

Week Nine

Reading the Book of Proverbs with a Praying Spirit So That It Will Render Us Nuggets and Gems to Strengthen Our Life of Pursuing Christ for the Fulfillment of God's Economy

Hymns: 811

Scripture Reading: Prov. 1:1-7; Eph. 4:22-24; 6:17-18

Outline

§Day 1

- I. **Proverbs is a collection of the words of the wise (1:1-7); it stresses the wisdom that man receives of God through his contacting of God (cf. 2 Chron. 1:10-12; Col. 2:2-3; 1:28-29), and it teaches man how to behave and build up his character in his human life (cf. Phil. 1:20; Gal. 6:7-8; 5:22-26):**
 - A. **Since the proverbs were collected mainly by two kings (Solomon and Hezekiah) in the age of the law, the book of Proverbs may be considered a subsidiary to the law.**
 - B. **The law is the portrait of God; as such, it demands that God's people keep it so that they may be made copies of God for His expression and glorification—cf. Rom. 8:4.**
 - C. **Proverbs, as a subsidiary to the law, instructs people how to behave and how to build themselves up according to God's attributes, that is, according to what God is.**
- II. **Proverbs has a particular character; that is, it presents to us the words of wisdom by many ancient wise men, which is unanimously considered good by all the people who read it; but we have to realize that what the book of Proverbs is to us depends upon what kind of persons we are and by what way**

we take it:

- A. If we are ethical persons with a strong mind and have a desire to be perfect as genuine moral persons, surely this book would help us to make a success in our pursuit of perfection; however, it would not help us to be persons who live in our spirit according to the Spirit of God (2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 1:9; 2:29; 7:6; 8:4-6, 9-11, 16; 1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 2:13-14; Phil. 3:3; Gal. 5:15-17, 22-25; 6:18; Eph. 5:18; 6:18):**
1. In the Old Testament Job was satisfied with his integrity, with his pursuit of human perfection, but that was not what God wanted of him; rather, it replaced what God wanted of him, and it became an enemy of God, frustrating Job as a man created by God to fulfill God's purpose.
 2. God's purpose was for Job to gain Him for the glorification of God, the expression of God; the highest service that we can render to God is for us to gain God to the uttermost, to be filled with God, in order to express God for His glory—Phil. 3:7-8, 12; Isa. 43:7; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; cf. John 17:1.
 3. God's purpose in creating man is to have man gain Him and be filled with Him to be His expression, not an expression of human perfection; therefore, the success of Job in human perfection was torn down by God; then God came in to reveal Himself to Job, indicating that He Himself is what Job should pursue, gain, and express—Job 42:1-6; 10:13; Eph. 3:9; Phil. 3:14; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-18.

§Day 2 & Day 3

- B. When we come to the book of Proverbs, we need to turn ourselves from the mind to the spirit by praying in our spirit (Eph. 6:18; Luke 18:1; Col. 4:2); if we come to Proverbs in this way, we will be touching the Word by the new man, and we will live a life not by our natural man, by our old man, and by our self but by the Lord Jesus, who is our life and person living in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22; John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16).**
- C. We must reject self-cultivation, condemn the building up of the natural man in the old creation (cf. Matt. 16:24; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20), and come to Proverbs as a regenerated man in the new**

creation (Eph. 4:22-24; 2 Cor. 4:16) by exercising our spirit with the Spirit to contact the word in the spirit of prayer so that the word in Proverbs will become spirit and life to us (John 6:63; Matt. 4:4; Eph. 6:17-18).

