

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION ONE

### Being Vital to Gain the Increase for the Church

*Hymns: 554, 255*

Scripture Reading: Lam. 3:22-24; Judg. 5:31; Prov. 4:18; Psa. 119:147; Rom. 10:12b-13;  
Eph. 6:17-18; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Tim. 4:6

*Focus: We need to be made vital—living and active—through being revived each morning, praying with a vital companion, and living a scheduled daily life in order to gain the increase for the church.*

- I. To be vital means to be living and active; vital groups are composed of vital persons who are living and active to gain the increase for the church.**
- II. The God-ordained way starts from our personal revival; the Christian revival occurs in the morning:**
  - A. Whether we are participating in the home meetings, the small group meetings, or the district meetings, we have to start from ourselves—we must be those who are revived.
  - B. We stress that this should be a morning revival based upon God's natural law—Lam. 3:22-23.
  - C. A Christian's life should be one that follows the moving of the sun; when the sun rises, we should rise with it; we keep rising until the perfect day—Judg. 5:31; Prov. 4:18.
    1. The first step in the exercise of the spirit is to call on the name of the Lord and to pray, which is to speak to the Lord; the calling plus the speaking to the Lord is like a man's deep breathing—Psa. 119:147a; Rom. 10:12b-13.
    2. The second step in the exercise of the spirit is to pray-read the Lord's word; this kind of pray-reading will fully mingle the Lord's word with our spirit—Psa. 119:147b; Eph. 6:17-18.
    3. In our time with the Lord, the main thing is to clear up our conscience, to get rid of our inner condemnation; this is done by making a thorough confession of all of our failures, defects, defeats, wrongdoings mistakes, even sinfulness to the Lord.
- III. A vital group can come into being only by a saint who is desperate and absolute for the increase of the Lord's recovery; we must take the lead to be made vital—living and active:**
  - A. Through the absolute, clear, and thorough fellowship with the Lord continuously.
  - B. Through the thorough confession of sins, transgressions, failures, defects, mistakes, wrongdoings, etc., hidden or manifested, before God and before men.
  - C. Through the absolute and thorough consecration of oneself with everything to the Lord.
  - D. Through the unceasing and desperate prayer.
  - E. Through the soaking of the infilling and outpouring of the Spirit.
- IV. Then we should contact another seeking saint:**
  - A. We should contact the ones whom we feel can be made vital and whom we can bring into our vital groups; contact the meeting members who are not yet vital; we need to pray and choose someone whom we can contact.
  - B. We should fellowship with him or her according to the above procedures (III. A.-E.).
  - C. We should make him or her vital and join with us as a group.
  - D. Both of us should continue to contact other seeking saints and make them vital to join with us and to increase our group.
- V. We need to set up a proper schedule for our life:**
  - A. One that is suitable for living to the Lord and serving Him.
  - B. Having a budget in time, energy, and finances:
    1. Setting aside a fixed time every week and every day for the Lord.
    2. There being the need to budget our strength for the Lord as well.
    3. In budgeting our finances, that which is for the Lord should be increased according to the prosperity bestowed by the Lord—Acts 11:29; 1 Cor. 16:2

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION ONE

### **Assignments:**

- Review the sample weekly schedule, “Budgeting our time and energy for the Lord: a sample schedule”
- Use the “GTCA Perfecting Training—Weekly Schedule Worksheet” to budget your time and energy for the Lord. Make a definite goal for this week in terms of morning revival and personal prayer. Track your progress with the help of the checkboxes on the schedule worksheet.

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION ONE

### *Ministry Excerpts*

#### **PAYING THE PRICE TO BE VITAL**

In light of the present situation we are in, what shall we do? I have studied our situation thoroughly and I feel that nothing can attract and move the present middle-aged American Caucasians unless they see the vitality among us. To be vital means to be living and active. If a group of people are meeting together and are a real vital group—living and active—whoever comes in and sees this will be convinced. If we are so vital and some seeking ones come in among us, they will be caught by the Lord. Vitality is the most convincing factor.

If we do not have vital groups, we will have no prevailing way to gain the middle-class Caucasians. If we are vital, sooner or later, in our neighborhood and among our relatives, colleagues, classmates, and friends, we will meet some seeking ones. The seeking ones care for our vitality, for our being living and active.

The truth has an amount of influence with people, but it depends upon who passes on the truth. If you are a vital person, the truth will be effective. If you are not a vital person, others will not be convinced. They will think that you just have some good talk but are really no different than they are. If we bring some new ones to our meeting, and our meeting is dormant, we will not convince them.

