

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE

Message Four

Proper Spiritual Activities and Exercises for the Young People

Scripture Reading: Luke 19:13, 20-23; Rom. 12:1-2, 4-5, 11; John 15:5; Acts 2:46-47;
Heb. 10:24-25; Matt. 13:37-38

I. According to our experience and observation, the young people need to be exercised in the spiritual activity of going forth to bear fruit; the easiest time for Christians to bear fruit is when they are young—John 15:5:

- A. When the apostle Paul was preaching the gospel, his accusers said, "We have found this man a pest" (Acts 24:5):
 - 1. This sounds negative, but it is positive to pass along the "germs" of Christ to others.
 - 2. In order to pass these "germs" to others, we cannot go to an isolated place; we must go to the places where people tend to gather; the best place to spread "germs" is in schools.
 - 3. We need to spread Christ, and it is easier to "infect" a young person with Christ than to "infect" an older person.
- B. We are living in a time of great opportunity for the young ones; whether they are in high school or college, they have many classmates and roommates; if they do not take this opportunity to "infect" their friends, there is no better time.
- C. We want to encourage the young people to consider and plan to lead many people to salvation in the coming year; we are branches of a vine, and a vine tree bears clusters of grapes, not just three to five single grapes—John 15:5.
- D. There is no easier place to preach the gospel than at school, and there is nothing more precious than preaching the gospel to a fellow classmate; when so many young people are gathered together, it is very easy to "infect" them with the gospel—Acts 24:5.
- E. If the young people can lead "clusters" of young people to salvation, who then lead others to salvation, thousands of young people will be saved and loving the Lord in eight to ten years; this is not a small thing; I hope that they would grasp this great opportunity.

II. We should endeavor to bring the young people into the practice of the church life through the homes; the small group becomes our practical church life—Acts 2:46-47:

- A. We need the young people to go to the campuses, especially those who are eighteen and nineteen years old; all the young people in the church life are useful; this is why we have to work with our high schoolers:
- B. The gospel must go out from the homes; even the campus work can go out from the homes; for a church to be strong, the home meetings must be built up.
- C. The young people in the church can invite others to the homes of the middle-aged ones and of the young couples; all these homes need to be open and ready to receive the young people.

III. The young people should also learn to function in the meetings of the church; the young people who are high school age should begin to bear some responsibility in their spiritual family:

- A. The young people should attend the regular meetings of the church: at a minimum, they should not miss the bread-breaking meeting and the fellowship meeting of the church, and attend the young people's meeting—Heb. 10:24-25.

- B. In the meetings of the church, they should not act as if they are guests or spectators; they should not wait for the older saints to function out of deference for their age.
- C. When they are in a meeting, they should try their best to release their spirit; in the church they are adults, and they must bear responsibility:
 - 1. The young saints must bear this responsibility; when they come to a meeting, they should open their mouth and release their spirit; they should give testimonies, sing hymns, and give praises—Eph. 5:18-20.
 - 2. There is a rich source, a living and fresh supply, within all the young people; they should not rely on listening to messages but rather exercise to function more in spirit—1 Cor. 14:24, 31.

IV. We should endeavor to bring the young people into the practice of the church life through the children's work and the practical service in the church:

- A. The young people should also bear responsibility in the children's meeting in every local church; the children's work is not less important than the young people's work:
 - 1. If children are added each year, they will become gospel seeds when they graduate from elementary school and enter into junior high school—Matt. 13:37-38.
 - 2. When this happens, the church will begin to gain young ones through them; when these young saints graduate from junior high, they will be gospel seeds when they enter into high school.
 - 3. When they finish high school, they will be gospel seeds in college; as this cycle is repeated, many people will be gained.
- B. If all the local churches labor well in the young people's work and in the children's work, the future of the churches will be unlimited:
 - 1. The young people and even the children will influence their parents, and this influence will be both deep and widespread.
 - 2. Hence, the young people should bear this double responsibility at this time; on the one hand, they should preach the gospel to their classmates, and on the other hand, they should help with the care of the children in the church.
- C. As energy and time allow, the young people should also take part in other miscellaneous services of the church:
 - 1. For example, they can serve in ushering, in the business office, or in cleaning; we rejoice to see that many services in the church are being borne by the young saints.
 - 2. In these services the young saints are spontaneously blended into the church life through the practical coordination and fellowship with saints of all ages, including their peers.
 - 3. This will help them greatly to grow in life and to manifest their function.
- D. We should endeavor to bring the young people into the practice of the church life through the homes; the small group becomes our practical church life.

V. “The future of the church hinges entirely on the young saints; the young saints should be faithful to take care of preaching the gospel to their classmates, to bear fruit, and to take care of the children; furthermore, they should attend the regular meetings of the church for the remembrance of the Lord in the breaking of bread and for worship and fellowship together with all the saints; then, as time and energy allow, they should bear some responsibility in the miscellaneous services of the church.” (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1968, vol. 2, p. 73*)