

Week Two

The Growth and Maturity Required for the Formation of the Army to Protect God's Testimony and Fight for His Move on Earth

RK Hymns: 540

Scripture Reading: Num. 1:2-3, 19-20; 2:1-2, 32, 34; Phil. 3:12-15;
Eph. 6:10-12

Outline

Day 1

- I. **The emphasis of Numbers is how the Israelites, who had been redeemed, received revelation, and been trained by God, were formed into an army to protect God's testimony and fight for His move on earth—1:2-3, 19-20:**
 - A. **Since the earth created by God was ruined by Satan, God needs to gain a group of people to be formed into an army for His move on earth—v. 3.**
 - B. **Numbers shows how God formed His redeemed people into an army to surround and protect His testimony—2:1-2, 32, 34:**
 1. In Numbers, particularly in the first four chapters, the Israelites were formed into an army according to God's arrangement.
 2. In order for the children of Israel to be formed into an army, they needed to be numbered; only after being numbered could the Israelites be formed into an army—1:2-3, 19-20.

II. In order “to go forth for military service,” an Israelite male needed to be at least twenty years old; this is related to growth and maturity—v. 3:

- A. There were approximately two million Israelites, but only 603,550 were twenty years old and upward and were able to go forth for military service—vv. 45-46.**
- B. Even though there are a great many believers on earth, only a small number among them are mature in life to the extent that they are able to fight for God’s testimony—Eph. 4:12, 15-16; 6:10-12.**
- C. Numbers mentions the age for those enlisting in the army, which was twenty years old and upward, yet this book does not mention the age for retirement:**
 - 1. God’s army was strong, just as Caleb was able to fight and was as strong before God in his eighties as he was in his forties—Josh. 14:6, 10-11.
 - 2. This signifies that we must have both life and maturity in life in order to be numbered by God.
- D. According to Numbers, neither children nor women were numbered:**
 - 1. Children signify immaturity, and women signify weakness.
 - 2. That only males who were twenty years old and upward were able to engage in warfare signifies that among the believers, only those who are mature in life and strong are able to fight in spiritual warfare.
- E. Those who were numbered needed to be confirmed by Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the twelve tribes—1:4, 16-18:**
 - 1. Moses signifies Christ as the Head of the Body who executes His authority, Aaron signifies Christ as the High Priest who exercises His priesthood, and the leaders of the twelve tribes signify the elders and leading ones in the church—Col. 1:18; Heb. 8:1; Acts 14:23:
 - a. This indicates that the numbering of God’s people is based on life and maturity in life and is confirmed by spiritual authority.

- b. Life, maturity, and the confirmation of spiritual authority are required for the formation of God's army.
- 2. In order to be numbered, the children of Israel were required to be in the fellowship of the life of their fathers' households and had to grow in life unto maturity, which is signified by the age of twenty—Num. 1:1-16.

Day 2

III. In the Lord's recovery today, there is an urgent need for the growth and maturity required for the formation of God's army; we need to grow in life unto maturity—Exo. 30:14; Num. 1:2-3, 18; Eph. 4:12-16:

- A. Spiritually, males who are twenty years old and over signify those among God's people who, regardless of their natural status, are strong in spirit and mature in the divine life; only these are qualified to be formed into an army to fight for God's interest and move on earth—Exo. 30:14; Num. 1:3.**
- B. The growth of life is the increase of the element of God (Col. 2:19), the increase of the stature of Christ (Eph. 3:17a; 4:13), the expanding of the ground of the Holy Spirit (5:18), the decrease of the human element, the breaking of the natural life, and the subduing of every part of our soul (2 Tim. 1:7).**
- C. To be transformed is to be metabolically changed in our natural life, whereas to be matured is to be filled with the divine life that changes us; the last stage of transformation is maturity, the fullness of life—Heb. 6:1.**
- D. In the New Testament the word mature refers to the believers' being full-grown and perfected in the life of God—Matt. 5:48; John 3:3, 5-6, 15:**
 - 1. As believers, we need to go on, to be brought on, to maturity by forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, pursuing toward the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ for the

uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom—Phil. 3:12-15.