- D. As New Testament believers, we should believe that Proverbs is a part of the holy word in God's Holy Scriptures; the psalmist says, "I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love" (Psa. 119:48); to lift up our hand unto the word of God is to indicate that we receive it warmly and gladly and that we say Amen to it (Neh. 8:5-6).**

§Day 4

- E. Proverbs is the breath of God for us to breathe in that we may receive the life supply from God; the Bible is God's exhaling; when we read any verse by means of all prayer, this pray-reading becomes our inhaling of God's breath—2 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 6:17-18:**

- 1. All the words in Proverbs are God's breathing, which is altogether embodied in Christ; as we read Proverbs, we need to inhale all that God has exhaled, all that He has breathed out; by inhaling the divine breath in Proverbs, the more we receive the breath of the speaking God, the more we will enjoy Christ—2 Tim. 3:16; John 20:22.**
- 2. Whereas the children of Israel were charged to keep the commandments, statutes, and ordinances, we today need to keep Christ; by taking Christ, keeping Christ, and holding fast to Him, we will gain Him, enjoy Him, and live Him; we need to love Christ, keep Christ, teach Christ, wear Christ, and write Christ—Deut. 6:1, 5-9; Phil. 3:9; 1:19-21a.**
- 3. Because the Scriptures are the breathing out of God, the exhaling of God (2 Tim. 3:16), we should inhale the Scriptures by receiving the word of God, including the book of Proverbs, by means of all prayer (Eph. 6:17-18); as we are teaching the Bible, we should be exhaling God into people.**

- F. We should read Proverbs by being filled with the fullness of God in our spirit (Eph. 5:18-19; 3:19); furthermore, we should read Proverbs in the New Testament Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2),**

with our regenerated spirit (v. 16), and by mingling prayer with our reading (Eph. 6:17-18) in order to mingle the words with spirit and life (cf. John 6:63).

III. According to God's economy, the big proverbs, like nuggets, and the small ones, like gems, are not for us to build up our old man; rather, they are for us to build up our new man to strengthen our life of pursuing Christ for the fulfillment of God's economy in producing and building up the Body of Christ, which consummates the New Jerusalem as God's heart's desire and ultimate goal:

§Day 5

- A. We need to receive the living and operative word of God with a praying spirit so that we can build up our new man and so that we may be able to discern our spirit from our soul—Heb. 4:12:**
- 1. The enemy's strategy is always to mix our spirit up with our soul; our greatest problem is our mixture; the more we know God by being filled with His light, His presence, the more we will treasure purity over power—Matt. 5:8; Luke 11:34-36; Psa. 119:105, 130.**
 - 2. The way to purge such mixture is through the revelation of the Holy Spirit; the dividing of the soul and the spirit occurs when God's word illuminates us, shining within us to reveal the thoughts and intentions of our heart—36:9; 1 Pet. 2:9.**
 - 3. Whatever we see under the shining of God from the word of God is killed by the light; the greatest thing in the Christian experience is the killing that comes from light; the dividing of the soul and the spirit comes from the shining—Isa. 6:1-8; Acts 9:1-4; 13:9-10.**
 - 4. Revelation is seeing what God sees; it is God opening our eyes to see our intentions and the deepest thoughts in our being as God sees them; as soon as God exposes our thoughts and shows us the intentions of our heart, our soul will be separated, divided, from our spirit.**
 - 5. Apart from pray-reading, the book of Proverbs is merely a collection of proverbs, but when we read Proverbs prayerfully, that is, when we pray-read Proverbs, our pray-reading causes all the proverbs to become**

words of spirit and life to us.

B. We should not come to Proverbs as a letter-keeper but as a God-seeker; we should be those who seek God with all our heart, who seek God's favor by entreating His countenance, who ask God to cause His face to shine upon us, and who walk in God's presence—Psa. 27:8; 105:4; 119:2, 10, 58, 135, 168; 2 Cor. 3:6.

IV. Ephesians 4:22-24 tells us clearly that a believer in Christ has two men—the old man and the new man; the old man is of Adam through our natural birth, and the new man is of Christ by a new birth, regeneration; we need to live a life of putting off the old man and putting on the new man; according to God's economy, Proverbs should not be used to cultivate and build up our old man but to cultivate and build up our regenerated new man:

A. In order to enter into the intrinsic significance of the book of Proverbs according to God's economy, we need to be those who are living according to the new creation (Gal. 6:15); the old creation is our old man in Adam (Eph. 4:22), our natural being by birth, without God's life and the divine nature; the new creation is the new man in Christ (v. 24), our being that is regenerated by the Spirit (John 3:6), having God's life and the divine nature wrought into it (v. 36; 2 Pet. 1:4), having Christ as its constituent (Col. 3:10-11), and having become a new constitution.

