

ANAHEIM YP PURSUIT

BUYING THE OIL

Session Three—Ministry Reading

A Time with the Lord (3)

Verses for Pray-Reading:

Eph. 6:17-18 – And receive...the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition.

Ministry Reading

If we do not know how to pray-read, we will pray in the following way: first, we will rise early in the morning, feeling that we must pray. Then we will try to pray like this: "Lord, I thank You that You are so good...that You have given me peace...that You have protected me from all kinds of danger..." Then we suddenly remember that we are about to travel somewhere: "Oh, I am about to travel...Lord, grant me journeying mercies...the safety...from a car accident..." After further hesitation, we continue, "I have a friend in Vietnam...Lord, remember him...remember James in Vietnam...also Tom in West Germany...Lord, Tom is there...he needs Your protection..."

We must answer honestly. What does this kind of prayer do for us? This is the way most Christians pray. But do they receive any nourishment? Do they gain something which causes them to be full of joy within and rejoicing without? No!

The right way is this: first, come to the Bible to pray-read. There is no need to close your eyes. Keep your eyes on the Word as you pray. In all sixty-six books of the Bible we cannot find one verse which says that we should pray with our eyes closed. But there is a verse which says that Jesus looked up to the heavens, saying, "Father..." (John 17:1). He was looking at heaven while He was praying! We would not argue in a doctrinal way, but we must realize that there is no need for us to close our eyes to pray. Simply look at the printed page which says, "In the beginning..." Then with your eyes upon the Word and praying from deep within say, "O Lord, 'In the beginning!' Lord, I praise Thee 'in the beginning was the Word.' Although I do not know what the Word is, the Word was there. I praise Thee, Lord! 'In the beginning!' Hallelujah! 'In the beginning!' O Lord, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'" Simply try to pray in this way. Perhaps you will turn to another verse. "There is now then no condemnation." "O Lord, 'There is now no condemnation' O Lord, 'Now no condemnation.' Amen. 'Now.' O Lord. 'Now.' Amen! 'Now no condemnation.' Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! 'No condemnation,'" etc.

While we are pray-reading there is no need for us to compose any sentences or create a prayer. Just pray-read the Word. Pray the words of the Bible exactly as they read. Eventually, you will see that the whole Bible is a prayer book! Not only is the "Lord's Prayer" a prayer, but the whole Bible is a prayer. Open to any page, any line, any word of the Bible, and start to pray with that portion of the Word. If you will continue to pray-read in this way in the presence of the Lord for thirty minutes, you will see what kind of enlightenment, watering, nourishment, refreshing, strengthening, and satisfaction you will obtain. From these thirty minutes, you will have a spiritual breakfast which will last the entire day!

Although you may not understand a certain passage, you still are nourished, because there is really something of God in His Word. The Word of God is His very breath. (Second Timothy 3:16 in the Greek is, "All Scripture is God-breathed.")

Do not try only to learn the Bible. We must realize that this is a book of life, not a book of knowledge. This book is the divine embodiment of the living Spirit, and He is life. The right way is not just to study or learn, but to contact the Word by exercising our spirit to pray-read. Thousands have proven that this is the right way. This way of coming to the Bible has revolutionized their lives. If you would try it for five mornings, you also will be changed. Your whole concept about the Bible will be radically altered. It may not work so well at first, but with practice, you will touch the living Spirit.

What the church needs today is not more knowledge and teachings, but nourishment, and the way the Lord nourishes His Body is by His Word. The Lord is eagerly waiting for a way to nourish us and become our enjoyment. Pray-reading gives Him that way. By this kind of prayer all the riches of Christ will be brought into us and even wrought into us. No teaching, doctrine, or knowledge can work Christ into us to such an extent; it is only by this way of prayer. Therefore, we all must learn to pray in this way. Eventually, we will be brought out of ourselves, saturated with Christ, and permeated with the Spirit.

(A Time with the Lord, Section 3, Witness Lee)