

Using the Life-Studies to Come to the Full Knowledge of the Truth

Excerpts from the ministry on being constituted with the truth

THE LORD'S RECOVERY BEING THE RECOVERY OF THE TRUTH

Today the whole earth needs the truth of the Lord that is in His Word. Regrettably, however, the Bible, the divine Word, has not been fully opened to the world. Thus, it has not been possible for people to fully know the truth of the Lord. At the most, Christians are able to boast that the holy Word of God has been published into many languages and propagated over the whole earth. Yet they are not able to say that after reading the Bible, regardless of which language, they have been able to truly understand the deep mysteries within it. They have been able to understand the superficial meanings of the things revealed in the Bible according to their own culture, philosophy, tradition, customs, ethics, living, and morality but have had no way of comprehending the mysteries of the truths in it. The mysteries of the truths in the Bible are very deep and profound. We need the enlightening of the Spirit of God to understand them, and we also need to spend time to dig them out (cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-14).

The truths in the holy Word of the Lord were completed approximately two thousand years ago, but over a period of a little more than one thousand years, they seemed to slowly vanish. Only in the last few centuries have the truths again been released little by little through the zealous and careful study of many lovers of the Lord. This is what we refer to as the Lord's recovery. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of all the truths in the Bible that were lost. Thus, the recovery of the truth is one of the great pillars in the Lord's recovery. The Lord's recovery depends upon the recovery of the knowledge of the truth.

HAVING THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH FOR THE SPREAD OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY

The New Testament says repeatedly that we should know the truth. Moreover, when referring to this matter, Paul repeatedly says that we should come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1). This means that we must know not just a small part or one aspect of the truth but rather the truth in its entirety and in all its aspects. Paul also says that the church is the pillar and base of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). This implies that the truth in the Bible is like a large building that is not one-sided but complete on all sides with a foundation and a roof. If we are going to spread the Lord's recovery today, we must know the truth and be able to expound the truth. For this reason we must know every side of the truth without any biases or particular leanings.

The truth not only has many sides but also includes many crucial items. For example, the Bible speaks about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the believers, the church, the kingdom, and the New Jerusalem. The Bible begins with God, then continues with God's creation, man's fall, God's redemption, and God's entering into man to be man's life for man to be regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed to His own image, and ultimately brought fully into glory. In the midst of all these matters, the Bible also shows us the believers and the corporate church. This corporate church brings in the kingdom,

consummating in the ultimate expression, which is the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth. All these aspects are included in the truths of the Bible.

Considering the deeper and more detailed truths, the Bible speaks about the two aspects of God's complete salvation: redemption and salvation. The aspect of redemption includes forgiveness, cleansing, justification, reconciliation, and acceptance; the aspect of salvation includes His coming to regenerate, sanctify, renew, and transform us so as to conform us to His image and ultimately to bring us into His glory. This is God's complete salvation. We must diligently learn all these things, obtain the knowledge of them, and be able to speak them clearly to others. (*CWWL, 1984*, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 4, pp. 393-394)

BEARING THE TRUTH

The Church Being the Pillar and Base of the Truth

First Timothy 3:15 says that the church is the pillar and base of the truth. The pillar and base of the truth is the entire church, including all the saints, not only the elders and leading ones. In ancient times buildings were supported by pillars or columns, each of which rested on a base. Paul referred to this architectural feature to illustrate that the church is the pillar and base to bear the truth. Most of the saints probably do not have a deep sensation that they are responsible to bear the truth. I hope that the Lord's speaking in this chapter will impress us that all the believers together are the pillar and base to bear the truth.

Paul Being an Example of Bearing the Truth

To understand what it means to bear the truth, we may consider the example of Paul in Galatians 2:11-14. Peter's shrinking back from eating with the Gentiles was contrary to the truth of the gospel, and Paul saw this. We need to remember that when Peter was the leading apostle, Paul was a young persecutor of the church. Compared to Peter, Paul was a young apostle. However, Paul saw that Peter did something contrary to the truth. Perhaps if we had been in Paul's place, we would not have rebuked Peter. We might have instead said to ourselves, "I know that Peter is wrong, but he is older, more experienced, and more qualified than me. I dare not do or say anything." Paul, however, wrote, "When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned" (v. 11). Paul rebuked Peter, for although Peter was older and more experienced, at that instant Peter was doing something that was not according to the truth. Paul was thus bearing the truth; he was a pillar and base of the truth.

Every Member Being Responsible to Bear the Truth

Paul was an apostle, but the Bible does not say that the apostles are the pillar and base of the truth. Rather, the Bible reveals that the church, which includes every believer, must bear the truth. If every saint does not bear the truth, the church will not be strong but will merely be a group of people who do not know and practice the truth but leave everything to the elders. This is a poor church. The United States is a strong nation because all the citizens bear the responsibility of upholding the Constitution. Even the president cannot violate the Constitution. If he does, he will be removed from office. In many other countries no one can touch the leader. The churches in the Lord's recovery need to be like the United States in that all the

saints need to bear the responsibility of upholding the truth. The people of the United States should respect the presidency and the president, but if the president violates the Constitution, the people need to exercise their right to uphold the Constitution. Likewise, the saints in the churches need to respect the eldership and the leading ones, but if the leading ones do something contrary to the truth, the saints should be responsible to uphold the truth.

