

# **FELLOWSHIP FOR FULL-TIMERS**

**By Titus Chu**

## **MESSAGE TEN: SERVING THE LORD BY TAKING CARE OF OUR PERSON IN LIFE, TRUTH, AND OPERATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In order to serve the Lord you must pay attention to your person. Your person must be proper. This requires that you grow in life, come to have a measure of maturity, and learn how to exercise according to that maturity. Hebrews 5:14 says, "...solid food is for the full-grown, who because of practice have their faculties exercised for discriminating between good and evil." This is the meaning of becoming exercised according to your level of maturity. It is not merely that you become busy; it means you become a person full of feelings and leadings regarding the things with which you are involved. To serve the Lord is not a simple matter. It is not merely a matter of zeal or faithfulness. In order for you to be a proper person to serve the Lord, you have to grow in life, truth, and operation.

### **A PERSON DEVELOPED IN LIFE GROWING UNTO MATURITY AND EXERCISING IN MATURITY**

If you desire to serve the Lord and become a blessing to the Lord's testimony, then first you must take care of life with its growth unto maturity. You should become as Jacob, who became so mature in life that he could see through what was natural. For example, he could see what was according to God's arrangement when he blessed Joseph's two sons. Very few Christians realize that their existence is for the purpose of growing unto maturity.

If you want to become a blessing to the Body of Christ, you must become a person with maturity, and a person who exercises according to that maturity. We must all grow to the extent that our faculties become keen due to maturity and exercise. We have to become mature in life to the extent that we are able to discern what is profitable from what is unprofitable. Then we will be able to serve the church properly.

When you enter into this kind of exercised maturity, then if one person comes to you and asks a certain thing you may say “No,” while to another you may say “Yes,” and to yet another you may say, “The Lord must lead you.” To different instances of the same question, you may reply different ways, for you are one who is exercised according to the maturity in life.

### **As An Exercised Person In Maturity, Paul Could Become All Things To All Men**

When the maturity in life develops, the ability for a proper and healthy exercise also develops. For example, the apostle Paul was able to say he became all things to all men (1 Cor. 9:22) because he was a mature person, His maturity enabled him to exercise to the point that if he saw a Jew, Paul came to him as a Jew, and if he saw a Gentile, Paul became as a Gentile. When Paul saw a person without God he knew how to approach such a person. If he saw a person who loved God, he also knew how to be with that kind of person. He was not being hypocritical in any of these situations; he just knew, because of his maturity in life, how to approach any person for Christ. Because Paul was such a person he was sensitized to each person’s need and clear about how to proceed in every situation for the gospel’s sake.

## **To Function For The Body, We Must Function Organically According To Our Measure Of Maturity**

God desires that we would function organically rather than mechanically. Such an organic function of the Body is what the Lord is seeking to recover in these days. The Lord has unveiled to us that we are here for the organic Body of Christ. The Body as a divine organism is wholly a matter of life. To become an operative and useful blessing to the Lord's Body, you need to grow until you reach a measure of maturity. Then out of this maturity you must develop a kind of exercise according to that maturity.

### **A PERSON DEVELOPED IN TRUTH, ACQUIRING TRUTH, GAINING FACILITY WITH TRUTH, AND ALLOWING THE TRUTH TO CONSTITUTE US**

To serve properly in the church life you must be not only proper in life but also equipped with truth. Furthermore, you must gain a facility with the truth. Do you know the difference between merely acquiring the truth, and having a facility with the truth? The truth you have acquired must become readily available to you. You must become skillful with the truth. You must be able to apply it without effort. For instance, it is not enough to know that there is a certain verse somewhere that says a certain thing. You should be equipped so that you can tell a person exactly where a specific verse is and what it says, and you can refer to other verses that are related to it. You should be equipped to the point that you can find something in the Bible when a person's need comes up. This requires that you become so familiar with the truth that it becomes an integral part of you.

After you have equipped yourself and have become skilled with the truth, you must also become constituted with the truth. Eventually the truth must become who you are. The words that you speak should become your experience. They should become what you enjoy, what you partake of, and what you are burdened for. Sometimes when you see a brother give a message you realize that the brother and the message are not together. You may see people stand up and have no idea what they are talking about, but they will speak as if it is real. This is because they are still in the stage of equipping. But don't despise this stage! A person may not match what he shares, but with the proper growth, the truth with which he equips himself will one day become very useful.

