

**HWMR: BEING A VESSEL UNTO HONOR, A FULLY EQUIPPED MAN OF GOD, BY BEING
EMPOWERED IN THE GRACE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS TO FULLY ACCOMPLISH
OUR MINISTRY IN THE UNIQUE MINISTRY OF GOD'S ECONOMY (Week 1)**

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 4:22

**Living in the Reality of God's Eternal Economy for Its Fulfillment by Building Up a Habit of Exercising
Our Spirit, Fanning Our God-given Spirit into Flame**

- 1 Timothy 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
1 Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come.
2 Timothy 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
2 Timothy 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Day 1

1 Timothy 1:3-4 - Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

I. God's eternal economy is His household administration to dispense Himself in Christ into His chosen people that He may have a house to express Himself, which house is the church, the Body of Christ; God's eternal economy is His eternal plan, and His divine dispensing is the means by which He accomplishes His plan—1 Tim. 1:3-4; 3:15; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 1:10; 3:8-9; 2:10:

- A. Christ is the center, circumference, element, sphere, means, goal, and aim of God's economy; in fact, all the contents of God's eternal economy are simply Christ— Matt. 17:5; Eph. 3:6; Luke 24:44.
- B. Unless we know God's economy, we will not understand the Bible; the central subject of the Bible is the economy of God, and the entire Bible is concerned with the economy of God—v. 45; Job 10:13; cf. Eph. 3:9.
- C. God's economy is to dispense Himself into our being so that our being may be constituted with His being; this can be accomplished only by God's dispensing Himself into us as the divine life—John 10:10; 14:6a; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11.
- D. The leadership in the New Testament ministry is the leadership of the controlling, God-given revelation of God's eternal economy—Acts 26:19; Prov. 29:18.
- E. Different teachings other than God's economy separate us from the genuine appreciation, love, and enjoyment of the precious person of the Lord Jesus Christ as our life and our everything (2 Cor. 11:2-3); the different teachings of the dissenting ones (1 Tim. 1:3) caused envy and discord among the believers, which are contrary to love, the end (the objective and purpose) of the apostle's charge to remain in the teaching of God's economy (v. 5; John 13:34; Gal. 5:13-14).
- F. God's divine dispensing deifies the believers, making them God in life and nature but not in the Godhead for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ and for the preparation of the bride of Christ to usher in the kingdom of Christ; for this purpose God became a man to "man-ize" Himself; then He dispenses Himself as life into us to "God-ize" us in His life and nature but not in His Godhead.

G. God's intention in His economy is to **dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity**— the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—into His chosen people; God's only goal in time is to dispense Himself into us day by day.

Our unique need as Christians is the processed and consummated Triune God as the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit. The Spirit is all that we need. Mainly we do not need righteousness or justification, nor do we need holiness or sanctification—**our central need is the consummated Triune God as the Spirit with His rich supply**. This Spirit is now in us and is one with us in life, in nature, and in essence, and we are one with Him. We all need to have a clear vision concerning this.

To be a Christian is not merely difficult—it is impossible. **Only the processed and consummated Triune God living in us as the all-inclusive Spirit can be a Christian**. What the New Testament requires of us is too high. The kind of holiness required, for example, is something that we cannot produce. We praise the Lord that it is not we who need to fulfill the New Testament requirements but the Spirit in us who fulfills them. Instead of doing things in ourselves, **we should simply enjoy His living and His working**. Only the Spirit can be a Christian, and only the Spirit can be an overcomer. Remember, the Spirit is our God, our Father, our Lord, our Redeemer, our Savior, our Shepherd, and our life and life supply.

The Spirit is everything to us to live the Christian life. The Christian life is altogether the processed and consummated Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit. In this Spirit we have the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. In this Spirit we are in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. What kind of God do we have today? **Our God is the processed and consummated Triune God, who is the consummated, all-inclusive Spirit as everything for our Christian life**. When we have a need or a disability, we can remind Him of it. When we are facing a difficult situation, we can talk to Him about it. Then He, the One who lives in us, will come in to face the situation and to do whatever is needed. (*Life-Study of Job, chapter 19*)

Day 2

Genesis 2:7 - Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Zechariah 12:1 - The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him,

II. In the "blueprint" of God's original intention, **man is the center** of the entire universe, and the **center of man is his spirit**—Zech. 12:1; Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27:

- A. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit that he may **contact** God, **receive** God, **contain** God, **worship** God, **live** God, **fulfill** God's purpose for God, **express** God, and **be one** with God—John 4:24; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- B. **Without** God being the Spirit and **without** us having a spirit to contact God, to be one with God, the whole universe is **empty**, and we are **nothing**—Eccl. 1:2; 3:11; Job 32:8; 12:10; 2 Cor. 4:13, 16-18.
- C. Due to the **fall**, men have not only overlooked and neglected the human spirit but also have even **refused** to admit that man has a spirit—1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; cf. Jude 19.
- D. Man as a vessel, through the **exercise** of his spirit, was to **receive God** in Christ as the tree of life so that life as a river would **flow in and out** of his innermost being for his transformation into precious materials for God's building, God's eternal expression—Gen. 1:26; 2:7-12, 22; 1 Tim. 4:7-8:
 1. The breath of God has become our human spirit, and our spirit is **God's lamp to contain** God as the **oil** and to give us **light**—Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27.
 2. Man's spirit became a broken lamp through his fall, but through **God's recovery** in His salvation, man's spirit is **regenerated**, **rebuilt**, and **reinforced** with the vivifying, sevenfold intensified Spirit—Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27; John 3:6; Rev. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15:45b.

Day 3

Romans 8:16 - The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

1 Corinthians 2:15 - But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

3. The **central government** and **most prominent** part of man's being should be his **spirit**; a man who is ruled and controlled by his spirit is a spiritual man— 2:14-15; 3:1; 14:32; 2 Cor. 2:12-15; Eph. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:4; Dan. 6:3, 10.
- E. The strategic and central point of God's economy is the divine Spirit dwelling in our human spirit and the two mingled together as one spirit, the **mingled spirit**— John 3:6; 4:24; Rom. 8:16; 2 Cor. 3:17; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; 1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:13:
 1. The great way to fulfill God's economy is for us to live and do everything according to the Spirit by **exercising our spirit**—Job 10:13; Eph. 3:9; Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:25.
 2. Whenever we turn to our spirit and exercise our spirit, we touch the Body, because the **Body is in our spirit**—Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.
 3. When we are in our spirit, we **overcome the world**, we **cannot sin**, the evil one **cannot touch us**, and we are **guarded** from idols—1 John 5:4, 18-19, 21; John 14:30.

First John 5:21 says, “*Little children, guard yourselves from idols.*” You may say that there are no idols in your meeting hall. However, you may not realize that **your idols are yourselves, your scheming, and your domineering**. You may not realize that your desire to win others over so that they will agree with you is an idol. You may not realize that your idol is your insistence on teaching others the spiritual experience you had three years ago. You may love your Bible and insist that others read it the same way you do. This is also an idol. **Whatever is not in the spirit is an idol**. Whatever is not of the spirit is an idol. If the elders and co-workers in a local church have opinions, they have idols. If we are in the spirit, we will not have any opinions. The Lord Jesus is one, and He is also one in our spirit, so there cannot be any opinion if we are in our spirit. Any church in which there is dissension between the elders and the deacons, among the elders themselves, or between the elders and the co-workers, has idols.

What are idols? **Whatever is not the true God is an idol**. Today the true God is in our regenerated spirit. We abide in Him, and He also abides in us. This is the true God and the eternal life. When some responsible brothers are not in one accord and are at a stalemate, that is an idol. When a few brothers who serve together protect themselves from each other, that is an idol. It is terrible to advertise the name of the Lord Jesus yet sell our flesh.

For many years I did not understand why this word suddenly appeared at the end of 1 John: “*Little children, guard yourselves from idols.*” One day, however, the Lord showed me this mystery, and then I realized that **anything we do that is not in the regenerated spirit and that does not live out the Lord Spirit is an idol**. Today there is only one true God, and this true God is in only one place, that is, our spirit. Everything outside of this spirit is an idol. If our bread-breaking and our praising are not in the spirit, they are false. Our bearing of responsibilities and our work may also be false if they are not in the spirit. Our insistence with one another in our service is also an idol. (*Living in the Spirit, chapter 5*)

Day 4

1 Timothy 4:7-8 - But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness. For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come.

