

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF JOB PROVERBS ECCLESIASTES, Week 9

The Reading the Book of Proverbs with a Praying Spirit So That It Will Render Us Nuggets and Gems to Strengthen Our Life of Pursuing Christ for the Fulfillment of God's Economy

Scripture Reading: Prov. 1:1-7; Eph. 4:22-24; 6:17-18

Proverbs 1:1	The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel:
Proverbs 1:2	For knowing wisdom and instruction; / For discerning words of understanding;
Proverbs 1:3	For receiving instruction in wise conduct, / Righteousness, justice, and equity;
Proverbs 1:4	For giving prudence to the simple, / Knowledge and discretion to the young man;
Proverbs 1:5	That the wise man may hear and increase in learning, / And he who has understanding may acquire sound counsel;
Proverbs 1:6	For understanding proverb and figure, / The words of the wise and their difficult sayings.
Proverbs 1:7	The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; / Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
Ephesians 4:22	That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man , which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,
Ephesians 4:23	And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
Ephesians 4:24	And put on the new man , which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.
Ephesians 6:17	And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit , which Spirit is the word of God ,
Ephesians 6:18	By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

When we come not only to the Proverbs but to any book of the Bible, especially Ephesians, the most spiritual book, we must be persons who are right. In reading the Bible, a right person is one who **loves Christ, pursues after Him, and lives a life of denying himself and of being conformed to the death of Christ**. This means that, on the negative side, we must deny the self, having all aspects of our being crucified, including our **self**, our **natural man**, our **old man**, our character, and whatever we have from birth. We have to put all these things on the cross. In other words, we must experience the cross of Christ, which has crucified us in every way.

As lovers of Christ, we need to realize that, on the negative side, we are finished, terminated. Nevertheless, on the positive side we have the processed and consummated Triune God to replace us as a **new life**. Therefore, we should live by this life every day. We have been crucified. Now we should be able to say with Paul in Galatians that it is no longer I who live, but another "I," Christ Himself as our person, lives in us and we live with Him. We should live such a person by the power of resurrection and by the bountiful supply of the all-inclusive Spirit of Jesus Christ.

When we are such persons, we can come to the Bible not merely by exercising our mentality but mainly by **exercising our spirit**. Our spirit will control our mind. In our spirit there is the marvelous, wonderful, processed, all-inclusive, sevenfold-intensified, life-giving Spirit. We live with Him, and He lives with us. Now when we come to the Bible by exercising our spirit, letting the Spirit move in us, every word of the Bible, in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament, becomes spirit and life. Then our reading of any verse in the Bible will revive us. However, if we exercise only our mind, the words of the Bible will become death to us. (*Life-Study of Proverbs, chapter 3*)

Day 1

Proverbs 1:1-4 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel: For knowing wisdom and instruction; / For discerning words of understanding; For receiving instruction in wise conduct, / Righteousness, justice, and equity; For giving prudence to the simple, / Knowledge and discretion to the young man.

I. Proverbs is a collection of the words of the wise (1:1-7); it stresses the wisdom that man receives of God through his contacting of God (cf. 2 Chron. 1:10-12; Col. 2:2-3; 1:28-29), and it teaches man how to behave and build up his character in his human life (cf. Phil. 1:20; Gal. 6:7-8; 5:22-26):

A. Since the proverbs were collected mainly by two kings (Solomon and Hezekiah) in the age of the law, the book of Proverbs may be considered a subsidiary to the law.

- B. The law is the portrait of God; as such, it demands that God's people keep it so that they may be made copies of God for His expression and glorification—cf. Rom. 8:4.
- C. Proverbs, as a subsidiary to the law, instructs people how to behave and how to build themselves up according to God's attributes, that is, according to what God is.

II. Proverbs has a particular character; that is, it presents to us the words of wisdom by many ancient wise men, which is unanimously considered good by all the people who read it; but we have to realize that what the book of Proverbs is to us depends upon **what kind of persons we are and by what way we take it:**

- A. If we are ethical persons with a strong mind and have a desire to be perfect as genuine moral persons, surely this book would help us to make a success in our pursuit of perfection; however, it would not help us **to be persons who live in our spirit according to the Spirit of God** (2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 1:9; 2:29; 7:6; 8:4-6, 9-11, 16; 1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 2:13-14; Phil. 3:3; Gal. 5:15-17, 22-25; 6:18; Eph. 5:18; 6:18):
 - 1. In the Old Testament Job was satisfied with his integrity, with his pursuit of human perfection, but that was not what God wanted of him; rather, it replaced what God wanted of him, and it became an **enemy of God**, frustrating Job as a man created by God to fulfill God's purpose.
 - 2. God's purpose was for Job to gain Him for the glorification of God, the expression of God; the highest service that we can render to God is for us to **gain God** to the uttermost, to be **filled with God**, in order to **express God** for His glory—Phil. 3:7-8, 12; Isa. 43:7; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; cf. John 17:1.
 - 3. God's purpose in creating man is to have man gain Him and be filled with Him to be His expression, not an expression of human perfection; therefore, the success of Job in human perfection was torn down by God; then God came in to reveal Himself to Job, indicating that He Himself is what Job should pursue, gain, and express— Job 42:1-6; 10:13; Eph. 3:9; Phil. 3:14; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-18.