§Day 6

B. In our spirit there is the marvelous, wonderful, processed, all-inclusive, sevenfold intensified, life-giving Spirit (Phil. 1:19; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 8:16); when we exercise our spirit to contact Christ as the living Word of God (John 1:1; 5:39-40) in the written word of God (10:35), He becomes the applied word of God as the Spirit to us (Eph. 6:17-18); then our reading of any word in the Bible will become

spirit and life to us to revive us (John 6:63).

- C. We need to turn the Bible from a book that apparently teaches us to cultivate the self and to build up the natural man into a book that actually is full of light, life, spirit, and spiritual nourishment by receiving it in a spirit and atmosphere of prayer; this will tear down our self, break our natural man, and supply us with the consummated Spirit of the Triune God.**
- V. We must be persons who love the Lord and pursue Christ, not self-perfection (cf. Phil. 3:3-14), and who love the Lord's word in the entire Bible and read it with a praying spirit, not to seek the doctrine of letters but to seek the Spirit and word of life (cf. John 5:39-40; 2 Cor. 3:6); we should read Proverbs not to gain any help for self-cultivation but to nourish our spirit so that we may live a Christian life that is perfect in the divine virtues, which are the expressions of the divine attributes (Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 5:5-9).**

WEEK 9 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Prov. 1:1-4 The proverbs of Solomon...: For knowing wisdom and instruction; for discerning words of understanding; for receiving instruction in wise conduct, righteousness, justice, and equity; for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young man.

Proverbs is a collection of the words of the wise. The main writers and collectors are Solomon, who wrote three thousand proverbs (1 Kings 4:32; cf. Eccl. 12:9), and Hezekiah, who added some proverbs of the forefathers in chapters 25 through 29.

The theme of Proverbs is that this book consists of words of wisdom teaching people how to behave and how to build up their character in the human life. Humanly speaking, this is the great subject, and all religions and philosophies are concerned with it. The matters of behavior and the building up of character have been the subjects of teaching ever since humankind came into being.

Proverbs stresses wisdom that man receives of God through his contacting of God and that teaches man how to behave in his human life. (Life-study of Proverbs, pp. 1-3)

Today's Reading

Since the proverbs were collected mainly by two kings of Judah in the age of the law, the book of Proverbs may be considered a subsidiary to the law. The law is the portrait of God, demanding God's people to keep it that they might be made copies of God for His expression and glorification. Proverbs, as a subsidiary to the law, helps God's people to keep the law.

Because the law was written according to what God is, the law tells man how to behave and how to build up himself according to God's attributes. God is love and light, and God is holy and righteous. These are some of God's attributes. For God to create man in His own image means that God created man according to what He is, that is, according to His attributes. The law, which was written according to God's attributes,

demands that man behave and build himself up according to God. Regarding this, Proverbs is a subsidiary part of the law, instructing people how to behave and how to build themselves up according to what God is. This helps us to see what the position of Proverbs probably is in the divine revelation in the Scriptures.

The book of Proverbs ... has a particular character; that is, it presents to us the words of wisdom by many ancient wise men, which is unanimously considered good by all the people who read it. But whether it is really good or not depends upon what kind of reader you are.

