

## **Laboring to be a Joyful Fruit Bearer**

Fellowship from Minoru Chen on June 27, 2021

### **Prayer**

Thank You for being with us, Lord. We commit this fellowship to You. Lord, continue to transfuse what is in Your heart into ours. Lord, we like to live according to Your inward parts, Your inward feelings, Your inward burden. We pray for these ten GTCA cities and all the dear saints there. We do pray for a new revival. Save us from a formal church life. Lord, build up the dynamic, vital, living, and active church life. We just pray, Lord, that this will bring forth the increase through our labor.

### **Shortage in Practice**

We are brought to the end of the first half of the year. I thank the Lord for giving us the opportunity to have these Lord's Day evening fellowship talks. I do not want to consider these as messages but as fellowship talks. I really pray that the content of these talks will not be water off a duck's back, but that at least some of it will be retained. Even more, I pray that these words will begin to have an effect in our lives, to the point that we are not just inspired or even just merely convicted by these words, but that we actually will begin to practice these things.

I still think that our shortage today is in practice. Our shortage is not in knowledge. Our shortage is not in the principles or the truth. We are overflowing with those. What is desperately needed in the local churches is a living that would match what we know. That means to walk in these truths, to live out these things, rather than to just talk about them. If we do not have this breakthrough, I fear, brothers and

sisters, the recovery will be is stuck in the realm of just understanding and mere knowledge of the very best, but without a genuine power and testimony to live out these things and to work out these things.

There is a verse in 2 Timothy that says, “Having an outward form of godliness, though denying its power” (3:5a). It refers to those religious people that had the form of godliness, but without the power. They had the form – this means they had the look; they had the appearance. Like the Pharisees, they put on a show when they walked on the streets and public places to pray. They just put on a show, told people what they were doing. The Lord hated that and said, “They have their reward in full” (Matt. 6:5d). If we do not practice what we have been taught, then we could become pharisaic, hypocritical, like the Pharisees.

Today, what Christian seekers are seeking are not just doctrinal matters, not just the letters, not just the knowledge of the truth, which are all very essential. The attraction of our church life is not just what is on our bookshelves or in our notebooks. The attraction of the church life is in the people, a group of God-men living these things out. That is what we are short of. That is what the world wants to see. And that is what the believers are drawn to.

### **Life and Service**

We have been speaking along this line of "practicing these things" over and over. Today, I am not going to get off that line. I am going to still be on that line, but today I want to use a number of quotes spoken by Brother Lee over time on this matter of fruit-bearing, which is the theme of our fellowship. The GTCA move, the migrations – all of these are for what, brothers and sisters? Migration is not just so we have a cheaper place to live. It is not that we used to live in a little house, and now we can get acreage over here in this cheaper place with a lower cost of living. It is not just moving for our career, or for what we want to accomplish, such as finding better schools for our children. I would not say these are wrong things. Humanly, they are good things. But I

want to remind us, brothers and sisters – what are we on earth for? Why are we saved? Why are we in the church life? Why are we in the recovery? Why are we pursuing Christ? Why? There is a reason. There is a purpose.

Of course, on the one hand, that purpose is so we can know Christ, we can grow in Him, we can be transformed and even be conformed to His image, we can be that corporate sonship as Christ's enlargement and expression. But we must not forget, there is the other side. The other side is that we are here functionally to accomplish something for the Lord's interests. God needs men to work out something that is in His heart, according to His economy. He needs man. If man is not cooperating and man is not available, God cannot do much, He cannot advance His kingdom. Christ cannot build up His Body. God cannot save the world. God cannot fulfill His will on earth. So there is the side of commission, of service. There is the side of something that we have to do, in concert with the Triune God, of course, in oneness with the Lord Himself. That is a charge, a destiny, if you will, brothers and sisters. These two things – life and service – must be balanced. Life and service. If you just grow in life to be mature, that is good. But you could be sorely lacking in your service.

## **Aspects of Service**

### **1. Fruit-bearing**

In our service, what do we do? We do many things. But I would like to use Brother Lee's latter-day speaking: number one is to bear fruit as branches in the vine. The branches have only one purpose, one singular destiny. If these branches are there and they do not bear fruit, they have no meaning. They are not fulfilling their destiny. There is no meaning to their lives. They may be branches. They may even be enjoying the tree, but they are not doing anything.

