

International Training
for Elders and Responsible Ones
April 2024

GENERAL SUBJECT:
BEING A VESSEL UNTO HONOR, A FULLY EQUIPPED MAN OF GOD,
BY BEING EMPOWERED IN THE GRACE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS
TO FULLY ACCOMPLISH OUR MINISTRY
IN THE UNIQUE MINISTRY OF GOD'S ECONOMY
(Friday—First Morning Session)

Message One
Living in the Reality of God's Eternal Economy
for Its Fulfillment by Building Up a Habit
of Exercising Our Spirit, Fanning Our God-given Spirit into Flame

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 4:22

- 1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
1 Tim 4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come.
2 Tim 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

I. God's eternal economy is His household administration to dispense Himself in Christ into His chosen people that He may have a house to express Himself, which house is the church, the Body of Christ; God's eternal economy is His eternal plan, and His divine dispensing is the means by which He accomplishes His plan—1 Tim. 1:3-4; 3:15; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 1:10; 3:8-9; 2:10:

- 1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things
1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
Eph 2:10 For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand in order that we would walk in them.
- A. Christ is the center, circumference, element, sphere, means, goal, and aim of God's economy; in fact, all the contents of God's eternal economy are simply Christ— Matt. 17:5; Eph. 3:6; Luke 24:44.
Matt 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!
Eph 3:6 That in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body

- and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel,
 Luke 24:44 And He said to them, These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all the things written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms concerning Me must be fulfilled.
- B. Unless we know God's economy, we will not understand the Bible; the central subject of the Bible is the economy of God, and the entire Bible is concerned with the economy of God—v. 45; Job 10:13; cf. Eph. 3:9.
 Luke 24:45 Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures;
 Job 10:13 But You have hidden these things in Your heart; / I know that this is with You:
 Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
- C. God's economy is to dispense Himself into our being so that our being may be constituted with His being; this can be accomplished only by God's dispensing Himself into us as the divine life—John 10:10; 14:6a; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11.
 John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
 John 14:6a Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; ...
 1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
 Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
 Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
 Rom 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.
 Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- D. The leadership in the New Testament ministry is the leadership of the controlling, God-given revelation of God's eternal economy—Acts 26:19; Prov. 29:18.
 Acts 26:19 Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,
 Prov 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; / But happy is he who keeps the law.
- E. Different teachings other than God's economy separate us from the genuine appreciation, love, and enjoyment of the precious person of the Lord Jesus Christ as our life and our everything (2 Cor. 11:2-3); the different teachings of the dissenting ones (1 Tim. 1:3) caused envy and discord among the believers, which are contrary to love, the end (the objective and purpose) of the apostle's charge to remain in the teaching of God's economy (v. 5; John 13:34; Gal. 5:13-14).
 2 Cor 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
 2 Cor 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.
 1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things
 1 Tim 1:5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith;
 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.
 Gal 5:13 For you were called for freedom, brothers; only do not turn this freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
 Gal 5:14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- F. God's divine dispensing deifies the believers, making them God in life and nature but not in the Godhead for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ and for the preparation of the bride of Christ to usher in the kingdom of Christ; for this purpose God became a man to "man-ize" Himself; then He dispenses Himself as life into us to "God-ize" us in His life

and nature but not in His Godhead.

- G. God's intention in His economy is to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—into His chosen people; God's only goal in time is to dispense Himself into us day by day.

II. In the “blueprint” of God’s original intention, man is the center of the entire universe, and the center of man is his spirit—Zech. 12:1; Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27:

- Zech 12:1 The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him,
- Gen 2:7 Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.
- Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.
- A. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit that he may contact God, receive God, contain God, worship God, live God, fulfill God's purpose for God, express God, and be one with God—John 4:24; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
- 1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
- B. Without God being the Spirit and without us having a spirit to contact God, to be one with God, the whole universe is empty, and we are nothing—Eccl. 1:2; 3:11; Job 32:8; 12:10; 2 Cor. 4:13, 16-18.
- Eccl 1:2 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; / Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.
- Eccl 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its own time; also He has put eternity in their heart, yet so that man does not find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.
- Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man, / And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.
- Job 12:10 In whose hand is the life of every living thing / And the breath of all flesh of man?
- 2 Cor 4:13 And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak,
- 2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
- 2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,
- 2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
- C. Due to the fall, men have not only overlooked and neglected the human spirit but also have even refused to admit that man has a spirit—1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; cf. Jude 19.
- 1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- Jude 19 These are those who make divisions, soulish, having no spirit.
- D. Man as a vessel, through the exercise of his spirit, was to receive God in Christ as the tree of life so that life as a river would flow in and out of his innermost being for his transformation into precious materials for God's building, God's eternal expression—Gen. 1:26; 2:7-12, 22; 1 Tim. 4:7-8:
- Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