For instance, suppose you are preparing an outline from the book of Hebrews. You may not have the sense that you are truly connected to what you are preparing, because you are still in the stage of equipping. Perhaps a few verses may touch you. For instance, take Hebrew 10:25-26: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...for if we sin willfully...." These verses may have little effect on you, because you have no realization that you are sinning if you miss the meetings. Eventually you may gain some understanding of what these verses mean so that you can readily explain them. That means you possess some facility with the truth in these verses. However, you may still not have the feeling that you are sinning when you intentionally miss a meeting, for the truth is not really in you. Once this truth becomes constituted in you, however, you will no longer be able to take your gathering together with other believers in a light way.

Initially you have to equip yourself in the truth, then you have to become proficient with it, and then eventually you must become constituted with it. When you are in the stage of equipping, you come to the truth as an object for your labor. In this stage there is no feeling involved; you just want to know what is there, and you are satisfied to gain some understanding. But eventually the truth you study should become a part of you.

People should not feel that you merely have the ability to explain what a verse means. People should feel that this verse is related to you, for it has become a part of your make-up. Your person, your being, has been impacted by this verse. Then when the truth comes out of you it is operative, with a kind of power and effectiveness. You are able to bring real light to others through the truth that you impart.

For your entire life you should struggle for these three stages of laboring into the truth. First, struggle to acquire the riches in the Word and the ministry. Then, struggle to achieve facility with whatever truth you have gained. Yet do not be satisfied if you are merely able to understand and explain it. Realize that the truth you are equipped with must still be constituted into you. You may know the portion of the word that says we should be given to hospitality, for instance, but has this word worked in you to the point that you yourself are given to hospitality? Don't be satisfied if you merely have some facility with the truth. Allow the truth to constitute you so that it becomes a part of you.

### **A PERSON DEVELOPED IN OPERATION LEARNING TO LABOR HUMANLY**

If you desire to serve and to be a blessing to the Lord's testimony, then you need to develop in operation. First of all, learn to operate as a man. If you do not know how to operate as a man, God cannot do much with you. Unfortunately, sometimes when a person loves the Lord he is no longer able to be a human being. People who love the Lord can become overly spiritual, talking and even walking in a peculiar fashion. It is a shame that many who seek to be "spiritual" end up despising their humanity. If you want to help the church and build up the church in your labor, the first and most crucial thing is your humanity. You must learn to labor "humanly."

For instance, love is a human virtue. You must love others through your humanity. Love will not come to others from the air. If you know how to labor humanly, then others will have a way to identify with you. This is crucial. Wherever you are, whether you are with an unbeliever, a new brother, a companion, or in a corporate gathering, people should have the feeling, “This person is a genuine human being.”

### **Jesus Served Among Men as a Man**

When the Lord was on this earth, how did He serve? First of all, He served humanly. The Lord could just have appeared on this earth as a thirty year old. If He were asked where He was from, He would have said, “I am from somewhere you cannot understand, but I am here with you now.” Don’t you think the Lord could have still done a marvelous work on the earth? Why would He have to go through all the stages of human development? Why couldn’t He have simply appeared, and performed a miracle by catching some fish with coins in them, in order to impress and gain some disciples? Then why couldn’t He have had the disciples buy a mansion where they could all live happily together, dispensing food miraculously to all the people for three and a half years? If He had done this then His time on earth would have been a pleasant excursion for Him, while He did the things that God can do but that man cannot do. Wouldn’t that have been sufficiently wonderful? When the Lord came to serve, however, the first thing He had to accomplish before beginning His service was to become a man and grow as a man. Then after thirty years He began to operate. When He operated, His divinity operated within a genuine, authentic humanity.

## **Jesus Touched People Primarily with His Humanity**

When John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, two of those who heard came to Jesus and asked Him, “Rabbi, Teacher, where are You staying?” (John 1:35-39). That was a very human question. Do you think that if two of us approached Jesus that we would ask this question? Perhaps we would ask, “Jesus, John the Baptist said that you are the Lamb of God. Would You please give us a message about what that means? We are from the recovery, so we could use a message.” If the two disciples began from that angle, the human element would have been gone. The Lord may have given them a word, and they would have likely gone home and forgotten about it. But the Lord gained these disciples in a very human exercise. When the two asked him, “Teacher, where are you staying?” He replied, “Come and see.” I do not know what He had to offer these two men to see. It might have been poor and limited. But as He began to operate as a human being, something divine came out. His approach was initially very human, but He did not operate only with a fine, nice, decent humanity. Something divine still came out. And this divinity was not “airy,” or apart from his humanity.

