

GOSPEL SERVICE SERIES – SESSION ONE

Receiving the Spirit of the Gospel and Being Burdened for the Lord's Increase and Spread

Hymns: 923

Scripture Reading: Matt.28:19, Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 9:16, 23; Hag. 1:8;
Rev. 1:9; John 15:2, 5-6; 2 Tim. 4:1-2

Focus: We need to receive the spirit of the gospel, being desperate and living uniquely for the gospel, for the increase and spread of the Lord's testimony by setting aside two to three hours each week for contacting people.

- I. In order to preach the gospel, we must receive the spirit of the gospel; the spirit of the gospel is the only thing that will bring in the genuine power of the gospel:**
 - A. We should open our spirit to the Lord that we may receive the spirit of the gospel, becoming burdened in our spirit such that if we do not preach the gospel we cannot be happy.
 - B. In order to touch the gospel spirit, the only way is for us to have a fresh consecration.
 - C. To prepare for the gospel outreach we have to continually consecrate ourselves, continually pray, and continually receive the dealings in the environment; the dealing of the cross brings in the Spirit.
 - D. Then when the Spirit touches the word, the two will be mingled as one; the word is like sugar, and the Spirit is like water; if you have the Spirit and can dissolve the Lord's word, our going out to dispense life to others will result in fruit-bearing.
- II. Our gospel preaching is not merely to save souls but is to gather material for the building of God's house, to gain more members for the increase of the Body of Christ—Hag. 1:8, note 1.**
- III. Our responsibility must be to increase and spread the Lord's testimony—to preach the gospel, to bear the testimony of Jesus, to be witnesses to Him, and to bring forth fruit by abiding in Him—Rev. 1:2, 9; Acts 1:8; John 15:5:**
 - A. We need to preach the high gospel; we can speak the high gospel to people from any part of the Bible—Acts 8:30-35.
 - B. We need to be equipped to teach the deeper truths of God's economy.
 - C. We also need to testify the Christian experience.
- IV. We need to be desperate to gain the typical, local people, praying that most of our increase would come from among them:**
 - A. After the recovery spreads to a certain nation, it should reach the typical, local people; this does not mean that we look down on others; it simply means that we need the local ones to be brought in.
 - B. America was built up by the Caucasians; the recovery in the United States should reach the Caucasian people; we should pray that most of the increase in number would come from the Caucasian people.
 - C. The best way to bring in the Caucasians is to approach the Caucasian students; if we bring in the young Caucasian students, we will be able to bring in all the other categories of people through them.
 - D. In view of our present situation, the Caucasian brothers and sisters need to be burdened and consider how to bring the Caucasian people into the Lord's recovery; we should pay some price to gain the Caucasian people; if we would not do this, it is a shame.
- V. We need to be desperate and living uniquely for the gospel, paying the price to set aside two to three hours every week for visiting people:**
 - A. We need to be warned to wake up realizing that any branch that does not bear fruit will be cut off—John 15:2, 6.
 - B. The Lord says He wants to recover what is His with interest; this should be enough to cause us to be desperate—Matt. 25:27.
 - C. We need to be charged by the Lord's appearing and His kingdom to stir up our aggressive desperation and not think that it is alright to be fruitless for years—2 Tim. 4:1; John 15:2.
 - D. We must learn to live on this earth uniquely for His gospel, saving two to three hours every week to go out to visit people.

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Assignments:

- Review again the sample weekly schedule, “Budgeting Our Time and Energy for the Lord: A Sample Schedule.” Consider how your practice of this has been since the last Perfecting Training. Regardless of how you did, you have begun!
- If you have not done so already, identify a definite companion who you could meet with this week.
- Gather together your previous weeks’ Schedule Worksheets and review your progress.
- Using a new Weekly Schedule Worksheet, set a definite personal goal for the coming weeks for your (1) morning revival, (2) personal prayer, (3) companion time, and (4) persons you are burdened to contact.

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Ministry Excerpts

THE GREAT COMMISSION AND THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL

Many in the past have used the term *the great commission* to describe the Lord's charge to His disciples before He ascended. But...we want to pick up a deeper understanding and application of this term. The great commission of Christ is in resurrection. *In resurrection* is a critical phrase... Many use the term *the great commission*, but they do not see that the great commission of Christ is to carry out God's eternal economy. Most think that the great commission is just to save sinners, to carry out soul-winning. Soul-winning is the meaning of their great commission. But the great commission to us revealed in the Bible is not soul-winning, to save sinners, but to carry out God's eternal economy. The goal of this eternal economy is the New Jerusalem, which is a divine-human constitution of the processed and consummated Triune God with His redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified elect. (*The Vital Groups*, pp. 43, 45-46)

