

THE EXPERIENCE, GROWTH, AND MINISTRY OF LIFE FOR THE BODY (1)

Kansas City Blending Conference

Living in the Fellowship of the Divine Life

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:2-7, 9

I. We need to enter into the vertical and horizontal aspects of the fellowship of the divine life:

- A. The fellowship is the flow of the eternal life within all the believers, who have received and possess the divine life; it is illustrated by the flow of the river of water of life in the New Jerusalem—Rev. 22:1.
- B. First John 1:2-3 and 6-7 reveal that the fellowship of the divine life has both a vertical aspect and a horizontal aspect:
 - 1. First John 1:2-3 says, “(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”:
 - a. The vertical aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with the Triune God; the horizontal aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with one another.
 - b. The initial experience of the apostles was vertical, but when the apostles reported the eternal life to others, they experienced the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship.
 - 2. Verse 6 says, “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth”; this is the vertical aspect of fellowship.
 - 3. Verse 7 says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another”; this is the horizontal aspect of fellowship.
- C. We need to see the relationship between the vertical and horizontal aspects of the divine fellowship:
 - 1. If you do not have the proper fellowship with the Lord, it is difficult to have fellowship with your fellow believers; in the same way, if you do not have the proper fellowship with your fellow believers, it is difficult to have fellowship with the Lord; the reason for this is that the divine fellowship is one fellowship—Acts 2:42.
 - 2. When we are not in this fellowship in a practical way, we are out of the Spirit, out of the Triune God, and out of the divine life—cf. 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Cor. 1:9; Phil. 2:1.
 - 3. We should try to have fellowship with our fellow believers as much as possible; this divine fellowship not only corrects us; it also molds us and even reconstitutes us; this fellowship brings the divine constituent into our spiritual being, causing a change in our being.

4. Fellowship also indicates a putting away of private interests and a joining with others for a certain common purpose; hence, to live in the divine fellowship is to put aside our private interests and join with the apostles and the Triune God for the carrying out of God's purpose—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:9; 3:6, 12.
- D. The divine fellowship is the reality of living in the Body of Christ:
1. The reason that the Lord has not yet come back (Rev. 22:20) is that the believers are individualistic, independent, opinionated, and divided.
 2. By being restricted in the divine fellowship, the Body of Christ is kept in oneness, and the work of the ministry continues to go on; the thing that makes everything alive is fellowship—Eph. 4:11-12; cf. Ezek. 47:9.
- E. The fellowship of life, the inner flow of life, results in joy and in the inner shining, the inner ruling, of the light of life—1 John 1:4-5; John 1:4; 8:12; cf. 2 Cor. 5:13.

II. We need to enter into the two aspects of the divine fellowship by the two spirits:

- A. We need to enter into the vertical aspect of the divine fellowship by the divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit—13:14; 2 Tim. 4:22:
1. The Spirit Himself is the fellowship because the fellowship is the flow, the current, of the Spirit; this is like saying that the current of electricity is just the electricity itself; the current of electricity is electricity in motion.
 2. In the same way, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit mentioned in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is the Spirit in motion; the grace of Christ is Christ Himself enjoyed by us, the love of God is God Himself tasted by us, and the fellowship of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself moving within us.
- B. We need to enter into the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship by the human spirit—Phil. 2:1; Rev. 1:10:
1. If we are going to have real fellowship horizontally with one another, we need to exercise our spirit—1 Tim. 4:7.
 2. If we exercise our spirit, we will never talk in a worldly manner, speak negatively about the saints or the churches, or gossip about others' mistakes and failures; when we exercise our spirit, the nature of our conversation will change because our spirit is holy—2 Cor. 6:6.
- C. The horizontal fellowship is interwoven with the vertical fellowship; this interwoven fellowship is the real fellowship:
1. When we fellowship with one another in a genuine way by exercising our spirit, we are eager to pray and contact the Lord; this shows how close the relationship is between the vertical and horizontal aspects of fellowship.
 2. Our horizontal fellowship with the saints brings us into vertical fellowship with the Lord; then our vertical fellowship with the Lord brings us into horizontal fellowship with the saints.