If you are merely “filled in Spirit,” as many young brothers strive to be when they serve, you may run over people and plow them under with your supposed spirituality, feeling you have prevailed and conquered. But that is not how the Lord operated. His operation was full of humanity. For instance, when He told Zaccheus, who was in a tree, “Come down, for today I must stay in your house” (Luke 19:5), that was very human, and it was also very divine. This humanity with divinity was repeatedly revealed as the Lord operated in His ministry.

### **Learn To Be With Others Humanly**

As you visit others to serve them, don't try to take the Spirit with you. Take this word in a proper way. Surely you need the Lords' presence. But don't pray for any "power" or "authority" to go with you. Instead, be a person who knows how to drink a cup of tea with people, and how to talk with people according to where they really are. Then at the same time, learn how to dispense God as life while you are with people in a human way.

### **As We Learn to Operate Humanly, the Divine Operation will Come Forth**

Our prayer should be, "Lord, as I serve You, I want to be a real human being. Whoever I am with, the first thing I want to learn is to be human. As I operate in a proper humanity, I believe that what is divine within me will also operate. Lord, work with me so that I might become such a life-dispensing person." We must see that our operation in the divine life requires the operation of a proper humanity.

### **Ultimately, Our Operation Must Produce What is Good For the Building Up of the Church**

Third, and very importantly, our operation should produce something that builds up the church. Often we are almost afraid when certain brothers want to serve, for we realize they may kill more saints than they raise up. And most seriously, those they do raise up may not be for the church. The danger is that their labor would produce something other than the church's building up. Therefore we need to learn how to labor "churchly."



If you desire to labor, you should labor in a local church. All brothers who labor in a “floating” way, meaning without a home church, eventually come into trouble. This is why I am rarely happy when I hear that a young full-time brother has been invited by some locality to give a conference. I fear eventually that such a gifted young full-timer will have no church life, and thus will not develop in a healthy manner. We all need to be grounded in a very real church life. I could travel much more than I do, but I realize that I need also to be in a church life practically. Conferences can help the church, but they cannot directly build the church. The churches are built up through those who are operating very humanly, very divinely, and very “churchly.”

### **Every Ounce of Our Labor Must Become a Blessing to the Body**

With this little talk you can realize that to labor in the church is by no means a simple matter. If you do not know how to respect others and exercise a proper humanity, you will not be able to dispense the divine life to others. And if you do not know how to operate in and for the Body, your spiritual operation can even cause problems. Every ounce of your labor must ultimately have the Body in view, and every ounce of your labor must become a blessing to the Body.

### **CONCLUDING WORD**

Whosoever desires to serve the Lord healthily and properly must pay attention to these three things. To serve the Lord is not only a matter of desire. Desire is surely valuable and precious. But you must realize that if you truly want to serve in the church you must pay attention to the matters of life, truth, and operation.

### **Pay Attention to Life**

As to life, you must pay attention to growth, to maturity, and eventually how to be exercised in your level of comparative maturity. The maturity you gain must issue in a keen exercise. You can be a very mature brother, but also very dull and dead! So you need to grow, you need to mature, and you need to be exercised according to your level of maturity.

### **Pay Attention to Truth**

You must learn to labor into the truth to the point that you are sufficiently equipped with it. That is, you should be adept with the truth and possess it with facility. Eventually you must become constituted with the truth. The truth you have received must become an integral part of your person.

### **Pay Attention to Operation**

Thirdly, your labor and operation must be with a proper humanity. I say this very strongly. How do you present yourself? How do you dress? How is your hair? You have to consider the conscience and perception of others. Furthermore, without a fine and proper humanity your spiritual operation will have no base. When the Lord was on the earth, His spiritual operation had a fine and proper humanity as its base. Learn to visit people humanly. Don't go to "get them" for the Lord's recovery. With the establishment of a proper human relatedness, what is divine will begin to operate. All you do, however, must have the Body as its goal. Your operation must produce what is good for the building up of the church.

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