

Topic Seven

**READING THE BIBLE TO SEE  
THE TRUE MEANING AND CENTRAL THOUGHT**

# READING THE BIBLE TO SEE ITS TRUE MEANING AND CENTRAL THOUGHT

COMPILED FROM COLLECTED WORKS OF WITNESS LEE,  
1958, VOLUME 1, ,pp. 18-98.

## READING THE BIBLE TO SEE ITS TRUE MEANING AND CENTRAL THOUGHT

- Man's Concept Covering the True Meaning of the Bible
- Rejecting Our Natural Concepts and Accepting the Concept of Life and Living in the Bible
- To Absorb the Fatness of God
- Two Characteristics of Studying the Bible in the Way of Life
- The Limitations to be Avoided

# READING THE BIBLE

Man's Concept Covering the  
True Meaning of the Bible

- When the Lord Jesus was on the earth those who strongly opposed Him and took the lead to resist Him were the ones who were the most knowledgeable in the Old Testament scriptures.
- Although all orthodox theological students have a high regard for the Bible and study the Bible all day long, they may not have received much spiritual benefit from the Bible study.

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# READING THE BIBLE

Man's Concept Covering the  
True Meaning of the Bible

- Bible reading is only beneficial if the person reading the Bible and the way of reading the Bible are correct.
- The person reading the Bible must have a spirit to love the Lord and receive Him, a mind freed from the influence of the knowledge of good and evil, and without the influence of habits, customs, education, and environment.

# READING THE BIBLE

Man's Concept Covering the  
True Meaning of the Bible

- God intended that the words of the Bible would be food to us. (Jeremiah 15:16; Genesis 2:9; Matthew 4:4)
- Man's concepts hinder him from seeing the true meaning of the Bible.

# READING THE BIBLE

Man's Concept Covering the  
True Meaning of the Bible

- This can be illustrated by the book of Ephesians.
- Ephesians reveals God wants to fill His Body with all that He is and has (1:23), even unto the fullness of God (3:19), according to the power that operates in us (3:20).
- However, many people only see husbands should love their wives, wives should submit to their husbands, children should obey their parents, slaves should serve their masters faithfully, and masters should treat their slaves leniently.

# READING THE BIBLE

Man's Concept Covering the  
True Meaning of the Bible

- These concepts are deeply rooted in us before we start reading the Bible.
- Reading the Bible according to our mentality and viewpoint is utterly incompatible with the true meaning of the Bible that we should be filled with God.

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# READING THE BIBLE

Rejecting Our Natural Concepts  
and Accepting the Concept of Life  
and Living in the Bible

- All our concepts and expectations are veils and distractions to our reading the Word.
- When we read the Word we often read our concepts into the Scriptures...If the co-workers and responsible brothers read the Word and actually receive the Word into them, the work among us would be revived, and it will change completely.

# READING THE BIBLE

Rejecting Our Natural Concepts  
and Accepting the Concept of Life  
and Living in the Bible

- Although the Bible is full of revelation, it is possible to read the Bible daily without receiving any revelation.
- The Bible has only one central revelation — God in His Son desires to be life to man.
- Our reading of the Bible must be restricted, regulated, and governed by the two lines of life and living; God being life to man and man living before God by God Himself as life.

# READING THE BIBLE

To Absorb the Fatness of God

- The way we read the Bible also determines the kind of Bible we have and the outcome of our reading.
- Our purpose for reading the Bible is to enjoy and absorb God. When we read the Bible we are contacting God; thus, we must exercise our spirit in order to properly receive Him.

# READING THE BIBLE

To Absorb the Fatness of God

- Every time we read God's Word, we must bring our entire being quietly before the Lord and use our spirit to contact the Word, realizing that it is His utterance.
- Only in this way will every chapter in the Bible contain the fatness and rich supply, the butter and the honey, and become the bread of life that satisfies us. (Psa. 63:5; Isa. 7:15; John 6:35)

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# READING THE BIBLE

To Absorb the Fatness of God

- We must learn to use our spirit to contact every portion and sentence in the Bible so that we may gain the supply of life and allow this life to produce a certain kind of living within us.
- To exercise our spirit to read the Word requires the use of our entire being—our eyes to read, our soul to comprehend, and our spirit to contact the Word.

