

## HOW TO HANDLE THE WORD OF GOD

### Lesson One

#### Reading the Word

Scripture Reading: Deut. 6:6-9; 17:18-20; 31:11; Josh. 1:8; 8:34; Neh. 8:1-3; Psa. 1:1-2; 119:11, 147; Job 23:12; Matt. 4:4; John 8:31b; Eph. 6:17-18; 1 Tim. 4:13; Rev. 1:3

#### I. We need to see the importance of reading the Bible:

- A. God's speaking to man today is based upon what He has already spoken in the past:
  - 1. Even though a person may be quite advanced in his spiritual walk, God's revelation to him will still be confined to the words that He has spoken in the Bible; God's speaking today is merely a repetition of His own word.
  - 2. If a person does not know what God has spoken in the past, it is difficult for him to receive His revelation in the present because he lacks the basis for God's speaking.
  - 3. If God wants to speak something to others through us, He will also do it on the basis of what He has spoken in the past; if we do not know what God has said in the past, He cannot speak through us to others, and we are useless in the eyes of God.
  - 4. This is why we need to let the Word of God dwell in us richly; by letting His Word dwell in us richly, we know His past ways and hear His present speaking; only then can God use us to speak to others—Col. 3:16.
- B. "I regard reading the Bible to be more important than anything else...We should not consider reading the Bible as a pastime or think that other things are more important. Reading the Bible is indispensable and cannot be put aside."—*The Sufficiency, Pursuit, and Learning of the Lord's Serving Ones*, p. 103.

#### II. We need to see how to read the Bible:

- A. The best way to read the Bible is to read it daily:
  - 1. Since the Bible is food for our spiritual life, we must receive spiritual nourishment from it daily; just as we need to eat physical food every day, we need to read the Bible every day; we are healthy when we eat food every day, and we are healthy when we read the Bible every day—Matt. 4:4; cf. Job 23:12.
  - 2. We should not eat food one day and then fast for three days; likewise, we should not read the Bible in fits and starts:
    - a. Just as our food should be apportioned to us throughout the day, our Bible reading should be apportioned in a measured and daily way.
    - b. We should not receive too much or too little, reading too much one day and very little the next.
  - 3. Eating at specific times is the most healthy way to eat; similarly, we should set aside specific times to read the Bible every day; it is best for our spirit to read a specific amount of the Bible at specific times every day.
- B. The morning is the best time to read the Bible—Psa. 119:147:
  - 1. It is best to read the Bible in the morning when our heart has just awakened, our spirit is clean and quiet, and there is no noise, people, or events to disturb or worry us—cf. Exo. 16:12-21
  - 2. If we come to the Lord's Word and read the Bible in the morning, it will supply us to meet our needs throughout the day.
- C. We should read the books of the Bible sequentially:

1. Some new believers read the Bible randomly; the Bible must be read consecutively and not randomly.
  2. We need to read the easy portions as well as the difficult ones; even if we do not understand a portion of the Bible, we still need to read it; read book after book without selection, choice, or preference.
  3. We should read the Old Testament and the New Testament simultaneously; we should not wait until we finish reading the Old Testament before reading the New Testament.
  4. Every Christian should allocate two different times to daily read the Bible; one time should be in the morning and the other can also be in the morning or in the afternoon or evening; we should read a consecutive portion during both times.
  5. A believer should read the whole book chapter by chapter, consecutively over and over again; the reading should neither be too fast nor too slow; it should be regular, continuous, and general in nature.
- D. We must not only be spiritual to read the Bible, but we must turn our heart to the Lord—2 Cor. 3:15-18:
1. If our heart is not turned to the Lord, there will be a veil on our heart that prevents us from seeing the light in the Bible; once our heart turns to the Lord, however, the veil is taken away.
  2. If we want to know the Bible, we must turn our heart to the Lord; that is, we must turn away from every person, thing, and matter outside of the Lord and return to the Lord.
- E. In reading the Bible, we should receive inspiration and turn it into prayer—Eph. 6:17-18:
1. The moment we receive inspiration, we should stop reading and turn the inspiration into prayer; however, there is no need to pray for a long time; we should simply pray briefly and then resume our reading—cf. Psa. 27:8; Rev. 22:20.
  2. This is the most beneficial way to obtain nourishment from reading the Word.
- F. We should not seek a thorough understanding when reading the Bible:
1. We should read according to our level, receive as much as we can understand, and let go of the things that we cannot understand; this is the simplest and most spontaneous way to read the Bible.
  2. This is the same as eating a meal; when there is a piece of bone with our chicken, we simply put the bone aside; although everything that is presented in the Bible is meant for us to eat, there are some things that we cannot eat now; they must be saved for later.

