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THE EXERCISE OF OUR SPIRIT

It is very good that we can be on the study of our spirit. I can testify that whenever we teach and speak about our human spirit, we have joy. This is because man was created by God with a spirit, and this spirit is a particular organ within man which functions to contact God and contain God. Man was created by God to be a living creature, but he is different from all the other living creatures. Only man has a human spirit.

Genesis tells us clearly that in God's creation, He did something particular to produce our spirit (2:7). God created the universe by speaking. God spoke and it was (Psa. 33:9). But when God came to the creation of man, He breathed His breath of life into man. Our breath is not ourselves, but nothing is as close to us as our breath. In like manner, God's breath of life is not God Himself, not the divine Spirit, and not the divine life, but it is very close to God, close to the divine Spirit, and close to the divine life.

If we did not have a spirit, we would be like the beasts. We would become meaningless. Also, if there were no God in the universe, the whole universe would become empty. So the key to our meaning and the meaning of the universe is in God's existence and also in our having a spirit. God is Spirit and we must contact Him, worship Him, in our spirit (John 4:24). These two spirits should contact each other and should become one (1 Cor. 6:17). Then the whole universe becomes meaningful. Then our life has its meaning. Without God being the Spirit and without us having a spirit to contact God, to be one with God, the whole universe is empty and we are nothing. By this we can see the importance of our spirit.

Regrettably, due to the fall, men have not only overlooked and neglected the human spirit, but also have even refused to admit that man has a spirit. Some men who live a higher life take care of their conscience, but they are in the minority. Most people take care of the law, not their conscience. Today's society needs the law so much because most people neglect one part of their spirit—their conscience. The conscience functions to judge us and condemn us when we do something wrong. Actually, the best people in human society are not the lawful ones, but

the ones who take care of their conscience. Some who are governed merely by the law like to find loopholes in the law so that they can carry out things that are unrighteous and unjust. Those who live by the conscience, however, live in a higher way. Our inward conscience controls us much more than the outward law does.

As Christians, our spirit has been regenerated. To be regenerated is to be reinforced. Something stronger and richer has been added into our being. This is God's life, which has been added into our spirit. This addition is a real gift. Hebrews 6:4 says that we believers have tasted of the heavenly gift. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, God firstly gives us the divine life. Secondly, God gives us the Holy Spirit. Also, He gives us many heavenly things, such as His forgiveness, righteousness, peace, and joy. God has given us justification, reconciliation, and His full salvation. All these were given in addition to God's life and God's Spirit. Actually, all these heavenly things are included in God's life and God's Spirit, which have been added into our spirit. We have a regenerated and reinforced spirit, a very strong spirit, with a companion. This companion is the Triune God. The Triune God becomes our companion in our spirit. What an enriched spirit we have!

Now that we have seen the importance of our spirit, we want to see the exercise of our spirit. We must build up a habit of exercising our spirit. When I rise up in the morning, the first thing I spontaneously say is "O Lord." To call on the Lord by saying, "O Lord" is a habit of exercising our spirit. To say "O Lord" as soon as you rise up in the morning makes a big difference. If you rise up in the morning without saying anything, you may pray in a routine way without really touching the Lord. This is because there is no exercise of your spirit. We have to build up a habit of saying, "O Lord." When we say, "O Lord," we touch the Lord. This is the habit of exercising our spirit.

At times we may be in a hard situation. We may be sick or we may have lost our job. At that time, we should exercise our spirit. We should force ourselves to say, "O Lord Jesus!" The word exercise implies forcing. To exercise is always a forced matter. When the Olympic athletes are exercising to practice or

compete, they must have a strong will. They force themselves to exercise. If we Christians want to be strong and want to grow in the Lord, we must force ourselves to use our spirit.

Let us suppose that a problem comes into your family life. It may be a problem between you and your spouse, between you and your children, or between you and your parents. If you do not exercise your spirit at that time, your entire soul with your mind, will, and emotion will become prevailing. Then the soul will overcome and subdue you, conquering your spirit. This can even cause you to lose your temper in a bad way. Therefore, whenever you are in a hard situation, you have to force yourself to exercise your spirit. To force yourself to exercise, or to use, your spirit makes you a different person.

In 1 Timothy 4:7 Paul said, "Exercise yourself unto godliness." Then in verse 8 he spoke of bodily exercise. In these two verses Paul speaks of two kinds of exercise. The exercise besides that of the body, which is the exercise unto godliness, must be the exercise of the spirit. To exercise ourselves unto godliness is to exercise our spirit to live Christ in our daily life.

I. TO FAN OUR SPIRIT

Second Timothy 1:6-7 indicates that we need to fan our spirit into flame. In these verses Paul said, "For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness." Some might think that these verses do not say that we should fan our spirit but that we should fan our gift. But if you get into these verses, you will see that the fanning of our gift into flame is the fanning of our spirit into flame. Paul tells us in verse 6 to "fan into flame the gift of God." Then in verse 7 he says, "For God has not given us a spirit..." Our God-given spirit is what we must fan into flame. We have to fan our spirit.

We have to know the background of 2 Timothy to appreciate Paul's word here. Paul wrote this book during a difficult time for his spiritual son Timothy. Paul was in prison in Rome. Furthermore, all those in Asia had forsaken Paul's ministry (v. 15). The churches in Asia were the main churches raised up through Paul's ministry, but they forsook him. Timothy was there among them. If you were Timothy, how would you face the situation? People could have said to Timothy, "Why are you still following Paul? All the saints in Asia have forsaken him. Also, if God were really with him, He would rescue him from the prison in Rome." No doubt, Timothy was discouraged.

Otherwise, Paul would not have said, "For which cause I remind you..." Timothy was discouraged and had to be reminded. Paul knew Timothy was down and he sympathized with him. He reminded Timothy that there was still a small fire within him which he needed to fan into flame.

At times you may suffer to such an extent that you may begin to doubt God and doubt your salvation. But regardless of how much you doubt, one thing is within you which you cannot deny— your spirit. You are not like a beast. You have a spirit. This spirit is a trouble to Satan. Regardless of how much work Satan has done and is still doing, there is one thing within that he cannot touch— our spirit. We need to fan our spirit into flame.

We may say that the gift of God which we must fan into flame is a spiritual gift. But without our spirit, how could we have the gift? The spiritual gift is in our spirit. There is fire in our regenerated spirit, which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Actually, we may say that our spirit is the fire.

(Spirit with Our Spirit, chapter 8)

Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for YP that they will be companions with one another to pursue the Lord together.
- Pray for the English-speaking testimony in Campbell.
- Pray for the follow-up of door-knocking contacts in Campbell.
- Pray for gospel preaching on West Valley College campus.
- Pray for the growth of the feeling of the Body of Christ.
- For daily exercise in GOW training: prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth and attend Lord's day meeting on time.

Announcement

- Morning Revival: 2011 Thanksgiving International Conference Message Four: The Focus of God's Economy – The Mingled Spirit
- YP Bible reading: John chapter 13.
- Prayer meeting Tuesday (1/25) 7:30 pm at Brother Liu's home, 14020 Shadow Oaks Way, Saratoga
- Boston Training Center financial needs.