Since we love the Lord and we are for the Lord's recovery, what shall we do? We have to be vital at any cost. We have no choice. We must learn diligently and practice absolutely to be vital; then there is much possibility for us to gain a good number of the seeking ones. These seeking ones caught by us will spread the news. They will say, "I am now meeting in a group full of vitality. Come and see." This kind of news will not be appreciated by the general Christians, but some real seeking ones will be attracted. Through this fellowship, I hope we realize where we are and what we need to be. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, pp. 240-241)

#### **A LIFE OF MORNING REVIVAL AND DAILY VICTORY**

A vital matter that is crucial to the practice of the church life in the new way is our living a life of morning revival and daily victory. We should not consider that to have a personal morning revival is difficult. To be revived is simply to be touched by the Lord anew. Whenever the Lord touches us, we are revived. In only two minutes the Lord can touch us and revive us. You may not have been revived for a long time, and you may feel that you are very far from the Lord. However, the Lord promises that, regardless of what we are, where we are, or how we are, He is always near to us. We may not have a pure conscience, but the Lord's blood is ready to cleanse us. If we simply confess our failures, defects, wrongdoings, and shortcomings, the Lord will forgive us and cleanse us. Then immediately we touch Him, and He touches us. This is to be revived, and this kind of revival must be fresh every day.

We stress that this should be a morning revival based upon God's natural law. Every twenty-four hours there is a morning to begin the new day. The sun rises anew every morning, and we also must rise up every morning. Therefore, it is good for us to go to bed earlier at night so that we can rise up earlier in the morning. Every morning we should get up, make our bed, and then spend some time with the Lord. If we can give the Lord ten minutes in the morning before doing anything else, surely we will be revived. If we normally get up at six o'clock, we should get up at five fifty. Then we could have ten minutes to contact the Lord and be revived.

In our time with the Lord, the main thing is to clear up our conscience, to get rid of our inner condemnation. This is done by making a thorough confession of all of our failures, defects, defeats, wrongdoings, mistakes, even sinfulness to the Lord. Then we can take one or two verses from the Holy Word to use in our prayer. This is pray-reading. Do not be concerned about too many things, and do not care that much for your understanding. Take care of calling on the Lord, contacting the Lord, and touching the Lord with a proper inner sense. This keeps you in a direct, fresh, intimate, loving contact with the Lord. Sometimes as you are enjoying the Lord in this way, you may have the sensation that the Lord is speaking to you. Then you can be silent, listening to His speaking. This is to fellowship with Him. In ten minutes you can do a number of things, yet you should not try to do too much. Use this ten minutes mainly to contact the Lord directly; then you will be revived. Because you have been revived, when you go to work, you will go with the Lord. In this way you will be victorious the whole day. (*The Exercise & Practice of the God-ordained Way*, pp. 279-280)

#### **THE WAY TO BECOME VITAL**

We have made it clear that the way to produce the vital groups is that each of us must take the lead to be vital. In order to be vital, we first must have a thorough fellowship with the Lord. Then that fellowship will bring us into a kind of realization that we are totally sinful. Then we will be brought into a thorough confession of our sins. Spontaneously, we will re-consecrate ourselves. We will pray, "Lord, now I would like to

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION ONE

consecrate myself to You anew.” Then that will bring us into a prayer life. No one can pray unceasingly without reaching this stage. When we pass through the stages of fellowship, confession, and consecration, we enter into a prayer life. It is in this prayer life that we pray ourselves into the Spirit --the essential Spirit, the economical Spirit, the all-inclusive Spirit. Then we learn how to follow this Spirit by exercising our spirit. If this is the case with us, we are really vital. Actually, this is all revealed, unveiled, in the New Testament, especially in Paul’s Epistles.

In the entire time of my ministry, I have not been as burdened as I am in these days concerning how the church should go on. Recently, I became clear that we must begin to take action, regardless of whether or not we feel that we have been adequately prepared. Without any burden of work, it is difficult to have a burden of prayer. The first step we need to take is to contact the saints who are not in the groups which we have. A number of the saints may be weaker and older, and they do not have the capacity to act that much and be in the vital groups. We should not go to contact them first, but go to contact the ones whom we feel can be made vital and whom we can bring into our vital groups. The first step in our action is not to contact the unbelieving sinners or our relatives and neighbors, but to contact the meeting members who are not yet vital. We need to pray and choose someone whom we can contact.