### III. We need to build up a habit of spending time in the Word:

- A. It is important to build up the habit of reading the Word; if you build up the habit of reading the Word, you will be healthy spiritually and you will grow.
- B. “To live we have to keep some legalities. We must be legal about four things: eating, drinking, breathing, and sleeping. Do you think it is too legal to eat three meals every day? Without such a legality you will soon be ready for a funeral! In order to live in a healthy way, you must eat, drink, breathe, and sleep...I encourage you to build up a habit of reading the Word daily, preferably in the morning. Make this a legality.”—*Life Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 34.

### IV. 1 Timothy 4:13 says, “Until I come, attend to the public reading, to the exhortation, to the teaching”; here Paul does not refer to reading in the sense of study, but to reading aloud in public; according to the context, this kind of public reading may be for exhortation and teaching.

## HOW TO HANDLE THE WORD OF GOD

### Lesson Two

#### Praying the Word

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 4:6; Jer. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:2-3; John 4:24a; 6:63; Eph. 6:17-18; Col. 3:16; Psa. 119:148

- I. **The main function of the Bible is to impart God into us as life and as the nourishment of life; 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—1 Tim. 4:6; Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 3:1-3; Rev. 10:9-10; Matt. 4:4:**
  - A. After we are saved and born again, our most immediate need is that we learn how to take in the Lord as our spiritual milk and nourishment—John 4:14; 6:35; 1 Cor. 12:13.
  - B. 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—1 Pet. 2:2-3.
  - C. The Spirit is the very substance of the Word of God:
    1. God is Spirit; the Spirit is God's essence and nature—John 4:24.
    2. Since the Word is the breath of God, and God is Spirit, whatever is breathed out of God must be Spirit—2 Tim. 3:16; John 6:63.
    3. The nature of this book is the very essence of God Himself; whenever we deal with this book, we must realize that we are touching and dealing with Him.
  - D. The Word of God must be taken by means of all prayer—Eph. 6:17-18:
    1. We need to receive the Lord's Word in spirit because the Lord's words are spirit and life—John 6:63.
    2. Prayer is the unique way to exercise our spirit; praying is the only way to receive and enjoy the Lord's Word with our spirit.
- II. **We should not simply have one way of prayer, but every means of prayer, exercising our spirit to pray in various ways to take the Word of God—Eph. 6:18:**
  - A. Pray-reading—6:17-18:
    1. When we read the Bible, we should turn the words in the Bible into prayer.
    2. We can simply take the words in the Bible as the words for our prayer, praying with the words in the Bible.
    3. We must contact the Lord by mingling our reading of the Bible with prayer, and by mingling our prayer with reading.
  - B. Musing—Psa. 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 99, 148:
    1. Rich in meaning, the Hebrew word for *muse* implies to worship, to converse with oneself, and to speak aloud; to muse on the Word is to taste and enjoy it through careful considering—1 Pet. 2:2-3; Psa. 119:103.
    2. Prayer, speaking to oneself, and praising the Lord may also be included in musing on the Word; to muse on the Word is to “chew the cud,” to receive the Word of God through much reconsideration—Lev. 11:3:
      - a. Usually musing upon the Word will be slower and finer than pray-reading the Word.
      - b. If we take in the Word too quickly, we will not have very much enjoyment; but if we “chew the cud” as we take in the Word, our enjoyment will increase.

3. Musing is even richer, broader, and more inclusive than pray-reading, for it includes prayer, worship, enjoyment, conversation, bowing down, and even lifting up our hands to receive God's Word; it includes rejoicing, praising, shouting, and even weeping before the Lord.

