

Practice These Things

Fellowship from Minoru Chen on November 14, 2021

The Need in the Recovery Today is Practice

Today I would like to make this whole session a Q&R time so that we can have some back and forth here. With all the speaking that has been going on in these Lord's Day afternoon times of fellowship, the burden is very simple, that we would not only be impressed or even convicted by this fellowship, but that we would practice and do these things, as I have said this repeatedly. This is a big matter – to translate burden into action, to translate theory into practice, to translate knowledge into experience. There is a gap between what we take in, what we know, what we apprehend, and even what we appreciate and with what we actually do, how we live, and how we carry out things in a practical way.

Repeatedly, Brother Lee said that the revival is, simply put, a group of God's people who put into practice what they have seen as revelation. That constitutes a revival. A true revival is when we begin, maybe not doing it in an adequate or complete way initially, but at least we begin, to put into practice the things that we hear. That is the beginning of a revival, and eventually that kind of working, practice, and doing of the things that we have learned will build up a visible model of the concept that we have.

From Concept to Reality

I am an architect by training. As a designer, I may have this concept about a building. I study the site, I study the environment, I study the program, and I have a certain artistic inclination and theory. All these things are put together by me when designing a building. Then what I

do is to build a small model as a replica of the real thing, and I subject this little model to some tests. For example, I would put a light here resembling the sun and the movement of the sun, then I study the shadows, then I begin to realize certain things are working and certain things are not, so I make adjustments. That model is a piece of work itself. It is part of the design process. Not just drawing, but by using a three-dimensional model, it aids me in my design until I come up with something that is appealing and satisfactory to me, functionally, visually, aesthetically, and programmatically. Eventually I would put all these into drawings and then the contractor would take it and build this building according to that model. But to translate something from my mind to paper and eventually into a little model, there's a distance there. A lot of times it is hard to put the first line on the paper, but you must do that. Until that happens, it is just a concept. It could be a fantastic one, but it is just a concept, and no one knows what it looks like except for me in my head.

Brothers, we must bridge concept with reality. We must bridge theory with practice. We must bridge the biblical truth with experience. If we don't do that, that gap will always remain there. There is a wonderful idea, but no one can see it, no one can touch it, no one can appreciate it, and no one can do something with it, because it's non-existent. When you do something, that's when you realize this works but that doesn't work; this is a fantastic idea, but it couldn't be built for this or that reason; then you change, you adjust, you learn, and you improve to make that concept buildable and workable. What we are facing in the recovery is always the challenge of this translation. It is easy to talk, to agree with the idea, and even espouse the idea, but the idea must be executed, and then it can be copied or used in a greater way so more people can enjoy it and take advantage of that.

The church is the same. In eternity past, God had a wonderful concept that sprang from His good pleasure and His heart's desire, turned into His will and council, and then He would devise an economy, a plan to work that out. All that in eternity past was there. You can read that in

Ephesians 1 where the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the whole Divine Trinity were involved. However, all that won't happen until one day, God Himself stepped out of eternity into time and became a man. That's when it started to happen. That's when the model started to be built. God had to take action, coming from the heavens to the earth. If that did not happen, it was still just a wonderful, eternal plan of God. God had to become a man and live thirty-three and a half years of human life, go through death, resurrection, ascension, and become the Spirit indwelling us. All these activities the Triune God took in the person of the Son. The Father planned and willed but the Son accomplished, and then whatever was accomplished by the Son, eventually the Spirit applied and transmitted right into us, and we became the beneficiaries of God's plan, and we became part of God's plan, and the church came forth, the Body of Christ. My point is that in these days, the need in the recovery is practice, so I keep saying Paul's word to Timothy, "practice these things" and Paul's word to the Philippians, practice these things, what you have learned from me, heard from me, seen of me, go practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Overcome the Fear of Failure

We think we cannot do it because of many reasons. One reason is the fear of failure, which keeps a lot of people from taking a step in life. Taking any kind of step to do something always involves a risk. If you don't want any risk, you don't do anything, but even doing nothing is taking a risk, isn't it? When we take a step, for example, you walk out the door, you're taking a risk, you don't know what you will step into, there could be a pothole or a car could hit you. However, if you don't take that risk, you will never go out and you would never do anything. This is the need today. We talked about our need to be vitalized, we need to be living an active, but all of that is to get us in shape, so that we would be in a condition that we will be alive and vital to walk, to move, and to do something, and to practice something. That takes vitality. But if we are vital and we don't do anything, then that vitality is for nothing, and that vitality will not bear any fruit. Vitality is to

propel us, to motivate us, to equip us to do something.