I believe that the way to help us be more vital is for us to contact others. If we wait any longer to contact others, we will never be vital. Every week we should set apart one day in which we contact others. We also need to have a vital group meeting one evening a week in addition to the regular meetings of the church. We still should attend the Lord’s Day morning meeting and the prayer meeting. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, pp. 230-236)

### SETTING UP A PROPER SCHEDULE FOR OUR DAILY LIFE

You need to set up a proper schedule for your life. Formerly, you were not living to the Lord, and your way of living was like that of those in the world. But now you are living to the Lord; you should set up a new pattern of life...We should have a budget for our time, our energy, and our finances. When people talk about budgeting, most of them consider only finances. But according to my experience, even our energy has to be budgeted. I know how much strength I have. Every day I can use only a certain amount of strength. Every time I have a cold, it is because I have overexerted myself. If I would control my time well, I would not have a cold. This is why I plan ahead how many messages I need to speak and how many people I need to see in a week. Although you are young, you should distribute your strength properly. In this way, you will be able to accomplish the proper tasks.

Timewise, every week and every day, we should set aside some time for the Lord. If you really love the Lord, at least you have to sanctify the Lord’s Day for Him. The Lord’s Day is the Lord’s. In addition, you should devote at least one evening out of a week for helping others for the Lord’s sake. Either you should go to preach the gospel to gain people, or you should go to others’ homes to have home meetings or small group meetings with them. You do not have to do too much. If you would spend one evening a week, in a year there will be fifty-two evenings.

Hence, the new way requires that everyone mean business the whole day long. In the morning we have to contact the Lord and read His Word. During the day we have to walk according to the Spirit. Every Lord’s Day has to be sanctified, and every week we devote one evening for helping others. If we practice this now, when the Lord comes back we will then be able to give an account. Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 16 that if any man does not love the Lord, let him be accursed, and that the Lord will surely come and judge (vv. 22, 23). At my age today, I am still pleading with all of you. I surely have a burden. I have exhausted my all. I do this because I know that I will have to see my Lord and that I will be judged. I hope that you will also consider this matter seriously before the Lord.

In budgeting your finances, you should offer up what you have in excess according to the prosperity that the Lord has provided you (Acts 11:29; 1 Cor. 16:2). The word “prosper” in the original language means to...be successful and profitable in our business, career, or whatever else. To be prosperous is a gift from God which results in abundance and affluence...Hence, this prosperity is from the Lord. We have to send out our riches and care for the poor according to the prosperity that the Lord has granted us. In budgeting our finances, we should increase our giving according to the prosperity provided by the Lord. For example, this year you may budget to give a tenth of what you have. Next year, you may have to adjust to twelve percent. By increasing this way, you will be blessed. (*Messages Given to the Working Saints*, pp. 85-88)

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION TWO

### Blending in Twos and Threes through Prayer to Bear Remaining Fruit

Scripture Reading: Matt. 18:19–20; Eccl. 4:9-12; John 15:16-17

*Focus: We need to blend in twos and threes through fellowship and prayer for one another and the ones under our care to bear remaining fruit.*