2 Timothy 1:6-7 - For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

III. The key to receiving the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity and being a channel of this dispensing for the saints' growth in life and their enjoyment of Christ is to **exercise our spirit**, which is to **fan our God-given spirit into flame**—Phil. 1:25; 1 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 4:22; Acts 6:10; 1 Cor. 14:32:

- A. **Godliness**, a **living that is the expression of God**, is the issue of the divine dispensing for the divine economy, and this dispensing depends on the exercise of our spirit to live Christ in our daily life for the corporate manifestation of God in the church life—1 Tim. 1:3-4; 3:15-16; 4:7-8; 2 Tim. 1:6-7.
- B. The word **exercise** implies **forcing**; if we Christians want to be strong and want to grow in the Lord, we must force ourselves to use our spirit until we build up a strong habit of exercising our spirit—1 Tim. 4:7.
- C. To exercise our spirit is to **fan our spirit into flame**— 2 Tim. 1:6-7:
 - 1. Second Timothy 1:6 refers to "the gift of God," and verse 7 indicates that what God has given us is our regenerated spirit, our mingled spirit, of power, of love, and of sobermindedness; thus, the **gift of God is our God-given spirit**.
 - 2. We saved ones have the **capital to live the Christian life and the church life**, and this capital is our God-given spirit.
 - 3. **Fire is in our regenerated spirit**, which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit; actually, our spirit is the fire—Luke 12:49-50; Rom. 12:11; Rev. 4:5; Prov. 20:27.

According to John 4:24, our **spirit needs to be the means of our worship**. We need to worship God the Spirit in our spirit and with our spirit. Many saints come to the meeting to meet, but they do not come to worship. We may go through the formality of meeting without rendering the Lord the real worship that He desires. **To worship is to exercise our spirit**. Whenever we begin to exercise our spirit, the worship begins. We may think that our worship begins when we call a hymn or when we pray. But **our worship actually begins when our spirit rises up and is exercised**.

Our meetings need to be full of the **exercise of the spirit**. When we come together to meet, before singing, before praying, before reading, before doing anything, all of us should exercise our spirit. There should be such a worshipping spirit in all our meetings. Many times the elders exercise their spirit to open the meeting. Then they stir up others' spirit. This is not the best situation. **All the saints must rise up to exercise their spirit**. We have to help the saints to realize that we need to use our spirit to worship. Our spirit needs to worship God directly apart from merely depending upon singing, reading, or praying in a formal way. (*Basic Lessons on Life, chapter 17*)

Day 5

Acts 14:22 - Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

2 Timothy 1:7 - For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

- D. To exercise our spirit, we must **deal with the parts of our soul** surrounding our spirit—our **mind, emotion, and will**—cf. 1 Pet. 3:4:
1. A spirit of **power** is a spirit with a **subdued and resurrected** will, a spirit of **love** is a spirit with an **emotion filled with God as love**, and a spirit of **sobermindedness** is a spirit with a **renewed mind**—2 Tim. 1:7.
 2. Our dear Lord Jesus is the **Shepherd** and **Overseer** of our souls; our soul is our inner being, our real person; our Lord shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our real person—1 Pet. 2:25; Psa. 23:1-6; cf. Heb. 13:17.
 3. Because the exercise of the spirit is linked to the parts of our soul and is so vital to living in the reality of God's economy, **we need to cooperate with our Lord** in His heavenly ministry by "establishing the souls of the disciples"—Acts 14:22.
 4. To establish the souls of the disciples is to **establish** them (1) in their **mind**, that they may know and understand the Lord and the things concerning Him (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 3:10); (2) in their **emotion**, that they may love the Lord and have a heart for the Lord's interest (Mark 12:30; Rom. 16:4); and (3) in their **will**, that they may be strong to remain with the Lord and do the things that please the Lord (Acts 11:23; Col. 1:10; 1 Thes. 4:1).
- E. To exercise our spirit, to fan our God-given spirit into flame, is to **rejoice always, pray unceasingly, and give thanks in everything** in order to enjoy the indwelling Spirit as the secret of doing all things in Christ—2 Cor. 12:2a; Phil. 4:11-13; Psa. 91:1; 1 Thes. 5:16-18.
- F. To exercise our spirit, to fan our God-given spirit into flame, is to **set our mind on the spirit**—Rom. 8:6; Mal. 2:15-16:
1. When we set our mind on the **spirit**, we have the inner sense of **life and peace**, the sense of **strength, satisfaction, rest, release, liveliness, watering, brightness, and comfort**.
 2. When we set our mind on the **flesh**, we have the inner sense of **death**, the sense of **weakness, emptiness, uneasiness, restlessness, depression, dryness, darkness, and pain**.
 3. Our Christian life is not according to the standard of right and wrong but according to the **inner sense of life and peace in our spirit**—Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 2:13-14.

