THE WORD
APPEARS IN THE FLESH

VOLUME 6

ON THE PURSUIT OF THE TRUTH I

THE CHURCH OF ALMIGHTY GOD

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The Word Appears in the Flesh (abbreviated as The Word), expressed by Christ of the Last Days, Almighty God, currently consists of six volumes: Volume 1, The Appearance and Work of God; Volume 2, On Knowing God; Volume 3, The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days; Volume 4, Exposing Antichrists; Volume 5, The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers; and Volume 6, On the Pursuit of the Truth.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (1) 1
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (2) 48
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (3) 90
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (4) 124
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (5) 160
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (6) 193
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (7) 233
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (8) 271
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (9) 296
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (10) 325
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (11) 353
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (12) 379
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (13) 410
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (14) 437
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (15) 470
What It Means to Pursue the Truth (16) 498
Why Man Must Pursue the Truth 525
How to Pursue the Truth (1) 556
How to Pursue the Truth (2) 583
How to Pursue the Truth (3) 618
How to Pursue the Truth (4) 657
How to Pursue the Truth (5) 694
How to Pursue the Truth (6) 721
How to Pursue the Truth (7) 752
How to Pursue the Truth (8) 782
How to Pursue the Truth (9) 811
How to Pursue the Truth (10) 848
How to Pursue the Truth (11) 884
How to Pursue the Truth (12) 917
How to Pursue the Truth (13) 957
How to Pursue the Truth (14) 994
How to Pursue the Truth (15) 1033
How to Pursue the Truth (16) 1070

How to Pursue the Truth (17) 1108
How to Pursue the Truth (18) 1152
How to Pursue the Truth (19) 1204
How to Pursue the Truth (20) 1248
How to Pursue the Truth (21) 1287

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (1)

Today's fellowship is on a topic that everyone is familiar with. It is closely linked to man's belief in God and their pursuit, and it is a topic that people encounter and hear about every day. Well then, what is it? The topic is what it means to pursue the truth. What do you think of this topic? Is it novel enough for you? Is it compelling? No matter how compelling this topic is, I know that it is relevant to each and every one of you; it is relevant to people's salvation, to their entry into the reality of God's words and their dispositional change, and to their future outcome and destination. Most of you are now willing to pursue the truth and have begun to awaken, but you are not so sure about what it means to pursue the truth or how the truth should be pursued. That is why it is necessary for us to fellowship on this topic today. The pursuit of the truth is a topic that people often encounter in their daily lives; it is a practical problem that people face when things befall them during their daily lives, while performing their duties, and so on. When something befalls most people, they simply make self-motivated efforts to read God's words, and they keep their thoughts from becoming negative, hoping to thereby stop themselves from plunging into negativity or misunderstandings of God, and to enable themselves to submit to His work. People of better caliber are capable of positively and proactively seeking all aspects of the truth within God's words; they look for the principles, God's requirements, and paths of practice. Or they are able to examine themselves, contemplate, and gain knowledge through the things that befall them, and thereby come to understand the truth principles and enter into the truth reality. However, this remains a great hurdle for most people, and whether they can achieve these things is uncertain. Most people have not yet entered into this aspect of reality. So, it will not be easy for you to arrive at a practical, objective, and true understanding of this ordinary, commonplace, and specific topic, even if you are given time to contemplate on it. So, to return to our main topic, let us fellowship on what it means to pursue the truth. You are not skilled at contemplating, but I hope that you are good at listening—not just with your ears, but with your heart. I hope that you will put your heart into understanding and comprehending this, and that you will take to heart, as something of import, everything that you are able to comprehend, and everything that corresponds to your state, your disposition, and each aspect of your situation. After that, I hope that you will set out to resolve your corrupt dispositions, and strive to take all the principles of practice to heart, so that when related issues arise, you will have a path to follow, and you will be able to treat God's words as a path of practice, and carry out and obey them as such. That would be best.

What does it mean to pursue the truth? This may be a conceptual question, but it is also the most practical question about believing in God. Whether people can pursue the truth or not is directly related to their preferences, their caliber, and their pursuit. The pursuit of the truth encompasses many practical elements. We should fellowship on

them one by one, so that you can understand the truth as quickly as possible, and know exactly what it means to pursue it and what issues relate to that pursuit. That way, you will ultimately be able to understand what it means to pursue the truth. First, let us discuss this: Are you pursuing the truth by listening to this sermon? (Not really.) Listening to sermons is merely a prerequisite and action of preparing to pursue the truth. What elements are involved in pursuing the truth? There are many topics that touch on the pursuit of the truth, and naturally there are also many problems that exist in people that we need to discuss here. For instance, some people say, "If one eats and drinks of God's words and fellowships about the truth every day, if they are able to do their duty normally, if they do whatever the church arranges, and never cause disturbances or disruptions—and though there may be times they violate the truth principles, they don't do so consciously or with intent—doesn't this demonstrate that they are pursuing the truth?" This is a good question. Many people have this idea. First of all, you must understand whether someone could attain an understanding of the truth and gain the truth by practicing consistently in this way. Share your thoughts. (Although practicing in this way is correct, it seems more along the lines of religious ritual—it's rule-following. It can't lead to an understanding of the truth or gaining the truth.) So, what sort of behaviors are these, really? (They're superficially good behaviors.) I like that answer. They are merely good behaviors that arise after a person comes to believe in God, upon the foundation of that person's conscience and reason, once they have been influenced by various good and positive teachings. But they are no more than good behaviors, and they are far from being the pursuit of the truth. What, then, is the root of these good behaviors? What gives rise to them? They arise from a person's conscience and reason, their morality, the favorable feelings they have toward believing in God, and their self-restraint. Since they are good behaviors, they have no relation to the truth, and they are certainly not the same thing. Possessing good behaviors is not the same as practicing the truth, and if a person behaves well it does not mean that they have God's approval. Good behaviors and practicing the truth are two different things—they have no bearing on each other. Practicing the truth is God's requirement and it is entirely in line with His will; good behavior comes from man's will and carries with it man's intents and motives—it is something that man regards as good. Although good behaviors are not evil deeds, they contravene the truth principles and have nothing to do with the truth. No matter how good these behaviors are, or how much they accord with man's notions and imaginings, they have no relation to the truth. So no amount of good behavior can attain God's approval. Since good behavior is defined in this way, clearly good behaviors do not relate to the practice of the truth. If people were to be sorted into types according to their behavior, then these good behaviors would, at the most, be the actions of loyal service-doers and nothing more. They have no relation at all to the practice of the truth or to true submission to God. They are merely a sort of behavior, and are completely irrelevant to people's dispositional change, to their submission to and acceptance of the truth, to the fear of

God and shunning of evil, or any other practical elements that truly involve the truth. So, why are they called good behaviors, then? Here is an explanation, and naturally it is also an explanation of the essence of this question. It is that these behaviors stem only from people's notions, their preferences, their volition, and their own self-motivated efforts. They are not manifestations of the repentance that come with gaining true self-knowledge by accepting the truth and the judgment and chastisement of God's words, nor are they the behaviors or actions of practicing the truth that arise when people try to submit to God. Do you understand this? It means that these good behaviors do not in any way involve a change in a person's disposition, or what comes of undergoing the judgment and chastisement of God's words, or the true repentance that arises from coming to know one's corrupt disposition. They certainly do not relate to man's true submission to God and the truth; still less do they relate to having a heart of fear and love for God. Good behaviors have nothing at all to do with these things; they are merely something that comes from man and something that man regards as good. Yet there are many people who see these good behaviors as a sign that someone is practicing the truth. This is a grave mistake, an absurd and fallacious view and understanding. These good behaviors are just a performance of religious ceremony, and going through the motions. They are not at all related to practicing the truth. God may not condemn them outright, but He absolutely does not approve of them; that is certain. You ought to know that these outward actions that accord with man's notions and these good behaviors are not the practice of the truth, nor are they a manifestation of the pursuit of the truth. Having heard this fellowship, you have merely a little conceptual knowledge about what it means to pursue the truth, an initial understanding of a simple concept of pursuing the truth. If you wish to truly understand what it means to pursue the truth, there is more that we must fellowship on.

To pursue the truth, one must understand it; only by understanding the truth can one practice it. Are people's good behaviors related to the practice of the truth? Are good behaviors born of the pursuit of the truth? What manifestations and actions belong to the practice of the truth? What manifestations are possessed by people who pursue the truth? You need to understand these questions. In order to fellowship on the pursuit of the truth, we must first speak about the difficulties and mistaken views people have toward it. It is essential to resolve these first. There are some people of pure understanding, who have a relatively clear perspective on what the truth is. They have a path upon which to pursue the truth. There are others who do not understand what the truth is, and though they have an interest in it, they do not know how to practice it. They believe that doing good things and behaving well are the same as practicing the truth—that to practice the truth is to do good things. It is not until they have read many of God's words that they realize that doing good things and behaving well are completely different to practicing the truth. You can see how absurd people's notions and imaginings are—those who do not understand the truth cannot see anything clearly! Many people have performed their

duty for years, they busy themselves every day, and have undergone more than a few hardships, so they think of themselves as people who practice the truth, and who possess the truth reality. However, they cannot offer any experiential testimony. What is the problem at play here? If they understand the truth, why can they not speak about their actual experiences? Is this not something of a contradiction? Some people say, “When I was performing my duty before, I didn’t pursue the truth, and I didn’t pray-read God’s words thoroughly. I wasted a great deal of time. I was so engrossed in my work, thinking that keeping busy with my duty was the same as practicing the truth and submitting to God’s work—but I was just squandering my time.” What is implied here? That they put off pursuing the truth because they were so busy performing their duty. Is that really the case? Some absurd people believe that as long as they keep busy with their duty, there will be no time for their corrupt disposition to reveal itself, that they will no longer reveal a corrupt disposition or live in a corrupt state, and therefore, they do not need to eat and drink of God’s words in order to resolve their corrupt disposition. Is this idea correct? Do people really not reveal corrupt dispositions when they are busy with their duties? It is an absurd idea—it is a bald-faced lie. They say that they have no time to pursue the truth because they are busy with their duty. This is pure fallacy; they are using being busy as an excuse. We have fellowshiped many times on the truths about life entry and performing a duty: It is only by seeking the truth to resolve problems while performing a duty that people can grow in life. Therefore, if all one does while performing their duty is busy themselves with tasks, if they fail to seek the truth to resolve problems, then they will never understand the truth. Some people who do not love the truth are content merely to render service, and hope to trade it for the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. They wind up giving the excuse that they are so busy performing their duty that they have no time to pursue the truth; they even say that they are so busy performing their duty that they do not reveal a corrupt disposition. This implies that because they are busy with their duty, their corrupt disposition has disappeared, that it no longer exists. This is a lie, is it not? Does their claim accord with the facts? Not at all—it may be called the biggest lie of all. How could a corrupt disposition no longer reveal itself because a person is busy with their duty? Do such people exist? Does such experiential testimony exist? Certainly not. People have been deeply corrupted by Satan; they all have a satanic nature, and they all live in satanic dispositions. Is there anything positive inside man, anything besides corruption? Is there anyone who was born without a corrupt disposition? Is there anyone who was born able to perform a duty with loyalty? Is there anyone who was born able to submit to God and love Him? Absolutely not. Because all people have satanic natures and are filled with corrupt dispositions, if they are not able to understand and practice the truth, they can only live by their corrupt dispositions. So, it is an absurdity and a fallacy to say that a person will not reveal a corrupt disposition if they keep busy with their duty. It is a bald-faced lie meant to mislead people. No matter if they are busy performing their duty or not, no matter if they have time to read God’s

words or not, people who do not love the truth will find reasons and excuses not to pursue it. These people are service-doers, plain and simple. If a service-doer does not eat and drink of God's words and does not accept the truth, will they be able to render good service? Certainly not. All those who do not accept the truth are devoid of conscience and reason, they are people who would live by their corrupt dispositions and commit a multitude of evils. They are by no means loyal service-doers, and even though they render service, there's nothing great about them. Of this, you can be sure.

Some people are too tangled up with their families and often wallow in anxiety. When they see younger brothers and sisters who have given up their families and careers to follow God and perform their duties, they envy them and say, "God has been kind to these young people. They began believing in Him at a young age, before getting married and having kids; they have no family ties and they don't have to worry about how they'll get by. They have no concerns that keep them from following God and performing their duties. They came just in time for God's work and His expansion of the gospel in the last days—God has provided them with such favorable conditions. They can devote themselves, body and soul, to performing their duties. They can pursue the truth, but it's not the same for me. God has not arranged a suitable environment for me—I have too many family entanglements, and I have to make money to support them. That's where my real problems lie. That's why I don't have time to pursue the truth. Pursuing the truth is for people who perform their duties full time and don't have any of these ties. I'm saddled with family entanglements, and my heart is full of the trivialities of getting by, so I have no time or energy to spare to eat and drink God's words or perform my duty. No matter what aspect of my circumstances you look at, there's no way for me to pursue the truth. You can't blame me for that. It just isn't my destiny to pursue the truth, and my circumstances don't allow me to perform a duty. All I can do is wait for my family entanglements to abate, for my children to become independent, and for me to retire and be free of my material worries—then I'll pursue the truth." People like this experience hardship in their daily lives, and they can occasionally feel their corrupt disposition pouring forth in the trivial matters of their day-to-day lives. They can detect these things, but because they are caught in the snares of the secular world, they believe that they are doing well by living, believing in God, listening to sermons, and getting by comfortably in this way. They believe that pursuing the truth can wait, and that it will not be too late to resolve whatever corrupt dispositions they have a few years down the line. That is how they defer the great matter of pursuing the truth, and put it off time and again. What do they always say? "It's never too late to pursue the truth. I'll give it a few years. So long as God's work hasn't finished, I still have time—I still have a chance." What do you think of this view? (It's wrong.) Have they taken on the burden of pursuing the truth? (No.) Well, what burden have they taken on, then? Is it not the burden of getting by, of providing for their families, of raising their children? They devote all their energy to their children, to their families, to their own days and lives, and only after these things are

taken care of will they make plans to begin pursuing the truth. So, are these excuses of theirs valid? Are they not stumbling blocks to their pursuit of the truth? (They are.) While these people believe in God's sovereignty and arrangements, they also complain about the environment that God has arranged for them. They disregard God's requirements and they do not proactively cooperate with them at all. Instead, they only care about satisfying their flesh, family, and relatives. What reason do they give for not pursuing the truth? "We're too busy and exhausted just trying to exist. We don't have time to pursue the truth; we don't have the right environment to pursue the truth." What view do they hold? (It's never too late to pursue the truth.) "It's never too late to pursue the truth. I'll do it in a few years." Is this not foolish? (It is.) It is foolish—they are fooling themselves with their excuses. Will God's work wait for you? (No.) "I'll do it in a few years"—what do those "few years" mean? They mean that you have less hope of being saved and that you will have fewer years to experience God's work. A few years will pass like this, then another few years, and before you know it, ten years will have gone by, and you will not have understood the truth or entered into the truth reality at all, and not a single shred of your corrupt disposition will have been resolved. Just speaking one honest word is such a struggle for you. Is this not dangerous? Is this not a pity? (It is.) When people offer all these excuses and reasons to justify not pursuing the truth, who is it they harm, in the end? (Themselves.) That's right—in the end, it is themselves who they harm. And when they are on their deathbed, they will hate themselves for not having gained the truth in their years of belief in God, and they will regret their entire lives!