James the apostle, as much as this brother was a bit fuzzy about God's New Testament economy, straddling between the Old Testament and the New, had a good word. He said just to hear the word is not enough, just to receive the word is not enough, we need to do the word. In that parable in the Gospels about building the house on the rock or on the sand, the one who built the house on the rock is the one who heard the word, who heeded the word, and he did something. He "walked the talk", so to speak. He put into practice what he heard. God is not a God of thought. God is a God of action. God is a God of tremendous activity. He is living, He is moving, and He is working. He is a God who operates in us, the willing and working of His good pleasure. We are supposed to work out our own salvation, and that means we need to do something to experience and enjoy that daily practical salvation.

Take Action

Brothers and sisters, I've been speaking for so many months, Lord's Day after Lord's Day, my question to you is, have you started practicing? How much are you practicing? I am not asking how much you have succeeded or failed, to me that's another matter, but I am asking if you have begun to do something. Just as an example, we talked about the need to have a time to repent and confess. Have you done that? Was it just a thought, did you just say amen because that was wonderful, or have you personally set aside time in the Lord's presence to confess your sins, to repent, to allow the light to shine, and to be convicted? Did you do that? We were also talking about our need to have vital companions. Have you tried that? Have you done that? Or was it just a good meeting that we were talking about that? Until we do things, we won't know whether something works or not. In your head, it is only dreaming. Everything works in your head, but when you do something, you will find out this doesn't work, or that works, then you learn, and by doing, you do it again, and you improve, and eventually you will succeed. The Lord doesn't need to go through

trial and error, but we are not the Lord. We are human beings. We need to learn our way forward. This is really my burden. There has been so much spoken and so much in the books. I hope that starting with your personal life, and then the church life, you begin to take action.

Right now, in the church in Charlotte, we're going to take action to build up the group life, a new church in Charlotte that is group based, home based, day to day and house to house. Charlotte now is not a small church. It is a sizable church, and it has people who recently migrated and local saints. People are all in different places. We asked ourselves, should we just wait? I told the brothers, no, we don't wait, we should just start, and we take a step, and that step will inform us how we should adjust, change, and improve things. If we don't do anything, we will just sit there and never know and nothing will happen either. So this has been very practical.

The Bible is not a book of doctrine and theology, nor a book of concepts or ideas or even just revelation and vision. The Bible is a book of action. The Bible is a book full of doings, full of the move of the Triune God and His people. So I will say brothers, do not fear. Take courage and have a mindset that is not afraid of risks. Have such a mindset, with prayer to do what we have heard, to live out and work out these things that we have read, and have heard, that are so precious and rich and wonderful.

Visible Progress

In this practice, don't aim for the moon. Take one step at a time. Take small steps. Take baby steps. But you move. You do something and have patience and endurance. Don't expect instant results or even quick results, rather, trust in the inner operation the Spirit to supply you to continue in your endeavor in your practice.

What we need today in the recovery are testimonies, stories, examples, and patterns of actual practice of these things. And when

there are certain results, I tell you, that is a practical encouragement. Paul told Timothy, practice these things so that your progress would be seen, would be manifested. That means visible progress. Paul wanted visible progress in Timothy, a progress that saints could see. Nothing is more convincing than that. I would rather say less and do more, speak less and practice more, because this is our need today. And look, we are here, ten churches, so many saints. Let's just take one another on, shall we? We are here in one accord. No one is here to criticize if you make a mistake. No. We are all trying. We are all learning. We are all practicing together. There is a lot of support here.

Questions and Responses

I will just say this much. If you have some questions about your practice, we can have some fellowship about that.

Question regarding Companionship

In my experience of trying to practice in the twos and threes, I have been meeting with a brother for a certain period of time. Although we set aside a daily time, I'm seeing that when I don't take the lead, he won't be there. He normally will come maybe once a week and he will have excuses on the other days. Should I consider this brother as a vital companion?

Response: Be Purposeful

This sounds to me that this brother is not a vital companion. I'm not saying this in a derogatory way to say that this brother is no good. I don't know why he is not vitalized. It may be that this brother is not ready, or not that open, or maybe you are not giving him the right help to be vitalized.

