

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

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"He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit . . . does He do it out of the works of the law or out of the hearing of faith?" Galatians 3:5

In

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As newborn babes, LONG FOR THE GUILELESS MILK OF THE WORD IN ORDER THAT BY IT YOU MAY GROW UNTO SALVATION.

1 PETER 2:2

Dear Life-study Listener,

How do you view the Bible? Do you see it only as a book of teachings to obey? Or do you see it as a source of supply to nourish you to carry out those teachings? This month we discuss the matter of eating the Word of God in our "What Is" article. To view the Bible as food may be a foreign concept to our natural understanding. Yet the thought that the Word of God is to be food to us is clearly seen in both the Old and New Testaments. We hope that our article will make this more than clear to you and that you will be brought into a new understanding and experience of the Word of God. The "Path of Life" excerpt on page four is also related to this important subject.

Are you on the Internet yet? We understand that many of you do not have access to this modern world of information, but for those of you who can get connected, we want to remind you that you can listen to *Life-study of the Bible* on the Web. More people are discovering our extensive library of *Life-study of the Bible* radio programs at www.lifestudy.com. At our current rate of production, we expect to finish the programs on all of the books of the Bible by May of 2005. Pray for us that the Lord would continue to grant us the grace for this tremendous work to spread the rich ministry of His Word.

Living Stream Ministry

WHAT IS IT TO EAT GOD'S WORD?

The Bible is a unique book because, as the Word of God, it nourishes us in our spiritual life. Other writings may function to enrich our understanding of people and events. The Bible alone satisfies our inner hunger for spiritual food. The Lord Jesus said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). The words

(continued on page 3)

RESPONSE *from* LISTENERS

We invite you to share your comments with us and other listeners so we all may be encouraged in the Lord. Responses should be addressed to *The Hearing of Faith*, "Response from Listeners," 2431 W. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92801 or radio@lsm.org. Responses are subject to editing for the sake of space and clarity.

It's a real joy to hear the spoken messages of Life-study of the Bible with Witness Lee and the easy-to-understand comments by mature brothers through Internet radio at www.lsm.org every morning. It's so inspiring and enlightening to see through this program how marvelous Christ and His church are to us Christians.

Osaka, Japan

I remember praying one night that I wanted to receive foundational teaching so that I may minister as Christ would have us. Later, I accidentally came across a radio station, and Witness Lee was speaking from the book of Galatians. I was doing a Sunday school study from that book. I knew God answered my prayer. I later ordered the New Testament Recovery Version.

Birmingham, Alabama

I listened to your radio ministry today on KTEK and enjoyed the ministry immensely. I am really intrigued to hear more. No morning is complete without listening to your ministry. I never had a grandfather in my family, a spiritual leader in the family. For me, listening to Witness Lee on the radio is like having a grandfather in the house to teach, lead, and guide the family in the direction that is highest and purest for the satisfaction of God. I enjoy listening to Witness Lee on the radio every morning and try to share everything I hear with my family and others as much as possible. I feel so supported, undergirded, and loved through the day through this ministry, so thank you very much. It is a necessary, integral part of my daily living.

Houston, TX

Excerpt from

THE SPIRITUAL MAN

BY WATCHMAN NEE

THE SPIRITUAL BELIEVER AND THE SOUL

If a believer wants to have a steady life in God, he needs to understand what is the meaning of piercing into the spirit.

The word of God is "living"—having the living power; "operative"—capable of doing work; and "sharper than any two-edged sword"—able to pierce into the spirit.

The word of God can pierce deeper than the soul, even to the innermost part, the spirit. Thus, the believers are led into what is much deeper than the feeling, into the eternal spirit-life. If a believer wants to have a steady life in God, he needs to understand what is the meaning of piercing into the spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can teach the believers what the soul-life is and what the spirit-life is. When the believer can distinguish the two in experience and know their value, he leaves that superficial and shallow life of emotion behind and comes to gain the deep, solid, spiritual one. Only then can the believer have rest. The soul-life will never give rest to people. Nevertheless, this has to be realized from experience. Otherwise, the understanding in the mind only makes the believers more soulish.