Some people are somewhat well-educated, but their caliber is poor and they do not understand spiritual matters. No matter how many sermons they listen to, they are unable to understand the truth. They always have their own ambitions and desires, and they are always contending for status. If they do not possess status, they will not pursue the truth. They say, "God's house never arranges for me to perform a duty that reflects my value, like text-based work, AV work, being a church leader, or being the supervisor of a group. They don't give me any of that important work to do. God's house doesn't promote me or cultivate me, and every time the church holds an election, no one votes for me, and nobody likes me. Do I really have no desirable qualities? I'm an intellectual, I'm well-educated, but God's house never promotes me or cultivates me, so I have no motivation to pursue the truth. All of the brothers and sisters who began believing in God around the same time as me are performing important duties, and serving as leaders and workers—why is it that I'm left to idle around? I only get to play a supporting role by spreading the gospel every now and then, and they don't let me testify, either. Whenever God's house promotes people to important duties, there's nothing there for me; I'm not even allowed to lead gatherings, and they don't give me any responsibilities. I feel so wronged. This is the environment that God has arranged for me. Why can't I feel the value of my existence? Why does God love others but not me? Why does He cultivate others but not me? God's house should give me more of a burden, and make me a

supervisor or something. That way, I'd have a bit of motivation to pursue the truth. How can I pursue the truth without motivation? People always need a bit of motivation to pursue the truth; we need to be able to see the benefits of pursuing it. I know that people have corrupt dispositions that need to be changed, and I know that pursuing the truth is a good thing, that it allows us to be saved and perfected—but I'm never used for anything important, and I feel no incentive to pursue the truth! I'll start pursuing the truth when the brothers and sisters hold me in esteem and support me—it won't be too late then." Are there not people of this sort? (There are.) What is the problem with them? The problem is that they want status and standing. Clearly, they are no lovers of the truth, yet they would like standing and a seat at the table in God's house. Is this not shameless? It is a fine enough thing for you to be a service-doer; whether you can rise to be a loyal service-doer remains to be seen. Why is that not clear to you? Do you think that if you have status and standing, you will be saved? That you will be someone who pursues the truth? Are these sentiments of yours valid? (No.) These people want to stand out, to make their presence felt, and when their desires go unmet, they complain that God is unjust, that He is biased in how He treats people, that His house does not promote them, that the brothers and sisters do not elect them—surely these things are not the foundation one needs in order to pursue the truth? Does it say anywhere in God's words that a pursuer of the truth must be embraced by all and held in esteem by their brothers and sisters? Or that they must be able to take on an important duty and do important work, and also make a great contribution to God's house? Do God's words say that only people like that can pursue the truth, that only they are fit to pursue the truth? Do His words say that only those people meet the criteria for pursuing the truth, that only they can enter the truth reality, or that in the end, it is only they who can be saved? Is this written anywhere in God's words? (No.) It is obvious that the claims made by this sort of person are invalid. So, why do they say these things? Are they not making excuses for not pursuing the truth? (They are.) They love status and prestige. They only care about chasing reputation and personal gain and pursuing status in their belief in God. They feel that it would be shameful to say this out loud, so they come up with a host of justifications, defending themselves for not pursuing the truth and foisting the blame onto the church, onto the brothers and sisters, and onto God. Is this not sinister? Are they not evil people pointing fingers at the innocent party? (They are.) They are making unreasonable trouble and harassing others with illogical demands; they are entirely without conscience or reason! Not pursuing the truth is a serious enough problem on its own, and yet they also try to debate and be difficult—that is truly unreasonable, is it not? Pursuing the truth is voluntary. If you love the truth, then the Holy Spirit will work in you. When you love the truth; when you pray to and depend on God, reflect on yourself and try to know yourself no matter what persecution or tribulation befalls you; when you actively seek the truth to resolve problems that you discover in yourself, you will be able to perform your duty adequately. In this way, you will be capable of standing firm in your testimony. When

people love the truth, all of these manifestations come naturally to them. They occur voluntarily, gladly, and without coercion, without any extra conditions attached. If people can follow God in this way, they will ultimately gain the truth and the life, they will enter into the truth reality, and they will live out the image of man. Do you need any additional conditions to be met in order to pursue the truth? No. Belief in God is voluntary, it is something that one chooses for themselves, and pursuing the truth is perfectly natural and justified; it is approved of by God. Those who do not pursue the truth are unwilling to renounce the pleasures of the flesh and still wish to gain God's blessings, but when they are faced with some tribulations and persecution, or a bit of ridicule and defamation, they grow negative and weak, and no longer wish to believe in God or follow Him. They may even blame and deny Him. Is this not unreasonable? They wish to be blessed and yet they still pursue the pleasures of the flesh, and when met with any tribulations or persecution, they blame God. That is how unreasonable these people who do not love the truth are. It will be difficult for them to follow God until the end; as soon as they are met with some tribulations or persecution, they will be exposed and cast out. There are too many people like this. Whatever your reason for believing in God, God will ultimately determine your outcome based on whether you have gained the truth. If you have not gained the truth, then none of the justifications or excuses you make will hold water. Try to reason as you like, tie yourself in knots as you please—will God care? Will God converse with you? Will He debate and confer with you? Will He consult you? What is the answer? No. He absolutely will not. No matter how strong your reasoning is, it won't stand up. You must not misunderstand God's intentions, and think that if you offer all sorts of reasons and excuses then you do not need to pursue the truth. God wants you to be able to seek the truth in all environments and in every matter that befalls you, and finally achieve entry into the truth reality and gain the truth. Regardless of what circumstances God has arranged for you, what people and events you encounter, and what environment you find yourself in, you should pray to God and seek the truth in order to face them. These are precisely the lessons you should learn in pursuing the truth. If you always look for excuses to get out of, to evade, to refuse, or to resist these circumstances, then God will give up on you. There is no point in reasoning, or being intractable or difficult—if God does not concern Himself with you, you will lose your chance at salvation. For God, there is no problem that cannot be solved; He has made arrangements for each and every person, and has a way of handling them. God will not discuss with you whether your reasons and excuses are justified. God will not listen to whether the arguments you make in your defense are rational. He will only ask you, "Are God's words the truth? Do you have a corrupt disposition? Ought you pursue the truth?" You just need to be clear about one fact: God is the truth, you are a corrupt human, so you should take it upon yourself to seek the truth. No problem or difficulty, no reason or excuse will stand—if you do not accept the truth, you shall perish. Any price a person pays to pursue the truth and enter the truth reality is worthwhile. People should let go of

all their excuses, their justifications, and their troubles to accept the truth and gain the life, because God's words and the truth are the life that they should attain, and it is a life for which nothing can be exchanged. If you miss this opportunity, you will not just regret it for the rest of your life—it is not a mere matter of regret—you will have ruined yourself quite completely. There will no longer be an outcome or a destination for you, and you, created being that you are, will have come to the end of the line. You will never again have the chance to be saved. Do you understand? (We do.) Do not look for excuses or reasons for not pursuing the truth. They are of no use; you are only fooling yourself.

Some leaders never work according to the principles, they are a law unto themselves, arbitrary and rash. The brothers and sisters may point this out, and say, "You rarely consult anyone before you take action. We don't know what your judgments and decisions are until after you've made them. Why don't you discuss them with anyone? Why don't you let us know ahead of time when you make a decision? Even if what you're doing is right and your caliber is greater than ours, you should still inform us about it first. At the least, we have a right to know what's going on. By always acting as a law unto yourself you're walking the path of an antichrist!" And what would you hear the leader say to that? "In my house, I'm the boss. All matters, great and small, are decided by me. That's what I'm used to. When anyone in my extended family has an issue, they come to me and have me decide what to do. They know that I'm good at solving problems. That's why I'm in charge of my family's affairs. When I joined the church, I thought I wouldn't have to bother with things anymore, but then I was chosen to be a leader. I can't help it—I was born to this fate. God gave me this skill. I was born to make decisions and to call the shots for other people." The implication here is that they were destined to be an official, and other people were born to be foot soldiers and slaves. They think that they should get the final say, and that other people should listen to them. Even when the brothers and sisters see this leader's problem and point it out to them, they will not accept it, nor will they accept being dealt with and pruned. They will fight and resist until the brothers and sisters clamor for their removal. All the while, the leader will be thinking, "With a caliber like mine, I'm fated to be in charge wherever I go. With calibers like yours, you'll always be slaves and servants. It's your fate to be ordered around by other people." What kind of disposition are they revealing by often saying such things? Clearly, it is a corrupt disposition, it is arrogance, self-conceit, and extreme egotism, yet they shamelessly show it off and flaunt it as though it were a strength and an asset. When a person reveals a corrupt disposition, they should reflect on themselves, know their corrupt disposition, repent, and forsake it, and they should pursue the truth until they can act according to the principles. But that is not how this leader practices. Instead, they remain incorrigible, sticking to their own views and methods. From these behaviors, you can see that they do not accept the truth at all and that they are absolutely not someone who pursues it. They do not listen to anyone who exposes and deals with them, and instead they remain full of self-justifications:

“Hmph—this is just how I am! It’s called competence and talent—do any of you have those? I’m fated to be in charge. Wherever I go, I’m a leader. I’m used to having the final say and making decisions about everything without consulting other people. That’s just who I am, it’s my personal charm.” Is this not wanton shamelessness? They do not admit that they have a corrupt disposition, and they clearly do not acknowledge the words of God that judge and expose man. On the contrary, they take their own heresies and fallacies to be the truth, and try to make everyone else accept and revere them. Deep down, they believe that they should rule in God’s house, not the truth, that they should call the shots there. Is this not brazen shamelessness? They say that they want to pursue the truth, but their behavior is quite the opposite. They say that they obey God and the truth, but always want to wield power, to have the final say, and for all the brothers and sisters to submit to and obey them. They will not permit others to supervise or advise them, regardless of whether what they are doing is appropriate or in accordance with the principles. Instead, they believe that it is everyone else who must heed and obey their words and decisions. They do not reflect at all on their actions. No matter how the brothers and sisters counsel and help them, and no matter how God’s house prunes and deals with them, or even if they are dismissed several times, they do not reflect on their problems. In every instance, they hold to that line of theirs: “In my house, I’m the boss. I make all the decisions. In all matters, I alone have the final say. That is what I’m used to, and there’s no way around it.” They are truly outrageous and irredeemable! They propagate these negative practices as if they were positive things, all the while thinking very highly of themselves. They are so shameless! These people do not accept the truth at all and they are incorrigible—so you can be certain that they do not love or pursue it. In their hearts, they are sick of the truth and hostile to it. The prices they pay and the hardships they undergo to satisfy their desires and gain status are all in vain. God does not approve of any of it, He loathes it. It is a manifestation of their opposition to the truth and resistance toward God. One can be perfectly sure of this, and all who understand the truth can discern it.

There are also some people who have believed in God for years, but do not possess any truth reality; they have listened to sermons for years, but do not understand the truth. Though they have poor caliber, they do have “talents” in which they are unrivaled: telling lies and covering them up, and duping and tricking others with florid words. If they say a dozen sentences, there will be a dozen adulterations within them—each will contain impurities to some extent. To put it precisely, nothing they say is true. But because they have poor caliber and appear quite well-behaved, they think, “I’m a timid, guileless person by nature, and my caliber is poor. I’m bullied wherever I go, and when people bully me, I just have to endure it and suffer. I don’t dare talk back or fight them—all I can do is hide, yield, and take it. I’m the ‘honest but ignorant man’ that God’s words talk about, I am one of His people.” If someone asks them, “How is it that you lie, then?” They will say, “When did I lie? Whom did I trick? I haven’t lied! How could I tell a lie, being the

guileless person that I am? My mind is slow to react to things, and I'm not very well-educated—I don't know how to lie! Those deceitful people out there, they can produce a couple of wicked ideas and plots in the blink of an eye. I'm not wily like that, and I'm always getting bullied. So I'm the honest person God speaks of, and there's no basis for you to call me a liar or a trickster. There's simply nothing to it—you're just trying to smear me. I know you all look down on me: You think that I'm stupid and that my caliber is poor, so you all want to bully me. God's the only One who doesn't bully me, He treats me with grace." This sort of person will not even admit to lying, and they have the audacity to say that they are the honest people God speaks of, and with that statement, they hoist themselves directly onto a throne. They believe that they are honest but ignorant people by nature and loved by God. They think that they do not need to pursue the truth or reflect on themselves. They think that from the moment they were born no lies could be found in their mouths. They do not admit to lying, no matter what anyone says, and instead they trot out the same old excuses to argue and defend themselves. Have they reflected on themselves? They have, in a sense. What came to them in that "self-reflection"? "I'm the honest but ignorant man who God speaks of. I may be a bit ignorant, but I'm an honest person." Are they not putting feathers in their own cap? They are not clear on which they are, an ignorant person or an honest person, but they deem themselves to be an honest person. Do they have self-awareness? If someone is a fool who gets bullied and lives a cowardly life, does that mean they are necessarily a good person? And if someone is seen as a good person by others, does that mean they do not need to pursue the truth? Are such people somehow just naturally possessed of the truth? Some people say, "I'm a pretty guileless person, I always try to speak the truth, I'm just a bit ignorant. I don't need to pursue the truth, I'm already a good and honest person." By saying this, are they not implying that they are possessed of the truth and do not have a corrupt disposition? All of mankind has been corrupted deeply by Satan. All people have corrupt dispositions, and when one possesses a corrupt disposition, they can lie, cheat, and deceive whenever they please. They may even flaunt some trifling achievement or contribution of theirs, pouring forth an arrogant disposition. All the while they are full of notions about God and extravagant demands of Him, and trying to reason with Him. Are these not problems? Is this not a corrupt disposition? Does this not require examination? It does. Yet these people have already anointed themselves as honest people who never lie or trick others; they proclaim that they do not have deceitful dispositions, so they do not need to pursue the truth. Therefore, no one who behaves in this way is pursuing the truth, and none of them have entered the truth reality. When they pray to God, they often cry bitterly about their stupidity, about how they are always being bullied, about their particularly poor caliber: "God, only You love me; only You take pity on me and treat me graciously. People all bully me, and say that I'm a liar—but I'm not!" Then, they wipe away their tears and stand up, and when they see other people, they think, "None of you are loved by God. Only I am." These people think highly of

themselves, and do not accept that they display any of the various behaviors and outpourings of corrupt dispositions spoken of by God. Even when a specific problem befalls them and produces a corrupt state or outpouring within them, they just admit to it verbally after a moment's thought, and then they are done with the matter. They do not seek the truth at all, and they do not accept the fact that they have corruption and are a corrupt human. Less still, of course, would they admit to having poured forth a corrupt disposition in any particular instance. No matter how many problems they give rise to, and no matter how many corrupt dispositions they pour forth, they always wind up saying the same thing: "I'm the honest but ignorant man that God speaks about. I'm the object of His pity, and He will bless me greatly." And so, with these words, they feel that they do not have to pursue the truth; these words are the excuse such people offer for not pursuing the truth. Are such people not absurd? (They are.) They are absurd and ignorant. How absurd are they? So much so that they seize on one phrase of God's words that benefits them and use it as a sigil with which to coerce God and exonerate themselves for not pursuing the truth, while treating the words of God that expose and judge man as having nothing to do with them. They feel that they do not need to listen to them because they are already an honest person. To put it precisely, such people are pathetic wretches. They have poor caliber, no sense, and very little shame, yet they still wish to gain blessings. And though they have poor caliber, and neither sense nor shame, they are very proud, and they look down upon ordinary people. They have no respect for people of good caliber who are able to pursue the truth, and who can fellowship on the truth reality. They think, "What good are these strengths of yours, anyway? With all your pursuing the truth and knowing yourselves—I don't need to do that stuff. I'm an honest person; I may be a bit ignorant, but that's not really an issue. And the corrupt dispositions I pour forth are nothing to worry about, either. As long as I equip myself with some good behaviors, I'll be fine." What do they require of themselves? "God knows my heart, at any rate, and my faith in Him is genuine. That's enough. Talking day in and day out about experiential testimony and knowledge of God's words—what's the use of all this talk? When all is said and done, sincerely believing in God is enough." Is that not as foolish as it gets? Firstly, such people are not at all interested in the truth; secondly, it is fair to say that they have no comprehension ability of the truth or God's words. And yet, they still think much of themselves and act so high and mighty. They look for a justification for why they do not pursue the truth, or a method of pursuit or something they perceive as a strength to replace the pursuit of the truth. Is this not foolish? (It is.)