The Church Meetings Being for the Saints' Instruction and Edification

The church, which is the pillar and base of the truth, includes all the brothers and sisters. The sisters should not excuse themselves from knowing the truth simply because they are sisters...

Every Saint Needing to Discern When Anyone Speaks in a Church Meeting

...In order for the church to be strong, every brother and sister must know the truth. I hope that if I were to say something contrary to the truth, even the young sisters would be prepared to stand up and exhort me in a proper way to stop.

Learning and Practicing the Truth

In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul refers to "the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth." We are each a living member of the church with the living God in us. The church being the pillar and base of the truth implies that every member of the church should know the truth. We need to make a decision to learn the truth. If the young saints do not make such a decision, the church has no future. For the sake of the spreading of the church to new localities, there is a need of leading ones, some who can bear responsibility. We are short of such ones because in the daily church life we do not learn or practice the truth. If we learn the truth and practice the truth in the daily church life, every member will be able to bear some responsibility. Then wherever we spread, there will be no problems; every local church will be strong.

In summary, in order to know how to conduct ourselves in the church life as the house of God, we need to be careful to always do two things: never insult the headship of Christ and always learn, guard, and bear the truth. The headship of Christ and the truth are two basic factors that direct, control, and safeguard the church life. We need to honor, respect, and not insult the headship of Christ, not overstepping in any matter related to Christ's headship. We also need to learn and practice the truth. If we do these two things, we will be clear regarding how to conduct ourselves in the house of God. (*CWWL*, 1978, vol. 2, "Crucial Principles for the Christian Life and the Church Life," ch. 7, pp. 618-621)

Excerpts from the ministry on coming to the full knowledge of the truth

**COMING TO THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH
AND TEACHING THE TRUTH
BY SPENDING ADEQUATE TIME
IN THE WORD AND THE MINISTRY**

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RECOVERY
OF THE TRUTHS IN THE BIBLE**

We need to care for the deeper truths in the Bible. Regrettably, through the centuries many Christians have neglected the Word of God. Early in the fourth century the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, initiated the formation of what would become the apostate Roman Catholic Church. By the end of the sixth century, the papal system was established, and the Roman Catholic Church was fully formed. The Catholic Church did not allow laymen to read the Bible, claiming that they did not possess the ability to understand the Bible properly. Consequently, the Catholic Church brought in the period known as the Dark Ages. From approximately the sixth century to the sixteenth century, the Bible was locked away, and the divine truths in the Bible were lost. During the Reformation the Bible was widely distributed in the languages of the people. Although the Bible was unlocked by the reformers, many of the divine truths in the Bible were not recovered. Hence, in the nineteenth century the Lord raised up the British Brethren to recover the truths in the Word.

After I was saved, I met with the Brethren for seven and a half years. During those years I learned a great deal from the Brethren teachers. They mainly emphasized three matters from the Bible: the types, prophecies, and dispensations. These three matters help to open the Word of God. For instance, the types in the Old Testament help to convey the full knowledge of Christ to us. Because Christ is wonderful and all-inclusive, the plain words of the New Testament alone are not sufficient to fully unveil and portray Him. Thus, we need the types in the Old Testament as “pictures” to reveal the many aspects of Christ.

Although the Brethren were experts in typology, prophecy, and dispensations, their teachings did not adequately emphasize Christ as life and the Spirit for the producing of the church. The Brethren spoke concerning Christ mainly in the way of doctrine, not in the way of life. Furthermore, they spoke concerning the church primarily in relation to the dispensations, not in relation to Christ, life, or the Spirit. Because the Brethren were preoccupied with doctrinal knowledge and neglected Christ, life, the Spirit, and the church, they were divided again and again. As a consequence, they lost the testimony of the church (cf. Rev. 2:5).

The Lord used the Brethren teachers to recover many truths in the Word of God related to the types, prophecies, and dispensations. Based upon the past recovery of the truths among the Brethren, in the last six decades the Lord has revealed more truths to us. On the one hand, we stand today upon the shoulders of the great Bible teachers who have gone before us, and we acknowledge that we have learned much from them. On the other hand, we must faithfully testify that we have received further light from the Lord concerning Christ as life and the Spirit for the producing of the church.

**EVERY BELIEVER COMING TO
THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH
BY SPENDING TIME IN THE WORD DAILY**

The Lord's recovery today is the full recovery of the divine truths in the holy Word. In traditional Christianity, believers who desire to learn about the Word of God are encouraged to attend seminaries. In the Lord's recovery, however, we learn the truth not by attending a seminary but by reading the Scriptures in a daily way. In 1 Timothy 2:4 Paul tells us that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth." It is not possible for every believer to study in a seminary, but it is possible for every child of God to come to the full knowledge of the truth by spending time in the Word every day. Every believer has the capacity to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

The divine revelation in the sixty-six books of the Bible is exceedingly profound. To understand and interpret the Bible according to its intrinsic significance is not easy. Through the centuries various schools of theology have emerged, numerous Bible institutes and seminaries have been established, and countless commentaries on the Bible have been written. In most of the Bible institutes and seminaries, students learn theology, history, geography, and biblical Hebrew and Greek. Today Christian theology has several major schools of thought. All these schools of thought arise from different ways of studying the Bible, many of which conflict with the God-ordained way of interpreting the Bible according to its spiritual significance.

