

Morning Nourishment

Phil. But I have received in full all things and 4:18 abound; I have been filled, receiving from Epaphroditus the things from you, a sweet-smelling savor, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

Today's Reading

Sometimes God will ask a person to sell all he has. Sometimes He will only ask a person to give what he has in excess. Whatever it may be, the heart has to be released. In Acts, the apostle rebuked Ananias for keeping back what he had in excess (Acts 5:3-4)...If there is any excess, it should be given away.

Sister Eva said that every time she went to bed, she would always consider how she could save something more from her spending in order that others may receive more. We need to take care of our livelihood, and we need to take care of our family. But that is not this issue today. As long as we would set aside a portion from our income and would lower our standard of living a little, we will be able to give away all our excess.

Today, when we speak of handing ourselves over, we are not talking about what we have to do to take care of our money. Rather, we are saying that a person has to offer himself up for the Lord and for the gospel. Brothers and sisters who are engaged in an occupation, the Lord needs your ministry in your job! These few years we are short of new co-workers. Formerly, at its peak we had about four hundred co-workers. Today we only have about two hundred, with two hundred short. In order to fill up the gap of these two hundred workers, there must be a group of people who would go to make money. Formerly, I dared not say such a word. But today I dare to say such a word. Some should go to make money and offer their money to the Lord's service. They

should consecrate themselves to make money for the Lord's service. Perhaps such a one can make a million dollars. He will only take what he needs to sustain his livelihood. The rest he will give to the church. If you are only a spectator here, nothing will happen to you. But if you want to give yourselves for the co-workers' need, it demands your life.

First He wants us; then He wants what is ours. We ourselves have to come to Him first before we can bring what we have to Him. If we do not come, God will not accept what we have. All the brothers and sisters have to see that everything is for the Lord and that everything has to center around the Lord. We must have the same center. Although some function in their money-making ministry while others function in their ministry of the word, the center for both must be the same. (*The Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry*, vol. 1, pp. 310-311)

The fragrant odor [in Philippians 4:18] refers to the sweet savor of the burnt offering (Gen. 8:20-21; Lev. 1:9). The offering we give to God's servants is not only a sacrifice to God, but also a fragrant odor of a burnt offering that is well-pleasing to Him. This reveals that the sacrifice here is like a burnt offering that is satisfying and well-pleasing to God.

By being offered to God for God's use by us who are of God, what was considered by God as "mammon of unrighteousness" (Luke 16:9), that is, as deceitful riches (Matt. 13:22) and uncertain riches (1 Tim. 6:17) which will fail (Luke 16:9), can actually become our "fellowship" with the saints, our "righteousness" toward men before God, an acceptable "sacrifice" to God, and a well-pleasing "sweet-smelling savor" to Him. Riches that deceive men, corrupt men, and destroy men can actually become such transcendent blessings that we have before God! This all depends on our offering of material riches. (*Life Lessons*, p. 187)

Further Reading: The Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry, vol. 1, pp. 309-312; *Life Lessons*, lsn. 24

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. For whether we were beside ourselves, it was 5:13 to God; or whether we are sober-minded, it is for you.

Today's Reading

The Bible also tells us about many people who were beside themselves in offering up their possessions and houses. Acts 4 mentions the disciples selling their all and laying the money they received at the apostles' feet (vv. 34-35). Many people agree that we should be zealous, but they say that we should be careful, balanced, and not go to extremes. Yet throughout the past two thousand years, all those who have truly consecrated themselves to the Lord were men who risked everything to offer up themselves. The more a person loves the Lord, the more he consecrates. One brother asked me, "How can you love the Lord so much, and why can't I love Him as much?" I said, "If you give your money to the Lord, you will love Him. The Lord said that where your treasure is, there is your heart also." If you want your heart to follow the Lord, your money must first go to the Lord. When your money goes into the offering box, and you say, "Amen," your heart will go with it as well.

In Shanghai two sisters who were nurses each earned less than a hundred dollars a month. They saved their wages in the bank. After they heard the Lord's word, they were moved in their heart, and one after the other offered up all their savings.

Today many people are planning too much for themselves. They are not willing to offer up their all. They make reservations for themselves. The result is that the gospel has lost its impact. During every great revival in history, we find men who were beside themselves in loving the Lord, who risked all to offer up themselves. I am not exhorting you to give everything to the Lord, but you must be a person who is fully consecrated to the Lord.

One elderly sister once came to Mr. George Müller and said, "My seventieth birthday is approaching. By that time I will have saved enough money to buy a coat. This has been my wish for many years. I have been saving since I was forty-two years old, and I have been looking forward to the day when I would have such a coat. I have waited twenty-eight years. Today I can finally buy it. However, the Lord is touching me to offer up these fifteen pounds." When Mr. Müller heard this, he felt that this would cost the elderly sister too much, and he wondered whether she would later regret it. He dared not accept that money. Yet the sister was quite resolute and determined to offer it up. Later, Mr. Müller testified that he had thought that it was difficult for poor people to love the Lord. But the Lord had died for all, and when one was touched by the Lord, even a savings of twenty-eight years meant nothing to her anymore.

Today we want all the young people to offer their time to the Lord. At the same time, we want them to offer themselves fully to the Lord. Some may have to give themselves to make money for the Lord. Such ones have to do their best to earn and offer....Some may have to offer themselves to serve the Lord full-time. We need both kinds of people. Does not the gospel need to be preached in many places? Is not the church taking the right path? If there were no need to preach the gospel, and if the church were on the wrong path, we could keep our money and save it for our own use. But if the gospel needs to be preached, and if the church is on the right path, we have to be beside ourselves for the Lord. We have to recalibrate the focus of our living. Formerly, we earned money for ourselves. Today everything has to be for the Lord.... We have to rise up and be beside ourselves. We have to be beside ourselves in the preaching of the gospel and in offering up our all. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 41, pp. 198-200)

Further Reading: The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 41, ch. 26

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

Mal. Bring the whole tithe to the storehouse that 3:10 there may be food in My house; and prove Me, if you will, by this, says Jehovah of hosts, whether I will open to you the windows of heaven and pour out blessing for you until there is no room for it.

Heb. Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of 13:15 praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name.