Some people who do not pursue the truth have no major problems in terms of their humanity. They stick to the rules and behave themselves. Such women are gentle and virtuous, dignified and decent, and do not fool around. They are good girls in front of their parents, they are good wives and mothers in their family lives, and they dutifully spend their days taking care of their homes. Such men are guileless and dutiful, and they behave themselves; they are filial sons, they do not drink or smoke, and they do not

steal or rob, they do not gamble or go whoring—they are model husbands, and outside of the home, they seldom quarrel or dispute with others about who's right or wrong. Some people think that it is enough to achieve these things as a believer in God, and that those who do so are standard, acceptably good people. They believe that if they are charitable and helpful, humble and patient, and tolerant after coming to believe in God, and if they do whatever work the church arranges for them diligently and well, without being careless or perfunctory, then they have attained the truth reality and are close to fulfilling God's requirements. They think that if they buckle down and put in a bit more effort, if they read more of God's word, if they remember more of its phrases, and preach them more to others, then they will be pursuing the truth. But they do not recognize their outpourings of corruption, they do not know what corrupt dispositions they have, and less still do they know how a corrupt disposition arises, or how it should be known and resolved. They know none of these things. Are there people like this? (Yes.) They regard their natural "goodness" as a standard to be achieved by those who pursue the truth. If someone were to call them arrogant, deceitful, and evil, they would not dispute it openly, and they would display an attitude of humility, patience, and acceptance. But deep down, instead of taking it seriously, they would resist it: "I'm arrogant? If I'm arrogant, there's not a single good person on earth! If I'm deceitful, then no one in the world is honest! If I'm evil, then no one in the world is decent! Is it easy to find someone as good as me nowadays? No—it's impossible!" It will not do to call them deceitful or arrogant, or to say that they do not love the truth, and it certainly will not do to call them a nonbeliever. They will just slam their hands on the table and argue: "So, I'm a nonbeliever, you say? If I can't be saved, not one of you can!" Someone may expose them by saying, "You don't accept the truth. When people call out your problems, you appear quite humble and patient, but deep down you're really resistant. What you preach when you're fellowshiping on the truth is correct, but the fact remains that you do not accept a single one of God's words that expose and judge the essence of man's corrupt disposition. You resist those and you are averse to them. You have a vicious disposition." If you call them "vicious," they simply cannot accept it. "Vicious, am I? If I were vicious, I'd have trampled you all underfoot long ago! If I were vicious, I'd have already destroyed you all!" They cannot comprehend anything you expose about them or fellowship with them correctly. What does it mean to comprehend things correctly? It means that no matter what problems someone reveals in you, you hold them up against God's words for comparison to examine whether there really were any mistakes in your intents and thoughts, and no matter how many problems are revealed in you, you approach them all with an attitude of acceptance and submission. That is how a person can truly gain knowledge of their problems. One cannot gain knowledge of their corrupt disposition according to their notions and imaginings, this must be done on the basis of God's words. So, what is the prerequisite for self-knowledge? You must acknowledge the fact that Satan has deceived and corrupted mankind, and that all people have corrupt dispositions. It is only

by accepting this fact that you can reflect on yourself according to the revelation of God's words, and in the process of this self-reflection, gradually uncover your problems. Unbeknownst to you, your problems will rise to the surface, little by little, and then you will understand with clarity what your corrupt disposition is. And on this foundation, you can gain knowledge of what sort of person you are and what your essence is. You will thereby achieve acceptance of all that God says and that which He reveals, and then go on to find in God's words the path of practice He has laid out for man, and practice and live according to His words. That is what it means to pursue the truth. But is that how this sort of person receives God's words? No—they may profess to acknowledge that God's words are the truth and that His words exposing corrupt mankind are all facts, but if you ask them to know their own corrupt disposition, they will neither accept nor acknowledge it. They believe that it has nothing to do with them. This is because they think themselves to be dignified and decent people—upright people, people of honor. Does being an upright person mean that they possess the truth? Being an upright person is merely a positive manifestation of one's humanity; it does not represent the truth. So, just because you have one characteristic of normal humanity, it does not mean that you do not need to pursue the truth, nor does it mean that you have already gained the truth—and less still does it mean that you are a person who God loves. Is that not the case? (It is.) These so-called "people of honor" believe that they do not have arrogant, deceitful dispositions, or a disposition of being sick of the truth, and that they certainly do not have evil, vicious dispositions. They think that none of these corrupt dispositions exist within them, because they are people of honor, they are by nature upright and kind, they are always bullied by others, and although they are poor of caliber and ignorant, they are honest. This "honesty" is not true honesty, it is guilelessness, timidity, and ignorance. Are such people not great fools? Everyone sees them as good people. Is this view correct? Do those who people perceive to be good have corrupt dispositions? The answer is "yes"—this is a certainty. Do guileless people not tell lies? Do they not cheat others or disguise themselves? Are they not selfish? Are they not greedy? Do they not wish for high office? Are they free of all extravagant desires? Certainly not. The only reason they have done no evil is that they lacked the right opportunity. And they take pride in this—they anoint themselves as people of honor and believe that they do not have a corrupt disposition. So, if anyone were to point out some sort of corrupt disposition, outpouring, or state in them, they would refute it by saying, "I do not! That's not who I am, and that's not how I act, or how I think. You've misunderstood me. You all see that I'm guileless, that I'm dumb, that I'm timid, so you bully me." What is to be made of such people, who would bite back like this? If anyone dared to rile such a person, they would be hounded by them forever. They would never hear the end of it; they would be unable to shake that person off, try as they might. These unreasonable, relentlessly vexatious people still think that they are pursuers of the truth, that they are guileless, ignorant people who have no corrupt dispositions. Often, they even say, "I may be

ignorant, but I'm guileless—I'm an honest person, and God loves me!" To them, these are things to capitalize on. Is this not just a bit shameless? You say that God loves you. Is that right? Do you have a basis for saying so? Do you have the work of the Holy Spirit? Has God said that He will perfect you? Does God plan to make use of you? If God has not said these things to you, then you cannot say that He loves you—you can only say that He takes pity on you, which is already a great thing. If you say that God loves you, that is just your personal understanding; it does not prove that God truly loves you. Would God love a person who does not pursue the truth? Would God love an ignorant, timid person? God has pity for the ignorant and the timid—that much is true. God loves those who are truly honest, who pursue the truth, who can practice the truth and submit to Him, who can exalt Him and testify for Him, who can be considerate of His will and love Him sincerely. Only those who can truly expend of themselves for God and loyally perform their duties have God's love; only those who can accept the truth, as well as being pruned and dealt with, have God's love. Those who do not accept the truth, who do not accept being pruned and dealt with, are those whom God detests and rejects. If you are sick of the truth and resist all of the words spoken by God, then God will be sick of you and spurn you. If you always think of yourself as a good person, as a pathetic, simple and guileless person, but do not pursue the truth, will God love you? It is impossible; there is no basis for that in His words. God does not look at whether you are guileless, nor does He care what sort of humanity or caliber you were born with—He looks at whether, having heard His words, you accept them or ignore them, whether you submit to them or resist them. He looks at whether His words have an effect on you and bear fruit in you, at whether you can bear true testimony to the many words He has spoken. If what your experience comes down to in the end is, "I'm guileless, I'm timid, I get bullied by every person I meet. Everyone looks down on me," then God will say that this is not testimony. If you add, "I'm the honest but ignorant man whom God speaks of," God will say that you are full of lies and that a single word of truth cannot be found in your mouth. If, when God has requirements of you, you not only fail to obey them at all, but also try to reason with God and make excuses for yourself, saying, "I've suffered and paid a price, and I love God," that will not stand. Do you pursue the truth? Where is your true experiential testimony? How does the love you have for God manifest? No one will be convinced if you cannot provide evidence. You say, "I'm a person of honor and I act with decency. I don't engage in fornication, and I follow all the rules in my actions. I'm a well-behaved person. I don't go around drinking, whoring, and gambling. I don't cause disruptions or disturbances in God's house or sow dissension, I endure suffering and work hard. Are these not signs that I pursue the truth? I'm already pursuing the truth." And God will say: Have you resolved your corrupt disposition? Where is your testimony to your pursuit of the truth? Can you obtain the approval and admiration of God's chosen people? If you cannot offer any experiential testimony, yet you say that you are an honest person who loves God, then you are someone who beguiles others with false words—you

are an unreasonable devil Satan, and you deserve to be cursed. All that is left for you is to be condemned and cast out by God.

Some people, in the course of performing their duties, often act arbitrarily and recklessly. They are extremely capricious: When they are happy, they do a bit of their duty, and when they are not, they sulk and say, “I’m in a bad mood today. I won’t eat anything and I won’t perform my duty.” Others then have to negotiate with them, and say: “That won’t do. You can’t be so capricious.” And what will those people say to that? “I know it won’t do, but I grew up in a rich, privileged family. My grandparents and aunts all spoiled me, and my parents were even worse. I was their sweetheart, the apple of their eye, and they acquiesced to me in everything and spoiled me. That upbringing left me with this capricious temperament, so when I perform a duty in God’s house, I won’t discuss things with others, or seek the truth, or submit to God. Am I to blame for that?” Is their understanding correct? Is their attitude one of pursuing the truth? (No.) Whenever anyone brings up a slight fault of theirs, like how they take the best pieces of food at meals, how they only care for themselves, and give no thought to others, they will say, “I’ve been like this since I was a child. I’m accustomed to it. I’ve never thought about other people. I’ve always lived a privileged life, with parents who adore me and grandparents who dote on me. I’m the apple of my whole family’s eye.” This is a pile of drivel and fallacy. Is this not a bit shameless and impudent? Your parents dote on you—does that mean everyone else must, too? Your relatives adore you and dote on you—does that give you reason to act recklessly and arbitrarily in God’s house? Is that a valid reason? Is this the correct attitude to have toward your corrupt disposition? Is it an attitude of pursuing the truth? (No.) When anything befalls these people, when they have any problem to do with their corrupt disposition or their lives, they seek objective justifications to answer for it, to explain it, to justify it. They never seek the truth or pray to God, and they do not come before God to reflect on themselves. Without self-reflection, can one know their problems and their corruption? (No.) And can they repent without knowing their corruption? (No.) If someone cannot repent, what condition is it that they will invariably be living in? Will it not be one of self-forgiveness? Of feeling that though they have poured forth corruption, they have not done evil or violated the administrative decrees—that though doing so was not in accordance with the truth principles, this was not intentional, and it is pardonable? (Yes.) Well, is that the sort of condition that someone who pursues the truth ought to have? (No.) If someone never truly repents and always lives in this sort of condition, will they be able to turn themselves around? No, they will never be able to. And if a person does not turn themselves around, they will be unable to truly let go of their evil. What does it mean to be unable to truly let go of one’s evil? It means that one cannot truly practice the truth and enter the truth reality. That is the obvious outcome. If you cannot let go of your evil or practice the truth and enter reality, then if you wish to make God change His mind about you, attain the work of the Holy Spirit, gain God’s enlightenment and illumination, and have God pardon

your transgressions and resolve your corruption, will that be possible? (No.) If that is not possible, then can your belief in God result in your salvation? (No.) If a person lives in a condition of forgiving and admiring themselves, they fall miles short of pursuing the truth. The things they busy themselves with, look at, listen to, and run about doing may be somewhat related to believing in God, but they will have nothing to do with pursuing the truth or practicing it. This outcome is obvious. And since they are not related to pursuing or practicing the truth, that person will not have reflected on themselves, nor will they have knowledge of themselves. They will not know the extent to which they have been corrupted, and they will not know how to practice repentance, so it is even less likely that they will achieve true repentance or make God change His mind about them. If you live in such a condition and want God to reconsider, pardon, or approve of you, that will be difficult indeed. What does “approve” mean here? It means that God acknowledges what you do, approves of it, and remembers it. If you cannot gain any of these things, it proves that you are not pursuing the truth in the things that you do, in your exertions, in your outpourings and behavior. It does not matter what you think, even if you are able to perform some good behaviors, these behaviors only represent that there is a bit of conscience and reason within your humanity. But these good behaviors are not a manifestation of the pursuit of the truth, because your starting point, intents, and motives are not those of pursuing the truth. What grounds are there for saying so? The grounds are that none of your thoughts, actions, or deeds are in pursuit of the truth, and they have nothing to do with the truth. If everything that one does is not to gain God’s approval and recognition, then nothing they do will be able to attain God’s approval or recognition, and it is obvious that these behaviors and practices can only be called good human behaviors. They are not signs that they are practicing the truth, and they are certainly not signs that they are pursuing it. People who are particularly capricious and often behave recklessly and arbitrarily do not accept the judgment and chastisement of God’s words, nor do they accept being pruned and dealt with. They also often make excuses for their failure to pursue the truth and their inability to accept being pruned and dealt with. What disposition is that? Obviously, it is a disposition that is sick of the truth—the disposition of Satan. Man is possessed of Satan’s nature and its disposition, so without a doubt, people are of Satan. They are devils, the progeny of Satan, and the offspring of the great red dragon. Some people are able to admit that they are devils, Satans, and the offspring of the great red dragon, and they speak very prettily about their self-knowledge. But when they reveal a corrupt disposition and someone exposes them, deals with them, and prunes them, they will try with all their might to justify themselves and they will not accept the truth at all. What is the issue here? In this, these people are exposed utterly. They speak so prettily when they talk about knowing themselves, so why is it that when faced with being pruned and dealt with, they cannot accept the truth? There is a problem here. Is this sort of thing not quite common? Is it easy to discern? It is, in fact. There are quite a few people who admit that they are devils and Satans when

they speak of their self-knowledge, but do not repent or change afterward. So, is the self-knowledge they speak of true or false? Do they have sincere knowledge of themselves, or is it just a ruse meant to trick others? The answer is self-evident. Therefore, to see whether a person has true self-knowledge, you should not merely listen to them talk about it—you should look at the attitude they have toward being pruned and dealt with, and whether they can accept the truth. That is the most crucial thing. Whoever does not accept being pruned and dealt with has an essence of not accepting the truth, of refusing to accept it, and their disposition is sick of the truth. That is beyond doubt. Some people do not permit others to deal with them, no matter how much corruption they have revealed—no one may prune or deal with them. They are allowed to talk about their own self-knowledge, in any way that they please, but if someone else exposes them, criticizes them, or deals with them, no matter how objective or in accordance with the facts it is, they will not accept it. No matter what kind of outpouring of a corrupt disposition another person exposes in them, they will be extremely antagonistic and keep giving specious justifications for themselves, without even the slightest bit of true submission. If such people do not pursue the truth, there will be trouble. In the church, they are untouchable and irreproachable. When people say something good about them, it will make them happy; when people point out something bad about them, they will grow angry. Should someone expose them and say: “You’re a good person, but you’re very capricious. You’re always acting arbitrarily and recklessly. You need to accept being pruned and dealt with. Wouldn’t it be better for you to be rid of these deficiencies and corrupt dispositions?” in response, they will say, “I haven’t done anything evil. I haven’t sinned. Why are you dealing with me? I’ve been doted on at home since I was a child, by both my parents and grandparents. I’m their sweetheart, the apple of their eye. Now, here in God’s house, no one dotes on me at all—it’s no fun living here! You’re always picking at some fault of mine or another and trying to deal with me. How am I supposed to live like that?” What is the problem here? The clear-sighted can tell at once that these people have been spoiled by their parents and family, and that even now, they do not know how to comport themselves or live independently. Your family has doted on you like an idol, and you do not know your place in the universe. You have developed the vices of arrogance, self-righteousness, and extreme capriciousness, which you are not aware of and do not know to reflect on. You believe in God but do not listen to His words or practice the truth. Can you gain the truth with such a belief in God? Can you enter into the truth reality? Can you live out the true likeness of a human being? Certainly not. As a believer in God, you must at least accept the truth and know yourself. Only thus will you be able to change. If you always rely on your notions and imaginings in your faith, if you only seek peace and happiness instead of pursuing the truth, if you are incapable of true repentance, and have no change in your life disposition, then your belief in God is meaningless. As a believer in God, you must understand the truth. You must put effort into knowing yourself. You must seek the truth no matter what befalls you, and you must

resolve whatever corrupt disposition pours forth from you by fellowshiping on the truth according to God's words. If someone points out your corrupt disposition, or you take the initiative to examine it yourself, if you can consciously hold it against God's words for comparison, and introspect, examine, and know yourself, and then go on to fix your problem and practice repentance, you will be capable of living as a human being. Those who believe in God must accept the truth. If you are always relishing the feeling of being doted on by your family, always pleased to be the apple of their eye, their sweetheart, what will you be able to gain? No matter how much you are the apple of your family's eye and their sweetheart, if you do not have the truth reality, you are trash. Believing in God only has value if you pursue the truth. When you understand the truth, you will know how to comport yourself, and you will know how to live in order to experience true happiness and be a person that pleases God. No family environment, and no personal strengths, merits or gifts, can stand in for the truth reality, nor should any such thing serve as an excuse for you to not pursue the truth. Gaining the truth is the only thing that can bring people true happiness, allow them to live a life of significance, and grant them a beautiful destination. These are the facts of the matter.