Vital companionship is not a buddy system. You should not be looking for a couple of brothers just to say these are my buddies and we hang out at Starbucks. Although you may meet in Starbucks, this is not the point of the meeting in twos and threes. It is not just about hanging out, shooting the breeze, or talking only of how things are going.

Initially, you may need to spend some time getting to know one another because we do need to know one another and be blended. But meeting in twos and threes is a purposeful thing. When you read Matthew 18, you see the practice of the twos and threes is very purposeful. It speaks of two or three gathered into My name (Matt 18:20), two or three praying in one accord (Matt 18:19), two or three going to shepherd a sinful brother (Matt 18:15-16). These are all mission-oriented, they have a purpose. They aren't just hanging out.

Even the enjoyment of Christ's presence is not just a hanging out, during this time you fellowship, pray, and exercise your spirit, in order to experience the Lord's presence. I don't know the brother you're meeting with, but if this brother is not ready, then you should go find someone else as the Lord leads. Or the Lord may lead you to have some deeper fellowship with this brother and say, "Brother, this is not happening. It does not work this way." Since I'm not there, I don't know whether this person is one you are trying to shepherd or restore. But when we talk about the kind of vital companions that are needed, we mean for you to vitalized, then you vitalize another one, and then you join together maybe even with a third one, and together you have a purpose. This purpose includes coming together to pray. It is a very important thing for two or three to come together and pray. Pray for an increase in the recovery, for new ones, for some certain saints and the people that you're burdened with, with a view to gaining these people. This time is not for sitting around to talk and hang out.

I cannot tell you what to do but, after a period of time in your efforts with this brother, you have to evaluate. I am not saying that you should not be with this brother, or that you should not help this brother. However, it sounds to me like he's not ready or available, that his heart is not revived. If the Lord leads you accordingly, you should help him of course. But any kind of commission, brothers and sisters, is deliberate with a burden to gain people. You might have a burden to meet with that brother to become companions together. These are very deliberate things. We in the recovery and in the church life have

become quite general. We have the feeling that, I love everybody, I'll come to all the meetings, but nothing much happens because I'm just kind of here. When you're just a body in the church life, nothing much will happen through you. Thank the Lord, you're faithful and in the meetings you're supportive. But in terms of action and doings that will advance the church life and gain people, nothing is happening if you're just there. We need a breakthrough in this area and for this reason, we need to be more vital. You might start with just having a morning time with a brother that you are burdened to vitalize. The morning time is a process to help this person to touch the Lord and be vitalized which is very purposeful. It's a kind of shepherding but it is also a kind of vitalizing.

Be Specifically Burdened

We have a song that tells us to be done with generality and be specific for reality (Hymn #1178). With a brother like this, it may be that you are not desperate enough to pray for him. If you arrange to meet with him on a Wednesday, but he doesn't show up, and you just say we'll try again the next week, you need to examine whether you have become desperate for this brother. You must pray for him and struggle for him. Go to the Lord and say, "Lord, gain this brother. Lord, what about his consecration? Lord, he needs to go on, he cannot stay like this." Paul said he struggled for every man, to exhort, to admonish, and to present every man. That's not hanging out. Paul doesn't hang out with people. Paul worked on people because he had a burden. He fought for them. If we just go to the meetings and serve a little bit here and there and that's our whole church life, then our church life is ineffectual. There's just not much happening. It has become a routine, something mechanical, something we're doing perfunctorily and we're repeating it with no progress or advance. The church will not increase or get stronger, and the meetings will not get higher and richer. It is just the same as it has been so for way too long. Brothers and sisters, we have to break this cycle. Now, we don't expect every saint in the church to be like that. That's why it has to start with some that are truly vitalized. And for that you have to

receive a burden from the Lord.

You have to begin to take action. Your need for companions is vitally important. Even if you are vitalized, two is better than one as we see in Ecclesiastes. The three-fold chord is not easily broken. We need that mutual support, and we need it to be mission specific. It is not hanging out and having a buddy. The purpose is to vitalize, to bear fruit, to gain people and to build up the church.