16 But do not forget doing good and sharing with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Today's Reading

In the Old Testament...the Israelites were in great poverty and difficulty. How could they carry out the words of Malachi 3:10? The Israelites might have asked, "If we cannot get by with ten loads of rice, how can we get by with nine? If ten bags of flour are insufficient, how can nine bags be sufficient?" These are words out of a carnal and foolish mouth. God reproached the people and told them that what is impossible with man is possible with God.

Ten loads are the reason for poverty, while nine loads are the cause for abundance. Man thinks that the more he has in his hand, the better off he will be. However, keeping things in one's hand is the very cause for poverty, while offering things to God is the very cause for blessing. If I have an additional load in my hands, it will become my curse. But if it is put in God's storehouse, it becomes my blessing...When you hold something back, you end up in poverty. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 49, p. 431)

The "tithe" [in Malachi 3:10] is the legal amount of offering which God required from the harvest of the Israelites...This word superabundantly displays the infinitely rich promise of

God. Although it was spoken to the Israelites in the Old Testament, in principle it applies also to the New Testament believers. If we will fully offer to God what belongs to Him that the church may be richly supplied, God will open the windows of heaven for us and pour out a blessing to us, which there will not be enough room to contain. (*Life Lessons*, p. 183)

Two sacrifices are spoken of [in Hebrews 13:15-16]. The first is the sacrifice of praise, and the second is that of doing good and sharing with others. A sacrifice is something that is a loss to oneself and a gain to God. A sacrifice of praise is a praise that is rendered to God at one's own loss. A sacrifice of sharing or giving is giving something to God at one's own expense.

We do not have adequate praise in the bread-breaking meeting because we fall short in sharing and giving. We must give to the extent that we "feel" our giving. In other words, we have to give to the extent that we can sense the loss. Only this kind of offering can be considered a sacrifice. When we do this, we will spontaneously offer up the sacrifice of praise. If we give in a casual way, our praise will not be high. If we do not have the sacrifice of giving, we will not have the sacrifice of praise...In addition to the sacrifice of praise, there is still something that follows. The phrase "do not forget" refers to the fact that it is most easy for men to forget...We should not forget doing good and sharing with others.

Praise and giving are like two legs. If one is shorter than the other, we cannot expect a person to walk properly. Praise and giving are also like two wings. If one is missing, a bird cannot fly. It may still have one wing, but the wing is useless. A bird with only one wing cannot fly. When we come to the meeting, we sometimes find superficial ones uttering a few words of praise, but their praise is never high. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 43, pp. 725-726)

Further Reading: The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 43, ch. 85

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 12:1-2 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

Today's Reading

Romans 12 speaks in a strong way of the matter of consecration. The consecration there is for service. This service is a service in the Body of Christ. It is not individual service, but service in the Body. If a man is not in the Body, it is difficult for him to understand God's will. I am afraid some people will misunderstand what we are doing here during the past few days and will think that we are rallying a fund-raising campaign. If you understand things in this way, you are off. We have received God's grace to serve Him in this age. In order to do that, we have to offer up everything and put everything in the Body. We need to be coordinated in our work and in our jobs. In order for God to take the fast way, and in order for the work to reach a high standard, we must have such a kind of consecration.

Why do we have to touch the matter of riches? It is because the Lord says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21). Where your heart is, there will be your very person also. Riches are like a nail; they nail a person down. Perhaps in these few days, some nails have loosened up. But they have not fallen down yet.

Today, every one of us is still under the tight grip of riches; they are still nailing us down. May God deliver every one of us from riches. Romans 12 speaks of two bodies. One is our own body, and the other is the Body of Christ. We offer up our

bodies for the Body of Christ. If a man has not been delivered from riches, he cannot offer up his body to God.

Acts 2 and 4 show us that as soon as money goes out, there is the one accord. When the disciples took care of the problem of money, the one accord followed, and God's work was realized in a marvelous way in an instant. The book of Acts is our standard. The first time God saved men, He saved them in great numbers. All those men were delivered from riches. Their service was carried out in the Body. This service in one accord is the Body service spoken of in Romans 12.

If a Christian has not been terminated by God with respect to money, he cannot serve the Lord along with other members. Even if he is to serve, his service will be a superficial one and will not be one that issues from the heart. One of the greatest obstacles to our consecration is the matter of riches. And one of the greatest enemies in the Body of Christ is individualism. In Acts, no one said that anything was his own. If you say that this money is yours, it will be difficult for you to be delivered from individualism. The strongest manifestation of individualism is in the matter of money.

Our way, our work, and our testimony in the future lie with the Body. If the question of money is not settled, we cannot expect to have good coordination, and we cannot expect that we can serve God.

During these years, concerning money, the co-workers can boast that they have not been tied down with jobs for a living. Although the other brothers and sisters have more occasions to be exposed to money, they have to remember that they are serving God just as the co-workers are. We do not expect anyone among us to be a steward for his whole life and yet find nobody to receive him into the eternal tabernacle [Luke 16:9]. (*The Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry*, vol. 2, pp. 443-445, 426)

Further Reading: The Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry, vol. 2, ch. 58

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 14:7-9 For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself; for whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's. For Christ died and lived *again* for this, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Today's Reading

For one to present his body to God is to go full-time. If you do not go full-time, how could your body be free to be presented to God as a living sacrifice? Our entire being is contained in our body, and our body is confined in our time. Therefore, the body is the center of these two things, the center of our being and the center of our time. The being is what we are, and the time is where we exist. We can change the places where we live, but we cannot move ourselves out of time. You always remain in time. To present your body to God means you give yourself to God. This is to be full-time. We Christians should all be full-timers. We have to give ourselves to Him. We do not give ourselves to anything else, only to our saving God.

In principle, we have to realize that every saved one should be a full-timer. This is why Paul has the ground to charge us to present our bodies to God. Every saved one must be a full-timer, presenting his body to God.... To present your body is just to present yourself to God. As a saved one, you have to present yourself to God. Having presented yourself to God, you will be led by the Lord to either do a job to make money or to preach the gospel without making any money. Whether you do a job or preach the gospel depends upon the Lord's leading.

To be a full-timer means to be one who is absolute for the Lord. Your income may be five times what you need, yet you would only spend that one-fifth for your living and give

the other four-fifths to the Lord. To talk about tithing as the Seventh-Day Adventists practice is a shame. That is something from the Old Testament, something in the law. In the New Testament it is not to present one-tenth but to present your body, to present your entire being. This includes everything you are, everything you have, everything you can do, and everything you earn. It is not just one-tenth but ten-tenths.

