

**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**

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five

**Being a Fully Equipped Man of God
by Inhaling and Exhaling the Word of God as the Breath of God**

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 3:14-17

- 2 Tim 3:14 But you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from which ones you have learned them
- 2 Tim 3:15 And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- 2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
- 2 Tim 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

I. God's ultimate intention is to gain a corporate God-man for His corporate manifestation; God does not desire a good man but a God-man, a man of God with the breath of God—John 1:1, 14; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17:

- John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
- 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.
- 2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
- 2 Tim 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.
- A. "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. 2:7:
1. The breath of life breathed into man's body became the spirit of man, the human spirit—Prov. 20:27; Job 32:8.
Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.
Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man, / And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.
 2. The breath of life breathed into man's body was not the eternal life of God nor the Spirit of God, but because the human spirit came out of God's breath of life, it is very close to the Spirit of God—cf. Gen. 2:7-9.
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.

3. Thus, there can be a transmission between God the Spirit and man's spirit, and the human spirit is able to contact God and be one with God—Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17.
Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
- B. "He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Pneuma"—John 20:22 (lit.):
John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.
1. The Holy Pneuma is the Holy Spirit, or Holy Breath.
 2. In the Gospel of John there are three wonderful words: *Word*, *flesh*, and *breath*; the Word is God, the flesh is man, and the breath is the Spirit—1:1, 14; 20:22.
John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.
 3. The Word became flesh to accomplish judicial redemption and then resurrected to become the Holy Breath indwelling us and supplying us for our organic salvation—1:14, 29; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 5:10; 10:12-13; cf. Lam. 3:55-56.
John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
Rom 5:10 For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,
Rom 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him;
Rom 10:13 For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
Lam 3:55 I called upon Your name, O Jehovah, / From the lowest pit.
Lam 3:56 You have heard my voice; do not hide / Your ear at my breathing, at my cry.
- C. "All Scripture is God-breathed"—2 Tim. 3:16a:
1. The Scripture, the word of God, is the breathing out of God.
 2. God's speaking is God's breathing out; hence, His word is spirit, or breath— John 6:63.
John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
- D. This all reveals that being a fully equipped man of God with the breath of God requires the exercise of our spirit, the continual receiving of the Spirit, and the breathing in of God's word—1 Tim. 4:7; Gal. 3:2; Eph. 6:17-18a.
1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
Gal 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?
Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
Eph 6:18a By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit ...

II. The God-breathed Scripture is profitable for teaching, conviction, correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God maybe complete, fully equipped for every good work—2 Tim. 3:14-17:

- 2 Tim 3:14 But you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from which ones you have learned them

- 2 Tim 3:15 And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- 2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
- 2 Tim 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.
- A. The Bible is God's breath, this breath is the Spirit, and the Spirit gives life — John 6:63:
 John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
1. Our reading of the Bible should be our inhaling of God to receive life, and our teaching of the Bible should be our exhaling of God to impart life—Acts 6:4.
 Acts 6:4 But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.
 2. A fully equipped man of God reads the Bible by means of all prayer and petition in the spirit to inhale God and ministers the word as the Spirit to exhale God into others—Eph. 6:17-18a; Acts 6:10; 2 Cor. 3:6.
 Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
 Eph 6:18a By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit ...
 Acts 6:10 Yet they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke.
 2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
- B. On God's side, the Bible is God's breathing; on our side, the Bible is for us to receive the breath of God as our profit in four matters: teaching, conviction, correction, and instruction in righteousness:
1. Teaching equals revelation; to teach is to roll away the veil so that others may see something of the Triune God and His economy—Eph. 1:17; 3:9.
 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 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,
 2. Conviction comes from the revelation that we have seen; whenever we see something of God, we realize our mistakes, wrongdoings, shortcomings, and sins, and the result is that we are convicted and reprov'd; the more we see God, know God, and love God, the more we abhor ourselves and deny ourselves— cf. Isa. 6:1-8; Job 42:5-6; Matt. 16:24.
 Isa 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple.
 Isa 6:2 Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings: With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.
 Isa 6:3 And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; / The whole earth is filled with His glory.
 Isa 6:4 And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.
 Isa 6:5 Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.
 Isa 6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.
 Isa 6:7 And he touched my mouth with it and said, Now that this has touched your lips, / Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged.
 Isa 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us? And I said, Here am I; send me.
 Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You;
 Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes.
 Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
 3. Correction follows conviction and is a matter of setting right what is wrong, turning

someone to the right way, and restoring a person to an upright state — cf. 7:13-14; James 5:19-20.

