

TONIGHT'S READING



THE WAY FOR MAN TO ENJOY GOD (I)

Scripture Reading:

- John 4:23-24 ²³But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him.
²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
- Romans 8:26-27 ²⁶Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.
- Ephesians 6:18a By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit...
- Jude 20 But you, beloved, building up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

GOD'S FOUR STEPS BEING THE BASIS FOR OUR ENJOYING HIM

Previously, we considered the four steps God took to become our enjoyment. In the first step He created us with a spirit. Our spirit is the organ for us to receive God. In the second step God became flesh in the fullness of time; He was mingled with humanity. This man was the Lord Jesus. In the third step the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross at the appointed time. On the cross He shed His blood to remove everything that was incompatible with God. At the same time He crucified and dealt with the old creation and the self. In the fourth step He rose from the dead and became the Spirit. His death and resurrection brought man into God. Humanity is now fully in the Spirit. The items in the Spirit are very rich. They include God's entrance into man, the death of the cross, resurrection, and man's entrance into God. These riches are now in the Spirit.

Here is a simple example. When sugar, grape juice, and other ingredients are added to a glass of water, it is still a glass of water in a general sense. But if we analyze it, we will see that it contains other ingredients. Sugar has been added to the water. Grape juice has been added. If the glass is placed on a burner and heat is applied to it, the element of heat has been added to it. Other ingredients may also be added. It is no longer just a glass of water; it now contains water with many rich ingredients. Whoever drinks from this glass will receive all the rich ingredients.

In the same way, when the Lord Jesus said to His disciples received the Holy Spirit (John 20:22), this Spirit was not just “water”; rather, He was a “drink” that included many rich elements. The elements of incarnation, crucifixion, the shedding of His blood, His termination of the old creation, His resurrection from the dead, and His bringing of humanity into divinity were all included in the Spirit. Whenever a person receives the Spirit, all the rich elements in the Spirit enter into him. Whether or not he is aware of it, all these elements are in him. This is like drinking a glass of water with many ingredients. Whether or not we realize it, all the ingredients in the water enter into us. Today when a person receives the Spirit, the functions of all the elements contained in the Spirit, such as God’s mingling with man, man’s mingling with God, the cleansing of sins, and the termination of the self are activated. As we practice living in this Spirit, we will gradually experience all these elements that God has accomplished for us. The steps or ways for us to enjoy God are based on the four steps He has accomplished. Hence, there are now four steps for us to enjoy God.

The First Step—Exercising Our Spirit

The first step for us to enjoy God is to exercise our God-created spirit. Whenever we want to contact God and enjoy Him, we must first learn to exercise our spirit. What does it mean to exercise our spirit? When we speak, we exercise our voice. When we look at others, we exercise our eyes. When others listen to us, they exercise their ears. In order for us to contact God and enjoy Him, we must exercise our spirit.

In order to exercise our spirit when we come to God, we should pray according to the feeling deep within our being. We should forget about our thoughts and not be concerned with what we should say. We should simply turn and pray according to the inner feeling. The feeling deep within us is the feeling of the spirit. When we pray according to this feeling, we are exercising our spirit in prayer.

Regrettably, we sometimes do not pray in this way. We may pray for many matters according to our mind but never touch God. Hence, even though we pray, we are dry within. When we prepare to pray, we have a lot of considerations in our mind. We may consider how we should pray. We may consider whether we should pray for our father, our mother, ourselves, our studies, our work, or our future. This is not the exercise of the spirit; instead, it is the exercise of the mind. It is right for us to exercise our mind when we are at school, but it is altogether wrong to exercise our mind in this way when we pray. The more we consider, the more God disappears. The more we exercise our mind, the farther God is with us. In reality God does not disappear and does not run away. We are simply using the wrong organ. We cannot use our eyes to hear or our ears to identify colors. If someone speaks of a dark red cup, the dark red will “disappear” if we try to see the cup with our ears. Or if someone tries to hear a loud voice with his eyes, the voice will “disappear.” Actually, the voice is still there, but the wrong organ is being used to substantiate it. In the same way, we cannot pray to God with our mind. God is not in our mind; He is in our spirit.

In English we have the word *substance*, which means “matter” or “reality.” From this noun we have the verb *substantiate*, which means “to make real” or “to materialize something.” Sound is an example of a

substance. It is something real, something substantial. However, if we do not have ears or if we are deaf, we will not realize that there is such a substance as sound; in other words, we will be unable to substantiate sound. The same is true with color. Although it is something real and substantial, if we do not have eyes or if we are blind, we will be unable to see this substance. In other words, we will be unable to substantiate color. We should remember that God is Spirit and therefore is “substance.” Even though God is a “substance,” and our spirit is a “substance,” as long as we exercise our mind instead of exercising our spirit, we will be unable to substantiate God. If we exercise our spirit, however, we will immediately realize that God exists. We will substantiate God.

When we come to God, we should forget our considerations and pray with our spirit. Provided we use our spirit, we will immediately touch God, sense His presence, and receive Him. Once a believer learns this lesson, instead of exercising his mind, he will learn to pray from his spirit. The moment he kneels down, he will exercise his spirit instead of wandering in his mind with different thoughts. When he is convicted in his spirit of being full of the self, loving himself rather than God, he will cry out to God, saying, “I am full of the self. I only love myself. I do not love You at all.” Such a simple prayer will immediately bring him in touch with God. The more we pray from our spirit, the more we touch God, take Him in, and are filled with Him. After praying, we are persons filled with God. We are satisfied, refreshed, freed, comforted, cheered, and enlightened. This is a prayer of fellowship, a prayer that touches God, a prayer that involves the exercise of the spirit, and a prayer that counts.

Our mind, however, is often quite troublesome. While we are praying with an exercised spirit, a thought may suddenly come to us concerning our work or our family. Once we are interrupted by such thoughts, we turn from our spirit to our mind. These thoughts cut off our fellowship with God and draw us out of the spirit. Then it is difficult to return to our spirit. This shows that contacting God through prayer is entirely a matter in the spirit. Whenever we are in the mind instead of the spirit, our fellowship with God is terminated immediately. We cannot fellowship with God in our mind. God meets with us in our spirit, and we meet with Him in our spirit. The Lord Jesus said that God is Spirit and that we must worship Him in spirit (John 4:24). To worship God is to fellowship with Him and to contact Him. May we learn to follow the steps that God has taken in the work He has accomplished in order for us to contact Him. His first step was to create us with a spirit. Hence, in contacting Him, our first step must be to exercise our spirit.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must set aside our troublesome and hindering thoughts whenever we pray. When we draw near to God in prayer, we must learn to set aside our thoughts. We must learn to reject and deny our thoughts. When we come to God, we must learn to turn to our spirit and to pray from our spirit. This is what it means to contact God by exercising our spirit.

Questions:

1. Why do we need to use our spirit to contact God?
2. How could we maintain a proper and regular physical exercise? In a spiritual sense, how do we exercise our spirit in contacting God to keep our spiritual muscle strong?