Some people, after becoming leaders and workers in the church, believe themselves to be golden and think that they finally have the chance to shine. They feel good about themselves and begin to put their strengths to use; they give free rein to their ambitions and demonstrate their full capabilities. These people have class and education, organizational skills, and the manner and bearing of a leader. They were at the top of their class and the head of the student union at school, they were the manager or president of the company they worked at, and when they began believing in God and came to His house, they were elected as a leader, so they think to themselves, "Heaven never lets me down. It would be tough for someone as capable as I to keep a low profile. As soon as I stepped down from the position of company president, I came to God's house and took on the role of a leader. I couldn't be an ordinary person even if I tried. This is God's exaltation of me, it is what He has arranged for me to do, so I'll submit to it." After becoming a leader, they put their experience, knowledge, organizational skills, and leadership style to use. They think that they are capable and bold, and a truly adept and talented individual. It is a pity, then, that there is a problem here. These adept, talented leaders, who were born with an ability to lead—what are they best at doing in the church? Establishing an independent kingdom, arrogating all power to themselves, and dominating discussions. After becoming a leader, they do nothing except work, run about, undergo hardships, and pay a price for the sake of their own prestige and status. They care about nothing else. They believe that their busyness and work is in line with God's will, that they have no corrupt disposition, that the church always needs them, and that the brothers and sisters need them too. They believe that no work could get done without them, that they can take it all on themselves and monopolize power. And they have quite a way of establishing their independent kingdom. They are capable of all

manner of inventive, novel things, they are particularly skilled at acting like officials and putting on airs, and practiced at lecturing others from on high. There is just one important thing they cannot do: After becoming a leader, they are no longer able to speak to others from the heart, to know themselves, to notice their own corruption, or to listen to suggestions from the brothers and sisters. Should someone raise some different ideas during work discussions, these leaders will not only reject them—they will justify doing so by saying, “You haven’t thought that proposal through. I’m the church leader—if I do as you say and nothing goes wrong, that’s fine, but if something bad does happen, the responsibility will fall on me alone. So, most of the time, you can voice your opinions—we can observe that formality—but in the end, it must be I alone who makes the choice and decides how things are done.” Over time, most of the brothers and sisters stop taking part in discussions or fellowshiping about work, and these leaders will not bother fellowshiping with them about any problems in the work. They will keep making decisions and passing judgments without speaking a word to anyone, and they will still be full of their justifications. They believe, “The church is the leader’s church, the leader plots the course. It’s the leader who has the final say over the direction the brothers and sisters go and the path they walk.” Naturally, these leaders then take control of the brothers’ and sisters’ life entry, the path they walk, and the direction of their pursuit. Once they have been made “captain,” they monopolize power and establish an independent kingdom. There is no transparency to their actions, and without realizing it, they suppress a few people and exclude some brothers and sisters who pursue the truth and have the comprehension ability. All the while, they still think that in doing so, they are protecting the church’s work and the interests of God’s chosen people. They do everything with such precise reasoning, with such a plethora of justifications and excuses—and what of it, in the end? Everything they do is to protect their status and their monopoly on power. They bring the principles, ways, and means of behavior from secular society and family life into God’s house, and think that in doing so, they are protecting its interests. Yet they never know themselves or reflect on themselves. Even if someone were to point out that they are violating the truth principles, even if they were to meet with God’s enlightenment, discipline, and chastening, they would have no awareness of it. Where does the problem lie? From the day they took on the position of leader, they treated their duty like a career, and it is this that dooms them to walk the path of the antichrists and ensures that they are unable to pursue the truth. And yet, in the course of this “career,” they believe that everything they do is pursuing the truth. How do they view the pursuit of the truth? They safeguard their own status and authority under the guise of protecting the interests of the brothers and sisters and God’s house, and they believe that this is a manifestation of their pursuit of the truth. They know nothing at all of the corrupt disposition that manifests and pours forth from them while they are in this post. Even if they sometimes have a faint sense that it is a corrupt disposition, that it is loathed by God, that it is a vicious, intransigent disposition, they quickly change their mind, thinking: “That won’t do.

I'm the leader, and I need to have the dignity of one. I can't let the brothers and sisters see me pour forth a corrupt disposition." And so, though they realize that they have poured forth a great deal of corruption, and that they have done many things that contravene the principles in order to safeguard their status and authority, when someone exposes them, they resort to sophistry or try to block it, so that no one else will learn of it. As soon as they gained authority and status, they put themselves in a sacrosanct and inviolable position, thinking themselves to be great, correct, irreproachable, and undoubtable. And having occupied such a position, they uniformly resist and reject any dissenting voices, any suggestions or advice that could be of benefit to the brothers' and sisters' life entry and to the church's work. What excuse do they give for not pursuing the truth? They say, "I have status, I'm a person of standing—that means that I have dignity and that I am sacrosanct and inviolable." Can they pursue the truth, having come up with such reasons and excuses? (No.) They cannot. They always speak and act from their high station while enjoying the trappings of their status. By doing this, they hold themselves over a fire, and make it necessary to expose them. Are such people not pitiful? They are pitiful and detestable, and also abhorrent—they are revolting! As a leader, they dress themselves up in the image of a saint. A saint, a great, glorious, and correct person—what are these titles? They are shackles, and whoever puts them can no longer pursue the truth. If someone dons these shackles, it means that they no longer have any relation to pursuing the truth. What is the principal reason that these people do not pursue the truth? In fact, the reason is that they have been constrained by status. They are always thinking to themselves: "I'm the leader. I'm in charge here. I'm a person of standing and status. I'm a dignified person. I can't have an arrogant or evil disposition. I can't open up and fellowship about my corrupt disposition—I have to protect my dignity and prestige. I have to make people look up to me and venerate me." They are always constrained by these things, so they are unable to open up or reflect and know themselves. They are ruined by these things. Do their views and mindset accord with the truth? It is quite obvious that they do not. Are the behaviors that they usually display in their duties—arrogance and self-righteousness, acting as a law unto themselves, pretense, trickery, and so on—are these practices the pursuit of the truth? (No.) Quite clearly, none of them are the pursuit of the truth. And what is the justification or reason they give for not pursuing the truth? (They believe that leaders are people with status and dignity, and that even if they have a corrupt disposition, it can't be exposed.) Is this not an absurd point of view? If a person admits to having a corrupt disposition but does not permit it to be exposed, are they someone who accepts the truth? If, as a leader, you cannot accept the truth, how will you experience God's work? How will your corruption be cleansed? And if your corruption cannot be cleansed and you go on living by your corrupt disposition, then you are a leader who cannot do practical work—you are a false leader. As a leader, you do have status, but that is a mere matter of having a different job, a different duty—it does not mean that you have become a person of standing. You

do not become more dignified than others or a person of distinguished standing because you have gained this status and performed a different duty. If there really are people who think this way, are they not shameless? (They are.) What is a more colloquial way to put it? They are brazenly cheeky, are they not? When they are not leaders, they treat people with sincerity; they are able to open up about their outpourings of corruption and analyze their corrupt dispositions. Once they take on a post as a leader, they become another person entirely. Why do I say they become another person? Because they put on a mask, and the real person stays behind it. The mask betrays no expressions at all, no crying, no laughter, no pleasure or anger, no sorrow or joy, no emotions and desires—and certainly no corrupt disposition. At all times, its expression and condition remain the same, while all of the leader's true states, personal thoughts and ideas stay hidden behind the mask, where no one can see them. There are some leaders and workers who always think of themselves as having standing and status. They are terrified that they would lose their dignity if someone were to prune and deal with them, so they do not accept the truth. They draw from their status and authority to speak honeyed, false words and cover up their corrupt disposition. At the same time, they mistakenly believe that they are more distinguished and holier than others on account of their status, and that they therefore do not need to pursue the truth—that pursuing the truth is for others to do. This way of thinking is mistaken, and it is somewhat shameless and senseless. That is how this sort of person behaves. From the essence of such people's behavior, it is clear to see that they are not pursuing the truth. Instead they are pursuing status and prestige. As they work, they are protecting their status and authority, and deluding themselves into thinking that they are pursuing the truth. They are just like Paul, making frequent summaries of the work they have done and the duties they have performed, the tasks they have handled in doing church work, and the achievements they have attained while doing the work of God's house. They frequently make tallies of these things, like when Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: From now on there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4:7–8). By this, he meant that after finishing his course and fighting a good fight, it was time to calculate how great a chance he had at salvation, how great his contributions had been, how great his reward would be, and to ask God to reward his contributions. He meant that he would not think God to be a righteous God if He did not reward him with a crown, that he would refuse to submit and even complain about God's unrighteousness. Is such a person, with this kind of mindset and disposition, pursuing the truth? Are they someone who truly submits to God? Can they put themselves at the mercy of God's orchestrations? Is this not clear at a glance? They think that their running of courses and fighting of battles is the pursuit of the truth, they do not seek the truth at all and they do not possess the manifestations of truly pursuing it—so they are not someone who pursues the truth.

Which of man's problems did our fellowship just now primarily expose? Specifically, which of man's corrupt dispositions did it primarily expose? A basic one is man being fed

up with the truth and refusing to accept it; this is one very specific sort of behavior. Another main one is something that exists in the essence of every person's disposition: intransigence. This also manifests quite concretely and obviously, does it not? (It does.) These are two of the main ways in which man's corrupt disposition manifests and pours forth. These specific behaviors, these specific views, attitudes, and so forth, truly and accurately illustrate that there is an element of being fed up with the truth within the corrupt disposition of man. Of course, what is more prominent in man's disposition are manifestations of intransigence: Whatever God says, and whatever corrupt dispositions of man are exposed in the course of God's work, people stubbornly refuse to acknowledge it and resist it. Beyond obvious resistance or contemptuous rejection, there is, of course, another sort of behavior, which is when people do not concern themselves with God's work, as if God's work has nothing to do with them. What does it mean to not concern oneself with God? It is when a person says, "Say what You will—it has nothing to do with me. None of Your judgment or exposure has anything to do with me. I don't accept it or acknowledge it." Might we call such an attitude "intransigent"? (Yes.) It is a manifestation of intransigence. These people say, "I live however I like, in whatever way makes me comfortable, and in whatever way makes me happy. The behaviors You talk about like arrogance, deceit, being fed up with the truth, evil, viciousness, and so on—even if I do have them, so what? I won't examine them, or know them, or accept them. This is how I believe in God, what are You going to do about it?" This is an attitude of intransigence. When people do not concern themselves with God's words or pay heed to them, which means that they uniformly ignore God, regardless of what He says, whether He speaks in the form of reminders or warnings or exhortations—no matter which manner of speaking He employs, or what the source and goals of His speech are—then their attitude is an intransigent one. It means that they pay no heed to God's urgent will, much less to His sincere, well-intentioned desire to save man. No matter what God does, people do not have hearts of cooperation and they are unwilling to strive toward the truth. Even if they acknowledge that God's judgment and revelation are entirely factual, there is no remorse in their hearts, and they go on believing as they did before. In the end, when they have heard many sermons, they say the same thing: "I'm a true believer, at any rate, my humanity's not poor, I wouldn't deliberately do evil, I'm able to forsake things, I can take on hardship, and I'm willing to pay a price for my faith. God won't forsake me." Is this not just like how Paul said: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: From now on there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness"? That is the sort of attitude people have. What is the disposition behind such an attitude? Intransigence. Is an intransigent disposition difficult to change? Is there a path for doing so? The simplest and most direct method is to transform your attitude toward God's words and toward God Himself. How can you transform these things? By analyzing and coming to know the states and mindsets that arise from your intransigent attitude, and by looking to see which of your actions and words, which of the viewpoints

and intents that you cling to, and even specifically which of the thoughts and ideas that you pour forth, are under the sway of your intransigent disposition. Examine and resolve these behaviors, outpourings, and states, one by one, and then, turn them around—as soon as you have examined and detected something, hurry to turn it around. For instance, we were just speaking about acting based on one's preferences and moods, which is capriciousness. The disposition of capriciousness carries with it a quality of being sick of the truth. If you realize that you are that sort of person, with that sort of corrupt disposition, and you do not reflect on yourself or seek the truth to resolve it, stubbornly thinking that you are just fine, that is intransigence. After this sermon, you may suddenly realize, "I've said things like that, and I have views like that. This disposition of mine is one that's sick of the truth. As that's the case, I'll set about resolving that disposition." How are you to set about resolving it, then? Begin by letting go of your sense of superiority, your capriciousness, and your arbitrariness; no matter if you are in a good or bad mood, look to what God's requirements are. If you can forsake the flesh and practice in line with God's requirements, how will He view you? If you can truly begin to resolve these corrupt behaviors, it is a sign that you are positively and proactively cooperating with God's work. You will be consciously forsaking and resolving that disposition which is sick of the truth, and at the same time, you will be resolving your intransigent disposition. When you have resolved both of these corrupt dispositions, you will be able to obey and satisfy God, and this will please Him. If you have understood the content of this fellowship and practice forsaking the flesh in this way, I will be very happy. Then I will not have spoken these words in vain.

Intransigence is a problem of a corrupt disposition; it is something in one's nature, and it is not easy to resolve. When someone has an intransigent disposition, it manifests mainly as a propensity for offering justifications and specious arguments, sticking to their own ideas, and not easily accepting new things. There are times when people know that their ideas are wrong, yet they stick to them for the sake of their vanity and pride, obstinate to the end. Such an intransigent disposition is difficult to transform, even if one is aware of it. To resolve the problem of intransigence, one must know man's arrogance, deceit, viciousness, being sick of the truth, and other such dispositions. When one knows their own arrogance, deceit, viciousness, that they are sick of the truth, that they are unwilling to forsake the flesh though they wish to practice the truth, that they are always offering excuses and explaining their difficulties though they wish to obey God, it will be easy for them to recognize that they have a problem with intransigence. To resolve this problem, one must first be possessed of normal human sense and begin by learning to listen to God's words. If you wish to be God's sheep, you must learn to listen to His words. And how should you listen to them? By listening for any problems that God exposes in His words that are relevant to you. If you find one, you should accept it; you must not believe that it is a problem that other people have, that it is everyone's problem, or humanity's problem, and that it has nothing to do with you. It would be wrong for you

to have such a belief. You should reflect, through the revelation of God's words, on whether you have the corrupt states or erroneous views that God is exposing. For instance, when you hear God's words revealing manifestations of an arrogant disposition pouring forth from someone, you should think to yourself: "Do I show manifestations of arrogance? I am a corrupt human, so I must show some of those manifestations; I should reflect on where I do that. People say I'm arrogant, that I'm always acting high and mighty, that I constrain people when I speak. Is that truly my disposition?" Through reflection, you will finally realize that the revelation of God's words is entirely accurate—that you are an arrogant person. And as the revelation of God's words is entirely accurate, as it matches up perfectly with your situation without the least discrepancy, and appears even more accurate upon further reflection, you should accept the judgment and chastisement of His words, and discern and come to know the essence of your corrupt disposition according to them. Then you will be able to feel true remorse. In believing in God, it is only by eating and drinking of His words in this way that you can come to know yourself. In order to resolve your corrupt dispositions, you must accept the judgment and exposure of God's words. If you cannot do that, there will be no way for you to cast off your corrupt dispositions. If you are a smart person who sees that the revelation of God's words is generally accurate, or if you can admit that half of it is correct, then you should accept it at once and submit before God. You must also pray to Him and reflect on yourself. Only then will you understand that all of God's words of revelation are accurate, that they are all facts, and nothing short of that. It is only by submitting before God with a God-fearing heart that people can truly reflect on themselves. Only then will they be able to see the variety of corrupt dispositions that exist within them, and that they are indeed arrogant and self-righteous, without the least bit of sense. If someone is a lover of the truth, they will be able to prostrate themselves before God, admit to Him that they have been deeply corrupted, and have the will to accept His judgment and chastisement. In this way, they can develop a heart of remorse, begin to deny and hate themselves, and regret not having pursued the truth before, thinking, "Why was I unable to accept the judgment and chastisement of God's words when I began reading them? This attitude I held toward His words was one of arrogance, wasn't it? How could I be so arrogant?" After frequently self-reflecting in this way for some time, they will recognize that they are indeed arrogant, that they are not entirely capable of admitting that God's words are the truth and facts, and that they truly do not have a shred of sense. But it is a difficult thing to know oneself. Each time a person reflects, they can only gain a bit more and a bit deeper knowledge of themselves. To gain clear knowledge of a corrupt disposition is not something that can be accomplished in a short span of time; one must read more of God's words, pray more, and reflect more on themselves. Only thus can they gradually come to know themselves. All those who truly know themselves have failed and stumbled a few times in the past, after which, they read God's words, prayed to Him, and reflected on themselves, and thereby came to