Matt 7:13 Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it.

Matt 7:14 Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

James 5:19 My brothers, if any one among you is led astray from the truth and someone turns him back,

James 5:20 Let him know that he who turns a sinner back from the error of his way will save that one's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

4. Instruction in righteousness is to be divinely instructed to enjoy Christ as our lived-out righteousness and to be divinely disciplined in being right with God and with man—Phil. 3:9.

Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,

- C. The issue of God's breathing out of Himself through the Scripture for teaching, conviction, correction, and instruction in righteousness is that the man of God becomes complete, fully equipped for every good work—2 Tim. 3:17:

2 Tim 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

1. A man of God is a God-man, one who partakes of God's life and nature (John 1:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:4), thus, being one with God in His life and nature (1 Cor. 6:17) and thereby expressing Him.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,

John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

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

2. God's breathing produces God-men; we need to continually inhale the Triune God by reading the Scripture with prayer to receive revelation, conviction, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

III. To receive the word of God as the breath of God in order to be constituted with God is also to receive the word of God as the sword of the Spirit in order to slay God's adversary—Eph. 6:17-18a:

Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

Eph 6:18a By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit ...

- A. Satan is not only the enemy outside of us but also the adversary inside of us; to deal with this inward adversary, we need to experience the killing power of the word, praying over the constant word of the Bible so that it becomes the instant word of the Spirit—John 6:63; Eph. 5:26; Rev. 2:7.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,

Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

- B. The sword, the Spirit, and the word are one; when the constant word in the Bible becomes the instant word (the applied word spoken at the moment by the Spirit in any situation), that word is the Spirit as the sword that kills the adversary—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.

- C. The more we take the word of God by means of all prayer in spirit, the more the negative elements in our being are slain; eventually, the self, the worst foe of all, the enemy of the Body, will be put to death—cf. Rev. 1:16; 2:16.
- Rev 1:16 And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His face shone as the sun shines in its power.
- Rev 2:16 Repent therefore; but if not, I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war with them with the sword of My mouth.
- D. Whenever we are troubled by something negative within us, we should take the word of God by means of all prayer in spirit; when the negative things in us are killed through praying, the Lord is victorious.
- E. We are preserved in the church life and in the ministry by receiving the word as the Spirit to be the killingsword, which is a spiritual antibiotic to kill the “germs” within us so that we can live a healthy Body life, a healthy church life.
- F. The overcomers keep the Lord’s word by always coming to the Lord to contact Him as the living word in the written word so that He can become the applied word as the dispensing Spirit in them—3:8; John 1:1; 5:39-40; 6:63.
- Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.
- John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- John 5:39 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me.
- John 5:40 Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.
- John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
- G. The overcomers are fully constituted with the Spirit as the word of God to be the bride of Christ and the new man, the corporate man of God with the breath of God as the killingsword for the destruction of the enemies of God and the manifestation of the sons of God—Rev. 2:7; 22:17a; 19:13-15; 2 Thes. 2:8.
- Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
- Rev 22:17a And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; ...
- Rev 19:13 And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God.
- Rev 19:14 And the armies which are in heaven followed Him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean.
- Rev 19:15 And out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and He will shepherd them with an iron rod; and He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
- 2 Thes 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming),

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE LORD’S WORDS BEING SPIRIT AND LIFE

Let us now go on to consider further another important verse related to the nature of the Bible—John 6:63. Here the Lord Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life...the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” This indicates that the Lord’s words are the embodiment of the Spirit of life. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we get the Spirit, who gives life.

