

Message One

The Intrinsic Significance of the Christian Life

Hymns: E1240

Scripture Reading: John 14:21, 23; 2 Cor. 2:10; 4:6-7

§ Day 1

I. **The Christian life is a life of living Christ; our living should be Christ, and the way to live Christ is to love Christ—Phil. 1:19-21a; Gal. 2:20:**

A. We can live Christ by loving Christ to the uttermost; if we do not love Christ, we cannot live Him, and loving Him is the best way to concentrate our entire being on Him—2 Cor. 5:14; 1 John 4:19; Phil. 1:19-21a; Mark 12:30; Rev. 2:4-5; John 14:21, 23; 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:9; 16:22.

B. To love God means to set our entire being—spirit, soul, and body with the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)—absolutely on Him, that is, to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him, so that He becomes everything to us and we are one with Him practically in our daily life.

C. When we love Him, “the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God” (1 Cor. 2:10); the Greek word for searches is used in reference to active research, implying accurate knowledge gained not by discovering but by exploring; the Spirit of God explores the depths of God concerning Christ and shows them to us in our spirit for our realization and

participation.

D. To live the Christian life is to love Jesus the Son of God so that we will be loved by the Father and the Son and enjoy the Son's manifestation to us and Their visitation to us for Them to make a mutual abode with us—John 14:21, 23.

§ Day 2

E. The Christian life is a life of loving God and loving one another with God Himself as our love; Christ lived in this world a life of God as love, and He is now our life that we may live the same life of love in this world and be the same as He is in His lost-one-seeking and sinner-saving ministry journey—1 John 4:16-19; Luke 10:25-37; 19:10; Eph. 4:20-21; cf. Gal. 5:13-15.

II. To live the Christian life is to do all things in the person of Christ, in the face of Christ—2 Cor. 2:10; 4:6-7:

A. The Greek word for *person* is literally “face,” as in 4:6; it refers to the part around the eyes, the look as the index of the inward thoughts and feelings, which shows forth and manifests the whole person.

B. The apostle Paul, who was a pattern for the believers (1 Tim. 1:16), was one who lived and acted in the presence of Christ, according to the index of His whole person, expressed in His eyes.

C. Whenever our heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away from our heart, and we can behold the Lord of glory with an unveiled face; actually, our turned-away heart is the veil; an unveiled face is an unveiled heart to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ—2 Cor. 3:16, 18; 4:6-7; 1 Sam. 16:7; Eph. 1:18a.

D. The glory of God is in the face of Christ, and His face, His person, is the indwelling treasure in our spirit—2 Cor. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 3:4.

E. We are earthen vessels who are worthless and fragile, but within our spirit we contain a priceless treasure, the face, the person, of Christ Himself (2 Cor. 2:10; 4:6-7); in the whole universe there is nothing so precious as to behold the face of Jesus (Gen. 32:30; Exo. 25:30; 33:11, 14; Psa. 27:4, 8; Rev. 22:4):

1. It is only when we are living in His presence, looking at the index of His being, that we will sense that He is such a treasure to us; if we have some problem, we just need to tell Him; He is right within us, and He is with us face to face—Phil. 4:6.

2. Seeing God equals gaining God, which is to receive God in His element into us to transform us (Job 42:5-6; Matt. 5:8); the very God whom we look at today is the consummated Spirit, and we can look at Him in our spirit to absorb the riches of God into our being and be under the divine transformation day by day (2 Cor. 3:18b; Matt. 14:22-23; Col. 4:2).

F. As we turn our heart to the Lord in our spirit to behold Him face to face and beam Him into others (Isa. 60:1, 5), we are in the process of being transformed into His glorious image unto the day when “we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is”—2 Cor. 3:18—4:1; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:4.

