

Outline Three

Coming to the Full Knowledge of the Truth by Studying the Truth with the Life-studies to be Equipped to Teach the Truth to Others

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 2:4; 4:6; 2 Tim. 2:15; Eph. 3:9; 5:16; Titus 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2:2

- I. **Every believer needs to come to the full knowledge of the truth by spending time in the Word daily—1 Tim. 2:4; Acts 17:11:**¹
 - A. The Lord's recovery today is the full recovery of the divine truths in the holy Word—2 Tim. 3:16.
 - B. In 1 Timothy 2:4 Paul tells us that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth":
 1. In the Lord's recovery, we learn the truth by reading the Scriptures in a daily way—Isa. 34:16a; Acts 17:11.
 2. Every believer has the capacity to come to the full knowledge of the truth; it is possible for every child of God to come to the full knowledge of the truth by spending time in the Word every day.
 - C. Today Christian theology has several major schools of thought; all these schools of thought arise from different ways of studying the Bible, many of which conflict with the God-ordained way of interpreting the Bible according to its spiritual significance.
 - D. We in the local churches need to understand the Bible in the way of apprehending its spiritual significance:
 1. In 1 and 2 Timothy Paul emphasizes that the churches need the healthy teaching so that every believer may come to the full knowledge of the truth—1 Tim. 1:10; 2:4; 4:3, 6, 16; 5:17; 6:3; 2 Tim. 2:15, 25; 3:7; 4:3.
 2. We should study the Bible according to the way ordained by God so that we may help the saints to receive the healthy teaching and know the truth in an adequate way.
- II. **We need to see the four purposes of publishing the Life-studies and the Recovery Version of the Bible:**²
 - A. The first aspect of the purpose is to provide the saints with a simple way to understand the truth in the Bible:
 1. Many of the expositions of the Bible in traditional Christianity may mislead their readers because they present the truth in a way that is difficult to understand.
 2. The Life-study messages and footnotes of the Recovery Version, however, help readers to enter into the knowledge of the truth in the Word through simple words so that every believer can understand them—cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:15.
 - B. The second aspect of the purpose is to help solve the common and difficult problems in the Bible that hinder us from fully understanding the Bible—cf. 2 Pet. 3:16:
 1. In almost every book of the Bible there are a few points that are difficult to understand.
 2. In order to properly understand these points, Brother Lee spent much time consulting Greek dictionaries, lexicons, and concordances.
 3. Thus, the Life-study messages and the footnotes in the Recovery Version of the Bible provide a proper interpretation of many points in the Bible that are difficult to understand.
 - C. The third aspect of the purpose is to minister the life supply to the readers—cf. John 10:10; Rom. 8:11; 1 Tim. 4:6:
 1. Regrettably, many books in traditional Christianity contain little life supply.
 2. Even if we spend hours reading these books, we may not receive much life.

¹ CWWL, 1984, vol. 1, "Being Built Up in the Truth and Growing in Life," ch. 4, pp. 61-66.

² CWWL, 1984, vol. 1, "Being Built Up in the Truth and Growing in Life," ch. 4, p. 63.

3. However, many saints in the churches can testify that by reading the Life-study messages even for a short amount of time, they receive a rich life supply.

- D. The fourth aspect of the purpose is to bring the children of God into His economy, which is His administration with His plan, His purpose, and His arrangement to attain His purpose for the fulfillment of the desire of His heart—Eph. 3:9.
- E. “I encourage the young ones among us to spend adequate time in the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version of the Bible so that they may receive a good foundation in the truth. If they do this, some of them may be able to develop the truth concerning God’s economy by standing on our shoulders, just as we stand on the shoulders of the great teachers of the Bible who have gone before us”—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 1, “Being Built Up in the Truth and Growing in Life,” ch. 4, p. 64.

III. We should enter into all the truths of the Bible by means of the Life-study messages: ³

- A. The Lord has raised up His recovery upon the truth; over the past years the Lord in His recovery has completed the life-study of the entire [Bible].
- B. This is the precious inheritance that the Lord has given to His recovery.
- C. We should not merely obtain some enjoyment from them; rather, we should gain some practical knowledge and experience.