When we read the Bible, we should receive life; and when we teach others concerning the Bible, they should receive life. If we do not receive life when we read the Bible, something is wrong. In our

reading of the Bible, there may be no spirit; and in our teaching of the Bible to others, there also may be no spirit. For there to be no spirit means that there is no life. We may read a portion of the Bible, several verses or a few chapters, without receiving the life supply. The reason for this lack of supply is that in our reading of the Word there is no spirit. If we do not sense the Spirit as we are reading the Bible, we should realize that something is wrong, and then we should adjust ourselves.

In the same principle, as we are teaching the young people in the summer school of truth, we need to check whether there is any spirit in our teaching. If there is no spirit, we should change our way of teaching. Teaching a class in the summer school of truth should not be the same as teaching a class in a secular school. In a secular school there is no need of spirit, but in our summer school there is the need of much spirit.

INHALING AND EXHALING GOD

From experience we know that in order for there to be much spirit in our reading and teaching of the Bible, we need much prayer. We must be a person of prayer. In other words, we must be a person who is continually breathing the Lord, a person who is always inhaling God. Our reading of the Bible should be a kind of inhaling, and our teaching of the Bible should be a kind of exhaling. As you are teaching a class in the summer school of truth, you should be exhaling God into your students.

The Bible is God's breath, this breath is the Spirit, and the Spirit gives life. When you breathe the Spirit, you receive not only unveiling, rebuking, correcting, and instructing— you receive life. Whenever you touch the Spirit as you are reading the Bible, you receive life. Likewise, as you are teaching in the summer school of truth, you need to touch the Spirit. You should have the sense that you are touching not only the Spirit but also the spirits of your students. You should have the sense that you are exhaling God and that they are inhaling God. This means that there is a communication between your exhaling and their inhaling. This indicates that your way of teaching is right, for you are exercising to minister life to the young people.

In teaching the Bible to others, you must be very strict with yourself, adjusting yourself again and again. During one class session you may need to adjust yourself a number of times. If you experience failure the first few times that you teach, you should go back to the Lord with much prayer. Pray yourself into the Lord, breathing God into you. Then, having become a praying person, a person who inhales God, go back to your class and exhale what you have received of God.

NOURISHING OTHERS WITH THE WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT THROUGH THE MOUTH OF GOD

In Matthew 4:4 the Lord Jesus said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God." Here we see that the word that proceeds out through the mouth of God is our real food. This indicates that the Bible is not only for lifeimparting but also for nourishing. When you teach the Bible to others, you should nourish them. I hope that all the young ones in your class will have the sense that they are not only being taught but also being nourished. Whether or not they are nourished through your teaching depends on you.

The instructors in today's seminaries may claim that they are teaching the Bible to their students. Yet most seminary students are being starved to death. They receive no nourishment, because their instructors teach the Bible in a wrong way. They teach the Bible in the same way as instructors in secular schools teach subjects such as geography, history, science, and mathematics. Thus, there is no nourishment. Our way of teaching must be different. When we teach the Scriptures to the young people in the summer school of truth, we must nourish the students with the life supply, with words that proceed out of God's mouth.

We all need to be living persons, those who are living channels with the words of God proceeding out through us. God's word proceeds out through God's mouth, and we should let it proceed also out through us as a channel. When in the meetings a certain brother reads the Bible or teaches from the Bible, we do not receive any nourishment, but when another brother does the same thing, we are

nourished. The reason for the difference is that the first brother read or spoke without any spirit, but the second brother read or spoke with much spirit. The principle is the same in your teaching a class in the summer school of truth. Your teaching must be in spirit and must be with spirit. As you are teaching, you need to be a living channel out through which the word of God is proceeding. If you are such a living channel, then the students in your class will receive spiritual food for their nourishment.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT KILLING THE ENEMY

Let us now turn to Ephesians 6:17. Here Paul charges us to receive “the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God.” When I was a young Christian, I did not understand how the word of God could be a sword. I understood what it means to be enlightened by the Bible, for by reading the Bible I was enlightened. To some extent, by the Bible I was also rebuked, corrected, and instructed to be right with God and man. But I did not know how the Bible could become a sword, an offensive weapon to deal with the enemy. To understand this requires spiritual experience.