§ Day 3

III. To live the Christian life is to walk worthily of the calling with which we were called—Eph. 4:1-4:

A. The first item of a walk worthy of God's calling is for us to be diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit as the reality of the Body of Christ, with

the transformed human virtues strengthened by and with the divine attributes—vv. 1-4:

1. In the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, there is the transformed humanity of Jesus; to drink of and flow out the one Spirit for the one Body is to drink of and flow out the Spirit of the Man Jesus, to drink of and flow out the humanity of Jesus with His divinely enriched human virtues of lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering for bearing one another in love—John 7:37-39a; 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 16:7; Eph. 4:2-3.
2. If we call on the name of the Lord and feed upon Him, we will enjoy Jesus as a man, and all the virtues of His uplifted humanity will be ours in the Spirit of Jesus for the practice of the recovered church life in the Spirit of reality as the reality of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:3-4, 17; 12:3b, 13; 16:13; Eph. 4:3-4a.

§ Day 4

B. The second item of a walk worthy of God's calling is for us to grow up into Christ the Head in all things—vv. 15-16:

1. In order to grow up into Christ in all things for the building up of His Body, we need to enjoy Christ as our all-inclusive, universal replacement for the producing of the one new man, so we must “hear Him” and see “Jesus only”—Mark 9:7-8.
2. Whatever or whoever is not Christ, God “fires”; God has replaced everything in His Old Testament economy with Christ—1:1-8; Matt. 17:3-5; Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 10:5-10; 11:5-6; cf. Isa. 22:20-25.
3. When God created us, He “hired” us; when He put us on the cross, crucifying us with Christ, He “fired” us; when He resurrected us together with Christ, He “re-hired” us by making us a new species of God-men, a new invention of God as His corporate masterpiece, bringing us back to His original intention of creating us for His glory, His corporate expression—Gen. 1:26; Gal. 2:20; Eph.

2:6, 10, 15; Isa. 43:7.

C. The third item of a walk worthy of God's calling is for us to learn Christ as the reality that is in Jesus—Eph. 4:20-24:

1. The reality is in Jesus refers to the actual condition of the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels; Jesus lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God; God was in His living, and He was one with God—vv. 20-21.
2. In His life on earth He set up a pattern, as revealed in the four Gospels; then He was crucified and resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit so that He might enter into us to be our life; we learn from Him, according to His example, not by our natural life but by Him as our life in resurrection—1 Cor. 15:45b; Col. 3:4.
3. As we love the Lord, contact Him, and pray to Him, we automatically live Him according to the mold, the form, the pattern, described in the Gospels; in this way we are shaped, conformed, to the image of this mold—this is what it means to learn Christ—Matt. 11:29; Rom. 8:29.

D. The fourth item of a walk worthy of God's calling is for us to live in love and light—Eph. 5:2, 8:

1. We need to be partakers, enjoyers, of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4); the divine nature is what God is—God is Spirit (John 4:24), God is love (1 John 4:8, 16), and God is light (1:5); Spirit is the nature of God's person, love is the nature of God's essence, and light is the nature of God's expression.
2. We all need to spend an adequate amount of personal time with the Lord to privately fellowship with Him in our spirit so that we can be filled with His loving essence for Him to shepherd others through us and so that we can be filled with His shining element for others to see Him in us—John 4:24; Luke 15:20; Matt. 5:15-16.

E. The fifth item of a walk worthy of God's calling is for us to live by being filled in spirit to overflow with Christ—Eph. 5:18:

1. Speaking, singing, psalming, giving thanks to God, and subjecting ourselves to one another in the fear of Christ are not only the outflow of being filled in spirit but also the way to be filled in spirit—vv. 19-21.
2. To be filled in spirit is to be filled with the riches of Christ to become the fullness of Christ, the overflow of Christ; by calling on the Lord and pray-reading His Word, we can continually receive Him as grace upon grace to become His fullness, His overflow—3:8; 1:23; 3:19b; Rom. 10:12-13; Eph. 6:17-18; John 1:16.

§ Day 5

IV. To live the Christian life is for us to accept the discipline of the Holy Spirit:

A. God wants to take away our taste and change our scent by our accepting the discipline of the Holy Spirit, which is God's emptying us from vessel to vessel for the removal of the lees, the dregs, of our natural outer man until we have the pure taste of Christ and exude the pure fragrance of Christ—Jer. 48:11; 2 Cor. 2:14-15; S. S. 4:16; 2 Kings 4:8-9:

1. “The Father of spirits” disciplines us through trials and chastisement “that we might partake of His holiness”—Heb. 12:4-13.
2. Those who have never gone through trials and chastisement have not been emptied from vessel to vessel; thus, the taste of the lees, the dregs, the sediment, of their natural disposition, their outer man, their self, remains within them and their scent is not changed—Jer. 48:11; Rom. 8:28-29; S. S. 4:16.