We in the local churches need to understand the Bible in the way of apprehending its spiritual significance. In 1 and 2 Timothy Paul emphasizes that the churches need the healthy teaching so that every believer may come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 1:10; 2:4; 4:3, 6, 16; 5:17; 6:3; 2 Tim. 2:15, 25; 3:7; 4:3). We should study the Bible according to the way ordained by God so that we may help the saints to receive the healthy teaching and know the truth in an adequate way.

**THE FOUR PURPOSES
OF PUBLISHING THE LIFE-STUDIES
AND THE RECOVERY VERSION OF THE BIBLE**

In the first eleven years of my ministry in the United States, I gave messages in conferences concerning various subjects, such as Christ, the church, and the kingdom. Later, I realized that no single subject could adequately cover the entire revelation in the Bible. I felt that I should go on in the ministry to open the Bible to the saints book by book. Therefore, we began to have a life-study of the Bible in 1974 through semiannual trainings in order to study the entire Bible book by book.

Our purpose in publishing the Life-studies and the footnotes of the Recovery Version of the Bible is fourfold. The first aspect of our purpose is to provide the saints with a simple way to understand the truth in the Bible. Many of the expositions of the Bible in traditional Christianity may mislead their readers because they present the truth in a way that is difficult to understand. The Life-study messages and footnotes of the Recovery Version, however, help readers to enter into the knowledge of the truth in the Word through simple words (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:15). The apostle John uses simple words and expressions in his Gospel. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In

John 14:6 the Lord declared, "I am the way and the reality and the life." Although John's writing is simple, the truth conveyed in it is profound. Likewise, in presenting the profound truths in the Bible, I endeavor to use simple terms and expressions so that every believer can understand them.

The second aspect of our purpose is to help solve the common and difficult problems in the Bible that hinder us from fully understanding the Bible (cf. 2 Pet. 3:16). In almost every book of the Bible there are a few points that are difficult to understand. In order to properly understand these points, I spend much time consulting Greek dictionaries, lexicons, and concordances. Thus, the Life-study messages and the footnotes in the Recovery Version of the Bible provide a proper interpretation of many points in the Bible that are difficult to understand.

The third aspect of our purpose is to minister the life supply to the readers (cf. John 10:10; Rom. 8:11; 1 Tim. 4:6). Regrettably, many books in traditional Christianity contain little life supply. Even if we spend hours reading these books, we may not receive much life. However, many saints in the churches can testify that by reading the Life-study messages even for a short amount of time, they receive a rich life supply.

The fourth aspect of our purpose is to bring the children of God into His economy, which is His administration with His plan, His purpose, and His arrangement to attain His purpose for the fulfillment of the desire of His heart (Eph. 3:9).

I encourage the young ones among us to spend adequate time in the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version of the Bible so that they may receive a good foundation in the truth. If they do this, some of them may be able to develop the truth concerning God's economy by standing on our shoulders, just as we stand on the shoulders of the great teachers of the Bible who have gone before us. When we were young, we spent considerable time studying classical Christian writings in order to glean their positive points. Many of these points have been consolidated into the Life-study messages and Recovery Version footnotes. If we spend time in the ministry publications, we will receive great benefit.

**REDEEMING THE TIME
TO OBTAIN A PROPER SPIRITUAL EDUCATION
IN ORDER TO TEACH THE TRUTH**

In order to teach the truth effectively, we need to obtain an adequate understanding of the truth. It is one thing to have a general knowledge of the truth concerning God's economy and another thing to be able to effectively present this truth to others. I encourage the saints to study one Life-study message with the corresponding verses, footnotes, and cross references of the Recovery Version of the Bible day by day, five days a week. If the saints practice this, in several years they will gain a proper understanding of the entire New Testament. We should learn to redeem the time to study the New Testament (cf. Eph. 5:16). When Brother Nee was a college student, he decided to read the New Testament fifty-two times in one year, that is, once a week continually for a year. He studied diligently and was one of the top students in his class. Nevertheless, he also endeavored to redeem his time in order to read the New Testament. Similarly, I can testify that although as an elderly man I need to rest for my physical health, I endeavor to redeem every moment so that I may fulfill my responsibility in the ministry of the word.

I spent approximately one week composing a single footnote of the Recovery Version of the Bible concerning the significance of the Greek word translated “truth” in 1 John 1:6. This required me to study several lexicons and concordances. If we study this footnote, we will be able to understand the intrinsic significance of the word *truth*. Just as young people need to receive an education in order to be responsible citizens in society, so also the young ones in the Lord’s recovery need to receive a spiritual education in order to come to the full knowledge of the truth. Regrettably, many Christians today have not received a proper spiritual education. However, the footnotes of the Recovery Version of the Bible and the Life-study messages are the Lord’s provision for the saints in the recovery to obtain a solid spiritual education. The elders in the churches may encourage the saints to read the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version of the Bible after the Lord’s table meeting and the prayer meeting. If the saints practice to read a few Life-study messages every week, in five years they will have read more than five hundred messages. We should endeavor to redeem the time in order to come to the full knowledge of the truth. The young people need to realize that because they have many years ahead of them, they are in a golden time to obtain a proper spiritual education by studying the truth in the Word.