Testimony: Praying with My Companion

Praise the Lord saints. I have a very positive testimony to share. Another brother and I have been practicing to be a vital group and I've been very convicted in a positive way. I had a tendency to minimize my prayer. This brother stops me in my tracks and says, "Brother, we need to pray." And we pray about everything. This brother's action has affected my private life. I've gotten to the place where I practice praying more and more. This has brought my prayer life to another level. That's a positive thing that I really enjoy and I'm so hopeful and thankful that we can practice this way. I am expecting results. We're praying according to the Lord's burden, His heart's desire, not just general things, but about very specific matters. This is very doable. The church life needs this. We've got to get through. Praise the Lord, amen.

Response: Take the Life Way

Very good brother. Someone has to take action. The brother says, "Brother, let's pray." Even if you don't like to pray or you don't want to pray, but eventually you pray. From the prayer something begins to happen, you become vitalized, your prayer is brought to a deeper level, you have an increased appetite for prayer. And then the sparks start to fly. You enter into much and thorough prayer, which is one of those five things. Then the Lord will start laying on your heart some burdens for people, the saints, seekers, colleagues, and friends. You become burdened and then you pray even more, and then you will take action as the Lord leads you to contact those people. That's how it works. It seems slow but brothers this is the life way. Amen. Thank

you for the testimonial brother.

Question regarding Gaining a Vitalized Companion

I'd like to bring out that point our brother shared. I have been praying with a couple of brothers, it's been here and there but we just got busy. I also pray with my wife, and we try to visit the saints and pray for the saints. The aspect that you mentioned about being strong with each other and praying for one another, I feel like maybe I'm vital, but I need to pray for the ones that I'm praying with to also become vital, or to have that burning for the Lord. But the enemy uses his wearing-down tactics. It's easy to get busy at work because you have to get things done. It's not easy to get your prayer times in all the time, it's very sporadic. I feel like the matter of having more prayer, not just for myself, but even for vitalized companions is necessary. But what if I'm not perfect and don't feel that I can perfect others. How does that work out?

Response: Have a Desperate Attitude

Well, let me say something here. We should consider why certain things happen with certain people. Say one person acts and something happens. Another person acts, but nothing happens. You ask how come? There are many different reasons, and we cannot be too simplistic about this. But I can tell you one thing that matters is the attitude. If you are nonchalant or indifferent, that's an attitude. And if you are nonchalant or indifferent, not much will happen. But when you are desperate, like this is life and death to you, all kinds of things will happen. Good things will happen because your attitude changed. People in desperate circumstances resort to desperate measures, and they can do what other ordinary human beings cannot do. They are just in a desperate mode. I think that we have not built up many saints with this kind of attitude with the Lord and in life. In our church life, in our service, and in all these things, we want something, we're impressed, we're desirous, but we are not yet desperate. It needs to be do or die. But if to you if it doesn't work out and you think it's still okay, then I'll tell you that you are indifferent,

and things may not work for you. There is nothing wrong with the things you are doing, but it's your attitude that determines the victory. When you go to war or battle as a soldier, how desperate you are to win will determine the outcome. If you enter battle and think it's okay if we lose, trust me, you will not win that battle. But when you're desperate, it must happen. It must happen this afternoon. We believe we have to take that hill, then you go for it. There's nothing magical here. It's not in the genes. It is the attitude.

Take a look at the apostle Paul. Now this man, apart from all the visions and revelations he saw, was desperate. He was fighting beasts. He was in the ocean for a day and a night. He was a desperate man. That's why he accomplished so much. Of course, it is God's energizing and strengthening him, but this man was also desperate to work out God's commission to him. A lot of the reason why we do not make progress in our own Christian life, or in the church life, in our function, in our usefulness is because we are too easy on ourselves. We think it's all grace. Grace is provided and will supply us. Thank the Lord for this. But it's not all grace. It's your attitude that will dictate the intensity of your work. If you're desperate, you will do desperate things. You will think about desperate ways to get out of this situation because you're a desperate man. I think the Lord needs to recover this level of desperation within us if we are to be overcomers. Brothers, we have said what we have said, Brother Lee has said what he has said. He said, "If you don't do it, I have nothing more to say." And surely after that Brother Lee spoke no more. Because it's not the speaking anymore. If we are to really have a breakthrough, it's up to someone that will work it out with tremendous desperation.