B. Mary had an alabaster flask filled with a pound of ointment of very valuable pure nard; when she broke the flask and poured it out on the Lord, “the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment”—John

12:2-3; Mark 14:3; cf. S. S. 1:12.

C. The alabaster flask signifies our outer man, which needs to be broken so that the inner man can break forth; the Lord works in us and on us in so many different ways for the purpose of breaking the earthen vessel, the alabaster flask, the outer shell—2 Cor. 4:7; John 12:3, 24; Rom. 8:28-29.

§ Day 6

D. What we are by nature means nothing; only what the Spirit constitutes into our being counts; the discipline of the Holy Spirit destroys our natural disposition and habits and brings in the constitution of the Holy Spirit in maturity and sweetness; God orders everything in our environment to tear down what we are naturally so that He may form in us a new disposition, new character, and new attributes—John 3:6; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.

E. There are two main reasons for not being broken:

1. A person is not broken because he is living in darkness; in all that happens to him, he puts all the blame on other people or the environment; he has no revelation of God's hand and that God is the One who is dealing with him—cf. Job 10:13; Eph. 3:9.
2. A person is not broken because he loves himself too much; we have to ask God to remove self-love from us; all misunderstandings and dissatisfactions arise from only one thing—secret self-love.

F. We need to realize that everything through which we pass has only one purpose—that God's life would be released through us and expressed in us; may our outer man be broken to such an extent that the inner man can be released and expressed; this is precious, and this is the way of the servants of the Lord—John 12:24-26; 2 Cor. 4:12.

Fellowship concerning the Breaking of the Outer Man for the Release of the Spirit and the Expression of God

We have to know why God has put us in the world. He has put us in the world so that our presence would create a hunger and thirst for righteousness in sinners, believers, and the world. In our work, we have to create a hunger within others. There must be an enigmatic freshness, power, nourishment, and supply within us that will drive others to seek after God by our presence. Others should have a desire to seek after God as a result of meeting us and speaking to us. If we always see others and communicate with them without creating a desire within them for God, it means that we have failed. If our reading of the Bible, prayer, service, and gospel preaching do not produce such a powerful hunger within man, our work has failed. (The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 42, p. 238)

Second Kings 4 gives us the account of the Shunammite woman's reception of Elisha. The Bible says that "one day Elisha was passing through Shunem; and there was a wealthy woman there, who compelled him to have a meal. So whenever he passed through, he would turn aside and have a meal there. And she said to her husband, Now I know that this man who continually passes through unto us is a holy man of God" (vv. 8-9). Elisha passed through Shunem. He did not give one message or perform one miracle. Every time he passed through, he turned aside and had a meal there. The woman identified him as a man of God by the way he took his meal. This was the impression that Elisha gave to others.

Today we have to ask ourselves, "What is the impression that we give to others? What is the thing that comes out of us?" We have spoken repeatedly that the outer man must be broken. If the outer man is not broken, the impression that others receive from us will be nothing but the outer man. Every time we contact others, we may give them an unpleasant feeling that we are self-loving, stubborn, and proud. Or we may give them an impression that we are clever and extremely eloquent. Perhaps we give others a so-called good impression. But does this impression satisfy God? Does it meet the church's need? God is not satisfied, and the church has no need of our so-called good impressions.

...If the outer man is not broken, our spirit will not be released, and the impression we give to others will not be an impression of the spirit.

...What generates an impression in others is the strongest spots we have in ourselves. (The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 54, "The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit," pp. 238, 237)

WEEK 1 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength.

John 14:23 Jesus answered..., If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

We Christians should keep a clean conscience but the main point of our Christian life is to live Christ. To live Christ should be our goal...Living Christ should be primary. All the troubles in our Christian life come because of our not living Christ.

