

## Outline Four

### **Promoting the Life-studies to Raise the Standard of the Church Life and Bring in a Genuine Revival**

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2, 15; 3:10, 14-17

- I. **We need to be nourished with the riches of Christ by reading the Life-study messages so that we can uphold the high standard of the church life:**<sup>1</sup>
  - A. If we are not nourished with the riches of Christ by reading the Life-study messages, the standard of the church life will remain low; it is by receiving spiritual nourishment in the messages that we can uphold the high standard of the church life—1 Tim. 4:6.
  - B. In recent years many churches have experienced a revival by obtaining spiritual nourishment in the Life-study messages; the saints in these churches not only enjoy the riches of Christ by reading the messages but also enliven and supply the church meetings by sharing these riches with one another in the meetings—cf. Eph. 4:15-16.
  - C. In order to raise the standard of the church life and hasten the progress of the Lord's move among us, we need to partake of the riches of Christ in the Life-study messages—3:8-11.
- II. **We need promote the study of the life-studies to bring in a genuine revival in the Lord's recovery:**<sup>2</sup>
  - A. Now that all the Life-studies of the New Testament have been published, we hope that all the churches would take this set of books as the basis for their study and greatly promote the learning of the truth.<sup>3</sup>
  - B. In every church we have to help all the saints to study the Recovery Version of the New Testament, especially the footnotes, in a careful and thorough way.
  - C. Now the way has been clearly presented to us, and everything depends on whether or not we are willing to pay the price; if we are willing to pay the price, in a relatively short period of time the church will make great progress in learning the truth.
  - D. We should help the saints to build up a practice or a habit that every day they would spend at least thirty minutes in the Word—Acts 6:4; 17:11:<sup>4</sup>
    1. This can be done by taking ten minutes in the morning, ten minutes in the evening, and another ten minutes before going to bed.
    2. We all need to build up such a practice to spend at least thirty minutes a day to get into God's Word.
    3. The best way is to charge the saints to study a book of the New Testament according to their choice; they should get into this book continually and every day.
    4. We should charge them to pray-read two or three verses of this book every day; then they have to study the accompanying message—Jer. 15:16; 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 2:15.
    5. They also need the help of the footnotes and the Life-study messages to enter into the truth; the saints need to take this way every day to get into the truth.
    6. After one year of studying the Bible in this way, there will be a solid change in the saints' home life, private life, and church life.
    7. It is not a matter of quantity but a matter of endurance; you must endure this kind of Bible study.

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<sup>1</sup> CWWL, 1977, vol. 1, "Various Meetings in Anaheim," ch. 1, pp. 515-516.

<sup>2</sup> CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—The Four Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 9, pp. 457.

<sup>3</sup> CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—The Four Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 8, pp. 439-445.

<sup>4</sup> CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, "Elders' Training, Book 3," ch. 10, p. 325.