If you are an ethical person with a strong mind and have a desire to be perfect as a genuine moral person, surely this book would help you to make a success in your pursuit of perfection. But it helps you to cultivate yourself, that is, to cultivate the human “bright virtue” created for man by God according to His attributes, that is, according to what He is. However, it does not help you to be a person who lives in his spirit according to the Spirit of God who dwells in you for the accomplishment of God’s eternal economy, that is, to produce and build up the Body of Christ which consummates the New Jerusalem as God’s heart’s desire and ultimate goal. In the Old Testament Job was exactly such a person. He was satisfied with his integrity, with his pursuit of human perfection. But that was not what God wanted of him; rather, it replaced what God wanted of him and then it became an enemy of God frustrating him, a man created by God to fulfill God’s purpose. God’s purpose in creating man is to have man be filled with Him to be His expression, not an expression of human perfection. So the success of Job in human perfection was torn down by God. In this tearing down by God, God tore down Job also. Job was perplexed, not knowing what to do. Then God came in to reveal Himself to Job, indicating that He Himself is what Job should pursue, gain, and express. Then Job had a big turn from pursuing human perfection to pursue God Himself. (Life-study of Proverbs, pp. 2-5)

Further Reading: Life-study of Proverbs, msg. 1

WEEK 9 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Psa. 119:48 And I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love...

2 Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life;...the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

To lift up our hand unto the word of God is to indicate that we receive it warmly and gladly and that we say Amen to it (Neh. 8:5-6). (Psa. 119:48, footnote 1)

If you are a person who is a law-keeper, surely you will appreciate all the proverbs in this book as words of wise men, thinking that they could help you to be a good or even better law-keeper. If so, you just make all the proverbs many, many laws and fall into the snare of keeping the law as many Jews do, who do not know God's purpose in the dispensation of His law, that is, to expose fallen man's weakness.

If you are a person who loves the Lord and pursues Christ, not self-perfection, and who loves the Lord's word in the entire Bible and reads it with a praying spirit, not for the seeking of the doctrine of letters but for seeking the Spirit and word of life, not to get any help for self-cultivation but for the nourishment of your spirit that you may live a Christian life which is perfect not in human virtues but in the divine virtues which are the expressions of the divine attributes, then this book will render you nuggets and gems to strengthen your life of pursuing Christ for the fulfillment of God's economy in producing and building up the Body of Christ. (Life-study of Proverbs, p. 5)

Today's Reading

God does not want us just to seek the knowledge, doctrine, truth, theology, and so-called revelation in letters. God wants us to seek after Him

that we may gain Him and that He may fill us up with Himself for His expression. He is the Spirit, and we worship Him and contact Him in our spirit. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. The word spoken to us by the Lord should become the Spirit and the life to us (John 6:63). If we study the Bible by the way of letters, not by the way of the Spirit and of life, we make the Bible, regardless of what part, a book of letters. Most Christians today have made the New Testament of the Spirit and of life the Old Testament of letters. To Paul the apostle even the Old Testament was like the New Testament, of the Spirit and of life. Too many Christians have made the New Testament proverbs, precepts, exhortations, and instructions of letters. Our life-studies have made all of the Old Testament, as the Word of God, books of the Spirit and of life. By this we have to realize that what the book of Proverbs would be to us depends upon what kind of persons we are and by what way we take it.

As New Testament believers, we should believe that Proverbs is a part of the holy word in God's Holy Scriptures.

We should realize that Proverbs is the breath of God for us to breathe in that we may receive the life supply from God (2 Tim. 3:16).

Next, we should read Proverbs by being filled with the fullness of God in our spirit (Eph. 5:18-19), in the New Testament Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), with our regenerated spirit, and by pray-reading to mingle it with spirit and life (cf. John 6:63).

I can testify that after just a few minutes of fellowship with the Lord, I am fed, nourished, and stirred up. Then when I come to the Bible, every word becomes a gem. We all need to read the book of Proverbs in this way. Then every word of Proverbs will become spirit and life to us. Every word will be living and become a gem to strengthen our life of pursuing Christ for the fulfillment of God's economy in producing and building up the Body of Christ. (Life-study of Proverbs, pp. 5-6, 18)

Further Reading: Life-study of Proverbs, msg. 3

WEEK 9 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:22-24 ...Put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

Ephesians 4:22-24 tells us clearly that a believer in Christ has two men—the old man and the new man. The old man is of Adam through our natural birth, and the new man is of Christ by a new birth, regeneration.

