

### Exercising Our Spirit to Terminate Gossip

"In any kind of human society, and in the church as well, it is so easy to have gossip. As a word of gossip spreads more and more, it will always be changed a little bit. Either some part will be left out, or something will be added. This is always the case when a rumor is spread. For example, one person may tell another that a certain thing will probably happen soon. The second person may repeat the story but omit the word probably. The third person may repeat the same story as if it had already happened.

"Gossip, rumors, and the twisting of words are all means of spreading death. Even among the brothers and sisters it is quite possible to have problems of this kind. As an example of the twisting of words spreading death, in some of the meetings I told people that to pray in the Lord's name should be a reality, not a formality. Simply to add the words, 'In the name of the Lord Jesus,' at the end of a prayer may be a formality. My words were twisted, and I was later accused in writing of saying that there is no need to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. I never told people that there is no need to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, but I did tell them not to make this a formality. Actually, I myself many times do say in my prayer, 'In the precious name of the Lord.' This is an example of the way rumors twist the words and spread death.

"If we learn to be in our spirit, we will be on guard against the death-spreading rumors. From years of experience and from suffering I have learned one secret to avoid these situations. I do not like to pass on a word from one person to another. Rather, I have learned to advise the brothers and sisters to write down their messages and mail them to one another instead of depending on me to pass on a word. I do not consider myself trustworthy, for it is easy for me to forget, and, even if I remember, I may leave out some point, or I might even add something to their word. This would damage their message. If we never pass on words for others, we will be spared that kind of suffering in the church life.

"If we are in the spirit, many things will be terminated. There could never be deadness or deadening in the church life through gossip. In the natural life we like to know things about others and their affairs. The result is gossip. If we are in the spirit, we will be so simple. We would not care to know things about others, and gossip would be terminated. We would prefer not to know anything about others unless it is necessary because the Lord has burdened us for them."

*(Witness Lee, To Serve in the Human Spirit, Chpt. 4, pp. 47-48)*

### Prayer Burdens

1. Pray for the Chinese-speaking Disciples' Camp Level 1 on Jan. 18th to 21st. May the Lord perfect the saints in the basic spiritual exercises for a healthy church life in Toronto.
2. Pray for the new ones among the young people who attended Ignite that they would be visited and cared for by the young people.
3. Pray for the approximately 40 saints attending the Hall 1 Chinese-speaking Basic Truth Class, which started last 12/24/06. May their faith be strengthened as they are nourished with the basic truths.

### Announcements:

#### General

1. **New web site**  
A new web site, [www.thechurchintoronto.ca](http://www.thechurchintoronto.ca), is available that contains the morning revival material, current announcements, church prayer burdens and fellowship concerning the church from the elders.
2. **2006 3rd Quarter Financial Summaries Posted**  
The 2006 Financial Summaries for the 3rd quarter have been posted at the various meeting halls.

### The church in Toronto

Philippians Week 13

Jan 22 - Feb 3, 2007

### Pursuing Christ to Gain Him (1) — Serving by the Spirit and Not Trusting in the Flesh

*Weekly Bible Reading:*

**Philippians 3:1-6**

*Hymns:*

**717; 751; 904; 1216**

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### Monday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

#### Philippians 3:1

- 1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, for me it is not irksome, but for you it is safe.

#### Romans 2:28-29

- 28 ...he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.
- 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### Rejoicing in the Lord and Being Watchful Concerning the Law Keepers

"The Epistle to the Philippians was written when Paul received material supply from the believers in Philippi. Through Epaphroditus they had sent this supply to care for Paul's need during his imprisonment. After receiving their gift, Paul wrote them this Epistle.

"As we have pointed out, in the first two chapters we see the believers' concern for Paul and Paul's concern for the saints. According to 1:7, Paul realized that the believers in Philippi had him in their heart and that they were partakers of his grace. Paul went on to say that he longed after them all 'in the inward parts of Christ Jesus' (1:8). Thus, there was a mutual care between the apostle and the believers.

"Toward the end of chapter two, Paul speaks of sending Timothy and Epaphroditus to Philippi. Remarks about the sending of co-workers to visit the saints are usually found at the very end of Paul's Epistles. This may indicate that Paul was planning to close this Epistle at the end of chapter two. Paul, however, was obviously burdened to write more. After he spoke of Timothy and Epaphroditus, his burden still was not discharged. Deep in his heart he was troubled by the Judaizers. I believe that this is the reason for the change of subject at the beginning of chapter three.