The real meaning of being full-time is to live to Him. To go full-time does not mean to drop your job and become a preacher. It does not mean that you give up your business and become one who preaches the gospel or who labors in the word all the time. A full-timer is one who lives to the Lord. Who should be such a one? Every believer, without one exception. As long as you are a believer, you have to realize you should be one living to Him. We have to live to Him because He is ours and we are His. To live to Him is based upon the fact that we are His. Not only is He ours, but we also are His.... To live to the Lord includes living for, by, with, and in Him. This is one being two and two in one. There is not only no separation between us and the Lord but also no distinction when we are living to Him.

To be full-time means that you live to the Lord. You do not live for Him but to Him. This is a great privilege. A full-timer does not mean what we may think. A full-timer is one who lives to the Lord; every believer, as one bought by the Lord with a price, should be a person living to the Lord. He is yours and you are His. He and you are one. He is to you and you are to Him. There is no distinction in anything. He does not need your permission to use you, nor do you need His permission to use Him. (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 105, 111, 113-114, 116-118)

Further Reading: Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move, ch. 7

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

**2 Cor. And He died for all that those who live may no
5:15 longer live to themselves but to Him who died
for them and has been raised.**

**Matt. Who then is the faithful and prudent slave,
24:45 whom the master has set over his household to
give them food at the proper time?**

**46 Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he
comes, will find so doing.**

Today's Reading

I believe we have touched the bottom of the significance of what it means to be full-time. The job-dropping full-timers may not have realized that they should be to the Lord. The most they may have realized is that they are for the Lord. They are not to the Lord. To be for the Lord means that you still could be away from the Lord. If you are to the Lord, you could never be away from Him. To be to the Lord means that you are one with Him. It means that we breathe to the Lord, eat to Him, walk to Him, and even exercise to Him. If you are practicing the real ownership of the Lord, you will do everything to Him.

I hope we all can realize the proper denotation of the spiritual term *full-time*. To be full-time does not mean that you need to give up your job. To be a full-timer means that whatever you do, you do to the Lord; whatever you are, you are to the Lord; and whatever you have, you have to the Lord. If you remain in a job, you remain there to the Lord. If you leave your job, you leave it to the Lord. As long as you are to the Lord you are a full-timer. Whatever you have to do practically all depends upon the One to whom you live. He leads you. Then you know whether you have to remain in a job or leave a job or whether you need to get married or remain single. It does not mean that if you remain single, you are full-time and that if you get married, you are not full-time. To be full-time simply means to live to the Lord.

Every dear saint who really means business with the Lord must be one all the way living to Him. Paul said that even when we die, we die to Him (Rom. 14:8). Thus, there is no problem concerning whether we live a longer life or whether we die today. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. There is no difference. Whatever I do and whatever happens to me, I am to the Lord because I am one with Him. To think that only those who give up their job to do the Lord's work are full-time is a wrong understanding. This is still the understanding under the influence of degraded Christianity...When you say that you are a full-timer, it means that you are to the Lord.

Since October of 1984, I fully realized that we had become somewhat stuck in the Lord's recovery. We held the Lord back very much, so we did not carry out His commission to the recovery...Let us all be full-timers! If we are led to drop our jobs, then we drop them to Him and go out to serve the precious truths... We will gain much increase. Actually, though, I do not care that much for the increase. I care for the spreading of the truths so that they can get into the needy hearts. If we spread these truths, we will become the faithful servants to serve food to the Lord's people at the appointed time (Matt. 24:45). Then we will fulfill the commission of the Lord's recovery. This is where my heart is. I will die to this. I told the brothers in the Far East I will not stop until my entire being is exhausted by this ministry. I hope you all will say the same thing.

Let us rise up to go full-time, either by dropping our jobs to go out or by remaining in our jobs to make more money and give every cent to the Lord's move. Then the Lord's move will not be short of men or money. We will be short of nothing... The wise way is that we all take the full-time way... This is what the Lord needs! (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 121-123, 126-127)

Further Reading: Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move, ch. 8

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

**Isa. Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,
6:8 Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? And I
said, Here am I; send me.**

**Dan. The people who know their God will show
11:32b strength and take action.**

Today's Reading

Right after [the Gulf War], I reconsidered the world situation. We have to consider what the Lord wants us to do in this present time. There is the need of an appropriate direction for the Lord's move in His recovery today to match the recent changes in the world situation.

The Lord's move and our move are both signified by a wheel. The wheel within the wheel is the Lord's move in our move. When God's people move, God moves. If God's people do not move, God has no way to move.

Recently, a group of brothers traveled to Eastern Europe and Russia, and they have testified of the openness and immense hunger of the people there for the divine truth.

Many of the people in Eastern Europe and Russia will only accept the writings of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee.... There is a famine of truth in that part of the world. Some of the people there have even begged the brothers to send people to teach them the Bible.

In both the Far East and the United States, the Lord's recovery is growing, but it is still in the stage of initiation in Europe. We should remember that the United States, Europe, and the Far East are the three influential factors of the present situation of the world. The recovery has taken root in the United States and the Far East, but there is a void in Europe. For this reason, the Lord's direction of His present recovery must be toward Europe. The recovery in Europe is still in the stage of initiation.

The Lord's recovery must spread to Europe and be

rooted there. The spreading of the truths of the Lord's recovery will be a preparation for the Lord's coming back to bring the recovery and restoration not only to Israel but also to the entire creation.

Of the three influential factors in today's world, the Far East and the United States have been occupied and taken by the Lord's recovery. Europe still remains as a region in which the Lord's recovery needs to be rooted and grow. I hope that we would bring this fellowship to the Lord and pray. We should tell the Lord, "Lord, these days are the consummation of the age. Lord, in these days rekindle my love toward You."

The disciples sovereignly were scattered to other places without waiting for the completion of the gospel in the Holy Land [(Acts 8:1)]. Portions of the Holy Land had not yet heard the gospel, but the Lord was still burdened for the disciples to carry the gospel to other places. Acts 8 also speaks of Philip going to Samaria and eventually preaching the gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch for the spread of the divine truths.