D. The divine fellowship is everything in the Christian life:

1. Just as the current of electricity is the electricity itself, the fellowship of the divine life, the flow of the divine life, is the divine life itself.
2. Our Christian life is a life of the fellowship of the divine life.
3. The apostles wanted to have fellowship with the believers—this is horizontal fellowship; then the apostles stated that their fellowship was with the Triune God—this is vertical fellowship.
4. We should be vertically fellowshiping with the Lord and, at the same time, be horizontally fellowshiping with one another.
5. Eventually, in this divine fellowship God is interwoven with us; this interweaving is the mingling of God with man.
6. We must realize that when fellowship disappears, God also disappears; God comes as the fellowship.

III. Our fellowship is deepened through the cross:

A. In the whole universe there is only one thing that takes away all the obstacles between God and us—the cross.

B. Verse 6 of hymn #737 in *Hymns* says, “Fellowship is deepened / Thru the cross of death; / Fellowship is lifted / By the Spirit’s breath”; without the Spirit and the cross, we cannot have real fellowship.

C. The first line of *Hymns*, #279 says, “First the blood, and then the ointment”:

1. The blood is a strong sign of the cross, and the ointment is a type of the all-inclusive, compound Spirit.
2. These two elements are mentioned in Leviticus 14:6-10 and 14-18; in this portion of the Word, we are told that a leper, signifying an unclean sinner, is to be cleansed first by the blood; upon the base of the blood, then the oil, the ointment, is applied:
 - a. The blood and the ointment are applied to the lobe of the leper’s right ear, to the thumb of his right hand, and to the big toe of his right foot; the ear signifies our listening to the word of God, the hand signifies our doing the things of God, and the foot signifies our taking the ways of God.
 - b. Spiritually speaking, leprosy is composed of the wrong hearing, the wrong working, and the wrong walking; because we are lepers, we need first to be cleansed by Christ’s redeeming blood, and then upon the blood we need the anointing oil.
 - c. Consummately, our cleansing is by the divine fellowship of the Spirit based upon the cleansing blood of Christ.

D. The divine fellowship is the dispensing of the Triune God into us, the tripartite men, making us and God one; the Greek word for *fellowship* means “joint participation,” and this joint participation issues in oneness:

1. Actually, fellowship is just oneness; when God is fellowshiping with us, and when we are fellowshiping with God, that makes God and us one.

2. In the whole universe there is a big oneness, and this big oneness is the divine fellowship.
3. The Lord desires to make us all one as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one; in John 17 the Lord prayed, “That they may be one, even as We are one” (v. 22b); the church’s oneness is a part of the divine oneness of the Divine Trinity (v. 21a).
4. Eventually, the church and the Divine Trinity are one in fellowship— 14:21, 23.

E. We must experience the cross in order to be thoroughly in the divine fellowship:

1. Because there is an obstacle within us toward another brother, our fellowship with him is not that thorough; we may avoid contact with certain saints because of the obstacles within us to the divine fellowship.
2. Our fellowship is not thorough, and obstacles remain within us because we do not have the cross in our experience—Gal. 2:20a.
3. *Hymns*, #631 says, “If no death, no life”; this means, “If no cross, no Christ”; furthermore, “If no Christ, no Spirit; and if no Spirit, no fellowship.”
4. In Matthew 16:24 the Lord said, “If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me”; the Lord used the words *his cross*, indicating that there is a particular portion of the cross for each one of us in order to cross each one of us out.
5. Actually, to bear the cross is to deny the self, to put the self to death, to apply the cross of Christ to the self all the time.
6. In order for us to have the horizontal fellowship, we need to deny ourselves; to deny ourselves means to be senseless about ourselves; then we can never be offended.
7. We need the experience of the cross to deepen our experience of the divine fellowship—cf. 1 John 1:9.