In Mark 8:35 the Lord said, "Whoever will lose his soul-life for My sake and the gospel's...." This is not only for the Lord's sake but also for the gospel's sake. Paul was an apostle who was consecrated for the gospel's sake. He said, "And I do all things for the sake of the gospel that I may become a fellow partaker of it" (1 Cor. 9:23). The more he advanced in his spiritual life and the deeper his life took root, the more the fire of the gospel burned in him. Paul said that he was a called apostle separated unto the gospel of God (Rom. 1:1). The gospel not only includes saving sinners from hell, but every aspect of God's gospel, including salvation, sanctification, justification, the church, etc. The gospel covers a wide scope. Paul said that he was the foremost among sinners, yet he was called to be a pattern to other believers (1 Tim. 1:16). He also said that he was less than the least of all saints, yet he received grace to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel (Eph. 3:8). These verses show us that the Lord has called us for the gospel. I have to shout aloud that we need to bring in a gospel spirit. This is the only way for the brothers and sisters to go on. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, Vol. 61, pp. 27-28)

Most people think that to prepare for the gospel outreach there is the need for more prayer, more reading of the Bible, and more willingness to suffer. But these kinds of teachings are too shallow. According to my experience and observation, the matter has to be presented in a more detailed way. You have to continually consecrate yourselves, continually pray, and continually receive the dealings in the environment. The dealing of the cross brings in the Spirit. When the Spirit touches the word, the two will be mingled as one. The word is like sugar, and the Spirit is like water. When the two meet, the sugar will be dissolved into a sugar solution. When we read the Bible or spiritual books, it should be like sugar touching water. If there is the lack of the Spirit, there will be the lack of the dissolving element for the Lord's word. If you have the Spirit and can dissolve the Lord's word, your going out to dispense life to others will result in fruit-bearing. (*Messages in Preparation for the Spread of the Gospel*, p. 16)

OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE INCREASE AND SPREAD OF THE LORD'S TESTIMONY

What is our burden? What is our responsibility? We must not just preach the gospel. We must bear the testimony of Jesus, as Revelation says (1:2, 9). We must be witnesses to Him, as Acts 1:8 tells us. We must bring forth fruit by abiding in Him, as John 15:5 and 16 tell us. This is the proper preaching of the gospel... The spreading of the Lord's recovery must be considered part of our ultimate responsibility. When the Lord was on earth, He sent the disciples out two by two. When the church testimony was spreading, Paul and Barnabas also went out by two. I believe this is a divine principle... We also need to work by contacting people in preaching the high gospel, in teaching the deeper truths, and in testifying the Christian experience. We should always practice to contact people one by one. We should not try to preach to a group. We may speak to fifty persons at one time, but eventually we may gain none of these fifty. The most effective way is to contact people one by one. We need to preach the high gospel. We should not be influenced by the old concept that people will not understand us if we share things that are deep and high. The thoughtful people want to hear the deeper truths concerning the real meaning of human life. (*The World Situation and God's Move*, pp. 80, 81; *The World Situation and the Direction of the Lord's Move*, p. 49)

BEING DESPERATE TO GAIN THE TYPICAL, LOCAL PEOPLE

After the recovery spreads to a certain nation, it should reach the typical local people. America was built up by the Caucasians. The recovery in the United States should reach the Caucasian people. If we cannot do this or we would not do this, we will suffer a big deficiency. God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Nevertheless, we must find the remedy for our imperfect situation in gaining the Caucasians in a country such as the United States. When I came to the United States, I came with the strong determination not to work among the Chinese people. Although I love China and the Chinese people, the commission that I received of the Lord was not to come here to take care of the Chinese. I did not do any particular work among the Chinese in America until 1983. Shortly before that time the law in America was changed to increase the quota for the immigration of Chinese to twenty thousand per year from both Taiwan and mainland China. I realized that many Chinese had already come to America from Taiwan, and after they arrived here they became lost to the recovery. Abraham Chang proposed to me that we begin to take care of the Chinese immigrants. That was the beginning of the Chinese-speaking work in the United States.

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In view of our present situation, I feel that the Caucasian brothers must consider how to bring the Caucasian people into the Lord's recovery. If we would not do this, it is a shame... We must find a way to get into the Caucasian community. We are healthy in our teaching, but we are not healthy in our practice. We must reconsider our situation. I would like to pay some price to gain the Caucasian people. All the Caucasian brothers and sisters need to be burdened and consider so that they may be enabled by the Lord to find a way.