2. The prerequisite for maturity in the spiritual life is to grow continually in the divine life—Eph. 4:15.
 3. The ultimate issue of the believers' growth and maturity in the life of Christ is a full-grown man—the church as the Body of Christ growing into a mature man—vv. 13, 16.
- E. To be mature is to have Christ fully formed in us; it also means that we have been fully transformed into His image—Gal. 4:19; 2 Cor. 3:18:**
1. Since the time of our regeneration, the Lord has been working in us so that we may have His image—v. 18; Rom. 8:29.
 2. When the Lord has fully worked His image into us and is fully expressed through us, we will be mature in life—v. 29; 2 Cor. 3:18.

Day 3

- F. Chapter 3 of Song of Songs shows us the maturity of the seeking one, and chapter 4 explains that maturity is reached by the subduing of the will:**
1. The secret of the maturity of the seeking one is that her will has been completely subdued and resurrected—3:6-9; 4:1b, 4.
 2. The neck signifies the human will under God; the Lord considers the submission of our will a most beautiful thing—v. 4.
 3. First, our will must be subdued; then it will be strong in resurrection and be like the tower of David, the armory for the spiritual warfare—Eph. 6:10.
 4. If we have a submissive will, our will becomes like the tower of David that holds all kinds of weapons for warfare—2 Cor. 10:3-5.

Day 4

- IV. In order for the children of God to reach the spiritual age of twenty, they need to pass through the first three stages of the experience of life and enter into the fourth stage:**

- A. The first stage of the experience of life is being in Christ, the second stage is abiding in Christ, and the third stage is Christ living in us, which is also the stage of the cross—Gal. 2:20; 3:1; 5:24; Matt. 16:24.**
- B. In the third stage the seeking believers deal with the flesh, the self, and the natural constitution with the natural strength and ability:**
1. The flesh denotes the totality of the fallen old man, our entire fallen being—Gen. 6:3; Rom. 7:18a; Gal. 2:16:
 - a. The flesh is the living out and the expression of the old man—Rom. 6:6.
 - b. The flesh cannot be changed or improved; thus, we need to be mindful of the fact that the flesh is always with us—13:14; Gal. 5:16.
 - c. The flesh is the camp of God’s enemy and the largest base for his work—vv. 19-21:
 - 1) The flesh is the first among our enemies, taking the lead over sin, the world, and Satan to fight against us—Rom. 8:3.
 - 2) God hates the flesh in the same manner that He hates Satan, and He wants to destroy the flesh in the same manner that He wants to destroy Satan—Exo. 17:16; Deut. 25:17-19; 1 Sam. 15:2-3.
 2. The self is the soul-life with the emphasis on human thoughts and opinions—Matt. 16:23-25:
 - a. In Matthew 16:23-25 three terms are related to one another: mind, himself, and soul-life:
 - 1) Our mind is the expression of our self, and our self is the embodiment of our soul-life—vv. 23-25.
 - 2) Our soul-life is embodied in and lived out by our self, and our self is expressed through our mind, idea, thought, concept, and opinion—vv. 22-23.
 - b. The self is the embodiment of Satan; the self is the essence of Satan in the soul, making the soul independent from God to express its self-opinion and self-will—v. 23; Gen. 3:1-6; 2 Cor. 11:3.
 - c. The self is the soul declaring its independence from God—Matt. 16:23;

Luke 14:26; Job 42:5-6.

3. **The natural constitution is the aggregate of our physical and mental abilities—1 Cor. 2:14-15; Phil. 3:3, 10-11:**
 - a. The natural strength and ability do not have the divine element.
 - b. The natural strength and ability act on their own, not according to God's will.
 - c. When we work with our natural ability, we seek our own glory and satisfy our own desire.
 - d. When our natural strength and ability are dealt with by the cross, they become useful in resurrection—v. 11.

Day 5

C. The fourth stage of our spiritual experience and spiritual life is the highest stage—Christ's full growth in us—the stage of spiritual warfare, where Christ is fully grown and matured in us—Eph. 4:13-16; 6:10-18:

1. At the end of the third stage, we express God with His image, and in the fourth stage, we represent Him with His authority—Gen. 1:26.
2. The experience of life in the fourth stage includes knowing the Body, knowing ascension, reigning with Christ, engaging in spiritual warfare, and being full of the stature of Christ—1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 6:10-12.
3. In order to know the Body and live in the Body, we must first deal with the flesh, the self, and the natural constitution—Gal. 5:24; Matt. 16:24:
 - a. If we still live according to the flesh, in ourselves, and serve the Lord in our natural ability, there is no way for us to know the Body—1 Cor. 12:12.
 - b. Only when our flesh has been dealt with, the self-opinion has been broken, and the natural life has been smashed will the divine life within us enable us to know the Body and realize that we are simply members of the Body and that the life within us cannot be independent.
4. If we want to fight the spiritual warfare and deal with God's enemy, we must first deal with our flesh, self, and soul-life—2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-12:

- a. Engaging in spiritual warfare to deal with Satan and recover the earth for God requires that we be wholly and absolutely for God and obey Him completely—Gen. 1:26-28:
 - 1) We cannot preserve ourselves or leave one bit for ourselves.
 - 2) When we are dealing with Satan, self must be utterly abandoned.
- b. The church must engage in spiritual warfare, fighting to bring in the kingdom of God—Matt. 12:28; Eph. 6:10-18; Rev. 12:10a; 11:15.

Day 6

- V. The prayer at the incense altar issued in the numbering of the children of Israel for the formation of an army to fight for God's interest on the earth—Exo. 30:11-16; Num. 1:45-46:**
 - A. As a result of the prayer at the incense altar, the Lord conducts a "military census" of the saints in the churches; those who are numbered are qualified to go to war for God's move on the earth—2:32; 4:23; 2 Tim. 2:3.**
 - B. The intercession offered at the incense altar is for the growth and maturity of the believers so that an army can be formed—Eph. 4:13; 6:10-12:**
 - 1. The more we pray at the incense altar, the more we will realize that the need for maturity is desperate, and the greater will be the urgency to pray for the growth in life unto maturity—1 Cor. 2:6; 3:1-2; 14:20; 16:13; Heb. 5:14—6:1; Eph. 3:16.
 - 2. Only when such an army is formed will God be able to move on earth for His purpose; apart from an army formed of mature ones, there is no way for God to move—4:13; 6:10-12.

WEEK 2 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Num. 1:3 From twenty years old and upward, all who are able to go forth for military service in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their companies.

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ.

The numbering of the Israelites is based on three basic matters: genealogy, which is related to life; age, which is related to maturity; and the confirmation by Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the twelve tribes. Today the formation of God's people into an army is a matter of coordination, which is based on three matters: life, maturity, and confirmation. These three matters must be fulfilled in order for God's people to be properly formed, which is to be properly coordinated. (CWWL, 1960, vol. 1, "Synopsis of Numbers," p. 71)

Today's Reading

A person's genealogy is related to his life, whereas his age is related to his growth and maturity. If an Israelite was not mature, even though he was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he could not be numbered. Those who were one month old and upward were considered Israelites; this is related to life. However, to be formed into an army, an Israelite needed to be at least twenty years old; this is related to growth and maturity. Although there were about two million Israelites at the time of Numbers, only six hundred three thousand five hundred fifty were twenty years old and upward and were able to go forth for military service (Num. 1:45-46). This is also true in the church today. Even though there are many believers on earth, only a small number among them are mature in life to the extent that they are able to fight for God's testimony. In other words, not all the saved and baptized saints are mature enough to be able to fight for God's testimony.

Concerning the matter of warfare, Numbers mentions the age for those enlisting in the army, which was twenty years old and upward; yet this book does not mention the age for retirement. Caleb fought when he was eighty years old (Josh. 14:6, 10-11), and Moses led the children of Israel in the wilderness until he was one hundred twenty years old. This signifies that those who are mature in life and are able to fight for God's testimony are not, and should not be, limited by age.

God's army was strong, just as Caleb was able to fight and was as strong before God in his eighties as he was in his forties (vv. 7, 10-11). This signifies that we must have both life and maturity in life in order to be numbered by God. According to Numbers, neither children nor women were numbered. Children signify immaturity, and women signify weakness. In principle, the same is true of the church. Although some believers may have been saved for a long period of time, they are still weak and not sufficiently strong in the Lord. Only males who were twenty years old and upward were able to engage in warfare; this signifies that among the believers, only those who are mature in life and strong are able to fight in spiritual warfare.

Those who were numbered needed to be confirmed by Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the twelve tribes....Here Moses signifies Christ as the Head of the Body who executes His authority. Aaron signifies Christ as the High Priest who exercises His priesthood. The Lord is not only the Head with authority but also the Priest coming to care for, examine, and confirm God's people. Moreover, the leaders of the twelve tribes signify the elders and leading ones in the church. This indicates that the numbering of God's people is based on life and maturity in life and is confirmed by spiritual authority.