As we are engaged in our daily activities, our living should not be those activities but Christ. Our mind should be concentrated on Christ, but this concentration of our mind depends upon our love for Christ. This is why the New Testament charges us to love Christ (Mark 12:30; Rev. 2:4-5; John 14:23; 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 1:8). If we do not love Christ, we cannot live Him, and loving Him is the best way to concentrate our entire being on Him. When a young mother delivers a child, her whole living is that new baby. For her, to live is her new baby. This is because of her love for her child. When we love Christ to the uttermost, our entire being is occupied with Him, and we live Him. This was Paul's experience...To Paul, to continue to live was Christ, and if he should die, it was gain [Phil. 1:21].

Living Christ requires that we love Him to the uttermost. Sometimes when we have been very captivated by something, that night we would have a dream about that thing...Christ needs to captivate us to such an extent. (CWWL, 1989, vol. 3, "The Experience and Growth in Life," pp. 30-31)

Today's Reading

To realize and participate in the deep and hidden things God has ordained and prepared for us requires us not only to believe in Him but also to love Him [1 Cor. 2:9]. To fear God, to worship God, and to believe in God (that is, to receive God) are all inadequate; to love Him is the indispensable requirement. To love God means to set our entire being—spirit, soul, and body, with the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)—absolutely on Him, that is, to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him, so that He becomes everything to us and we are one with Him practically in our daily life. In this way we have the closest and most intimate fellowship with God, and we are able to enter into His heart and apprehend all its secrets (Psa. 73:25; 25:14). Thus, we not only realize but also experience, enjoy, and fully participate in these deep and hidden things of God.

First Corinthians 2:10 says that the Spirit searches all things. The Greek word rendered “searches” includes active research and implies accurate knowledge gained not by discovering but by exploring. The Spirit of God explores the depths of God concerning Christ and shows them to us in our spirit for our realization and participation. The depths of God refers to the deep things of God, which are Christ in many aspects as our eternal portion, foreordained, prepared, and given to us freely by God. These have never arisen in man’s heart but are revealed to us in our spirit by God’s Spirit. Hence, in order to partake of them, we must be spiritual. We must move, act, and live in our spirit that we may enjoy Christ as everything to us. (Life-study of 1 Corinthians, 2nd ed., pp. 144-145)

When we love Him, not only does His Spirit abide in us but also He Himself will manifest Himself to us [John 14:21]. This means that we have the presence of the One whom we love in our fellowship with Him...We need to be brought more and more into the manifestation of the Son to us, with the Father and the Son making an abode with us [v. 23]. We need to go up the stairway of the Lord’s salvation by loving Him. Then He will manifest Himself to us, and the Father and the Son will make Their abode with us for our enjoyment. (CWWL, 1988, vol. 1, “Living in and with the Divine Trinity,” pp. 304-305)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1989, vol. 3, “The Experience and Growth in Life,” ch. 5; Life-study of 1 Corinthians, msg. 16

WEEK 1—DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.

2 Cor. 2:10 But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive;...What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ.

God first loved us [1 John 4:19] in that He has infused us with His love and generated within us the love with which we love Him and love the brothers (vv. 20-21)...He who hates a brother habitually proves that he is not abiding in the divine love or in the divine light (2:9-11). When we abide in the Lord, we abide both in the divine love and in the divine light. We do not hate the brothers but love them habitually, living the divine life in the divine light and the divine love.

In 4:21 John says, “And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God love his brother also.” The commandment here is the commandment of brotherly love (2:7-11; John 13:34). It is possible to summarize John’s writing here in a simple way: God is love, and if we abide in Him, we will love the brothers with Him as our love. This is John’s basic thought in these verses. (Life-study of 1 John, 2nd ed., p. 310)