Although some Caucasians have been brought into our meetings, very few have remained. Some of the younger ones have remained, but in general the middle-aged ones do not remain. According to my observation, they do not feel that there is anything that interests them enough to cause them to stay. They have not arrived at the stage where they seek the Lord according to the deeper truth that we have released. What we have as treasures seem to be hidden in the earth. Although they may meet with us a number of times, they do not seem to see anything concerning these treasures. In our meetings we do not have the proper atmosphere or the way to present the treasures to them. There seems to be little in our meetings that can attract them or stir up their interest. I feel quite certain that the Caucasians should be contacted and taken care of by the Caucasians. This principle should be established among us. Therefore, we must reconsider our way. We cannot go on contentedly, remaining the same for another year. In the recovery today there is a real warfare, a real need. The way that we have seen is right. The problem is that within ourselves we are not clear concerning the practice. To speak of grouping the saints together is easy, but to find the proper way to form the groups and to carry them on is difficult. Thus, we need to pray for this. I hope that all the saints would bear a burden to pray for this. This is a great need among us today. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, pp. 3-4, 4, 6)

Moreover, we should pray that most of the increase in number would come from the Caucasian people. This does not mean that we despise the Chinese. Rather, because we are in America, we need to bring in the local American people. The best way to bring in the Caucasians is to approach the Caucasian students. If we bring in the young Caucasian students, we will be able to bring in all the other categories of people through them. We may even forget about the other categories of people and simply focus on bringing in the young ones. They may be young this year, but after ten years they will no longer be young. Instead, they will be mature and even more useful than the other categories of people. We need to work on the young Caucasian students. Otherwise, those who visit our meetings will merely see a group of Chinese Christians meeting together, and the next time we invite them to come, they may refuse. Thus, we need to bring in the young Caucasian students in order for our meetings to have an atmosphere of the local American people. (*Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1967, Vol. 2, pp. 120-122*)

BEING DESPERATE AND LIVING UNIQUELY FOR THE GOSPEL

We have talked much concerning abiding in John 15. But have we entered into the reality of abiding in John 15, and do we realize the seriousness of not bearing fruit? To take a branch away from a tree is serious. After being taken away, the branch loses everything of the tree... I hope you would be impressed with the seriousness of not bearing fruit. Any branch that bears no fruit will be taken away... Saints, wake up! As a brother among you, I am shouting, sounding, and even crying to you—you have to wake up! If the Lord is real and the Bible is a true book, it is solemn and serious to be a Christian without bearing fruit. You may have been cut off, taken away, already. This is why you may not have had any enjoyment of Christ for years. You got cut off from Him. The elders and co-workers need to consider this. We may have been in the Lord's recovery for many years, but what have we been doing? We may have been carrying out things in a drugged way, and we may even be drugging others.

Each one of us needs to wake up to be serious, to live uniquely for the gospel. When you say that you live uniquely for the gospel, you have to consider the standard of your living. Regardless of how much money you make, it should not uplift the standard. The uplifted standard will not only waste your money but also waste your time. You will spend a lot of money and waste your time and energy. Then surely you will have no time to go out. If you have a bigger lawn, either you have to mow it or you have to hire others to do it. Thus, your money, energy, and time will all be wasted. Forget about having a higher standard of living. Every week save two hours to go out. I do not mean that you should not mow your lawn or take care of your house and belongings. But knocking on doors two or three hours a week is first. Let us all do this first. Then if there is any time left, go out a second time for two or three hours. We must live uniquely for the gospel. If you are faithful to the Lord by living uniquely for His gospel, the Lord will bless. He will bless your job or your business. He will take care of you. He will fulfill His promise in Matthew 6:33. If you seek His kingdom and His righteousness, He will give you His kingdom and His righteousness with an addition of all your daily necessities. We have no excuse. We must learn to live on this earth uniquely for His gospel. As husbands, we care for our family, for our wife, and for our children and their education. We should take care of them, but only the living for the gospel should be the first. Suppose one hundred saints are living in a locality uniquely for the gospel. Some may be too old and it would be hard for them to go out... Some may be too young to go out. Forty percent may be either the old ones or the younger ones. Thus, there are still sixty who will have no excuse. Since you mean business to live uniquely for the gospel, you have to go out. (*Being Desperate and Living Uniquely for the Gospel*, pp. 20-21, 38)

GOSPEL SERVICE SERIES – SESSION TWO

Learning to Coordinate in One Accord and to Contact People as Vital Groups through the Homes

Hymns: 779, 925

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:5; Acts 1:14; 5:42; John 15:5, 16; Acts 20:20, 31; 1 Thes. 2:7; Heb. 10:24-25

Focus: We need to coordinate and learn to contact people face-to-face—doing it personally, directly, and continually—that we may bear remaining fruit.