### Rejoicing in the Lord

"In 3:1 Paul says, 'For the rest, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, and for you it is safe.' The Greek word rendered irksome also means wearisome, tedious, troublesome. Paul did not find it irksome or wearisome to write the same thing to the saints.

"Paul here charges the saints to rejoice in the Lord. To rejoice in the Lord is a safeguard, a security. For Paul to write the saints about rejoicing in the Lord was safe for them. Paul's use of the word safe points to the connection between 3:1 and 2. There must have been a situation

in Philippi which required a safeguard, some kind of protection. The situation Paul had in mind was the trouble caused by the Judaizers. Therefore, after telling the believers to rejoice in the Lord, he charges them to beware of the dogs, the evil workers, the concision (v. 2). The Greek word for beware means to keep a watchful eye ever upon. On the one hand, the apostle advises the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord; on the other hand, he warns them to beware of, to keep a watchful eye ever upon, the Judaizers."

*(Witness Lee, Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 17, pp. 139-140)*

## Tuesday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Philippians 3:2-3

- 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision.
- 3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

### Romans 8:5-6

- 5 For those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit.
- 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### The Three Negative Aspects of the Religious Judaizers

"In using the word 'dogs' Paul was very strong. If we were to use such an expression today, we would surely be condemned. Paul, however, was not the first to be so bold in his utterance. Both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus referred to the Pharisees as the offspring of vipers (Matt. 3:7; 12:34). Like John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, Paul was honest and frank in speaking the facts. The Pharisees truly were the offspring of vipers, and the Judaizers really were 'dogs.'

"In 3:2 Paul says, 'Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision.' Since there is no conjunction used between these clauses, they must refer to the same class of people. Dogs are unclean (Lev. 11:4-8), the workers are evil, and the concision are those deserving contempt. (Concision, meaning mutilation, is a term of contempt, used in place of circumcision.) The 'dogs' refer to the Judaizers. In nature they are unclean dogs, in behavior they are evil workers, and in religion they are the concision, people of shame. In such a book concerning the experience and enjoyment of Christ, the apostle warns the Gentile believers to be wary of such unclean, evil, and contemptible people.

"In speaking of the dogs, the evil workers, the concision, Paul exposed the shame of the Judaizers. In nature, they were dogs; in behavior, they were evil; and in religion, they were contemptible. Although they gloried in their religion, Paul regarded it as an object of shame and contempt. He wanted the believers to beware of the dogs, the evil workers, the concision.

### The Three Positive Aspects of the Spiritual Believers

"In verse 3 Paul continues, 'For we are the circumcision, who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' Those who are the circumcision here are the New Testament believers, the ones genuinely circumcised by Christ's crucifixion. They are absolutely different from the Judaizers. They serve as priests by the Spirit of God, not by the ordinances of law; they boast in Christ, not in the law; and they have no confidence in the flesh, but have their confidence in the Spirit.

"In verses 2 and 3 there is a threefold contrast: believers who serve by the Spirit of God in contrast to the dogs; believers who boast in Christ in contrast to evil workers; and believers who have no confidence in the flesh in contrast to the concision. The Judaizers lived by their fallen nature, whereas the believers in Christ serve by the Spirit of God. Thus, the Spirit of God is in contrast to the nature of the 'dogs.' The Judaizers did evil things and even boasted in

take away all these things, there may be very little left in today's religious organizations. I believe that we are quite clear that we do not want to take that way in the Lord's recovery. Although we may have no intention of following that way, I am nevertheless concerned that something of that old way still remains within us, unconsciously, subconsciously, influencing us. Due to such an influence, we may have some consideration within us that after a period of training in Los Angeles we would be sent out to another city. In our consideration, we would then make our training the same as a seminary, a Bible school, or a Bible institute. This is absolutely not the Lord's way, and it is not the way we are taking. The Lord's way is a way in prayer. How much we need a deep realization that the Lord's way is absolutely a way in prayer.

### 2) There is a Great Difference Between Two Different Kinds of Serving

"Not only is the Lord's way of prayer the way to carry out the matter of moving out to other cities for the spread of the Lord's recovery, but it is also the way to take care of such matters as the cleaning of the meeting hall and arranging the chairs for the meeting. For these practical everyday matters, we need much prayer. How good it would be to see so many saints coming into the service in the church here without any arrangement and without any assignment, but coming to serve by praying. How wonderful it would be to have all the service carried out by means of prayer.