IV. We need to redeem the time to obtain a proper spiritual education in order to teach the truth: ⁴

- A. In order to teach the truth effectively, we need to obtain an adequate understanding of the truth; it is one thing to have a general knowledge of the truth concerning God's economy and another thing to be able to effectively present this truth to others—2 Tim. 2:2.
- B. We should encourage the saints to study one Life-study message with the corresponding verses, footnotes, and cross references of the Recovery Version of the Bible day by day, five days a week.
- C. If the saints practice this, in several years they will gain a proper understanding of the entire New Testament; we should learn to redeem the time to study the New Testament—Eph. 5:16.
- D. Just as young people need to receive an education in order to be responsible citizens in society, so also the young ones in the Lord’s recovery need to receive a spiritual education in order to come to the full knowledge of the truth.
- E. The footnotes of the Recovery Version of the Bible and the Life-study messages are the Lord’s provision for the saints in the recovery to obtain a solid spiritual education.
- F. If the saints practice to read a few Life-study messages every week, in five years they will have read more than five hundred messages.
- G. The young people need to realize that because they have many years ahead of them, they are in a golden time to obtain a proper spiritual education by studying the truth in the Word.
- H. The best way to study all the crucial points of the divine revelation in the New Testament is to read the Life-study messages and the footnotes of the Recovery Version according to the sequence of the New Testament, book by book, chapter by chapter.
- I. Dietitians say that we need a variety of wholesome nutrients in order to have a healthy diet; similarly, in order to have a balanced spiritual diet, we need to read the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version footnotes, which contain a variety of spiritual “nutrients.”

V. “I encourage all the saints, young and old, to redeem their time to read these ministry publications for several years so that they may become “scribes” disciplined to the kingdom of the heavens, those who are filled with the knowledge of God's economy, and may be qualified to teach the truth concerning God's economy to others” (cf. Matt.

³ CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, “Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—The Four Pillars in the Lord’s Recovery,” ch. 1, p. 359.

⁴ CWWL, 1984, vol. 1, “Being Built Up in the Truth and Growing in Life,” ch. 4, pp. 65-66.

13:52; Titus 1:9)—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 1, “Being Built Up in the Truth and Growing in Life,” ch. 4, p. 66.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**COMING TO THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH
AND TEACHING THE TRUTH
BY SPENDING ADEQUATE TIME
IN THE WORD AND THE MINISTRY**

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RECOVERY
OF THE TRUTHS IN THE BIBLE**

We need to care for the deeper truths in the Bible. Regrettably, through the centuries many Christians have neglected the Word of God. Early in the fourth century the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, initiated the formation of what would become the apostate Roman Catholic Church. By the end of the sixth century, the papal system was established, and the Roman Catholic Church was fully formed. The Catholic Church did not allow laymen to read the Bible, claiming that they did not possess the ability to understand the Bible properly. Consequently, the Catholic Church brought in the period known as the Dark Ages. From approximately the sixth century to the sixteenth century, the Bible was locked away, and the divine truths in the Bible were lost. During the Reformation the Bible was widely distributed in the languages of the people. Although the Bible was unlocked by the reformers, many of the divine truths in the Bible were not recovered. Hence, in the nineteenth century the Lord raised up the British Brethren to recover the truths in the Word.

After I was saved, I met with the Brethren for seven and a half years. During those years I learned a great deal from the Brethren teachers. They mainly emphasized three matters from the Bible: the types, prophecies, and dispensations. These three matters help to open the Word of God. For instance, the types in the Old Testament help to convey the full knowledge of Christ to us. Because Christ is wonderful and all-inclusive, the plain words of the New Testament alone are not sufficient to fully unveil and portray Him. Thus, we need the types in the Old Testament as “pictures” to reveal the many aspects of Christ.

Although the Brethren were experts in typology, prophecy, and dispensations, their teachings did not adequately emphasize Christ as life and the Spirit for the producing of the church. The Brethren spoke concerning Christ mainly in the way of doctrine, not in the way of life. Furthermore, they spoke concerning the church primarily in relation to the dispensations, not in relation to Christ, life, or the Spirit. Because the Brethren were preoccupied with doctrinal knowledge and neglected Christ, life, the Spirit, and the church, they were divided again and again. As a consequence, they lost the testimony of the church (cf. Rev. 2:5).