- Gen 2:7 Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.
- Gen 2:8 And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed.
- Gen 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Gen 2:10 And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four branches.
- Gen 2:11 The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that goes around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.
- Gen 2:12 And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.
- Gen 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- 1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
- 1 Tim 4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come.
1. The breath of God has become our human spirit, and our spirit is God's lamp to contain God as the oil and to give us light—Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27.

Gen 2:7 Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.
 2. Man's spirit became a broken lamp through his fall, but through God's recovery in His salvation, man's spirit is regenerated, rebuilt, and reinforced with the vivifying, sevenfold intensified Spirit—Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27; John 3:6; Rev. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15:45b.

Gen 2:7 Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Rev 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
 3. The central government and most prominent part of man's being should be his spirit; a man who is ruled and controlled by his spirit is a spiritual man— 2:14-15; 3:1; 14:32; 2 Cor. 2:12-15; Eph. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:4; Dan. 6:3, 10.

1 Cor 2:14 But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually.

1 Cor 2:15 But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

1 Cor 3:1 And I, brothers, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshy, as to infants in Christ.

1 Cor 14:32 And the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets;

2 Cor 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and a door was open to me in the Lord,

2 Cor 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.

2 Cor 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place.

2 Cor 2:15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God in those who are being saved and in those who are perishing:

Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

1 Pet 3:4 But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.

Dan 6:3 Then this Daniel distinguished himself among the chief ministers and satraps because in him there was an excellent spirit, and the king considered setting him over the whole kingdom.

Dan 6:10 Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had always done so previously.

E. The strategic and central point of God's economy is the divine Spirit dwelling in our human spirit and the two mingled together as one spirit, the mingled spirit— John 3:6; 4:24; Rom. 8:16; 2 Cor. 3:17; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; 1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:13:

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

2 Cor 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

2 Cor 4:13 And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak,

1. The great way to fulfill God's economy is for us to live and do everything according to the Spirit by exercising our spirit—Job 10:13; Eph. 3:9; Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:25.

Job 10:13 But You have hidden these things in Your heart; / I know that this is with You:

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Gal 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

2. Whenever we turn to our spirit and exercise our spirit, we touch the Body, because the Body is in our spirit—Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,

Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,

Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

3. When we are in our spirit, we overcome the world, we cannot sin, the evil one cannot touch us, and we are guarded from idols—1 John 5:4, 18-19, 21; John 14:30.

1 John 5:4 For everything that has been begotten of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory which has overcome the world—our faith.

1 John 5:18 We know that everyone who is begotten of God does not sin, but he who has been begotten of God keeps himself, and the evil one does not touch him.

1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the evil one.

1 John 5:21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

John 14:30 I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and in Me he has nothing;

III. The key to receiving the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity and being a channel of this dispensing for the saints' growth in life and their enjoyment of Christ is to exercise our spirit, which is to fan our God-given spirit into flame—Phil. 1:25; 1 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 4:22; Acts 6:10; 1 Cor. 14:32:

- Phil 1:25 And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,
- 1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
- 1 Tim 4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come.
- 2 Tim 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
- 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
- 2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.
- Acts 6:10 Yet they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke.
- 1 Cor 14:32 And the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets;

A. Godliness, a living that is the expression of God, is the issue of the divine dispensing for the divine economy, and this dispensing depends on the exercise of our spirit to live Christ in our daily life for the corporate manifestation of God in the church life—1 Tim. 1:3-4; 3:15-16; 4:7-8; 2 Tim. 1:6-7.

- 1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things
- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
- 1 Tim 3:16 And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh, / Justified in the Spirit, / Seen by angels, / Preached among the nations, / Believed on in the world, / Taken up in glory.
- 1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
- 1 Tim 4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come.
- 2 Tim 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
- 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

B. The word *exercise* implies forcing; if we Christians want to be strong and want to grow in the Lord, we must force ourselves to use our spirit until we build up a strong habit of exercising our spirit—1 Tim. 4:7.