- I. Saints of all ages are needed to coordinate in one accord to gain the increase from the fishing ponds of the college campuses:**
 - A. The one accord is the basic factor of the Lord's move on our side; it is a response to God's doing, a coordination or cooperation offered to God for His move.
 - B. The best fishing ponds for the Lord's recovery today are the college campuses; we should send our fishermen to these fishing ponds.
 - C. We need all the saints of every age to coordinate because preaching the gospel is a work for the entire Body:
 1. We need the young people to go to the campuses, to effectively contact the freshmen; however, the young people's preaching of the gospel should be in coordination with all the saints.
 2. Every young person who goes to the campus needs a home for his contacts; the living rooms of the saints will catch them.
 3. The middle-aged saints should serve the young people in the living room; our living rooms should be filled with the enjoyment of Christ, especially through singing and psalming.
 4. Then the older saints can open their homes, prepare snacks, refreshments, and the best dinners to gather the new contacts.
- II. We need to learn the secrets needed for preaching the gospel:**
 - A. We must have a love for all men, a genuine affection for men, and be interested in man in general.
 - B. We must be "thick-skinned" even having a face like brass.
 - C. We have to speak with a wide-open mouth, opening our mouth widely to speak everywhere.
 - D. We must release the spirit; this is the spirit of the gospel.
 - E. We need to learn from our mistakes and failures; the secret to being trained is to be unafraid of making mistakes, of failing, of falling short, and of having your weaknesses exposed.
- III. We need to acquire the skills needed for the preaching of the gospel:**
 - A. We need to learn how to bring people to have a personal contact with the Lord by their spirit directly; this is the central, crucial point of our contact with people.
 - B. We need to learn: 1) to lead to sinners to know the main contents of the gospel, 2) to lead a sinner to be regenerated and saved by leading him to pray—"closing the deal" and stressing the crucial point of touching the Lord Jesus as the Spirit by exercising one's spirit, 3) to lead a person to have the assurance of salvation, and 4) to teach the new believer to contact the Lord in the morning.
- IV. We need to contact people personally, directly, and continually to bear remaining fruit:**
 - A. For the Lord's recovery we all need a turn from barrenness to fruitfulness; we should each make a decision to get one person saved for the church life every year.
 - B. We should make a vow to the Lord through prayer to spend two or three hours every week to contact people for their salvation to get one sinner saved within a year.
 - C. We should practice selecting and taking care of three people; we should go to see each of them at least once a week; we just need to go to them continually.
- V. Then we need to follow up by making appointments with people, visiting them in their homes, and bringing them into groups for mutual care:**
 - A. For gospel preaching, for feeding the lambs, and for perfecting the saints—the first three steps of the God-ordained way—the very unique need is to visit people, to speak with them face to face.
 - B. We need to visit the new believers one or two times every week to take care of their spiritual condition, nourish them as a nursing mother caring for her own children—1 Thes. 2:7.
 - C. We also need to bring the new ones into a group meeting, a meeting for mutuality—Heb. 10:24-25.

GOSPEL SERVICE SERIES – SESSION TWO

Assignments:

- Schedule to come together with 1-2 companions this week to review one another's Weekly Schedule Worksheets from the previous weeks. For the next few weeks, continue to review and "sign-off" on one another's worksheets to encourage one another, help track one another's progress, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments for advancement and sustainability.
- During your companion time, begin to fellowship concerning the matter of contacting people, e.g. make a list of ones you are burdened for, begin praying for ones you are burdened for, call/email/text to schedule a time to visit ones you are burdened for.

GOSPEL SERVICE SERIES – SESSION TWO

Ministry Excerpts

ALL AGES COORDINATING IN ONE ACCORD TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

We need all the saints of every age. Preaching the gospel is a work for the entire Body. We should not do the gospel work in an individualistic way. We must do it in the Body. We need the young people to go to the campuses, especially those who are eighteen and nineteen years old. All the young people in the church life are useful. This is why we have to work with our high schoolers. After graduating from high school, they all will be on the campuses to effectively contact the freshmen. People over twenty-five have a more difficult time in contacting freshmen. They are not as useful and prevailing as the younger saints on the campus. There is an open door for the eighteen-year-old freshmen to contact other freshmen. A person is most effective when he contacts a person who is his same age. Someone who is eighteen may not easily talk with me because I am much older than he is, but it is so easy for an older man to talk with me. We can talk because we are birds of the same feather. Birds of the same feather can talk together.

The young people's preaching of the gospel on the campuses, however, should be in coordination with all the saints. Since we may not have that many young ones, we need many homes of the saints for coordination in the gospel work. Every young person who goes to the campus needs a home for his contacts. A young person who catches eighteen new ones should be able to bring all eighteen into the living rooms of the saints. We need living rooms to receive all these new contacts. All the ages can be used. No one is too old. The older saints can open up their homes to these new contacts. Even though the older saints have opened their homes, they can keep themselves in the background and invite some middle-aged saints to serve the new ones in the living room. This is coordination.

The younger you are, the more you should be in the front to take care of the new young ones. The older you are, the more you should be at the back. It would be good for the older ones to buy the groceries, cook the food, and wash the dishes to serve the young people and their contacts. The young ones should go to the campus and the middle-aged saints should serve the young people in the living room. Our living rooms should be filled with the enjoyment of Christ, especially through singing and psalming. Such an atmosphere of enjoyment and mutuality requires a great deal of coordination.