Hebrews 4:12 shows that the spirit is concealed in the soul just as the marrow is concealed in the joints. Our spirit is like the marrow, and our soul is like the joints. In other words, our **spirit is altogether wrapped up, enveloped, in our soul**. The soul is the envelope that hides our spirit. So to discern our spirit from our soul, **we must know where our spirit is**. It is within our soul. Here we can also see the situation of our spirit. Our spirit is surrounded, enclosed, by our soul. To discern our spirit from our soul, we need to see the position and situation of our spirit.

If the joints are not broken but are whole, the marrow can never be divided from the joints. In order to divide the marrow from the joints, we have to **break the joints**. This shows that without our soul being broken, our spirit can never be separated from our soul. In order for the contents to be divided from its cover, its wrapping, the cover must be broken. This is basic. **Our soul must be broken**. If we let our soul remain whole, there is no possibility for our spirit to be divided from it. To discern the spirit means not only to realize the difference between the spirit and the soul but also to divide the spirit from the soul. Thus, there is the need of the breaking of the soul. (*Basic Lessons on Life, chapter 20*)

Day 6

Romans 8:6 - *For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.*

Hebrews 4:12 - *For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

- G. To exercise our spirit, to fan our God-given spirit into flame, is to **discern our spirit from our soul**—Heb. 4:12:
1. We should always be on the alert to **discern and deny** anything that is **not of the spirit** but of the soul, the self—Matt. 16:25; cf. Luke 9:25.
 2. Whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we do **must be in spirit**; everything that God is to us is in our spirit—Rom. 2:28-29; 1:9; 8:4; 12:11.
- H. To exercise our spirit, to fan our God-given spirit into flame, is to **live the normal church life** and **overcome** the church's degradation by **pursuing Christ** with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.
- I. To exercise our spirit, to fan our God-given spirit into flame, is to **pray**, to approach God in a **personal and confiding manner**, for the interests of God—Christ, the kingdom of God, and the house of God—as the goal in God's eternal economy—1:6-8; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 2:1-3, 8; 1 Kings 8:48; Jude 19-21.

Thus far, we have seen that we should teach God's economy and that we should **fan into flame the gift of God, opening our whole being and calling on the name of the Lord Jesus**. In addition, we surely need to exercise our spirit. After charging Timothy to fan into flame the gift of God, Paul went on to say, "God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness" (1:7). The spirit here denotes our spirit, regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 3:6; Rom. 8:16). To fan into flame the gift of God is thus related to our regenerated spirit. Of power refers to our will; of love, to our emotion; and of sobermindedness, to our mind. This indicates that having a strong will, a loving emotion, and a sober mind has very much to do with having a **strong spirit for the exercise of the gift of God that is in us**.

We all should be those who teach God's economy, who fan the gift of God into flame, who call on the name of the Lord Jesus, and who exercise our spirit. At this point we need to consider another crucial matter—being **persons of prayer**. I have no doubt that, as believers in Christ, you have received the eternal life and the divine Spirit, but I am concerned that you will go to your class with "ice water" instead of a flame. We have emphasized the fact that to have a flame you need to let the draft come in through opening up to the Lord. Every morning you need to bring in the draft by fanning the gift of God into flame. However, suppose that you have just had a most unpleasant situation with your spouse, and now it seems impossible for you to fan the flame. It may take several days for you to be able once again to fan the flame by yourself, but this will be much easier to do if you **pray with a small group of saints**. If you pray by yourself, you may keep thinking about the situation with your spouse and thus have no way to fan the flame. However, **if you pray with others, they will fan the flame within you**. Eventually, you also will be able to pray, and you will fan them. Then the draft will come in, and you will have a flame. (*Teachers' Training, chapter 3*)