We should pay special attention to the words "piercing" and "dividing." The word of God pierces (or penetrates) into the soul and the spirit so that they become divided. When the Lord Jesus was crucified, His hands, His feet, and His side were pierced. Are we willing to let the cross work in our soul and spirit? The soul of Mary was pierced (Luke 2:35). Although her "son" was given by God, she had to give Him up and give up all her right and demand for a son. She had to reject every natural love. She had to rid herself of all the attachments in the soul. This is the kind of work that the word of God should do in us.

The dividing of soul and spirit is not only the separating of soul and spirit, but the dividing of the soul itself. The dividing of the soul is very meaningful. If the word of life is to reach to our spirit, it has to divide the soul first, for the spirit is surrounded by the soul. The word of the cross pierces and divides the soul and opens the way for the life of God to get into the life of the spirit and free the spirit from the bondage of the soul. The soul-life, having the imprint of the cross, will then keep its submissive position to the spirit.

The Spiritual Man, vol. 1, pp. 203-204

TO EAT GOD'S WORD (continued from page 1)

that proceed out of God's mouth are food for us to eat.

The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah said, "Your words were found and I ate them, and Your word became to me the gladness and joy of my heart" (Jer. 15:16). What does it mean for us to eat God's Word? For Jeremiah to eat God's Word did not mean that he ate the black and white pages of the Bible, for if this were the meaning, Jeremiah would not have said that the words made his heart joyful. Jeremiah's eating of the Word was not a physical eating but a spiritual receiving of the Word of God as food. Food signifies anything that we take in to satisfy us, sustain us, and strengthen us. For Jeremiah to take God's Word as his food meant that he received God's Word as his

*The way to touch
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spiritual nourishment and satisfaction. We also can take the Word of God as food and eat it to satisfy our spiritual hunger and cause our heart to be joyful.

The Lord Jesus said, "The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). In order to receive the Scriptures as nourishment we must go beyond the letter of the Bible and touch the

Spirit in His Word. In Ephesians 6:17-18 the apostle Paul said, "And receive...the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit." The way to touch the Spirit in God's Word is to use our spirit to receive, or eat, His Word by prayer. We can make the words of the Bible the content of our prayer, praying the words directly to the Lord. As we read God's Word, we pray over the words, turning them into our prayer. We can even turn verses that seemingly do not have anything to do with us into prayer. For example, we may read the verses on how Jesus walked on the stormy sea and how his disciples were "willing to take Him into the boat" (John 6:21). These words can become our nourishment when we pray as we read them saying, "Lord, thank you for walking on the stormy waters of my difficult situations. I take you into the 'boat' of my family life, my marriage, and my employment. Lord, calm all my troubles." Receiving the Word of God in this way nourishes our spirit and strengthens our life before God.

Throughout the centuries, God's loving seekers in both the Old and New Testaments, such as David (Psa. 119:103); Jeremiah (Jer. 15:16); Ezekiel (Ezek. 3:1-3); Peter (1 Pet. 2:2); and John (Rev. 10:10) all fed on the words that proceed out of God's mouth. Day by day we also can come to the Word of God as food to satisfy our hunger and make our heart joyful. As we take in the milk of the Word, we, like Peter, will taste that the Lord is good (1 Pet. 2:2-3).

For further reading on this subject, please see *A Living of Mutual Abiding with the Lord in Spirit*; *A Time with the Lord*; and *Pray-Reading the Word*, by Witness Lee, published by Living Stream Ministry.

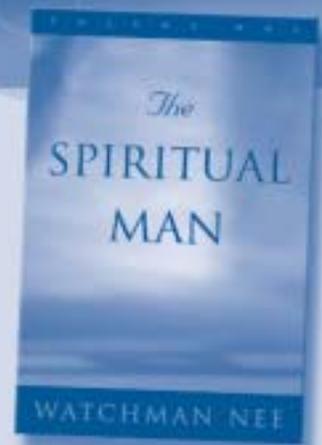
A BOOK THAT INTERPRETS

*"...spiritual things with
spiritual words"*

1 COR. 2:13

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The PATH OF Life

Below are excerpts focused on matters and practices of the spiritual life as revealed in God's Word. May the Lord show us "the path of life" (Psa. 16:11) that we may have a daily living of enjoying, experiencing, and gaining Christ.