If all the churches practice preaching the gospel in the campus work in this way, we will have a prevailing church life. One of the best ways for the churches to get new contacts is to send our young people to the campus. The best fishing ponds for the Lord's recovery are the college campuses. We should send our fishermen to the fishing ponds. Then the older saints can stay home to prepare snacks, refreshments, and the best dinners to gather the new contacts at least once every four weeks. The living rooms will catch them.

We need a young army that can be sent to the campuses to bring in more young people, but all the older and middle-aged saints are also needed. We should not be discouraged that we may be too old to go to the campus. The church's gospel preaching needs all the saints. Because the local churches in the Lord's recovery are standing on the genuine ground of oneness, we can have a very good coordination. We all need to learn so that we can have the best coordination.

We should not preach the gospel in an individualistic way. We also should not invite people to our homes or serve them dinner in an individualistic way. We should do everything corporately in the Body. This needs much fellowship and coordination. If we have the faith to apply the truth in the Bible, we will have the power, and if we have the coordination in the Body, nothing will frustrate our preaching. Our preaching will be powerful and prevailing. Then we will gain many young people for the Lord's recovery in this generation. What we need is the revelation and experience of the Spirit and the Body. (*Preaching the Gospel on the College Campuses*, pp. 15-16)

LEARNING THE SECRETS OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL

We must be "thick-skinned." If we seriously look into this, we will see that those who have been able to bear fruit for the gospel have all been thick-skinned. People who are thin-skinned cannot preach the gospel, much less be fruitful. To have the impact of the gospel, we must have a "skin that is thicker than our soles." Not only so, while preaching the gospel, we must have a face like brass. If we do not have a face like brass, we cannot preach the gospel. I was not a gospel preacher by nature, but due to the Lord's mercy, I was forced out of my old nature to become a "crazy" preacher of the gospel for the Lord. Forty years ago, from 1940 until 1943, I was a real "gospel fanatic" passionately preaching the gospel for the Lord.

We have to learn to open our mouth widely to speak everywhere. It does not matter even if you speak wildly; as long as it is the gospel, there will still be the effect. If you intend to convince people by reasoning and therefore speak properly with eloquence and persuasion, you will tend to kill them with your speaking. In the past fifty years in China, the most effective gospel preacher was Dr. John Sung. I heard his preaching. While preaching the gospel, sometimes he jumped from the platform to the ground and then used someone as a steppingstone to jump back to the platform. His messages did not follow any logical order. Sometimes he screamed at people and scolded them, and occasionally he even made strange noises in his speaking. Nevertheless, his gospel preaching was very effective.

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To preach the gospel, you must have a spirit that is so released and strong that if you faced the devil, you would convince even him to receive the gospel. This is the spirit of the gospel. (*Rising Up to Preach the Gospel*, pp.8-9)

ACQUIRING THE SKILLS NEEDED FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL

In order to fulfill the New Testament priesthood of the gospel, we must learn how to bring people to have a personal contact with the Lord by their spirit directly. This is the central, crucial point of our contact with people. We must learn this skill and practice it. In doing anything, we firstly need a practical, particular way. Then we need to exercise the proper skill. We must do things, not in a natural way but in an instructed, trained way. Without the proper way and the skill to carry it out, we cannot do anything effectively. We need to learn the way and the skill.

In the Gospel of John, there are two illustrations of the Lord's skill in bringing people to contact God. The first is the case of Nicodemus in John 3. Nicodemus took the initiative to come to the Lord, and the Lord said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:5-6). The Lord Jesus pointed Nicodemus to the two spirits. The second case is that of the Samaritan woman. The Samaritan woman did not take the initiative to contact the Lord. Rather, the Lord Jesus approached her, asking her to give Him a drink. That led their talk to the Spirit. Jesus said, "God is Spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and reality" (John 4:24). The Lord Jesus eventually showed the immoral woman the need to exercise her spirit to contact God as the living water.

The Lord used His skill to bring both Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman to contact God by their spirit, but He applied His skill in different ways. By these two cases we can see that regardless of the way we talk to people, we must have the skill to bring them to contact God as the Spirit by their spirit. One cannot be regenerated without contacting the Spirit directly by his spirit. We may know how to teach or instruct people, but we have not learned the way to enliven them in our contact with them. We must be like electricians who know how to make the proper connections to bring the electricity directly to a person in need.

It is crucial that we firstly change our way from bringing people to good speakers or meetings to contacting them personally. We should contact new ones and find new sources for gospel candidates. We should always have two or three under our care. It is also crucial that we learn to contact people again and again, waiting for a chance to enliven them, to "connect" them to the "electricity." To have a personal contact with the Lord by one's spirit is to be enlivened by the life-giving Spirit in his or her spirit (Eph. 2:5), to be regenerated in his or her spirit by the Spirit (John 3:3, 5-6), to receive the divine life, that is, the eternal life, into his or her spirit, and to learn to live by this life (John 3:15; Gal. 2:20).