Become a Desperate Person

So brother, you need to be more desperate. I cannot tell you what to do. You must ask yourself, how desperate are your prayers for yourself and for others. And even all these other things, like our confession and repentance, it all depends on how desperate we are. Consider the two blind men at the gate who wanted to see. The Lord

said, what do you want? They said, "Son of David, we want to see!" And then that woman who suffered from the hemorrhage; she worked her way toward the Lord and just grabbed the hem of His garment. The Lord said, what happened, this virtue that has gone out of me. That was one desperate woman. It was do or die for her. Really brothers, this actually explains the lack of progress in our spiritual life and in our church life. It's nothing to do with the truth or vision. It's down to will. We lack the desperation and the commitment. We don't really mean business. We're not in a life or death situation but what we're facing is life or death. The way I see it, I am nobody, but one thing I like to tell you brothers, I'm a desperate man. Every day I'm desperate, if not every hour I'm desperate. I'm not unusual but I am desperate. I'm very desperate for myself, for the saints, for the churches, and for this country. I'm so very desperate that I don't know what to do. But that desperation translates into my prayer, my fellowship, and my activity. Things will happen when you are desperate. So with some of these things, there's no answer and I cannot tell you what you need to try regarding this way or that way. Eventually it's not the way, it's you. It's the person who is desperate. I'm giving you a little perfecting here. It's not the way, but it's your attitude. You must apply yourself. The Lord's recovery is really great, wonderful, heavenly, and eternal but we're just here nonchalantly carrying on. Compare this with our secular jobs, we're more desperate because we need to advance and get a higher position with a bigger paycheck. We are more desperate in our jobs than in our church life. Some may say it's no big deal, and in the church life whether I speak in the meeting or not is no big deal. Here is something wrong. You're asking me for a way and I don't have a way. The question is do you want this or not?

Question regarding Not Becoming a Problem

How do you go from being desperate to fearing becoming a problem to the Body? I know in the history of the church there were many brothers who were desperate, but eventually they became rebellious. How do you avoid that?

Response: Serve the Lord with a Pure Heart

These are the two different things. I'm not encouraging you to be ambitious. I'm not telling you to be disobedient and rebellious. Those are impure things. We need to have clean hands and a pure heart. We need to be submissive, and to not to be a problem in the church life. So don't try to be somebody or try to cause problems in the church, but be desperate to be vital, to bear fruit, to gain people, to serve the church, and to function in the meetings. Don't over function or take over. Don't try to be somebody. Just do your part according to the Lord's leading. That is a matter of our heart. This matter of desperation applies to our labor and our work for the Lord in actually gaining people and in helping to vitalize others and even ourselves.

Testimony regarding Putting These Things into Practice

Brothers and Sisters, I appreciate our brother's thought here about attitude. I actually have a poster in my classroom that says, "Attitude is everything." You realize that Paul, in his desperation, even reiterated this to Agrippa, he said "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," which implies that he took steps to put into practice what had been given to him. And so, week after week, we've been hearing much vision related to being vital and even pairing up in the twos and threes with others. Within this last year, the Lord has put me with someone else that's as vital as I am, or more vital than I am so that we could pray together and actually put everything we've heard into practice. Saints, it's one thing to have the attitude. The other thing is to put it into practice, we can hear it over and over again, but if we don't practice, you're not going to get anywhere. This is a concept I can relate to as a math teacher. This past week, we actually went out to practice the gospel. It was just a few of us brothers, and we had a new one with us. We got together to pray, to coordinate, and to be together. Did we make mistakes? Probably. Were we rusty? Surely. But we went out to practice. I think if we have this attitude, that we're just going to sit here and listen week after week but not do anything, then we're really not being obedient to the heavenly vision, because we're not doing much. So I appreciate the attitude, the desperation that in all of us

should be increased. And I think as the Lord matches us up with someone else that is as vital as we are, that we can pray in this way to even put into practice some of these matters, the Gospel, getting into the truth, taking care of the saints, and visiting ones will happen. This is what Brother Lee released related to faithfulness in using our talents properly. We don't want the Lord to come back and say, your desperation was not there. He says evil and slothful slave. So I appreciate this word about attitude and desperation saints, may we really take this word and put some of these matters into practice. Amen.