see the truth of their own corruption clearly, and to feel that they were indeed profoundly corrupted, and absolutely bereft of the truth reality. If you experience God's work like this, and you pray to Him and seek the truth when things befall you, you will gradually come to know yourself. Then one day, your heart will finally be clear: "I may have slightly better caliber than others, but this was given to me by God. I'm always boastful, attempting to outdo others when I speak, and trying to get people to do things my way. I truly lack sense—this is arrogance and self-righteousness! Through reflection, I've learned of my own arrogant disposition. This is God's enlightenment and grace, and I thank Him for it!" Is it a good thing or a bad thing to learn of your own corrupt disposition? (A good thing.) From there, you should seek how to speak and act with sense and obedience, how to stand on equal footing with others, how to treat others fairly without constraining them, how to correctly regard your caliber, gifts, strengths, and so on. In this way, like a mountain being hammered into dust, one strike at a time, your arrogant disposition will be resolved. After that, when you interact with others or work with them to perform a duty, you will be able to treat their views correctly and pay careful, close attention while you listen to them. And when you hear them voice a view that is correct, you will discover, "It seems my caliber isn't the best. The fact is that everybody has their own strengths; they're not inferior to me at all. Before, I always thought that I had better caliber than others. That was self-admiration and narrow-minded ignorance. I had a very limited outlook, like a frog at the bottom of a well. Thinking like that really lacked sense—it was shameless! I was blinded and deafened by my arrogant disposition. Other people's words didn't get through to me, and I thought that I was better than them, that I was right, when in fact, I'm no better than any of them!" From then on, you will have true insight into and knowledge of your deficiencies and your small stature. And after that, when you fellowship with others, you will listen closely to their views, and you will realize, "There are so many people who are better than me. My caliber and comprehension ability are both middling, at best." With this realization, will you not have gained a bit of self-awareness? By experiencing this, and frequently reflecting on yourself according to God's words, you will be able to gain true self-knowledge that grows ever deeper. You will be able to see through to the truth of your corruption, to your poverty and wretchedness, to your deplorable ugliness, and at that time, you will be sickened by yourself and hate your corrupt disposition. Then it will be easy for you to forsake yourself. That is how you experience God's work. You must reflect on your outpourings of corruption according to God's words. In particular, after revealing a corrupt disposition in any kind of situation, you must frequently reflect on and know yourself. It will then be easy for you to see your corrupt essence clearly, and you will be able to hate your corruption, your flesh, and Satan from the heart. And from the heart, you will be able to love and strive for the truth. In this way, your arrogant disposition will keep diminishing, and you will gradually cast it off. You will gain more and more sense, and it will be easier for you to submit to God. In the eyes of others, you will appear steadier and more

grounded, and you will seem to speak more objectively. You will be capable of listening to others, and you will give them time to talk. When others are right, it will be easy for you to accept their words, and your interactions with people will not be so taxing. You will be able to cooperate harmoniously with anyone. If this is how you perform your duty, will you not then have sense and humanity? That is the way to resolve this kind of corrupt disposition.

Let us now fellowship a little on the way to resolve corrupt dispositions through the issue of intransigent disposition that I just mentioned. To resolve a corrupt disposition, one must first be able to accept the truth. To accept the truth is to accept God's judgment and chastisement; it is to accept His words that expose the essence of man's corruption. If you come to know and analyze your outpourings of corruption, your corrupt states, and your corrupt intentions and behaviors on the basis of God's words, and you are able to uncover the essence of your problems, then you will have gained knowledge of your corrupt disposition, and you will have set in motion the process of resolving it. On the other hand, if you do not practice in this way, not only will you be unable to resolve your intransigent disposition, you will also have no way to eradicate your corrupt dispositions. Every person is possessed of multiple corrupt dispositions. Where should one begin resolving them? Firstly, one must resolve their intransigence, as intransigent disposition hinders people from drawing close to God, seeking the truth, and submitting to God. Intransigence is the greatest stumbling block to man's prayer and fellowship with God; it is what interferes most with man's normal relationship with God. After you have resolved your intransigent disposition, the others will be easy to resolve. Resolving a corrupt disposition begins with self-reflection and self-knowledge. Resolve whichever corrupt dispositions you are aware of—the more of them you gain knowledge of, the more you can resolve; the deeper your knowledge of them, the more thoroughly you can resolve them. This is the process of resolving corrupt dispositions; it is done by praying to God, and by reflecting on and knowing oneself and analyzing the essence of one's corrupt disposition through God's words, until one is able to forsake the flesh and practice the truth. Knowing the essence of your corrupt disposition is no simple task. Knowing yourself is not saying, broadly, "I'm a corrupted person; I'm a devil; I'm the offspring of Satan, the descendant of the great red dragon; I'm resistant and hostile toward God; I'm His enemy." Such talk does not necessarily mean that you have true knowledge of your own corruption. You may have learned those words from someone else and not know much about yourself. True self-knowledge is not based in man's learning or judgments, it is based in God's words—it is seeing the consequences of corrupt dispositions and the suffering that you have experienced as a result of them, feeling how a corrupt disposition harms not only you, but also other people. It is seeing through to the fact that corrupt dispositions originate in Satan, that they are Satan's poisons and philosophies, and that they are entirely inimical to the truth and to God. When you have seen through this problem, you will have come to know your corrupt disposition. After some people

acknowledge that they are the devil Satan, they still do not accept being pruned and dealt with. They do not admit that they have done anything wrong or violated the truth. What is the matter with them? They still do not know themselves. Some people say they are the devil Satan, yet if you were to ask them, “Why do you say that you are the devil Satan?” they would be unable to respond. This goes to show that they do not know their corrupt disposition, or their nature essence. If they could see that their nature is the devil’s nature, that their corrupt disposition is Satan’s disposition, and admit that they are therefore the devil, Satan, they would then have come to know their own nature essence. True self-knowledge is achieved through the exposure, judgment, practice, and experience of God’s words. It is achieved through understanding the truth. If a person does not understand the truth, then no matter what they say about their self-knowledge, it is hollow and impractical, because they cannot find or grasp those things that are at root and essential. To know oneself, one must acknowledge which corrupt dispositions they have revealed in specific instances, what their intent was, how they behaved, with what they were adulterated, and why they could not accept the truth. They must be able to state these things clearly, only then can they know themselves. When some people are faced with being pruned and dealt with, they admit that they are sick of the truth, that they have suspicions and misunderstandings about God, and that they are guarded against Him. They also acknowledge that all of God’s words that judge and expose man are factual. This shows that they have a bit of self-knowledge. But because they do not have knowledge of God or His work, because they do not understand His will, their self-knowledge is quite shallow. If someone only acknowledges their own corruption but has not found the root of the problem, can their suspicions, misunderstandings, and guardedness surrounding God be resolved? No, they cannot. This is why self-knowledge is more than just a mere acknowledgment of one’s corruption and problems—one must also understand the truth and resolve the problem of their corrupt disposition at its root. That is the only way to see through to the truth of one’s corruption and achieve true repentance. When those who love the truth come to know themselves, they are also able to seek and understand the truth to resolve their problems. Only this sort of self-knowledge yields results. Whenever a person who loves the truth reads a phrase of God’s words that reveals and judges man, before anything else, they have faith that God’s words that reveal man are real and factual, and that God’s words that judge man are the truth, and that they represent God’s righteousness. Lovers of the truth must, at least, be able to recognize this. If someone does not even believe God’s words, and does not believe that God’s words exposing and judging man are facts and the truth, can they know themselves through His words? Certainly not—even if they wished to, they could not. If you can be firm in your belief that all of God’s words are the truth, and believe them all, no matter what God says or His manner of speaking, if you are able to believe and accept God’s words even if you do not understand them, it will be easy for you to reflect on and know yourself through them. Self-reflection must be based in the truth.

That is beyond doubt. Only God's words are the truth—none of man's words and none of Satan's words are the truth. Satan has been corrupting mankind with all kinds of learning, teachings, and theories for thousands of years, and people have become so numb and dull-witted that they not only lack the slightest knowledge of themselves, but they even uphold heresies and fallacies and refuse to accept the truth. Humans like these are irredeemable. Those who have true faith in God believe that only His words are the truth, they are able to know themselves on the basis of God's words and the truth, and thereby achieve true repentance. Some people do not pursue the truth; they base their self-reflection only on man's learning, and they admit to nothing more than sinful behavior, and all the while, they are unable to see through to their own corrupt essence. Such self-knowledge is a futile endeavor and it yields no results. One must base their self-reflection on God's words, and after reflecting, gradually come to know the corrupt dispositions that they reveal. One must be able to measure and know their deficiencies, their humanity essence, their views on things, their life outlook and values, based on the truth, and then come to an accurate assessment and verdict on all these things. In this way, they can gradually attain knowledge of themselves. But self-knowledge grows ever deeper as one experiences more in life, and before one has gained the truth, it will be impossible for them to see entirely through to their nature essence. If a person truly knows themselves, they can see that corrupted human beings are indeed the offspring and embodiments of Satan. They will feel that they do not deserve to live before God, that they are unworthy of His love and salvation, and they will be able to completely prostrate themselves before Him. Only those who are capable of such a degree of knowledge truly know themselves. Self-knowledge is a precondition for entering the truth reality. If someone wants to practice the truth and enter reality, they must know themselves. All people have corrupt dispositions and, despite themselves, they are always fettered and controlled by these corrupt dispositions. They are unable to practice the truth or obey God. So if they wish to do these things, they must first know themselves and resolve their corrupt dispositions. It is only through the process of resolving a corrupt disposition that one can understand the truth and gain knowledge of God; only then can one submit to God and bear witness for Him. That is how one gains the truth. The process of entering the truth reality is that of resolving one's corrupt disposition. So, what must one do to resolve their corrupt disposition? Firstly, one must know their corrupt essence. Specifically, this means knowing how one's corrupt disposition arose, and which of Satan's lies and fallacies they accepted gave rise to it. Once one fully comes to understand these root causes on the basis of God's words and has discernment of them, they will no longer be willing to live by their corrupt disposition, they will want only to submit to God and live by His words. Whenever they reveal a corrupt disposition, they will be able to recognize it, reject it, and forsake their flesh. By practicing and experiencing in this way, they will slowly cast off all of their corrupt dispositions.

Some people say, “When I read God’s words of exposure and judgment, I reflected on myself and realized that I’m arrogant, deceitful, selfish, evil, intransigent, and devoid of humanity.” There are some who even say that they are extremely arrogant, that they are beasts, that they are the devil Satan. Is this true self-knowledge? If they are speaking from the heart, and not just copying something, then it shows that they, at least, have some self-knowledge, the only question being whether it is shallow or deep. If they are copying something, repeating someone else’s words, then that is not true self-knowledge. Knowledge of one’s corrupt disposition must be concrete, down to every matter and state—this means details such as states, outpourings, behaviors, thoughts and ideas that relate to the corrupt disposition. Only then can one truly come to know themselves. And when a person truly knows themselves, their heart will fill with remorse, and they will become capable of true repentance. What is the first thing that one must practice in order to repent? (One must admit to their mistakes.) “Admitting to their mistakes” is not the right way to express this; rather, it is a matter of acknowledging and knowing that one has a certain corrupt disposition. If one says that their corrupt disposition is a kind of mistake, they are wrong. A corrupt disposition is something that belongs to one’s nature, something that controls a person. It is not the same thing as a one-off mistake. Some people, after revealing corruption, pray to God: “Oh God, I made a mistake. I am sorry.” This is inaccurate. “Admitting to a sin” would be more appropriate. The specific way that people practice repentance is by knowing themselves and resolving their problems. When a person reveals a corrupt disposition or commits a transgression, and realizes that they are resisting God and invoking His hatred, they should then self-reflect and know themselves within the relevant words of God. Consequently, they will gain some knowledge of their corrupt disposition and acknowledge that it comes from Satan’s poisons and corruption. After that, when they have found the principles for practicing the truth and been able to put the truth into practice, that is true repentance. No matter what corruption a person reveals, if they are able to first know their corrupt disposition, seek the truth to resolve it, and come to practice the truth, that is true repentance. Some people know a bit about themselves, but there are no signs of repentance within them, nor any testimony to their practice of the truth. If they remain unchanged after gaining self-knowledge, that is far from true repentance. To achieve true repentance, one must resolve their corrupt dispositions. So, how, specifically, should one practice and enter in order to resolve their corrupt dispositions? Here is an example. People have deceitful dispositions, they are always lying and cheating. If you realize that, then the simplest and most direct principle of practice to resolve your deceitfulness is to be an honest person, to tell the truth and do honest things. The Lord Jesus said, “But let your communication be, Yes, yes; No, no.” To be an honest person, one should follow the principles of God’s words. This simple practice is the most effective, it is easy to understand and to put into practice. However, because people are so deeply corrupted, because they all have satanic natures and are living by satanic

dispositions, it is quite difficult for them to practice the truth. They would like to be honest, but they cannot. They cannot help but tell lies and engage in trickery, and though they may feel remorse after recognizing this, they will still be unable to cast off the constraints of their corrupt disposition, and they will go on lying and cheating as they did before. How should this problem be resolved? Part of it is knowing that the essence of one's corrupt disposition is ugly and despicable, and being able to hate it from one's heart; another part is training oneself to practice according to the truth principle, "But let your communication be, Yes, yes; No, no." When you are practicing this principle, you are in the process of resolving your deceitful disposition. Naturally, if you are able to practice according to the truth principles while resolving your deceitful disposition, that is a manifestation of you turning yourself around and the beginning of your true repentance, and God approves of it. This means that when you turn yourself around, God will change His mind about you. In fact, God doing this is a sort of pardon for man's corrupt dispositions and rebelliousness. He forgives people and does not remember their sins or their transgressions. Is that specific enough? Have you understood this? Here is another example. Say you have an arrogant disposition, and no matter what happens to you, you are very willful—you always want to call the shots, have others obey you, and do what you want them to do. The day then comes when you realize that this is caused by an arrogant disposition. Your admission that it is an arrogant disposition is the first step toward self-knowledge. From there, you should seek out a few passages of God's words that expose arrogant disposition against which to compare yourself, and reflect on and know yourself. If you find that the comparison is completely apt, and you admit that the arrogant disposition that God exposes exists in you, and then you discern and uncover where your arrogant disposition comes from, and why it arises, and which of Satan's poisons, heresies, and fallacies govern it, then, having seen to the heart of all these questions, you will have dug down to the root of your arrogance. This is true self-knowledge. When you have a more precise definition of how you reveal this corrupt disposition, it will facilitate deeper and more practical knowledge of yourself. What should you do next? You should look for the truth principles in God's words, and understand what sort of human comportment and speech are manifestations of normal humanity. After you find the path of practice, you must practice according to God's words, and when your heart has turned around, you will have truly repented. Not only will there be principles to your speech and actions, you will also be living out human likeness and gradually shedding your corrupt disposition. Others will see you as a new person: You will no longer be the old, corrupt person you once were, but one reborn in God's words. Such a person is one whose life disposition has been changed.