We should not bring people into Christianity or merely teach them doctrines. We need to have the skill to use the top Bible verses to enliven people and help them to contact the Lord directly, either by a desperate prayer or a desperate confession of their sins. If we have this skill, we will realize how to touch the conscience of those like the Samaritan woman to make them desperate. We will know how to point out that even in their confession of sins, they must exercise their spirit to contact God as the Spirit. We will also know how to give them a verse such as John 3:15 and have a desperate talk with them about believing in the Lord Jesus and being connected to the Spirit. God is Spirit, and the Lord is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). We have to learn how to help people to contact the Spirit by their spirit. We need a change in our way for the gospel. Otherwise, it will be difficult to have a strong church life. (*Elders' Training Book 11: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way* (3), pp. 75-77)

OUR NEED TO PRACTICE CONTACTING PEOPLE PERSONALLY, DIRECTLY, AND CONTINUALLY

For gospel preaching, for feeding the lambs, and for perfecting the saints—the first three steps of the God-ordained way—the very unique need is to visit people. To visit people is to go to them and stay with them. You have to speak with them face to face. If you were to visit someone every week for ten minutes, you could surely gain that person in a year. The biblical way for us to gain people is to visit them, to spend time with them face to face.

We should practice selecting and taking care of three people. We should go to see each of them at least once a week. We do not need to talk too much, and we should not be hurried to baptize them. When we went to Taipei in 1986, we were experimenting to find the most effective way to preach the gospel and gain people for the kingdom of God. We found out that we should not baptize people so quickly. Mainly we need to go to visit them again and again, week by week. When we visit them, we should not speak too much of the truth to them, nor should we try to gain them in a quick way. We just need to go to them continually.

I hope that we would take this charge to visit people consistently. We may feel that this is too difficult. But if we cannot contact three persons every day, at least we can see them once a week. After three months, we will have contacted each person twelve times. We will see a positive result from this kind of labor. I want to say again that we should not try to be that quick, looking for quick results. Instead, we should visit people consistently over a period of time. (*Elders' Training Book 11: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way* (3), pp. 79, 80-81, 81)

GOSPEL SERVICE SERIES – SESSION THREE

Preaching the Gospel in a Consistent, Daily Way through the Help of Tracts

Scripture Reading: Mark 4:3, 14; Acts 8:4; 6:7; 12:24; 19:20; 2 Tim. 4:2

Focus: We need to see the importance and benefits of distributing gospel tracts and enter into a daily practice of giving away tracts wherever we go.

I. We need to see the importance and benefits of distributing tracts:

- A. The importance of distributing gospel tracts:
 - 1. During the past two to three hundred years, God has used tracts very much to save men.
 - 2. We hope that tract distribution would become a common practice in the church.
 - 3. We have to charge the new ones with this work so that tract distribution will become a lesson and a training for everyone in the next generation in the church.
- B. The benefits of distributing gospel tracts:
 - 1. Tracts are not limited to man's speaking.
 - 2. Tracts are not limited by age or status.
 - 3. Tracts are not intimidated by human factors or the surrounding atmosphere.
 - 4. Tracts avoid much debate.
 - 5. Tracts are not limited by time and persons.
 - 6. Tracts are able to be sowed anywhere.
 - 7. Tracts enable all believers to function.

II. We need to practice passing out gospel tracts in our daily life:

- A. By the ordinary ways, that is, anywhere and everywhere; we should carry tracts with us at all times and give them to the people we meet.
- B. By personal distribution, targeting our relatives and friends.
- C. We should not depend on ourselves, but trust in the Spirit of God, and ask Him to save people through these tracts.

III. We also need to participate in the church's service in preaching the gospel:

- A. By special ways, according to a plan and by teams; for example, we can group the saints by teams and distribute tracts door to door along each street.
- B. By mobilizing all the brothers and sisters in the preaching of the gospel; we have to put all the one-talented ones to use; when all the one-talented ones rise up, we will have the church.

IV. We need to schedule our time for the gospel:

- A. We need to set up a proper schedule for our life, one of living to the Lord—2 Cor. 5:15.
- B. We need to budget our time, energy, and finances for the Lord.
- C. The primary thing in practicing the new way is to be definite with a budget of our time, not practicing according to the tide of our emotions, but laboring definitely and regularly in a practical way; then eventually we will see the fruitful result.
- D. We must redeem the time by budgeting it to make a weekly schedule for the gospel; to redeem the time is to have the real spirituality—Eph. 5:16.
 - a) We should devote at least one evening a week for helping others for the Lord's sake.
 - b) We may either go to preach the gospel to gain people, or go to others' homes to have home meetings or small group meetings with them.

V. Once a person receives the Lord, we must immediately set up a time to visit them and nourish them weekly:

- A. We must immediately care for and nurture the newly saved ones, just as we would a child after it is born.
- B. It is better to take such a step not by ourselves but with a companion; the Lord's way is to send His disciples two by two—Luke 10:1; Acts 13:1-3.