8. We need to remind the saints week after week, and sometimes the elders need to give the them some direction, some encouragement, and some incentive—cf. Rom. 15:15; 2 Tim. 1:6; 2 Pet. 1:12-13; 3:1.
- E. Try your best in your locality to stir up an atmosphere and to create a hunger and thirst in the saints for the Lord's truth; tell them that the truth is in the unique holy Word and that the best help to usher them into the Word is the Recovery Version with the footnotes and all the Life-studies—John 17:17; Eph. 3:3-4; *Hymns*, #806.
- F. If the saints do love the Lord's recovery, they must get themselves fed all the time with the healthy food so that they may be strong; as a result of eating a proper, regular diet, the saints will be strong, and the Lord will have a strong testimony—1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 1:9; 2:1.
- G. Today the reason that the gospel of the Lord cannot be spread is that we do not know the truth; the truth is the gospel—Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5:<sup>5</sup>
  1. If we speak the truth in every place, we are in fact preaching the gospel in every place—Acts 8:4, 30-35.
  2. The entire Bible is the gospel of God, but it seems that we do not understand this.
  3. Now we have to turn this situation around so that all the saints among us will know how to speak the truth and preach the gospel; this will provide the Lord a broad way to fulfill His desire—Eph. 4:25.
- H. If the saints have Life-study messages everywhere in their homes, their spiritual condition will be greatly revived—cf. Deut. 11:18-21:
  1. If they have the Lord's word, it will be impossible for them not to be revived.
  2. As long as we are willing to take the lead to encourage the whole church to read and to absorb what they have read, revival will definitely come.
  3. If we all rise up to study the truth and to know and pursue the Lord, this will bring in a big, long-lasting, and genuine revival of the church.
- I. We should have a burden to promote the Life-studies continent by continent until every house-hold has the Life-studies, and every saint has the Life-studies both inwardly and outwardly.<sup>6</sup>
  1. The Life-studies are for teaching and helping people to read the Bible.
  2. When you read the Bible, your mind may not be enlightened even after reading it a hundred times—cf. Acts 8:30-31.
  3. However, when you open the Recovery Version of the New Testament, there are footnotes that open the truth to you in the places you cannot understand—vv. 32-35; Eph. 3:3-4.
  4. Once the word of the truth is opened, you will receive the revelation; then when you read the Life-studies, you will be enlightened even more; after you have read the Life-studies, the few verses that you have studied will be fully opened to you—Psa. 119:130.

### III. **We need to learn and practice the truth:**<sup>7</sup>

- A. We need to make a decision to learn the truth; if the young saints do not make such a decision, the church has no future—2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1:13.
- B. For the sake of the spreading of the church to new localities, there is a need of leading ones, some who can bear responsibility; we are short of such ones because in the daily church life we do not learn or practice the truth—1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:24.
- C. If we learn the truth and practice the truth in the daily church life, every member will be able to bear some responsibility; then wherever we spread, there will be no problems; every local church will be strong—1 John 2:14; Rev. 3:8-10.

<sup>5</sup> CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—The Four Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 8, pp. 439-445.

<sup>6</sup> CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—The Four Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 9, pp. 457.

<sup>7</sup> CWWL, 1978, vol. 2, "Crucial Principles for the Christian Life and the Church Life," ch. 7, pp. 618-621.

- D. If we study the biblical truths thoroughly and then present them to people, especially to the college students, they will fully appreciate what we say: <sup>8</sup>
  - 1. On the contrary, if we are short of the knowledge of the truth, it will be impossible for us to preach the gospel on the campuses effectively.
  - 2. Hence, we must strive to pursue the truth; we must exert some effort to be solidly equipped in the truth.
- E. Remember “the tortoise wins the race”: <sup>9</sup>
  - 1. Never forget the race between the hare and the tortoise; the tortoise wins the race.
  - 2. If we keep going slowly, we will win the race; all the “running ones” will be defeated, but the working ones will win the race.
  - 3. Eat regularly, continuously, and slowly; you will then reach the goal.

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<sup>8</sup> CWWL, 1985, vol. 5, “Vessels Useful to the Lord,” ch. 1, pp. 21-22.

<sup>9</sup> CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, “Elders’ Training, Book 3,” ch. 13, p. 362.

## **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

### **BEING NOURISHED WITH THE RICHES OF CHRIST TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF THE CHURCH LIFE AND HASTEN THE LORD'S MOVE**

If we are not nourished with the riches of Christ by reading the Life-study messages, the standard of the church life will remain low. It is by receiving spiritual nourishment in the messages that we can uphold the high standard of the church life. In recent years many churches in the Far East have experienced a revival by obtaining spiritual nourishment in the Life-study messages. The saints in these churches not only enjoy the riches of Christ by reading the messages but also enliven and supply the church meetings by sharing these riches with one another in the meetings. In order to raise the standard of the church life and hasten the progress of the Lord's move among us, we need to partake of the riches of Christ in the Life-study messages. (*CWWL, 1977*, vol. 1, "Various Meetings in Anaheim," ch. 1, pp. 515-516)

