

Young Adults Outing Pre-reading

Sunday, October 6th

Eph. 5:14 Therefore He says, Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

Prov. 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

The God-ordained way is intrinsically a way of life (1)

...I would like to give you a short testimony of my experience in this matter. I was with the Brethren for more than six years—from 1925 to 1931—when the Lord shined on me in a particular way. In August of 1931 while I was walking on the street, something deep within me said, “You have been with the Brethren for all these years. You have gone to meeting after meeting and have heard message after message. But look at how dead you are. In these years you didn't bring one person to the Lord.” I was really bothered by this realization. The next morning, I went to the top of a hill to spend some time alone with the Lord. I wept and prayed, “Lord, have mercy upon me. What shall I do?” That was something vital. I did that every day for quite some time....

Later, he [Watchman Nee] came and held a conference in our denomination. The day after he left, the Lord sent someone to me, and we spontaneously became companions. That was the start of the church in my hometown. We two became vital. There was no need for us to go to people. The Lord sent people one by one to come to contact us. Just after two weeks' time, we had eleven brothers coming together to take the Lord's table. That was a vitalized situation....

What I have been teaching here is according to what I have experienced. The many teachings that I had received from the Brethren did not help me in the matter of life. It was not until the Lord shined upon me that I began to be brought into the pathway of life.

You may say, “Well, the Lord has not come to me yet.” But I would say, “The Lord is waiting for you. You need to go to Him.” The Lord is within you, but you may not care to listen to Him. He is speaking all the time. You need to stop yourself from all other things. Go to a closed room, to a mountaintop, or to some other place to be with the Lord for a personal time....

Verse 14 of Ephesians 5 is an imperative—“Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead.” We should take heed to this word. There is not any doctrine here. We must wake up. If we do not, we are through. We say that we hate the deadness of Sardis, but we have to arise from the dead. Awake and arise! This verse is very practical to us. If we awake and arise, Christ will shine on us. His shining will work out many things and show us where we are.... We need to be vitalized because we are sleeping. We need to be saved from our deadness.

(The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups, Chapter 9, Section 3)

The first thing to do in the small group meeting is to see whether or not everyone is revived. This revival is a morning-by-morning revival, a day-by-day overcoming, a life that lives Christ, that speaks Christ, and that attends every meeting there is. The revival that we talk about in the Lord's recovery is easier than all the revivals that Christians have sought after throughout the previous centuries. All we need to do is go to the Lord every morning when we wake up and pour out everything we have in us in a genuine way from the depth of our being. In this way we will be cleansed and will be enlightened by the Lord's word. The Lord will fill us, and we will be able to consecrate ourselves to Him to live the overcoming life. After ten minutes our whole being will be revived.

Following that, we should move on with the sun, which means to walk according to the Lord Jesus who is rising up within us.... The Bible compares those who love the Lord and follow Him to the sun. Proverbs 4:18 says, “The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and

brighter until the full day.”...Every morning we need to have a new beginning before the Lord to be revived anew. For this we all have to make a vow to the Lord and to consecrate ourselves.

We must be revived. Only then can we be living persons. In order to walk the new way, we must be the new man. The new man is the living man....The old man cannot take the new way. Hence, the first thing to make clear in the small groups is that everyone has to be revived and have clear dealings before the Lord....Only by this can we walk the new way. The new way requires a revived and living people to walk in it.

(The Organic Practice of the New Way, Chapter 3, Section 2)

Monday, October 7th

Acts 4:31 And when they had so besought, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

John 6:33 For the bread of God is He who comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world.

The God-ordained way is intrinsically a way of life (2)

THE APPLICATION OF THE GOD-ORDAINED WAY BY A REVIVED LIFE

In this chapter I would like to fellowship concerning the application of the God-ordained way, the biblical way, the new way. To know this way outwardly is not that difficult, but to apply the biblical way to meet and to serve is not so simple. This biblical way includes four things: (1) the preaching of the gospel by visiting people to get people saved for Christ (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15); (2) having home meetings set up in the new ones' homes for nourishing and cherishing them so that they may grow in life (John 21:15; 1 Pet. 2:2); (3) having group meetings to group the new ones together for perfecting (Heb. 10:24-25; Eph. 4:12-13); and (4) prophesying, speaking for the Lord and speaking forth the Lord, in the church meetings for the building up of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 14:1, 3-5, 12, 23-24, 31, 39a). None of these four items is easy. Even the first step of visiting people to get them saved is not easy.

To visit people for the preaching of the gospel, we must be revived persons. We must be stirred up in our spirit. We must be praying persons who pray ourselves into our spirit. Then when we are in the light, we can make a thorough confession of all our sinfulness, defects, and failures. For the entire day we have to walk in the spirit, and we have to live Christ. We also must learn to speak Christ all day long to anybody. Then this will qualify us to be the right persons to go out not merely with a doctrinal gospel but with the living person of Christ....

In order to be prevailing in the gospel, we must be people who live a revived life, an overcoming life. As regenerated persons, we need to be filled with the Spirit inwardly and outwardly. Then when we go to visit people, we go with Christ as the Spirit. Christ is not only our power but also our authority. When we speak to people, Christ speaks in our speaking. When we are filled with the Spirit, we have the boldness and the utterance. We can speak the same word in two ways. One way is by ourselves. The other way is to speak with Christ. This makes a great difference....

To help people experience regeneration, we need the Spirit. If we go out by ourselves and in ourselves, we may talk fluently to someone for a long time with no result. People may be convinced by us and still not be regenerated. We need to get ourselves prepared with the infilling and outpouring of the Spirit. When we go in this way, others will be regenerated. Whether or not others get regenerated depends upon what kind of persons we are when we go out.

To take an easy way in the Lord's present move does not work. Even the first item, the preaching of the gospel, is not an easy thing. It requires us to live a victorious life. By what way can we live such a life? There is no other way except by contacting the Lord. First, we must enjoy Him every morning. We have to spend a little time every morning to be with the Lord, to enjoy the Lord. Living a revived life enables us to bring others to the Lord so that they can be regenerated....

We may not have much time in the morning, but at least we can set apart ten minutes to spend with the Lord. We can spend these ten minutes to say, "O Lord Jesus," and we can turn to His Word to enjoy Him. The heavenly manna has been made available to us, and we just need to take it. The leading ones in the churches must learn and be burdened to be revived by the Lord every morning, and they have to help the other brothers and sisters to practice this. Whoever practices this will become living and even victorious. They will be eager to speak Christ to their relatives, acquaintances, colleagues, and classmates. They will also anticipate meeting in the evening with their family and with other Christians. When they meet, they will have something to say. They will have something living to render to the meeting. The key point is that we need to have a revived life, a victorious life.

(Elders' Training, Book 09: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way (1), Chapter 3, Sections 1-3)

Tuesday, October 8th

Acts 1:14 These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

A vital group is a blended group (1)

First, we need to seek to be blended with the other members of our vital group by having an intimate and thorough fellowship with much and thorough prayer.

(Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups, Chapter 16, Section 1)

The word *fellowship* is used in the New Testament first in Acts 2:42: “They continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.” This verse mentions the fellowship of the apostles. Among the apostles there was an intimate fellowship. In the beginning of Acts the apostles were with a group of about one hundred twenty saints (1:15). We may say that that was the apostles’ group. Among them there was an intimate fellowship. The one hundred twenty stayed together for at least ten days. They ate together, prayed together, and did everything together. Surely they had an intimate fellowship. The day of Pentecost was a day produced by ten days of this kind of fellowship. Among us there is a shortage of such an intimate fellowship.

Our fellowship should be not only intimate but also thorough. We may know one another, but we may not know one another thoroughly. If this is the case, we cannot say that we have thorough fellowship with one another. In the vital groups the members first need to know one another intimately and thoroughly.

Fellowship is the flowing, the current, of the oneness. Ten days before Pentecost, on this earth there was a group of people who were in the fellowship; they were in the current, in the flow, of the oneness. According to Acts 1:14, they were also in one accord....

The way to have an intimate and thorough fellowship is to exercise our spirit. Whenever we speak something in fellowship, we need to exercise our spirit. According to my observation, a number of saints have the teaching concerning exercising the spirit, but in practice they do not have the reality. For the proper fellowship we need to exercise our spirit with much and thorough prayer. In the vital groups we need to fellowship concerning our status, our spiritual condition, and our present situation in and with the Lord.

We need to build up an intimacy with all the members of our group. To do this, one sister may call another during the day for a few minutes of contact and fellowship. If we love one another, we will always feel that we miss one another. If we would contact one another in this way, we will see the difference. We will be enlivened and stirred up to love the Lord. Our hearts will also be softened toward one another, and we will be able to receive something from one another.

The Lord Jesus built up the oneness between Peter, John, James, and all the others who followed Him for three and a half years. They left their families, their nets, their boats, and their jobs just to follow the Lord every day. The outsiders might have thought that to follow Jesus was a waste. In their view, wherever He went, a group of people followed Him doing nothing. It seems that the Lord did nothing, but actually He trained His disciples for three and a half years. Every day when He spoke, He trained them. When He did not speak, He still trained His disciples. His silence was also a kind of training. At the end of the three and a half years the Lord Jesus went up to Jerusalem to die. While they were on the way, James and John and all the rest were quarreling concerning who would sit on the Lord’s right hand and on His left hand in His kingdom (Matt. 20:20-24). It seems that they did not gain anything during those three and a half years, but something was built up within them. After witnessing the Lord’s death, resurrection, and ascension, they became different persons. Among them there was the fellowship, the

oneness, and the one accord. At that time they were ready, qualified, prepared, and equipped to receive the outpoured God upon them....The Triune God poured Himself out upon these people who were in the oneness and in the fellowship and who had the genuine one accord. To build up such a one accord is not an easy thing.

(Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups, chapter 10, sections 2-3)

Wednesday, October 9th

Lev. 2:2 Then he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests, and he shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all its frankincense. And the priest shall burn *it as* its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

11 No meal offering that you present to Jehovah shall be made with leaven, for you shall not burn any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to Jehovah.

13 And every offering of your meal offering you shall season with salt, and you shall not omit the salt of the covenant of your God from your meal offering; with all your offerings you shall present salt.

A vital group is a blended group (2)

In the vital groups we need to be blended by much and thorough prayer, as fine flour of the wheat, with all the members of our group, with the Spirit as the oil, through the death of Christ as the salt, and in the resurrection of Christ as the frankincense, into a dough for the Lord (1 Cor. 5:6-7a; Lev. 2:1-13). To be blended is not merely to be put together as a couple, like a husband and wife. Being "coupled" is not as advanced as being blended. It is possible for a couple to be married for a number of years and yet never be blended. In human society there are often quarrels between husbands and wives, between brothers and sisters, and between children and parents because they have never been blended with one another.

The New Testament tells us, first, that we are grains of wheat. In John 12:24 the Lord Jesus was the unique grain. Through His death and resurrection He released His life into us, making us the many grains. This is very good. However, the New Testament goes on to tell us that as grains, we need to eventually become a lump (1 Cor. 5:6-7a). This means that we need to become dough. The making of dough requires the blending of grains of wheat, but before being blended, the grains need to be ground into fine flour.

The New Testament also tells us that we all eventually become a loaf (10:17). In a sense, the grains, the fine flour, the lump, and the dough are nothing until they become a loaf. After we become a loaf, we mean something and we are something in the hand of the Lord. The loaf is the group.... A number of saints among us may never have been ground or broken. Although we are grains, it is possible that we have never been broken and ground into fine flour. On the other hand, we may be broken, yet we may never have been blended together. Thus, we are far from being a loaf. The way to become a loaf is to be blended together in the groups. The loaf is the group....

According to the type of the meal offering in Leviticus 2:1-13, to be blended requires the adding of oil so that the flour will not be dry. It is impossible to blend fine flour that is dry; oil is needed to make the flour moist. In the same way, we need the Spirit as the oil to "moisten" us so that we can be blended together.

To be blended together, we also need the salt, that is, the death of Christ, to kill all the germs within us. We need to realize that we have many germs in our being. All these germs need to be killed by the death of Christ. Then we also need to be in the resurrection of Christ. In the blending we need to experience the Spirit as the oil, and we also need to pass through the experiences of the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. If by the Lord's mercy we are able to experience such a blending, we will be absolutely different from what we are today. It is not enough just to put people together and call them a group. That can be done very quickly. The proper grouping with the blending of the members will take time....

In order to be blended together, we need to confess the sin of individualism and individuality. Our individualism is a kind of principle, a kind of policy, with us....Our individualism becomes our logic. The educational system in America educates the young people to be individuals. The logic of being an individual, or the logic of individualism, is a sin in the eyes of God. We need to condemn individualism and individuality. In our church life we may be full of individuality. We may not care for others but may care only for ourselves. Even though we may love others, we may not care for others. In loving others we

may still care for ourselves. This is individuality. We need to confess this sin. As long as such germs remain within us, we cannot be one and we cannot be blended....

To be blended by the Lord, we also need to confess all our defects, shortcomings, wrongdoings, mistakes, transgressions, trespasses, outward sins, and inward evils. We need not only to confess these things but also to ask for the Lord's forgiveness. The New Testament is full of the promise of the Lord's forgiveness (Acts 2:38; 10:43; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 John 1:9). The Lord is willing to forgive and even to forget (Heb. 8:12), but we need to confess. We should make a thorough confession so that we can be forgiven and justified. Then we can be blended.

(Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups, chapter 10, section 3)

Thursday, October 10th

Acts 2:46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart,

47 Praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.

Three characteristics of a vital group—purpose, nature, and condition (1)

THE PURPOSE—FOR THE INCREASE, THE PERFECTING, AND THE BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH

The purpose of the vital groups is the increase, perfecting, and building up of the Body of Christ (Acts 2:46-47; Eph. 4:12). The vital groups are to gain the increase, finish the perfecting, and complete the building.

First, we need the increase, not only of Caucasians but of all peoples. Acts 2:46-47 says, “Day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart, praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.” This is the normal standard of the Christian life. In these verses there are a number of important points. The first point is “day by day,” the second is “continuing steadfastly with one accord,” the third is “breaking bread from house to house,” and the fourth is “they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart.” The believers in this verse not only enjoyed their food, but they partook of it with exultation. To exult means to praise by giving a ringing shout. The fifth point is that they praised God and had grace with all the people, and the last point is that the Lord added together those who were being saved. The increase comes from this. If we want the increase, we need to have the few things mentioned in these two verses....

The proper way to be a Christian is not to have opinions and divisions but to continue steadfastly with one accord in meeting in the homes, having the Lord’s table, and eating with exultation, with rejoicing and shouting. We all need to be beside ourselves. Brother Nee once said that if a Christian has never been beside himself, he is not qualified to be a Christian. As Christians, we must be outside of ourselves, praising God and having grace with all the people. These are the conditions for the proper increase. In such a condition the Lord can add to the church day by day.

Ephesians 4:12 speaks of the perfecting of the saints that each one may do the unique work of the ministry, that is, to build up the Body of Christ. This is the purpose of the vital move to have the groups.

(Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups, chapter 7, section 2)

In this chapter we want to consider the purpose of the vital groups. Many of the groups have been coming together to pray earnestly and have been laboring for about seven months, but what has come out of this? The outward situation among us may not seem that encouraging because we have not yet seen some definite results. The saints in the book of Acts prayed together for ten days. The result was the outpouring of the Spirit (2:2-4), and three thousand added to the church (v. 41). We may expect a similar great result after we pray together for a short period of time. We may be discouraged since we have not yet seen much of a result....

John 15 is a very valuable and deep chapter in the Bible. A number of Bible teachers teach only the abiding in the Lord from this chapter. Actually, however, John 15 stresses the bearing of fruit. Abiding is not for the sake of abiding; abiding is for the sake of fruit-bearing. If you abide in the Lord for your whole life and do not bear any fruit, your abiding means nothing. The stress in John 15 is not on abiding. The key is abiding, but the stress is fruit-bearing. We can have the fruit-bearing by abiding....

