

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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OF
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Living Stream Ministry
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THE WORD OF LIFE

The Word is both the embodiment of the living God and identical to the living Christ. [First John 1:1 and 2](#) say, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld, and our hands 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.” These verses indicate that the Word of life is the Son of God, Christ. Therefore, the Word of life is identical to the living Christ.

THE SPIRIT

It is crucial for us to realize that, having passed through the various steps of a process, the Triune God today has become the Spirit. [John 7:39](#) says, “The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Although the Spirit of God has always been in existence, this verse nevertheless says that the Spirit was not yet. The expression “the Spirit” here denotes the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—processed

to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. This Spirit is all-inclusive because it includes not only divinity, but also humanity, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. It includes all the three-one God is, has, and has accomplished and attained. Therefore, the Spirit is the totality of all the three-one God is, has, and has accomplished and attained.

THE SPIRIT EMBODIED IN THE WORD

It is even more difficult to define the Word than it is to define the Spirit. In the New Testament, the Son of God is called the Word. [Revelation 19:13](#) says of Him, “His name is called The Word of God.” For Christ to be the Word of God means that He is the definition, explanation, and expression of God. However, this understanding is not adequate. The New Testament indicates that the Word is the Spirit. The Lord Jesus said, “The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life” ([John 6:63](#)). Furthermore, [Ephesians 6:17](#) even identifies the Word as the Spirit. Hence, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit, and the Word are one in a very mysterious way.

The Spirit is the consummation of the process through which the Triune God has passed,

and the Word is the consummation of God's speaking. But why is the Word the Spirit and the Spirit the Word? I admit that this matter is very difficult to understand and explain.

As a help to our understanding, we may use the striking of matches as an illustration. Matches are made of phosphorus. Hence, a match is the embodiment of phosphorus. As such, in a very practical way it is identical to phosphorus. This means that the match is phosphorus and phosphorus is the match. Applying this illustration to the Bible and the Spirit, we may compare the Bible to the match and the Spirit to phosphorus. Furthermore, because a match is made of phosphorus and is the embodiment of phosphorus, it makes phosphorus available to us. The Triune God today is the Spirit, and the Spirit is embodied in the Word. Although it is rather difficult for us to handle the Spirit, we can easily carry a Bible. Just as we have phosphorus by having a match, so we have the Spirit by having the Bible.

EXERCISING OUR SPIRIT TO "STRIKE" THE WORD

If we want to light a match, it is not adequate merely to love the match. We need to strike the match in a proper way. In the same principle, if

we would contact the Spirit embodied in the Word, we need to “strike” the “match” of the Word by exercising our spirit.

Suppose someone tried to light a match by analyzing it or by exercising his emotion to express his love for it. This indeed would be useless, even foolish. To light a match does not require that we analyze it or love it. We simply need to strike it in a proper way, and it will suddenly burst into flame. In like manner, if we want to contact the Spirit through the Word, we should not merely analyze the “match” of the Word or express our affection for it. Once again I say we need to “strike” the Word in the proper place, and that place is our spirit.

If we would “strike” the “match” of the Word, we must learn to exercise our spirit. Do not use your mind or emotion to strike the Word. The Word will only light up in our experience if we strike it in our spirit. This is the reason we need to exercise our spirit to pray when we come to the Word of God. This is to pray-read the Word.

TESTIMONIES OF PRAY-READING THE WORD

Many believers throughout the centuries had the practice of praying with the Word of God.

Although they did not use the term pray-reading, they nonetheless had the fact in their experience. One of those who practiced praying the words of the Bible was George Whitefield, a contemporary of John Wesley. George Whitefield's practice was to pray the New Testament in Greek while on his knees. This was the secret of his power and spirituality. George Whitefield pray-read the Word of life. To pray the Word is to use our spirit to "strike" the Word.

I have been reading and studying the Bible for more than fifty years. When I was a young man, I loved the Word of God and was ambitious to know it thoroughly. However, I only knew to read the Bible with my eyes and my mind. Then someone encouraged me not only to read the Word, but also to meditate on it. I began to spend time to ponder the Word, to consider it, to dwell on it. This was somewhat helpful. I was also helped by reading George Mueller's autobiography. According to Mueller, we should not only read the Bible and meditate on it, but also pray over it. In his autobiography Mueller does not say that we should pray the Word; however, he does say that after reading a certain portion we should pray. For example, if we read a verse concerning love, we should then pray regarding

love. Likewise, we should pray concerning repentance when reading about repentance in the Word. This practice of praying immediately after reading a verse is similar to pray-reading. George Mueller's autobiography was very helpful, and I began to read the Bible and pray according to his practice. Often I actually prayed with the pure word of the Bible, making a certain verse my prayer to the Lord. In effect, I was pray-reading.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SPIRIT

Although I had adopted the practice of praying while reading the Word, I did not yet know how to exercise the spirit. From Brother Watchman Nee I received help in this matter. Brother Nee emphasized the necessity of exercising the spirit. He said that when we speak to others, especially in giving a message, we need to send forth our spirit by exercising it. He pointed out that if we use a certain part of our being while speaking to others, we shall touch the same part in them. For example, if we use our mind, we shall touch the mind of others. If we speak from our emotion, we shall touch others in their emotion. If we would touch others' spirit, Brother Nee told us, we must use our spirit.

THE SPIRIT BEING DORMANT

Because man is fallen, his spirit is dormant, whereas the mind and the emotion of the soul are extremely active. With men the mind is active; with women, it is the emotion which is active. The most idle and dormant part of the being of fallen man is the spirit. Even after we have been saved and regenerated, our spirit may remain idle and dormant. When certain sisters pray, they may pray by the emotion instead of by the spirit. As they pray to the Lord about their problems, they may weep. If they exercise their spirit instead of the emotion, they will pray in a very different manner about their problems. Instead of crying, they may say, "Lord, I thank You and praise You for all my troubles. I thank You, Lord, for my circumstance."