THE EXPERIENCE, GROWTH, AND MINISTRY OF LIFE FOR THE BODY (2)

The Urgent Need of the Growth of Life and Growing in Life by Dealing with the Heart

I. Among us in the Lord's recovery, there is an urgent need of the growth of life; if we lack the growth of life, there will be no way for the recovery to go on, and eventually we will drift back into the situation of Christianity and become a repetition of the sad history of Christianity—Eph. 4:11-16; Matt. 13:31-33; 2 Tim. 3:1-4.

II. The most significant thing with life is growth—Eph. 4:13, 15-16:

- A. If there is no growth, it either means that there is no life or that there is something wrong; we need to grow in life—1 Cor. 3:6; 14:20; 16:13.
- B. The best way to solve the problems among saints in a local church is to turn their attention to the growth of life—John 6:57; 1 Pet. 2:2-3.
- C. The growth of life is the primary matter in the practice of the church life; hence, we should pay attention to the growth of life—Eph. 4:13, 15-16.

III. We need to know what the growth of life is:

- A. The growth of life is the increase of the element of God within us until we are filled unto all the fullness of God—3:19.
- B. The growth of life is the increase of the measure of the stature of Christ; the more we love Christ and pursue Christ, allowing Christ to live in us and to gain us, the more the measure of the stature of Christ will increase within us; this is the real growth of life—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:17; 4:13.
- C. The growth of life is the expanding of the ground of the Holy Spirit within us; when we pursue the working of the Holy Spirit within us and obey the teaching of the Holy Spirit within us as the anointing, the Holy Spirit can expand His ground extensively, and thus the divine life within us will grow to a great extent—Rom. 8:11; Eph. 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27.
- D. The growth of life is the decrease of the human element, that is, the decrease of the flavor of man and the increase of the flavor of God—Matt. 16:25; John 12:25.
- E. The growth of life is the breaking of the natural life, that is, the breaking of our skills, ability, and capacity; if we desire to grow in life, our gifts must be stripped by God, and our shell of godliness and piety must be broken by God—2 Cor. 4:16-17.
- F. The growth of life is the subduing of every part of the soul; the more our soul is subdued, the more life grows; and the more our soul decreases, the more life increases—John 12:24-25.

IV. The proper growth of life comes only from direct, personal contact with the Lord—2 Cor. 3:18:

- A. The growth of life comes from His living enlightenment and from His instant pointing out of things within our being—1 John 1:5:
 - 1. Then in His presence we will respond, "Lord, I love You. Lord, I take You according to Your enlightenment. I take You according to Your instant, present shining."
 - 2. This kind of prayer will cause the growth of life, and we will take a great step in the growth of life—1 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 4:15.
- B. We all need to go to the Lord and have direct contact with Him purposely and particularly concerning the growth of life; if we do this, something within us will be killed and eliminated, and the growth of life will come—Psa. 36:9.

V. We grow in life by dealing with the heart—Matt. 5:8; James 4:8; Eph. 3:17:

- A. After we receive Christ into our spirit, we need to be pure in heart because our heart is the field where Christ can grow and spread—1 Cor. 6:17; Matt. 5:3, 8:

1. Christ has been sown into our spirit in order to grow and spread in our heart; the growth of life is the spreading of Christ in our heart—Eph. 3:17.
 2. Christ desires to make His home in our heart and to take possession of every part of our inner being—v. 17.
 3. The problem that limits the growth of many believers is in their heart— Matt. 6:21; 12:34-35; 13:15; 15:8; 22:37.
 4. If we have a problem with our heart or if our heart is wrong, the Lord will have no way to spread in us—15:8:
 - a. In the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:3-8 and 18-23, the Lord made it clear that the seed was unable to grow in the first three kinds of hearts because they had no room for the seed to grow and spread.
 - b. If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that we have withheld room in our heart from the Lord.
 - c. If Christ as the seed of life is to grow in our heart, we need to have a pure and unoccupied heart, a heart in which every inch is given to Christ so that He can spread within us; His spreading is the growth of life—5:8; Eph. 3:17.
- B. “Purify your hearts, you doubled-souled!”—James 4:8:
1. To purify our heart is to make our heart single, having only one goal; when we have more than one goal, our heart is impure and we are double-souled— Matt. 5:8.
 2. In order for our heart to be single and pure, we need to have a unique goal—God Himself—v. 8; Mark 12:30.
 3. To purify our heart, we need grace; we need to receive the Lord’s grace to deal with our heart continually—Heb. 13:9; 1 Cor. 15:10.
 4. We need to see the condition of our heart and deal with our heart so that the Lord will have the way to spread within us--Matt 6:21; 15:8.
- C. Our dealing with our heart is according to the Lord’s shining, and His shining is gradual; He progressively intensifies His shining as we deal with the items that He brings to light, so that each time our heart is more thoroughly examined and purified—2 Cor. 4:6; 1 John 1:5; Rev. 4:5.
- D. “The heart is deceitful above all things, / And it is incurable; / Who can know it?”—Jer. 17:9:
1. It is difficult to deal with our heart because our heart is deceitful.
 2. Part of the deceitfulness of our heart is manifested in our self-pity and self-love; because we love ourselves and sympathize with ourselves so much, it is difficult for the Lord to spread within us—2 Tim. 3:2.
 3. The Lord may have been in our spirit for a long time, but because our heart is complicated, mixed, confused, and deceitful, He may not have had the opportunity to spread from our spirit into our heart—4:22; Jer. 17:9; Eph. 3:17.
- E. The genuine growth of life is not our growth but Christ’s growth in us—Col. 2:19:
1. Because such growth depends on our heart, we need to deal with our heart so that Christ will have a way to grow within us—James 4:8; Matt. 5:8; Eph. 3:17.
 2. The Lord as the life-giving Spirit has entered into our spirit, and He is presently waiting in our spirit for the opportunity to spread Himself into our heart—John 3:6; 1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 3:17; 1 Thes. 3:13.
 3. This spreading is His growth in us, and His growth in us is our genuine growth in life—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15.

THE EXPERIENCE, GROWTH, AND MINISTRY OF LIFE FOR THE BODY (3)

Growing in Life by Dealing with the Spirit

I. To deal with the spirit is not to deal with the spirit itself but to deal with the passage of the spirit—Luke 9:54-56; 1 Pet. 3:4:

- A. The regenerated spirit, the innermost part of our being, is pure and undefiled; however, surrounding the spirit are the soul and the body, both of which have been mixed with the wicked elements of Satan and are thus filthy and corrupt.
- B. Therefore, when the spirit comes forth and passes through the soul and body, it becomes contaminated by this filthiness and corruption; hence, when being manifested, the spirit bears certain filthiness, corruption, impurity, impropriety, and various other undesirable conditions.
- C. We judge the characteristics of the spirit by the characteristics of the things that are attached to it; the kind of person we are produces the kind of characteristics our spirit carries; when our spirit is released, it expresses the tastes and colors of our very person; thus, the quality of a man determines the quality of his spirit.
- D. If a person is proud in his soul, the spirit also manifests itself in pride; if a person is angry in the flesh, his spirit also reveals the anger.
- E. We often encounter the spirit of anxiety, the spirit of jealousy, a rebellious spirit, a coarse spirit, a crooked spirit, a boastful spirit, a dominating spirit, or a rude spirit, all of which are not the problems of the spirit itself but the defiling influence of the undesirable elements of the soul and body upon the spirit as it passes through them; we can tell the kind of defilement from the kind of spirit, and the kind of spirit reveals the kind of man.
- F. If our motive is impure, the spirit is also impure when released; if our intention is not clean, the spirit coming forth is also not clean; with the purpose of heart for self-glory, the result is a showy and boastful spirit; a competitive motive causes others to touch a competing and striving spirit.
- G. Whenever we are about to act or speak, not only do we need to inquire whether what we are about to do is right or wrong, good or bad, but we must also discern whether or not our inner intention is clean, our motive is pure, and our aim is wholly for God.
- H. We need to check if there is any selfish purpose behind our action or any self-inclination; this kind of dealing is dealing with the spirit.
- I. For this reason we need not only to have our flesh, self, and natural constitution broken so that the spirit can come forth, but we must go one step further and deal with all the negative purposes of the heart, undesirable intentions, impure inclinations, improper will, and mixed emotion to the end not only that the spirit can come forth but also that it may come forth in an upright, clean, and pure manner.