"To serve by praying, it is necessary for us to serve in our human spirit. This is the number one item. To pray is altogether a matter in the human spirit. Just as seeing is a matter of the eyes, hearing, a matter of the ears, and walking, a matter of the feet, in the same way, praying is a matter of the spirit. To serve by praying means to serve by using our human spirit. The way to use our human spirit, to exercise our spirit, is to pray. To pray is the best way to exercise our spirit. Therefore, to say that we serve by praying is to say that we serve in the spirit.

"We do expect that every member would be a functioning member, but we do not like to see the functioning under the assignment of the leading ones. The unique way for us to come together and serve together is the way of prayer. How much prayer we need in our serving together. When we come to arrange the chairs for the meeting, each one of us has to come with much prayer. Then before we begin to take care of the chairs, we need to pray together, to pray very much for the arranging, pray for the seating, pray for our service, pray for everything we are going to do in the church service. There is a great difference between the service that is full of prayer and the service that is done without prayer. These are two entirely different kinds of services; one is a service full of prayer, even with a lot of prayer poured out over the service, and the other, a service that is merely doing many things. There is a great difference between the two.

"In the same way, there is a great difference between visiting the saints or visiting the unbelievers with the visitation that is full of prayer and the visitation that has very little prayer. Without prayer, there will be poverty in the service. The riches, even the enriching power in the service, come with much prayer. We need an appetite for prayer. Not only do we need to pray individually, but we need to come together to pray. We should not try to initiate anything, to start anything, or to do anything without adequate prayer. We need to learn to pray adequately."

*(ibid., Chpt. 5, pp. 57-61)*

Note: **Bold type** and/or underlining have been added for emphasis in the above verses and quotations.

### Suggested Supplementary Reading

The Holy Word for Morning Revival— Philippians: Week 4, Days 1-2

The Life-study of Philippians, Messages 17

speaking. Yet they may know how to demonstrate the spirit and have the utterance. Utterance comes from the spirit.

“Our one need is to learn how to exercise our human spirit. Christ has accomplished everything, He has obtained everything, and He has attained to the headship. Everything is completed, everything is ready, and, thank Him, everything has been installed into us. From my experience I can tell you that what we need is to learn how to exercise our spirit.”

*(To Serve in the Human Spirit, Chpt 4., pp. 51-52)*

## Saturday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Romans 1:9

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,

### Romans 14:17-19

17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

18 For he who serves Christ in this is well pleasing to God and approved by men.

19 So then let us pursue the things of peace and the things for building up one another.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### ***Serving by the Spirit of God with Our Human Spirit, cont'd.***

#### **5. We Need to Serve in Prayer — to Serve by Praying**

“If we consider all the verses in the book of Acts related to the matter of prayer, we will see that the first group of Christians in the early days served the Lord by means of prayer. If we look into the content of all the verses, if we read and pray-read them, we will see that the serving ones took the way of prayer. We may be surprised how much the service in the book of Acts is a matter of prayer. The book of Acts is a long book, covering quite a long period of time, and it includes many serving ones: Peter and the other disciples who took Jerusalem as a center, and later, Paul the apostle with his co-workers who took Antioch as another center. In all the chapters you could not find one verse that tells you they had some plan, some program, some schedule, or even some convention or conference to have a discussion about organizing their service to the Lord. In every case all the different serving ones took only one way, and that was the way of prayer. Every part of their service, every bit of their work for the Lord, was initiated by prayer. This is a crucial matter. They had no other way, used no other method, and took no other means for the Lord’s work, for His service, but the unique way of prayer. Their way was absolutely different from the way of the religious organizations today. In the early days of the churches, the apostles and all the saints served the Lord in the way of prayer. We need to be impressed with the crucial point that they had no other way, no other method, no other means.

#### **1) Delivered from the Influence of the Old Way Practiced In Religion**

“In practical matters such as these related to the Lord’s move, we should not expect the leading ones or anyone else I tell us what we should do or where we should go. That way of organization is wrong, and we need to be delivered from the influence of that way, the old way practiced in religion. We need to come back to the pure Word to see the way taken in the early days by the first group of Christians in serving the Lord. There was no organization, no arrangement, no schedule, no plan, and no raising of funds. There was hardly any mention of money or finances, and no one exercised control over the situation. The conference in chapter fifteen of Acts did not concern the work, but the teaching, the doctrine, and the faith of the church.

