

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
MAINTAINING A HEALTHY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND A HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE**

Message One

**Cleaving to the Healthy Teaching of God's Eternal Economy
and Living in the Divine Dispensing of God in Christ into Our Being
through the Exercise of Our Spirit unto Godliness**

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 1:3-6; 3:15; 4:6-7; 6:3, 20; 2 Tim. 1:6-7, 12-14; 4:22

- I. The subject of 1 Timothy is God's economy concerning the church; God's economy is His household administration, which is to dispense Himself in Christ into His chosen and redeemed people that He may have a house to express Himself, which house is the church, the Body of Christ—1:3-6; 3:15:**
- A. God's eternal economy, which is God's plan, is His will and goal; God's dispensing, God's distributing, is the process and means whereby He accomplishes His economy; for this reason, God's dispensing is for God's economy.
 - B. 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; Luke 24:44.
 - C. 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.
 - D. 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 dispensing Himself into us as the divine life—vv. 16-17a; John 10:10; 14:6a; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11.
 - E. The leadership in the New Testament ministry is the leadership of the controlling, God-given revelation of God's economy—Acts 26:19; Prov. 29:18.
 - F. In a darkened and confused situation, we must cleave to the enlightening and ordering word in the New Testament, the healthy teaching of God's economy, which concerns God's dispensing of Himself in His Divine Trinity into His chosen people so that they may be constituted into the Body of Christ for the manifestation of the Triune God—Titus 1:9; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-4, 10; 2 Tim. 4:3; 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13:
 - 1. *Healthy* implies the matter of life; the sound teaching of the apostles, the teaching of God's economy, ministers the supply of life to people, either nourishing them or healing them; in contrast, the different teachings of the dissenting ones (1 Tim. 1:3) sow the seeds of death and poison into others.
 - 2. Any teaching that distracts people from the center and goal of God's eternal economy is not healthy; 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.
 - 3. The different teachings of the dissenting ones 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—1 Tim. 1:5; John 13:34; Gal. 5:13-14.
 - 4. The basic factor of the decline and apostasy of the church is the turning away from Paul's ministry centered on the economy of God—2 Tim. 1:15-17; cf. 2:17-18; 4:4, 10, 14-16; Eph. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Rev. 2:1-7, 14-15, 20; 3:8.

- G. In order to be preserved in the Lord's recovery, we must "guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit who is indwelling us" (lit.)—2 Tim. 1:14:
1. According to verse 13, the deposit must refer to the deposit of the healthy words of God's economy, including the riches of life in the Lord's words, which He has stored in us; we have to deposit the Lord's healthy words into our being, like we deposit money in a bank—1 Tim. 6:20; Col. 3:16; Psa. 119:11, 72, 111, 162.
 2. To hold a pattern of healthy words means to live by the healthy words, being nourished with the words of the full gospel concerning God's eternal economy and the sweet words that contain and convey the riches of Christ—2 Tim. 1:13; 1 Tim. 4:6.
 3. The Holy Spirit dwells in our spirit (Rom. 8:16); hence, for us to guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit requires that we exercise our spirit (1 Tim. 4:7).
 4. If we are persons acting, behaving, and having our life in the Spirit through the exercise of our spirit, all that has been deposited in our being will be guarded through the Spirit who is indwelling us—2 Tim. 1:12, 14.

II. The subject of 2 Timothy is the inoculation against the decline of the church, and the key to receiving and dispensing this inoculation is the exercise of our spirit unto godliness—1:6-7; 1 Tim. 4:7-8; 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. 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:
1. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit so 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—Prov. 20:27; John 4:24; 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:22.
 2. Without God being the Spirit and without our 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.
 3. 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—cf. 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; Jude 19.
 4. 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:
 - a. The breath of God has become our human spirit, and our spirit is God's lamp to contain God as the oil and give us light—Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27.
 - b. 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—John 3:6; Rev. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
 - c. 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; Eph. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:4; Dan. 6:3, 10.
 5. The building of God into man is typified by both the tabernacle and the breastplate, and the key to God's building is our mingled spirit:

- a. The uniting bars of the boards of the tabernacle, made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, signify the mingled spirit, the divine Spirit mingled with the human spirit to become the uniting bond of peace—Exo. 26:26-30; Rom. 8:16; Eph. 4:3.
 - b. In the New Testament the reality of the Urim and the Thummim put into the breastplate is the mingled spirit—the unveiling Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, indwelling our receiving spirit, our regenerated human spirit—Exo. 28:30; Rom. 8:4, 14; 1 Cor. 2:9-12.
- 6. The divine Spirit dwelling in our human spirit and the two mingled together as one spirit, the mingled spirit, are the strategic and central point of God's economy, which is in faith—John 3:6; 4:24; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; 1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:13:
 - a. The great way to fulfill God's economy is for us to live and do everything according to the Spirit by exercising our spirit—Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:25; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 1:9.
 - b. 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.
- C. 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.
- D. To exercise our spirit is to fan our spirit into flame—2 Tim. 1:6-7:
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. We saved ones have the capital to live the Christian life and the church life, and this capital is our God-given spirit.
- E. To exercise our spirit, we must deal with the parts of our heart surrounding our spirit—our mind, emotion, will, and conscience—1 Pet. 3:4; Psalms 51:10:
 - 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. To exercise our spirit is to exercise ourselves to have a good conscience without offense toward God and men and to have a pure conscience, which means to have a pure heart of seeking only God and His will—1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; Acts 23:1; 24:16; Matt. 5:8; Psalms 73:25-26.
- F. To exercise our spirit by rejoicing always, praying unceasingly, and giving thanks in everything to enjoy the indwelling Spirit is the secret of doing all things in Christ—2 Cor. 12:2a; Phil. 4:11-13; Psalms 91:1; 1 Thes. 5:16-18.
- G. To exercise our spirit 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 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—2 Tim. 1:6-8; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 2:1-3, 8; 1 Kings 8:48.