

# CHAPTER ONE

## OUR PURPOSE, INTENTION, MOTIVE, AND ATTITUDE IN DOING THINGS

### THE IMPORTANCE OF DOING THINGS PROPERLY IN THE SERVICE

The emphasis of this service training is on how to do things, how to work, and how to administer the church. When we speak of doing things, we are not referring to doing things in general but to the spiritual aspect of doing things, that is, doing things in serving the Lord, in working for the Lord, and in administering the church. We do many things when we work for the Lord, administrate the church, and coordinate with the brothers and sisters. The Lord has enlightened us to see that the whole church should serve. In such a coordinated service it is crucial that we learn how to do things. Even though our heart is proper before the Lord, our coordination can be weak or problematic because we do not know how to do things. Some of the weaknesses or problems that arise in the coordination are not because of wrong intentions but because we do not know how to do things. When the co-workers and elders serve and coordinate together with the believers in the church, the coordination will be proper if things are done well. Those who know how to do things can bring the church into a harmonious coordination. In contrast, those who do not know how to do things bring trouble to the believers in the coordination and service. They may even cause the church to suffer a loss because they ruin matters and dishearten the believers. The co-workers and elders who know how to do things and how to make arrangements can stir up disheartened believers to love the Lord and to desire to serve. Knowing how to do things may not seem to be a spiritual matter, but it influences spiritual matters. Therefore, we must pay attention to how to do things in the service.

How we do things is based on how we conduct ourselves. One who serves the Lord must conduct himself properly, do things properly, and work properly. When we know how to conduct ourselves, we can do things properly and work properly. Our work is based on how we do things, and

how we do things is based on how we conduct ourselves. Whether we know how to do things and whether we do things properly depend on our conduct. Last year we emphasized the exercise of thirty character points related to our conduct. We should regard those thirty character points as our foundation in doing things. If we neglect our conduct, we cannot accomplish anything.

## **THE PURPOSES OF DOING THINGS**

The first purpose of doing things is to accomplish certain things. Our attitude when we do things sometimes indicates that we do not care about succeeding. A brother can send out an announcement letter but not care about the result. When we do things, our attitude should be to do them successfully. Doing something without succeeding is a condition of the fall. Normally, we should succeed in what we do. In order to succeed, we must learn how to do things. We must want to succeed in everything we do.

The second purpose of doing things is to glorify God. We should not do things just to accomplish something. The reason we should accomplish something is to glorify God. People generally do things with the purpose of succeeding, and they can use any means in order to succeed. Because we do things in order to glorify God, we cannot use any means or disregard the means. The issue of our doing something must glorify God. Therefore, we must learn to fear the Lord. We want to do things successfully, but we must never put the name of the Lord to shame or cause the truth to suffer loss. If we accomplish something without glorifying God, we have missed the purpose. We should not do this.

The third purpose of doing things is to edify the believers. Whatever can glorify God should edify the believers. However, because we have weaknesses, God can be glorified without the believers being edified. When we do things, we should show understanding and sympathy for the weaknesses of the believers. The believers are often not edified because of their weaknesses and because of their not understanding God's will. Because Peter said that the Lord should pay the temple tax, the Lord dealt with Peter, showing him that He should not pay. Afterward, the Lord told Peter to pay

the tax so that other people would not be stumbled (Matt. 17:24-27). Before God the Lord did not have to pay the tax, but the people would not understand and could be stumbled, so He asked Peter to pay. In order to take care of people so that they would walk according to the commandments, the Lord paid the tax. By doing so, He did not cause God's glory to suffer any loss, and the people were edified.

We must be balanced in taking care of accomplishing things, glorifying God, and edifying people. We should not pay attention to only one or two of these points. In this way can we do things without incurring losses or causing trouble. When most people do things, they care about whether they succeed or benefit. We who serve the Lord should not bring our personal interest into consideration when we do things. If we consider our personal interest, we have fallen and lost the position of serving the Lord. We should care only for things, God, and the believers, not for our self. Caring for things is to succeed, caring for God is for God to be glorified, and caring for the believers is for their edification. We must be balanced in these three points so that the purpose of our doing things can be fulfilled. We should not do something that can be accomplished without glorifying God, and we should not do something that can glorify God but does not edify people. For this reason we need to learn to do things.