Today’s Reading

Second Corinthians 2:10 mentions “the person of Christ.” The American Standard Version translates this phrase as “the presence of Christ.” In the original Greek text the common word for presence is *parousia*. But the word for person here is *prosopon*. Paul said, “Whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ.” Paul forgave a brother in the person of Christ. This Greek word means the face, the part around the eyes, which is the index of all the

inward thoughts and feelings to signify the presentation of the whole person. The part of the face around the eyes is the index of all the inward thoughts and feelings, signifying what a person is thinking and how he feels within. Paul forgave that brother

in the person of Christ, according to the index of His whole person expressed in His eyes. Paul lived not only in the presence of the Lord but also in the index of the inward feelings and thoughts of Christ. This is so deep, so tender, and so delicate. I cannot fully express the feeling I had within when I discovered the meaning of this word person. I bowed before the Lord and said, "Lord, for all these years I have never realized that I have to live not merely in Your presence but in Your person in such a tender way." It is not just to live in His presence but even more to live in His person...We may say that we live, act, and behave in the presence of the Lord, but who behaves himself in the person of Christ...? But here in 2:10 there is a phrase telling us that Paul was such a person, behaving himself all the time in the index of the Lord's eyes, the index of His inward feelings and thoughts, in His person.

Paul looked at the index of the Lord's eyes, and he knew that he had to forgive that brother. He forgave him not according to his feeling, not according to his thought, but according to the feeling, the thought, of the Indweller within him. He was behaving himself in the person of Christ. When he forgave, he forgave in the person of Christ. He wanted to let the Corinthians know that he did not forgive according to himself or according to his flesh but in the person of Christ. This is what it means to live by Christ. The apostle Paul had been reduced to such an extent that he never behaved himself in his person. He behaved himself in the person of Christ, in the face, in the thought, in the expression of the feeling of Christ. To live in the person of Christ is so tender and so deep. Paul was a person reduced to nothing except taking Christ as his person. He behaved himself in the person of Christ. (CWWL, 1967, vol. 2, "An Autobiography of a Person in the Spirit," pp. 158-159)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 John, msg. 35; Life-study of Luke, msg. 25; CWWL, 1967, vol. 2, "An Autobiography of a Person in the Spirit," ch. 4

WEEK 1—DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:1-3 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love, being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

The first item of a walk worthy of God's calling is to keep the oneness, and the second is to grow up into Christ the Head. The third item is to learn Christ as the reality is in Jesus.

In order to have the virtues spoken of in Ephesians 4:2, we need a transformed humanity. In our natural humanity there is no lowliness, meekness, or long-suffering. But these virtues are to be found in our transformed humanity, that is, in the humanity of Jesus...Meekness and lowliness are characteristics of the humanity of Jesus [Matt. 11:29]. Any meekness or lowliness that we may seem to have in ourselves is a pretense and cannot survive any real testing. Praise the Lord that the humanity of Jesus in His resurrection life can be ours today! The more we are transformed, the more of the humanity of Jesus we have. By having the humanity of the resurrected Christ, we spontaneously have the virtues required to keep the oneness of the Spirit. (Life-study of Ephesians, 2nd ed., pp. 377, 296-297)

Today's Reading

The genuine oneness in the Triune God is seen in the picture of the tabernacle with its forty-eight boards of acacia wood overlaid with gold. In themselves the boards were separate from one another, but in the gold they were one. The bars that held the boards together were also made of acacia wood overlaid with gold...The golden bars signify the uniting Spirit. The acacia wood signifies humanity, and the gold signifies the divine nature...This indicates that the uniting Spirit is not merely the Holy Spirit of God but the Holy Spirit mingled with our spirit.

This mingled spirit is seen in Romans 8...The spirit in verse 4 is our human spirit mingled with God's Holy Spirit. Furthermore, verse 16...clearly points to the mingled spirit, that is, the Spirit with our spirit. In the mingled spirit, which constitutes the uniting bars, there is the transformed humanity with the virtues of lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering.

For years I tried to be meek and lowly, but I failed time after time. Eventually, I learned that the lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering in Ephesians 4:2 are not to be found in our natural humanity but are characteristics of the transformed humanity, the humanity of Jesus Christ. This transformed humanity with all its virtues is typified by the acacia wood within the uniting bars. This indicates that in the uniting Spirit there is the transformed humanity, our humanity transformed by the resurrection life of Christ.

Keeping the oneness of the Spirit requires transformation...If you have not been transformed, you will not have the lowliness or the meekness necessary to keep the oneness. The more we have been transformed, the more we spontaneously inherit lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering. All these virtues are our heritage by transformation.