- I. **Matt. 18:20** says, “For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst.” This is the reality of the vital groups. These two or three are gathered into the Lord’s name for His purpose, not into their names for their purposes.
- II. **Two or three being particular numbers in the Scriptures, denoting witness and testimony (Deut. 19:15; 1 Tim. 5:19); complement and match (Gen. 2:18); partnership and companionship (Eccl. 4:9-10); mutual help and support (Eccl. 4:11-12); and strength and durability (Eccl. 4:12; Deut. 32:30):**
  - A. Examples in the Old Testament:
    1. Jehovah and the two angels—Gen. 18:2.
    2. Joshua and Caleb—Num. 14:6.
    3. David’s chief men—2 Sam. 23:13–17.
    4. Daniel’s three companions—Dan. 3:23–25.
  - B. Pictures in the New Testament:
    1. Jesus, the Spirit of God, and the heavenly Father—Matt. 3:16–17.
    2. Peter, James and John—Matt. 17:1; 26:37; Mark 5:37.
    3. The disciples two by two—Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1–2.
    4. Paul and his co-workers—Acts 13:2; 15:40; 16:25; 18:5, 18.
- III. **A vital group that is up to the standard revealed in the Bible has a purpose, a nature, and a condition—John 15:17, note 1:**
  - A. The purpose of the vital groups is the increase, perfecting, and building up of the Body of Christ; the vital groups are to gain the increase, finish the perfecting, and complete the building—Acts 2:46-47; Eph. 4:12.
  - B. The nature of the vital groups is spiritual; to be spiritual means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, within and without—Acts 13:52; 4:31b.
  - C. The condition of the vital groups is that of loving one another in oneness and with one accord; we need to love one another, meeting together in a mutual love—John 13:34-35; 17:21, 23; Phil. 2:2.
- IV. **We need to practice fellowshiping, interceding, mutual care and shepherding with our vital companions:**
  - A. With our vital companions, we have to take care of fellowship, intercession, mutual care, and shepherding; all these things can be done in a very spontaneous way.
  - B. First, we must take care of the proper fellowship; by the mutual fellowship, we can know one another’s situation and consider one another—Heb. 10:24-25.
  - C. This kind of fellowship can spontaneously turn to intercession for one another.
  - D. This prayer for one another will bring us into a mutual care for one another.
  - E. The mutual care leads to shepherding, and the shepherding leads to the rendering of help, whether it be spiritual, practical, or material.
- V. **On the foundation of intimate and thorough fellowship, we need to be blended by much and thorough prayer with the release of our spirit:**
  - A. Our prayer must come out of a burden; what the vital groups should have a burden to pray is this: “Lord, the church needs the proper increase...Lord, we ask You, when the season comes, to give each one of us two people who are remaining fruit. Otherwise, we cannot go on.”
  - B. Whether or not the vital groups work depends upon how much prayer you offer to the Lord.
  - C. Praying is the unique way for us to exercise our spirit and even the more to release our spirit.
  - D. When our spirit is released, we can be blended together in this released spirit; the released spirits are a kind of blending.
  - E. For the building up of the vital groups, we need to pray much and thoroughly for the four steps of the God-ordained way.

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION TWO

### **Assignments:**

- Get together with 1-2 companions during the week to fellowship and pray over the contents of these training sessions. Fill in the name of your companion(s) on the form “GTCA Perfecting Training—Weekly Schedule Worksheet.”
- Review your worksheet progress with one another.

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION TWO

### *Ministry Excerpts*

#### **THE TWOS AND THREES BEING THE REALITY OF THE VITAL GROUPS**

[Matthew 18:18] says, "Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven." We have to see the connection between verses 17 and 18. Verse 17 is so low, saying that we should let the sinning one who will not listen to the church be to us like a Gentile and a tax collector. But verse 18 says that we should touch heaven by our binding and releasing prayer. This is the prayer of the vital group. Verse 19 says, "Again, truly I say to you that if two of you are in harmony on earth concerning any matter for which they ask, it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens." This is the practice of a vital group of two or three in harmony touching the very God in heaven. These are the two or three mentioned in verse 16: "But if he does not hear you, take with you one or two more...." These are the members of a vital group.

If a brother sins against us, we need to deal with him first in love. If we cannot get through, we should bring with us one or two more to contact him. If we still cannot get through, we should tell it to the church, and if the church cannot get through, then the sinner brother will lose the fellowship of the church. But this is not all. We have to then pray in the way of binding and releasing, and we have to pray in harmony. Whatever we pray, our Father in heaven will accomplish to gain that person. Verse 20 says, "For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst." This is the reality of the vital groups. These two or three are gathered into the Lord's name for His purpose, not into their names for their purposes. (*The Vital Groups*, pp. 4-5)

#### **PRACTICING FELLOWSHIPING, INTERCEDING, MUTUAL CARE, AND SHEPHERDING**

Everything must be done in a natural, or normal, way. There are many ways to practice the group meeting. You may have heard that a certain brother has just had an automobile accident. When you come to the meeting, you may say, "Brothers and sisters, Brother John has been in an automobile accident." This is fellowship. Then some will spontaneously intercede for this brother. In the group meeting, singing, fellowship, and interceding should all come forth in a normal and spontaneous way.

First, the group meeting must take care of the proper fellowship. Many things should have happened since the group meeting the previous week. Therefore, when we come together, we should fellowship with each other. This kind of fellowship can spontaneously turn to intercession for one another. Then following intercession, we may have some mutual care. After praying for the brother who has had the automobile accident, someone may know if he is at home or in the hospital. Then immediately some may go to visit him. This is shepherding. Along with the shepherding, we may need to render some help. We should consider this brother's family and the financial situation. Some sisters may want to go to visit his wife and children. All these things can be done in a very spontaneous way. In the group meeting, we have to take care of fellowship, intercession, mutual care, and shepherding.