Confirmation: God is Active

Thank you, brother. I just wanted to read a small portion from Brother Lee that touches this matter concerning how we have an indwelling active God. Brother Lee said, "While He is indwelling, He is very active. You can never be more active than He is. You may think that you are more active because you do not realize that a more active One is in you. You have been influenced by Pentecostalism and fundamentalism. You consider that if nothing is falling upon you then He is not active. You think that if you do not feel some inspiration, then that means He is silent. Actually, He is not silent; He is moving in you. You need to say to the Lord, 'Lord, how can I thank You that You are more active than I am? I can be silent, but You would never be silent. I can sleep, but You will never sleep. I can be dormant, but you will never be dormant. With me there is winter, but with You there is no winter. You are more active than I am.'"

Then later on Brother Lee says, "You can never deny that He is indwelling us, and He is living, He is acting, and He is working. He is very active. It is by the way of indwelling that He works for us, and He is very busy." Praise the Lord!

There's also another book called Vessels Useful to the Lord. He has a couple portions like this in that book.

Showing Strength and Taking Action

Whatever references you have, please send them to me. This is wonderful. We don't know how active God is. We are not really living out the active God. The God that we express is not the real God. He's not that silent. He's not so static. He's not so torpid. He is a tremendously active God. The people who know their God will show strength and take action (Daniel 11:32).

Question regarding Waiting for the Lord's Leading

Thank you very much for sharing. I just have a question because we are reading the morning revival on the books of Joshua, Judges and Ruth, and we are now in week nine. It talks about why Israel fell was because everyone did what was right in their own eyes. It talks about the Israelites and that in God's eyes, all goodness performed by self-will is lawlessness. You have said that we should not wait to take action, right? But shouldn't we wait for the Lord's leading before we take action, because if we try to please God in our own way, even in spiritual things like having fellowship or praying or preaching the gospel, then it is a sin. I just don't know what to do about it.

Response: The Principle of Incarnation

It's a classic question that needs to be resolved in us, and that is, "When can I start to move to do something? I'm still not transformed. I'm still so not okay. I'm not so pure. Maybe I'll mess things up." Well, there are two sides. Number one, we have to believe, and we have to know that God operates according to the principle of incarnation. Even in the Old Testament, before God was incarnated, He worked according to that principle. That means that God cannot move without man's cooperation. This was true even in the Old Testament. In the New Testament even the more. That means if we don't act, then God cannot act; if we don't move, then God cannot move. If you don't speak, then God cannot speak. If you don't preach the gospel, then God cannot preach the gospel. God will do His part that you cannot do. But you also have to do your part that God cannot do. We work together with God. We work together. You know, Paul says we are

working together with God (2 Cor. 6:1a). Therein is the principle of incarnation. So, who starts at first? Does the Lord start or do you start? Who takes the lead? I don't know. Sometimes it's you. Sometimes it seems like it's the Lord. Sometimes you don't even know who's who because you and He are joined. He is within you – one Spirit with you. So, He might have some feeling, and you have some feeling, and you think it's your feeling but actually, it's His feeling. You see what I mean? We are one with Him, so don't wait. That's my point. Don't wait for God to do something first. That's a wrong thing. He'll say, "I've been waiting for *you* to do something." You say, "Lord, save so and so," and the Lord says, "Go save so and so, and when you go save so and so I'll be with you. I'm with you. Don't worry. I'll give you the words to say. I will work in this person's heart. But you go first, you go first, then I'll follow you." This is more the real situation, and we're here waiting. "The Lord saved this person. He saved that person. How come the Lord doesn't do anything now?" That's because we don't do anything. So, go. Don't wait.

Taking Initiative

Now, the other thing is, you say, "I'm not so pure. I'm not so clean, and I may mess things up and cause problems. Well, I tell you, the more you do things, the more you will be exposed, and it's good to be exposed. When you do nothing, you are just a mystery. Nobody knows where you are and even *you* don't know where you are. But when you start to do something – aha! Oh, in this matter, I'm not so pure. In that matter, this is my natural man. In that matter, etc. Do you know what I mean? That exposure is what will help you to correct yourself. So, you just go; you just do something. You know in the Lord's recovery we've lost a lot of our initiative. Now we should not burn strange fire or exercise our natural strength, that's true. But on the other hand, if we lose our initiative, then nothing happens. In fact, if we take the initiative and do something, then this is how the Lord can get rid of these natural things and expose these impurities within us so we can deal with them and still continue to serve and work for Him. This is how we grow; this is how we are dealt with. Not by doing nothing, but

by doing *something*. I hope in a very simple way this helps.