If, by the Lord’s mercy, we determine to spend time five days a week to read the Life-studies of the New Testament with the footnotes of the Recovery Version, after five years of persistent practice we will possess the adequate knowledge of the New Testament. We will acquire the knowledge of both the various subjects in the New Testament as well as the crucial points of the truth revealed in each book of the New Testament. The best way to study all the crucial points of the divine revelation in the New Testament is to read the Life-study messages and the footnotes of the Recovery Version according to the sequence of the New Testament, book by book, chapter by chapter. Dietitians say that we need a variety of wholesome nutrients in order to have a healthy diet. Similarly, in order to have a balanced spiritual diet, we need to read the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version footnotes, which contain a variety of spiritual “nutrients.” I encourage all the saints, young and old, to redeem their time to read these ministry publications for several years so that they may become “scribes” disciplined to the kingdom of the heavens, those who are filled with the knowledge of God’s economy, and may be qualified to teach the truth concerning God’s economy to others (cf. Matt. 13:52; Titus 1:9). (CWWL, 1984, vol. 1, pp. 61-66)

Excerpts from the ministry on using the Life-studies

THE MAIN REVELATION IN THE BIBLE

In the Bible mainly life is revealed. Life is the focus of the whole Bible. But *what* is life, or *who* is life? The answer is in the word of the Lord Jesus. He says, "I am life," and "I am come that you may have life." The Bible is a revelation of Christ as life. Whenever we come to the Bible, we must realize that we are coming to contact Christ as our life.

The whole Bible is a book of life, and this life is nothing less than the divine and living Person of Christ Jesus Himself, who is our portion. When we come to the Bible, we must come to contact Him. We should not repeat the pitiful history of the Jewish people who researched the Scriptures because they thought there was life in them, yet would not come to the Lord Jesus (John 5:39-40). We should not contact the Bible without contacting the Lord. Whenever we open the Bible we have to say, "Lord Jesus, You have to be here. This is not merely a book, this is Your revelation. I don't like to read this book without contacting You. I don't like to hear something from this book without hearing You. I don't like to read this book without seeing You. I like to see Your face. I like to see what You are from the printed page. O Lord Jesus, enlighten Your Word and anoint every line that I may touch You." We need such a spirit to contact this living Word.

After man was created, he was put in front of two trees in the garden of Eden: one was the tree of life and the other was the tree of knowledge. If man had eaten the tree of life he would have received the divine life of God that was indicated by the tree of life. But man was tempted and took the tree of knowledge that denoted the source other than God, that is Satan. The issue of that was death. The principle is the same in our contact with the Bible. We may take the Bible as a book of life by contacting it with our spirit, by praying to the Lord that we may receive Him as life through His Word, or we may make the Bible a book of knowledge by contacting it merely with our mind, seeking knowledge in letters. This brings us death, not life. Second Corinthians 3:6 warns us that "the letter [that is, the scripture in letters] kills, but the Spirit gives life." We shouldn't make the Bible merely a book of letters to kill us. We have to take the Bible by contacting the Lord Spirit that it may be the Spirit and life to us. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 3-4).

THE LIFE-STUDY MESSAGES LEADING PEOPLE TO TOUCH LIFE

Another function of the Life-study messages is to bring people into life. The Life-study messages are not a set of philosophical or classical writings apart from the Bible. The Life-study messages do not merely expound the Bible and present the truth; rather, they also bring people into the truth to enjoy and experience its riches. Mere exposition of the Bible is just the impartation of knowledge, which causes people to know doctrines mentally. The Life-study messages bring us into the depths of the Bible to touch and enjoy the life within (cf. John 5:39-40).

After reading Exodus 12 many Christians only know that something happened on the night of the passover (v. 12); they do not know the meaning of what happened. However, today through the Life-study messages we can all understand the deep meaning of this matter and enter into the application of the precious blood, the enjoyment of the meat of the lamb, and the reality of the unleavened bread and bitter

herbs. Therefore, the life-study of the Bible is a proper and accurate study of the Bible that ushers people into the Bible to obtain the life supply and enjoyment contained in it.

THE FACTOR FOR RICH MEETINGS

Today pastors and preachers in Christianity must search everywhere to find a good word for their sermons. Some pastors do not have anything to talk about, so they speak about things such as sanitary practices and personal hygiene. Some are a little better and speak about matters such as redemption, the washing away of sins, and justification. There are some who are even deeper and speak about things such as how to fellowship with the Lord and how to enjoy the peace given to us by the Lord. But even this is not enough. We have seen from our experience and our research that the richest meetings are those with the Life-study messages as their content. If every Lord's Day we would take two Life-study messages as the content of our fellowship, the meeting would be very rich.