### **2. Shepherd**

The other thing is shepherding. You know, we are here to shepherd the Lord's lambs, the Lord's sheep, the Lord's flock, the Lord's people.

This shepherding is very much for the building up of the Lord's Body. Whereas fruit-bearing is to gain the increase, to gain materials for the growth of the Lord's Body, shepherding is to edify the flock and build them up.

### **3. Perfecting**

I will go beyond fruit-bearing and shepherding. There is actually a third thing that, in these days, I am deeply burdened about, and we are very short in. That is perfecting. Perfecting is more than just shepherding people, feeding, and nurturing. Perfecting is to perfect people into their function, into usefulness as a vessel in the Lord's hands, to build up the church and to accomplish God's purpose. These are the things we do in the church life. It should not just be attending meetings or doing some services, which we do, and we all need to do. We all need to go to the meetings faithfully. We all need to serve in this or that. But if we just do those things without bearing fruit, without shepherding anyone, without perfecting others, I must say we only have at the most a 50% church life, maybe less. What are we doing here? Are we just for ourselves, just for ourselves to be overcomers, just for ourselves to be rich and mature? No, that will not satisfy the Lord.

### **Walking and Serving**

Romans talks about walking in newness of life (6:4). That is just one side, the life side. After we are baptized, we grow in the likeness of His death, and we also grow in the likeness of His resurrection by walking in newness of life. We walk by Christ, we live by Christ as our life, forsaking our old kind of living, our old kind of life on the other side of the grave, on the other side of the "baptistery," if you will. But there is another verse that says, "we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter" (7:6). So here, not only is there the walking in newness of life, but there is also the serving in newness of spirit. Paul was balanced. Our Christian life is not just our daily walk: what about our Christian service? What about our service?

One day when the Lord judges us at His judgment seat, it will not just be according to life, it will be according to service. That is why you have Matthew chapter 25 with those two famous parables. There is not just the parable of the ten virgins, wise and foolish, which pertains to their being filled with the Spirit in their vessels, in their souls, so they would be qualified to participate in that wedding feast in the coming millennial. But there is the other balancing parable of the three slaves. You cannot just be a virgin. We are all virgin-slaves. We are all slave-virgins. There is a double duty here, a double status. There is a compound status here that we all possess.

Strong words were spoken in that second parable. Regardless of how many talents we have been given, we are to use them and to gain 100% increase, doubling the talent(s) that we have been given. The last slave did not do that, but hid the talent in the earth, the earth being the world. This is a Christian that is buried in the world, burying his talent, serving the world. One day, there will be a reckoning at the judgment seat by his or her master: Where is the return? Where is the interest? You should have at least put it in some savings account, even at a terribly low interest rate, at least put it in there and get some interest. You hid it and did not even invest it. If you put it even in some low-risk investment, there would have been at least some return especially, if you compound the interests. The slave did not earn any interest. So what happened? The master said, "Cast out the useless slave to a place with gnashing of teeth, and you will miss the joy of the Lord." Brother Lee often used this to warn us again and again in the most serious way. If we do not take these things seriously, there is nothing I can say. We must take the Bible – especially the Lord's own words, seriously; we have to be balanced.

Saints, I tell you, we are at a kind of threshold in the US. We cannot go on in the same way. There is a need for a breakthrough in the churches. Now, I am not saying or expecting every saint to do this, but there should be a percentage. I hope all of you in this fellowship would be part of that percentage: one out of four saints, one of three saints,

two out of five saints, or one out of two saints in a church that would pay the price, that would be serious with the Lord, that would mean business. That will be the Zion in Jerusalem. That will change things around. Otherwise, we will just be like Christianity. We have more meetings than most denominations, which is good. We definitely have a lot more truth than they have, which also is good. We have conferences and trainings all year round supplying us. That is wonderful. This coming training is going to be marvelous – it will be on Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. You might have seen Brother Ed Marks' fellowship or Brother Ron say something to encourage us saints to join this training. This is going to be a very important training and a very good one. It is on taking the land and gaining the right persons in Canaan that would be useful in bringing forth Christ in His first coming in incarnation.