- 1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.

C. To exercise our spirit into flame—2 Tim. 1:6-7:

- 2 Tim 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
- 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

1. Second Timothy 1:6 refers to “the gift of God,” and verse 7 indicates that what God has given us is our regenerated spirit, our mingled spirit, of power, of love, and of sobermindedness; thus, the gift of God is our God-given spirit.

- 2 Tim 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

- 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

2. We saved ones have the capital to live the Christian life and the church life, and this capital is our God-given spirit.

3. Fire is in our regenerated spirit, which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit; actually, our spirit is the fire—Luke 12:49-50; Rom. 12:11; Rev. 4:5; Prov. 20:27.

- Luke 12:49 I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!

- Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is

accomplished!
 Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
 Rev 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;
 Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.

D. To exercise our spirit, we must deal with the parts of our soul surrounding our spirit—our mind, emotion, and will—cf. 1 Pet. 3:4:

1 Pet 3:4 But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.

1. A spirit of power is a spirit with a subdued and resurrected will, a spirit of love is a spirit with an emotion filled with God as love, and a spirit of sobermindedness is a spirit with a renewed mind—2 Tim. 1:7.

2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

2. Our dear Lord Jesus is the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls; our soul is our inner being, our real person; our Lord shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our real person—1 Pet. 2:25; Psa. 23:1-6; cf. Heb. 13:17.

1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Psa 23:1 Jehovah is my Shepherd; I will lack nothing.

Psa 23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; / He leads me beside waters of rest.

Psa 23:3 He restores my soul; He guides me on the paths of righteousness / For His name's sake.

Psa 23:4 Even though I walk / Through the valley of the shadow of death, / I do not fear evil, / For You are with me; / Your rod and Your staff, / They comfort me.

Psa 23:5 You spread a table before me / In the presence of my adversaries; / You anoint my head with oil; / My cup runs over.

Psa 23:6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me / All the days of my life, / And I will dwell in the house of Jehovah / For the length of my days.

Heb 13:17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable to you.

3. Because the exercise of the spirit is linked to the parts of our soul and is so vital to living in the reality of God's economy, we need to cooperate with our Lord in His heavenly ministry by "establishing the souls of the disciples"—Acts 14:22.

Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

4. To establish the souls of the disciples is to establish them (1) in their mind, that they may know and understand the Lord and the things concerning Him (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 3:10); (2) in their emotion, that they may love the Lord and have a heart for the Lord's interest (Mark 12:30; Rom. 16:4); and (3) in their will, that they may be strong to remain with the Lord and do the things that please the Lord (Acts 11:23; Col. 1:10; 1 Thes. 4:1).

1 Cor 2:16 For who has known the mind of the Lord and will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

Rom 16:4 Who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

- Acts 11:23 Who, when he arrived and saw the grace of God, rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart;
- Col 1:10 To walk worthily of the Lord to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full knowledge of God,
- 1 Thes 4:1 Furthermore, brothers, we ask and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that even as you received from us how you ought to walk and please God, even as indeed you do walk, that you abound still more.

- E. To exercise our spirit, to fan our God-given spirit into flame, is to rejoice always, pray unceasingly, and give thanks in everything in order to enjoy the indwelling Spirit as the secret of doing all things in Christ—2 Cor. 12:2a; Phil. 4:11-13; Psa. 91:1; 1 Thes. 5:16-18.
- 2 Cor 12:2a I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body I do not know, or outside the body I do not know; ...
 - Phil 4:11 Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content.
 - Phil 4:12 I know also how to be abased, and I know how 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.
 - Phil 4:13 I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.
 - Psa 91:1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High / Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
 - 1 Thes 5:16 Always rejoice,
 - 1 Thes 5:17 Unceasingly pray,
 - 1 Thes 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- F. To exercise our spirit, to fan our God-given spirit into flame, is to set our mind on the spirit—Rom. 8:6; Mal. 2:15-16:

- Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
- Mal 2:15 But did He not make them one? And the remnant of the Spirit was His. And why the one? He sought the seed of God. Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one be treacherous to the wife of his youth.
- Mal 2:16 For I hate divorce, says Jehovah the God of Israel; and he who does it behaves in violence, says Jehovah of hosts. Take heed then to your spirit, and do not be treacherous.