I have spent eleven years laboring to carry out the summer and winter life-study trainings. This year I have completed the life-study of the entire New Testament, and next year I will begin another eleven years to complete the study of the entire Bible. We should bring all the saints in the churches in the Lord's recovery into the practice of carefully reading one or two Life-study messages each week. If we do this, over the long term—perhaps over ten, eight, or even just five years—the saints will make much progress in all areas, and the condition of the entire church will be reversed.

Nutritionists tell us that to eat healthily, we cannot eat just one kind of food. Fish is very nutritious, but if we ate only fish for three meals a day without eating anything else, we definitely would not be healthy. In order to eat healthily, we must eat all kinds of foods. For example, a salad contains not only one kind of vegetable but many kinds mixed together; thus, salads are rich and nutritious. The Life-study messages are like a salad that is made not with just one kind of vegetable but with all different kinds. However, we must have our staple food, our center. Christ as life is the center of the Life-study messages, so when we read the Life-study messages, they help us to grow strong and healthy in life.

Before 1974 we mainly emphasized releasing messages on one topic at a time through conferences. Later, we realized that we should dig out the matter of life because life is the center. So from that time on, we began to dig out life from the Bible, book by book through the Life-study messages. At present we have dug out life from each book of the New Testament and even the Old Testament books of Genesis and Exodus. Although the Bible was written comprehensively, speaking much on many topics, it always has life as its center to clearly point out the way.

Even the book of Ephesians with only six chapters is composed in a comprehensive way, speaking on many topics. For example, the book of Ephesians speaks of very high matters—matters that could not be any higher—such as God's selection in eternity and His predestinating us (1:4-5). It also speaks of very low matters—matters that could not be any lower—as in the word that those who steal should steal no more (4:28). If today we were to choose a topic and speak of God's calling and predestination, we would not also speak of such things as stealing. However, after the book of Ephesians speaks of such high matters, it suddenly inserts just such a sentence, telling those who steal to steal no more. It also tells the husbands to

love their wives and tells the wives to be subject to their husbands (5:25, 22). This proves that the Bible's way of speaking is comprehensive. Nevertheless, the Bible still has its center. When we use the Life-study messages, we must firmly grasp this point and see that the Bible has an intrinsic central lane and also speaks comprehensively on many matters. (*CWWL*, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," pp. 364-366)

EXPERIENCING LIFE BY KNOWING THE TRUTH

The Lord has not left us in darkness. Today all His truths are contained in the Bible, which He has given to us. We must realize that the Bible is a book of life. The reason the Bible is a book of life is that its entire content is truth. All experienced Christians confess that no one can enjoy Christ as life if he does not know the Bible or understand the truth in the Bible. We need to go to the supermarket to buy food for our physical body in order to be fed and sustained. In like manner, we must come to the Bible to receive the truth that is in it if we want to receive and enjoy the Lord as life. All the truths in the Bible are food for our spiritual life.

The Bible is not merely a book of knowledge. All the knowledge contained in the Bible is in fact truth, and in this truth, life is concealed. When we read the Bible, if we study only the letter but not the intrinsic truth within, we will not receive life. Hence, every Bible reader has to see the truth that is conveyed through the letter of the Word. Once we see the truth, we will spontaneously touch life. The Life-studies have been published to help us enter into the depths of the letter of the Word. Therefore, all those who carefully study the Life-studies will surely gain a certain amount of experience. The Life-studies bring us into the biblical truths, from which we may receive the genuine life supply.

Today the Lord's recovery is a recovery of the truth and of life. We all know that the decline of Christianity is due to the fact that it has lost both the truth and life. This loss of the truth and life eventually produced many human methods and worldly organizations, which are not what the Lord wants. The Lord does not want any organization or human method. Instead, He wants His church to know Him as the truth and to receive and enjoy Him as life. The entire content of the church must be the growth of Christ in us as truth and life. This may be likened to an orchard, the entire content of which is the fruits of life produced from the fruit trees. In an orchard we cannot find any organization or behavior. We can only see the fruit trees growing and bearing fruit as the issue of their growth in life. This should be the situation of the churches in the Lord's recovery today. In the churches we do not want to have any organization or human methods. Rather, we want to minister to God's people for their growth by planting and watering as the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6 and 9. (*CWWL*, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 6, pp. 415-416)

BEING EQUIPPED IN THE TRUTH AND GROWING IN LIFE IN ORDER TO FEED THE LAMBS

The Gospel of John is a book on life, but John was also particularly fond of using the word *truth* in his writings. Hence, in his Epistles, just as in his Gospel, he first mentions the truth and then presents the matter of life. This shows us a spiritual principle. If there is no truth, there will be no life; and if there is no life, there will be no truth.

In John 14:6 the Lord put life and truth together. Then in chapter 15 the Lord spoke of the matter of fruit-bearing. This indicates that fruit-bearing has a great deal to do with life and truth. Experientially, our barrenness exposes our shortage in life. Why are we barren? It is because we are not rich in life. If we have an abundance of life, we will spontaneously bear fruit. If we would pay attention to fruit-bearing, we surely must pay attention to the growth in life. If we would pay attention to the growth in life, we must also pay attention to pursuing the truth. Once we have the truth, we will be led into the experience of Christ. In this way we will be able to shepherd our lambs. Otherwise, we will have nothing to feed our lambs with and no way to take care of them. Without knowing the truth or growing in life, we may still be able to lead people to be saved and baptized; however, if we lack the knowledge of the truth and the experience of Christ, we will not be able to properly fulfill the responsibility of feeding.