If you take away all the schedules, the programs, the plans, and the conventions, the conferences, and the fund-raising, the talk about money, and the human manipulation—if you

them, whereas the true believers boast in Christ. They glory and rejoice in Him. As used here, the word boast implies not only boasting, but also rejoicing and glorying. Our boasting, glorying, and rejoicing are not in our outward deeds, not in our behavior or conduct, but in Christ alone. The Judaizers had confidence in the flesh, whereas the true believers in Christ have no confidence in the flesh.

“The flesh in 3:3 comprises all that we are and have in our natural being. The fact that the Judaizers had confidence in their circumcision was a sign that their confidence was in their flesh. They trusted in their natural qualities and qualifications, not in the Spirit. Their confidence was in what they were by nature. They trusted in the fact that they were Jews. By contrast Paul says strongly that we who believe in Christ do not have any confidence in the flesh. Our confidence is wholly in the Lord.

“What a contrast we see in verses 2 and 3! We serve by the Spirit of God, we boast in Christ, and we have confidence not in the flesh, but only in the Lord. Because we deny our old nature, we are the true circumcision. The denial of the flesh is the real circumcision, the true cutting off of the flesh as revealed in Colossians 2:11.”

*(ibid., pp. 140-142)*

## Wednesday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Philippians 3:3

3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

### John 3:6

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

### John 4:24

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### ***Serving by the Spirit of God with Our Human Spirit***

#### **1. The Holy Spirit and Our Human Spirit — the Power and the Switch**

“As Christians, we all know that to serve God we need the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no possibility that we could serve God. However, we need a vision, a revelation, that to serve God it is necessary for us, in addition, to know our human spirit. The Holy Spirit is the power for us to serve God, and the human spirit is the organ, the means, the instrument, for us to receive and contain the power and to apply it.

“The way to use our human spirit can be illustrated by the application of electricity. First of all, it is necessary for electricity to be installed into a building. After the electricity has been installed, what should we do when we need to use it? It would be foolish to call the power plant and ask them to send some electricity. What we need to do is simply use the switch in order to apply the electricity. If we realize that electricity has been installed already, we simply need to go to the place where there is a means for us to apply the electricity. When we turn on the switch, immediately the electricity works for us.

“We may compare ourselves to the building, and the Holy Spirit to the heavenly, divine electricity. This spiritual ‘electricity’ is the Lord Himself, and He has already been installed into us. We need to realize that we already have the heavenly electricity installed into us. Hallelujah, we do have this installation! We received this wonderful installation of Christ into us when we accepted Him. Now we know that we need the Holy Spirit, but we may not be so clear as to the way to apply the Holy Spirit who has been installed into us as the heavenly electricity. There is no need for us to fast and pray for three days and nights without sleeping. There is no need for us to pray with a loud voice in a zealous way, with tears flowing down. The heavenly electricity has already been installed into us, and there is a switch within us.

When we need electricity for any purpose, we simply go to the proper place to touch the proper organ, the means to apply the electricity. We touch the switch just a little bit, and the electricity is turned on. It is so simple. This is the wonderful secret of applying the heavenly electricity. "...In John 3:6 we are told, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' In this verse there are two spirits, the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. That which is born of the Holy Spirit is the human spirit. The human spirit is a specific organ for us to have contact with God, who is the Spirit. Our human spirit is the switch, the proper organ or the means to apply the heavenly electricity that has been installed in us."

*(Witness Lee, To Serve in the Human Spirit, Chpt. 4, pp. 43-45)*

## Thursday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Romans 7:6

6 But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that **we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.**

### 2 Corinthians 3:6b

6 ...for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

### Galatians 6:1-2

1 Brothers, even if a man is overtaken in some offense, **you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness**, looking to yourself lest you also be tempted.