1. When we set our mind on the spirit, we have the inner sense of life and peace, the sense of strength, satisfaction, rest, release, liveliness, watering, brightness, and comfort.
2. When we set our mind on the flesh, we have the inner sense of death, the sense of weakness, emptiness, uneasiness, restlessness, depression, dryness, darkness, and pain.
3. Our Christian life is not according to the standard of right and wrong but according to the inner sense of life and peace in our spirit—Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 2:13-14.

- Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
- 2 Cor 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.
- 2 Cor 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place.

- G. To exercise our spirit, to fan our God-given spirit into flame, is to discern our spirit from our soul—Heb. 4:12:

- Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

1. We should always be on the alert to discern and deny anything that is not of the spirit but of the soul, the self—Matt. 16:25; cf. Luke 9:25.
- Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
 - Luke 9:25 For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world but loses or forfeits himself?

2. Whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we do must be in spirit; everything that God is to us is in our spirit—Rom. 2:28-29; 1:9; 8:4; 12:11.
- Rom 2:28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.
- Rom 2:29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God.
- Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,
- Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
- Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
- H. To exercise our spirit, to fan our God-given spirit into flame, is to live the normal church life and overcome the church's degradation by pursuing Christ with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.
- 2 Tim 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
- I. To exercise our spirit, to fan our God-given spirit into flame, is to pray, to approach God in a personal and confiding manner, for the interests of God—Christ, the kingdom of God, and the house of God—as the goal in God's eternal economy—1:6-8; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 2:1-3, 8; 1 Kings 8:48; Jude 19-21.
- 2 Tim 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
- 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
- 2 Tim 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me His prisoner; but suffer evil with the gospel according to the power of God;
- 1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things
- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- 1 Tim 2:1 I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men;
- 1 Tim 2:2 On behalf of kings and all who are in high position, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and gravity.
- 1 Tim 2:3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior God,
- 1 Tim 2:8 I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and reasoning;
- 1 Kings 8:48 And if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, who have carried them captive, and they pray to You toward their land that You have given to their fathers, the city that You have chosen, and the house that I have built for Your name;
- Jude 19 These are those who make divisions, soulish, having no spirit.
- Jude 20 But you, beloved, building up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
- Jude 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE EXERCISE OF OUR SPIRIT

It is very good that we have this study concerning our spirit. I can testify that whenever we teach and speak about our human spirit, we have joy. This is because man was created by God with a spirit, and this spirit is a particular organ within man that functions to contact God and contain God. Man was created by God to be a living creature, but he is different from all the other living creatures. Only man has a human spirit.

Genesis tells us clearly that in God's creation, He did something particular to produce our spirit (2:7). God created the universe by speaking. God spoke, and it was (Psa. 33:9). But when God came to the creation of man, He breathed His breath of life into man. Our breath is not ourselves, but nothing is as close to us as our breath. In like manner, God's breath of life is not God Himself, not the divine Spirit, and not the divine life, but it is very close to God, close to the divine Spirit, and close to the divine life.

If we did not have a spirit, we would be like the beasts. We would become meaningless. Also, if there were no God in the universe, the whole universe would become empty. So the key to our meaning and the meaning of the universe is in God's existence and also in our having a spirit. God is Spirit, and we must contact Him, worship Him, in our spirit (John 4:24). These two spirits should contact each other and should become one (1 Cor. 6:17). Then the whole universe becomes meaningful. Then our life has meaning. Without God being the Spirit and without us having a spirit to contact God, to be one with God, the whole universe is empty, and we are nothing. By this we can see the importance of our spirit.

Regretfully, due to the fall, men have not only overlooked and neglected the human spirit but also have even refused to admit that man has a spirit. Some men who live a higher life take care of their conscience, but they are in the minority. Most people take care of the law, not their conscience. Today's society needs the law so much because most people neglect one part of their spirit—their conscience. The conscience functions to judge us and condemn us when we do something wrong. Actually, the best people in human society are not the lawful ones but the ones who take care of their conscience. Some who are governed merely by the law like to find loopholes in the law so that they can carry out things that are unrighteous and unjust. Those who live by the conscience, however, live in a higher way. Our inward conscience controls us much more than the outward law does.

As Christians, our spirit has been regenerated. To be regenerated is to be reinforced. Something stronger and richer has been added into our being. This is God's life, which has been added into our spirit. This addition is a real gift. Hebrews 6:4 says that we believers have tasted of the heavenly gift. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, God first gives us the divine life. Second, God gives us the Holy Spirit. Also, He gives us many heavenly things, such as His forgiveness, righteousness, peace, and joy. God has given us justification, reconciliation, and His full salvation. All these were given in addition to God's life and God's Spirit. Actually, all these heavenly things are included in God's life and God's Spirit, which have been added into our spirit. We have a regenerated and reinforced spirit, a very strong spirit, with a companion. This companion is the Triune God. The Triune God becomes our companion in our spirit. What an enriched spirit we have!

Now that we have seen the importance of our spirit, we want to see the exercise of our spirit. We must build up a habit of exercising our spirit. When I rise up in the morning, the first thing I spontaneously say is "O Lord." To call on the Lord by saying, "O Lord" is a habit of exercising our spirit. To say "O Lord" as soon as you rise up in the morning makes a big difference. If you rise up in the morning without saying anything, you may pray in a routine way without really touching the Lord. This is because there is no exercise of your spirit. We have to build up a habit of saying, "O Lord." When we say, "O Lord," we touch the Lord. This is the habit of exercising our spirit.

At times we may be in a hard situation. We may be sick, or we may have lost our job. At that time we should exercise our spirit. We should force ourselves to say, "O Lord Jesus!" The word *exercise* implies forcing. To exercise is always a forced matter. When the Olympic athletes are exercising to practice or compete, they must have a strong will. They force themselves to exercise. If we Christians want to be strong and want to grow in the Lord, we must force ourselves to use our spirit.

Let us suppose that a problem comes into your family life. It may be a problem between you and your spouse, between you and your children, or between you and your parents. If you do not exercise your spirit at that time, your entire soul with your mind, will, and emotion will become prevailing. Then the soul will overcome and subdue you, conquering your spirit. This can even cause you to lose

your temper in a bad way. Therefore, whenever you are in a hard situation, you have to force yourself to exercise your spirit. To force yourself to exercise, or to use, your spirit makes you a different person.

In 1 Timothy 4:7 Paul says, “Exercise yourself unto godliness.” Then in verse 8 he speaks of bodily exercise. In these two verses Paul speaks of two kinds of exercise. The exercise besides that of the body, which is the exercise unto godliness, must be the exercise of the spirit. To exercise ourselves unto godliness is to exercise our spirit to live Christ in our daily life.

TO FAN OUR SPIRIT

Second Timothy 1:6-7 indicates that we need to fan our spirit into flame. In these verses Paul says, “For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.” Some might think that these verses do not say that we should fan our spirit but that we should fan our gift. But if you get into these verses, you will see that the fanning of our gift into flame is the fanning of our spirit into flame. Paul tells us in verse 6 to “fan into flame the gift of God.” Then in verse 7 he says, “For God has not given us a spirit...” Our God-given spirit is what we must fan into flame. We have to fan our spirit.

We have to know the background of 2 Timothy to appreciate Paul’s word here. Paul wrote this book during a difficult time for his spiritual son Timothy. Paul was in prison in Rome. Furthermore, all those in Asia had forsaken Paul’s ministry (v. 15). The churches in Asia were the main churches raised up through Paul’s ministry, but they forsook him. Timothy was there among them. If you were Timothy, how would you face the situation? People could have said to Timothy, “Why are you still following Paul? All the saints in Asia have forsaken him. Also, if God were really with him, He would rescue him from the prison in Rome.” No doubt, Timothy was discouraged. Otherwise, Paul would not have said, “For which cause I remind you...” Timothy was discouraged and had to be reminded. Paul knew that Timothy was down, and he sympathized with him. He reminded Timothy that there was still a small fire within him, which he needed to fan into flame.

At times you may suffer to such an extent that you may begin to doubt God and doubt your salvation. But regardless of how much you doubt, one thing is within you that you cannot deny—your spirit. You are not like a beast. You have a spirit. This spirit is a trouble to Satan. Regardless of how much work Satan has done and is still doing, there is one thing within us that he cannot touch—our spirit. We need to fan our spirit into flame.

We may say that the gift of God that we must fan into flame is a spiritual gift. But without our spirit, how could we have the gift? The spiritual gift is in our spirit. There is fire in our regenerated spirit, which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Actually, we may say that our spirit is the fire.

A small fire that is fanned into flame can turn into a great fire. A forest fire is an example of this. The wind fans the small fire into a great fire. If something were burning within a house, and you wanted to fan that fire, you would open the window or the door. The wind would cause the fire to burn into a flame. The easiest way for you to fan your spirit is to open up your mouth.