- J. The practical way to deal with the spirit is to condemn all the mixtures, to remove them by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to take the initiative to apply the cross and crucify the passages of the spirit, including our flesh, our self, our natural constitution, our purpose of heart, aim, intention, inclination, motive, etc.—Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:24.
- K. God arranges all circumstances and things in our environment for the purpose of dealing with the self and destroying it; in this way, by the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the quality of our spirit is enhanced and purified—Matt. 10:29-31; Rom. 8:28-29.
- L. If all the brothers and sisters have an excellent, sterling, pure, weighty, and noble spirit in its quality, they will mutually supply one another, and the church will be rich—cf. Dan. 5:12; 6:3.

II. To be useful in building up the Body of Christ, we need to have a proper spirit:

- A. In Luke 9 James and John asked the Lord whether they should command fire to come down from heaven and consume the village of the Samaritans who had rejected Him (v. 54); but the Lord rebuked James and John, saying, “You do not know of what kind of spirit you are. The Son of Man has not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them” (vv. 55-56):
 - 1. The disciples were wrong in their spirit because their motive was one of hatred; the Lord’s spirit is a spirit of saving men’s lives, not destroying them.
 - 2. Brother Watchman Nee said that a person should not only do the right thing but also do the right thing in the right way and in the right spirit.
 - 3. For our conduct to be constructive, edifying, and useful in building up the Body of Christ, we must be right in the thing that we do, right in our way, and right in our spirit; whenever we are about to do anything, we should ask ourselves what kind of spirit we have.
- B. A seeking saint should be poor in spirit and pure in heart—Matt. 5:3, 8; Isa. 66:2:
 - 1. To be poor in spirit means that we are humble, acknowledging that we have nothing, know nothing, can do nothing, and are nothing; without Christ as the life-giving Spirit, we are nothing—cf. Gal. 6:3.
 - 2. To be poor in spirit is to be emptied in our spirit, having nothing preoccupying us in the depth of our being; to be pure in heart is a matter of motive; it is to be single in purpose, to have the single goal of accomplishing God’s will for God’s glory—1 Cor. 10:31.
- C. We must have a steadfast spirit—Psa. 51:10b:
 - 1. A steadfast spirit is a spirit that is immovable, unshakable, standing constantly as something firm and steady—cf. 1 Cor. 15:58.
 - 2. In his repentance and prayer for restoration, David prayed that the Lord would renew such a spirit within him.