By the mutual fellowship, we can know one another's situation and consider one another. In Hebrews 10:24-25 there are three important words concerning the group meeting. Verse 24 says that we should "consider one another for inciting to love and good works." To "consider" implies fellowship. If we do not fellowship, how can we consider one another? The next word is "inciting." This considering should issue in our inciting one another to love and good works. Then in verse 25, we are to be those "exhorting" one another. We should not take these three words—consider, inciting, and exhorting—as a doctrine, but we should immediately practice these things in our group meetings. If we consider one another, we will surely have something to fellowship when we come together. This kind of fellowship will spontaneously usher the meeting into intercession. This prayer for one another will bring us into a mutual care for one another. Then, the mutual care leads to shepherding, and the shepherding leads to the rendering of help, whether it be spiritual, practical, or material. Through these practices, our group meeting will thoroughly cover the needs of the saints. (*The Exercise and Practice of the God-Ordained Way*, pp. 236-237)

#### **BEING BLENDED BY MUCH AND THOROUGH PRAYER WITH THE RELEASE OF THE SPIRIT**

We need to remember that our groups must be vital groups. The Bible talks about vital people. What is an overcomer? An overcomer is a vital person. Then what is it to be vital so that we can be overcomers? A vital person, an overcomer, is a praying person. You must have the real burden for the real prayer....Then we may ask, "How can we be burdened for prayer?" This is a matter of the Lord's mercy. I cannot forget the vital groups, because that is my real burden. I cannot forget the Lord's recovery, because His recovery is my burden. I always have to pray to the Lord for His recovery. When I pray and cry, "O Lord, the recovery," this is out of some burden. Once we begin to pray for the recovery, we realize that we cannot finish our prayer. There

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION TWO

are many places and persons for which we have to pray. We need to be vital, and to be vital is to have the real burden for prayer. There is the need of the real prayer among us. What the vital groups should have a burden to pray is this: "Lord, the church needs the proper increase."

Because of some rebellious ones who were among us, our number was damaged and our morale was spoiled. If we love the church, we should be desperate to pray, even to pray with fasting. Our meetings should be full of real prayers, not formal prayers. We should pray, "Lord, we just cannot go on without the proper increase, especially among the Caucasians." This kind of prayer is the real prayer. We should not merely meet according to our schedule to fulfill a formal duty. The prayer of some among us is too traditional. There is no burden or desperation in their prayer. We need to be desperate. The going on of the vital groups to gain the increase should be a life or death matter with us. Even if we are not scheduled to meet, there should still be a burden in us to come together to pray.

I recently checked with some of the groups concerning what they were doing, but no one told me that they were praying desperately for the vital groups. Instead they told me about other activities in their groups. When I heard this, I was concerned that we were making the groups something that is not vital. The vitality is not in your doing. The vitality is in your prayer. If someone asks you what you are doing in your group, it would be wonderful to hear you say, "We just cannot live without prayer. We are desperate with the Lord. Everybody prayed. We only have the time to pray." This is what I like to hear. You must have some vital prayer with some vital burden.

In order to have the vital groups, we ourselves need to be vital. We need to pray desperately, "Lord, we ask You, when the season comes, to give each one of us two people who are remaining fruit. Otherwise, we cannot go on." We should pray and pray until the Lord answers our prayer. We should not be discouraged or disappointed, but have the full assurance that He will fulfill His word. This is because He told us that He has chosen us and set us to go forth to bear fruit and that our fruit should remain. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, pp. 221-223)

In our prayer we should not merely exercise our spirit but also release our spirit. Praying is the unique way for us to exercise our spirit and even the more to release our spirit. When our spirit is released, we can be blended together in this released spirit. Actually, when our spirit is released, there is no need to talk about blending. The released spirits are a kind of blending. When we come together to pray, we need to release our spirit by praying short prayers. Our prayers are too long. The long prayer is a prayer of composition. It is not prayer out of a burden. The real burdened prayer would not be a long composed prayer. At one time in the 1960s when we were in Los Angeles in Elden Hall, our prayers were very short. Sometimes we had over two hundred in our prayer meeting. Each saint would pray one sentence, and we were like one person praying together. We coordinated together in our prayer, and there were no long prayers. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, p. 106)