C. Singing—Col. 3:16:

1. 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.
2. If we sing the Word, we open our being more fully to the Word and give it the opportunity to sink into us and saturate us; the best way to receive the Word of life and to be saturated with the element of Christ is to sing the Word.

D. Psalming—v. 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; 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. At such times we may worship the Lord, have fellowship with Him, or even converse with ourselves in the Lord's presence.

**III. We all need to improve and make progress in the details related to our pray-reading; whenever we do anything, we should first grasp the principles and then get into the details and techniques:**

- A. The principles of pray-reading are to pray-read the Word in a quick way, with short phrases, praying something new and fresh; this keeps us from our mind and exercises our spirit.
- B. Sometimes when we pray-read the Word, we may pray a whole verse at one time; however, often it is better to pray-read word by word or phrase by phrase; we should pray-read the Word a little at a time, perhaps even word by word.
- C. We need to exercise our spirit in order to avoid being methodical; we should avoid following a procedure; instead, we should always open to the Lord and allow the Holy Spirit to flow freely.
- D. Our utterance should be living, not old; we do not pray-read from our memory or from our knowledge; we need new utterances and new inspiration; the more we practice pray-reading the Word, the more we will receive new things.
- E. Some saints are rough in their pray-reading, but the spirit is gentle, not rough; as long as we are rough, we will not be able to follow the spirit; although our spirit needs to be strong, living, and fresh, it still needs to be fine and gentle.
- F. We should avoid being overly excited in our pray-reading; we should not be too excited or too restricted; although we should be fresh, living, and released, we should also be sober-minded.

**IV. Through our pray-reading the Bible, the Lord as the living Word enters not only into our mind but also into our spirit; consequently, we not only receive the Lord's nourishment, refreshment, and enlightenment but also experience His watering, strengthening, transforming, and uplifting; this is the experience of the power of the Word of God in our spirit; there is no adequate way to describe the benefit of pray-reading the Word.**

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### Lesson 3

#### Studying the Word

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:42; 17:11; 1 Tim. 2:4; 3:9, 15; 4:6; 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:2, 15; Heb. 5:13-14

- I. There is the need of a thorough study of the holy Word; in regard to learning the truth we need to pay attention to several matters:**
  - A. The need to teach the believers to observe all that the Lord commanded—Matt. 28:20.
  - B. The need for the believers to continue steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles—Acts 2:42.
  - C. The need for the believers to always learn and to come to the full knowledge of the truth—1 Tim. 2:4.
  - D. The need for the believers to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly—Col. 3:16.
  - E. The need for the believers to be experienced in the Lord's word through exercise and practice—Heb. 5:13-14.
  - F. The need for those who are learned in the Lord's word to commit what they have learned to those who will be competent to teach others also—2 Tim. 2:2.
- II. The best way to be constituted with the New Testament truths, the best way to gain the knowledge of God's New Testament economy is to use the Recovery Version with the notes and the Life-study messages.**
- III. We need to see the purpose of the Recovery Version with the notes:**
  - A. The first purpose of the notes of the Recovery version is to present the truth, to bring you into the truth.
  - B. The second purpose is to minister to you the life supply, to give you much nourishment; in most of the commentaries and expositions there is not much of life.
  - C. The third purpose of the notes is to solve the common and hard problems in the Bible, to remove all the obstacles on your "driveway" so you can drive your "study car" through any book of the Bible without stops; we now have a clear way for our study, and every book is open to us.
  - D. The fourth purpose of the Recovery Version with the notes is to open up the books of the Bible, to "open up the mine" in the Bible, to expose the treasures so it is easy for you to dig out the treasures.
- IV. In order to get the benefit of these four purposes in full you must dive into the Recovery Version with the footnotes and the life-study messages:**
  - A. In order to be constituted with the truth, we need to pray-read and then study.
  - B. In our study of the Recovery Version there are three subsidiary items to the text itself: the outlines, the notes and the cross-references:
    1. First, in reading the Recovery Version you must learn the outline; the outline is the first crucial item; some of the outlines are more crucial than the notes.
    2. The notes are very crucial; to be built up in the truth, we must study the text and every note.
    3. The cross-references are not crucial, only helpful; if possible, it is helpful to take care of the cross-references.
  - C. Then you need to study the life-study messages:

1. You need to consider the text of the Recovery Version with the notes and the life-study messages as a textbook; you must study them as a textbook.
2. If you merely read the life-studies, you will only receive a temporary nourishment; that will only become a kind of inspiration to you; an inspiration is like a vapor in the air.
3. The only way for the truth to get into you is through your mentality; then it remains in your memory; if the truth gets into your memory it becomes a constant and long term nourishment.

**V. We need to acquire the crucial points of the truth and a bird's-eye view of the Scriptures:**

- A. We must first pick up the crucial points of the truth to carry out what we have seen:
  1. If you want to read a life-study message, you must first read it in a general way.
  2. In reading the pages of the life-study messages, we must learn how to realize the crucial points; you must first of all pick up the crucial points and get into them.
  3. For example, when there is a message telling us that Jesus Christ was designated the Son of God (Rom. 1:4) we must consider what it means for Him to be designated; we must pick up this crucial point because today we are the same in principle as the Lord.
- B. Second, after picking up the crucial points, we must put these points together in order to have a bird's eye-view.

**VI. We need to build up a habit of spending time in the Word:**

- A. We should bring all the saints in the churches in the Lord's recovery into the practice of carefully reading one or two life-study messages each week.
- B. We should help the saints to build up a practice or a habit that every day they would spend at least thirty minutes in the Word:
  1. They should study every day either three times of ten minutes each or one time of thirty minutes.
  2. We should charge them to pray-read two or three verses of this book every day; pray-read the biblical verses in order to get the help to enter into the truth conveyed in these few verses—Eph. 6:17-18.
  3. Then they have to study the accompanying message; they need the help of the notes and the life-study messages to enter into the truth.
- C. To study the Bible regularly means to study it every day at a set time, whether in the morning, afternoon, or evening.
- D. In addition to our personal study, we also need to study with others; this kind of study cannot be carried out in big meetings; it can be carried out mutually in vital group meetings of six to not more than ten saints.

**VII. We need to redeem the time to learn the truth—Eph. 5:16-17:**

- A. It is very easy for us to waste time in our daily life, hence Paul told us to redeem the time.
- B. To redeem the time means to grasp every opportunity, and the way to redeem the time is to not make any casual telephone calls, to not gossip, and to not waste time; instead we should save all our time to learn the truth.
- C. If we would save our time to learn the truth, we would have more than enough time.

**VIII. Never forget the race between the hare and the tortoise; the tortoise wins the race; if we keep going slowly, we will win the race; we need to eat regularly, continuously, and slowly; do not go too fast, but go slowly; you will then reach the goal.**

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### Lesson 4

#### Speaking the Word

Scripture Reading: Num. 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 14:24, 31, 26; 12:8; Acts 1:8; 2:41, 46-47; 5:42; Eph. 6:17-18; Col. 3:16; Acts 8:1, 4; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Cor. 12:3

#### **I. We have already seen that God desires all men to come to the full knowledge of the truth; a second desire of God's heart is that we would speak for Him; everyone must speak:**

- A. In the book of Numbers in the Old Testament there is the concept that everyone must speak the Word of God or that everyone is able to speak the Word of God—Num. 11:29:
  - 1. Num. 11:29 says, “But Moses said to [Joshua], Are you jealous for my sake? Oh that all Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put His Spirit upon them!”
  - 2. Moses desired that all the people of Israel would be prophets, those who spoke for God; this word was a great prophecy uttered by Moses.
- B. In the New Testament, Paul also spoke this kind of word—1 Cor. 14:31:
  - 1. The word by Moses (Num. 11:29) was promoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 and is fulfilled in God's New Testament economy by the prophesying of the believers in the church meetings—vv. 24, 31.
  - 2. In 1 Corinthians 14:31 Paul said, “You can all prophesy one by one”; the word in Greek includes the right and also the ability.
- C. God's desire has always been that all His people, in both the Old and New Testaments would be a speaking people.

