

Pray-  
Reading  
the  
Word

Witness Lee

# Pray- Reading the Word

Witness Lee

***Living Stream Ministry***  
Anaheim, CA • [www.lsm.org](http://www.lsm.org)

# PRAY-READING THE WORD

When a baby is born, his most immediate need is to take some milk for nourishment. Without nourishment the new babe will not only fail to grow properly, but will soon become very weak and eventually even die. After we are saved and born again, our most immediate need also is that we learn how to take in the Lord as our spiritual milk and nourishment. Without this spiritual nourishment, we also have no way to grow properly and will in a short time be spiritually dead.

In the Gospels, the Lord Jesus presents Himself as a feast for us to drink and eat. He says in [John 4](#) that He is the living water for us to drink. In the sixth chapter of the same book, He says that He is the bread of life to be eaten. Then the Bible says in [1 Corinthians 12](#) that we “were all given to drink one Spirit.” We drink Him, we eat Him, and thereby enjoy Him and receive Him as our spiritual nourishment.

We have to praise the Lord that Jesus Christ has presented Himself to us as a feast to meet all our need and to be all our supply. We all know

that His name is the great I AM, which means I AM whatever My people need.

## THE WORD OF GOD BEING FOOD TO US

In [1 Peter 2:2-3](#) we have a most important passage. “As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation, if you have tasted that the Lord is good.” These verses are important to us because they tell us clearly how to taste the Lord: drink “the guileless [pure] milk of the Word.” If we would taste Christ, we must take into us the milk of the word. Then we will be nourished for spiritual growth. Praise the Lord, the Bible says *tasted!* It does not say that we *know* this aspect or that aspect about the Lord, but that we *taste* the Lord. When we drink the milk of the Word, we are actually tasting the Lord. Therefore, the way for us to taste the Lord is simply by drinking the milk of the Word. The Word is not only for us to study or learn, but even more for us to taste. The way the Lord nourishes His Body is by His Word. If we desire to enjoy the Lord and be nourished by the Lord, we must come to the Word to taste the Lord.

However, the concept which most of us have of the Bible is that it is a kind of teaching, a book

full of doctrines. Thus, we come to the Word with the intention of understanding and knowing something. In all of our Christian life, how much of the Word have we taken in as food to our spirit? We must answer honestly that most of us have taken in very little. We must not come to the Bible only to learn and to understand. The Bible is not the tree of knowledge; it is the tree of life! If we take the Word of God as the tree of knowledge, we misuse the Bible, because [2 Corinthians 3:6](#) tells us that the letter kills. We must never take the Bible as a book of letters, but as a book of life.

All Christians know that the function of the Word of God is to reveal God to us. Although this is true, this is not its main function. The main function of the Bible is to *impart God into us as life* and as the nourishment of life. It is not only to give us knowledge about God and His love, but to impart God Himself into us. Whenever we read the Bible, we should not merely try to know or understand it, but take something of God's essence into us just as we take our food. Then, like food, this substance will be assimilated into our very being.

[First Timothy 4:6](#) says that we are “nourished with the words of the faith.” No doubt we have

read this verse many times, but have we noticed the word “nourished”? Praise the Lord! The concept of the apostle Paul was that God’s Word is food to nourish God’s children. We too must have the same realization regarding the Word of God. We should not consider it only as knowledge, but as food to nourish and supply us all the time.

[First Timothy 1:10](#) speaks of things that are “opposed to the healthy teaching.” The King James Version uses the word “sound” instead of “healthy.” God’s Word is not just sound doctrine for the mind, but healthy doctrine for life. This word “healthy” in Greek is equivalent to the English word “hygiene.” Hygiene is very much related to health. We must have more than a sound word; we must have a healthy word which nourishes and supplies us.

The Scriptures contain at least three examples of those who ate the Word of God. The first is Jeremiah, who said, “Your words were found and I ate them...” ([Jer. 15:16a](#)). To eat something is not merely to receive it, but to assimilate it. To assimilate is to receive something *into you*, digest it, and make it a part of yourself. The second example of someone eating the Word of God is recorded in the book of Ezekiel, where the prophet Ezekiel ate the Word of God ([3:1-3](#)).