Today in the church there is the headship and priesthood of Christ. When a church is in a normal condition, the elders take the lead in the church and learn to live before God to confirm and judge whether people have life and are sufficiently mature and strong. (CWWL, 1960, vol. 1, "Synopsis of Numbers," pp. 68-69)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1960, vol. 1, "Synopsis of Numbers," ch. 2; Life-study of Numbers, msgs. 2-3

WEEK 2 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Col. 2:19 ...Holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

Eph. 3:17 ...Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith...

If a Christian has the proper growth in life, when you touch his thoughts, you will sense the taste of the Lord in it; when you touch his likes or even his dislikes, you will sense the taste of the Lord; and if you watch the way he decides and chooses, you will also sense the taste of the Lord.... [This] is because he allows the Lord's Spirit and the Lord's life to permeate from his spirit into his mind, emotion, and will. That is, he allows the Lord's life to spread and expand in him and also allows the Lord's life in him to grow step by step and to mature little by little. In the same way, the more the fruit on a tree grows, the more it matures. One day the Lord's Spirit and life will permeate our whole being completely, causing our whole being to be filled with the Lord and to have the taste of the Lord in full. When this happens, we will be mature believers. Not only will we be blameless in our daily walk, but when others touch us, they will be able to sense the taste of the Lord in our thoughts, preferences, and ideas. This will be the case because the Lord's Spirit and life will have spread from our spirit to every part of our soul. (CWWL, 1955, vol. 3, "The Way for a Christian to Mature in Life," pp. 300-301)

Today's Reading

Our heart is often closed toward the Lord, and the Lord is detained in our spirit to the extent that He cannot come out. Although the Lord is within us, it is as if He is surrounded by signs that say, No Thoroughfare. Thus, the Lord is not able to move within us even a little bit, and He does not have an opportunity to come out of us.

This does not mean that we do not acknowledge the Lord at all; it

means that there is no ground for the Lord in our thoughts. We think about this and that, but we do not think about the Lord. There is also no ground for the Lord in our emotions. We love many things, but we do not love the Lord. Moreover, there is no ground for the Lord in our will—in our decisions and choices. Our self has all the ground. Although we have been saved and have the Lord in our spirit, the Lord cannot come out from our spirit to control our mind, emotion, and will. We believe in the Lord and have the Lord, but our mind, emotion, and will are independent of the Lord, and the Lord has no ground in these three parts of our soul. This is the reason why we are not mature in life.

In order for us to grow in life, our heart must be open to the Lord, and our mind, emotion, and will must be opened to the Lord. Once these three parts are open, the Lord will be able to spread out from our spirit into our mind, emotion, and will to reach these different parts of our soul. How do we open our heart to the Lord? Whenever we have to make a determination or decision, we should first say to the Lord, "O Lord, I love You. I am willing to please You." This kind of prayer opens our will to the Lord, and once our will is opened, the Lord will enter into it. In addition, whenever we love or desire something, we should stop for a moment and say to the Lord, "O Lord, I love You. I want to please You." This opens our emotion to the Lord. When we do this, the Lord will surely enter into our emotion. Similarly, whenever we begin to think about something, we should stop our thinking for a moment and say to the Lord, "O Lord, I love You. I want to please You." This kind of statement opens our mind to the Lord, and through this opening, the Lord will be able to enter into our mind.

Whenever we open to the Lord in our mind, the Lord's Spirit will gain the opportunity to enter into the different parts of our soul. (CWWL, 1955, vol. 3, "The Way for a Christian to Mature in Life," pp. 306-308)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1955, vol. 3, "The Way for a Christian to Mature in Life," chs. 18-19; CWWL, 1953, vol. 3, "The Knowledge of Life," chs. 1, 12; Life-study of Genesis, msgs. 92-93

WEEK 2 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

S. S. 4:4 Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory: a thousand bucklers hang on it, all the shields of the mighty men.

Eph. 6:10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

Song of Songs 3 tells us of the maturity of the seeking one, and chapter 4 continues by explaining how she reached such a mature stage....Eventually, she is reckoned by the Lord as Jerusalem. This is the maturity that is mentioned in chapter 3 when she becomes the palanquin. A palanquin is a miniature of the city. The city contains the Lord in a full way, and the palanquin contains the Lord on a smaller scale....Then chapter 4 explains that such a maturity is reached by the subduing of the will.