Knowing oneself is no simple task. It is achieved by accepting the truth, as well as practicing and experiencing God's words, and true self-knowledge can only be attained by accepting God's judgment and chastisement. Those who have not experienced judgment and chastisement can, at the very most, admit to the mistakes they have made

and the things they have done wrong. It will be very hard for them to see their nature essence clearly. Why was it that even though believers in the Age of Grace stopped committing certain sins and changed their behavior for the better, they never achieved a transformation of their life dispositions? Why, though they believed in God, did they resist Him, and even betray Him? It is difficult for corrupt humanity to recognize the source of this issue. Why do all people have satanic dispositions? It is because Satan has corrupted mankind, and people have accepted its lies and philosophies. That is what gave rise to corrupt dispositions, and that is how Satan's disposition became the source of man's resistance against God. This is the most difficult thing for people to recognize. God is doing His work of judgment in the last days to save mankind from Satan's influence, and to resolve the source of mankind's sin and resistance against God. Satan has corrupted mankind for thousands of years, and its nature has taken root in the hearts of man. Therefore, no sort of corrupt disposition can be resolved and cast off with just one or two attempts at self-reflection and self-knowledge. Corrupt dispositions pour forth constantly and repeatedly, so people need to accept the truth and wage a long battle with their satanic dispositions until they overcome Satan. Only then can they thoroughly cast off their corrupt dispositions. So, people must ceaselessly pray to God, seek the truth, self-reflect, know themselves, and practice the truth, until corruption no longer pours forth from them, their life dispositions change, and they achieve submission to God. Only then will they gain God's approval. The results of each battle may not be immediately apparent, and you may still reveal corrupt dispositions afterward. You may feel a bit negative and discouraged, but unwilling to give up, and you can still keep trying hard, looking up to God and relying on Him. If you persevere in that way for two or three years, you will truly be able to put the truth into practice, and there will be peace and joy in your heart. Then you will see clearly that every failure, every effort, and every gain you made was a good sign that you were moving toward a transformation of your disposition and getting God to change His mind about you. Though each change is imperceptible to human consciousness, the dispositional transformation that comes with each turn cannot be achieved by any other action or thing. This is the path that one must take in their dispositional change and life entry. This is how the pursuit of dispositional change must be practiced. Of course, people should have an accurate understanding of how dispositional change happens: It is not a sudden, earthshaking change that surprises and delights, as they imagine. That is not how it happens. It is a matter of changing unconsciously, slowly, bit by bit. When one is able to put the truth into practice, they will see the fruits of their labor. When you look back after walking this path for three, five, ten years, you will be surprised to find that your disposition has changed vastly in those ten years, that you are entirely different. It may be that your personality and temper have not changed, or that your lifestyle and so forth have not changed, but the dispositions, states, and behaviors you pour forth will be worlds apart, as if you have truly become a different person. Why will such a change occur? Because in those ten

years, you will have been judged and chastised, pruned and dealt with, tested and refined by God's words many times, and you will have understood many truths. It will begin with a change in your views on things, a change in your outlook on life and your values, which will be followed by a change in your life disposition, a change in the foundation which you rely on to survive—and as these changes occur, you will gradually become another person, a new person. Though your personality, temper, lifestyle, and even your speech and deportment may be unchanged, you will have transformed your life disposition, and that alone is a fundamental, essential change. What are the signs of dispositional change? How does it manifest specifically? It begins with a change in a person's views on things—it is when the numerous views on things of unbelievers that a person harbors change as they gain an understanding of the truth, and those views grow closer to the truth of God's words. This is the first stage of dispositional change. Beyond that, through self-reflection and self-knowledge, people can focus on practicing the truth. By reflecting on the various intents, motives, thoughts and ideas, notions, viewpoints, and attitudes that arise within them, they can locate their problems, and begin to feel remorse for them. Then, they can forsake the flesh and put the truth into practice. And as they do, they will come to cherish God's words and the truth even more, and acknowledge that Christ is the truth, the way, and the life. They will be more willing to follow Christ and submit to Him, and they will feel that God expresses truths to expose, judge, and chastise man, and to change people's corrupt dispositions, and that by doing so God saves and perfects man in a truly practical way. They will feel that without God's judgment and chastisement or the provision and guidance of His words, people would have no way to achieve salvation, nor could they reap such rewards. They will begin to love God's words, and they will feel that they depend upon them in their real life, that they need His words to provide for them, to guide them, and to clear the way for them. Their hearts will be filled with peace, and when something befalls them, they will unconsciously seek out God's words to serve as their basis, and look for the principles and the path of practice within them. This is one result achieved through knowing oneself. There is another: People will no longer treat their outpourings of corrupt dispositions as they once did, with an attitude of intransigence. Instead, they will be able to quiet their hearts and listen to God's words with an attitude of honesty, and they will be able to accept the truth and positive things. This means that when they pour forth a corrupt disposition, they will no longer be as they were before—intransigent, difficult to tame, wildly aggressive, arrogant, insolent, and vicious—instead, they will proactively reflect on themselves and gain knowledge of their real problems. They may not know what the essence of their corrupt disposition is, but they will be able to quiet themselves, pray to God, and seek the truth, after which they will admit to their problems and to their corrupt disposition, and repent to God, and resolve to comport themselves differently in the future. That is wholly an attitude of submission. In this way, they will gain hearts of submission to God. Whatever God says, whatever He requires of them, whatever work

He does or environments He arranges for them, it will be easy for people to submit to it. Their corrupt dispositions will not present such a great obstacle for them, they will be easy to resolve and overcome. At that point, putting the truth into practice will be effortless for them, and they will be able to achieve submission to God. These are the signs of dispositional change. When someone can put the truth into practice and truly submit to God, it is fair to say that their life disposition has already undergone a change—a true change, one that is entirely achieved through the pursuit of the truth. And all of the behaviors that arise in people during this process, whether they be positive behaviors or normal negativity and weakness, are indispensable and inexorable. Since there are positive behaviors, there must also be behaviors of negativity and weakness—but negativity and weakness are temporary. Once a person possesses a certain stature, they will have ever fewer negative, weak states, and ever more positive behaviors and entry, and their actions will grow increasingly principled. Such a person is one who obeys God, and one whose life disposition changed after their corrupt dispositions were cleansed. It can be said that these are the results that pursuers of the truth attain by experiencing the judgment and chastisement of God's words, and by being repeatedly pruned and dealt with, tested, and refined.

Since people have all now heard and understood the specific, normal processes of pursuing the truth, they should no longer fabricate different justifications or excuses for why they are sick of the truth, or resist it, or do not pursue it. Having understood these truths and seen this issue clearly, do you now have discernment of the justifications and excuses people give for not pursuing the truth? If an older person says, "I'm old. I'm not driven or enthusiastic like a young person. With age, I lose the aggressiveness and ambition of youth, and I don't get arrogant anymore. So, you saying that I'm arrogant is nonsense—I'm not!" Are they correct? (No.) Obviously not. All of you have discernment of such words now. You would be able to reveal that person and say, "Even though you're old, you still have an arrogant disposition. You've been arrogant your whole life without ever resolving it. Do you want to go on being arrogant?" Some younger people say, "I'm so young, I haven't experienced the chaotic parts of society or struggled and drifted along within different groups. I don't have the experiences that people who've been around in the world do—and more importantly, of course, I'm not as slippery or treacherous as those old foxes. As a young person, it's normal for me to have a bit of an arrogant disposition; at least I'm not as calculating, deceptive, and evil as an old person." Is it appropriate to say this? (No.) Every person has a corrupt disposition. It has nothing to do with age or gender. You have what others have, and they have what you have. There is no need for anyone to point fingers. Of course, it is not enough to merely acknowledge that everyone has a corrupt disposition. Since you have acknowledged that you have a corrupt disposition, you must seek the truth to resolve it—you will not have reached your goal until you have gained the truth and your disposition has changed. Resolving a corrupt disposition ultimately depends on you accepting the truth,

letting go of your justifications and excuses, and being able to face your corrupt disposition properly. You must not avoid it or shirk it with excuses, and you certainly must not reject it. These are easy things to achieve. What is the hardest thing to do? I can think of something. There are people who say, “Say that I pursue the truth or that I don’t, say that I don’t love the truth or that I’m sick of it, reveal me to have any corrupt disposition—I’ll just ignore you. I do whatever God’s house asks me to or whatever work needs doing. I listen during sermons and gatherings, I read along when everyone is eating and drinking of God’s words, I sit and watch videos of experiential testimony alongside you, and I eat when you eat. I’m in lock-step with you. Who among you could say that I don’t pursue the truth? This is how I believe, so you can do or say whatever you like, I don’t care!” This sort of person puts up a front of not making excuses or justifications, but also has no intention of pursuing the truth. It is as if God’s work of salvation has nothing to do with them, as if they have no need of it. People of this sort do not explicitly say, “My humanity is good, I truly believe in God, I’m willing to forsake things, I’m able to suffer and pay a price. Do I need to accept God’s judgment and chastisement, on top of that?” They do not explicitly say this, they do not have a clear attitude toward the truth, and they do not outwardly condemn God’s work. However, how does God treat such people? If they do not pursue the truth, if they are very indifferent about God’s words and disregard them, then God’s attitude toward them is very clear. It is just like that line in the Bible, which goes, “So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:16). God does not want them, and that means trouble. Are there such people in the church? (Yes.) So, how are they to be sorted? Where should they be sorted to? There is no need to sort them. In brief, such people do not pursue the truth. They do not accept the truth or reflect and know themselves, and they do not have hearts of repentance—instead they have a muddled and confused faith in God. They do whatever God’s house asks them to, without causing any disturbances or disruptions. Ask them, “Do you have any notions?” “No.” “Do you have any corrupt dispositions?” “No.” “Do you wish to attain salvation?” “I don’t know.” “Do you acknowledge that God’s words are the truth?” “I don’t know.” Ask them anything, and they say they do not know. Is there a problem with such people? (Yes.) There is, yet they feel that it is not a problem, and that it needs no resolving. The Bible says, “So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.” That phrase—“I will spew you out of My mouth”—is the principle for handling such people; it is the result that comes to them. To be neither cold nor hot means that these people do not have any views; it means that no matter how you fellowship on matters of dispositional change or salvation with them, they remain indifferent. What does “indifferent” mean here? It means they are uninterested in such matters and unwilling to hear about them. Some may say, “What’s so wrong with having no views or outpourings of corruption?” What absolute drivel! These are soulless, dead people, neither cold nor hot, and there is no way for God to work upon them. When it

comes to people who cannot be saved, God just spews them out and is done with them. He does not work upon them, and we will make no sort of appraisal of such people, we will just ignore them. If there are such people in the church, they may remain so long as they do not cause any disturbances—if they do, they are to be cleansed away. This is an easy thing to resolve. My words are directed at those who can accept the truth, who wish to pursue it and have a clear attitude about it, who acknowledge that they have corrupt dispositions and can be saved; they are aimed at those who can understand God's words and hear His voice, they are aimed at God's sheep—those are the people who God's words are directed at. God's words are not directed at those who are neither cold nor hot toward Him. Such people are uninterested in the truth, and neither cold nor hot about God's words and work. The way to handle such people is to say, "Leave. How you are has nothing to do with Me"—to ignore them and not waste any effort on them.

We have just fellowshiped on some negative examples relating to the topic of pursuing the truth. People often unconsciously think up various justifications, excuses, and pretexts with which to deny their outpourings of corrupt dispositions—of course, they also often hide the existence of their corrupt dispositions, deluding themselves and others. These are man's foolish and stupid ways. On the one hand, people acknowledge that all God's words that judge man are the truth; on the other, they deny the existence of their own corrupt dispositions, as well as their erroneous behaviors that violate the truth. This is a clear sign that they do not accept the truth. Regardless of whether you deny or acknowledge that you have a corrupt disposition, or whether you offer excuses, justifications, or specious arguments for your outpourings of corrupt behavior—in brief, if you do not accept the truth, you cannot gain God's salvation. This is indisputable. Anyone who does not pursue the truth at all will ultimately be exposed and cast out, no matter how many years they have been a believer. This outcome is a terrifying one. It will not be long until the disasters descend and you are revealed, and when the disasters come, you will feel afraid. You may have many justifications and ample excuses, or it may be that you are well disguised and wrapped up tightly, but there is one fact that cannot be denied: Your corrupt disposition is intact, it has not changed at all. You are unable to know yourself truly, you are incapable of true repentance, and in the end, you will not be able to truly turn yourself around or submit to God, and God will not change His mind about you. Will you not be in big trouble then? You will be in danger of being cast out. That is why a smart person would drop these unwise excuses and foolish justifications and cast off their disguises and wrappings. They would face the corrupt dispositions they pour forth properly and use the correct methods to handle and resolve them, striving to make everything that they do and act out good deeds, so that God will change His mind about them. If God changes His mind about you, it proves that He has truly absolved you of your past rebelliousness and resistance. You will feel peace and joy, and you will no longer feel repressed, as though a weight has been lifted. This feeling is your spirit's confirmation; you now have a hope at salvation. This hope is what you

traded the prices you paid in your pursuit of the truth and your good deeds for. It is the result you achieved by pursuing the truth and preparing good deeds. Conversely, you may think yourself smart enough already, and you may be able to find ample justifications with which to defend and exculpate yourself every time you pour forth corruption. You may disguise and package your corrupt disposition, and thus cleverly avoid having to reflect on it and know it, as though you did not pour forth any corruption. You may think yourself quite smart, evading, time and again, being exposed by the various environments that God has arranged. You will not have reflected or known yourself, you will not have gained the truth, and you will have missed many chances to be made perfect by God. What will the consequences of this be? Let us put aside whether you are capable of repentance or attaining salvation for now, and just say that if God gives you chances to repent over and over, and none of them ever compel you to change your mind, then you will be in great trouble. What will it matter how well you defend yourself, how well you present yourself, how well you disguise yourself, how well you excuse and justify yourself? If God has given you opportunities time and time again, and this has not even compelled you to change your mind, then you are in danger. Do you know what danger that is? You go on stubbornly making excuses for your corrupt disposition, offering excuses and justifications for not pursuing the truth, and resisting and rejecting God's judgment and His work, and yet, you think yourself to be quite fine and believe your conscience to be clear. You refuse to accept being supervised, pruned, and dealt with by God's house, evading once and again God's judgment, chastisement, and salvation, with a heart full of rebelliousness against Him—God already loathes you and He has already abandoned you, and yet, you think that you may yet be saved. Do you not know that you have already walked farther and farther down the wrong path and that you are already beyond redemption? God reigns in God's house. Do you think that you are beyond God's reach when you resist Him and do your assortment of evils? You do not accept God's judgment and chastisement, you have not gained the truth and life, and you have no experiential testimony at all. For this, God condemns you. You are bringing catastrophe upon yourself. There is nothing smart about that—it is foolishness, extreme foolishness! It is catastrophic! We have laid this out here—if you do not believe it, just wait and see. You had better not think that if you have your pack of justifications for not pursuing the truth, and you have your eloquence and your scheming, that if no one can out-argue you and the brothers and sisters cannot expose you, and that if the church has no justification for clearing you out, then God's house can do nothing at all to you. You are wrong about that. You keep contending with God; I will see how long you can compete with Him! Will you be able to compete with Him until the day that God rewards the good and punishes the evil after His work is done? Can you ensure that you will not die in the disasters—that you will survive them? Do you truly have sovereignty over your own fate? Your justifications and excuses may allow you to escape the investigation of God's house for a while; they may enable you to drag out your ignoble