The oneness of the Spirit cannot be kept by babyish or childish Christians. It can be kept only by the transformed ones. Those who are natural and fleshly cannot be meek, lowly, or long-suffering. They cannot keep the oneness, because nothing in their natural being can ever enable them to keep it. Therefore, I wish to emphasize the fact once again that 4:2 implies the need of transformation. We have problems with oneness because we are so natural, so fleshly, and so much in ourselves. But if we have been transformed, we keep the oneness spontaneously because in our transformed humanity we have lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering.

Ephesians 4:2 indicates the need of transformation, and 4:3 indicates the need of the cross. We need to be transformed in order to have lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering; and we need to be crossed out in order to have the uniting bond of peace. Then we will keep the oneness of the Spirit. (Life-study of Ephesians, 2nd ed., pp. 297-299)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 36

WEEK 1—DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

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

5:15 Look therefore carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise.

18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit.

To live by being filled in spirit is the fifth item of a walk worthy of God's calling. The first four aspects of such a worthy walk are the keeping of the oneness, the growing up into the Head, the learning of Christ, and the living in love and light. In Ephesians 4 Paul speaks of keeping the oneness, of growing up into the Head, and of learning Christ. In chapter 5 he speaks of living in love and in light and of living by being filled in spirit. Thus, in chapter 5 there are three crucial words: love, light, and spirit. Love and light are covered in the first fourteen verses. The next section of this chapter deals with the mingled spirit.

To be filled in spirit (v. 18) is to be filled in our regenerated spirit, the human spirit indwelt by the Spirit of God. Our spirit should not be empty but should be filled with the riches of Christ unto all the fullness of God (3:19). All the items in 5:18—6:9 are related to the one matter of being filled in spirit. Many readers of this chapter pay attention to such details as wives submitting to their own husbands or husbands loving their wives, but they fail to see the source of all these virtues, that is, being filled in spirit. When we are filled in our spirit with Christ unto all the fullness of God, then wives will be subject to their husbands, husbands will love their wives, parents will care for their children, slaves will obey their masters, and masters will treat their slaves in a proper way. All these things are the issue of being filled in spirit. (Life-study of Ephesians, 2nd ed., pp. 419-420)

Today's Reading

If our spirit is flat, it needs to be filled with pneuma. We need to go to the heavenly “filling station” and get our spirit filled with pneuma. In this way we will be filled in spirit. According to Ephesians 3, we are to be filled with the riches of Christ unto all the fullness of God. If our spirit is filled with the riches of Christ, we will have no problems in our Christian life.

Living by being filled in spirit is the fifth aspect of a walk worthy of God’s calling. The first aspect is the keeping of the oneness. This is for the Body life, the church life. The second aspect is the growing up into Christ the Head in all things. This is for the building. Following this, we learn Christ by being placed into the mold, the standard of a living according to the reality in Jesus. We Christians have a high standard with an uplifted principle to govern our daily walk. To learn Christ is to take Him as the standard and to take His life as the principle. Fourth, a life worthy of God’s calling is a life in love and in light. We must live not only according to reality (truth) and by grace but also in light and in love. We need to be those who live in intimacy with God and walk in His presence. Our daily life must be altogether according to God’s heart and in His presence. If we have these four aspects of a worthy walk, we will spontaneously be filled in our spirit.

These five items are arranged in a marvelous sequence. First, we keep the oneness, and then we grow in Christ. After this, we learn Christ and live in love and in light. Then we are spontaneously filled in our spirit with the riches of Christ unto all the fullness of God. Out of this inner filling will come submission, love, obedience, care, and all the other attributes of a proper Christian life, church life, family life, and community life. Therefore, the fifth aspect of a walk worthy of God’s calling is the issue of the first four aspects; that is, it is the issue of keeping the oneness, growing in Christ, learning Christ, and living in love and in light. What a life we have when we demonstrate these five aspects of a worthy walk! If we are filled inwardly unto the fullness of God, there will be no problems at home, in the church, or in the community. This is the crucial point in this message. (Life-study of Ephesians, 2nd ed., pp. 420-421)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 51

WEEK 1—DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

Jer. 48:11 Moab has been at ease from his youth;...and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel; nor has he gone into exile. Therefore his taste remains in him, and his scent is not changed.