# READING THE BIBLE

## Two Characteristics of Studying the Bible in the Way of Life

- **We read the Bible by exercising our spirit and not merely our mind.**
  - God's children must learn to distinguish between what is life and what is mere teaching.
  - In Mark 16:15 Jesus said, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to all creation." A person can read and understand this verse without sensing that his negligence in the preaching of the gospel is a sin.... And even after reading and understanding that verse he does not preach the gospel.

# READING THE BIBLE

## Two Characteristics of Studying the Bible in the Way of Life

- **Whenever we are inspired and touched inwardly by some portion of the Word, we must examine it based on the central lines of LIFE and LIVING.**
  - **Pursue and know the central points and let go of the secondary points in the Bible.**

# READING THE BIBLE

## The Limitations to be Avoided

- We should not bring along our preconceived ideas, thoughts, and spiritual experiences and knowledge when we read the Bible.
- Gentiles oppose it, the Catholics forbid the laity from reading it, the Protestants control it with traditional theology, and the spiritual people become limited by their previous experiences that helped them to know the Bible.

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# READING THE BIBLE

## The Limitations to be Avoided

- We must be careful in using reference books in our study of the Bible lest the reference books become a limitation to our understanding of the Bible.
- Paying attention to points regarding life and living is not contrary to reading the Bible to enjoy God, rather they support one another.
- In studying the Bible in the way of life we do not abandon the supplemental points but pay more attention to the central points

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John

### Practice Finding the Key Word Using 1 John 1:1-4

- *1 John 1:1-2 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes we have beheld and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life. And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us.*

What is the key word in these verses?

Please find 2-3 supporting verses in the Bible that further define the key word ?

How can this Word become rich to you?

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John

- *1 John 1:3-4 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. These things we write that your joy may be full.*

What is the key word in this verse?

How does this verse convey life and living?

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John

### Practice Finding the Key Word Using 1 John 1:5-6

- *1 John 1:5-6 This is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth.*

What is the key word in these verses?

What is the contrast given here and what is this contrast implying?

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John

- *1 John 1:7 If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.*

What is the key word?

How do we experience this cleansing?

Crucial Points Concerning Life and  
Living in the Epistle of First John  
Chapter One

Summarize how these key words of 1 John 1:1-7 relate to one another in life and in living in our experience?

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John Worksheet for 1 John 2

1. Read 1 John 2 — Write the two crucial points concerning life and the one crucial point concerning living.

Instruction: When the word life is not mentioned specifically you may need to consider the goal, purpose, vehicle, or source of life as a crucial point. A crucial point concerning living would relate to the application of life or the experience of life not the result of living Christ.

# Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John Worksheet for 1 John 3

Read 1 John 3 — Write the two crucial points concerning life with the three subordinate points and the one crucial point concerning living with the five results.

**Instruction:** When a crucial point of life appears in the Bible, many times there are also subordinate points. In this chapter you can see three subordinate points supporting the first crucial point. Concerning our living there are also results or issues of this crucial point. There are five issues of the crucial point of our living found in this chapter.

# Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John Worksheet for 1 John 4

Read 1 John 4 — Write the two crucial points concerning life with their auxiliary function and the two crucial points concerning living with five results of this living.

Instruction: Although God being love and our loving one another is very important, there are two crucial points of life that are primary. Find these primary crucial points in this chapter. Differentiate the primary goal from the auxiliary function of the accomplishment of redemption. The crucial points are the goal whereas propitiation is the procedure to reach the goal. The results are a constant and continual Christian life with a marvelous expression. Such a living issues in having much discernment, protection, and reflection of Christ.

# Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John Worksheet for 1 John 5

Read 1 John 5 — Write the crucial point concerning life and the three crucial points concerning our living. Try to glean as many results of such a life and living as you can from this chapter.

Instruction: The focus of God's economy is on a person who can carry out His purpose. If you know this person you will receive His Spirit and thus will experience the crucial item and have the crucial element. Do not be distracted by the supplemental items but learn these with the view of the crucial point. The crucial points of living are for experiencing a victorious Christian life, expressing God's essence in our living, and maintaining a living that consistent with the fact of our position before God.

# Answer Key

Reading the Bible to See Its True Meaning and Central Thought,  
*Collected Works of Witness Lee*, 1958, Vol. 1, pp.18-98.

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John

### Practice Finding the Key Word Using 1 John 1:1-4

What is the key word in verses 1-2?

v.1 LIFE and WORD OF LIFE

Is there another verse in the Bible that speaks of life and the Word?