Parents feed their children by giving them food to eat and milk to drink. Similarly, in order to feed our lambs, we must prepare spiritual food and milk. The Lord's word is the bread of life (6:35, 63) and the spiritual milk (1 Pet. 2:2). If we know the truth in the Bible and the word of the Lord, we will be able to give our lambs much nourishment. For example, we can use the Gospel of John to feed others, saying, "John 1 says that the Lord was God, and as God He became flesh. Furthermore, with Him came the truth, which is the Word of God. Then chapter 8 says that the truth shall set us free, and chapter 17 says that we are sanctified in the truth. In actuality, the truth is nothing less than the Lord Jesus Himself. Thus, we have to love the Lord, pray to Him all the time, and read His Word every day." How good this is! The Gospel of John speaks of life and truth. This life and truth are just the Lord Jesus, and today He is the Spirit who lives in us and supplies us day by day. Hence, chapter 6 tells us that the Lord is the bread of life for us to eat (vv. 35, 48). When we eat Him, we live because of Him (v. 57).

If we have a rich knowledge of the truth and a considerable measure of the experience of life, when we go to visit our lambs, we will be able to supply them with the milk of the word according to their situation. This is the proper practice of feeding the lambs. Regrettably, when most of us see our lambs, usually we can only say, "Do you attend the Lord's Day meeting? Why don't you come to the meeting? The meeting is really good; you surely have to come." We only know to say this to our lambs over and over again. Eventually, they get so tired of us, and gradually they do not like to see us anymore because they know that we have nothing to say except, "The meeting is really good; please come." This is not feeding them; rather, it is like serving them a summons to appear in court. Therefore, they not only are not supplied, but they even grow tired of us.

Therefore, when we see our lambs, we should not say, "The meeting is really good; please come." Instead, we have to speak the truth to them. The truth is the Lord's word. Perhaps some saints will say, "There are many places in the Word that I do not understand; I cannot even comprehend the Gospel of John." The Lord has already opened the entire New Testament to us in the Life-study messages. If someone does not understand the Gospel of John, he should read the *Life-study of John*, where all the truths are opened. Once he reads the Life-study messages, he will be able to understand the intrinsic significance of the book. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 7, pp. 432-433)

Excerpts from the ministry on promoting the Life-studies

**BEING NOURISHED WITH THE RICHES OF CHRIST
TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF THE CHURCH LIFE
AND HASTEN THE LORD'S MOVE**

If we are not nourished with the riches of Christ by reading the Life-study messages, the standard of the church life will remain low. It is by receiving spiritual nourishment in the messages that we can uphold the high standard of the church life. In recent years many churches in the Far East have experienced a revival by obtaining spiritual nourishment in the Life-study messages. The saints in these churches not only enjoy the riches of Christ by reading the messages but also enliven and supply the church meetings by sharing these riches with one another in the meetings. In order to raise the standard of the church life and hasten the progress of the Lord's move among us, we need to partake of the riches of Christ in the Life-study messages. (*CWWL*, 1977, vol. 1, p. 516)

PROMOTING THE LEARNING OF THE TRUTH

...Now that all the Life-studies of the New Testament have been published, I hope that all the churches would take this set of books as the basis for their study and greatly promote the learning of the truth. In every church we have to help all the saints to study the Recovery Version of the New Testament, especially the footnotes, in a careful and thorough way. This will truly be a great task. In the past we felt that we had nothing to do. Actually, this was because we did not do anything and did not want to do anything. Even when we truly wanted to do something, we could not find the way to do it, so we lost interest in doing anything. However, now the way has been clearly presented to us, and everything depends on whether or not we are willing to pay the price. If we are willing to pay the price, I believe that in three to five years the whole church will make great progress in learning the truth. (*CWWL*, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 8, pp. 439-440)

**THE TRUTH ENABLING MAN
TO RECEIVE LIGHT AND FREEDOM**

The Lord Jesus said that the truth shall set us free (John 8:32). There is light in the truth, and once we receive the light, we are set free. During the time of the Lord Jesus, the Pharisees and lawyers also read the Old Testament, but they studied only the letter without the light of the truth. However, once the Lord Jesus gave the explanation, the truth was revealed. For example, there was a group of Sadducees who did not believe that there was such a thing as resurrection, so they went to question the Lord. The Lord Jesus said to them that in Exodus 3:6, the section concerning the burning bush, Moses clearly pointed out that God is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. The Lord also told them that God is not the God of the dead but of the living (Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-38). Since God called Himself the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, this proves that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had died, will be resurrected. This example shows us that the Lord Jesus' knowledge of the truth and the light of the Scriptures was very thorough, and the way He expounded the Scriptures was not only according to letter but also according to the life and power implied within them. This is also the focus of the Life-studies. Thus, we must make an effort to read the Bible and study the Life-studies in order to know the truth.