GOSPEL SERVICE SERIES – SESSION THREE

Assignments Review:

Session One:

- Review again the sample weekly schedule, “Budgeting Our Time and Energy for the Lord: A Sample Schedule.” Consider how your practice of this has been since the last Perfecting Training. Regardless of how you did, you have begun!
- If you have not done so already, identify a definite companion who you could meet with this week.
- Gather together your previous weeks’ Schedule Worksheets and review your progress.
- Using a new Weekly Schedule Worksheet, set a definite personal goal for the coming weeks for your (1) morning revival, (2) personal prayer, (3) companion time, and (4) persons you are burdened to contact.

Session Two:

- Schedule to come together with 1-2 companions this week to review one another’s Weekly Schedule Worksheets from the previous weeks. For the next few weeks, continue to review and “sign-off” on one another’s worksheets to encourage one another, help track one another’s progress, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments for advancement and sustainability.
- During your companion time, begin to fellowship concerning the matter of contacting people, e.g. make a list of ones you are burdened for, begin praying for ones you are burdened for, call/email/text to schedule a time to visit ones you are burdened for.

Session Three:

- Pick up a bundle of 30 gospel tracts.
- For the next month, practice receiving the spirit of the gospel by distributing **one tract a day** for the next thirty days.

GOSPEL SERVICE SERIES – SESSION THREE

Ministry Excerpts:

THE IMPORTANCE OF DISTRIBUTING TRACTS

Today we will consider the matter of distributing tracts. First, we have to know the importance of distributing tracts. During the past two or three hundred years, God has used tracts very much to save men. Whether they have been distributed by mail or by hand, tracts have played a very crucial role... Some realize the importance of this work, but the tracts they use are short of “hooks”; they are not effective. We hope that tract distribution would become a common practice in the church. We have to prepare some effective tracts. We have to charge the new ones with this work so that tract distribution will become a lesson and a training for everyone in the next generation in the church.

THE BENEFITS OF DISTRIBUTING TRACTS

God has used tracts very much to save men. There is something special about tract distribution. We can enumerate the following benefits:

Tracts Not Being Limited by Man’s Speaking

The first advantage of distributing tracts is that they are not limited by man’s ability to speak. Many people cannot speak well. They do not have the eloquence or the gift. Others are naturally shy. However, even if a person is slow or shy, he has to open his mouth to testify for the Lord as soon as he is saved. He cannot remain silent just because he says he is not eloquent. The church should encourage the believers and should provide them many opportunities to speak. They have to learn to speak for the Lord. Even those who do not have the gift of speaking should speak for the Lord. Having said this, the truth is that speaking is still a hard task for some people. Either they are short of truth or they are short in experience. Some sinners need to be told the vanity of the world. Some need to be told of how the evil and power of sin robs a person of all peace. Some people need to be told about repentance. Many people do not know what to say when faced with such needs. At these times they can pass out tracts. When a person finds it hard to open his mouth to preach the gospel, tracts become an important tool... In preaching, it is easy to be affected and restricted by one’s own condition. But tract distribution is independent of a man’s own personal condition. In fact, many times the tracts speak more clearly and accurately than a man can speak. This is the first advantage of tract distribution. It makes up for a person’s lack.

Tracts Not Being Limited by Age and Status

The second advantage of tracts is that they are not limited by the age or status of the receiver. One basic principle in leading men to Christ is for workers to work on the same kind of person as they are. It is unsuitable for a child to work on an old man or for a manual laborer to work on a doctor. One should send an old man to work on an old man, a young man to work on a young man, and a nurse to work on a nurse. Under normal circumstances, one should work within the sphere of his own social rank, sex, and age. For example, it is better, and indeed more appropriate, for sisters to work on ladies. Of course, there are exceptions to this. I am a man, and it would be harder for me to preach to a young lady one-on-one. It is equally embarrassing for a young sister to testify to an old man. Of course, with enough power one can sometimes overcome such barriers. But under normal circumstances, it is difficult to preach to people of different social standing, status, or background. At such times, tracts come in very handy. When you visit a person, you must first pray earnestly. After that you can present a tract to him politely and testify to him. Perhaps you are a new believer. You do not know how or what to say. You only need to give him a tract. This does not mean that you let the tract do all the work. The tract only makes up for your lack; you still have to open your mouth to testify. When there is a gap between the preacher and his listener in rank, age, or sex, and there is some hesitation because of this gap, tracts fill the gap nicely.