The scattering of the believers from Jerusalem to other localities is the first mentioning of migration for the spreading of the gospel; hence, it should be considered as the basic principle for the spreading of the gospel, including the divine truths. Regardless of whether or not the divine truths have reached the entire United States, we still need to go to Europe. We also have to believe that our going to Europe will stir up something positive in the United States.

To take action [Dan. 11:32] means to do something noble and worthy which may be considered as an achievement. Especially in these days in the Lord's recovery, we need to be those who show strength and take action. (*The World Situation and the Direction of the Lord's Move*, pp. 7, 11, 14, 17, 19, 43-44)

Further Reading: The World Situation and the Direction of the Lord's Move, chs. 1-2

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

**2 Cor. As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor
6:10 yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet
possessing all things.**

**Phil. I know also how to be abased, and I know how
4:12 to abound; in everything and in all things I
have learned the secret both to be filled and to
hunger, both to abound and to lack.**

Today's Reading

Some need to go to Europe to meet the real need of the seeking ones with the divine truths from the holy Word. After the four-day, four-hour war with Iraq, I received a burden to "invade" Europe with the divine truths of the Lord's recovery...We should go to Europe by emigration, not by a work or by a movement. We will be warmly welcomed because the people there want to receive new things from the Western world. Some of the young people in eastern Berlin begged the brothers to send people there to teach them the Bible.

Some can emigrate to Europe to live the Lord and serve the Lord full-time....Some can emigrate there to take a job or do a business and serve the Lord....Some can emigrate there to study in a school and serve the Lord.

The full-timers should live a life by faith, trusting in the Lord for their necessities and receiving the Lord's supply through the saints and the churches. If we feel led and burdened by the Lord to go full-time, we should not worry about our necessities. We have to believe in the Lord and put our trust in Him. We should not think that we will have a prosperous life in material things. We must get ourselves prepared to suffer. The first suffering is poverty. We need to learn to serve the Lord in poverty. Some think that if they serve the Lord in poverty, that is a sign they have not been chosen and called by the Lord. However, the apostle

Paul was in poverty (2 Cor. 6:10; 11:27). Because the churches established by him did not adequately support him, he was forced to make tents (Acts 18:3). At the same time, he ministered to the needs of his co-workers (20:34).

When I was called by the Lord to serve Him full-time, I thought that He had just called me to preach the gospel to my countrymen in the villages. I told the Lord that as long as I could have water to drink and food to eat, I would be satisfied. I never thought the Lord would bring me to the big cities of mainland China and eventually to Taiwan and the United States. In 1961 I came to the United States with the intention of staying here for the Lord's recovery. At that time I had just a little amount of cash on hand to meet my need. However, the Lord supplied me with enough for my necessities. The Lord is faithful to meet all our needs when we follow Him and His calling.

By the Lord's mercy, I have learned how to be abased in poverty and how to abound (Phil. 4:12). If we have the money, we should learn to save some for others and for the needs of the churches. To serve the Lord in this way is glorious. If the Lord has called us and sent us, He will surely take care of us. He has a way to supply us through the saints and the churches.

When we serve the Lord, we should not have the thought that we are hired in any sense by anyone or by any church. If the church supplies us, that does not mean that the church hires us. That is not a wage but the Lord's supply through the church. We have to fully realize that the Lord in supporting us needs His Body (the church) and the members of His Body (the believers) to cooperate with Him. He does not supply us directly by Himself but indirectly through His Body and His members. (*The World Situation and the Direction of the Lord's Move*, pp. 45-47, 54-56)

Further Reading: The World Situation and the Direction of the Lord's Move, chs. 3-4

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

- 2 Cor. But it is out of equality; at the present time 8:14 your abundance for their lack that their abundance also may be for your lack, so that there may be equality;**
- 15 As it is written, "He who gathered much had no excess, and he who gathered little had no lack."**

Today's Reading

In 2 Corinthians 8:12-15 Paul says we must give willingly according to what we have. Those who gathered much will have no excess, and those who gathered little will have no lack. The result of such giving and receiving is what Paul calls "equality" (v. 14). Equality equals having everything common, but there are different means of practicing this.

We must remember that God's principle is to have equality. Even in the Old Testament there is the divine way to balance the social wealth. None of the Jews could sell their property forever....In the year of jubilee everything was returned to the original owner (Lev. 25:8-17). God's way is to keep equality.

The Bible encourages us to support the full-time workers. Third John 5-8 tells us we need to take care of, support, and send the traveling full-time workers forward on their way in a way that matches God, who is generous. If we support the full-timers, we are participating, sharing in, their work for the truth, and we become "fellow workers in the truth" (v. 8). We are not directly taking part of the full-time work, but we are indirectly sharing the same work. The believers ought to support and undertake for the need of the brothers who work for God in His divine truth and who take nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore, if you do not have the burden to be full-time, you should make more money for the Lord's interest. Do not work merely to support yourself, but also to support the full-time workers. Even the wives whose husbands are full-time workers

could work to support their husbands and other full-timers if possible. This will be greatly blessed by the Lord. (*The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 71-73)

The full-timers who would still remain in their job, their profession or business, to make money...remain there to make a gain of the world's gold. When the Israelites left Egypt, they plundered it of its gold (Exo. 11:2-3; 12:35-36). The material gold mine is in Egypt. We need some full-timers to remain there to dig the gold mine to get the gold. The other full-timers will drop their job, profession, or business for the preaching and teaching of the gospel truth, but they will need something to live on. We would not like to see that they would be forced to make tents as Paul was in Acts 18:1-3. That would be a shame to us. If I were there at Paul's time, I would have gone through all the churches to tell them that it was a shame that they would not have fellowship with the apostle Paul unto the gospel (Phil. 1:5). It was a shame to force him and his co-workers to go back to "Egypt" to get some gold. We must stress to the saints that we are all full-timers in different functions. Some have the function to preach the gospel, teach the truth, and minister life to all the seekers. However, these dear ones could not have any time to make a living. They need others to support them. Therefore, a great number of us full-timers should remain in our jobs, professions, or businesses to make money.

It is a great thing to have fellowship unto the gospel. Unto the gospel means for the furtherance of the gospel. All the full-timers who remain in their jobs and businesses need to have this kind of fellowship, a fellowship for the furtherance of the Lord's move through those who do not remain in businesses and jobs, but who are occupied all day with preaching and teaching for the spreading of the Lord's kingdom. (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 129-130)

Further Reading: The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move, ch. 5

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

Acts 2:44 And all those who believed were together and had all things common.

4:32 And the heart and soul of the multitude of those who had believed was one; and not even one said that any of his possessions was his own, but all things were common to them.

Today's Reading

It is not sufficient to use the Seventh-Day Adventists as an example, reminding the saints how they practice ten percent tithing. This is too poor. The tithing of ten percent to the Lord is altogether an Old Testament thing, belonging to the law. There was no grace, life, or life power in that. We must be different. We are in the age of grace, which provides us with much supply of life. The dynamic salvation was accepted by Zaccheus in Luke 19:1-10. Immediately after being saved, that sinner gave up so much of his worldly possessions. That was not a tithing of ten percent; that was the very issue of the dynamic salvation. Likewise, on the day of Pentecost all those small members had everything in common (Acts 2:44, 45; 4:32-35). This was not one tenth of their possessions but one hundred percent. They put everything at the feet of the apostles, that is, at the Lord's disposal. That was wonderful. We are in the Lord's recovery; even this matter has to be recovered.

Train the saints who love the Lord so much. It is regrettable that in the past they did not receive the adequate education or instruction in this matter. The more they would spend for the Lord, the more they have the blessing spoken of in Philippians 4:19. Give this verse to all the dear ones who love the Lord and are full-time to make money and to give. This verse is a great blessing. Quite often when I receive a gift from a dear saint, I quote this verse as a conclusion to my letter of acknowledgment: "My God will

fill your every need according to His riches, in glory, in Christ Jesus." Because you are taking care of God's need, God would give you a great blessing in filling every need of yours according to His riches. I have seen in the past that those who did care for God's need all received a bountiful blessing. The saints' giving will not be in vain. The more they give, the more they will see the Lord's riches. Due to the good government, the good administration in Taiwan, the people there have become rich. We have to give the credit to our sovereign God. Now all the saints there in Taiwan can share the riches. We have to pray that God would keep blessing the United States for His purpose. The Lord's recovery needs much blessing that comes from God's sovereignty through the government. The recovery needs the United States as its center.

Train the saints in your locality. Do not merely enjoy the physical gains you have received under God's sovereignty. This may offend the Lord. In this case the Lord will take back His blessing. Train the saints to realize that if we are faithful to Him, He will bless us. If we spend every ounce of our gold for His purpose, He will return to us not only by ounces, but by pounds. This is to carry out the fellowship unto the gospel, the fellowship for the furtherance of the gospel.

The key point of this way is that every believer is a full-timer. Some drop their job to preach and teach, while some remain on their job to make money. We must encourage some to drop their jobs. We must also encourage some to make money and separate five percent monthly, purposely for the account of the fellowship unto the gospel. (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 130-132, 137)

Further Reading: Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move, ch. 9

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

Phil. And you yourselves also know, Philippians, 4:15-16 that in the beginning of the gospel, when I went out from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the account of giving and receiving except you only; for even in Thessalonica you sent both once and again to my need.

19 And my God will fill your every need according to His riches, in glory, in Christ Jesus.

Today's Reading

What kind of sweet feeling the apostle expressed [in Philippians 4:15-16]! He said this was "a sweet-smelling savor, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God" (v. 18). Paul did not seek a gift from them (v. 17), but what they gave became a sweet savor for Paul to put on the altar for them. It was not merely something to support him, but it became something increasing to their account. There is an account in the heavenly bank, in which we may have credit or debit. It is merely a low practice to give ten percent. God is not a beggar; do not treat Him as one. You should honor Him as the very bountiful Giver who affords you all the riches. All your riches come from Him. It was and still is up to Him whether you will be rich or not. It is not according to your plan of what you should do and have. You simply must labor day and night. He then will follow your labor to bless you, not for your enterprise, but for the spreading of His kingdom.

In any church out of twenty there must be one who drops his business or profession to take the full-time way to preach and to teach. The nineteen others should do their best regularly, even weekly, to put aside a certain amount of their monthly income for the supporting of such a one. For nineteen to support one would be, humanly speaking, very easy. Each one simply saves five percent of their income. This would be sufficient to support the one who drops his job. This ninety-five percent is

the equivalent of a full-time job for the one who drops his job. This will not burden the church. It will be easy.

Charge the dear saints that besides their regular giving to the Lord through the church, they should give an additional five percent of their income every month. Do not do it once a year. It is better to...put one portion every Lord's Day into the offering box.

Whether or not in your locality there are these job-dropping full-timers, you should still practice this. In your place there may not be such, yet in other places there may be.... They should practice to save five percent of their income to take care of those in the other halls, in other churches, and even in other countries. If we are in one accord on the whole earth, the church must practice this, encouraging and charging all the saints each month to designate five percent of their income specifically for supporting the job-dropping full-timers throughout the whole earth.

Do not say that you do not have any job-dropping full-timers. All the churches on the earth have to do this. Leave to the Lord how much will be accomplished, but you must practice the five percent giving. Train everyone among us to practice the putting aside of an extra five percent, putting it aside uniquely for the fellowship unto the gospel. I believe that the Lord will bless this. This is for His spreading. How much He desires to spread through us! But for this spreading today, there is the need of financial support. We do not need to have a fund raising movement. We do not need to send someone to convince all the churches to contribute money. We simply need a regular, weekly practice of giving in this way, designated for the fellowship unto the gospel....Every church should have such a separate "Fellowship unto the Gospel" account. (*Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 134, 136-137)

Further Reading: Elders' Training, Book 8: The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move, ch. 9

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. On the first day of the week each one of you 16:2 should lay aside in store to himself whatever he may have been prospered, that no collections be made when I come.

Today's Reading

If we mean business with the Lord for the spreading of all the truths He has shown us, we all have to bear the burden to give five percent of our income purely, solely, and definitely separate for the full-time workers' support. Every time you give to the Lord through the church, five percent of your income should be given to the Lord to support full-time workers for His propagation. Every church that has at least twenty members should practice this. A church smaller than twenty may still have one or two among them who are burdened to be full-time. Suppose a church can only support one full-timer, but two among them are burdened and qualified to be full-time. One of these two should not be told to go back and get a job. Some churches may have twenty members with no full-time workers. Then their five percent can be given to a church that has an extra number of full-time workers. This is done not by organization but by fellowship.

I hope all the churches will begin to practice this regardless of whether or not they have full-time workers and regardless of how many workers they have. The leading ones should fellowship with the saints concerning giving five percent of their income for the full-time workers. Then the church should set up a separate account for the support of full-timers whether it has a full-timer or not. The funds in this account will eventually be useful. The Lord desires many full-time workers for His present move. Within 1986 I expect that all the churches in the United States would have between four and five hundred full-time workers.

If a church of one hundred saints only has three full-time

workers, they should have an extra supply for two other full-time workers. Through fellowship with the other churches, they will be able to realize where there are places with full-time workers who need support. We all need to pray and seek the Lord's leading regarding this matter. There should only be a principle set up with no regulation. The church needs to take care of the principle of setting aside five percent of the offerings for the full-time workers. But this does not exclude the saints from giving to the full-timers directly. (*The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move*, pp. 75-76)

According to the Bible, the offerings made by the believers in the meetings should be used for: (1) the local expenses, for example, rent, etc., (2) the relief of the brothers and sisters who are in poverty and want, and (3) the assistance of the workers and the expenses for the work, as commanded by the Bible. Actually, the workers of a locality should be supported by the believers of that locality. The funds of the meetings should be used in such a manner. The individual believer still has a responsibility towards relieving the poor and assisting the workers and the work.

Now we have two offering boxes, and each box has two partitions. There are two openings on the top of each box. The funds for the church meetings should be put into one opening, and the funds for the work should be put into the other opening. This is necessary because, in the past, some have put funds meant for the work into the box for the meetings. In this way the meetings have taken advantage of the work....If there is money designated for an individual worker, it should be wrapped up in paper with the name of the worker written on it. Although the boxes are there, the surplus or deficit of the funds for the work is the responsibility of the workers; they are not the responsibility of the brothers and sisters in the meetings. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 17, pp. 214-215)

Further Reading: The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move, ch. 5

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 8:7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and in word and in knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love in you from us, abound in this grace also.

13-15 For *it is* not that to others *there would be* relief, yet to you affliction, but *it is* out of equality; at the present time your abundance for their lack that their abundance also may be for your lack, so that there may be equality; as it is written, “He who gathered much had no excess, and he who gathered little had no lack.”

Today's Reading

In the wilderness the children of Israel did not do any farming, sowing, or reaping. Instead, they gathered manna. Some may have been greedy and tried to gather a large amount of manna, much more than they needed. However, by the end of the day, what was left was no longer useful....In the case of those who gathered an excess of manna, perhaps wanting to store it up for days and weeks to come, God caused the excess to be taken away.

Those who were rather feeble and not able to gather much manna did not have any lack. The divine way is that those who gathered little had no lack and those who gathered much had nothing over. This is God's heavenly way of balancing the supply among His people....God balances the daily supply among His children by His sovereign and miraculous hand.

In 2 Corinthians 8 Paul likens our giving to the needy ones to the gathering of manna. To our realization, we are giving, not gathering. But what Paul says indicates that our giving is a gathering. Paul's word at least implies that as children of God we should not be greedy. We should not think that if we earn a large sum of money, we shall be able to preserve it all for

ourselves. We need to see that whether we give or not, eventually the outcome will be the same.

Suppose a brother earns \$40,000 a year, but what he actually needs for his living is much less than that amount. Being rather greedy, he wants to reserve a large amount for himself. He tithes ten percent, or \$4000, with the intention of keeping the other \$36,000. This tithing is a good practice. However, it is possible for this brother to follow an even better way. According to this better way, the brother should keep what he needs for his living, perhaps \$20,000, and give away the remainder. No doubt, humanly speaking, almost everyone would follow the first way, the way of tithing, instead of the second way, the way of giving all that he can. If the brother decides to tithe and keep the extra \$16,000 for himself, eventually he will learn that, in His sovereignty, God has many ways to cause this excess money to disappear. There may be illness, accident, or calamity. If the money does not disappear in this generation, it will disappear in the following generation or certainly in the third generation. God's mighty, sovereign hand will be active to practice a heavenly balancing of the wealth among His people.

No matter how wise you may be in the handling of money, God is wiser. As the heavenly pilot, he knows how to cause your money to fly away. He did this with the manna in the Old Testament, and does it with money today. The question that faces you is this: do you want to balance the material supply willingly, or will you force God to balance it in a miraculous, sovereign way? I can assure you that sooner or later you will be balanced in financial matters. Concerning this, we need to understand God's heart. Deep in His heart God desires that His people be balanced in the daily supply....You should remember that whether or not you willingly share with others, eventually the outcome will be the same. (*Life-study of Second Corinthians*, pp. 419-422)

Further Reading: Life-study of Second Corinthians, msg. 48

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 9:6-7 But take note of this: He who sows sparingly shall also sparingly reap; and he who sows with blessings shall also with blessings reap; each one as he has purposed in his heart, not out of sorrow or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Pro. 11:24 There is one who scatters and increases yet more, / And there is one who withholds what is appropriate, but ends up only in want.

Today's Reading

The Christian way of managing money is not to hold on to money. The tighter you hold on to your money, the more it dies. The more you grasp it, the more it disappears; it will evaporate like vapor. But the more you give away, the more you will have. If God's children would learn to give more, God would have many ways to work out His miracles. Keeping back money only makes God's children poor. God will not entrust Himself to those who hold on to their money and who will not give. The more you give, the more God will give to you.

Please read 2 Corinthians 9:6, which says, "He who sows sparingly shall also sparingly reap; and he who sows with blessings shall also with blessings reap." This is also a scriptural principle of financial management. When Christians give, they are not throwing their money away; they are sowing. The Word does not say, "He who throws away his money sparingly shall also sparingly reap; and he who throws away his money with blessings shall also with blessings reap." It says, "He who sows sparingly shall also sparingly reap; and he who sows with blessings shall also with blessings reap." When you give, you are sowing. Do you want your money to grow? If you do, you need to sow. When you give your money away, it grows. When you do not give it away, it does not grow.

Brothers and sisters, can anyone be so foolish as to expect a harvest without sowing? How many times has God not answered your prayer for your needs? You are a "hard man," trying to reap where you have not sown and gather where you have not winnowed. This is impossible. Why do you not sow some of your money? There are many brothers and sisters who are in difficulty. Why do you not sow money upon them so that you may reap when the reaping time comes? The more a person holds on to his money, the less he will have. In the above portion of the Word, we see a very beautiful picture. The Corinthians gave to those in Jerusalem, remembering their needs, and Paul said that it was a kind of sowing, not a kind of throwing away. Please remember that money can be our seeds. If you see a brother or sister in difficulty, and you remember him or her, God will cause that money to grow and harvest thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and even a hundredfold. I hope that more of your money will be sown.

A new believer should learn to sow, so that when he has needs, he can reap what he has sown. You cannot reap what you have not sown. There are many brothers who are getting poorer and poorer. If you eat what you have, of course, there will not be anything left. But if you keep half of your seed for sowing, you will have a harvest next year. If next year you also keep half for planting, you will have another harvest the following year. If you want to sow anything, you must not eat all that you have. Some people always eat and never sow. They also never receive anything when they are in need. Suppose some young brothers sow some money upon other brothers, praying as they sow, "O God, I have sown upon the brothers. When I have needs, I want to harvest." If they do this, God will honor His own words. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 49, pp. 429-431)

Further Reading: The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 49, ch. 28

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. Now He who bountifully supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed and cause the fruits of your righteousness to increase. You in everything are being enriched unto all liberality, which works out through us thanksgiving to God.

Today's Reading

[Second Corinthians 9:6 speaks of] a natural law established by the Lord in the biological realm. This law contains His promise. Offering material riches is like sowing. Since sowing eventually brings in reaping, he who sows sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully shall reap bountifully. In man's eyes, the offering of material riches is to give away their riches. However, in God's eyes, such offering is a kind of sowing which will result in reaping. He...who offers much shall reap much. We ought to believe in the Lord's promise in this law. (*Life Lessons*, p. 182)

According to 9:6, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and he who sows with blessings shall also reap with blessings. In verse 6 we have the thought of sowing for the benefit of others. But what farmer, when he sows seed in his field, has the thought of sowing for others? Surely, most farmers have the concept of sowing for themselves. This kind of sowing, however, is not with blessings. To sow with blessings is to give to others....When we give of our money, we are sowing, and this sowing is not for ourselves, but is for others. If we sow with blessings to others, we shall reap with blessings from God.

When we sow with blessings to others, we shall reap with blessings from God. Furthermore, the harvest will always far surpass the amount of seed sown. It may be multiplied thirty or even one hundred times. This does not

happen miraculously; it takes place according to natural law. God controls the life supply among His children by miracles. Because of this, no Christian family can maintain its wealth for generations. But sowing is according to natural law, not according to miracle. Regarding this, there is no need for God to do anything miraculous. We all need to sow, to give. The more we give, the more we shall reap. However, we should not do this in a superstitious way for the purpose of gaining riches for ourselves.

The two illustrations of gathering and sowing are related to Paul's profound thoughts in these chapters. In chapter nine the deep thought is that as Christians we give in the sense of sowing. Moreover, we should not sow sparingly. If we sow sparingly, then according to natural law we shall reap sparingly. We need to sow with blessings to others. If we sow with blessings to others, then, also according to natural law, we shall reap with blessings from God to us. This blessing will be many times more than what we have sown....The Lord will always honor the natural law He has ordained.

We should sow more and in turn reap more. The goal is not to make ourselves rich. The result is the abounding of thanksgiving to God [9:11]. I hope that in the time to come many of the saints will become a factor of thanksgiving to God. This means that your giving will abound in much thanksgiving to God. I have the full confidence that if the saints in the Lord's recovery are willing to give, the recovery will never be lacking in material supply. Instead of lack, there will be abounding in thanksgiving to the Lord through many saints. Therefore, let us all practice our giving, a giving which is carried out by gathering and by sowing. (*Life-study of Second Corinthians*, pp. 422, 425-426)

Further Reading: Life-study of Second Corinthians, msgs. 48-49

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 6:19-21 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves dig through and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not dig through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

31-33 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed? For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Today's Reading

In [Matthew 6:19-20] the King decrees that the kingdom people should not lay up for themselves treasures on earth, but treasures in heaven. To lay up treasures in heaven is to give material things to the poor (19:21) and to care for the needy saints (Acts 2:45; 4:34-35; 11:29; Rom. 15:26) and for the Lord's servants (Phil. 4:16-17). Verse 21 says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The kingdom people must send their treasure to heaven so that their heart can also be in heaven. Before they go there, their treasure and their heart must go there first.

Apparently, in this section...the Lord is speaking about the dealing of the kingdom people with material riches. Actually, He is dealing with the matter of anxiety...It may also seem that the Lord is touching our heart, for where our treasure is, there our heart is also....The whole world is involved with anxiety. Anxiety is the gear that makes the world move. It is the incentive for all human culture. If there were no anxiety regarding our living, no one would do

anything. Rather, everyone would be idle. Thus, by touching our anxiety, the Lord touches the gear of human life.

Let us now consider the Lord's intention in verses 19 through 34. Does the Lord intend that the young people finish school, or drop out and be like birds in the air? It is wrong to have anxiety, for anxiety does not belong to the divine life. There is no anxiety in the life of God. However, the Lord does not mean that we should not do our duty. When the Lord brought the children of Israel into the good land, they all had to work on the land. That was their duty...They labored not only for themselves, but also for the birds. If they did not do the work of farming, it would have been difficult for the birds to live. To do their duty was right and necessary, but to have anxiety was wrong. Likewise, we must do our duty today, but do it without being anxious about our living. The reason you are so reluctant to give to others is your anxiety. Because of anxiety, you love the material things. If you had no anxiety, you would not care for the material things. Rather, you would let others have them. It is anxiety that causes us trouble.

After a number of years, many of our young people will have college degrees. I believe that under the Lord's sovereign blessing, many riches will come in. At that time you will need to remember that you have gone to school not for anxiety, but to do your duty. Therefore, the riches that you bring in should not be used for your anxiety, but for your duty. Your duty is to give, to lay up treasures in heaven. Do not aspire to be a millionaire. Do not endeavor to have a savings account of a million dollars. Rather, learn to give and lay up treasures in heaven. Transfer your treasures from the earth to the heavens. In this way you will not be a millionaire on earth, but a millionaire in the heavens....Be a good giver according to the life and nature of your heavenly Father. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 271, 273, 275-279)

Further Reading: Life-study of Matthew, msg. 22

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

1 Tim. 6:17-19 Charge those who are rich in the present age not to be high-minded, nor to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches but on God, who affords us all things richly for *our* enjoyment; to do good, to be rich in good works, to be ready to distribute, to be ones willing to share; laying away for themselves a good foundation as a treasure for the future, that they may lay hold on that which is really life.

Today's Reading

From the time that man developed a problem with God because of the fall and left the position where he took God as everything, material riches have become a critical matter in the life of fallen man. In his fallen condition, man fell into the darkness of acknowledging only material riches and not God, of trusting only in material riches and not in God, and even of serving material riches, taking material riches as God, and allowing material riches to replace God. God's enemy, Satan the devil, exploited the fallen condition of men to come in and deceive men to worship idols, such as the god of wealth, for riches and gain. By being behind these idols, he supplants men's worship and service that are due God. For this reason, the Lord Jesus told us that one "cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). Literally, the service spoken of by the Lord here refers to the service of a slave.... This tells us that Satan utilizes material riches to seduce people to worship him on the one hand, and enslaves people in material riches, as misers, on the other hand. However, we have received God's mercy and the Lord's salvation, which delivered us from the authority of Satan and turned us to God (Acts 26:18). After we have received God's salvation in this way, we are confronted with an issue in our practical living, that is, what should we do with material riches that Satan used in time

past to delude us and all the world.... Should we be the same as we were in the old manner of living before we were saved? Or should we have a change regarding our material riches according to the salvation which delivered us from the authority of Satan and turned us to God?

[First Timothy 6:17] exposes Satan's plot to delude men, showing us that all the material things and enjoyment in our living apparently come from the uncertain riches, but they actually come from God's giving. They are supplied to us from God's rich giving. Hence, we must not set our hope on deceitful and uncertain material riches, but on the very God who gives us all things richly for our enjoyment.

We ought to endeavor in our businesses. The Bible also requires that we learn to maintain good works for necessary needs (Titus 3:14, 8). Yet without God's blessing, all our labors, endeavors, and painstaking enterprises will yield little. Therefore, in this matter of material supply, unlike the worldly people who trust only in their own abilities, we have to learn to set our hope in God.

[First Timothy 6:17-19] is the apostle's charge, which is simply the Lord's charge to us. The rich refers to those who have excess from their gain after the needs of their living have been met. To do good and to be rich in good works refer to distributing the surplus from one's living to the needy ones. To be rich in doing good and good works is to be ready to distribute and willing to communicate. This is also to lay up treasure in heaven, to lay up as a treasure a good foundation for the future. Doing this will enable one to lay hold on, that is, to possess, to use, and to enjoy, that which is really life, the eternal life of God. To save up the surplus riches from our living on the earth is to lay hold on and make use of our natural life; while to save up the same in heaven, spending it on God, is to lay hold on and employ the eternal life of God. (*Life Lessons*, pp. 179-181)

Further Reading: Life Lessons, lsn. 24

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. Now concerning the collection for the saints, 16:1-2 just as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also do. On the first day of the week each one of you should lay aside in store to himself whatever he may have been prospered, that no collections be made when I come.

Today's Reading

All of fallen mankind are under the domination of mammon and material possessions (Matt. 6:19-21, 24-25, 30; 19:21-22; Luke 12:13-19). At the day of Pentecost, under the power of the Holy Spirit, all the believers overthrew this domination and had all their possessions in common for distribution to the needy ones (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32, 34-37). That practice, due to the weakness of the believers' fallen nature (see Acts 5:1-11; 6:1), did not last long. It was already over by the apostle Paul's time. Then the believers needed grace to overcome the power of mammon and material things and to release them from Satan's domination for an offering to the Lord to fulfill His purpose. Resurrection life is the supply for the believers to live such a life, a life trusting in God, not in treasures of material possessions, a life not for today but for the future, not for this age but for the coming age (Luke 12:16-21; 1 Tim. 6:17-19), a life that overthrows the usurpation of temporal and uncertain riches.... This dealing is related to God's administration among the churches.

It is a crucial matter that this dealing follows a chapter concerning the reality of resurrection life. Resurrection is not only the power over sin and death; resurrection is a power over mammon and material possessions. Therefore, immediately following the chapter on resurrection, Paul turns to the matter of material possessions.

In the second section of 1 Corinthians, chapters eleven through sixteen, Paul deals with matters in the realm of the

divine administration. This section begins with the headship of God and consummates with a seemingly insignificant matter—the gift of material things for the saints. Whether or not we are truly in God's administration...and are carrying out God's administration, can be tested by how we are related to material things and how we handle our money. If we use our money in a worldly way, then no matter what we say about resurrection, we are not truly in God's administration. The extent to which we are in the divine administration...is determined by how we care for money and material possessions.

If we all would be faithful to live for God's administration in caring for money and material matters, there would be no financial needs in the recovery. For example, certainly we can exercise our spirit and our will to save a small amount of money each week, perhaps just two dollars and fifty cents, and give this to the Lord for His move on the earth. One day, instead of having our lunch at a restaurant, we may eat a simple meal prepared at home. Then the money saved could be given to the Lord. Imagine what the situation would be if we all were faithful to do something like this week by week!

In such a spiritual book dealing with spiritual and heavenly matters, Paul eventually turns to the very practical matter of finances. It is quite easy to talk about the headship and say, "Praise the Lord, I am under the headship of Christ! Christ is my Head. Concerning His headship, I do not have any problems." But can you say that you have no problem with the matter Paul brings up in chapter sixteen? We may talk about the victory of resurrection over sin and death, but what about the victory in resurrection over your use of your money and material possessions?...For this reason, Paul, in God's wisdom, deals with the matter of giving immediately after the matter of resurrection. (*Life-study of First Corinthians*, pp. 625-628)

Further Reading: Life-study of First Corinthians, msg. 69, pp. 625-628

Enlightenment and inspiration: _____