According to my observation, very few believers in Christ and lovers of Christ live a life of continually putting off the old man and putting on the new man. In our daily life we mainly live an ethical life, spontaneously caring for matters of right and wrong. Those who live such an ethical life try their best to do what is right and to avoid doing what is wrong.

What kind of life do you live day by day? Is your daily life a life of the new man?... In your married life is it your practice to love your wife or husband by the new man or by the old man? We should not think that loving in the old man is justified by God. That kind of love is according to the law, according to the old dispensation, not according to God's New Testament economy and not according to the new creation. A brother may love his wife very much, but his love may be of the old creation, not of the new creation. (Life-study of Proverbs, p. 25)

Today's Reading

We need to have this realization when we come to the Bible. We may study the Bible either by the old man or by the new man. Many Christians study the Word in a natural way, according to their old man.... If we merely exercise our mind to get knowledge from the Word, we are reading it by the old man.

To read the Bible by the new man is very different. Even before coming to the Bible, a person in the new man exercises his spirit to contact the Lord. He may confess, saying, "Lord, I am sorry that I live so much in my old

man, not exercising my spirit to contact You, to live by my new man, as one of Your new creation. Lord, forgive this sin.” When we approach the Bible in this way, exercising our spirit, we have the deep feeling and sense that we are approaching, touching, and contacting God. By this I do not mean that the Bible is God but that in coming to the Bible we are coming to contact God.

In Proverbs there are many detailed precepts for man to live a proper human life and ... every precept is a gem. Even if a person accepts all these gems and is successful in keeping them, he will only build up himself to be a perfect man by cultivating the self. But the Lord Jesus said that whoever would follow Him must deny himself (Matt. 16:24).

We must learn to come to the Word of God as those who are approaching God, not to receive proverbs and teachings but to receive nourishment and enlightenment, so that we may know that, according to God, we should always be conformed to the death of Christ by the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3:10), which is the consummated Spirit, who is the reality of the resurrection of Christ.

We must reject self-cultivation and condemn the building up of the natural man. We need to turn the Bible from a book that teaches us to cultivate the self and to build up the natural man to a book that is full of life, spirit, spiritual nourishment, and spiritual enlightenment. This will tear down our self, break our natural man, and supply us with the consummated Spirit of the Triune God. Then we will live a life not by our natural man, by our old man, and by our self but by the Lord Jesus, who is our life and person living in our spirit.

We need to learn to exercise our spirit every day in our daily life, especially in our Bible study. We need to turn ourselves from the mind to the spirit by praying in our spirit. If we come to the Bible in this way, we will be touching the Word by the new man, and it will become to us a book of Spirit and life. (Life-study of Proverbs, pp. 26, 28-29)

Further Reading: Life-study of Proverbs, msgs. 4, 6

WEEK 9 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Eph. 6:17-18 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints.

When we come to the Bible to contact God, we should not only read but pray-read the Word. No matter who we are, as long as we read the Bible without praying, we are reading by the old man. To read the Bible without praying is to contact the Word by the old man. The genuine reading of the Bible by the new man can never be separated from praying.

The term pray-reading has been in use for less than thirty years. This does not mean, however, that before we invented this term, there was no such thing as pray-reading. Many saints have practiced the pray-reading of the Word without using this expression to describe what they were doing. A number of seeking Christians have pointed out that the best way to read the Bible is to read it prayerfully. I have read certain books which said that we should read the Bible in a prayerful way. To read the Word prayerfully actually is to pray-read the Word. (Life-study of Proverbs, pp. 26-27)

Today's Reading

I can testify that long before we began to speak of pray-reading, it was my practice to read the Word with prayer. For example, I remember reading John 3:16 and praying, "O God, thank You. You loved the world so much. O God my Father, You loved me so much that You gave Your Son, the Only Begotten, to me." I had the feeling that I had touched God and that He had touched me. Through my prayer John 3:16 became Spirit and life to me.