We do not need to worry about the shortage of material or about the way for us to pursue the truth. The only need is for us to be willing to spend the time and effort on this matter. If we all rise up to study the truth and to know and pursue the Lord, this will bring in a big, long-lasting, and genuine revival of the church. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," ch. 8, p. 446)

**PROMOTING THE STUDY OF THE LIFE-STUDIES
TO BRING IN A GENUINE REVIVAL
IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

We should have a burden to promote the Life-studies continent by continent until every household has the Life-studies, and every saint has the Life-studies both inwardly and outwardly. The Life-studies are for teaching and helping people to read the Bible. When you read the Bible, your mind may not be enlightened even after reading it a hundred times. However, when you open the Recovery Version of the New Testament, there are footnotes that open the truth to you in the places you cannot understand. Once the word of the truth is opened, you will receive the revelation. Then when you read the Life-studies, you will be enlightened even more. After you have read the Life-studies, the few verses that you have studied will be fully opened to you. Ephesians has only six chapters, but there are ninety-seven messages in the *Life-study of Ephesians*. If you read two messages a day, you will need about fifty days to finish it. After you have spent fifty days to read through all these ninety-seven messages, the content of the six chapters, the entire book of Ephesians, every sentence, and even every word will be clear and enlightening to you. In other words, Ephesians, this mysterious and marvelous book, will be fully opened to you. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, "Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery," pp. 457-458)

THE LIFE-STUDIES AND THE RECOVERY VERSION

Through the past ten years up to the present time, it has been fully proven among us that the most profitable writings and publications are the Life-study messages with the footnotes of the Recovery Version. I wrote these things not for scholarly study for people to get a degree but for life ministering, for truth releasing, and for opening up the books of the Bible. We do not need scholarly writings or any kind of books that build up people's degrees. That is not our purpose. To some extent we would not agree with this. We are not for theology, but we are for "theos," for God. Our publications are not for any kind of "ology" but just for God, the Triune God, the processed Triune God, and the Lord, Christ, Jesus, the Spirit, life, and the church. Our publications are for a living person, not for any "ology." We are not for the ology of God, the ology of Christ, the ology of the church, or the ology of the divine things. However, I do have a burden to publish things full of Christ, full of the processed Triune God, full of the life-giving Spirit, full of life, and full of the church. The Lord's recovery is just for the processed Triune God to be dispensed into us, and the living Christ, the Spirit, life, and the church are the crucial contents of the Lord's recovery. There is no other place to pick up other books that are so rich, so enlightening, and so nourishing concerning the recovery of Christ, the Spirit, life, and the church. Since this is the real situation and the real condition, I feel that we have no choice but to use the Life-studies, because we realize that this is the best way to bring people into the holy Word.

The holy Word itself says in Psalm 119:130: "The opening of Your words gives light." Millions of copies of the Bible have been distributed. They have been placed in hotels, in homes, and in many places. Nearly everywhere you go today, you find a Bible, but who has entered into the Bible? There has been nearly no entrance. Many have a copy of the Bible, but the Bible has been closed and nearly never opened. Now the Lord has given us a key, an opener. I consider our writings as the opener to open the holy Word. I believe that those of you who have read the Life-study messages can testify honestly that these messages with the footnotes of the Recovery Version have opened up a certain chapter or a certain book of the Bible to you. This is not to replace the Bible but to bring people into the Bible. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, "Elders' Training, Book 3," ch. 10, p. 320-321).

THE NEED OF A SOLID FOUNDATION IN THE WORD

...I have the assurance that if you would get into the Life-study messages continually, you will be different after fifty days. Any message from any book, such as Genesis, Exodus, Matthew, or Revelation, is good for your study. Just go to the Life-study messages. I hope that the Lord would really have mercy upon us so that we would not hold any kind of personal feeling or individualistic opinion. We must be those who solely take care of the interest of the Lord's recovery and the benefit of all the dear saints who have come into the Lord's recovery. We care only for this.

We must do our best to get ourselves into these truths and to get these truths constituted into our being. This cannot be done within a short time, but this must be our practice. I also am burdened that all the leading ones, either the elders or the serving ones taking some kind of lead, should have a real burden to pray for the saints in your locality that the Lord may stir up their interest, their seeking heart, and their spirit to seek after the Lord in His truth. The truth is nowhere but in the Bible, yet the Bible needs an opener. We need to lead the saints into the real, right, and proper realization of the need of the Bible and also of the help of the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version.

BUILDING UP A HABIT OF SPENDING TIME IN THE WORD

We should help the saints to build up a practice or a habit that every day they would spend at least thirty minutes in the Word. This can be done by taking ten minutes in the morning, ten minutes in the evening, and another ten minutes before going to bed. We all need to build up such a practice to spend at least thirty minutes a day to get into God's Word. The best way is to charge the saints to study a book of the New Testament according to their choice. They should get into this book continually and every day. Some saints may decide to study the book of Romans or the book of Hebrews. They should study every day either three times for ten minutes each or one time for thirty minutes. We should charge them to pray-read two or three verses of this book every day. Then they have to study the accompanying message. We have messages on all the verses. The saints do not need to pray-read the Life-study messages, but they have to pray-read the biblical verses in order to get the help to enter into the truth conveyed in these few verses. They also need the help of the footnotes and the Life-study messages to enter into the truth. The saints need to take this way every day to get into the truth. After one year of studying the Bible in this way, there will be a solid change in the saints' home life, private life, and church life. A few verses seems very slow, but we