### **Our Deficiency**

So we have all these things, but there is a big “but” in the recovery, in the churches, we are not adequate, we are short, we are deficient, in gaining increase, in bearing fruit, in shepherding, and in perfecting. The church should not just be rich in life, the church should be strong in numbers. The church should not just be prevailing in life, the church should be prevailing in size. It should be. I am not talking about becoming some mega church. I am not talking about that. You may say that if you combine all the local churches in this country, we are somewhat the size of a mega church with 25,000 saints. That is a mega church, except we are not in a single city or congregation. We are spread out, as the Lord would have it according to the Bible to have many local churches. But that number has been stagnant for decades, for many years. Do you not think, brothers and sisters, that there should be 50,000 saints in the US, rather than just 25,000? Should there not be 100,000 saints in the US, rather than 25,000? Well, what do you think? I think so. And I think there are that many people that the Lord has chosen. There are so many seekers who are still out there looking for reality. I believe this. But it is up to us what we will do, what we saints in the church life will do.

This burden is very heavy. I really pray that we will not just repeat an old church life. Let us serve in newness of spirit, for the growth in life in our daily living. Our need is the newness of life. For service, for function, for activity, we need the newness of spirit. We have no other energy source, but the Spirit. That is why we need to pray. That is why we need to become vital. That is why we need to be living and active by the Spirit. So I hope that these days saints, we would really lay hold of the Spirit, touch the Spirit, have much and thorough prayer, and even be filled in spirit, not just inwardly, but even outwardly. I hope that the Spirit would revive us, enliven us, vitalize us, and energize us, so that we would all become the energizing priests of the gospel. This is the need today.

### **Ministry Portions on Fruit-Bearing**

Now, I'm going to just read from some of the portions that I have collected on fruit-bearing today, straight from Brother Lee's fellowship. I don't think there could be anything better than that. A lot of these things I have actually shared already, but I'd like to just read these words today.

"The primary thing that every serving one in the church must do is to bring forth fruit." It cannot be more clear, more succinct than that. It's not just to take care of projects and things. We do need to arrange the hall, clean the hall, and sell the books. We need to do that, but that is not the primary thing. The primary thing is that we need to bring forth fruit. Just like two persons who get married. Marriage is not just for enjoyment. It is enjoyment, but marriage is to bring forth a family. It is to bring forth offspring, to bring forth fruit, and to beget and have children. Similarly, for the church. I hope we will not forget this primary thing. We're here in our city, in our church, to bring forth fruit. If you have this view, you will just set your life that way. You will pray that way. You will organize everything. You'll schedule everything to do just that.

### **Be Fruitful and Multiply**

I continue to read: “The Lord Jesus said that we believers are the branches of the vine, and the branches of this vine are for bearing fruit. God first created one man, that's Adam. But He desired to have many men for His purpose. Therefore God said ‘be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth’ (Genesis 1:22).”

The first word God gave to the created man or rather the first blessing God gave to man was to be fruitful, to multiply. That's it. God wanted Adam to replenish the whole earth, to fill this whole earth with little Adams, with little created men. God wanted man created in His image and likeness for His corporate expression. God had the thought; they are all to be vessels to receive My life and to express Me. That's Genesis one, brothers and sisters. That's the original intent of God in His creation of the human: Be fruitful.

According to this verse, the primary responsibility Adam bore was to reproduce. That is the primary responsibility we all have. Just to enjoy the Lord and to grow is a bit selfish. It's a bit irresponsible. Our responsibility is to reproduce. “Lord,” we have to pray, “what about this? I haven't produced, I haven't reproduced myself. When will I do this? Lord, I must do this. Help me to do this. It's not normal that I don't reproduce. It's just me.”

### **Candles Lighting Other Candles**

Brother Watchman Nee used a famous little analogy. He said, we're just like a wax candles with finite time. Of course, the candle's job is to give light. There is no doubt about that. He said, the candle, while in its lifetime, should not just give forth light, but should go around to light many other candles. Yes, as the children of light, we're here to give forth light. Yes, we are here to do that, to testify of Christ. But that's not good enough. When this candle of yours and mine burns out, then where are the other candles? In our lifetime, we have to light many other candles so that even when we are burned out, others will continue to burn. And that light will continue. That divine light will continue to burn and give light on the earth.



Likewise, we Christians are charged to bear fruit, all other matters in the Christian life are for this. Your growth, your salvation, your enjoyment of the Lord and mine is for this. In the end, it's not just for you, it's not just for me, it's for bearing fruit. We read the Bible because we must bear fruit. We pray because we must bear fruit. And we are victorious in overcoming because we must bear fruit. Everything is for fruit bearing.