#### **II. We need to practice the divine speaking in our daily life, ministry and meetings:**

- A. We should not speak negatively but always speak positively; we should no longer gossip, criticize, or speak idly; we should simply speak Christ, speak grace, speak mercy, speak God, and speak the holy Word—Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6.
- B. We have to realize that as believers we all have been made the witnesses of the living Christ—Acts 1:8:
  - 1. In Acts 1:8, the Lord Jesus told His disciples, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
  - 2. In this verse the crucial point is, “You shall be My witnesses”; witnesses are speakers.
  - 3. The disciples after Christ's ascension were witnessing the living One; their speaking was concerning His being God, His incarnation, His living on this earth, His being crucified, His resurrection, His staying with them for forty days, and His ascension.
  - 4. Three thousand believed and were baptized; then they began to meet, not only in the temple, but also from home to home; in their homes they preached and they taught; they preached Jesus and they taught Jesus—2:41, 46-47; 5:42.
- C. We can practice the divine speaking by using the life-studies in the home meetings; there are at least seven ways to read:
  - 1. First you have to read in a short way; just read a short portion.
  - 2. Second, if that portion is crucial, repeat it; this repeating-reading is very living, very meaningful, and very impressive.

3. The third way is to read with some explanation; but not with too much; sometimes some wordings or terminologies in certain messages are not common.
  4. Another way is to pray-read; sometimes when you have crucial verses, you have to pray-read them—Eph. 6:17-18.
  5. You also need to read with some variation in your voice, just like music; sometimes the melody goes up and comes down; sometimes it is faster; sometimes it is slower.
  6. We can also pray-sing; when we read a verse, perhaps you will have a hymn or a chorus that just matches that thought—Col. 3:16.
  7. Then there is another way to read: to read in order to apply, an applying-reading; you may read a verse and apply it to your situation, to your present need.
- D. We need to speak Christ to others in a living way—Acts 8:1, 4:
1. Acts 8:1 tells us that all the thousands of new believers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria as a result of a great persecution; those who were scattered preached the good news of the word wherever they went—v. 4.
  2. Those scattered ones had learned just to speak the same thing; wherever they went they spoke Christ.
  3. All of us in the Lord's recovery have to speak Christ in our daily life to our parents, our children, our cousins, and our in-laws; we all owe so much to our relatives.
  4. Speak Christ every day; speak in your office, at the coffee break, at your lunch break; at least five minutes every day, five days a week, four weeks a month; speak about Jesus, Christ, the life-giving Spirit, the all-inclusive, processed Triune God.
- E. We need to preach the word in season and out of season—2 Tim. 4:2:
1. In 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul charged Timothy to “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season.”
  2. The word Paul charged Timothy to preach was the word in the sacred writings of the Scriptures that Timothy had known from a babe (3:15); we all have to get into the Word, into the Scriptures.
  3. Paul charged Timothy to be ready “in season and out of season,” to preach the word; many times we say that now is not the time to speak; that it is out of season; that is the right time to speak; we all must speak out of season.
- F. We need to speak in the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church—1 Cor. 12:3:
1. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul refers to the matter of speaking in the meetings; in verse 3 he says, “No one speaking the Spirit of God says Jesus is accursed; and no one can say, Lord Jesus, except in the Holy Spirit.”
  2. We do have 1 Corinthians 12:3 as the solid ground to say with assurance that we are in the Holy Spirit; we just say, “O Lord Jesus,” and we are in the Holy Spirit.
  3. When we come to the meetings, we need to practice speaking this way in the Holy Spirit; when we open our mouth to speak, we need to open our mouth with the Spirit.
  4. We must be on the alert not to say things differently; do not try to display your smartness or your sharpness; do not try to show that you are better, higher, than others; receiving the blessing depends upon our speaking the same thing.

**III. There is no other way to build up the church but by all of us learning to speak Christ, to speak for Christ, and to speak forth Christ; we must speak in our daily life, in our office, in our school, in our family, in our ministry, and especially in the small groups.**