My Testimony: Learning as We Take Steps Forward

I just want to share my experience, which is very positive. Because I've heard the brother sharing for quite a while that we need sisters to pray with the twos and threes, so, I prayed for a long time, and finally the Lord brought me a sister. It's very positive. At seven o'clock in the morning, Monday through Friday, we pray. Sometimes she has a song and sometimes I have a song, but it's really good. We pray for the saints here and the situation. There were once several college student sisters who used to come to my house on Thursday nights for dinner, and then of course, that group dispersed. One sister went away to China, and then she came back and visited some of the saints who invited her, and I invited her one night to my house. Before that, there was a sister saying, "How come we can't repeat what we hear? We're not getting constituted." She was really concerned about that. So, I just went to the Lord, and then I asked her, "What if we get together? You know, I'm just getting into the truth," and she said, "Oh, that's good! We'll do that." Then I fellowshiped with another sister, and she suggested reading Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures by Witness Lee. We're getting through that and we're just really taking our time. So, I invited this young sister who had been away for a while and I asked her, "Do you want to come? We're going to start on Tuesdays and Thursdays at my house," and she wanted to come. It's been really enjoyable, but when we started out, we had no idea what we were doing because we really want to get constituted and we want to look up the verses. It was kind of a hit or miss and we'd fellowship with the sisters – you know, we have to slow down, how do we get her to share? etc. So, there's been fellowship. It's not like, "Okay! Here we are. We're going to do this!" because this young one doesn't have the Recovery Version; she doesn't read the Recovery Version, but she's hooked on the book Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures. She's really enjoying that. So, it was a matter of prayer and of sensing the need in the Body, and I just really appreciate that the Lord is really answering our prayer. What I wanted to share is that through praying and then

fellowshipping our condition with the sisters, we are just taking a step forward. We still don't know what we're doing, but I have to say on Thursdays we enjoy the Lord so much because we're focusing on this young sister, and she's enjoying, she's participating, and she'll look up the Greek word and tell us what it means in Greek. It's just so rich. She doesn't read the Recovery Version; she brings her King James, but that's fine too because we're just enjoying the Lord and really enjoying The Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures.

Response: Praying to Lay the Tracks for the Lord to Move

Thank you, sister. It's like you're on your way. This is exactly what Brother Lee was talking about. To have a vital group starts with one, and then another, and then you may find each other as vital companions. And I like what you said: the key thing is to pray, much and thorough prayer. Prayer gets us into the spirit. Prayer fills us with the spirit. Prayer is what makes us vital, and prayer is what lays the tracks for the Lord to move. And so now through you two, you have another one, and then another sister that now you're caring for, and they are becoming vitalized by you. They're being taught by you, they're learning the truth through you, and they're getting into this ministry through you. You are actually gaining this sister and eventually there will be others, and now you are on your way as a little vital group to gain the increase. You are already leading in a very living way. You know, when we know what to do, everything is programmed and then we're already off. It's kind of good that you don't know what you're doing. You're constantly learning, you're improvising, you have to follow the Spirit; you're pressed to do so, and you have to be flexible. Now you're learning how to care for people – people who just use King James and don't use the Recovery Version. Now all of this caring is to gain this person. Don't forget these practices are so we can eventually gain people, whether recovering saints, new ones, or whether we're gaining the seekers. This is what we're practicing. So, I like that. There's a little model there that's quite wonderful. But the prayer is really the key.

Testimony of Cooperation with the Lord

I echo the brother's speaking. So, the wait is desperate. We need to pray. First, we need lots of thorough prayer, and we need to cooperate with God. If we do something, then God will just follow us because we are one with the Lord. Matthew says, "Go therefore," so we need to go first. But our heart has to be pure not only just to say, "Lord, I want to do something," but "Lord, I want to cooperate with You so You will follow us and mingle with us." This is a matter of our attitude. A little attitude will make a big difference, so we need to be desperate. Lord Jesus! I want to cooperate with You. I want to go with You. I want to mingle with You." This is a God-man principle.