3. We need a steadfast spirit, which is always firm, constant, immovable, and unshakable, so that we can never be tempted, seduced, or misled.
- D. A repentant believer has a willing spirit—"Restore to me the gladness of Your salvation, / And sustain me with a willing spirit"—Psa. 51:12:
1. As a believer, we should always have a willing spirit for the things of the Lord and for the things of the church.
 2. A willing spirit in the things of the Lord's interest depends upon the joy of salvation; when we have the joy of salvation, we spontaneously will have a willing spirit to go along with the Lord; what the Lord wants, what the Lord desires, what the Lord asks of us, we will have a willing spirit to answer, to obey.
 3. When we have joy in God's Spirit, we will be happy to do whatever can please the Lord—Rom. 14:17.
- E. In Psalm 51:17a David said that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
1. A broken spirit is a spirit that repents, that feels very sorrowful for any sinfulness; in other words, a broken spirit is a real repenting spirit.
 2. To be broken means not to be whole; it means that you do not consider yourself as being whole, perfect, and complete; when your spirit is repenting, your spirit is broken, contrite, and sorrowful.
- F. We need to have a meek and quiet spirit:
1. First Peter 3:4 says that the hidden man of our heart is a meek and quiet spirit; Galatians 6:1 says that we need to restore a fallen brother in a spirit of meekness; in 1 Corinthians 4:21 Paul asked the Corinthians if they wanted him to come to them with a rod or in a spirit of meekness.
 2. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"—Matt. 5:5:
 - a. To be meek means not to resist the world's opposition but to suffer it willingly; the world's way is to fight, to strive, and to defeat others to gain some possession, some inheritance.
 - b. Regardless of the situation, we should be meek, not fighting against others; meekness means not fighting for ourselves.
- G. God desires to dwell with people who have a contrite and lowly spirit—Isa. 57:15; 66:2; cf. Prov. 16:18-19:
1. If we are contrite and lowly in our spirit, we are broken in our spirit, and we can enjoy God's presence; God is then with us and even dwells with us.
 2. "Thus says the high and exalted One, / Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: / I will dwell in the high and holy place, / And with the contrite and lowly of spirit, / To revive the spirit of the lowly / And to revive the heart of the contrite"—Isa. 57:15.
 3. "Thus says Jehovah, / Heaven is My throne, / And the earth the footstool for My feet. / Where then is the house that you will build for Me, / And where is the place of My rest? / For all these things My hand has made, / And so all these things have come into being, declares Jehovah. / But to this kind of man will I look, to him who is poor / And of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word"—66:1-2.
 4. The dwelling place that God desires to have is a group of people into whom He can enter, a group of people with a contrite and lowly spirit:

- a. God intends to have a dwelling place in the universe that is the mingling of God and man, in which God is built into man and man is built into God, so that God and man, man and God, can be a mutual abode to each other (John 14:2, 20, 23; 15:4; 1 John 4:13); in the New Testament this dwelling place, this house, is the church, which is God's habitation in the believers' spirit (Eph. 2:22).
- b. The ultimate manifestation of this universal building, this universal house, is the New Jerusalem; in this city God is in man, taking man as His dwelling place, and man is in God, taking God as his habitation—Rev. 21:3, 22.

THE EXPERIENCE, GROWTH, AND MINISTRY OF LIFE FOR THE BODY (4)

Living a Sacrificing Life in the Body and Ministering Life to the Body for the Growth of the Body

Scripture Reading: Phil. 2:17; Rom. 12:1; 1 John 5:16a; 2 Cor. 4:12; Eph. 4:13-16; Col. 2:19

I. In the Body we need to live a sacrificing life—Rom. 12:1:

- A. The vine typifies the sacrificing Christ, the Christ who sacrificed everything of Himself, and out of His sacrifice He produced new wine to cheer God and man—Deut. 8:8; Judg. 9:13; Psa. 104:15a:
 - 1. Christ is the wine-producer, sacrificing Himself to produce wine to cheer God and others; as the vine, Christ produces happiness for God and happiness for others—Judg. 9:13; Psa. 104:15a.
 - 2. Under the Lord's sovereignty, we may be put into situations where we need to sacrifice ourselves to make others happy—Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:2:
 - a. If in the midst of such a situation we contact the Lord, we will experience Him as the wine-producing vine, as the One who gives cheer to God and to others—Phil. 3:1a.
 - b. The issue of experiencing Christ as the vine is that in Him, with Him, and through Him we become a vine that produces something to cheer God and man—Judg. 9:13.
 - 3. If we contact the Christ typified by the vine and experience His sacrificing life, He will energize us to live a life of sacrifice, producing wine to make others and the Lord happy—Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:2; 2 Cor. 1:24:
 - a. In ourselves we are not able to live a life of sacrifice, for our life is a natural life, a selfish life; if we contact the Lord and experience His sacrificing life, He will energize and strengthen us to sacrifice for God and for others—Matt. 16:25; John 1:29; 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; Phil. 4:13; Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:2.
 - b. The more we experience Christ as the vine with His sacrificing life, the more we will be energized to sacrifice ourselves to make God and others happy; we will bring happiness to those who contact us, and we will bring cheer to God—2 Cor. 1:24; 5:13a.
- B. By experiencing Christ as the wine-producing vine and by being filled with Him as the new wine, we may become a drink offering in Him and with Him to cheer God and man—Gen. 35:14; Exo. 29:40-41; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6:
 - 1. The drink offering typifies not only Christ Himself but also the Christ who saturates us with Himself as new wine until He and we become one to be poured out for God's satisfaction and for God's building—Matt. 9:17; 2 Tim. 4:6; Gen. 35:14.
 - 2. The drink offering is our experience of being made one with Christ to such an extent that He becomes us and that we become the same as He is in His sacrificing life—Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6.