It is common for Christians to be enlightened, rebuked, corrected, and instructed by the Bible, but not many experience the word of the Bible as a sword that kills the enemy. The reason for this lack of experience is that we may receive the word of the Bible for teaching, rebuke, correction, and instruction without touching the Spirit. Even unbelievers may be enlightened by what they read in the Scriptures. Also, they may be rebuked, corrected, and instructed by what the Bible says concerning honor, love, humility, and honesty. However, in their reading of the Scriptures there is nothing of the Spirit. However, if we would take the word of the Bible as a sword for fighting the enemy, we must touch the Bible in a way that is full of the Spirit.

The Word of God Being the Sword Indirectly

According to Paul’s word in Ephesians 6:17, the word of God is the sword not directly but indirectly. Paul speaks of “the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God.” Here we have indirectness. The sword is not the word directly. Rather, the sword is the Spirit directly, and then the Spirit is the word. This indicates that if we would deal with the enemy Satan, the Bible must become the Spirit. Without the Spirit it may be possible for us to teach from the Bible that the young people should honor their parents and ask for forgiveness for what they have done wrong. But if we would use the word of the Bible as a sword to kill the enemy, in our experience the word must be the Spirit.

Understanding Ephesians 6:17 Experientially

At this juncture I would ask you to consider how, in a practical way, the word of the Bible can become the sword of the Spirit for fighting against the enemy. Can you give an illustration of this or a testimony concerning it? Ephesians 6:12 reveals that our enemies are the evil spirits, “the world-rulers of this darkness,” “the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.” Can you testify from your experience how you have slain these enemies by taking the word as the sword? In order to give such a testimony, we need to understand Ephesians 6:17 experientially by handling the Bible in the way of the Spirit and not merely in a mental way. I am concerned that in the summer school of truth you will teach the young people merely in a mental way, as if you were teaching in a secular school. We all have to learn to teach the Bible in the way of the Spirit.

Ephesians, a book on the church as the Body of Christ, talks about the Body life, the oneness of the Body (4:4), and the Body being the fullness of the One who fills all in all (1:23). We need to realize that things such as our opinion, thought, temper, emotion, natural life, and point of view are often used by the powers of darkness in the air to damage the Body life. As brothers and sisters in the church, we all have our emotion, thought, opinion, and natural life, and we all have our own point of view. Quite often we are offended, not due to the wrongdoings of others but simply due to our emotion or opinion. A chair cannot be offended, because it does not have feelings. No matter how you treat a chair, it will not be offended. However, it is easy for brothers and sisters in the church to be offended.

Due to their emotion, sisters are easily offended. Suppose an older brother speaks a word to a particular sister and she is offended because of her emotion. Then the evil power in the air comes into

take advantage of her emotion, and she determines not to forget that she has been offended. Apparently, the problem is her emotion. Actually, the problem is that her emotion has been taken over by the evil force in the air. This means that the real enemy is not this sister's emotion but the evil spirit in the air who takes advantage of her emotion in order to damage the church life. Because of the enemy's use of her emotion, this sister first has a negative effect on her husband, and then she goes on to have a negative effect on several others. As a result, part of the Body is poisoned. If the enemy is to be defeated in this situation, the sister must learn to receive the word as the Spirit, which becomes the sword to deal with the enemy.

Being Preserved in the Church Life and in the Ministry by Receiving the Word as the Spirit

This is something I have learned through many years of experience. I am not a "marble" person who cannot be offended. I have often been offended by others in the church life or in my family life. How have I been able to get through all the offenses? I get through by receiving the word as the Spirit. The word I receive as the Spirit then becomes the sword to slay the enemy. Apparently, the sword of the Spirit kills my emotion; actually, it kills the evil spirit in the air who takes advantage of my emotion. Whereas my emotion is killed directly, the evil spirit is killed indirectly. In this way I have been able to get through the offenses.