John 1:4; 11:25; 14:6

How can this Word become rich to you?

Taking the Word as life, not doctrine because the person of the Lord Jesus is both the Word and life.

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## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John

What is the key words in verses 3-4?

v.3 FELLOWSHIP; v. 4 JOY

How does this verse convey life and living?

ENJOY THE LORD IN THE WORD  
THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John

**Practice Finding the Key Word Using 1 John 1:5-6**

What is the key word in these verses?

v.5 LIGHT; v.6 TRUTH

What is the contrast given here and what is this contrast implying?

Life causes us to have fellowship with God, who is light, and as soon as we have fellowship with God, we are brought into the light. If we remain in darkness, we are not in fellowship with God but are in fellowship with Satan; and we are blended as one with him, meaning that we are lying and are not in the truth, not living and walking in God.

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John 1:7

What is the key word?

THE CLEANSING OF THE BLOOD

How do we experience this cleansing in our living?

1. Fellowship is with Him and with one another.
2. Fellowship brings in the shining on our situation.
3. Once we see our sins in the light we thoroughly confess and receive forgiveness.

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John Summary of Chapter One

Summarize how these key words of 1 John 1:1-7 relate to one another in life and in living in our experience?

### IN LIFE

The Lord who enters into us is the eternal life that has become our life. Having entered into us, this eternal life causes us to have fellowship with and become one with God, the Lord, and all those who belong to Him. Since God is light, if we are in fellowship with Him, we are in the light. When we are in the light we are exposed, and as a result we confess our sins. Then we are cleansed by the blood.

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## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John Summary of Chapter One

Summarize how these key words of 1 John 1:1-7 relate to one another in life and in living in our experience?

### IN LIVING

Since we have eternal life we must learn to have more dealings and interactions with the Lord so that we may become closer to Him in and according to this life. We must receive the shining of light when we are in fellowship with God. Once we have been shined upon and see our mistakes and sins, we must immediately confess and seek forgiveness. In this way we can truly receive the supply of life.

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John Worksheet for 1 John 2

Answer: Jesus Christ is our Advocate with the Father and the Holy Spirit is the Anointing within us so that we may abide in Him at all times thus keeping the commandments, walking as He walked, loving the brothers, and practicing righteousness.

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John Worksheet for 1 John 3

Answer: We, as children of God, have been begotten of God (v1). The purpose of God in His coming in the flesh is to take away sins (v.5), destroy the works of the devil (v.8), laying down His life for us v.16b) that in His coming manifestation we would be completely like Him (v.2) are subordinate to the crucial point of God begetting us to be His children.

Now, as children of God we may abide in God (v.24) and have continual fellowship with Him. This crucial living results in the hope that we will be like Him (vv.2-3), our purifying ourselves by not practicing sin and practicing righteousness (vv.6-7,9), our loving the brothers (v.14), persuading our heart before God (vv.19, 21), and receiving whatever we ask (v.22)

## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John Worksheet for 1 John 4

Answer: We have been begotten of God (v.7) that we may have life and live through Him (v.9). God's loving us and sending His Son as a propitiation for our sins is the auxiliary function of the work of the cross. The goal of the cross is for us to have life and live by Him. God's love seen in His redemption is a supplemental point on life. His being love is the motive for His giving us life.

This life abides in us and empowers us to love God and to love one another with the love of God (vv.10-13, 19). As children of God we are abiding in God and loving God with five results: knowing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (v.2), discerning which spirits are of God (v.6), recognizing heretical teachers (v.4), loving the brothers (v.7), and having a living on earth that is like Christ (v.17)

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## Crucial Points Concerning Life and Living in the Epistle of First John Worksheet for 1 John 5

Answer: God has begotten us so that in His Son we may have Him as our life (vv.1, 11-12). When we have the Son as our life, we can live a life of faith (v.4),

We receive life by faith and we enjoy life in our living by faith. When we experience this life we spontaneously love God, love all the children of God, and keep His commandments (vv.1-3). Subsequently we become people who have a living in God (v.20) and maintaining this living and abiding in God by continually enjoying Christ as our life (v.20).

Other results are overcoming the world, having boldness, giving life to a sinning brother, not sinning habitually, keeping ourselves pure, overcoming the evil one, and guarding ourselves from idols. (vv.4, 14, 16, 18, 21.)