Day 2 & Day 3

Psalms 114:48 And I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love; / And I will muse upon Your statutes.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Ephesians 4:22-24 That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

- B. When we come to the book of Proverbs, we need to **turn ourselves** from the mind to the spirit **by praying in our spirit** (Eph. 6:18; Luke 18:1; Col. 4:2); if we come to Proverbs in this way, we will be touching the Word by the new man, and we will live a life not by our natural man, by our old man, and by our self but by the Lord Jesus, who is our life and person living in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22; John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16).
- C. We must **reject self-cultivation, condemn the building up of the natural man in the old creation** (cf. Matt. 16:24; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20), and come to Proverbs as a regenerated man in the new creation (Eph. 4:22-24; 2 Cor. 4:16) **by exercising our spirit with the Spirit to contact the word in the spirit of prayer so that the word in Proverbs will become spirit and life to us** (John 6:63; Matt. 4:4; Eph. 6:17-18).
- D. As New Testament believers, we should believe that Proverbs is a part of the holy word in God's Holy Scriptures; the psalmist says, "I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love" (Psa. 119:48); to lift up our hand unto the word of God is to indicate that we **receive it warmly and gladly and that we say Amen to it** (Neh. 8:5-6).

Day 4

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Ephesians 6:17-18 And receive the helmet of salvation and 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 and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

- E. Proverbs is the breath of God for us to breathe in that we may receive the life supply from God; the Bible is God's exhaling; when we read any verse by means of all prayer, this pray-reading becomes our **inhaling of God's breath**—2 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 6:17-18:
1. **All the words in Proverbs are God's breathing**, which is altogether embodied in Christ; as we read Proverbs, we need to inhale all that God has exhaled, all that He has breathed out; by inhaling the divine breath in Proverbs, the more we receive the breath of the speaking God, the more we will enjoy Christ—2 Tim. 3:16; John 20:22.
 2. Whereas the children of Israel were charged to keep the commandments, statutes, and ordinances, we today need to keep Christ; by taking Christ, keeping Christ, and holding fast to Him, we will gain Him, enjoy Him, and live Him; we need to **love Christ, keep Christ, teach Christ, wear Christ, and write Christ**—Deut. 6:1, 5-9; Phil. 3:9; 1:19-21a.
 3. Because the Scriptures are the breathing out of God, the exhaling of God (2 Tim. 3:16), we should inhale the Scriptures by receiving the word of God, including the book of Proverbs, by means of all prayer (Eph. 6:17-18); as we are teaching the Bible, we should be **exhaling God into people**.
- F. We should read Proverbs by **being filled** with the fullness of God in our spirit (Eph. 5:18-19; 3:19); furthermore, we should read Proverbs in the New Testament Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), with our regenerated spirit (v. 16), and by mingling prayer with our reading (Eph. 6:17-18) in order to **mingle** the words with spirit and life (cf. John 6:63).

III. According to God's economy, the big proverbs, like nuggets, and the small ones, like gems, are not for us to build up our old man; rather, they are for us to build up our new man to strengthen our life of pursuing Christ for the fulfillment of God's economy in producing and building up the Body of Christ, which consummates the New Jerusalem as God's heart's desire and ultimate goal:

Day 5

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.

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.

- A. We need to receive the living and operative word of God with a **praying spirit** so that we can build up our new man and so that we may be able to **discern our spirit from our soul**—Heb. 4:12:
1. The enemy's strategy is always to mix our spirit up with our soul; our greatest problem is our mixture; the more we know God by being filled with His light, His presence, the more we will treasure purity over power—Matt. 5:8; Luke 11:34-36; Psa. 119:105, 130.
 2. The way to purge such mixture is through the revelation of the Holy Spirit; the dividing of the soul and the spirit occurs when God's word illuminates us, shining within us to reveal the thoughts and intentions of our heart—36:9; 1 Pet. 2:9.
 3. Whatever we see under the shining of God from the word of God is killed by the light; the **greatest thing in the Christian experience is the killing that comes from light**; the dividing of the soul and the spirit comes from the shining—Isa. 6:1-8; Acts 9:1-4; 13:9-10.
 4. Revelation is **seeing what God sees**; it is God opening our eyes to see our intentions and the deepest thoughts in our being as God sees them; as soon as God exposes our thoughts and shows us the intentions of our heart, our soul will be separated, divided, from our spirit.
 5. Apart from **pray-reading**, the book of Proverbs is merely a collection of proverbs, but when we read Proverbs **prayerfully**, that is, when we pray-read Proverbs, our pray-reading causes all the proverbs to become words of spirit and life to us.
- B. We should not come to Proverbs as a letter-keeper but as a **God-seeker**; we should be those who seek God with all our heart, who seek God's favor by entreating His countenance, who ask God to cause His face to shine upon us, and who walk in God's presence—Psa. 27:8; 105:4; 119:2, 10, 58, 135, 168; 2 Cor. 3:6.