My burden in these messages on Proverbs is to help you touch the Word of God by your new man, by exercising your spirit to pray-read.

Pray-reading changes the Bible from letters to Spirit and life. Apart from pray-reading, the book of Proverbs is merely a collection of proverbs. But when we pray-read Proverbs, our pray-reading causes all the proverbs to become words of Spirit and life to us.

Ephesians 6:17-18 unveils the matter of pray-reading, and our invention of the term pray-reading was based on these verses. Ephesians 6:17-18 tells us to “receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit.” Here we see that we should receive the word of God not merely by exercising our mind to understand but by means of all prayer and petition, praying by exercising our spirit. Prayer is general; petition particular.

We receive the word by reading. However, to receive (read) without praying is altogether a matter in the mind. Along with our reading we must pray. When we pray-read the Word by exercising our spirit, the word in black and white immediately becomes the Spirit. In this way the Spirit and the word are one. When we read, it is a word. When we pray with the exercise of our spirit, the word becomes Spirit and life. Whenever we come to the Word we must pray, and we should pray not merely with the mind but with the spirit.

The Bible is God’s breathing. God is breathing out Himself as the word (2 Tim. 3:16a). This means that the Bible is God’s exhaling. The exhaling of God in the Bible is waiting for us to inhale. When we read any verse and pray, this praying becomes our inhaling of God’s breath. By this the Word becomes Spirit and life to us in our experience. If this is not our situation, then even in our reading of the Bible we are not in the new man but are still in the old man. (Life-study of Proverbs, pp. 27-28)

Further Reading: Life-study of Proverbs, msg. 8

WEEK 9 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit,...able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

2 Tim. 1:6-7 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you....For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

The Hebrew believers were wondering what they should do with their old Hebrew religion.... So the writer of this book said that the word of God, that is, what was quoted from the Old Testament, could pierce into their wondering like a sharp two-edged sword and divide their soul from their spirit. As the marrow is concealed deep in the joints, so the spirit is deep in the soul. The dividing of the marrow from the joints requires mainly the breaking of the joints. In the same principle, the dividing of the spirit from the soul requires the breaking of the soul. The Hebrew believers' soul, with its wondering mind, its doubting concerning God's way of salvation, and its considering of its own interests, had to be broken by the living, operative, and piercing word of God that their spirit might be divided from their soul. (Heb. 4:12, footnote 2)

Today's Reading

In Hebrews 4:12 the word discern is used....Quite often our thoughts are deceiving. But if we exercise our spirit, there is a discernment that our thoughts are evil, because behind our thoughts there is an evil intention. To discern the thoughts and intents of the heart equals the dividing of the soul from the spirit....The enemy's strategy is always to mix our spirit up with our soul. In today's world nearly everyone is in a mixed situation. They mix up their spirit with their soul. Whenever such mixing is there, the spirit loses and the soul wins.

Before a brother begins to talk to his wife about another brother, he

has to consider, “Is this of my spirit or of my soul?” If it is of his soul, what he says will be either gossip or criticism. If it is of his spirit, what he says will be something led by the Lord. This shows that we have to discern our spirit from our soul.

Actually, our person, our being, is quite complicated ...because we have three parts. We have the flesh, which is bad; the spirit, which is good; and the soul, which is in between. We should always follow our spirit and walk in all things according to our spirit. This is according to Romans 8:4. We should always be on the alert to discern anything that is not of the spirit but of the soul. Then we will remain in the spirit all the time. This is to exercise, to use, to employ, our spirit.

It is easy to know what is of the flesh and what is of the spirit; but quite often it is a very mixed-up situation between what is of the soul and what is of the spirit.

Our Christian walk is a very fine walk. If we are going to walk according to our spirit, we must learn not to do things too fast or to say things too quickly. It is safe to wait awhile. I have had this experience in writing answers to letters. Sometimes I will write a letter and then keep it for another day before I mail it. The next day a new thought might come to me to include in that letter, or I may realize that I said something wrong. To wait in this way helps us to walk according to our spirit.