### **THE INTENTION OF DOING THINGS**

The purpose of doing things is outward, but our intention is inward. The Lord's serving ones are not politicians. Politicians care about the purpose, not the intention. It is not sufficient for the Lord's serving ones to do things with a right purpose. They also need to check their intention. If there is a problem with their intention, they are worthless no matter how well things are done. If the intention is not right, one will lose God's blessing and have no spiritual weight.

First, our intention must be clean. Being clean means having no ill effect. Our cleanness means that our heart is not filthy but is pure without any ill effect, which is higher than not being filthy. Sometimes those who serve the Lord

have a proper outward purpose, but their inward intention is not clean. Visiting others with more than one intention will produce an ill effect. The Lord's serving ones must not do this.

Second, our intention must be upright. If our intention is not proper or upright, it is a deceit. Our intention is right if we are willing to fellowship with someone who comes to us for fellowship in order to receive help. If we purposely change the topic to avoid saying something, it will have an ill effect, and it will show that we are crooked. Sometimes our intention is not upright when we praise others. If our heart is upright, we can rebuke others severely and yet perfect them. If our intention is not upright, the rebuke will not be accepted before God, and our intention will cause problems. When the serving ones preach the Lord's word and fellowship with others, their intention must be upright. Christians should do things in the light. Our relationships with others should be clean.

Third, we must learn to be selfless. It is difficult for people in the world to be selfless in doing things. They do things for themselves. We who serve the Lord need to deal with the self so that when we do things, we can be selfless and not for the self. Our service will fail if our intention is mixed with the self, with considerations for ourselves, or with hopes to gain ground, a position, or a future for ourselves.

## **THE MOTIVE FOR DOING THINGS**

Motive is closely related to intention and to purpose. It is hard to distinguish the boundaries of these three, but they are distinct. The intention is the condition of the heart in doing things, and the motive is the inner feeling after the intention. The motive is the cause of an action. If an intention does not have a motive, there will be no action. If a motive is produced after an intention, there will be practical action. In doing things, we need to deal with our intention and also take heed to our motive.

First, the motive must come from God. God motivates us within and causes us to do things. Second, our motive must be according to God's will. God and His will are the motive for our doing things. Unless we are clear about

God's will, we should not take action. The proper motive is first God's moving within us. Then it is our knowing God's will and walking according to it.

## OUR ATTITUDE IN DOING THINGS

Our intention and motive are hidden within, but our attitude is manifested without. Our attitude in doing things must be proper. Being proper means being right and normal, not abnormal. Twenty years ago, when I began to serve, I stayed in a brother's house in Tientsin. I heard him read some sentences in a letter: "A man can do a right thing but with a wrong attitude. Thus, we must do the right things with the right attitude." This left a very deep impression within me, reminding me that the things I do must be right, and my attitude in doing them must also be right. Sometimes the words we say are right, but our attitude is wrong. This speaking is wrong. It is easy for things to be right, but it is not easy for our attitude to be right. In order to have a right attitude, we need to deal with our intention thoroughly and to deal with our flesh. If our intention is off, our motive is problematic, and our flesh is not dealt with, our attitude will surely be wrong.

Second, our attitude needs to be humble and gentle. No matter what we do and whom we meet, our attitude should be humble and gentle. An attitude that is not humble and gentle spoils the things one wants to do.

Third, our attitude must be polite. Some believers are right in doing things but are not courteous. In Shanghai some brothers criticized the elders not because the elders were bad in doing things but because they were not courteous. A new believer who came to Shanghai with a letter of commendation from another locality was negatively affected by the bad attitude of the elders in Shanghai who received him. When the older ones meet with the younger ones in the service, they should be polite and not offend or stumble others because of their impoliteness.

Fourth, our attitude must be warm. It is not sufficient to be polite, because being courteous can be a form. We should give others the feeling of kindness and warmth.