existence for a time. You may be able to temporarily blind people, and keep disguising and cheating others in the church and filling a seat there—but you cannot escape God's inspection or scrutiny. God decides a person's outcome based on whether or not they have the truth; He does His own work and threshing. No matter what sort of person or what devil you are, you cannot escape God's judgment and condemnation. As soon as God's chosen people understand the truth and gain discernment, no one will be able to escape, that is when you will be cleared out of the church. Some people may be unconvinced and grumble, "I've run about so much for God, done so much work for Him, and paid such a price. I abandoned my family and my marriage; I gave my youth for God and His work. I abandoned my career and spent half my life's energy, thinking I was sure to gain the blessings that He bestows. I never imagined that I'd be cast out for not pursuing the truth and never practicing it!" Do you not know that the truth reigns in God's house? Is it not clear to you whom God rewards and whom He blesses? If your renunciation and expenditure have led to true experiential testimony, and they also testify to God's work, then God will reward and bless you. If your renunciation and expenditure are not true experiential testimony, and much less testimony to God's work, if they are instead testimony to yourself, a request to God to recognize your achievements, then you are walking the same path as Paul. What you are doing is evil and it is resisting God, and God will say to you, "Get away from Me, you evildoer!" And what will this mean? It will be proof that you are blighted, doomed to fall into the disasters and be punished. You will meet with catastrophe. Paul was superior to the average person of his time in terms of status, the work that he did, his competence, and his gifts—but what came of it? From start to finish in his belief in God, Paul was trying to strike a deal with God, to set conditions; he sought a reward and a crown from God. In the end, he did not truly repent or prepare many good deeds—and naturally, he was far from possessing much true experiential testimony. Could he have gained God's pardon without even having truly repented? Could he have gotten God to change His mind about him? That would be impossible. Paul spent his whole life for the Lord, but because he walked the path of an antichrist and absolutely refused to repent, not only was he not rewarded—he was punished by God. It goes without saying that the consequences he suffered were catastrophic. So, I am now telling you clearly that if you are not someone who pursues the truth, then you should, at least, have a bit of sense and not argue with God or stake your outcome and destination as a wager, as if you were gambling. That is attempting to strike a deal with God, which is a way of resisting Him. What good ending can come to those who believe in God yet resist Him? People become well-behaved in the face of death; those who are impervious to reason will not give up their ways until they are at death's door. In order to be saved, the best, simplest, and wisest method is to set down all your excuses, justifications, and conditions, and to accept and pursue the truth with your feet firmly on the ground, thereby getting God to change His mind about you. When God changes His mind about you, you have hope of being saved. Man's

hope of salvation is given by God, and the precondition for God giving you this hope is that you let go of everything you cherish and forsake all to follow Him and pursue the truth, without trying to strike a deal with Him. It does not matter whether you are old or young, male or female, educated or uneducated, nor does it matter where you were born. God looks at none of these things. You may say, “I have a good temper. I’m patient, tolerant, and compassionate. If I keep being patient to the end, that will get God to change His mind about me.” Those things are useless. God does not look at your temper, or your personality, or your education, or your age, nor does it matter how much you have suffered or how much work you have done. God will ask you, “In all your years of faith, has your disposition changed? What is it that you live by? Have you pursued the truth? Have you accepted God’s words?” You may say, “I have listened to them and accepted them.” God will then ask you, “Since you have listened to them, and you have accepted them, has your corrupt disposition been resolved? Have you truly repented? Have you truly submitted to God’s words and accepted them?” You say, “I have suffered and paid a price; I have expended of myself and forsaken things, and I have made offerings—I have offered my children up to God too.” All your offerings are useless. Such things cannot be traded for the blessings of the kingdom of heaven or used to make God change His mind about you. The only way to get God to change His mind about you is to embark on the path of pursuing the truth. There is no other option. Man must not be opportunistic or crafty when it comes to salvation, and there is no back door. Do you understand? You must be clear on this. Do not get muddled about this—even if you do, God will not. So, what should you do from now on? Reverse your attitude and change your point of view, and let God’s words be your foundation, no matter what you are doing. No man-made “goodness,” no human excuse, no human philosophy, knowledge, morals, ethics, or even conscience, nor man’s so-called integrity and dignity, can stand in for the truth. Set these things aside, silence your heart, and find the foundation for all your comportment and action within God’s words. And as you do, find God’s revelation of the various aspects of man’s corrupt disposition within His words. Hold yourself up against them for comparison, and resolve your corrupt dispositions. Strive to know yourself as soon as possible, cast off corruption, and hasten to repent and turn yourself around. Let go of your evil and seek the truth principles in your comportment and actions, basing them all on God’s words—you absolutely must not base these things upon human notions and imaginings. You absolutely must not try to strike a deal with God; you must not attempt to trade your insignificant suffering and sacrifices for God’s rewards and blessings. Stop doing such foolish things, lest God grow angry with you, and curse you, and eradicate you. Is that clear? Have you understood this? (Yes.) Well then, ponder on it carefully going forward.

Everything that we just fellowshiped on was related to the pursuit of the truth, and though we did not provide a specific answer to the conceptual question of what it means to pursue the truth, we did engage in some fellowship that targeted man’s various

misapprehensions and fallacious knowledge of the pursuit of the truth, as well as the various difficulties and problems that exist when one pursues the truth. To finish, I would like to summarize what it means to pursue the truth, the ways that the pursuit of the truth manifests, and what exactly the path of practice for pursuing the truth is. So, what does it mean to pursue the truth? To pursue the truth is to begin practicing and experiencing God's words, and to then achieve an understanding of the truth and to enter into the truth reality through the process of experiencing God's words, and to become someone who truly knows and obeys God. That is the final result that is achieved by pursuing the truth. Of course, the pursuit of the truth is a process with steps, and it is divided into several stages. When you have read God's words and found that they are the truth and reality, you will begin to reflect on yourself within God's words and gain knowledge of yourself. You will see that you are so rebellious and that you pour forth so much corruption. You will yearn to be able to put the truth into practice and achieve submission to God, and you will begin to strive toward the truth. That is precisely the result that comes of self-reflection and self-knowledge. From that moment on, your life experience begins. When you start to investigate and examine the states and problems that arise from your corrupt disposition, this proves that you have begun to pursue the truth. You will be able to proactively reflect on and examine any problems that occur or any corruption that you pour forth. And when you realize that they are indeed outpourings of corruption and a corrupt disposition, you will naturally seek the truth and begin to resolve those problems. Life entry begins with self-reflection; it is the first step of pursuing the truth. Right after that, through self-reflection and self-knowledge you will see that all of God's words of exposure accord with the facts. You will then be able to submit to them from your heart, and accept the judgment and chastisement of God's words. That is the second step of pursuing the truth. Most people are able to accept God's words that reveal man's corrupt behaviors, but they cannot easily accept the words of God that expose man's corrupt essence. After reading God's words, they do not acknowledge the great depth of their own corruption; they only acknowledge the words of God that reveal man's corrupt behaviors. Because of this, they cannot accept God's judgment and chastisement from their hearts. Instead, they brush it aside. Some say, "I just have a few corrupt behaviors, but I can do some good things. I'm a good person, I'm not of Satan. I believe in God, so I should be of God." Is this not drivel? You were born into the human world, you have lived under Satan's power, and you have received the education of traditional culture. Your innate inheritance and the knowledge you have learned come from Satan. All of the great and famous people you venerate are of Satan. Will saying that you are not of Satan allow you to escape its corruption? It's just like how little children are able to lie and insult others from the moment they open their mouths. Who teaches them to do that? No one. What could that be, other than a consequence of Satan's corruption? These are the facts. People cannot see Satan and the evil spirits of the spiritual world, but living demons and the kings of devils are everywhere in the human

world. All of them are incarnations of Satan. This is a fact that all people must acknowledge. Those who understand the truth can see through to these things, and they can acknowledge that all of God's words of exposure are facts. Some people may talk of knowing themselves, but they never acknowledge that the corruptions revealed by God's words are factual, or that His words are the truth. This is equivalent to being unable to accept the truth. If one does not acknowledge the fact that they have a corrupt disposition, they will not be able to truly repent. Of course, one must experience God's work for a while in order to acknowledge and accept the fact that all people have corrupt dispositions. After pouring forth many corrupt dispositions, they will naturally bow their head in submission before that fact. They will have no choice but to acknowledge that all of God's words that reveal, judge, and condemn man are facts and the truth, and to completely accept them. That is what it means to be conquered by God's words. When people are able to know their corrupt dispositions and corrupt essence on the basis of God's words, and admit that they have a satanic disposition and that their corruption runs deep, they can then fully accept and submit to God's judgment and chastisement. They will be willing to submit to God's words that reveal and judge mankind, no matter how harsh or piercing they are. When you have understood and know a bit about how God's words define, classify, and condemn corrupt mankind, as well as how they judge and reveal corrupt mankind, when you have truly accepted the judgment and chastisement of God's words and have begun to know your own corrupt disposition and corrupt essence, when you have begun to hate your corrupt disposition, Satan, and your own flesh—and when you long to gain the truth, to live as a human is meant to, and to become someone who truly submits to God—that is when you will begin focusing on pursuing a change in your disposition. This is the third step of pursuing the truth.

To truly know oneself is to reflect on and know one's corrupt disposition based on God's words, thereby achieving knowledge of one's corrupt essence and the fact of one's corruption. When a person does this, they will see the great depth of mankind's corruption with complete clarity—they will see that mankind does not live as people are meant to, that humanity only lives out corrupt dispositions, and that mankind is bereft of even the slightest bit of conscience or reason. They will see that people's views on things are all of Satan, and that none of them are correct or in accordance with the truth, and that people's preferences, pursuits, and the paths that they choose are all adulterated with Satan's poisons, and that these all contain man's extravagant desires and intent to gain blessings. They will see that the dispositions man pours forth are precisely the disposition and nature essence of Satan. Knowing oneself to such an extent is no simple matter; it can only be achieved upon the basis of God's words. If it is done on the basis of the moral theories, statements, and thoughts of traditional culture, will one be able to achieve true self-knowledge? Absolutely not. Your corrupt disposition came from within these satanic philosophies and theories. Would it not be absurd, to base your self-knowledge in these things that belong to Satan? Would it not be blind nonsense?

Therefore, self-knowledge must be based in God's words. Only God's words are the truth, and only God's words are the criterion by which all people, matters, and things are measured. If you truly see that God's words are the truth, and that they are the only correct basis upon which to measure all people, matters, and things, then you have a way forward. You can then live in the light, which is to live before God. When people gain true knowledge of their own corrupt essence within God's words, how will they subsequently behave and practice? (They will repent.) That is right. When a person has gained knowledge of their nature essence, remorse will arise naturally in their heart, and they will begin to repent. This means that they will seek to rid themselves of their corrupt dispositions, and no longer live by satanic dispositions. Instead, they will live and comport themselves according to God's words, and be capable of submitting to God's orchestrations and arrangements. This is true repentance. This is the fourth step of the pursuit of the truth. You are all clear on what true repentance is now, so how should you practice it? Practice turning yourself around. This means giving up the things you cling to and think to be right, not living by a satanic disposition, and being willing to practice the truth according to God's words. That is what it means to turn yourself around. Specifically, you must first deny yourself and characterize, based on God's words, whether your thoughts, ideas, acts, and deeds are aligned with the truth, and how they arose. If you determine that these things are of a corrupt disposition and born of satanic philosophies, then you should adopt an attitude of condemnation and cursing toward them. Doing so is conducive to forsaking the flesh and Satan. What kind of behavior is this? Is it not the denial, abandonment, renunciation, and forsaking of your corrupt disposition? Denying the things you believe to be right, letting go of your interests, forsaking your incorrect intents, and thus achieving a reversal of your course is not so simple, and there are many specific details to it. If you are willing to repent, but you just say this, and do not deny, abandon, renounce, or forsake your corrupt disposition, then this is not a manifestation of repentance, and you have not yet practically entered into repentance. How does true repentance manifest? First, you deny those things you believe to be right, for instance: your notions and demands of God, as well as things like your views on things, your methods and ways of handling problems, your human experience, and so on. Denying all these things is a concrete practice of being repentant at heart and turning toward God. You can only let go of erroneous things when you have seen through to them and denied them. If you do not deny these things, and still believe them to be good and right, then you will not be able to let go of them, even if others tell you to do so. You will say, "I'm very well-educated, and I've got a wealth of experience. I believe that these things are correct, why should I let go of them?" If you cling to your ways and persist in doing so, will you be able to accept the truth? It would not be easy at all. If you want to gain the truth, you must first deny those things that you think are right and positive, then see clearly that they are negative in essence, that they originate in Satan, that they are all specious fallacies—and that holding onto satanic things will

only lead you to do evil, resist God, and ultimately, be punished and destroyed. If you can see clearly that the thoughts and poisons with which Satan corrupts man are capable of leading to man's destruction, you will be able to abandon them completely. Of course, denial, abandonment, renunciation, forsaking, and so on are all approaches and methods one adopts against Satan's forces and nature, as well as against the philosophies, logic, thoughts, and views which Satan uses to mislead people. For example, letting go of the interests of one's flesh; abandoning the preferences and pursuits of one's flesh; renouncing Satan's philosophies, thoughts, heresies, and fallacies; forsaking Satan's influence and its evil forces. This whole series of practices are all methods and paths by which people can practice repentance. To enter into true repentance, one must understand a great many truths, only then can they completely deny themselves and forsake their flesh. For instance, say that you believe yourself to be knowledgeable and rich in experience, and that you ought to be an asset to God's house and of great use. And yet, having heard several years of sermons about the truth and understood some truths, you feel that your knowledge and learning are worthless and not of the slightest use to God's house. You realize that it is the truth and God's words that can save people, and that it is the truth that can be a person's life. You come to feel that no matter how much knowledge or experience a person has, this does not mean that they possess the truth, and that no matter how much human things conform with human notions, they are not the truth. You realize that all of them come from Satan, and that they are all negative things with no relation to the truth. Regardless of how educated, knowledgeable, or experienced you are, it is of little use if you do not understand spiritual matters and cannot understand the truth. If you were to serve as a leader, you would not have the truth reality, and you would be incapable of resolving problems. If you were to write an experiential testimony essay, you would not be able to get the words out. If you were to testify to God, you would not have knowledge of Him. If you were to spread the gospel, you would not be able to fellowship on the truth to resolve people's notions. If you were to water newcomers, you would not be clear on the truth of visions, and you would only be able to preach the words and doctrines. If you cannot resolve your own notions, how can you resolve the notions of newcomers? You cannot do any of this work—so what can you do? If you were asked to labor, you would think it a waste of your talent. You say that you are talented, yet you cannot handle any task nor perform any duty well—so what is it, exactly, that you can do? It is not that God's house does not wish to put you to use, it is that you have not fulfilled the duty you were supposed to. You cannot blame the church for that. Yet still, you may think to yourself, "Doesn't God expect too much of man? These requirements are beyond me. Why is so much demanded of me?" If someone harbors such a great misunderstanding of God, it proves that they have no knowledge of Him and that they do not understand the least bit of the truth. If you feel that your views are right and do not need to be reversed, and if you acknowledge that God's words are the truth in theory, but you cannot let go of the rubbish you are clinging

on to, this demonstrates that you do not yet understand the truth. You should come before God and seek more on the truth, and you should read more of His words and listen to more sermons and fellowship, then you will gradually come to understand that God's words are the truth. As a person, the first way in which you should treat the truth and God is with obedience. This is man's bounden duty. If you are able to understand these things, it means that you are reversing your course. Reversing your course is the path of practice for repentance; it is to abandon entirely those things you once thought right, which come from Satan, and to choose anew the road you will take. It is to put God's words into practice according to His requirements and the truth principles, and to walk the road of pursuing the truth. This is the meaning of reversing one's course. It is to have truly come before God, and to have entered the reality of repentance. When one can put the truth into practice, it goes without saying that they have begun entering the truth reality and truly repented. It is only when man has truly repented that they may be said to have set off on the road toward salvation. Doing so is to have engaged in the fourth step of pursuing the truth.

When a person has truly repented, they will have embarked on the road of pursuing the truth, they will basically harbor no notions or misunderstandings about God's work, they will be willing to submit to God's judgment and chastisement, and they will formally begin to experience God's work. There is a long period of transition between a person first coming to believe in God to them formally experiencing God's judgment and chastisement. This period of transition is the phase that goes from a person beginning to believe in God until they truly repent. If someone does not love the truth, they will not accept the least bit of God's judgment and chastisement, nor the least bit of the truth, and they will never be capable of knowing themselves. Such people will be cast out. If someone does love the truth, then, in reading God's words and listening to sermons alike, they will be able to truly gain something, and know that God's work is that of saving man, and reflect on themselves and know themselves in the truths that they understand; they will come to hate their own corrupt dispositions more and more and to be ever more interested in the truth, they will unwittingly gain true self-knowledge, and they will be truly remorseful and repentant. When people who love the truth read God's words or listen to sermons, they naturally achieve such results. They gradually come to know themselves and achieve true repentance. Once one is truly repentant, how should they practice? They should seek the truth in all things; no matter what befalls them, they should be able to find the principles and paths of practice based in God's words, and then go on to begin practicing the truth. This is the fifth step of pursuing the truth. What is the purpose of seeking the truth? To practice the truth and achieve submission to God. But in order to practice the truth, one must do so according to the truth principles. That alone is the accurate practice of the truth; that alone allows one to gain God's approval. So, being able to act according to the truth principles is what pursuing the truth is meant to achieve. Reaching this step means that one has entered into the reality of practicing the truth.