For the building up of the vital groups, we need to pray much and thoroughly for the four steps of the God-ordained way. When we come together in the groups, we need to forget the old way and the old things in our prayer. We need to learn the new way and the new things, which are the four steps of the God-ordained way. The first step of the God-ordained way is to fulfill the New Testament priesthood of the gospel to seek, visit, and contact sinners for God's salvation to make the sinners organic members of the Body of Christ and offer them to God as the New Testament sacrifice (Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9). The second step is to nourish and cherish the newborn babes in Christ in home meetings as nursing mothers (1 Thes. 2:7). The third step is to perfect the saints by mutual teaching in group meetings for the work of the ministry to build up the organic Body of Christ (Eph. 4:12-13). Finally, the fourth step of the God-ordained way is the prophesying by all the saints in the church meetings for the direct and organic building up of the Body of Christ as the organism of the processed Triune God (1 Cor. 14:1-5, 23-26, 31, 39a).

Day and night we need to pray for these four things. After several months of preparation we will pay our attention to the carrying out of these four things. Before that time we need much prayer. Therefore, day and night, morning and evening, we should not forget these four items. This is the purpose and the goal of our being grouped together. Our being grouped together is to make us a corporate Nazarite and the overcomers to replace the degraded church to carry out these four things. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, pp. 86-67)

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION THREE

### Practicing the God-ordained Way with Vital Companions to Contact and Labor on People

**Scripture Reading:** Rom. 1:9; Luke 19:2-6, 9-10; Mark 2:14-17; Col. 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:58

*Focus: We need to practice having two weekly times with our vital companions for the definite goal of fruit-bearing: one for fellowship and prayer and the other to go contact people.*

#### **I. The way to carry out the four steps of the God-ordained way is by the vital groups:**

- A. The God-ordained way revealed in the Scriptures is of four steps: begetting, feeding, perfecting, and building:
  - 1. *Begetting*—the vital group begets, produces, new believers—1 Cor. 4:15.
  - 2. *Feeding*—the vital group feeds them that they may grow in life—1 Thes. 2:7.
  - 3. *Perfecting*—the vital group perfects them, not by one teacher but through the mutual teaching in the groups—Eph. 4:12; Heb. 10:25.
  - 4. *Building*—the vital group makes the new ones qualified to prophesy, to speak for the Lord, for the building up of the church—1 Cor. 14:26, 31, 4b.
- B. Our vital groups should reach the standard of making everyone function according to the God-ordained way with its four steps.

#### **II. We need a weekly time to pray for our work of contacting people, studying their cases, and fellowshiping about them:**

- A. Each week we should meet with our group to pray for the purpose of contacting people; then we should fellowship about the situation with our contacts, so that we can study their cases, fellowship about them, and receive the mutual help:
  - 1. We should not pray and study by ourselves but should study with our group as a unit; if we will pray, the Lord will lead us first to study all the acquaintances of each group member.
  - 2. We should make a list of people we know who need to be saved.
  - 3. We should pray, “Lord, who are the best two or three right now for me to work on?”; when we read this list prayerfully, we will have some inner registration of the two or three whom we should labor on.
- B. We need to consider all our acquaintances, and we need the proper discernment in our consideration of whom we should labor on; we should spend our time to labor on those whom we consider to be promising and not waste our time on others who are not open.

#### **III. We also need to have a second weekly time with our vital companions for the purpose of contacting people:**

- A. When we go to contact the sinners, we should not go by ourselves but as a team.
- B. We should exercise to always have two or three new ones under our care.
- C. We can use the telephone to make appointments to talk with people about Christ.
- D. We can visit them by appointment continuously—Luke 19:1-10.
- E. We can invite them to our dinner regularly—Mark 2:14-17.
- F. We can write [email or phone] them concerning their salvation periodically.
- G. We can give away gospel tracts or spiritual booklets all the time.

#### **IV. We need to labor according to a schedule endeavoring with faithfulness, endurance and much prayer in order to reach a definite goal—Col. 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:58:**

- A. We should go to visit people according to a regular schedule, without care for our "climate"—whether we are happy or full of anxiety, whether we are victorious or defeated.
- B. We must set a goal for our fruit-bearing; then, according to the goal, we should stretch forth with our full strength and pray before the Lord.

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION THREE

### Assignments Review:

#### Session One:

- Review the sample weekly schedule, “Budgeting our time and energy for the Lord: a sample schedule”
- Use the “GTCA Perfecting Training—Weekly Schedule Worksheet” to budget your time and energy for the Lord. Make a definite goal for this week in terms of morning revival and personal prayer. Track your progress with the help of the checkboxes on the schedule worksheet.