### **Materials for the Building**

If we do not have fruit-bearing, we cannot have the increase. And if we do not have the increase, we cannot build up the Body of Christ. We are the materials for that building. So the prophet Haggai charged the selfish Israelites, asking, where's My house? You are in your sealed houses, but where's My house? Go to the mountain and gain wood and build My house. I need a house. I need a place to live. You are okay. You have your house, but what about mine? Where are the materials? Go to the mountains and bring wood and build My house, that I will have a dwelling place on the earth.

What about that brothers and sisters? We say we're here to build up the Body of Christ. What does that mean? That doesn't just mean that I grow in life, or that we are just built up together. That's good, and we need that. But where are the materials that will cause this building to grow? It says in Ephesians 2, this building is "growing into a holy temple in the Lord." (Eph 2:21) This is an organic growing building, increasing in size and in volume. Where are the additional materials for this building?

### **Chosen**

John 15:16(a) says, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain." We've been talking much regarding this verse. The word here about choosing is important. It is very clear. You didn't choose Me, but I chose you before the foundation of the world. We've been selected, marked out, predestinated. We've been chosen.

### **Set or Grafted into Christ**

But right after that, He said, “and I set you, that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain.” (John 15:16) Now, this is not just to be chosen and to be saved. No, this is chosen to be set. The Lord chose us so that He could set us, that we would go forth and bear fruit. The word set is a strong word.

I think in the one of the footnotes, Brother Lee said this really proves the thought of grafting. We're all grafted into this rich tree. We're from a poor tree, but thank the Lord, we've been grafted into Christ as the fat tree. And this word set has something to do with that thought. We were set; we've been grafted into Christ. It is not just that the Lord appointed us or arranged something for us, but that He has set us. This is our destiny. According to this verse, the destiny of the lovers of Christ is to bear fruit. Do we not love the Lord Jesus? I believe we all do. What's our destiny? Our destiny is to bear fruit for Christ.

### **Pruned to Bear Fruit**

According to John 15, fruit bearing is not an easy thing. The vine suffers for many months before its season comes to bear fruit. The Lord didn't say that bearing fruit was easy. Mostly when we read John 15, we stop at verse 17. That's the first half of John 15 about the branches and the vine and all that. But John 15 has some more verses from verse 18 to the end. Do you know what that talks about? That talks about the world hating us, the world persecuting us. It speaks of the world hating Jesus, the world even hating the Father Himself. He said all this will happen. But then He also said, at the end of this chapter, that the Comforter, the Spirit of reality, will still come to comfort us in all these trials and in all these persecutions. What's the point? The point is this: today, for us to bear fruit, we have to go through certain things. Just like the branch, it needs to be not so much shaped for good looks but pruned. A vine tree is never for looks. Instead, they're pruned. For what? For only one thing, so that they can bear more fruit when the season comes.

What's the point brothers and sisters? The point is this: even our

sufferings, even the trials and tribulation that befall us, in the end, is for fruit. How about that thought? Why do we suffer? Well, you might say, we suffer so that we can be transformed, so that we can be mature. That's true. But like I said, there's a balance. There's another way to look at it and that is that even our suffering is so that there will be fruit.

Childbearing is a great suffering to a woman, to a female. That's why some females don't want to have children. It's a suffering. The suffering is not only in the delivery room, in the hospital, but it's in the raising of a child. It's a lot of suffering and mothers all know that to bring forth a life and to nurture a life and to grow that life, is a suffering. But if you say I don't want that suffering, then you will have no fruit. Even what we pass through, the “all things that work together,” really is for God's purpose in bearing much fruit for Him.

### **Going Forth**

The Lord then says in John 15:16, to go forth. The Greek word for go forth means to depart, to physically depart. Go forth implies to leave for another place. Hence, it's rendered go forth. That means we need to get up out of our chair. That means we need to leave our house, our comfort zone. That means we have to go somewhere. Like those saints who migrated, they went forth from the west coast to the east coast. They went forth from one country to another. That is what it means to go forth. To bear fruit, we need to go forth.

Even in our city, even where we are, brothers and sisters, we must have a going forth church life. We should not just have a coming together church life. We have that, but how about the balance? We should have a going forth church life also, a church life that reaches out, a church life that contacts people. To go out just once or twice, even 30 or 40 times will not work. You may say that's a lot of times, but even that is not enough.