In 4:4 the Lord likens [the seeking one's] neck to the tower of David....The hair signifies our will, and...our neck also signifies our will. Those who are rebellious toward God in the Bible are called stiff-necked (Exo. 32:9; Acts 7:51). So we see that a flock of goats appearing on the mountain [S. S. 4:1] shows the subduing of her will, and the tower of David illustrates how strong her will is in resurrection. First of all, our will must be subdued; then it must be strong in resurrection. The natural will must be dealt with, and then we will have a resurrected will. The crucified and subdued will is just like a flock of goats standing on a mountainside, but the resurrected will must be like the tower of David builded up as an armory. (CWWL, 1972, vol. 1, "Life and Building as Portrayed in the Song of Songs," pp. 273-274)

Today's Reading

How poetic the Song of Songs is! First, our will must be subdued; then it will be resurrected like the tower of David, the armory for the spiritual warfare. All the weapons for spiritual warfare are kept in our subdued and resurrected will. If our will has never been subdued by the Lord, it can never be a strong armory to keep all the weapons for spiritual warfare. All

the weapons are mostly defensive, not offensive. It is not so much a matter of going out to fight as it is a matter of standing to resist. Bucklers and shields are all for protection in order to stand. In spiritual warfare, we are not so much on the offensive as we are on the defensive, standing against all the devilish, subtle attacks of the enemy. Most of the items of the armor mentioned in Ephesians 6 are also defensive. There is really no need for us to fight; the Lord has won the battle already.

We simply need to stand and resist all the enemy's attacks. The bucklers and the shields that protect us against the arrows of the enemy are kept in this tower, which is the subdued and resurrected will of the Lord's seeking one. This is the real maturity in life.

An unsubdued will is, on the one hand, stubborn, and on the other hand, weak. When the enemy comes, the stubborn, unsubdued will always makes an unconditional surrender. We all know this by our own experience....The sisters who are stubborn in the matter of submission are the first to surrender when the enemy attacks. But if we have a submissive will, a will that has been subdued like a flock of goats on a mountainside, our will is expressed like a tower of David. When the enemy comes, our will is like the tower of David that holds all kinds of weapons against his attacks.

The secret of the maturity of the seeking one in Song of Songs 3 is that her will has been completely subdued and resurrected. Of all eight figures [of the seeking one in the first three chapters of Song of Songs], the first one, [the mare], is strongest in the will, and the last one, [the crown], has no will of its own at all. The mare has an exceedingly strong will, but the palanquin and the crown have no will at all. She has come out of her natural will and is now standing in her resurrected will against the enemy. She is like the tower of David builded as an armory for the spiritual warfare. (CWWL, 1972, vol. 1, "Life and Building as Portrayed in the Song of Songs," pp. 274-275)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 23, "The Song of Songs," pp. 61-62; CWWL, 1972, vol. 1, "Life and Building as Portrayed in the Song of Songs," ch. 6

WEEK 2 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Phil. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.

10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

Anything natural does not have the divine element in it, especially the natural strength and natural ability. To use our natural strength and ability is altogether against the basic principle of the church as the Body of Christ, because the church as the Body of Christ is altogether a composition of humanity mingled with divinity. The church as the new man must be full of the divine element. The Lord condemns Christianity because it has become a religion carried out by man's natural strength and man's natural ability. There is no development of the divine element there. But the genuine church is a composition of the divine element mingled with humanity. We must learn this as a basic lesson, and we also must impress every saint who partakes of the church service with this point. (CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "Basic Lessons on Service," p. 140)

Today's Reading

In our service we must do everything in the principle of incarnation. The principle of incarnation is that the divine nature is wrought into humanity. When the Lord Jesus was on this earth, He did everything in His humanity full of the divine element. He did not do anything by the natural strength or the natural ability. He said that He could not do anything apart from the Father (John 5:19). The Father was within Him and one with Him in all His deeds, in all His words, and in all His works (14:10; 10:30). Whatever He did, whatever He said, and whatever He worked was altogether with the Father as the divine element. We need to consider whether the strength and ability we use for the Lord's service are natural or divine. We have to learn the lesson of rejecting our natural strength and

ability, and we have to help all the saints to learn this lesson.