Heb. 12:11 Now no discipline at the present time seems to be a matter of joy, but of grief; but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it.

Jeremiah 48:11 describes those who have never suffered any chastisement or sufferings before the Lord. The Moabites had been at ease from their youth. They experienced no suffering or pain. What did such ease produce? They became like wine settled on its lees. If a person brews liquor from grapes or other kinds of fruit, the wine surfaces to the top, while the lees settle to the bottom. The wine floats, while the lees sink. In order to clear the wine, it has to be poured from vessel to vessel...One pouring is not enough; some lees are bound to escape into the other vessel. This is why he has to do this again... He has to keep pouring until no lees are left in the wine. God said that Moab had been at ease from his youth and had settled on his lees. He had not been emptied from vessel to vessel, and his lees always followed him. One must be emptied from vessel to vessel if he wants to do away with the lees. He has to be poured out again and again until one day the lees at the bottom are gone. Moab was full of lees; although he was clear at the top, he was not emptied at the bottom. Those who have never gone through trials and chastisement have never been emptied from vessel to vessel. (CWWN, vol. 50, "Messages for Building Up New Believers (3)," pp. 703-704)

Today's Reading

To be at ease is not a good thing. Brothers and sisters, God wants to purify us. This is why He disciplines and scourges us. Never consider ease and comfort to be something good. Moab's ease caused him to remain Moab forever!

Here are some sobering words: “His taste remains in him, / And his scent is not changed.” Because Moab was not emptied from vat to vat, from pot to pot, and from vessel to vessel, and because he was never disciplined and dealt with by God, his taste remained in him and his scent never changed!

Brothers, this is why God has to work on you. He wants to take away your taste and change your scent. God does not want your own taste and scent...You had a certain kind of taste before you believed in the Lord. Today you may have been a believer for ten years, yet your taste is still the same. Your scent remains the same as it was before you believed in the Lord. The word scent in Hebrew means “smell,” which is the flavor of something in its original state. You had a certain smell before you were saved. Today you have the same smell; there is no change in you at all.

God’s discipline is indeed precious! He wants to uproot us and to empty us from vessel to vessel. God disciplines us and deals with us in many ways so that we may lose our original smell and yield the peaceable fruit...of righteousness.

Please remember that the fruit is peaceable. A man must be at peace with God in order to obtain this fruit. The worst thing one can do is to murmur, to lose his peace, and to rebel during times of discipline. One can be grieved by the discipline, but he should not murmur or rebel. The problem with many people is that they have no peace. This is why we need the peaceable fruit when we are under discipline. If you want the peaceable fruit, you must first learn to accept the discipline. You must learn not to fight with God or argue with Him...Once you have the fruit of peace, you have the fruit of righteousness...If the inward fruit is peace, the outward expression is righteousness. If you have the fruit of peace within, you will spontaneously partake of God’s holiness.

Our hope is that God would constitute us with something, something called a holy character. (CWWN, vol. 50, “Messages for Building Up New Believers (3),” pp. 704-705)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 50, “Messages for Building Up New Believers (3),” chs. 41-42

WEEK 1—DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

Eph. 3:16-17 That He would grant you...to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, that Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith...

Whatever we are by birth, whether good or bad, whether useful or not, is natural and altogether a hindrance to the Holy Spirit in constituting the divine life into our being. For this reason our natural strength, natural wisdom, natural cleverness, natural disposition, natural shortcomings, natural virtues, and natural attributes, plus our character and habits, must all be torn down in order that the Holy Spirit may form in us a new disposition, new character, new habits, new virtues, and new attributes. In order to accomplish this work of reconstitution, the Holy Spirit of God moves within us to enlighten, inspire, lead, and saturate us with the divine life. He also works in our environment to arrange every detail, person, matter, and thing in our situation to tear down what we are naturally. He may arrange to place a certain person in our home in order to tear down our natural quickness or slowness. He may arrange certain matters to abolish our natural cleverness or dullness. He may arrange another situation to tear down our natural wisdom or folly. He uses all kinds of persons, matters, and things to tear down all aspects of our natural being in order that He may conform us to the image of Christ. (Watchman Nee—a Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age, pp. 115-116)

Today's Reading

The Holy Spirit dwelling in our spirit is confined and imprisoned by the outer man. For this reason the outer man must be broken that the inner man (the human spirit with the Holy Spirit) might be released [cf. 2 Cor. 4:16]. (Watchman Nee—a Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age, p. 117)

Why do so many people remain unchanged after being dealt with for years?...There are two main reasons.