#### Session Two:

- Get together with 1-2 companions during the week to fellowship and pray over the contents of these training sessions. Fill in the name of your companion(s) on the form “GTCA Perfecting Training—Weekly Schedule Worksheet.”
- Review your worksheet progress with one another.

#### Session Three:

- Consider some personal goals you may have in order to practice the points presented in these training sessions, all with an ultimate goal of fruit-bearing.
- Fellowship about your goals with your companions during your fellowship time.
- Fill out the gray “goals” section on the “GTCA Perfecting Training—Weekly Schedule Worksheet” form together with your companions.
- Schedule a time to meet again next week to pray and to fellowship and to review your progress and goals.

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION THREE

### *Ministry Excerpts*

#### THE GOD-ORDAINED WAY

The term the God-ordained way was invented by us, and we saw that this God-ordained way revealed in the Scriptures is of four steps: begetting, feeding, perfecting, and building. We need to beget, to produce, new believers. Then we need to feed them that they may grow. Then we need to perfect them, not by one teacher but through the mutual teaching in the groups. In the groups everyone is a teacher, and every teacher is a student. Through the mutual teaching in the groups the new ones are perfected unto the work of the ministry as pointed out in Ephesians 4:12. This makes them qualified to prophesy, to speak for the Lord, for the building up of the church. To take the God-ordained way is by these four steps, but how do we carry them out? We found out that the way to carry out these four steps is by the vital groups. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, p. 229)

#### THE NEED FOR LABOR AND STUDY TO BEAR REMAINING FRUIT

After the formation of the group is completed, the members should not go out immediately to knock on doors. This was our practice in the past, but it did not work out well. All the members of the group need to work together as one person. For this they need to come together to pray: "Lord, You lead us. You show us to whom we should go to knock on their doors." If you will pray, the Lord will lead you first to study all the acquaintances of each group member, including their relatives, neighbors, friends, classmates, and colleagues. Make a list of them and study things such as their temperament, their character, and their family situation. By doing this you will surely gain a clear view of those to whom you should go. Then you can contact them. Since they are your acquaintances, it may seem that it is easy to contact them. However, you need to find a way to contact them properly. Before you go to visit the first acquaintance, you may need to study his situation for a considerable length of time.

Some of the saints may take my word concerning the groups and attempt to practice it, but after a short time their practice may not have a positive result and they may become disappointed. The probable reason for their failure is that they did not labor. Some businessmen are able to make money, while others are not. Many businessmen invest a great deal of time and money to improve their business. In order to do business internationally, many businessmen, especially those from the Far East, expend considerable effort to learn other languages so that they can communicate with those in other nations and export their goods abroad. Because of their labor, they have become very successful. However, when we come to the Lord's work, we may take it easy. When we do not labor, we will not see a proper result. Merchants labor because they are desperate; that is their livelihood. However, we are not desperate. Whether we gain one this year or do not gain one, we can still live; we can still come to the Lord's table to enjoy the Lord. If we do not bear one remaining fruit in five years, that does not seem to concern us; but if a businessman does poorly even for half a year, he may have to close his doors. I would like to impress you with the fact that the people of the world are busy, but in relation to the Lord's work, many of the saints are not busy. The worldly people are industrious, but many of us are not.

If you would labor according to my word, you will see the result. When you go out to knock on doors, a good number of doors will be open to you. You will not go to the doors in vain. Before going you must study the situation very much. You need to consider what to say the first time you contact someone, and what to speak the second time. It is not adequate to merely take with you a copy of *The Mystery of Human Life* and speak the same thing to everyone whom you contact. You should not pray and study by yourself but should study with your group as a unit. After studying together, you should go to contact people. If you take this way, it will be easy to gain the increase; the increase is assured. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, pp. 28-30)

#### HAVING THE GROUP MEETINGS AND PRAYING FOR OUR WORK OF CONTACTING PEOPLE

Each week you need to have a group meeting, and you also need to set aside a day or an evening for the purpose of contacting people. You need these two times weekly. These are additional to the prayer meeting of the church and the Lord's table meeting. In our group meeting in these days, we have to pray for our work of contacting people. Then we should fellowship about the situation with our contacts, so that we can study their cases, fellowship about them, and receive the mutual help. After your study, we should pray again. This kind of practice will be very practical, useful, and vital. Then you can decide whom you should contact and by what way. We have to believe that what we are doing by the vital groups will not be in vain, because this is a very