It was not our decision to choose to be a branch of Christ, the true vine. The Lord said, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you” (v. 16). The word *set* is a strong word. It is not just that the Lord has appointed us or arranged something for us but that He has set us. This is our destiny. The destiny of the lovers of Christ is to bear fruit.

According to John 15, fruit-bearing is not an easy thing (vv. 18-25). The vine suffers for many months before its season comes to bear fruit....

We should not think that our meeting together for about seven months in the vital groups has been a wasted time. We must remember that the bearing of fruit is according to the proper season.

(Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups, chapter 23, section 1)

Friday, October 11th

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Three characteristics of a vital group—purpose, nature, and condition (2)

THE NATURE—SPIRITUAL

The nature of the vital groups is spiritual (Acts 13:52; 4:31b). To be spiritual means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, within and without. We need to practice to be filled every day, every morning, and even every evening. We need to pray, “Lord, fill me with Yourself.” Every morning my regular prayer is: “Lord, thank You for a good night’s rest with good sleep. Thank You for my safety, and thank You for peace. Thank You for Your forgiveness through Your grace and Your cleansing with Your precious blood. Thank You, Lord, that this cleansing brings me into Your presence, and that You are now anointing me with Yourself as the all-inclusive Spirit, who is the compound ointment. Lord, fill me now.” Such a regular prayer is not vain repetition. I eat three meals every day, and every meal is a regular meal. In the same way, I pray every day that the Lord will fill and saturate me thoroughly. We all, young and old, need to pray in such a way. This will cause us to be active, fresh, and new.

I cannot rest without seeing the saints stirred up by the Spirit and having their spirits fanned into flame. We should all be stirred up by the Lord, and we also need to fan our spirits into flame (2 Tim. 1:6). A proper Christian is one who is filled with the Spirit. We should not be “flat tires.” We should be those who are filled with the Spirit, within and without, essentially and economically. The Bible tells us that whenever the people of God come together, they should make not merely a joyful voice but a joyful noise (Psa. 100:1). Whenever they speak, certain saints speak very solemnly. However, if they would speak exultantly, they would be normal. For this we need to be filled inwardly with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 13:52 says that the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. They were filled with the Spirit within. Then Acts 4:31b indicates that they were also filled with the Spirit without. At that time a number of them prayed together in one accord. Eventually, they were all filled outwardly. They experienced the outpoured Spirit again. In Acts the disciples experienced the outpoured Spirit again and again (2:1-4; 4:31; 9:17; 10:44; 13:9; 19:6).

THE CONDITION—LOVING ONE ANOTHER IN ONENESS AND WITH ONE ACCORD

The condition of the vital groups is that of loving one another in oneness and with one accord (John 13:34-35). To love one another may seem very common. However, we must admit that although we do love one another, we may not love one another very much. Because we meet together day after day and year after year, we surely have human affection for one another, but the condition of loving one another in the vital groups should be more than this. We need to love one another, meeting together in a mutual love.

We not only love one another, but we love one another in oneness and with one accord. In John 17 the Lord Jesus said that when His disciples are one in the Triune God, the whole world will believe that He was sent by the Father (vv. 21, 23). This is the way to gain people. Often when we go out to visit people by twos and threes, the people whom we visit may realize that there is no oneness among us. The result is a lack of impact. But if two or three of us go out as one man, the people whom we visit will realize that there is a dynamic power among us. There will be the impact, and they will be convinced.

In John 13:34-35 the Lord Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” By our loving one another, the whole world will know that we are the Lord’s disciples. This is the real impact. Without our speaking anything, people will be convinced because they see us loving one another in oneness and with one accord. On the whole earth, in

every society everyone knows that whenever people group together, there is struggling and fighting. Wherever there are groups of people, there will be debates, arguments, and strife. But when people are among us and we are really one, they will wonder what has made us one. The Lord Jesus is the living person who has made us one....

(Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups, chapter 7, section 3)