First, these ones are living in darkness,...not [seeing] God's hand. God is working and breaking, yet they do not know that God is doing the work. They are short of light, and they are not living in the light. They only see men, thinking that men are opposing them. Or they only see the environment, complaining that it is too harsh...May the Lord grant us the revelation to see God's hand. May we kneel down and say, "This is You. This is You. I accept it."... At a minimum we have to know that hand and see that it is not the world, our family, or the [saints] who are dealing with us...God is the One who is dealing with us...We have to accept and believe everything that the Lord has done. He can never be wrong in what He does.

Second, a person is not broken because he loves himself too much...When God plucks this self-love from us, we have to worship Him, saying, "Lord! If this is Your hand, I accept it from my heart." We have to remember that all misunderstandings, complaints, and dissatisfactions arise from only one thing—secret self-love...Many times problems arise because we try to save ourselves...Self-love is the root of our problem. May the Lord speak within us today, and may we pray, "My God! I now see that everything comes from You...All of these things were done with only one purpose in mind—that Your life would be expressed through me...Through self-love I have done many things to save myself, and I have wasted much of Your time. Today I see Your hand, and I willingly consecrate myself to You. I commit myself to Your hand once again."

Hopefully the Lord will find a way through us. May our outer man be broken to such an extent that the inner man can be released and expressed. This is precious, and this is the way of the servants of the Lord. (CWWN, vol. 54, "The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit," pp. 157-159)

Further Reading: Watchman Nee—a Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age, chs. 15-16

WEEK 1 — HYMN

Deeper, deeper, in the cross of Jesus

The Church — Building by the Growth in Life

1240

1. Deeper, deeper, in the cross of Jesus; Deeper let me go; Death and life, they always go together; Deepen, Lord, the
flow. (C) Oh, deep - er yet we pray, Do work in us each day; Go
deep - er, through and through, Till in Thee we're whol - ly new.

2. Higher, higher, in the life of Jesus;
Lord, we are so low.
By Thy life we all can go much higher—
Higher let us go.
Oh, higher yet we pray—
Transform us every day—
And richer in the flow;
May Thy life be all we know.
3. Growing, growing, in us He is growing,
More and more each day.
Into all our living He is flowing—
This is now His way.
For growth, O Lord, we pray;
Increase in us each day.
It's not enough to know;
Now Thy life in us must grow.
4. Living, living, Christ is all our living,
He's so practical:
Small things, big things, anything and all things—
He's involved in all.
Live Christ in every way;
Oh, live Him out today.
His name you now must call,
And give Him your all for all.

(To be continued on the next page)

5. Person, Person, Jesus is our Person,
Living now in us.
He's our tastes, our attitudes and actions;
Oh, how glorious!
Our Person, Lord, Thou art
Make home in all our heart.
As life in every way
Be our Person, Lord, each day.

6. Churches, churches, in the local churches
We all find the flow:
Deeper, higher, Christ as all our living,
For the church we grow.
The churches are today
Just Christ in every way.
For this, from self we cease,
For Thy Body, Thine increase.

7. Building, building, we will see the building
Of the church this way:
Christ experienced will produce the building—
He's the only way.
Oh, build us, Lord, we pray,
By growth of life each day.
Oh, make us now such men
For the new Jerusalem.

8. Coming, coming, Jesus soon is coming
For His chosen Bride.
In, the churches we are all preparing
To be glorified.
Lord Jesus, come again
This cry is deep within
We'll praise Thee to the end,
Oh, come back! Come back! Amen!

Composition for prophecy with main point and sub-points:
