

European Parents' Conference

**Vital Factors
in Caring for Children
and Young People
according to God's Economy**

Message Outlines

June 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to express their indebtedness to the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee in their preparation of this material. They have opened up the Word of God and we are entering in. Furthermore, the authors wish to express their appreciation to the Living Stream Ministry, which has graciously granted permission to make use of various quotations in preparation of these outlines for the parents, young people and children in the Lord's recovery.

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**VITAL FACTORS IN CARING FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACCORDING TO GOD'S ECONOMY**

Message One

**Seeing the Vision of God's Economy
and Realizing That We Are God-men to Live the Life of a God-man**

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 3:9; John 14:19a; Gal. 2:20

I. Seeing the vision of God's economy—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 1:10; 3:9:

- A. The divine and eternal economy is second only to God Himself.
- B. Definitions of God's economy:
 - 1. An economy is an arrangement for getting things done.
 - 2. God's economy is God's plan to dispense Himself into His chosen, predestinated, and redeemed people as their life, their life supply, and their everything—2 Cor. 13:14.
 - 3. God's economy is God becoming man that man may become God in life and in nature (but not in the Godhead) to produce the organic Body of Christ, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem—Eph. 3:9; 4:16; Rev. 21:2.
- C. God's New Testament economy is for the processed Triune God to be wrought into us to become our life and our very being—Eph. 3:17a; Gal. 4:19.
- D. In His economy God intends that His people enjoy Himself as the processed and consummated Triune God and become one with Him—1 Cor. 6:17.
- E. God's economy requires our cooperation, and to cooperate with God means to be bound together with Christ and to have one living with Him by one life—John 14:19a; 6:57.
- F. Instead of usurping God by praying for our prosperity, health, or family without any consideration of God's economy, we should pray, live, and be persons according to God's heart and for His economy—Eph. 1:9-11.
- G. When God's economy is carried out among His people, they are blessed:
 - 1. Our welfare, our well-being, is linked to the carrying out of God's economy, and we should not seek our well-being apart from God's economy—Matt. 6:33.
 - 2. We should not expect prosperity for ourselves; rather, we should expect that through us the Lord will do as much as possible to accomplish His economy.
 - 3. Today the Lord is blessing us in every way for the fulfillment of His economy to build up the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:16.

II. Realizing that we are God-men to live the life of a God-man—John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:2:

- A. Realizing that we are God-men:
 - 1. To know who we are and to realize who we are revolutionizes us—2 Cor. 5:17.
 - 2. As the regenerated children of God, we are God in life and in nature, belonging to the same species as God and having God's "gene"—John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5-6; 1 John 3:9.
 - 3. If we realize that, as children of God, we are God in life and in nature, we will be radically changed; the atmosphere and everything related to us will also be changed—John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:2.
 - 4. If all of today's Christians realized that they were God in life and in nature, the whole world would be changed.
 - 5. When we think of ourselves as God-men, this thinking, this realization, revolutionizes us in our daily experience.

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B. Living the life of a God-man:

1. We need to learn how to have a God-man living in all the details of our daily life— Phil. 1:20-21a.
2. “Do we live Christ at home with our husband or wife and with our children? We need a real revival to be God-men who live a life of always denying ourselves and being crucified to live Christ for the expression of God” (*Life-study of 1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. 77).
3. “We need to walk in all things according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4). We need to be warned and be on the alert that whatever we say, whatever we do, whatever we express, our attitude, our spirit, and our intention must be purified by the life-giving, compound, all-inclusive Spirit” (49).

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Message Two

Principles and Precepts for Living a Proper Human Life

Scripture Reading: Prov. 1:7; 3:5-6; 30:5-6; 14:12; 16:25

I. Principles for living a proper human life:

- A. The first principle in living a proper human life is revering God:
 - 1. To revere God is to consider and regard Him in everything, remembering that He is the One who created us.
 - 2. To revere God is to fear God:
 - a. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge—Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33a.
 - b. The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life—14:26-27.
 - 3. To revere God is to trust in Him—3:5-8.
 - 4. To revere God means that we honor God—vv. 9-10.
 - 5. Every word of God is tried—30:5-6:
 - a. We should not add to His word, lest He reprove us, and we be found a liar.
 - b. We must not change His word by adding something to it according to our point of view.
 - 6. A man's heart devises his way, but Jehovah directs his steps—16:1, 9.
 - 7. A man's steps are of the Lord—20:24.
 - 8. Jehovah weighs the hearts—21:2.
- B. The second principle for living a proper human life is needing wisdom:
 - 1. The one who finds wisdom is blessed—3:13-18; 8:11.
 - 2. We should not let wisdom depart from our sight but keep sound wisdom and discretion—3:21-22.
- C. The third principle for living a proper human life is honoring our parents:
 - 1. We should hear the instruction of our father and not reject the teaching of our mother—1:8-9.
 - 2. We should receive our father's words and treasure up his commandments within us—2:1-6.
 - 3. We should not forget our father's instruction but let our heart keep his commandments—3:1-5, 11-12, 21-22.
 - 4. A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to His mother—10:1.
- D. In order to live a proper human life, we must hold marriage in honor:
 - 1. In holding marriage in honor, man's faithfulness is the base—5:5-19.
 - 2. Woman's virtues are the building up—11:16a; 12:4a; 14:1a; 31:10-31.

II. Precepts for living a proper human life:

- A. Diligence versus slothfulness—10:4-5; 12:24, 27; 18:9; 19:15, 24.
- B. Humility versus pride—10:19; 13:3; 14:23; 17:27a.
- C. Almsgiving versus stinginess—11:24-26.
- D. Restrained lips versus many words—10:19; 13:3; 14:23; 17:27a.
- E. Truthfulness versus falsehood—12:19, 22; 14:4.
- F. Holding back anger versus being prone to anger—12:16; 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 17:27b; 19:11, 19.
- G. The paths of life versus the ways of death—14:12; 16:25.

III. Using the book of Proverbs to cultivate our new man:

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- A. "We must reject self-cultivation and condemn the building up of the natural man" (*Life-study of Proverbs*, p. 29).
- B. "As believers in Christ, we are no longer the old man—we are the new man. However, no matter how new we may be, we still have our humanity....Because we still have our humanity, we need the proper, spiritual proverbs, not to cultivate our old man but to cultivate our regenerated new man" (pp. 41-42).
- C. "We all need Proverbs for the cultivation of our new man. We need to come to Proverbs as a new man by exercising our spirit with the Spirit to contact the word. Then the word in Proverbs will become spirit and life to us, not to cultivate our natural man but to cultivate our regenerated new man" (p. 43).
- D. "To use the book of Proverbs properly, we must know God's economy. God's economy is that God became man so that man may become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead to produce the organism of the Triune God, the Body of Christ, which consummates the New Jerusalem" (p. 54).
- E. "Now we can see the place of the book of Proverbs in God's economy. According to His economy Proverbs should not be used to build up the old man. The big proverbs, like nuggets, and the small ones, like gems, are not for us to build up our old man, to cultivate our self and our natural man. Rather, they are for us to build up our new man. It is for this purpose that they are useful. While we are still living in this body, we need Proverbs to give us instructions on how to live rightly in so many aspects, in order to build up our new man" (p. 59).

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Message Three

Living in the Reality and Practicality of the Kingdom of the Heavens

Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:3, 7-8, 10, 20; 16:18-19

I. Living in the reality of the kingdom of the heavens:

- A. In the Lord's recovery, we do not care for outward things; rather, we care for inward reality—Matt. 15:1-17:
 - 1. God's economy is not a matter of outward things; it is a matter of Christ coming into us inwardly—2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 3:17a.
 - 2. The Lord cares for the inward reality, not for the outward appearance—1 Sam. 16:7.
- B. The reality of the kingdom is Christ Himself—Luke 17:20-21:
 - 1. The Christ who enters our spirit is the King with the kingdom.
 - 2. Because the kingdom is in us, we are subdued, controlled, and ruled by the indwelling King.
- C. To live in the reality of the kingdom is to live under the heavenly ruling—Rom. 14:17:
 - 1. The kingdom of the heavens is implanted in our spirit.
 - 2. Something invisible exercises an inward control over us, and we live under this control; this is the kingdom.
- D. If we would be in the reality of the kingdom, we must be poor in spirit—Matt. 5:3:
 - 1. To be poor in spirit is to be empty in our spirit.
 - 2. When we are poor in spirit, we have no pride in our heart.
- E. If we would be in the reality of the kingdom, we must be pure in heart—v. 8:
 - 1. Toward God we must be pure in heart, seeking nothing besides Him.
 - 2. To be pure in heart is to be single in purpose, having the single goal of accomplishing God's will for God's glory.
- F. To eat Christ as our supply is the way to be the kingdom people living in the reality of the kingdom—15:26-27; 37a:
 - 1. We need to take Christ in by eating Him.
 - 2. As the nourishing food, Christ is the best cleansing element:
 - a. When Christ comes into us as food, He not only nourishes us but also inwardly cleanses us.
 - b. As long as we are enjoying the Lord as our food, we are being purified from within.
- G. If we want to live in the reality of the kingdom of the heavens, we must learn to live by the hidden life of our Father—6:1-18:
 - 1. The Father's life is a life of enjoyment, rest, comfort, and satisfaction.
 - 2. There is no anxiety in the life of God; therefore, as children of God we have a life—the divine life—that knows no anxiety—vv. 25-34.
 - 3. If we live by the highest life, we will have the highest morality as the expression of the highest life—5:20.
- H. Whatever the kingdom people do is an expression of their nature—v. 48:
 - 1. Their actions, behavior, speech, and outward deeds are the expression of their divine life and nature.
 - 2. What is within them is manifested in their outward behavior—vv. 13-16.
 - 3. Our Father is the God of peace, with a peaceful life and nature, and as those born of Him, we should behave in His life and according to His nature—v. 9.

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- I. The reality of the kingdom depends mainly upon righteousness—vv. 6, 10, 20:
 - 1. Righteousness is related to what we are inwardly.
 - 2. Righteousness is the outflow of our inner being, the expression of what we are within.
 - 3. Subjective righteousness is the indwelling Christ lived out of us as our righteousness—22:11-12; 13:43.
- J. The kingdom people do the will of the Father—7:21:
 - 1. The kingdom people are not for anything other than doing the will of the Father.
 - 2. In order to do the will of the Father, we need to walk in the constricted way, a way full of limitations and restrictions—vv. 13-14.
- K. The basic concept concerning the reality of the kingdom is that we should be righteously strict with ourselves, mercifully kind toward others, and secretly pure toward God—5:10, 7-8.

II. Living in the practicality of the kingdom of the heavens:

- A. The practicality of the kingdom of the heavens is today's church life—16:18-19; 18:17.
- B. The heavenly ruling over the kingdom people requires that they take care of others—7:1-12; 18:10-14:
 - 1. The Lord's intention in 7:1-12 is to encourage us to forget ourselves and to take care of others.
 - 2. The principle of the kingdom people in dealing with others is to take care of others; in whatever we do, we must think of others.
 - 3. We should not simply act according to our feeling but take care of the other person.
- C. We need to deal with our natural affection and not love our relatives above the Lord—10:34-29.
- D. We need to learn to deal with outward matters in an inward way—15:21-28; 17:14-21.
- E. If we would relate to others in a proper way in the church life, our pride must be dealt with—18:1-3.
- F. Living in the practicality of the kingdom requires that we deal with our anger, especially our dispositional anger—5:21-22.
- G. We need to forgive others from our hearts—18:21-35.
- H. We need to see the difference between rule and control—20:20-8.
- I. We must be on the alert not to allow any kind of leaven to come in—13:33; 16:6, 11-12.
- J. In the church life, we need to experience the healing that issues from the virtues of the Lord's human life—14:34-36:
 - 1. To be healed in this way means that one's corrupted character is changed.
 - 2. The church people must live out the uplifted humanity of Jesus to have the virtue that can heal those surrounding us:
 - a. If we have the proper church life and live by Christ, we will live out His uplifted humanity.
 - b. In this kind of living there will be a virtue with the power to heal those around us.
- K. The kingdom people need the building—16:18; 5:13-14:
 - 1. It is as a corporate entity that the kingdom people are salt and light—vv. 13-14a.
 - 2. The Lord's word about a city on a hill is not intended for individuals but for a corporate people who are built together on a high level—v. 14b:
 - a. The light is a corporate city built up as one entity to shine over the people surrounding it.
 - b. If we would be a shining city situated on a mountain, we must keep the oneness of the Spirit and remain one entity, the corporate Body—Eph. 4:3-4.
 - c. The more we are built up, the more we will be a city shining upon those around us.

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Message Four

Cultivating a Divine Sense of Value

Scripture Reading: Matt. 6:32-33; 16:26; Heb. 11:24-26; Phil. 3:7-8

- I. We need to help the young ones to have a change in their concept of value and to cultivate a divine sense of value—Luke 16:15b.**
- II. If we bring out the precious from the worthless, we will be as the Lord's mouth—Jer. 15:19.**
- III. The Bible has much to say concerning a change in one's concept of value:**
 - A. "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner"—Psa. 118:22:
 1. "This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner"—Acts 4:11.
 2. "Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious"—1 Pet. 2:4.
 3. "To you therefore who believe is the preciousness"—v. 7a.
 - B. "The kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant seeking fine pearls; and finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it"—Matt. 13:45-46.
 - C. "The word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God"—1 Cor. 1:18.
 - D. "The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid, and in his joy goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field"—Matt. 13:44.
 - E. "For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you"—6:32-33.
 - F. "He who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me"—10:37-38.
 - G. "What shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?"—16:26.
 - H. "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave"—20:25-27.
 - I. "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be ill treated with the people of God than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin, considering the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked away to the reward"—Heb. 11:24-26.
 - J. "But what things were gains to me, these I have counted loss on account of Christ. But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ"—Phil. 3:7-8.
 - K. "Let your adorning not be the outward plaiting of hair and putting on of gold or clothing with garments, but the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God"—1 Pet. 3:3-4.

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- L. “How much better it is to acquire wisdom than gold, / And to acquire understanding is to be chosen above silver”—Prov. 16:16.
- M. “The law of Your mouth is better to me / Than thousands of pieces of gold and silver”—Psa. 119:72.
- N. “I love Your commandments / More than gold, indeed, more than fine gold”—v. 127.
- O. “I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my apportioned food”—Job 23:12b.
- P. “If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up. / If you put injustice far away from your tents, / And place your gold nuggets in the dust / And your gold of Ophir in the stones of the brooks, / Then the Almighty will be your gold nuggets / And precious silver to you. / For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, / And you will lift up your countenance to God. / You will pray to Him, and He will hear you; / And you will repay your vows. / You will decree something, and it will be established for you; / And light will shine on your ways”—22:23-28.

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Message Five

**Sowing unto the Spirit,
Expecting the Lord's Blessing,
and Living a Life of Continual Consecration**

Scripture Reading: Gal. 6:7-9; Rom. 12:2; 14:7-8; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Matt. 14:19-21

I. Sowing unto the Spirit—Gal. 6:7-8:

- A. To sow is to put forth something that will grow and eventually be reaped.
- B. We always reap what we sow:
 - 1. If we sow unto the flesh, we will reap corruption of the flesh—v. 8a.
 - 2. If we sow unto the Spirit, we will reap eternal life of the Spirit—v. 8b.
 - 3. There are only these two kinds of sowing and two kinds of reaping; there is no neutrality, and there is no third kind of reaping.
 - 4. In principle, all that we say or do is a seed sown either to the flesh or to the Spirit.
- C. The Christian life is a life of sowing:
 - 1. Everything we do is some kind of sowing, either to the flesh or to the Spirit.
 - 2. Wherever we may be and whatever we are doing, we are sowing seeds.
- D. Everything we say to our children and do with them is a seed sown into them.
- E. In the church life we are constantly sowing tiny seeds.
- F. To be careful in our sowing is to be watchful concerning our living.

II. Expecting the Lord's blessing—Matt. 14:19-21:

- A. We all need to be brought to the point where we realize that everything depends on the Lord's blessing and look to the Lord for His blessing.
- B. In serving the Lord, we should believe in and expect the Lord's blessing.
- C. To be under the Lord's blessing means that in our service the Lord gives us unexpected results, results that are not in proportion to the cause and that are far beyond our expectation.
- D. We need to learn to live in a way that does not hinder the Lord's blessing.
- E. The future of our service does not depend on our being right—it depends on the Lord's blessing.
- F. Whatever we bring to the Lord must be broken for it to become a blessing to others—Matt. 14:19:
 - 1. "The Lord will break whatever is consecrated to Him. This means that after we consecrate ourselves to the Lord, we shall be broken by Him" (*Life-study of Matthew*, p. 518).
 - 2. "Whatever you are and whatever you have must be offered to the Lord. If you do this, in His hand nothing will remain whole. Rather, everything will be broken. The Lord will break whatever is placed into His hands. If we are not broken, our consecration does not mean anything, and it is not effectual. Our consecration works only by our being broken by the Lord" (p. 519).
 - 3. "No doubt there has been great blessing in the Lord's recovery in this country. Nevertheless, we must realize that some dear ones have offered themselves to the Lord. In the Lord's hand, they all have been broken, and those broken pieces have brought in the blessing" (p. 519).

III. Living a life of continual consecration—Rom. 12:2:

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- A. The definition of consecration: our consent to God's working in us and on us, to God's using us, and to God's directing our ways.
- B. Aspects of consecration:
 - 1. The basis of consecration—God's purchase—1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 14:8.
 - 2. The motive of consecration—God's love—2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 12:1.
 - 3. The meaning of consecration—to be a sacrifice—Rom. 12:1; Num. 28:2-3.
 - 4. The purpose of consecration—to be used by God—and to work for God—Eph. 2:10.
 - 5. The result of consecration—to abandon our future—Lev. 1:9.
- C. The power to consecrate ourselves comes through God's appearing and revelation—Gen. 12:7; Acts 9:6.
- D. The experience of consecration—Matt. 7:13-14:
 - 1. The crisis of consecration.
 - 2. The process of consecration.
 - 3. The absoluteness of consecration.
 - 4. The joy of consecration—Psa. 43:4a; 40:8a.
 - 5. The rest of consecration—Matt. 11:29-30.