If you want to fan your spirit into flame, you need to open up your mouth, open up your heart, and open up your spirit. You need to open these three layers of your being. You have to use your mouth to say, “O Lord Jesus.” But then you have to go deeper by using your mouth with your heart to say, “O Lord Jesus.” Then you need to go even deeper by using your mouth with your heart and with your spirit to say, “O Lord Jesus.” This is to open up your spirit from deep within. Then the fire burns. If you are down, you should call “O Lord Jesus” again and again from deep within with the exercise of your spirit. Then you will be up.

Paul wrote 2 Timothy 1:6-7 according to his experience. He reminded Timothy to fan into flame the gift of God within him. Then he said that God has not given us a spirit of cowardice. Instead, God has given us a spirit in the center of our being surrounded by the three parts of the soul—the will, the emotion, and the mind. The spirit given to us by God is of power, of love, and of sobermindedness. Power belongs to our will. Love belongs to our emotion. Sobermindedness belongs to our mind. God

has given us a spirit of these three things. Our will should be strong, full of power; our emotion should be loving, full of love; and our mind should be sober, full of sobermindedness.

According to the divine revelation, God does not give us a spirit of cowardice but a spirit of power. That means our spirit is connected to our will, which is powerful. So whenever we exercise our spirit, we have to realize that our will is involved. Our spirit is surrounded not only by the powerful will but also by the loving emotion and by the sober mind. That means that our mind should not be cloudy or foggy but very clear, very sober.

Paul had the revelation of this and also the experience. Verses 6 and 7 of 2 Timothy 1 are marvelous. These verses show us that we saved ones have the capital to live the Christian life and the church life. This capital is the God-given spirit. This God-given spirit, according to God's ordination, is surrounded by the power of our will, by the love of our emotion, and by the sobermindedness of our mind. These three helpers are surrounding our spirit, not to depress us but rather to uplift us and help us.

We have to exercise such a God-given spirit. The capital for a person to run in a race is his God-created legs. Without God creating two legs for you, how could you run? You would have no capital with which to run. In like manner, if God did not give us a spirit, we would not have the capital to run the Christian race. But today we have a great account, a great deposit in the bank. We have a God-given spirit. As long as we have the God-given spirit, we have power, love, and sobermindedness with a clear sky.

To say that we have the capital means that we have the capacity. We can do things because we have the capacity of power. We should not say that we do not love people, because we have the capacity of love. We should not say that we are in darkness, because we have the capacity of sobermindedness with a clear sky. We should declare, "My sky is not cloudy; my sky is clear," because this is our capacity.

Quite often we are cheated and deceived by the enemy. We say that we are weak and cloudy. But when we say that we are weak, we are weak. When we say that we are cloudy, we are cloudy. On the other hand, when we say that we are strong, we are strong. When we say that we are clear, we are clear. When we say what we are, that is what we are. Do not say that you are weak. If you say that you are weak, weakness is with you. But if you say that you are strong, strength is with you. We can say that we are strong because we have the capacity. We have the capital. God gave us not a spirit of cowardice but a spirit of power, of love, and of sobermindedness. We should declare this and claim this. Then we will have it. This is our portion. This is our legal, God-appointed lot, which has been allotted to us by God.

Sometimes in the past, I felt down as I was preparing to speak for the Lord. It seemed that I had nothing to speak. But at that juncture I prayed. In my prayer I realized that this was a cheating. Actually, I was not weak and I did have something. There were times when I stepped up to the podium to speak without knowing what I was going to speak. When I was asking the saints to open their Bibles to read some verses, I did not know what we would read until that very moment. After we read these verses, the message came to me. Quite often such a message is more living, more powerful, and full of more impact and supply than other messages.

I am sharing this to point out that you should not listen to what you feel or what you think. What you feel and what you think are altogether a lie, a falsehood. Christians should not believe that. We should always believe and declare and claim that we are strong. We are full of love. We can love our enemies. We are well able to love everyone. We are very clear. Our sky is crystal clear. We have to believe because we have this capital. This is our capacity. We should claim and declare, "I am strong! I am loving! I am clear!" We are blessed if we say this. This is the way to exercise our spirit. This is to fan our spirit into flame. Then we will pray. The more we pray, the more we are fanning, and the more burning there will be within us.