Testimony regarding Practicing

Well, I was very impressed with the matter of practicing. You know, the great home run hitters in baseball history who hit over 700 home runs, like Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron, probably struck out double the amount of home runs they hit in their lifetimes. So anyway, these are the corruptible crowns, right? But I appreciate that we need to begin to practice. In one of the groups I'm in we're beginning to see some of these ones we're praying for, and in fellowship and coordination there is starting to be some budding of these ones. They're beginning to grow. And then in another group, we had to change lanes four times. We're on our fourth lane change, but we're practicing and we're endeavoring to care for these ones who have not been so easy to care for. We pray, we fellowship, we consider, we're before the Lord, and we're desperate. But still the Lord is moving forward in this fourth change that we've made in this one group. So this matter of beginning to enter into the practice of looking to the Lord, and of praying together with the other ones in your vital group is so wonderful. And in this the Lord has a way to perfect us, to complete the perfecting work and the building work.

Testimony regarding Being Desperate

Well, I stand fully with our brother's burden to be desperate. I don't know what to do. You know, we just go day by day here. We try to

shepherd, we open our home, and we open our fridge. But I feel like in me, there's something that's still not satisfied, and I think maybe it's because I'm not desperate enough to be vitalized with some of my brothers around me. And I just want to say thank you, brother. I just consecrate like all the saints here. We're just consecrating to Him for His purpose so He can come back. We don't want Him to wait for the next generation. We're preparing them, but we don't want to wait for them. We want to do it ourselves. We want to be the generation of people that see the Lord come back. Why go to our grave without Him coming back? We just give everything to Him. We're all doing this together. We're all in one boat. We're all here to see Him have His way. Whatever it takes, that's what we want. We don't want to be anybody, but we want to enjoy Him, and we want to see Him have His way in our life. We don't want to come up short by one tenth. We want Him to have everything. We just consecrate everything to Him. May He have His way and fulfill every word that has been spoken. May we be that people to see Him come back.

Testimony regarding a New Beginning

I really enjoy the sharing as well. I feel like it's very fitting for our time here. I recently moved to Charlotte with my kids and husband. For years we were in the Bay Area, and I was praying for a vital companion. Sometimes it takes a while before you get that companion. But when we got here, the Lord paired me with this sister. I was still praying for a companion, and it just so happened that there's a sister who also moved here, who is very hungry for the Word. In the beginning, like what was mentioned, in a sense we began getting together just to get to know one another, and through that she personally opened up and said, "I really want to get into the word. I want to get to know the ministry." She just really wants to know the ministry, the Bible, and how everything connects. I realized this was an opportunity for me also to be vital, because I realized I haven't been so much into the word. Our times have been so precious. She's hungry, and I realize I'm hungry because she's hungry, and we are feeding one another. I do sense that there's a beginning here, but I appreciate the

further word that everything starts with prayer, and we need to continue with prayer. I think that, in assessing our times together, we could use more prayer and I feel like that's probably the direction our getting together should take. More prayer as we get into the word and more prayer and more fellowship with the other saints.

Concluding Word

There's a lot we need to get into as we move forward in how to care for people. That's another whole realm. But we need to get into that realm first. For example, some of you are talking about how to lead a new one on, so we need to know how to discern where people are. We ourselves need to have a level of constitution of the truth, but not only so, we need to have a living way to share these riches with people according to where *they* are in a progressive manner. So, there's a lot to learn to effectively shepherd people, to cherish and nourish people, to help them to grow in life, to have the proper life practices, and to have the proper experience of the Lord, to exercise their spirit, etc., and also to help them to know the things in the word of God. So, there's a lot of fine skill sets we need to pick up in time as we enter into this realm. So you see, there's a lot more for us than to just to sit there and just to enjoy some speaking, like from me or something. There's so much that we need to pick up and learn now in order to have spiritual children, to have some little lambs and sheep, to have some new ones and young ones under our care, and to have some sinners that we need to save and even some saints that we need to restore and perfect. So, there's a lot of work to do, and this is the real work of the priests of the gospel in the New Testament. This is how all the saints can function in a meaningful and purposeful way. So, don't despise the day of small things. You may say, "Oh not much is happening; it's kind of a ticking time." Don't give up. Don't look down on that. Just persist. Just persevere. The main thing is to *be regular* and to sustain what you are doing. Of course, you always have to back this up with much and thorough prayer personally and with your companions. Well, it sounds like at least certain ones have been making some good starts. Now let us use that to encourage ourselves

and we can all go on together.

Okay, saints. Maybe we'll conclude with the verse in 1 Timothy 4:15, "Practice these things; be in them, that your progress may be manifest to all."