must realize that breathing is a slow thing. We breathe only a little at a time, but this continual practice accumulates and keeps us living. We may think that this is too slow, but even if it took us ten years to finish the entire New Testament, that would be wonderful. To pick up the truth contained in half of the New Testament after five years would be marvelous. We do not encourage the saints to be greedy and attempt to finish one book in one day. Then “their stomach will burst.” We should not encourage them in this way. Rather, we should slow them down. It is not a matter of quantity but a matter of endurance. You must endure this kind of Bible study. I think that we need to remind them week after week, and sometimes the elders need to give the saints some direction, some encouragement, and some incentive. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, “Elders’ Training, Book 3,” ch. 10, p. 324-325*).

THE NEED OF A PROPER DIET

...We must realize that to shepherd a church is to take care of a big family with many folks who are young, old, and middle-aged. We must feed them properly, and we must consider what is the most nourishing, healing, and germ-killing diet. We have to make a choice.

Please do not think that I am “selling my cargo.” I beg you to forget this thought, which comes from the devil. I am not selling my cargo, but I am ministering the divine truth to God’s people. Therefore, as leading brothers, try your best in your locality to stir up an atmosphere and to create a hunger and thirst in the saints for the Lord’s truth. Tell them that the truth is in the unique holy Word and that the best help to usher them into the Word is the Recovery Version with the footnotes and all the Life-studies. Of course, we should not practice anything legal. We should not make these things a legal matter that the saints are required to do. However, if the saints do love the Lord’s recovery, they must get themselves fed all the time with the healthy food so that they may be strong. As a result of eating a proper, regular diet, the saints will be strong, and the Lord will have a strong testimony. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, “Elders’ Training, Book 3,” ch. 10, p. 326-327*).

A PRIVATE TIME IN THE LORD’S WORD

We should encourage the saints to have a private time in the Lord’s Word and that they should do this as a proper rule of their daily life. Regardless of how busy or how tired we are, we can reserve thirty minutes a day for a time with the Lord in the Word. It all depends upon our will. If there is the will, there is the way. To save half an hour among twenty-four hours is not a hard thing. If the saints could practice spending one hour or more in the Lord’s Word, this would be wonderful, but at least we should encourage them to give half an hour to the Lord every day. The saints should be encouraged to separate or sanctify thirty minutes every day to the Lord. We all can realize what a blessing this will be, and I believe that this will make the Lord very pleased. Then every local church needs to find a way to carry out the meetings in the principle of giving the saints the proper education in the full knowledge of the truth. (*CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, “Elders’ Training, Book 3,” ch. 13, pp. 358-359*).

Learning and Practicing the Truth

In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul refers to “the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.” We are each a living member of the church with the living God in us. The church being the pillar and base of

the truth implies that every member of the church should know the truth. We need to make a decision to learn the truth. If the young saints do not make such a decision, the church has no future. For the sake of the spreading of the church to new localities, there is a need of leading ones, some who can bear responsibility. We are short of such ones because in the daily church life we do not learn or practice the truth. If we learn the truth and practice the truth in the daily church life, every member will be able to bear some responsibility. Then wherever we spread, there will be no problems; every local church will be strong. (CWWL, 1978, vol. 2, "Crucial Principles for the Christian Life and the Church Life," ch. 7, p. 620)

NEEDING TO PROGRESS IN THE STUDY OF THE TRUTH

...Today we can easily attract crowds of students through our gospel preaching on the campuses because the students are quite educated and will readily receive the high gospel according to logic and reasoning. In the villages, however, it may not be that easy to preach the gospel due to the people's shortage of knowledge and lack of understanding. In any case, human beings all have the desire to pursue knowledge. If you study the biblical truths thoroughly and then present them to people, especially to the college students, they will fully appreciate what you say. On the contrary, if you are short of the knowledge of the truth, it will be impossible for you to preach the gospel on the campuses effectively. Hence, you must strive to pursue the truth. If you still do things today in the old way—graduate from high school, study two years of theological school, and then go out to be a preacher—that will not work. That way is an outdated way and cannot meet the need of this age. You must exert some effort to be solidly equipped in the truth. This is my main burden for you. (CWWL, 1985, vol. 5, "Vessels Useful to the Lord," ch. 1, pp. 21-22)

THE TORTOISE WINS THE RACE

A diligent seeker of the Lord could possibly finish the entire New Testament by studying two hours a day for two and a half years. If the church, however, took seven and a half years to get through the entire New Testament, this would still be wonderful. Never forget the race between the hare and the tortoise. The tortoise wins the race. If we keep going slowly, we will win the race. All the "running ones" will be defeated, but the working ones will win the race. We need to eat regularly, continuously, and slowly. I advise you not to go too fast but to go slowly. You will then reach the goal. If we had started this practice ten years ago, we would have finished the entire New Testament already. Even if you get through half of the New Testament, you will see that you are different. Also, if the entire church could get through half of the New Testament, the church would be different. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, "Elders' Training, Book 3," ch. 13, p. 362)