The Lord used the Brethren teachers to recover many truths in the Word of God related to the types, prophecies, and dispensations. Based upon the past recovery of the truths among the Brethren, in the last six decades the Lord has revealed more truths to us. On the one hand, we stand today upon the shoulders of the great Bible teachers who have gone before us, and we acknowledge that we have learned much from them. On the other hand, we must faithfully testify that we have received further light from the Lord concerning Christ as life and the Spirit for the producing of the church.

EVERY BELIEVER COMING TO

THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH BY SPENDING TIME IN THE WORD DAILY

The Lord's recovery today is the full recovery of the divine truths in the holy Word. In traditional Christianity, believers who desire to learn about the Word of God are encouraged to attend seminaries. In the Lord's recovery, however, we learn the truth not by attending a seminary but by reading the Scriptures in a daily way. In 1 Timothy 2:4 Paul tells us that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth." It is not possible for every believer to study in a seminary, but it is possible for every child of God to come to the full knowledge of the truth by spending time in the Word every day. Every believer has the capacity to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

The divine revelation in the sixty-six books of the Bible is exceedingly profound. To understand and interpret the Bible according to its intrinsic significance is not easy. Through the centuries various schools of theology have emerged, numerous Bible institutes and seminaries have been established, and countless commentaries on the Bible have been written. In most of the Bible institutes and seminaries, students learn theology, history, geography, and biblical Hebrew and Greek. Today Christian theology has several major schools of thought. All these schools of thought arise from different ways of studying the Bible, many of which conflict with the God-ordained way of interpreting the Bible according to its spiritual significance.

We in the local churches need to understand the Bible in the way of apprehending its spiritual significance. In 1 and 2 Timothy Paul emphasizes that the churches need the healthy teaching so that every believer may come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 1:10; 2:4; 4:3, 6, 16; 5:17; 6:3; 2 Tim. 2:15, 25; 3:7; 4:3). We should study the Bible according to the way ordained by God so that we may help the saints to receive the healthy teaching and know the truth in an adequate way.

THE FOUR PURPOSES OF PUBLISHING THE LIFE-STUDIES AND THE RECOVERY VERSION OF THE BIBLE

In the first eleven years of my ministry in the United States, I gave messages in conferences concerning various subjects, such as Christ, the church, and the kingdom. Later, I realized that no single subject could adequately cover the entire revelation in the Bible. I felt that I should go on in the ministry to open the Bible to the saints book by book. Therefore, we began to have a life-study of the Bible in 1974 through semiannual trainings in order to study the entire Bible book by book.

Our purpose in publishing the Life-studies and the footnotes of the Recovery Version of the Bible is fourfold. The first aspect of our purpose is to provide the saints with a simple way to understand the truth in the Bible. Many of the expositions of the Bible in traditional Christianity may mislead their readers because they present the truth in a way that is difficult to understand. The Life-study messages and footnotes of the Recovery Version, however, help readers to enter into the knowledge of the truth in the Word through simple words (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:15). The apostle John uses simple words and expressions in his Gospel. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In John 14:6 the Lord declared, "I am the way and the reality and the life." Although John's writing is simple, the truth conveyed in it is profound. Likewise, in presenting the profound truths in the Bible, I endeavor to use simple terms and expressions so that every believer can understand them.

The second aspect of our purpose is to help solve the common and difficult problems in the Bible that hinder us from fully understanding the Bible (cf. 2 Pet. 3:16). In almost every book of the Bible there are a few points that are difficult to understand. In order to properly understand these points, I spend much time consulting Greek dictionaries, lexicons, and concordances. Thus, the Life-study messages and the footnotes in the Recovery Version of the Bible provide a proper interpretation of many points in the Bible that are difficult to understand.

The third aspect of our purpose is to minister the life supply to the readers (cf. John 10:10; Rom. 8:11; 1 Tim. 4:6). Regrettably, many books in traditional Christianity contain little life supply. Even if we spend hours reading these books, we may not receive much life. However, many saints in the churches can testify that by reading the Life-study messages even for a short amount of time, they receive a rich life supply.