### **PROMOTING THE LEARNING OF THE TRUTH**

Now that all the Life-studies of the New Testament have been published, I hope that all the churches would take this set of books as the basis for their study and greatly promote the learning of the truth. In every church we have to help all the saints to study the Recovery Version of the New Testament, especially the footnotes, in a careful and thorough way. This will truly be a great task. In the past we felt that we had nothing to do. Actually, this was because we did not do anything and did not want to do anything. Even when we truly wanted to do something, we could not find the way to do it, so we lost interest in doing anything. However, now the way has been clearly presented to us, and everything depends on whether or not we are willing to pay the price. If we are willing to pay the price, I believe that in three to five years the whole church will make great progress in learning the truth. (*CWWL, 1984*, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—The Four Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 8, pp. 439-440)

### **THE TRUTH ENABLING MAN TO RECEIVE LIGHT AND FREEDOM**

The Lord Jesus said that the truth shall set us free (John 8:32). There is light in the truth, and once we receive the light, we are set free. During the time of the Lord Jesus, the Pharisees and lawyers also read the Old Testament, but they studied only the letter without the light of the truth. However, once the Lord Jesus gave the explanation, the truth was revealed. For example, there was a group of Sadducees who did not believe that there was such a thing as resurrection, so they went to question the Lord. The Lord Jesus said to them that in Exodus 3:6, the section concerning the burning bush, Moses clearly pointed out that God is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. The Lord also told them that God is not the God of the dead but of the living (Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-38). Since God called Himself the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, this proves that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had died, will be resurrected. This example shows us that the Lord Jesus' knowledge of the truth and the light of the Scriptures was very thorough, and the way He expounded the Scriptures was not only according to letter but also according to the life and power implied within them. This is also the focus of the Life-studies. Thus, we must make an effort to read the Bible and study the Life-studies in order to know the truth.

We do not need to worry about the shortage of material or about the way for us to pursue the truth. The only need is for us to be willing to spend the time and effort on this matter. If we all rise up to study the truth and to know and pursue the Lord, this will bring in a big, long-lasting, and genuine revival of the church. (*CWWL, 1984*, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—The Four Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 8, pp. 446)

**PROMOTING THE STUDY OF THE LIFE-STUDIES  
TO BRING IN A GENUINE REVIVAL  
IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

We should have a burden to promote the Life-studies continent by continent until every household has the Life-studies, and every saint has the Life-studies both inwardly and outwardly. The Life-studies are for teaching and helping people to read the Bible. When you read the Bible, your mind may not be enlightened even after reading it a hundred times. However, when you open the Recovery Version of the New Testament, there are footnotes that open the truth to you in the places you cannot understand. Once the word of the truth is opened, you will receive the revelation. Then when you read the Life-studies, you will be enlightened even more. After you have read the Life-studies, the few verses that you have studied will be fully opened to you. Ephesians has only six chapters, but there are ninety-seven messages in the *Life-study of Ephesians*. If you read two messages a day, you will need about fifty days to finish it. After you have spent fifty days to read through all these ninety-seven messages, the content of the six chapters, the entire book of Ephesians, every sentence, and even every word will be clear and enlightening to you. In other words, Ephesians, this mysterious and marvelous book, will be fully opened to you. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—The Four Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 9, pp. 457-458)

**THE LIFE-STUDIES AND THE RECOVERY VERSION**

Through the past ten years up to the present time, it has been fully proven among us that the most profitable writings and publications are the Life-study messages with the footnotes of the Recovery Version. I wrote these things not for scholarly study for people to get a degree but for life ministering, for truth releasing, and for opening up the books of the Bible. We do not need scholarly writings or any kind of books that build up people's degrees...However, I do have a burden to publish things full of Christ, full of the processed Triune God, full of the life-giving Spirit, full of life, and full of the church. The Lord's recovery is just for the processed Triune God to be dispensed into us, and the living Christ, the Spirit, life, and the church are the crucial contents of the Lord's recovery. There is no other place to pick up other books that are so rich, so enlightening, and so nourishing concerning the recovery of Christ, the Spirit, life, and the church. Since this is the real situation and the real condition, I feel that we have no choice but to use the Life-studies, because we realize that this is the best way to bring people into the holy Word.