IV. Ephesians 4:22-24 tells us clearly that a believer in Christ has two men—the old man and the new man; the old man is of Adam through our natural birth, and the new man is of Christ by a new birth, regeneration; we need to live a life of putting off the old man and putting on the new man; according to God's economy, Proverbs should not be used to cultivate and build up our old man but to cultivate and build up our regenerated new man:

- A. In order to enter into the intrinsic significance of the book of Proverbs according to God's economy, we need to be those who are **living according to the new creation** (Gal. 6:15); the old creation is our old man in Adam (Eph. 4:22), our natural being by birth, without God's life and the divine nature; the new creation is the new man in Christ (v. 24), our being that is regenerated by the Spirit (John 3:6), having God's life and the divine nature wrought into it (v. 36; 2 Pet. 1:4), having Christ as its constituent (Col. 3:10-11), and having become a new constitution.

The problem of **mixture** is the biggest problem among workers. We often touch life in the brothers, but also touch death. We touch God in the brothers, but also touch their self. We touch a spirit of meekness, but also touch a stubborn self. We find the Holy Spirit in them, but also find the flesh in them. When they stand up to speak, others sense a mixed spirit, an impure spirit. If God intends for us to serve Him in the ministry of the word and if we have to speak for God, we have to ask for grace. We have to say, "God, work in me. Break my outer man, tear it down, and separate it from the inner man." If we have not experienced this deliverance, we will express our outer man subconsciously every time we open our mouth. There is no way for us to hide it. As soon as the word goes out, the spirit goes out as well. We are the kind of person we are; we cannot pretend. If we want to be used by God, our **spirit must be released**, and this spirit must be **pure**. In order for us to be pure, our **outer man must be destroyed**. If our outer man is not destroyed, we will carry our own cargo with us when we serve as ministers of the word. The Lord's name will suffer loss, not on account of our lack of life, but on account of our mixture. The Lord's name will suffer, and the church will suffer as well. (*The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit, chapter 7*)

Day 6

John 10:35 If He said they were gods, to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken,

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Ephesians 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

- B. In our spirit there is the marvelous, wonderful, processed, all-inclusive, sevenfold intensified, life-giving Spirit (Phil. 1:19; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 8:16); when we exercise our spirit to contact Christ as the living Word of God (John 1:1; 5:39-40) in the written word of God (10:35), He becomes the applied word of God as the Spirit to us (Eph. 6:17-18); then our reading of any word in the Bible will become spirit and life to us to revive us (John 6:63).
- C. We need to turn the Bible from a book that apparently teaches us to cultivate the self and to build up the natural man into a book that actually is full of light, life, spirit, and spiritual nourishment by receiving it in a spirit and atmosphere of prayer; this will tear down our self, break our natural man, and supply us with the consummated Spirit of the Triune God.
- V. **We must be persons who love the Lord and pursue Christ, not self-perfection (cf. Phil. 3:3-14), and who love the Lord's word in the entire Bible and read it with a praying spirit, not to seek the doctrine of letters but to seek the Spirit and word of life (cf. John 5:39-40; 2 Cor. 3:6); we should read Proverbs not to gain any help for self-cultivation but to nourish our spirit so that we may live a Christian life that is perfect in the divine virtues, which are the expressions of the divine attributes (Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 5:5-9).**

Faith Comes out of the Hearing of the Word

According to Romans 10:17, **faith comes out of the hearing of the word**. Thus, the source of faith is the word, but we have to realize the crystallization of this point. There are three aspects of the word. First, there is the **written word** of God—the **Bible**. Then there is the **living word** of God—**Christ**. Finally, there is the **applied word** of God—the **Spirit**.

The Bible is the written word, and Christ is the living word. Without the Spirit, however, the living word cannot be applied to us. The living word becomes the applied word through the Spirit. God has only one kind of word. First, He spoke, and what He spoke was written in a book. That is the Bible. There is only one book that is the word of God. The term Bible means "the book." The Bible is the book of books. What a mercy and what a wonder that in human history such a book has been produced—the word of God! The world today is a mess. So many bad things are reported in today's newspapers. Suppose the Bible were taken away from mankind. I do not think that mankind could exist without the word of God.

We have such a word, but not many have really been benefited by this word. This is why we have to either **read** or **hear** the Bible. Every week we gather together a number of times just to read, speak, and hear the word. When the word of the Bible is **spoken** to us and **heard** by us, right away the written word becomes the living word. That is Christ. When the living word is applied to us and **received** by us, it becomes the word of the Spirit. Then this word of the Spirit heard by us is the source of our faith. **Faith comes from the hearing of this applied word by the Spirit through the living Christ out of the written Bible.** (*Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 8*)