Within us there is a battle between the spirit and the flesh and even more between the spirit and the soul. So we have to exercise our spirit, to use our spirit, that is, to fan our spirit into flame. Then we should learn how to control our mind by setting our mind on our spirit. We should also always discern what is of the spirit and what is of the soul. If something is not of the spirit, we do not want to say it or do it. This is to use, to exercise, our spirit. I hope that we will practice using our spirit until we build up a strong habit of exercising our spirit. (CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, “The Spirit with Our Spirit,” pp. 186-187)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 54, “The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit,” chs. 7-8; CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, “The Spirit with Our Spirit,” ch. 8

WEEK 9 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

John 10:35 If He said they were gods, to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken.

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

Eph. 6:17 ...Receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God.

According to Romans 10:17, faith comes out of the hearing of the word. Thus, the source of faith is the word...There are three aspects of the word. First, there is the written word of God—the Bible (John 10:35). Then there is the living word of God—Christ (1:1). Finally, there is the applied word of God—the Spirit (Eph. 6:17; John 6:63).

The living word becomes the applied word through the Spirit. God has only one kind of word. First, He spoke, and what He spoke was written in a book. That is the Bible. There is only one book that is the word of God...The Bible is the book of books. What a mercy and what a wonder that in human history such a book has been produced—the word of God! The world today is a mess. So many bad things are reported in today's newspapers. Suppose the Bible were taken away from mankind. I do not think that mankind could exist without the word of God. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 1, "Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans," pp. 286-287)

Today's Reading

We have to either read or hear the Bible. Every week we gather together a number of times just to read, speak, and hear the word. When the word of the Bible is spoken to us and heard by us, right away the written word becomes the living word. That is Christ. When the living word is applied to us and received by us, it becomes the word of the Spirit. Then this word of the Spirit heard by us is the source of our faith. Faith comes from the hearing of this applied word by the Spirit through the living Christ

out of the written Bible.

Early in the morning you may read the Bible but without prayer and without calling on the name of the Lord. Then the word of God is merely the written word to you. It has nothing to do with you subjectively. So you have to have some contact with the Lord by calling on Him and pray-reading the Word. When you call on Him and pray-read the Word, right away you have the deep sensation that Christ is living within you. Then you would say, "Lord, I love You. I love this word here. How I love Hebrews 11:6: 'He who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.'" Right away this written word becomes a living word and then an applied word to you. Then you get into your car and drive to your office. While you are driving, you have something living applied to you. Then you have faith. Faith comes from this source.

All three—the written word, the living word, and the applied word—refer to God Himself. "In the beginning was the Word...and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The Word here is a person. God's written word in the Bible becomes Christ as the living word, who is applied into us as the Spirit, the word of the Spirit. That is God Himself. The more that God is gained by you in this way, the more He becomes your faith.

Thus, the source of faith is God. He is the One who calls the things not being as being and gives life to the dead (Rom. 4:17).

The source of faith is. God in His written word contacted as the living word and applied as the word of the Spirit so that we can gain the Triune God, who is able to call the things not being as being and give life to the dead. This One is embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit. So faith is the Triune God embodied and realized. God in the written word becomes the living word applied as the word of the Spirit. Thus, God embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit is faith. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 1, "Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans," pp. 287-289)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 1, "Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans," ch. 8

<< **WEEK 9 — HYMN** >>

Hymns, #811 My heart is hungry, my spirit doth thirst

Study of the Word — Feeding on the Word

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

(Chorus)

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

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

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

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

**5 Thou in the Word art the Spirit and life,
Thus by the Word I may feed upon Thee;**

**Thou dost as Spirit in my spirit live,
Thus I may drink in the spirit of Thee.**

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

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

**8 Here, O my Lord, may I feast upon Thee;
Flood with Thy Spirit and fill by Thy Word;
May, Lord, Thou be such a feast unto me
As man hath never enjoyed nor e'er heard.**