Although we may be very strong in our mind, emotion, or will, our spirit may be weak, idle, and dormant. Our mind, emotion, or will may react immediately to things. Our spirit, however, may be very slow to respond. Our spirit may even be dormant when we come to the Bible, whereas other parts of our being, especially the mind, may be extremely active. In reading the Bible, we may have very little exercise of the spirit.

EXPERIENCING THE FIRE IN THE WORD

If we fail to exercise our spirit in reading the Word, we fail to “strike” the “match” in our spirit. As a result, the “phosphorus,” the Spirit embodied in the Word, does not ignite. If we want to experience the phosphorus embodied in the match, the Spirit embodied in the Word, we need to exercise our spirit to pray-read the Word. Then we shall strike the match in the right place and experience the fire in the Word. We can testify that by taking the Word in the proper way, exercising our spirit, we experience the burning in our spirit.

EXPERIENCING THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

In the Bible light is one with life, life is one with love, love is related to holiness, and holiness, to righteousness. When all these are put together, we have power. These divine attributes—light, life, love, holiness, righteousness, and power—are actually the Triune God Himself coming to us as the Spirit through the Word. When we contact the Triune God as the Spirit through the Word, we experience Him as our light, life,

love, holiness, righteousness, and power. This is Christ in our experience. Experiencing Christ in such a subjective way, we spontaneously live Him.

The Word of life is not only identical to Christ; it is identical also to these divine attributes. From experience we can testify that whenever we strike the Word with our spirit, we have light. The Word of life becomes light to us in our experience. Furthermore, the Word becomes life, including love, holiness, righteousness, power, strength, and might. This is the Word of life being identical to the living Christ and also to the various attributes of the Triune God.

TAKING THE WORD AS THE TREE OF LIFE

We should not regard the Bible simply as a book of theology revealing who God is, what God is, and what God wants us to do in order to contact Him. The Bible is not just an objective revelation of God and His requirements. The Bible should also be the tree of life for us to eat. To us the Bible may be either a book of knowledge or a book of life, either the tree of knowledge or the tree of life. The tree of knowledge brings death, but the tree of life brings the divine life

supply. I can testify that in the past I acquired a great deal of knowledge by approaching the Bible as the tree of knowledge. The result was that I was deadened, even killed, by the Bible in black and white letters. This is according to Paul's word, "the letter kills" (2 Cor. 3:6). The Scripture in letters can kill. This comes from taking the Bible as the tree of knowledge. But if we exercise our spirit to feed on the Word, the Bible will become in our experience a book of life, even the tree of life. We shall then be supplied with life through every verse.

THE LORD AND HIS WORDS ABIDING IN US

I can testify that I am living and energized because I receive the life supply from the Word as the tree of life. The Word is the embodiment of the very Lord whom I love. Because I love Him, I contact Him through the Word, which is identical to the Lord Himself. Two verses in [John 15](#) indicate this. In [verse 4](#) the Lord Jesus says, "Abide in Me and I in you." But in [verse 7](#) He says, "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall come to pass to you." Notice that in [verse 4](#) it is the Lord who abides in us, whereas in [verse 7](#)

His words abide in us. This indicates that the Lord's words abiding in us are equal to the Lord Himself abiding in us. If we do not have His words abiding in us, it will be difficult for us to experience Him abiding in us. The Lord is abstract, but His word is concrete.

We need to contact the Word not only with our mind, but also with our regenerated spirit. When we exercise our spirit to contact the Word, the Word becomes identical to the Lord Himself in our experience. Then the Word is living, energizing, and filled with the divine attributes of light, life, love, holiness, righteousness, and power. By taking the Word in this way, we live Christ.

THE PROPER CHRISTIAN LIFE

I have no doubt that Paul's life was a life of living Christ. He could say, "To me to live is Christ" ([Phil. 1:21](#)). He also charged us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly ([Col. 3:16](#)). The word dwell in [Colossians 3:16](#) means to inhabit, to house itself, in us. To let the word of Christ house itself in us is to let the Word saturate our whole being. Eventually, when in our experience the Word, Christ, and the Triune God are mingled together as one, we live Christ. We have a life full

of the divine virtues of light, life, love, holiness, righteousness, and power. This is the proper Christian life.

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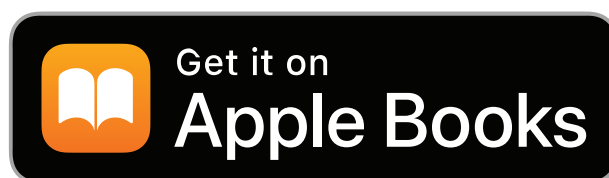
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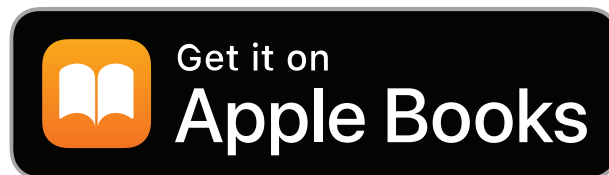
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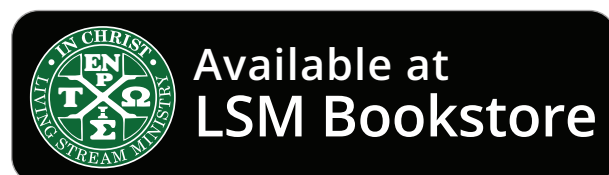
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