Tracts Not Being Intimidated by Human Factors or the Atmosphere

The third advantage of tracts is that they are not intimidated by human factors or the surrounding atmosphere. In large and well-prepared gospel meetings, a preacher can stand on the podium to speak solemnly of such serious subjects as sin and judgment. But when he has to preach to a person one-on-one, politeness, face, and other human factors pose limitations to what can be said. He cannot speak a serious word of warning forthrightly. It is hard to preach under such circumstances. If he points out sin and judgment too bluntly, he may lose a chance to see that person again. In conducting private evangelism, there are certain restrictions and difficulties in speaking what one really wants to speak. But if he gives out a tract which says, “We are all sinners, and we have all sinned before God; we all need Jesus,” the other party can more easily receive it. The preacher may not be able to say many things, but he can pray for the other party as he reads the tract and then ask, “Do you feel that you have sinned?” This will not be very offensive. We do not want to offend others when we preach. However, we have to speak directly and honestly. Therefore, when considerations such as status, rank, face, or other human factors stand in the way, we can give tracts and pray. The advantage of a tract is that it is not intimidated by human factors. It is not influenced by the listener, and it speaks only the words of the truth.

GOSPEL SERVICE SERIES – SESSION THREE

Tracts Avoiding Much Debate

The fourth advantage of tracts is that they avoid much debate. Many times in preaching to others, we fall into debates and arguments. Sometimes we meet a person who likes to argue. He does not have a heart for the gospel; his whole intention is to test us and embarrass us. When we try to testify to him, he tries to argue. We should not debate with him. Instead, we should present a tract to him in a sincere and calm way. This is a very good way of handling the situation. An argumentative person can do nothing to a silent and objective tract. For example, we may meet one of our relatives. He knows that we are Christians, and he may try to argue with us. At such times we should not say too much to him. We should only politely present a tract to him. No matter how much a person likes to argue, he can do nothing with a tract. The best thing to do with such a person is to give him a tract. The next day you can ask, "Have you read the tract I gave you? Do you want another one?" This will avoid any direct confrontational arguments. Of course, we have to pray much for him privately.

Tracts Not Being Limited by Time and Persons

The fifth advantage of tracts is that they are not limited by time and persons. Tracts save men without the limitation of time. In order for a man to preach in person, there is the limitation of time and space as well as audience. A man cannot be in the same place twenty-four hours a day, but a tract is not limited by these factors. Tracts can testify for us beyond any limitation in time. It also is hard for us to testify to total strangers, but tracts can testify anywhere at anytime to anyone. Whether or not we know a person, tracts can testify to him. They are not limited by the kind of person who receives the tract. A man can read a tract at any time. Any time he is free, he can read a tract. If we give a man a tract, it can go where the man goes; it can testify to him anywhere at anytime. This is what makes tracts so convenient.

Tracts Being Able to Be Sowed Anywhere

The sixth advantage of tracts is that we can sow them anywhere. In Ecclesiastes 11:1 and 6, Solomon said, "Cast your bread upon the surface of the waters....In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not hold back your hands." It is all right to sow randomly, because we do not know which of the seeds we sow will prosper.

Tracts Enabling All Believers to Function

The seventh advantage of tracts is that they enable all believers to function. God has given to the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. Although not everyone can be an apostle, everyone should do the work of an evangelist. Under normal circumstances, everyone in the church should preach the gospel; everyone should function. Some may say that they do not have the eloquence or the gift. They may say that they cannot sing or preach the gospel. But thank the Lord that everyone can pass out tracts. There is no distinction between tract distributors; a person who receives a tract does not care who he received it from. In preaching the gospel and in giving a testimony, some are more gifted and powerful; their preaching brings more people to the knowledge of salvation. Others are not as gifted and powerful; they bring fewer people to salvation. But tract distribution does not work this way. Whether or not one is gifted or powerful, he can pass out tracts. Whether he is a child or an adult, an educated man or illiterate, he can pass out tracts. The sphere becomes much larger. Anyone can do this as long as he is godly and dedicated. A businessman can invest a few dollars to print some tracts, round up some children, and go out with them to pass out these tracts. His work is different from the work of those preaching from the podium. The work of preaching is limited to a few brothers and sisters, but tract distribution is not restricted by this distinction. Everyone can do it. We have to help the distributors to realize that they have a share in God's service. Their work is a great blessing to the church. In this way their hearts will be drawn to the church, and they will be burdened for the souls of men. No work can be as widespread as the work of tract distribution.

The apostle Paul said that he who sows with blessings shall reap with blessings (2 Cor. 9:6). In order to sow *en masse*, there is no better way than tract distribution. Anyone can sow with tracts anywhere. If we have to preach to three, five, or ten persons today, we have to spend much time with them. But it is not a problem to distribute one thousand to two thousand tracts a day. Some brothers have distributed more than one thousand tracts a day for over three years. This is mass sowing. No other method can be as easy as tract distribution when it comes to mass sowing of gospel seeds. No other method is as convenient. Many servants of God love to distribute tracts. They do not even waste their walking time; they seize this opportunity to pass out tracts everywhere. If one person is saved through the tracts that we pass out in one day, we have done a great job already. A new believer has to learn to pass out tracts in bulk. It is a pity if we do not take advantage of tracts effectively. (*Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 60, pp. 405-410*)