morning, we can pray-read a verse from time to time; this is a good habit.
- VI. **Pray-reading is the best way to walk according to the Spirit—Rom. 8:4-6; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16:**
- A. Our daily life as Christians should be a life of walking by the Spirit to live Christ by expressing Him with all His excellent virtues—Phil. 1:21a; Gal. 5:22-23.
 - B. The best way to walk and do things according to the spirit is to pray-read the Word of God:
 - 1. If the husbands would pray-read with their wives, they would easily overcome their temper and be patient with their wives; the best thing to do when there is trouble with your husband is not to argue with him but to pray-read; this is the best way to exercise and touch our spirit.
 - 2. If we are unhappy and sorrowful, we should not try to comfort ourselves; instead, we should take God's Word and pray-read it; after some time, we will be comforted and will have the joy of the Lord—Jer. 15:16.
 - 3. We are like a battery, and the Lord is like the electrical power plant; the more we pray-read, that is, the more we touch the Lord, the more charged we become; after being fully charged, we should simply cooperate with the “electricity” within us; this is to walk according to the spirit.

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Lesson Three

Praying the Word Corporately

Scripture Reading: Eph. 5:29-30; 3:18; Col. 2:19; 3:16

- I. **The Lord as our divine food is for the Body, not just for the individual members; when we exercise to pray-read not just by ourselves but with a few of the members of the Body, we keep the principle of the Body—cf. Col. 2:19:**
 - A. Eating is for the Body; it is not for the individual members only—Eph. 5:29-30; 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:13.
 - B. When we pray-read not only individually but also in larger groups, we apprehend the riches of the word; in order to realize just how rich the word is, we need the Body—Col. 3:16; cf. Eph. 3:18.
 - C. “To pray-read properly, we need the Body. I have proven this by my experience. I enjoy pray-reading privately, but whenever I practice pray-reading with a group of believers, I am transported to the third heavens”—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1967*, vol. 1, p. 415.
- II. **There are several points that require our attention when we pray-read corporately:**
 - A. Our spirit needs to be stirred up; just as every member in a basketball team is stirred up and ready to play, our spirit must be stirred up and ready to move when we come to a meeting—Hag. 1:14:
 1. We should always exercise not our mind and emotion but our spirit.
 2. We need to drop our fear, timidity, excessive cautiousness, and self-consciousness and be bold in spirit—2 Tim. 1:6-7; cf. Prov. 29:25.
 - B. As we practice to pray-read corporately, we need to remember four words: *quick*, *short*, *real*, and *fresh*:
 1. To be quick is to forget about our mind; when we are quick, we have no time to consider.
 2. Then our prayers need to be short, because long prayers need some composition.
 3. We also need to be real; we must not pretend.
 4. Finally, we need to learn to be fresh.
 - C. We need instant utterance; our utterance should be living, not old; we need new utterances with new inspiration.
 - D. We need the skill of functioning with one another; this is the skill of cooperating with one another; no matter how many saints there are in a meeting, we need an attitude of cooperation; we need a spirit of cooperation and the skill to cooperate.
 - E. When we pray-read, we should not be too loud; pray-reading should have the flavor, atmosphere, and spirit of prayer; otherwise, it cannot be called pray-reading.
 - F. When we pray-read the Word, we must be liberated from our habit:
 1. We need to pray-read according to the need and the atmosphere.
 2. We should shout not according to our habit but according to the situation, the condition, the environment, and the atmosphere; we need the release of our spirit, not the release of our habit.
 3. With a small number we need to experience the Spirit to pray-read in a low voice; with a large number of saints we need to pray-read with a loud voice in the Spirit.

- G. In our corporate pray-reading, we do not always need to pray sequentially according to the points in the verses we read:
 1. We should not be bothered when others do not pray sequentially or according to the main points in the verses.
 2. We must not be overly legal when we pray-read, because the Holy Spirit is like the wind that blows where it wills; it blows sometimes here and sometimes there—John 3:8.
- H. The moment we have an inspiration, we should not hold back or overly consider:
 1. In our pray-reading we should not adhere to conventions, hesitate, or overly consider; we should also not fear that we cannot pray well.
 2. We should simply continue the sense of the one who prayed before us and add something more.
- I. We should not pray-read too many verses at a time:
 1. If we use too many verses, we may be confused about the main points and become distracted, and the inspiration we receive will not be accurate.
 2. There is no need to do anything in a rigid way; if there is nothing that we comprehend in one verse, we do not need to force ourselves to digest it; simply skip to the next verse.
- J. While praying, we should be the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit and not have distracting thoughts:
 1. Whenever the Spirit moves, whether others pray well or not, we should avoid having differing thoughts and always try to be open to others.
 2. If we have improper thoughts and thus close ourselves to the Spirit, He will not be able to flow through us.
- K. We must avoid damaging the saints when we lead them to pray-read:
 1. When we lead the saints, we should not abruptly tell them that what they have been doing is wrong; if we say this, we will hurt their spirit; if we damage the spirit of the saints and they become averse to us, their spirit may not rise up again.
 2. Therefore, we should be slow in leading the saints to pray-read; this requires patience.