Then in [Revelation 10](#) we read that the apostle John also ate the Word of God.

Jeremiah said, “Your word became to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart” ([Jer. 15:16b](#)). This is a kind of enjoyment. The Word, after being eaten, became a joy and also a rejoicing. God’s Word is an enjoyment; after it is taken into us and assimilated into our very being, it becomes joy within us and rejoicing without. David said, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth” ([Psa. 119:103](#)). The Word is indeed an enjoyment; it is even sweeter and more pleasant than honey to our taste.

From these verses we realize that the Word of God is not only for us to learn, but even more for us to taste, to eat, to enjoy, and to digest. The Lord Jesus even speaks of God’s Word as spiritual food: “It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God” ([Matt. 4:4](#)). Every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God is spiritual food to nourish us. This is the food by which we must live.

## THE ESSENCE OF GOD’S WORD

What is the substance, the essence, of God’s Word? The answer is found in [2 Timothy 3:16](#):

“All Scripture is God-breathed...” The King James Version says “given by inspiration of God,” but the meaning in the original language is God-breathed. All Scripture is God’s breath. We know that God is Spirit ([John 4:24](#)); the Spirit is God’s essence and nature. God is Spirit (just as a table is wood). Since the Word is the breath of God, and God is Spirit, whatever is breathed out of God must be Spirit! So the essence of nature of the Word of God is Spirit. It is not just a thought, revelation, teaching, or doctrine, but Spirit. The Spirit is the very substance of the Word of God. Now we see why the Lord Jesus told us that the words which He spoke are spirit and life ([John 6:63](#)). A revelation, thought, or teaching could never be life, but because the Word is Spirit, it is life. The nature of this book is the very essence of God Himself. Whenever we deal with this book, we must realize that we are touching God and dealing with Him!

## **TAKING IN THE WORD BY PRAYER**

Having seen that the Word of God is the very essence of God Himself and that it is for our spiritual enjoyment and nourishment, we must now see the proper way to come to the Word. What is it? We must look at the Word of God as



recorded in [Ephesians 6:17-18](#): “Receive...the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the Word of God.” It is the Spirit that is the Word of God. Then [verse 18](#) continues: “By means of all prayer and petition.” The verses then together are: “Receive...the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition.” In what way are we to take the Word of God according to this passage? It is by means of all prayer and petition. This is what we call *pray-reading*! Again, we must repeat—the Word of God must be taken by means of all prayer.

## HOW TO PRAY-READ

Simply pick up the Word and *pray-read* a few verses in the morning and in the evening. There is no need for you to exercise your mind in order to squeeze out some utterance, and it is unnecessary to think over what you read. Just pray *with* the same words you read. On every page and in every verse there is a living prayer.

There is no need to close your eyes when you are pray-reading. Keep your eyes on the Word as you pray. In all sixty-six books of the Bible, we cannot find one verse which says that we must close our eyes to pray, but there is a verse telling us that Jesus *lifted up His eyes* to heaven, saying,

“Father...” ([John 17:1](#)). He was looking toward heaven while He was praying. We would not argue in a doctrinal way, but we must realize that there is no need for us to close our eyes when we pray. It is better for us to close our mind! For example, in pray-reading [Galatians 2:20](#) simply look at the printed page, which says, “I am crucified with Christ.” Then with your eyes upon the Word and *praying from deep within*, say: “Praise the Lord, ‘I am crucified with Christ.’ Hallelujah! ‘Crucified with Christ.’ Amen! ‘I am.’ O Lord, ‘I am crucified.’ Praise the Lord! ‘Crucified with Christ.’ Amen! ‘I am crucified with Christ.’ Hallelujah! Amen! ‘And it is no longer.’ Amen. ‘No longer.’ Amen. ‘I who live.’ O Lord. ‘I who live.’ Hallelujah! Amen! ‘But it is Christ who lives in me,’ etc.” Then perhaps you will turn to [John 10:10](#) and read, “I have come that they may have life.” Then with your eyes still on the Bible you can pray: “‘I have come.’ Amen! ‘I have come.’ Hallelujah! ‘I have come that they may have life.’ Praise the Lord! ‘May have life.’ Hallelujah! ‘Life.’ Amen! ‘Life.’ O Lord, ‘Life.’”