You see, we give up so easily. We go once or twice, and when nothing happens, we just give up and forget about it. Dear ones, that's where

we've failed. We give up. If we respect our destiny, if we are sympathetic to the Lord's interest, if we are responsible to the Lord's selection, we cannot just do it once or twice. We have to keep going and going. We have to keep contacting people, visiting people, meeting with people, taking care of them, praying for them, shepherding them, and teaching them. You just have to keep going.

So our church life is on one leg—it comes together. But that's just one leg. The other leg must be there, and it's called going forth. The lockdown is almost over, right? Society is going back to normal. I hope this would have meaning for us. That is, we would not just go back to the normal times and go back to some meetings. That's good. Many churches are now starting to do that, at least having some hybrid meetings. This morning, we started to do that here in Irvine. But we must consider whether going back to normal is just for us to go to meetings? I don't think so. It's so that we can go out and meet people in person.

### **Laboring Persistently**

We should keep going out to preach the gospel for a complete year, regardless of whether we bear fruit or not. Even if there apparently is no fruit, brothers and sisters, we should still go. A quote by Brother Lee says: "I do not expect that you will gain one person every year, but I expect and have the full assurance that within three years, you will gain at least one." How about that? Not one a year, but how about one every three years? But this can only happen if during those three years, we keep going.

We go by prayer. We go by our offerings. We especially go with our bodies and time to contact people, the saints, sinners, and the seekers. Lord, give me a fruit every two or three years. That's the right prayer to pray. The Lord's desire is for remaining fruit. The problem is that we have never built up a habit to labor persistently over a long period of time.

We are drowned in the US in a fast-food culture. Everything has to be

instant gratification. Anything that takes a little longer we are unhappy with. But anything that is quick is usually not that valuable. Anything solid, and meaningful, and valuable takes time to build and acquire. It takes labor.

We are too “magical” in our thoughts, too “miraculous” in our thinking. The way to bear fruit is not miraculous. It takes nine months in the womb for a lady to have a child, and so many years to grow up. That's labor, but that's also remaining fruit. I can assure all the saints in the churches that they will be successful if they will be faithful to go out for two or three hours every week. In my list to you, I said two or three hours every month. But let's say it's three hours a month, that still would be 45 minutes a week. How about we start there? We can pray, Lord I give you 45 minutes a week, I schedule it in my schedule. Those 45 minutes are for nothing but to contact people, to shepherd people, to preach the gospel.

Over a long period of time, in a habitual way, week after week, while the saints are practicing this, they will learn many things. The more we practice, the more we learn: how to speak to people, what to say, what not to say. We will learn, but if you don't contact people, we will never learn. We learn by doing. This means the more we do this, the more we will be good at this.

### **Learning by Doing**

If we do not contact people, we will never learn. We learn by doing. This means the more we do this, the more we will be good at this. There is an art to contacting people and having a conversation. There are a lot of things to learn - how to make yourself approachable, how to endear yourself to others, how to feed people in a progressive way and not drown them in so many riches. There's a verse that says, “you shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk” (Exo. 23:19). Many of us have made that mistake. We drowned the kids by too much milk. We need to learn how to feed a little lamb according to its need, not too much and not too little. We need to learn how to be patient, how to have

one-on-one appointments, how to take care of the lambs' human needs and problems, how to help them to pray, how to help them to read the Bible, how to help them to be baptized, how to help them to be consecrated, and so forth. There is a lot to learn in how to bear fruit and how to raise a child, and it only comes by practice, not by reading a book. Again, the key word is exercise and practice.

### **A Simple Way to Bear Remaining Fruit**

We all need to practice a simple way to bear remaining fruit (*Elder's Training*, Book 10: "The Eldership and the God-ordained Way (2)", Chapter 9). I gave you those 12 points which are just a sample. It is not legal, but I think it's helpful. "First, we need to make a vow to the Lord," I continue to read Brother Lee's words, "to give Him two or three hours per week to contact people for their salvation." I say start with 45 minutes.