The fourth aspect of our purpose is to bring the children of God into His economy, which is His administration with His plan, His purpose, and His arrangement to attain His purpose for the fulfillment of the desire of His heart (Eph. 3:9).

I encourage the young ones among us to spend adequate time in the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version of the Bible so that they may receive a good foundation in the truth. If they do this, some of them may be able to develop the truth concerning God's economy by standing on our shoulders, just as we stand on the shoulders of the great teachers of the Bible who have gone before us. When we were young, we spent considerable time studying classical Christian writings in order to glean their positive points. Many of these points have been consolidated into the Life-study messages and Recovery Version footnotes. If we spend time in the ministry publications, we will receive great benefit.

REDEEMING THE TIME TO OBTAIN A PROPER SPIRITUAL EDUCATION IN ORDER TO TEACH THE TRUTH

In order to teach the truth effectively, we need to obtain an adequate understanding of the truth. It is one thing to have a general knowledge of the truth concerning God's economy and another thing to be able to effectively present this truth to others. I encourage the saints to study one Life-study message with the corresponding verses, footnotes, and cross references of the Recovery Version of the Bible day by day, five days a week. If the saints practice this, in several years they will gain a proper understanding of the entire New Testament. We should learn to redeem the time to study the New Testament (cf. Eph. 5:16). When Brother Nee was a college student, he decided to read the New Testament fifty-two times in one year, that is, once a week continually for a year. He studied diligently and was one of the top students in his class. Nevertheless, he also endeavored to redeem his time in order to read the New Testament. Similarly, I can testify that although as an elderly man I need to rest for my physical health, I endeavor to redeem every moment so that I may fulfill my responsibility in the ministry of the word.

I spent approximately one week composing a single footnote of the Recovery Version of the Bible concerning the significance of the Greek word translated "truth" in 1 John 1:6. This required me to study several lexicons and concordances. If we study this footnote, we will be able to understand the intrinsic significance of the word *truth*. Just as young people need to receive an education in order to be responsible citizens in society, so also the young ones in the Lord's recovery need to receive a spiritual education in order to come to the full knowledge of the truth. Regrettably, many Christians today have not received a proper spiritual education. However, the footnotes of the Recovery Version of the Bible and the Life-study messages are the Lord's provision for the saints in the recovery to obtain a solid spiritual education. The elders in the churches may encourage the saints to read the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version of the Bible after the Lord's table meeting and the prayer meeting. If the saints practice to read a few Life-study messages every week, in five years they will have read more than five hundred messages. We should endeavor to redeem the time in order to come to the full knowledge of the truth. The young people need to realize that because they have many years ahead of them, they are in a golden time to obtain a proper spiritual education by studying the truth in the Word.

If, by the Lord's mercy, we determine to spend time five days a week to read the Life-studies of the New Testament with the footnotes of the Recovery Version, after five years of persistent practice we

will possess the adequate knowledge of the New Testament. We will acquire the knowledge of both the various subjects in the New Testament as well as the crucial points of the truth revealed in each book of the New Testament. The best way to study all the crucial points of the divine revelation in the New Testament is to read the Life-study messages and the footnotes of the Recovery Version according to the sequence of the New Testament, book by book, chapter by chapter. Dietitians say that we need a variety of wholesome nutrients in order to have a healthy diet. Similarly, in order to have a balanced spiritual diet, we need to read the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version footnotes, which contain a variety of spiritual “nutrients.” I encourage all the saints, young and old, to redeem their time to read these ministry publications for several years so that they may become “scribes” disciplined to the kingdom of the heavens, those who are filled with the knowledge of God's economy, and may be qualified to teach the truth concerning God's economy to others (cf. Matt. 13:52; Titus 1:9). (*CWWL*, 1984, vol. 1, “Being Built Up in the Truth and Growing in Life,” ch. 4, pp. 61-66)

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 1, “Being Built Up in the Truth and Growing in Life,” ch. 4.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 5, “Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—The Four Pillars in the Lord's Recovery,” ch. 1.