## VITAL LIVING SERIES – SESSION THREE

practical sowing. Surely there will be the real reaping. (*Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, pp. 243–244)

### ENDEAVORING WITH FAITHFULNESS, ENDURANCE, AND MUCH PRAYER IN ORDER TO REACH A DEFINITE GOAL

In our practicing and learning of the God-ordained way, we should not care for problems, hardships, and frustrations. If we would begin to practice one step of the God-ordained way, after a short time we may encounter a number of problems. However, if we care for these problems, we are finished. In doing anything we should not care for problems. If there is a will, there is a way. If this is our attitude, we will succeed. The more we care for problems, the more problems we will have. However, if nothing is a problem, a hardship, or a frustration to us, we will get through; we will have a way. We need to learn to believe this. This means that we are trusting the Lord. In practicing the definite steps of the God-ordained way, we must do so with faithfulness, endeavoring, patience, endurance, and much prayer (Col. 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:58). Then we will reach our goal. (*The Practice of The Church Life According to the God-ordained Way*, pp. 128-129)

The God-ordained way is the laboring way (Col. 1:29; 1 Cor. 15:10, 58). To labor is more than to work. Without our laboring, there can be no practice of the God-ordained way. The New Testament tells us clearly that Paul was a laboring apostle. In 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul said that he labored more than all the other apostles. In Colossians 1:29 Paul used a word that is even stronger than the word labored. There he said that he was struggling according to God's operation, which operated in him in power. In his use of these terms, Paul was probably alluding to the competing of athletes in the Olympic games. In every event in the Olympics, the athletes are struggling to gain the crown (1 Cor. 9:25).

In Romans 15:16 Paul said that he was a laboring priest of the gospel of God. In that verse the word laboring has the same root in Greek as the word energizing. Energy is the noun, whereas energize is the verb. There Paul said that he was energizing himself. To energize yourself is to use the last ounce of your strength. In other words, it is to pour out the last drop of your blood. It also means to exhaust yourself. In carrying out his ministry for God's economy, Paul exhausted himself. If we do anything by taking the way of laboring, struggling, and energizing ourselves, we will surely have a success.

I have participated in the Lord's work in His recovery for more than sixty years. In this work I have never suffered a defeat. I would not be defeated. I may be defeated today, but I will persevere in the same thing for another period of time.

My ministering on the God-ordained way has been like a coach's instructing of his players. At the present time there is the need for some to develop my teaching into a practical, detailed way. One of the points that I stressed repeatedly is that every local church should have one-third of its members going out in a regularly scheduled way to visit people for the gospel. In Taipei one brother picked up a burden for this matter. Within half a year he stirred up the entire church in Taipei, which has over five thousand regular attendants each Lord's Day morning. Through this stirring up, one-third of the saints began to practice the regular going out for the preaching of the gospel. That was a great help to Taipei. Now Taipei has seventeen hundred people going out regularly in a scheduled way to gain people. If they do not gain one within a year, surely they will gain one within two years. If we would go to visit people according to a regular schedule, we cannot care for our "climate." Whether we are happy or full of anxiety, whether we are victorious or defeated, we still must go. I doubt that many of us have ever practiced this way. We are all easily directed by our "climate." Just a little "rain" and we stop going. We may intend to go out to contact people, but then something may happen to stop us. We do not go, because the "weather" is not good. This causes us to change our schedule. (*The Practice of The Church Life According to the God-ordained Way*, pp. 131-132)

### SETTING A GOAL FOR OUR FRUIT-BEARING

We must set a goal for our fruit-bearing. Then, according to the goal, we should stretch forth with our full strength and pray before the Lord. I believe that the Lord will surely listen to our prayer. A young sister testified that originally she had decided to gain ten people, but eventually she gained only eight. In general we may feel that this was good enough. However, she felt that it was not right and that she must have some problems. When she went home, she prayed and confessed her sins before the Lord. After confessing her sins, she even prayed, "Lord, tomorrow You have to add four more to me to complement the two I yet lack." Such a prayer pleases God. In addition to prayer, whether or not our estimate and goal can be attained depends entirely on whether we endeavor. If we endeavor, they can surely be attained; if we do not endeavor, they certainly cannot be attained. Our estimate and goal can never be attained if we are loose. In the matter of door-knocking and visiting, we should stretch forth with our full strength. (*Bearing Remaining Fruit, Volume One*, p. 42)