### **Solid Morning Times with the Lord**

"Second," he said, we need to be revived day by day by the Lord. We have *The Holy Word for Morning Revival*, and so many other available materials, "help the saints to be revived by the Lord every morning." So even our morning revival, dear saints, is not just for us merely to enjoy the Lord, but for us to be quickened and enlivened by Him, and for us to become vitalized so we will not be a dead Christian but activated and energized, so we can be effective and living to bear fruit. "The most effective way to live the Christian life," Brother Lee said, "is by having a vital, living, active morning time with the Lord." Morning revival with the Lord is very important. I hope our morning time with the Lord is not donuts and coffee, quick but unhealthy. I hope our morning times are all solid, eating nutritious food, bathing in the Lord's word, enjoying His presence, and becoming really energized within. That is vital. If we do this daily, we will be vital Christians, vital brothers and sisters in the church. "We should get two verses from the Scripture to live on every day and then contact people for the Lord in a definite way." Now you see, even these 12 points I gave you are very much based on Brother Lee's speaking here and there. Just take

two verses every day to live by: chew them, masticate them, be supplied and nourished, then we contact people in a definite way.

### **Scheduled Time**

Then he said the next thing is that we “need to plan and schedule our time” to personally contact people every week. If we don't make a plan, nothing will happen. The week just flies by and nothing happens because nothing is scheduled. Fruit bearing for a branch in the vine is not an inspirational activity. It is a scheduled thing. Make a decision and tell the Lord you will spend two or three hours every week in the Gospel, contacting people one by one personally and directly. We are not talking about going to the street corner and speaking to many people or having a stadium campaign. We are talking about each one of us just talking to one person, by zoom or by phone, in person, directly.

We have been talking about this a lot, but I find this is the most difficult thing to help the saints to do. I pray that the Lord will lead you, teach you, and give you the wisdom in planning, in scheduling your time, in making appointments, and in talking to people. There are too many candidates and persons in our small universe that the Lord has arranged that we can contact in this way. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom on how to plan your week, how to schedule your time, and how to talk to people, so that you can contact two or three individuals per week. The two or three individuals could even be a saint. How about a saint that is weak, that is kind of dormant, that is not meeting much? You know this person and you have a relationship there. How about picking up a burden for him or for her? How about a young person in the church? How about the high schoolers and college age? There are so many people we can contact if we have a heart and if we have set time to do that.

There is something called office hours, a professor stays in a room with an open door and the students would know where to find him. How about we all have this 45-minute to an hour “office hour,” “fruit

bearing hour,” “gospel hour,” or “shepherding hour,” - a set time, where we will meet other people and contact other people every week. You will see what will happen if you do that.

### **Make a List of People and Study Their Situation**

“We should make a list of our acquaintances and study their situation. Then we can labor on them according to our study. This is the way to gain the proper persons.” Make a list of the people you know. Don't be afraid to write down their names. Then you consider each of their situations which are all diverse and different. We need to know their situations and where they are. Are they open right now or not? What is going on in their lives? You study their situations. This all takes a real heart, a real burden.

The gospel is not just a side thing. People are the only thing, the main thing, in the church life. I told all of you many months ago, we need to switch from a meeting-centered church life to a people-centered church life. We still meet, but we focus on people. Even when we go to the meetings, some people just show up and then leave. How about going to a meeting to meet the saints and to sit down with a saint after the meeting. Don't go home right away. After the meeting, take them out for a cup of coffee. It is about people, brothers and sisters, lift up your eyes, it's about people.

There are just too many people waiting for us to labor on them – those with whom you are acquainted directly or indirectly, relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues, classmates, etc. Too many people are waiting for us and are available to us. The problem is not with a scarcity of people but with the scarcity of our time. In other words, we are not available. People are available all day long, but we are not. Pray to the Lord to get a proper candidate for your labor, that He may show you the vital way to bring them to Him. Pray to the Lord, “Lord, I don't know how to contact this person, but I have a great burden for him or for her. Lord, show me the right way.” Pray this kind of prayer, ask the Lord this way, and see if the Lord will lead you or not. I believe He will.



He will anoint you and guide you, and he will even arrange circumstances for you to meet with this person. Pray and trust in prayers.

### **Get a Companion**

You can start by yourself and then get a companion to labor with you. That is the two-and-threes. We cannot last that long by ourselves, but if we have another one, two, or three, we can help one another, strengthen one another, and be accountable to one another. That is a great help. However, even to find that one or two, you need to go forth. Do not just sit there and wait for people to contact you. You need to go forth and find some saints and burden them in a similar way and help them to be vitalized. This is the church life.

### **Use Bibles for America Tools for the Gospel**

Redeem your time to pray for them, write them letters or emails, send them booklets, and make appointments to go visit them. Look, today we have all these tools BFA is offering on the gospel page. You can send them a tract, a post, all kinds of videos and things. You can cut and paste and put it in your emails. We have an abundance of tools, brothers and sisters, use them.