There is no need for you to compose any sentences or create a prayer. Just pray-read the Word. Pray the words of the Bible exactly as they read. Eventually, you will see that the whole Bible is

a prayer book! You can open to any page of the Bible and start to pray with any portion of the Word. The Bible is *the* Book, the Holy Book. Every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God is different from anything else, even the best of the world. The world has only the words of human beings, but the Bible has the Word of God! Every word in this Book *is* the Word of God. Although you may not understand a certain passage, still you are nourished while pray-reading it, because there is really something of God in His Word; the Word of God is His very breath. There is no need to explain or expound the Word; simply pray *with* the Word. Forget about reading, researching, understanding, and learning the Word. You must pray-read the Word. Then eventually you will *really* understand it. If you will practice this you will receive something so nourishing and strengthening within which will empower you and give you life all the time.

Perhaps you are quite familiar with the entire book of Romans. But even today, you still need to pray-read one or two verses of it. Though we may know all about food, yet we still must partake of some food daily. Regardless of how much we know about it, we still must eat it! To know is one thing, but to eat is another. We must not

only know food, we must eat it. How many times have you read the Gospel of John? Perhaps you have read it more than fifty times. But how much of that book has been taken into you as your nourishment and enjoyment? To know, to understand, and even to recite the Gospel of John is one thing. But to take it in, to eat it or to enjoy it bit by bit, is another thing. You may have been a Christian for many years, but regardless of how long you have been a Christian and regardless of how many times you have read this book, you must not only read it but pray-read it! You must eat it, partake of it, and enjoy it day by day.

## **PRAY-READ WITH OTHERS**

For more enjoyment and nourishment and to pray-read the Word properly and adequately, we need the Body, the church. We may enjoy pray-reading the Word privately, but if we try it with a group of other Christians, we will be in the third heaven! The explanation of this is that food is for the whole Body, not merely for one member alone. We do not eat food simply for the sake of our arm; neither should we think that the hand can eat food by itself. No, the food is to be eaten by the Body, and the food is for the Body. The principle is that eating is for the Body,

not just for the members. Therefore, the best way to pray-read is with other members of the Body. You will profit by pray-reading alone, but you will see the difference when you come together with other brothers and sisters.

When we come together to pray-read with other brothers and sisters, there are four words we must remember: *quick, short, real, and fresh*. First, we need to pray quickly, without hesitating. When we are quick to pray, we have no time to use our mind and to consider. Then our prayers must be short, because long prayers need some composition. We must forget about composing a long prayer and just utter a phrase or a sentence. Do it in a quick and short way. And we also need to be real, not pretending. Say something in a real way. Finally, our prayers must be fresh, not old. The best way to be fresh is not to pray with our own words but with the words of the Bible. Every part and every line of this book can be used as a prayer, and it will be the freshest prayer!

Thousands have proved that this is the right way to come to the Word of God. It has revolutionized their lives. It may seem awkward at first, but with practice and a sincere heart, you will touch the living Spirit. If you will try this both

privately and corporately, you will be able to testify of the riches of Christ that have been imparted to you by pray-reading the Word of God. You will see blessing and growth in your spiritual life. There will be a great change. By contacting the Word in this way to enjoy Christ and be nourished by Him, you will be a person growing to maturity, full of life and saturated with this living One.

© 1991 *Living Stream Ministry*

Please feel free to share this eBooklet with others.

See more titles in this series at  
[www.lsm.org/booklets](http://www.lsm.org/booklets).