**II. As we live a sacrificing life in the Body, we minister life to the Body—
1 John 5:16a; Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11; Eph. 4:16:**

- A. Everything we have is in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body; thus, our living should be in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—v. 16.
- B. The Body is built up by the mutual supply of the members; God conveys life to the Body through every member—v. 16.
- C. One can supply the Body only with what he has received of Christ; the measure of our ministry is determined by the measure of Christ in us—vv. 15-16:
 - 1. The only thing that is useful in the Body is the Christ who has been wrought into us, and only this can render the supply of life to others—3:16-17.
 - 2. What we minister to the Body is Christ, and what the Body receives is Christ, because Christ is all and in all in the Body—Col. 3:4, 10-11, 15-16.
 - 3. What we receive from Christ the Head, the Body spontaneously receives, for what is ours *is* the Body's, and there is no need to struggle to pass it on—John 1:16; Eph. 3:2; 2 Cor. 12:9; 1 Cor. 15:10.
- D. Where there is the cross, there is the ministry of life; the way to be used to minister life to the Body is to let the cross operate in us in the normal course of our life with the Lord—2 Cor. 4:10-12:
 - 1. It is an abiding principle of the Body that “death operates in us, but life in you”—v. 12.
 - 2. Anything that God takes us through by way of the cross spontaneously brings an increase of life in the Body; what we go through in secret with the Lord is sufficient to minister life to the Body—Matt. 6:16-18; Col. 3:3-4.
 - 3. The Body is ministered to by a communication of life, and life is communicated to the Body as death operates in us—2 Cor. 4:12.
- E. It is by inward reality that we minister life to the Body of Christ; the Holy Spirit will witness only to what is true and real—John 16:13; 1 John 5:6.
- F. Through the ministry of life, we serve the Body and contribute to the growth of the Body; when the life we receive from the Lord flows into the Body, the measure of the stature of the Body increases—Eph. 4:13-14.

**III. We need to minister life to the Body for the growth of the Body—Col. 2:19;
Eph. 4:15-16:**

- A. God's intention is to use the members of the Body of Christ as channels for Christ's life to flow into the Body and to increase the measure of the Body through them—2 Cor. 4:12; Eph. 4:16.
- B. The growth of the Body depends on what comes out of Christ as the Head—vv. 15-16:
 - 1. When the Body is supplied by holding the Head, the Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19.
 - 2. The Body grows out from the Head, for all the supply comes from the Head—Eph. 4:15-16.
- C. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us—Col. 2:19:
 - 1. God gives the growth by giving Himself to us in a subjective way.

2. The more God is added into us, the more growth He gives to us; this is the way God gives the growth—1 Cor. 3:6-7.
 3. Only God can give growth; only God can give us Himself, and without Him we cannot have growth—vv. 6-7:
 - a. The addition of God into us is the growth He gives.
 - b. For God to give us growth actually means that He gives us Himself—Rom. 8:11.
- D. The growth of the Body is the building up of the Body—Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19:
1. Ephesians 4:11-16 occupies a special place in the New Testament because it shows the mystery concerning the building up of the Body of Christ.
 2. The growth of the Body of Christ is the increase of Christ in the church, which results in the building up of the Body by the Body itself—v. 16; 3:17a:
 - a. When Christ enters into the saints and lives within them, the Christ within the saints becomes the church—Col. 3:10-11.
 - b. The Body of Christ grows by the growth of Christ within us and is built up this way—1:18; 2:19.