The holy Word itself says in Psalm 119:130: "The opening of Your words gives light." Millions of copies of the Bible have been distributed. They have been placed in hotels, in homes, and in many places. Nearly everywhere you go today, you find a Bible, but who has entered into the Bible? There has been nearly no entrance. Many have a copy of the Bible, but the Bible has been closed and nearly never opened. Now the Lord has given us a key, an opener. I consider our writings as the opener to open the holy Word. I believe that those of you who have read the Life-study messages can testify honestly that these messages with the footnotes of the Recovery Version have opened up a certain chapter or a certain book of the Bible to you. This is not to replace the Bible but to bring people into the Bible. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, "Elders' Training, Book 3," ch. 10, p. 320-321).

**THE NEED FOR A SOLID FOUNDATION IN THE WORD**

...I have the assurance that if you would get into the Life-study messages continually, you will be different after fifty days. Any message from any book, such as Genesis, Exodus, Matthew, or Revelation, is good for your study. Just go to the Life-study messages. I hope that the Lord would really have mercy upon us so that we would not hold any kind of personal feeling or individualistic opinion. We must be those who solely take care of the interest of the Lord's recovery and the benefit of all the dear saints who have come into the Lord's recovery. We care only for this.

We must do our best to get ourselves into these truths and to get these truths constituted into our being. This cannot be done within a short time, but this must be our practice. I also am burdened that

all the leading ones, either the elders or the serving ones taking some kind of lead, should have a real burden to pray for the saints in your locality that the Lord may stir up their interest, their seeking heart, and their spirit to seek after the Lord in His truth. The truth is nowhere but in the Bible, yet the Bible needs an opener. We need to lead the saints into the real, right, and proper realization of the need of the Bible and also of the help of the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version.

### **BUILDING UP A HABIT OF SPENDING TIME IN THE WORD**

We should help the saints to build up a practice or a habit that every day they would spend at least thirty minutes in the Word. This can be done by taking ten minutes in the morning, ten minutes in the evening, and another ten minutes before going to bed. We all need to build up such a practice to spend at least thirty minutes a day to get into God's Word. The best way is to charge the saints to study a book of the New Testament according to their choice. They should get into this book continually and every day. Some saints may decide to study the book of Romans or the book of Hebrews. They should study every day either three times for ten minutes each or one time for thirty minutes. We should charge them to pray-read two or three verses of this book every day. Then they have to study the accompanying message. We have messages on all the verses. The saints do not need to pray-read the Life-study messages, but they have to pray-read the biblical verses in order to get the help to enter into the truth conveyed in these few verses. They also need the help of the footnotes and the Life-study messages to enter into the truth. The saints need to take this way every day to get into the truth. After one year of studying the Bible in this way, there will be a solid change in the saints' home life, private life, and church life. A few verses seems very slow, but we must realize that breathing is a slow thing. We breathe only a little at a time, but this continual practice accumulates and keeps us living. We may think that this is too slow, but even if it took us ten years to finish the entire New Testament, that would be wonderful. To pick up the truth contained in half of the New Testament after five years would be marvelous. We do not encourage the saints to be greedy and attempt to finish one book in one day. Then "their stomach will burst." We should not encourage them in this way. Rather, we should slow them down. It is not a matter of quantity but a matter of endurance. You must endure this kind of Bible study. I think that we need to remind them week after week, and sometimes the elders need to give the saints some direction, some encouragement, and some incentive. (pp. 324-325)

### **THE NEED OF A PROPER DIET**

...We must realize that to shepherd a church is to take care of a big family with many folks who are young, old, and middle-aged. We must feed them properly, and we must consider what is the most nourishing, healing, and germ-killing diet. We have to make a choice.