THE OUTWARD WAY AND THE INWARD WAY TO TOUCH THE BIBLE

There are two ways to touch the Bible: the outward way and the inward way. The outward way to touch the Bible is by exercising our mind merely to understand it, while the inward way is by using our spirit not mainly to understand it but to touch the spirit and get the life supply.

*If we touch the Bible
in an inward way
exercising our spirit,
we will be enlivened.*

John 1:1 is a wonderful verse. Suppose two brothers come together to read this verse. After reading it, one brother may ask, "What does *in the beginning* mean?" The other brother may say, "God is the beginning." The first brother may respond, "I don't think so. How can you say that God is the beginning? I don't understand what you are talking about. And what is *the Word*?" This verse says that the Word was with God and the Word was God. Surely the Word and God are two. How can they be one? Let us ask the students at the Bible institute." This is an illustration of touching the Bible in an outward way. Touching the Bible even for only a few minutes in this way is deadening.

There is another way to touch the Bible, the inward way, the way of exercising our spirit. Suppose these same two brothers come to the Word in the following way, saying, "O Lord, in the beginning. In the beginning was the Word. Amen! Hallelujah for the beginning. O Lord, the Word.

Hallelujah for the Word! And the Word was with God. O God! And the Word was God!" When we exercise our spirit to touch the Word in such a living way, we may not understand much, but we are filled with the Spirit, and we get the life supply.

It is very clear that the Bible can be two entities. It can be dead letters to kill us, or it can be the Spirit to enliven us. It depends upon which way we touch it. If we touch the Bible in an outward way using only our mind, we will be deadened. However, if we touch the Bible in an inward way exercising our spirit, we will be enlivened. This is true of any verse or chapter, from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation. Sometimes we may not understand what we read, and sometimes we may understand but not be able to utter what we see. We may even say, "Praise the Lord, I received something this morning, but I do not have the words to speak it!" This is the right way. The right way to touch the Bible is to touch the Lord Himself. We must never separate the Bible from the Lord. Whenever we open the Bible, we have to open our mouth and open our spirit to utter something to the Lord. We can say, "O Lord! O Lord Jesus!" The louder we say these words the better. This is truly something wonderful and marvelous.

Today the best dietitians cannot fully tell us what is in the food that we eat day by day. If the smallest wheat germ cannot be fully understood, how can we understand the Bible in full? Although we do not fully understand the food we eat, we still take it in day by day. Many things get into us

and nourish us, whether or not we understand them. It is the same with the Bible. The Bible is not merely for our understanding. If the Bible were only for our understanding, we would be miserable because our understanding is so limited. We should not trust in our understanding of the Bible. Forty years ago I trusted very much in my understanding of the Bible, but today I no longer trust in my understanding. I do not care merely to understand the Bible. When I come to the Bible, I simply receive it. I receive it not merely by using my mind to understand but by exercising my spirit.

Enjoying the Riches of Christ for the Building up of the Church as the Body of Christ, pp. 38-39, by Witness Lee

THE HEARING OF FAITH

is a publication of Living Stream Ministry. All subscriptions are free. In addition to portions of ministry, this newsletter features broadcast updates and other items of interest. We hope that this newsletter will not only inform you of current news but will also nourish and refresh your spirit. Please be sure to read our reply card and feel free to use it to make comments or ask questions.

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According to the revelation of the Scripture, we believe that any ministry that comes from God should trust in God for all its needs. Therefore, we have made it our policy not to solicit donations or contributions. However, if any of our listeners are led by the Lord to give, we will accept offerings as from the Lord and will use them for the furtherance of His truth.

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