Today it is possible that we may act and do some service for the Lord on our own according to our natural strength and ability but not according to God's will. Because we have the strength and the ability, we feel that we do not need to pray, to wait on the Lord, to seek the Lord's will, or to look for the Lord's leading. This was exactly what happened to Moses. When he slew an Egyptian to protect his fellow Hebrew, he did this on his own and not according to the Lord's will (Exo. 2:11-12). The sad situation in today's Christianity is that people work for the Lord mostly on their own by their natural strength and ability. They do not pray for the Lord's leading. They may pray only for the Lord to bestow His blessing upon what they do. They do not pray that much for the Lord's will, because they trust in their natural strength and ability.

When we work in our natural strength and ability, the goal is to seek our own glory, and the motive is to satisfy our own desire. If we see this vision, it will kill our self-seeking and impure motive. Actually, in the Lord's work we should not have our own desire, and we should not have our own goal for our glory, for our boast. We should do things simply because the Lord leads us to do them. We should not do them because we have something to achieve for our goal. That is wrong. The goal must be the Lord's.

To kill our desire and our goal means to kill our strength and ability. Our own desire and our own goal for our glory are one with our natural strength and natural ability. The people of the world and even many Christians do things by their strength and ability for their desire and glory, but we have to condemn and reject this.

The natural strength and ability are useful if they are dealt with by the cross. After being dealt with by the cross, they are in resurrection.... In resurrection something divine has been wrought into our strength and ability.... After being dealt with, our strength and ability become useful in resurrection for our service to the Lord. (CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "Basic Lessons on Service," pp. 140-143)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "Basic Lessons on Service," chs. 16-20; Life-study of Exodus, msgs. 133-135

WEEK 2 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Nothing requires us to know the Body so urgently as spiritual warfare, because spiritual warfare is not an individual matter but a Body matter. No individual believer can fight with the enemy; it takes the whole Body. If we wish to learn spiritual warfare, we must first know the Body.

We must wait until the fourth stage [of the experience of life] to speak of knowing the Body, because the Body referred to here is the mystical Body of Christ, the church. This Body is formed by Christ as life in each of us, Christ mingled with us. During the second and third stages of our experience of life, we are still living in our own life; therefore, we cannot know this life that mingles with us to form the Body. Only when our self life has been utterly dealt with and we have the experience of passing through the Jordan and entering into the fourth stage [of our spiritual life] will we be able to touch the reality of this life of the Body and come to know the Body. (CWWL, 1953, vol. 3, "The Experience of Life," p. 479)

Today's Reading

The Bible and our experience prove that though each one of us is a member of Christ, the life in each one of us is not a member life but a Body life....Each member [of our body] shares in common the same life together with all the other members, that is, the life of the entire body....Similarly, in the Body of Christ, when one member is joined to the Body or having fellowship with the Body, his life is the life of the Body, and the life of the Body is his life. It would not do for him to be separated from the other

members, or vice versa, because the life in him and in the other members is of the same Body; it can neither be distinguished nor separated. It is this life that joins us together to become the Body of Christ; or, to say it more precisely and emphatically, it is this life that mingles with us to become the Body of Christ.

We cannot, however, experience this before the difficulties of the self have been entirely dealt with. If we are still living according to the flesh, in ourselves, and serving the Lord in our natural ability, the life of the Body, which is Christ Himself in us, has no way of being manifested, and there is no way for us to know the Body. The more we live by the flesh, the less we feel the need for the support of the Body. If we live by our self-opinion, we find no need for the sustaining of the church. If we serve with our natural ability, we sense no need for the coordination of the members. Only when our flesh has been dealt with, the self-opinion has been broken, and the natural life has been smashed, will the life within cause us to realize that we are simply members of the Body and that the life in us cannot be independent. Hence, this life requires us to have fellowship with all other members and be joined to them, and it also brings us into that fellowship and the experience of being joined together. It is at this time that we begin to know a little concerning the Body and become qualified to engage in spiritual warfare.