2 **Bear one another's burdens**, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ completely.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### **Serving by the Spirit of God with Our Human Spirit, cont'd.**

## 2. Exercising Our Spirit for the Body of Christ

"...the Body of Christ is altogether a matter in our spirit. The book of Ephesians confirms this. Ephesians 1 tells us that we can see the church only in our spirit (vv. 17-23). Ephesians 2 tells us that the building of the church, the Body, both universally and locally, is in our spirit (vv. 20-22). Then chapter three tells us that we need to be strengthened into our inner man, the regenerated human spirit (v. 16). Chapter four tells us that we are being renewed in the spirit of our mind (v. 23), and chapter five tells us that we need to be filled in our human spirit unto all the fullness of God (v. 18, with 3:19). Finally, chapter six tells us that we need to pray as the church, as the Body, in the spirit (v. 18). From all these verses we can see that the Body is altogether a matter in our spirit.

"Whenever we turn to our spirit and exercise our spirit, we touch the Body, because the Body is in our spirit. When we exercise our spirit and touch the Body, not only do we have power, but we have the authority, because the Body is identified with the enthroned Head, with the lordship, with the headship, and with the kingship. The authority of the Head is with the Body. When you exercise your spirit, you touch the Body, and when you touch the Body, you are in the authority of the Head. In doing any business, there is the need of capital to work with. We may say that the authority of the Head is the capital for our service. The capital that we need for service is the authority of the Head, and the way for us to touch this authority is by exercising our spirit. We touch the power in electricity by switching on. In a similar way, we touch the authority of the Head when we exercise our spirit. This is not a small thing.

"Many dear saints are weak because they damage their spirit. Then, speaking in a practical way, they are out of the reality of the Body. When you are out of the reality of the Body, you are powerless. You have no power because you lose the practical connection with the Body. Your spirit (be damaged by only a little bit of gossiping, a little bit of murmuring, or a little bit of dissatisfaction. Even a very thin piece of paper that gets into a switch can cut off the flow of electricity. When this happens, the power is lost. A little bit of murmuring, a little bit of

gossiping, or a little bit of dissatisfaction with certain brothers is enough to cut you off from the flow of the divine electricity.

"You may think that a little gossip or a little criticism of others is not very important. But just as a piece of very thin paper can cut off the flow of electricity, only a little gossip or criticism is sufficient to cause you to be out of the spirit, and therefore out of the reality of the Body. From experience I know too well that a very small thing in my spirit disconnects me from the flow of the heavenly electricity. Then I am through, I am finished, as far as the power and authority are concerned. There is no power and no authority, because the power and the authority of the Head are in the Body, not in me individually, and the Body is absolutely a matter in the spirit. Therefore, all the time we need to keep ourselves in our spirit connected to the Holy Spirit. Then we will have not only the power, but also the authority of the Head. When we turn to the spirit, we get into the reality of the Body, and in the Body we are empowered and authorized by the Head.

*(ibid., pp. 50-51)*

## Friday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### 1 Corinthians 2:1-4

1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, came not according to excellence of speech or of wisdom, announcing to you the mystery of God.

2 For **I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ**, and this One crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling;

4 And **my speech and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power**,

5 In order **that your faith would not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### **Serving by the Spirit of God with Our Human Spirit, cont'd.**

## 3. Ministering Christ to Others by the Exercise of Our Spirit

"The main purpose of the spiritual service is to minister life to others, to minister Christ to others. This Christ as life is in our spirit. If we do not know how to exercise our spirit, how to apply our spirit, it is impossible for us to minister Christ as life to others. We may not minister life, but instead minister knowledge, teaching in letters, because we do not know how to exercise our spirit and because we are not in our spirit. In that kind of ministry there is no life and no ministry of the living Christ.

## 4. In Demonstration of the Spirit and of Our Spirit

"In 1 Corinthians 2:4 Paul says that, when he came to the Corinthians, he did not use enticing words, persuasive words, but he came to them with the demonstration of his spirit. 'And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' Enticing words of wisdom issue from the human mind and come out of the mouth; the demonstration of the Spirit comes forth from the human spirit. Paul's words came from his spirit with the release of the Spirit and therefore with power. The Corinthians may have thought that Paul was a fool, but there was a demonstration of the spirit. Where there is the demonstration of the spirit, there is power. It is not a matter of speaking enticing words of wisdom by exercising our mind, but a matter of exercising our spirit to release Christ as life and minister Him to others.

"In the church meetings we all need to behave ourselves by the demonstration of our spirit. We should not care for eloquent speaking. We all need to demonstrate our spirit. Instead of eloquence, we need utterance. Utterance is different from eloquence. Eloquence is something natural. Some are born with eloquence, whereas others lack eloquence and are awkward in