

## READING THE BIBLE TO FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

- We need to practice reading the Bible in a way that causes us to have fellowship with God spontaneously
- We need to learn to avoid certain hindrances to our fellowship with God as we read the Bible
- We need to learn to convert the Word into the Spirit through prayer, and to convert the Spirit into the Word by our prayer

Once we contact and touch God, we should turn to read the Lord's Word, the Bible. We should be careful not to exercise our mind merely to analyze while reading the Scriptures. This can be done at another time. This time is for eating. When we come before the Lord and open His Word, we should spontaneously exercise our spirit to absorb His Word and thus eat spiritual food.

### Not Reading Fast or Too Much

We also should not read the Bible too fast, and neither should we read it too slowly. We should read as much as we can, without intending to read too much. There is what I would call a temptation to read the Bible too fast. Everyone who reads the Bible is tempted to read fast. After reading the first verse, we are tempted to quickly go on to the second verse, or we are tempted to quickly finish reading one portion in order to read the next portion. This kind of fast and quick reading is common, but it is a great interruption to our fellowship with God. Therefore, we must practice to be calm, spontaneous, and not hasty when we read the Bible to fellowship with God. We should simply read according to the time we have available, not intending to read fast or to read too much. We may read one chapter, one paragraph, one verse, one sentence, or even a few words. What matters is that we touch God in fellowship.

### Not Pondering

To ponder is another temptation when reading the Bible. It is strange that when we read fast, we cannot stop our mind, but when we read slowly, we often ponder. For example, when we read, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," we begin to consider what *the beginning* refers to and how many places *the heavens and the earth* include. We may consider different things and

draw analogies. This is a great hindrance to our fellowship. Therefore, we should exercise not to ponder. We do not need to understand, research, study, read fast, read much, or ponder in order to fellowship through reading the Bible.

On one hand, reading the Bible in this way is spontaneous, but on the other hand, it may not be so easy. Can we come to the Bible without intending to understand or to research and study? Can we come without haste or the desire to read too much or too little? Can we instead read spontaneously and not ponder over the word? If we practice these things over a period of time, we will find that it is not easy. Someone may occasionally touch God in fellowship through reading the Bible, but he cannot constantly and confidently have good fellowship with God whenever he reads the Bible. This inadequacy shows that there is a need for more practice.

### The Word Needing to Become the Spirit

Since we read the Bible to contact God, what we read needs to enter into us to become the Spirit. If the words we read remain as words only, we have not practiced sufficiently and are overly relying on our mind. This is the reason I have repeatedly said that we should not intend to understand, to study, or to ponder. Once our mind is focused on studying and pondering, the words of the Bible will not enter us but will remain merely words. However, with sufficient practice, we can touch the Spirit whenever we read the Bible. When we touch the Spirit, the words will enter us and become the Spirit. If we learn to read the Bible in this way...[although] we may read the Bible for half an hour and not remember much, we will feel as if we have eaten a full meal and taken a good bath in our spirit.

### The Spirit Needing to Become the Word

This point is the reverse of the previous point. When the Word enters into us, it becomes the Spirit; this is a matter of entrance. However, the Spirit becoming the Word is a matter of operation. This operation is similar to the moving of the Holy Spirit that we usually refer to. Once the Word enters into us, it becomes the Spirit, and once the Spirit operates in us, He becomes the Word. This is a sure principle.

We need to learn to contact the words of the Bible with our spirit. When we have the inspiration of the Spirit, we need to allow the

inspiration within us to become the Word. At this juncture, our mind needs to be spiritual, and our thoughts need to be trained spiritually so that we are able to interpret the inspiration of the Spirit. Our mind needs to cooperate with the Spirit so that we can interpret the meaning of the inspiration we receive. In this way, the Spirit can become the Word in us.

Hence, it is not good to put off our prayer until the end of our reading. When we contact the words of the Bible and the Word becomes the Spirit within us, we should pray. This prayer involves worship, thanksgiving, and praise. Whenever the Word becomes the Spirit as we read, we should pray; once the Spirit becomes the Word through our prayer, we should continue to read. As a result, the Word becomes the Spirit, and the Spirit becomes the Word. We read awhile and then pray; we pray awhile and then read. This is a sweet fellowship. The word we contact becomes the Spirit in us, and the more we pray, the more inspiration of the Spirit we receive. As we continue reading and praying, we will surely have good fellowship with God. We will enjoy the fellowship to such an extent that we forget our sickness, our poverty, and even the many problems in our locality. We will forget all of these things.

### **Preventing Interruptions**

In this kind of fellowship of praying and reading, reading and praying, a fellowship in which the Word becomes the Spirit and the Spirit becomes the Word, we need to do our best to prevent and guard against interruptions. Then we will enjoy the fellowship to the uttermost. We need to put aside and not pray for the many things that may require prayer. Truthfully, many things do not require our prayer. As long as these matters are in our heart, God knows about them and remembers them accordingly. He wants us to worship Him, fellowship with Him, absorb Him, enjoy Him, and gain Him; this is the most pleasing to Him. The Lord said that our heavenly Father knows all we need (Matt. 6:8). Thus, we should leave all these things to Him. He knows our sickness, our family problems, our lack, and our needs. We do not need to beg before Him; instead, we should be at peace and believe. The one thing, the best thing, we should do is to touch Him, worship Him, believe in Him, pursue Him, and gain Him. He will add all the other things to us. Therefore, we should not let consideration of these things interrupt us. We should try our best to stay in fellowship.

If we have ten minutes, we should spend ten minutes to fellowship with Him; if we have twenty minutes, we should spend twenty minutes to fellowship with Him. We can lift up our face at any time and at any place and speak to Him of our practical needs. But when we are fellowshiping with God, we should not bring in these matters. It is useless to merely speak concerning these things. We need to practice them diligently and help others practice them. As we gradually become more adept in the matter of fellowship, we will taste the sweetness and enjoy the riches of fellowship in reality. (*Lessons for New Believers*, Chapters 24- 25)

### **Fellowship Questions:**

1. What may it mean for the Word to become the Spirit while we are reading the Bible? How is this related to the Word entering us?
2. What may it mean for the Spirit to become the Word while we are reading the Bible? How is this related to the Spirit operating in us?
3. How are the matters of *the Word becoming the Spirit* and *the Spirit becoming the Word* related to our prayer?
4. How do the activities of our mind frustrate us from having fellowship with God as we read the Bible? How are these frustrations related to reading too fast, too much, pondering, or being interrupted as we read?
5. Why is practice required before this type of fellowship with God in the Word becomes “spontaneous” for us?
6. Do you have some positive experiences or helps with this kind of fellowship that you could share? What are some frustrations that your group or companions could pray for or provide help with?