Please do not think that I am "selling my cargo." I beg you to forget this thought, which comes from the devil. I am not selling my cargo, but I am ministering the divine truth to God's people. Therefore, as leading brothers, try your best in your locality to stir up an atmosphere and to create a hunger and thirst in the saints for the Lord's truth. Tell them that the truth is in the unique holy Word and that the best help to usher them into the Word is the Recovery Version with the footnotes and all the Life-studies. Of course, we should not practice anything legal. We should not make these things a legal matter that the saints are required to do. However, if the saints do love the Lord's recovery, they must get themselves fed all the time with the healthy food so that they may be strong. As a result of eating a proper, regular diet, the saints will be strong, and the Lord will have a strong testimony. (pp. 326-327)

### **A PRIVATE TIME IN THE LORD'S WORD**

We should encourage the saints to have a private time in the Lord's Word and that they should do this as a proper rule of their daily life. Regardless of how busy or how tired we are, we can reserve thirty minutes a day for a time with the Lord in the Word. It all depends upon our will. If there is the will, there is the way. To save half an hour among twenty-four hours is not a hard thing. If the saints could practice spending one hour or more in the Lord's Word, this would be wonderful, but at least we should encourage them to give half an hour to the Lord every day. The saints should be encouraged to separate or sanctify thirty minutes every day to the Lord. We all can realize what a blessing this will be, and I believe that this will make the Lord very pleased. Then every local church needs to find a way to carry out the meetings in the principle of giving the saints the proper education in the full knowledge of the truth.

### **Learning and Practicing the Truth**

In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul refers to "the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth." We are each a living member of the church with the living God in us. The church being the pillar and base of the truth implies that every member of the church should know the truth. We need to make a decision to learn the truth. If the young saints do not make such a decision, the church has no future. For the sake of the spreading of the church to new localities, there is a need of leading ones, some who can bear responsibility. We are short of such ones because in the daily church life we do not learn or practice the truth. If we learn the truth and practice the truth in the daily church life, every member will be able to bear some responsibility. Then wherever we spread, there will be no problems; every local church will be strong. (*CWWL, 1978*, vol. 2, "Crucial Principles for the Christian Life and the Church Life," ch. 7, pp. 618-621)

### **Needing to Progress in the Study of the Truth**

Today we can easily attract crowds of students through our gospel preaching on the campuses because the students are quite educated and will readily receive the high gospel according to logic and reasoning. In the villages, however, it may not be that easy to preach the gospel due to the people's shortage of knowledge and lack of understanding. In any case, human beings all have the desire to pursue knowledge. If you study the biblical truths thoroughly and then present them to people, especially to the college students, they will fully appreciate what you say. On the contrary, if you are short of the knowledge of the truth, it will be impossible for you to preach the gospel on the campuses effectively. Hence, you must strive to pursue the truth. If you still do things today in the old way—graduate from high school, study two years of theological school, and then go out to be a preacher—that will not work. That way is an outdated way and cannot meet the need of this age. You must exert some effort to be solidly equipped in the truth. This is my main burden for you. (*CWWL, 1985*, vol. 5, "Vessels Useful to the Lord," ch. 1, pp. 21-22)

### **THE TORTOISE WINS THE RACE**

A diligent seeker of the Lord could possibly finish the entire New Testament by studying two hours a day for two and a half years. If the church, however, took seven and a half years to get through the entire New Testament, this would still be wonderful. Never forget the race between the hare and the tortoise. The tortoise wins the race. If we keep going slowly, we will win the race. All the "running ones" will be defeated, but the working ones will win the race. We need to eat regularly, continuously, and slowly. I advise you not to go too fast but to go slowly. You will then reach the goal. If we had started this practice ten years ago, we would have finished the entire New Testament already. Even if you get through half of the New Testament, you will see that you are different. Also, if the entire church could get through half of the New Testament, the church would be different. (*CWWL, 1984*, vol. 2, "Elders' Training, Book 3," ch. 13, p. 362)

## References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1977*, vol. 1, "Various Meetings in Anaheim," ch. 1.
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," chs. 8-9.
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 2, "Elders' Training, Book 3," chs. 9-13.
4. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1978*, vol. 2, "Crucial Principles for the Christian Life and the Church Life," ch. 7.
5. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985*, vol. 5, "Vessels Useful to the Lord," ch. 1.