Whenever there is the fanning, there is always a battle with Satan. While the fanning of a fire is

going on, the fire department is fighting to quench the fire. This is an illustration of Satan trying to quench the fire being fanned within us. Today there are many things that are like cold water, trying to quench our inner flame. Sometimes a telephone call comes with bad news. Then someone comes to you with more bad news. Things will happen in our environment that can quench us. At that time we have to fight. We have to declare the facts. We have to fan our spirit into flame. Then we will be the highest persons, the super persons.

TO SET OUR MIND ON THE SPIRIT

After you fan your spirit into flame, learn to practice another thing. Always manage your mind. Do not let your mind be a “wild horse.” The mind is the great part of the soul, and the soul is in between our outward flesh and our inward spirit. Romans 8:6 says, “The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” After fanning our spirit into flame, we must learn to set our mind on the spirit. Our mind is very “talkative.” Our mind speaks to us everywhere at all times. If we do not control our mind, we can wander in our imagination all over the globe within a short time. We can dream in our mind even during the day. This is why we must direct our mind to the spirit. When we do this, we will sing to the Lord, praise the Lord, or speak forth the Lord.

It is easy for a husband and a wife to commit sins because when they are with each other, they do not set their mind on the spirit. Before other people, they will be restricted in what they say. But when they are together, they may feel free to gossip about others or speak negatively about the church. At that time they are in death because they are setting their mind on the flesh. But we have to learn to fan our spirit into flame and to control our mind. Do not let the mind be set on the flesh, but direct it to be set on the spirit. This habit has to be built up in us. To set our mind on the flesh is death. To set our mind on the spirit is life and peace.

TO DISCERN OUR SPIRIT FROM OUR SOUL

In Hebrews 4:12 the word *discern* is used. It says that the word of God can divide our soul from our spirit and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Quite often our thoughts are deceiving. But if we exercise our spirit, there is a discernment that our thoughts are evil, because behind our thoughts there is an evil intention. To discern the thoughts and intents of the heart equals the dividing of the soul from the spirit. All the time you have to keep your spirit separate from your soul. The enemy’s strategy is always to mix our spirit up with our soul. In today’s world nearly everyone is in a mixed situation. They mix up their spirit with their soul. Whenever such mixing is there, the spirit loses and the soul wins.

Before a brother begins to talk to his wife about another brother, he has to consider, “Is this of my spirit or of my soul?” If it is of his soul, what he says will be either gossip or criticism. If it is of his spirit, what he says will be something led by the Lord. This shows that we have to discern our spirit from our soul. We, the ones who are seeking after Christ, must learn to fan our spirit into flame, to set our mind on the spirit, and also to discern our spirit from our soul.

Actually, our person, our being, is quite complicated. We are not so simple, because we have three parts. We have the flesh, which is bad; the spirit, which is good; and the soul, which is in between. We should always follow our spirit and walk in all things according to our spirit. This is according to Romans 8:4. We should always be on the alert to discern anything that is not of the spirit but of the soul. Then we will remain in the spirit all the time. This is to exercise, to use, to employ, our spirit.

Our God-given spirit is our capital and our capacity. We have to use our spirit, to employ our spirit, and to exercise our spirit by fanning it into flame, by setting our mind on it, and by discerning it from our soul. Of course, it is easy to know what is of the flesh and what is of the spirit; but quite often it is a very mixed-up situation between what is of the soul and what is of the spirit. This is why we have to discern.

When we get into these points, we can realize that our Christian walk is a very fine walk. If we

are going to walk according to our spirit, we must learn not to do things too fast or to say things too quickly. It is safe to wait awhile. I have had this experience in writing answers to letters. Sometimes I will write a letter and then keep it for another day before I mail it. The next day a new thought might come to me to include in that letter, or I may realize that I said something wrong. To wait in this way helps us to walk according to our spirit.

The battle in the Christian life is always there. Even within us there is a battle between the spirit and the flesh and even more between the spirit and the soul. So we have to exercise our spirit, to use our spirit, that is, to fan our spirit into flame. Then we should learn how to control our mind by setting our mind on our spirit. We should also always discern what is of the spirit and what is of the soul. If something is not of the spirit, we do not want to say it or do it. This is to use, to exercise, our spirit. I hope that we will practice using our spirit until we build up a strong habit of exercising our spirit. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, "The Spirit with Our Spirit," pp. 180-187)