III. We need to see the benefits of corporate pray-reading:

- A. When the brothers and sisters come together to pray-read, it brings us into coordination with one another; when several of us pray together, our spirits are blended together, our love for one another deepens, and our concern for one another increases.
- B. Corporate pray-reading can help us to open our mouth in the meetings to pray, testify, and speak of the Lord's grace—Col. 3:16; cf. 1 Pet. 4:10-11.
- C. Corporate pray-reading causes our spirit to be burning—2 Tim. 1:6-7; Rom. 12:11:
 1. With only a single, large piece of wood, it is not easy to have a flaming fire; it is best to put many small pieces of wood into a pile; then when one piece is lit, the fire starts immediately.
 2. In the meeting the most precious thing is for all the saints to be burning in spirit, and pray-reading in small groups is the best way to encourage this.
- D. The church also receives the benefit by allowing the Holy Spirit to flow freely in the meeting, which causes the meeting to become living; gradually, we will see that not only are we made strong individually, but at the same time others also receive the help, and the church becomes living.

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Lesson Four

Being Saturated with the Word by Singing and Psalming the Word in Order to Live Christ for the Body

Scripture Reading: Phil. 1:19-21a; 2:16; Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16-17; Psa. 119:54; 1 Cor. 14:15, 26

I. The way to live Christ is to plug yourself into the Word all the day long; if you remain in this plugging, you live Christ—Phil 1:21a; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17:

- A. The Christian life is a life of living Christ for the constitution and building up of the Body of Christ—Phil. 4:1-3, 12, 16; Col. 1:24; 2:19:
 - 1. God's desire is for us to live Christ, to have Christ as our living, to have Christ as the reality, the real contents of the church life, making every local church a golden lampstand; the Body life will reach the reality of Romans 12 and this will be the spontaneous preparation of the bride for His coming back.
 - 2. From the very beginning, even from eternity, this is what the Lord has desired; this is the goal of the Lord's recovery.
- B. The way to live Christ is to receive His word into us and be filled with it—Phil. 2:16:
 - 1. If we exercise our whole being to take in the Word, we shall be filled, occupied, and saturated with the living Word.
 - 2. Because the Word is the embodiment of the Spirit and because the Spirit is the reality of Christ, we shall automatically be filled with Christ and whatever we do or say will be in the name of Christ; this is to live Christ—1 Cor. 15:45b; John 6:63; Col. 3:16-17.

II. From experience we know that we can take the Word as food by pray-reading it; but now we must go on to see that there is no better way to receive the word into our being than by singing the Word; the more we sing and psalm the Word of God, the more it will sink into the depths of our being and saturate us—v. 16:

- A. We may compare our spirit to an automobile needing gasoline, and the Word, the Bible, to a gas station; in the Word we have an inexhaustible supply of spiritual gasoline; the way to pump this "gasoline" into us is by singing and psalming the Word—Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16:
 - 1. Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:18-19 show that our reading of the Bible should become our singing.
 - 2. We are thankful for the recovery of pray-reading the Word; now we must go on to sing-read the Word of God; we need to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom by singing; this is the charge given by the apostle Paul in Colossians 3:16.
 - 3. The highest way to enjoy reading the Bible is to sing the words with a spontaneous melody:
 - a. We need to exercise our spirit to receive God's written Word so that it may become the present, spoken word to us—John 6:63; Eph. 6:17-18.
 - b. Singing the Word is an excellent way to exercise the spirit; to pray is to exercise the spirit, but to sing is an especially good way to exercise the spirit—1 Cor. 14:15.
 - 4. If we do not know a melody to use in singing a particular verse, we may make up one of our own.

5. Whether or not we sing well, the Lord is pleased to hear us singing the Word.
 6. As we sing the Word, we need to exercise our eyes to read, our mind to understand, our emotion to love the Word, our will to receive the Word, and also our spirit to pray, sing, psalm, and thank the Lord for His Word—Luke 24:45; Psa. 119:140, 173; Eph. 6:17-18.
 7. We should sing the Word not only in the meetings, but especially in our daily life; in particular, we should sing the Word at home; when you are alone in your room or with others at the dining table, sing the Word of God.
 8. Let us build up the habit of singing the Word day by day; then our meetings will not be formal; they will be filled with an exhibition of our daily life; in particular, we shall sing in the meetings.
- B. We need to get into the word by psalming—Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16:
1. Psalming is higher, deeper, and more profound than singing; to sing the Word is better than reading it, and to psalm the Word is even better than singing it.
 2. Psalming is a type of singing that includes musing:
 - a. Singing itself does not include much musing, but in psalming we muse upon the Word; at such times we may worship the Lord, have fellowship with Him, or even converse with ourselves in the Lord's presence—Psa. 1:1-3.
 - b. As we psalm the Word, we dwell upon it, muse on it, and enjoy it, thereby giving more opportunity for the Word to saturate us.
 3. Psalming does not need much of a melody for singing:
 - a. You can psalm with your own tune and even with all kinds of irregular tunes.
 - b. You will see what will come out; there will be a sweet and strengthened receiving of the divine element.
- C. In Colossians 3:16 Paul tells us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly; we should regard all the words written by Paul, in fact the whole New Testament, as the word of Christ:
1. Certain Christians sing verses from the Bible; however, for the most part, they sing portions from the Old Testament; this is good, but it is not nearly as rich as singing from the New Testament.
 2. In particular, we should sing the four books which make up the heart of the divine revelation—Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians—to enjoy the unsearchable riches of Christ.
 3. We especially need to sing those verses which convey to us the riches of Christ; Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians are books filled with the divine riches.
 4. "I hope that one day we shall be able to set the entire New Testament to music as a help in singing the word of Christ. Then we shall have a tune for every verse in the New Testament"—*Life-study of Philippians*, p. 366.

III. If we all would practice praying the Word, singing the Word, psalming the Word, and thanking through the Word, the church life will be much uplifted; we all need to be deeply impressed with the need to practice what has been presented, exercise our spirit to pray the Word, to sing the Word, and to thank God and praise Him; then we will enjoy the Lord, be one with Him, and live Him.