

Lesson 4

The Receiving and Handling of the Word

Scripture Reading: Isa. 34:16; Acts 17:11; Psa. 119:147; John 5:39-40; Eph. 6:17-18; 5:18-19; Col. 3:16; Psa. 119:15; 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:2; Acts 5:20; 1:8; Num. 11:29; 1 Cor. 14:31; Eph. 4:29

I. “Seek from the book of Jehovah and read”—Isa. 34:16a:

- A. We need to have a private time to read the Word; we need to lay a good foundation in the Word of God by reading through it consecutively from Genesis to Revelation.
- B. Read book after book without selection, choice, or preference; try to read the Bible through once every year or every two years.
- C. The best way to read the Bible is to read it daily (Acts 17:11) and morning is the best time to read the Bible (Psa. 119:147).
- D. The first step we should take when we open the Scriptures is to prepare ourselves to contact God—cf. John 5:39-40:
 1. When we come to the Bible, we have the sweet consciousness that we are coming to our God, our Father, our Lord.
 2. Whenever we come to the Word, it would be good to pray, “Lord grant me a sweet taste for Your Word. Make it so precious to me”; if we have this taste for the Word, surely it will bring us life.
- E. It is important to build up the habit of reading the Word; if you build up the habit of reading the Word, you will be healthy spiritually and you will grow.

II. “Receive...the word of God, by means of all prayer”—Eph. 6:17-18a:

- A. We should not simply have one way of prayer, but every means of prayer, exercising our spirit to pray in various ways to take the Word of God—v. 18.
- B. Pray-reading the word—vv. 17-18:
 1. There is no need for us to pray only after we understand some words in the Bible, we should simply pray-read the Bible.
 2. We should exercise our spirit to pray-read; if we pray-read a portion of the Word for five to ten minutes, we will receive some nourishment from the word.
 3. By pray-reading the Word, we will truly understand it; furthermore, we will receive nourishment and strengthening within, which will empower us and give us life all the time.
- C. Singing or sing-reading the word—Col. 3:16; cf. Eph. 5:18-19:
 1. The way to live Christ is to take the Word by exercising our spirit; we must exercise our spirit by praying the Word and singing it.
 2. Let us first read the Word and then pray-read it; following this, let us sing the Word.
 3. The more we take the Word by reading, pray-reading, and especially sing-reading, the more the riches of the Word will saturate us and make us one with the Lord.
- D. Musing on the word—Psalm 119:15:
 1. The Hebrew word for muse, or meditate, implies to bow down, to converse with oneself, and to utter; according to the Old Testament, to meditate on the Word of God is to enjoy it by musing upon it.
 2. To muse upon the Word is to “chew the cud,” like a cow eating grass (Lev. 11:3); as we muse upon the Word of God, we should “chew the cud”:

- a. If we take in the Word too quickly, we shall not have very much enjoyment; but if we “chew the cud” as we take in the Word, our enjoyment will increase.
- b. When we muse upon the Word of God, enjoying it and even chewing it as a cow chews the cud, we shall spontaneously pray.
- 3. Furthermore, we may converse with ourselves or begin to praise the Lord; we may be so inspired by the Word that we want to shout our praises to the Lord.
- 4. Usually musing upon the Word will be slower and finer than pray-reading the Word.
- 5. Musing upon the Word in this way is even richer, broader, and more inclusive than pray-reading, for it includes prayer, worship, enjoyment, conversation, bowing down, and even lifting up our hands to receive God’s word; it also includes rejoicing, praising, shouting, and even weeping before the Lord.

III. “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed workman, cutting straight the word of the truth”—2 Tim. 2:15:

- A. We need a thorough study of the divine word; the believers need to always learn and to come to the full knowledge of the truth—1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:15.
- B. The best way to be constituted with the New Testament truths, the best way to gain the knowledge of God’s New Testament economy is to use the Recovery Version with the notes and the Life-study messages:
 - 1. In order to be constituted with the truth, we need to pray-read and then study.
 - 2. We need to consider the text of the Recovery Version with the notes and the life-study messages as a textbook; we must study them as a textbook.
 - 3. We need to acquire the crucial points of the truth and a bird’s-eye view of the Scriptures.
- C. We need to build 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.

IV. “Speak to the people all the words of this life”—Acts 5:20:

- A. God’s heart is that we would speak for Him; everyone must speak—Num. 11:29; 1 Cor. 14:31.
- B. We should not speak negatively but always speak positively; we should no longer gossip, criticize, or speak idly; we should simply speak Christ, speak grace, speak mercy, speak God, and speak the holy Word—Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6.
- C. We have to realize that as believers we all have been made the witnesses of the living Christ (Acts 1:8); witnesses are speakers.
- D. Acts 8:1 tells us that all the thousands of new believers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria as a result of a great persecution; those who were scattered preached the good news of the word wherever they went—v. 4.
- E. Just speak the word of Christ; let the word of Christ dwell in you—Col. 3:16:
 - 1. We can preach the word in season and out of season—2 Tim. 4:2.
 - 2. We can speak Christ with hymns—Col. 3:16.
 - 3. We can practice the divine speaking by using the life-studies in the home meetings.
 - 4. We can practice to prophesy, to speak for the Lord and speak forth the Lord, for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 14:31, 26.

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1978, vol. 2*, “Life Messages, Volume 1,” chs. 2, 10, 11.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1932-1949, vol. 3*, “Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Volume 3,” ch. 31.
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1958, vol. 1*, “How to Enjoy God and Practice the Enjoyment of God,” ch. 6.
4. *Life-study of Revelation*, ch. 45.
5. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1967, vol. 1*, “Pray-reading the Word”, ch. 1.
6. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1988, vol. 2*, “Crucial Words of Leading, Book 2,” ch. 8.
7. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984, vol. 2*, “Elders’ Training, Book 3,” chs. 1, 11, 12.
8. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994-1997, vol. 5*, “The Vital Groups,” ch. 16.
9. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985, vol. 4*, “Everyone Speaking the Word of God,” ch. 1.
10. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985, vol. 3*, “The Divine Speaking,” chs. 2, 4, 5.
11. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1991-1992, vol. 2*, “The Practice of the Church Life According to the God-ordained Way,” ch. 7.