I told you there is a brother in the West Coast. He is a leading brother, and he would take half an hour two days of the week, at seven o'clock in the morning before going to work. He has a list of seventy people, all kinds of people, and he will use that time to write texts and emails, especially write emails to them. At the end of the email, he will always have a prayer, and then he would attach something from Bibles for America.

### **Laboring in a Personal Way for the Increase of the Church**

We need to labor in a personal way for the increase of the church. Don't trust in the big meetings, trust in your personal labor. "We must make a strong decision to labor in a personal way for the increase of the church." The key word is personal. Do not try to bring people into

the meeting so quickly. Be with them personally. Make it so personal. “We need ‘new blood,’ newly saved ones. All the local churches must pay attention to this. The only rescue for us is to change our way so that we can gain the increase.” The increase of the churches is the key point for us today. Brother Lee was repeating himself. We need to change our way to gain increase. Our church life needs a change, a revolution. “What we need today is the proper increase due to our labor. If we labor faithfully, we will see the result.”

### **Exercise Discernment in Preaching the Gospel**

“As we are preaching the gospel, we should learn to exercise our discernment concerning whether a person will be difficult to gain or not. If we discern that the environment, the family, and so forth would make it difficult to gain someone, we should not invest our time in that person.” (*The Exercise and Practice of the God-ordained Way*, Chapter 22). You see, if you have the experience in helping people and contacting people, you will know what he's talking about here. Some are on the front burners, and some should be on the back burners. Some are ready and some are not quite ready. There is a matter of time and a matter of the sovereign situation for someone to be ready to be saved. We need to discern the environment and we need to study the person. I hope all of this, brothers and sisters, would become something so incredibly interesting to you. People are very interesting if you have a heart for them.

### **Building Up a Habit**

“We should always have two or three gospel candidates under our care” (*Elders' Training, Book 11: "The Eldership and the God-ordained Way (3)," Chapter 8*). “If we have close relatives, we should spend our time, heart, and energy on them.” Family is always a good place to start, extended family, in-laws, cousins, uncles, relatives, because you know them already and they are warm doors. “We must visit those under our care at least once a week.” Now that you have gained someone and touched someone, you need to care for them at least once a week. “A nursing mother must feed her little ones regularly. In

the same way, we must visit the new ones again and again.” It could be in their place, at a Starbucks, in the park, in your home, by inviting them to dinner or tea, you work out all these environments and situations so you can feed them, so you can inject them with something of Christ.

### **Contact People Directly, Personally, and Continually**

“We need to contact people directly, personally, and continually to bear remaining fruit” (*Elder’s Training, Book 10: “The Eldership and the God-ordained Way (2),” Chapter 9*). I like these three words – directly, personally and continually, to bear remaining fruit. “We should each make a decision to get one person saved for the church life every year.” Brother Lee says eventually, one every three years. There should be a regular, seasonal bearing of fruit. “The most basic, crucial, and vital thing is for us to bring forth children. To bring forth spiritual children, we must make a serious decision to contact people directly.” “The reason why we do not bear fruit is because we do not practice contacting people directly, personally, and faithfully.” “We should practice selecting and taking care of three people. We should go to see each of them at least once a week. We just need to go to them continually.” These numbers are not legal; it depends on your availability and your capacity. If you feel overwhelmed, let’s start small – start with five or ten names and start to take care of just one or two. Just start there. We should practice. “We may feel that we do not know how to perfect people, but we all can go to them. We should focus our attention on going to see people and letting them see us. This practice will bring in the increase.”

### **Joy**

Lastly, just one word – joy. Today I was just thinking about this matter of joy. The Lord is our joy and there is no doubt about that. To be filled with the Spirit is simply to be filled with joy. But I remember in Thessalonians and in other places, Paul said that you are our glory and crown and boasting before the Lord. One reason we are short of joy is not just that we are short of Christ or the Spirit, but because we are

short of people that we have begotten, short of people we are nursing and shepherding, and bringing forth as fruit. We are short of these ones and therefore our Christian life is devoid of that full joy. John 15 says we should bear fruit that our joy may be made full. I pray that in all of the GTCA churches, we will really live a true, joyful life, filled in the spirit, by caring for different ones. One day at the Lord's judgment seat, we will have joy, and we will have a crown and that is the ones we cared for, and we will have a boast even before the Lord because these ones that we have gained will be our boast before Him.