On one hand, we say that if we want to fight the spiritual warfare and deal with God's difficulty we must first deal with our flesh, self, and soul-life, thus solving our own difficulties; on the other hand, we say that in order to fight the battle, we must first know the Body, and in order to know the Body and live in the Body, we must first deal with our flesh, self, and soul-life. Whether, therefore, we speak from the standpoint of fighting the warfare or knowing the Body, we all must first pass through the preceding three stages—coming out of the flesh, the self, and the soul-life—in order to attain to the fourth stage of the experience of life. (CWWL, 1953, vol. 3, "The Experience of Life," pp. 479-480)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1953, vol. 3, "The Experience of Life," chs. 9-11, 15; CWWN, vol. 34, "The Glorious Church," ch. 1

WEEK 2 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

6:11 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil.

2 Tim. 2:3 Suffer evil with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

First, there is the need of the tabernacle as God's embodiment. Then God's chosen people must experience all the aspects of the tabernacle until they arrive at the incense altar to intercede for God's interests and His move. In particular, God's people need to pray for the formation of the army of the Lord, an army to fight for God's move on earth. This is the reason the census and the propitiation silver are mentioned [in Exodus 30] immediately after the description of the incense altar. Actually, in verses 11 through 16 there is more emphasis on the census than on the ransom silver, the propitiation silver. In verse 12 the Lord told Moses to take a sum, a census, of the sons of Israel according to those who were numbered of them. This numbering of the people is for the formation of an army. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1649)

Today's Reading

If we would be in the army to fight for God's move, we need to mature. We need to grow until we come to the spiritual age of twenty. The intercession offered at the incense altar is for this growth and maturity so that the army can be formed. The more intercession there is at the incense altar, the greater will be the urgency for God's people to grow. More and more we shall realize that the need for maturity is desperate. There is the urgent need for more of us to grow, reach maturity, and thereby become qualified to be formed into an army. Only when such an army has been formed will God be able to move on earth for His purpose. Apart from an army formed of mature ones, there is no way for God to move. Oh, God's

chosen people need to grow!

If the Lord's recovery is to move on, a number of saints need to experience all the aspects of the outer court and the tabernacle. They must go to the altar and then enjoy Christ as their life supply at the table in the Holy Place. Then they need to receive Christ as their light and experience the breaking of their natural being in order to have the Ark, Christ as the testimony of God. Eventually, they will reach the incense altar and intercede for God's move.

Some of the saints in the recovery have had this experience.... These saints long to stay at the incense altar to pray,...“Lord, we call on You for Your recovery. O Lord, move on. But look at today's situation—there are enemies everywhere. Lord, where is Your testimony? We pray that Your testimony will go on.” This is the intercessory prayer offered at the incense altar.

After we arrive at the incense altar and stay there for a period of time, we shall not have the appetite to pray for material things, such as a house or a car. Our only desire will be to pray for the Lord's move. We shall be burdened for His testimony throughout the earth. We shall pray,”Lord, may Your recovery move on. O Lord, what about Your testimony on earth? Lord, move on in Europe and in South America.” We may be so burdened to pray for the Lord's move that we shall not have the heart to pray for personal matters. We shall leave all these matters, including concern for our health, in the hand of the Lord. But even if we outwardly have some prayer for personal matters or for our health, inwardly those things are not our real concern. Our concern deep within is for the Lord's recovery, move, and testimony.

The intercessory prayer at the incense altar makes it urgent for God to have a census among His people so that an army can be formed to fight for His move. This means that it is the prayer at the incense altar that leads to the formation of the army....As a result of the prayer at the incense altar, the Lord conducts a military census of the saints in the churches. Here and there, He numbers His people. Those who are numbered are the ones qualified to go to war. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1653-1654, 1656-1657)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 154

<< WEEK 2 — HYMN >>

Hymns, #395 O Jesus Christ, grow Thou in me

Longings — For Growth in Christ

1

**O Jesus Christ, grow Thou in me,
And all things else recede;
My heart be daily nearer Thee,
From sin be daily freed.
Each day let Thy supporting might
My weakness still embrace;
My darkness vanish in Thy light,
Thy life my death efface.**

2

**In Thy bright beams which on me fall,
Fade every evil thought;
That I am nothing, Thou art all,
I would be daily taught.**

3

**More of Thy glory let me see,
Thou Holy, Wise, and True;
I would Thy living image be,
In joy and sorrow too.**

4

**Fill me with gladness from above,
Hold me by strength divine;**

**Lord, let the glow of Thy great love
Through all my being shine.**

5

**Make this poor self grow less and less,
Be Thou my life and aim;
Oh, make me daily through Thy grace
More meet to bear Thy name.**