When some hear this, they might say, "Brother Lee, show me a verse that can kill your emotion directly and kill the evil power in the air indirectly." This is not a matter of a particular verse that touches our emotion but a matter of applying Ephesians 6:17 in an experiential way. Suppose in the evening I am offended by one of the elders. Because I fear the Lord, I do not dare to talk about this with others. The next morning I rise up to contact the Lord in the Word. I do not read any verses that touch the matter of my emotion. Instead, I simply begin to read the Bible with the exercise of the spirit. I may read Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." As I read this verse, I receive the word in a living way as the Spirit, and the Spirit, which is the word, becomes the sword that kills my emotion directly and kills the evil force indirectly. Spontaneously, the offense is gone, and no damage is done to the church. However, if the offense were allowed to remain, it would cause serious damage to the church life. I believe that many of us have experienced receiving the word of God in this way.

Without the word as the Spirit to be the killingsword, there would be no way for us to be kept in the church life over the years. For more than half a century, I have been traveling, visiting the churches, and contacting thousands of saints. Without the word as the Spirit to kill all the enemies, I would not still be here ministering. If I had allowed myself to remain offended with a certain church or saint, I would have been finished with the ministry. I have been kept in the church life and in the ministry through the killing of the word as the Spirit.

A Spiritual Antibiotic

Suppose a particular brother is not happy with the church in his locality. He moves to another city, supposing that he will like the church there. However, after a short period of time, he becomes unhappy with this local church, so he moves to another place. But soon he is offended by something or someone in this church, and he moves to yet another locality. Such a person cannot participate in the building up of the church. On the contrary, because there is no killing of the enemy within him, he causes the church to suffer damage.

According to Paul's word toward the end of Ephesians, a book concerning the church, we need to receive the word of God in a living way, that is, receive the word as the Spirit. The Spirit will then become the killingsword. This sword first kills us directly and then kills the power of darkness in the air indirectly. We may compare this kind of killing to the effect of an antibiotic on the germs that cause illness in our body. In order for our body to be saved, the germs need to be killed by an antibiotic. The word that we receive in a living way as the Spirit is a spiritual antibiotic that kills the "germs" within

us. When the germs are killed, the evil forces in the air have no way to take advantage of us. Then we can live a healthy Body life, a healthy church life.

This is the way I have been preserved in the church life and in my ministry for so many years. Apart from the killing of the word as the Spirit, my ministry would have been terminated. Once again I would emphasize that we need to receive the word of God in a living way so that in our experience the Spirit becomes the killingsword. When the word becomes the Spirit, the Spirit becomes the sword—the sword of the Spirit that kills the germs in us and the evil spirits in the air. In this way the Body, the church life, and our ministry are saved. This will enable our ministry to have a long life. However, the ministry of certain brothers has not lasted long. In their situation it was their ministry and not the enemy that was killed.

Let us all receive the word of God in a living way! As long as in our experience the word becomes the Spirit, the word will not only heal us but also kill the enemy.

All those who teach in the summer school of truth should help the young ones not merely to receive the word for the learning of certain biblical truths but to receive the word as the living Spirit. When they receive the word as the living Spirit, in their experience the Spirit will become the sword. Receiving the word in this way requires much prayer. This is why we need to have the proper pray-reading. Through pray-reading the Bible, we receive the word in a living way as the Spirit.

THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH

In 1 Timothy 2:4 Paul tells us that God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.” Today it seems that most Christians bring others only into God’s salvation; they do not go further to bring them into the full knowledge of the truth. The purpose of the summer school of truth is to bring our young people not only into God’s salvation but also into the full knowledge of the truth. In this verse *truth* does not mean doctrine; it means reality and denotes all the real things revealed in God’s Word, which are mainly Christ as the embodiment of God and the church as the Body of Christ. Every saved person should have a full knowledge, a complete realization, of these things. In our summer school we should endeavor to bring the young people into the experiential knowledge of the reality of the Triune God. In order to do this, we ourselves need to be persons who are in this reality. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 1, “Teachers’ Training,” pp. 427-434)