Seeking the truth is done in order to resolve man's corrupt dispositions. When a person is able to put the truth into practice, their corrupt dispositions will naturally fall away, and their practice of the truth achieves the result that God demands. Such is the process that leads from true repentance to practicing the truth. To once have lived amid corrupt dispositions was to live under Satan's power, to have all one's actions and behaviors condemned and loathed by God; now, being able to accept the truth, having truly repented, being able to practice the truth and submit to God, and living by His words—this, of course, meets with God's approval. Those who pursue the truth should reflect on themselves often. They should acknowledge their corrupt dispositions and accept God's judgment and chastisement, they should gain true knowledge of their corrupt essence and develop a heart of remorse; they should begin to seek the truth in all things after repenting, practice according to the truth principles, and achieve submission to God. This is what pursuing the truth and the gradual deepening of one's life entry can accomplish. If one does not truly know themselves, it is impossible for them to submit to God's judgment and chastisement or to truly repent. And if one does not truly repent, that person will continue to live by a satanic disposition. True change will not come about in them, no matter how many years they believe in God. Their behavior will change a bit; that is all. It is impossible for those who do not pursue the truth to accept the truth as their life, so it is certain that their acts and behaviors will still be outpourings of a corrupt disposition, that these things will be incompatible with the truth, and resistant to God. Those who pursue the truth can accept the truth as their life, they can cast off their corrupt dispositions, put the truth into practice, and achieve true submission to God. Those who pursue the truth will seek it when things happen that are unclear to them. They will no longer plot for their own sake and they will shun all evil, with a heart that is compatible with God. Those who pursue the truth submit ever more to God, and they can fear God and shun evil, living ever more as man is meant to. Such changes are impossible for those who do not pursue the truth. What do those who do not pursue the truth pursue? They pursue prestige, gain and status; they pursue blessings and rewards. Their ambitions and desires grow ever greater, and they do not have the correct goal in life. No matter what it is they like to pursue, they will not give up if they cannot achieve their goal, and less still will they change their minds. As soon as circumstances allow and the setting is right, they will be capable of doing evil and resisting God, and they may try to establish an independent kingdom. This is because they do not have hearts that fear God or submit to Him, and in the end, they can only be obliterated by God for committing multifarious evils and betraying Him. All those who do not pursue the truth are people who are sick of the truth, and all those who are sick of the truth are lovers of evil. In their spirits and blood and bones, all they revere is prestige, gain, status, and influence; they are happy to live by satanic dispositions, and to fight against Heaven, earth, and man in order to achieve their goals. They think that such a life is joyful; they wish to live as an outstanding individual and die a hero. Obviously, they are walking the

satanic road of destruction. The more that those who pursue the truth understand it, the more they love God and feel how precious the truth is. They are willing to accept God's judgment and chastisement, and no matter how many hardships they endure, they are resolved to pursue the truth and gain it. This means that they have embarked on the path of salvation and perfection, and that they are capable of achieving compatibility with God. Most importantly, they are able to submit to God, they have returned to their original stations as created beings, and they have God-fearing hearts. They can rightfully gain God's leadership, guidance, and blessings, and God no longer detests or rejects them. What a wonderful thing! Those who do not pursue the truth cannot cast off their corrupt dispositions, so their hearts grow ever further from God, and they are sick of the truth and reject it. As a result, they grow increasingly resistant toward God and set off on a road in opposition to Him. They are just like Paul, openly asking God for their reward. If they do not receive it, they will try to argue with God and oppose Him, and in the end, they will become antichrists, wholly exposing the hideous countenance of Satan, after which God will curse and destroy them. Those who walk the road of pursuing the truth, on the other hand, can accept the truth and submit to it. They can cast off Satan's corrupt disposition, they are willing to forsake everything to perform their duties well and repay God's love, and they are able to become people who obey and worship God. A person who is willing to submit to God, and who does so absolutely, has completely returned to the original station of a created being, and they are capable of submitting to God's orchestrations and arrangements in everything. This means that they are possessed of fundamental human likeness. What does true human likeness refer to? It is when a person obeys and fears the Creator, like Job and Peter did. Such are they who God truly blesses.

The major steps of pursuing the truth that we have fellowshiped about today are as simple as that. Repeat the steps back to Me. (First, reflect on yourself according to God's words; second, acknowledge and accept the facts that God's words reveal; third, know your own corrupt disposition and essence, and begin hating your corrupt disposition and Satan; fourth, practice repentance, and cast aside all of your evil deeds; fifth, seek the truth principles, and practice the truth.) Those are the five steps. Practicing each of those steps is very difficult for people who live amid corrupt dispositions, there are many impediments and difficulties involved in each one, and they all require the expenditure of painstaking effort to practice and achieve, and of course, one cannot avoid experiencing some failures and setbacks along the way—but what I would tell you is this: Do not lose heart. Though others may condemn you, saying, "You're done for," "You're no good," "This is just how you are—you can't change it"—however unpleasant their words may be, you must be clear in your discernment. Do not lose heart, and do not give up, because only the path of pursuing the truth, only the entry and practice of these steps, will truly enable you to elude your catastrophe. Smart people will choose to set all their difficulties aside; they will not avoid failures and setbacks, and they will press

on, no matter how hard it is. Even if you remain at the step of examining and knowing yourself for three or five years, or if after eight or ten years you merely know which corrupt dispositions you have, but you remain unable to understand the truth or throw off your corrupt disposition, I would still tell you the same thing: Do not lose heart. Though you are not yet capable of achieving a true reversal, you have already entered into the first three steps, so why worry about not being able to enter into the remaining two? Do not worry; work harder, push harder, and you will get there. There may also be some who come to the fourth step of repentance, but they fall short of seeking the truth principles and cannot enter into this step. What is to be done then? You, too, must not lose heart. So long as you have the will to do so, you should persist in your pursuit of seeking the truth in all things, and pray more to God—doing so is often fruitful. Pursue as well as you can, based on your caliber and your circumstances, and work hard to achieve what you can. So long as you are doing all that you can, your conscience is clear, and you will definitely be able to make greater gains. Even understanding one more truth is a good thing—your life will become a little happier and a little more joyful for it. In summary, the pursuit of the truth is no hollow thing; there is a specific path of practice for each of its steps, and it requires people to suffer some pain and pay a certain price. The truth is not a field of academic study, or a theory, or a slogan, or an argument; it is not hollow. Each truth requires people to experience and practice it for several years before they can understand and know it. But no matter what price you pay or what efforts you make, as long as your approach, method, path, and direction are correct, then sooner or later, the day will come when you will reap a great bounty, gain the truth, and be able to know God and submit to Him—and with that, you will be perfectly contented.

January 8, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (2)

In our last gathering, we fellowshiped about what it means to pursue the truth. Let us begin with a review: What does it mean to pursue the truth? Do you have an answer to this question? Did you ponder on it after our previous fellowship? After we finish fellowshiping on certain topics, you will need to ponder on them, and then experience and go through them practically in your real lives. Only then will you be able to gain true knowledge; only then will you be able to truly understand and appreciate those topics you have been pondering on; only then will you be able to offer true experience and knowledge. Is that not so? (It is.) So, did you ponder on the question? What does it mean to pursue the truth? What elements are involved in the pursuit of the truth? What are the main things that it entails? Have you summarized these things? (Last time, God began by fellowshiping about the various mistaken ideas, views, and attitudes that man has regarding the pursuit of the truth, then God fellowshiped in detail on the five steps of pursuing the truth.) There were essentially two major parts to our last fellowship: some negative states or mistaken views that many people have in relation to the pursuit of the truth, man's misunderstandings about pursuing the truth, as well as the excuses and justifications that people give for not pursuing the truth—that was the first major part. The second was fellowship about how to pursue the truth, which consisted of five steps. Although there were only two parts, we touched on lots of details and specifics within each of them. I revealed some of man's fallacious knowledge and comprehension about the pursuit of the truth, and I also exposed several difficulties that man has in pursuing the truth, as well as some excuses, justifications, and pretexts that those who are sick of the truth give for not pursuing it. The negative, passive attitudes and cognitions that people display when it comes to the pursuit of the truth correspond with the lifestyles and pursuits that they hold to in their real lives, as well as the attitudes that they harbor toward the truth—they all relate to people's specific behaviors and specific outpourings. Then, based on man's various behaviors, I offered a few specific methods and steps of practice regarding the path of pursuing the truth. Is all that clear to you? (Yes.) Is it, really? Why do you not say something, then? It seems that it is still not so clear to you; there is more that we need to fellowship on.

The greatest matter in believing in God is the pursuit of the truth. What does it mean to pursue the truth? When it comes to the matter of pursuing the truth, all of people's manifestations reveal many of their troubles and difficulties, and people possess all kinds of justifications and excuses for not pursuing the truth—the barriers are just so large. Because of people's various difficulties, they seem extremely hard-pressed and discomfited when it comes to pursuing the truth, and they think that it is very difficult. In fact, the question itself—"What does it mean to pursue the truth?"—is an easy one to answer, so why is it that people cannot pursue the truth? What is the reason? Everyone boasts that they have a conscience and sense, that they truly believe in God, that they

can fulfill their duty, that they are willing to suffer and ready to pay a price. How is it that, with these good behaviors as their foundation, they are unable to embark on the path of pursuing the truth? They have such good humanity, integrity, and a great reputation; they have their will, aspirations, and wishes about their pursuit; they have their subjective exertions, their will to endure hardships, and an attitude of paying a price; they have their active, positive, upward-looking attitude of yearning to accept the truth. With these things as their foundation, how is it that they do not qualify as pursuing the truth? Why is it that they cannot achieve the pursuit of the truth? Where is the root of the problem? (Man doesn't love the truth and is sick of it by nature.) That is an accurate answer. The most fundamental reason is that people have corrupt dispositions. Man's corrupt disposition is of Satan, and anything that is of Satan is antagonistic toward God and the truth. Therefore, asking people to pursue the truth is equivalent to requiring them to forsake their inherent life and attributes, and their inherent mode of pursuit and outlook on life. Letting go of these mistaken things, forsaking their fleshly preferences, and instead pursuing and practicing the words of God and the truth, which their flesh does not like, which they do not possess, and which they disdain, detest, and reject—this is what they find difficult. Asking you to pursue the truth is equivalent to asking you to let go of your inherent life. Is that not the same as having you lay down your life? (It is.) It is you laying down your own life. Do people willingly lay down their lives for things? (No.) In the depths of their hearts, they say, "I will not"—a hundred times, a thousand times, ten thousand times: "I will not." No matter what, it is hard for people to let go of the inherent, satanic things that they possess. This is a fact, one that you have deeply and truly experienced. From the depths of their hearts, people are unwilling to forsake the flesh; or to forsake their lives, whose nature essence is of Satan; or to forsake their inherent, satanic attributes or their satanic nature, in order to pursue the truth. So, for those with satanic natures, who live by satanic dispositions, loving and pursuing the truth runs contrary to their will, and they are reluctant to do it. What is the root of this? It is that the attributes within man are of Satan, and they are intrinsically antagonistic toward God. So, after people have heard and understood the truth, only those who love the truth, who are willing to strive up toward it and pay a price, who have this will, aspiration, and wish, are able to put the truth into practice as soon as they understand it. Only they are capable of living by the truth and living out its reality. There are many people who are willing to practice the truth, but they are obstructed by their satanic natures and dispositions; they are unable to practice the truth, even though they may wish to. The fact is that in real life, practicing the truth is a very difficult thing to do. It is one thing to ask you to let go of your favorite clothes and jewelry, or the things you enjoy, or the job and career that you like, or your strengths and hobbies, or any such thing. You could forsake any of these; they are easy to let go of. But to have you forsake your flesh and your satanic disposition, to come to practice the truth and submit to God—that is much more difficult. To describe it using an inexact phrase, it would be like forcing a duck onto a perch, or having a bull

climb a tree—these things are far too taxing for them. Now, it would be easy to get a feline up a tree; that is natural for them. But it would be quite impossible to get one to eat hay instead of meat. If you asked a person to suffer a bit, to pay a bit of a price, and to live humbly for the rest of their life, that is something that anyone who has the will to do so can achieve. In fact, no physical difficulty poses a big problem for someone who truly believes in God and yearns for the truth. Not indulging in fleshly comforts, for instance; or reducing the amount they sleep each day; or living rough for ten years straight; or making do with very poor food, clothes, housing, and transportation—such hardships and prices can be taken on by anyone, so long as they have the will to do so, and are willing to pursue the truth, and have a bit of self-restraint. But if you ask someone to forsake the flesh and Satan, to act entirely in accordance with God's requirements and based in His words, to practice according to the truth and thus achieve submission to God, any person would find that hard. That is where man's difficulties lie. So, in pursuing the truth, it is not as if people can just make a resolution and give it a go, or practice restraint and follow the rules, and then be able to put the truth into practice and possess the truth. Pursuing the truth is the hardest and most difficult thing for corrupt mankind to do. Where does the root of this problem originate? (It originates from Satan's disposition.) That is right. Satan's disposition is man's greatest challenge. One may have poor caliber, or a bad temper and personality, they may not have any strengths, talents, or gifts to speak of—none of these things will pose a big challenge to them. Ultimately, the problem originates in man's corrupt disposition. A corrupt disposition keeps people's hands and feet, their minds and ideas, their thoughts, their way of thinking, and the depths of their souls in the death grip of its control, such that every inch on the road of pursuing the truth is hard for them to walk. One might believe in God for three or five years without gaining anything; there are even some people who have believed for ten, twenty, or thirty years, and have only gained a smattering of things from it. And some of them have gained nothing at all—how impoverished and pitiful those empty-handed people are! They have believed in God for thirty years but remain impoverished and blind, with nothing to show for it. When they fall into negativity, they do not know how to emerge from it; when they fall into misunderstandings about God, they do not know how to dispel them; when adversity befalls them, they do not know how to face it, nor do they know how to resolve that kind of difficulty. Can problems be solved by using mere subjective willpower to restrain oneself or by relying on one's patience to persevere endlessly? People may plod through situations step by step until they have passed, but their corrupt dispositions still remain. They have not been resolved. No matter how many times they have experienced negativity, or misunderstandings about God, or had notions about God, or failed, and fallen, and been weak, to this very day they are still unable to offer the least bit of experiential testimony, nor do they have a single thing to say about their knowledge, experience, or exposure to God's words. Their hearts are empty; the depths of their souls are empty. They have no experiential understanding of the truth,

and they have no true knowledge of God's words, and they are even further from having knowledge of His work and His disposition. Are they not impoverished, blind, and pitiful? (They are.) If someone does not pursue the truth, then no matter how many years they believe in God, it is pointless. Why, then, would a person let themselves get to this point? Wherein lies the cause? Here too, the problem originates in man's corrupt disposition. This is the objective cause.

We have already made it clear what the objective cause for people not pursuing the truth is. We will now speak a bit about the subjective cause. The subjective cause is that though people may have learned that they have a corrupt disposition from God's work and all of His words, or from their real lives, they never hold themselves against God's words and the truth for comparison, they never gain knowledge of and forsake their corrupt dispositions, and they never practice according to God's words. It is that though people may exert and expend a great deal upon the road of belief in God, though they may work very hard, suffer greatly, and pay many prices upon it, these are all just external behaviors. They do not prove that one has embarked on the path of pursuing the truth. The people who have suffered the most are those who began to follow God in the early days, who took on their duties when they were around twenty years old. These people are now about fifty years old, and still unmarried. You could say that they have devoted their youths to their faith in God, and let go of family and marriage. Is that a great price? (Yes.) They gave up their youths and offered up their whole lives, and what comes of it? The price that they paid was great, but what they gain in the end is not equal to or in line with their expenditure. What is the problem here? Based on the attitude and resolve with which they pay a price, and the duration, amount, and degree of their expenditure, it would seem as though they should understand the truth and be able to practice it. You would think that they should have testimony and God-fearing hearts; that they should have knowledge of God; that they should already have set off on the path of fearing God and shunning evil; that they should have already entered into the truth reality. But in fact, that is just an inference—these two things have only a logical relationship, it does not line up with the facts or with what these people live out. What is the problem here? Should we not subject it to investigation and discussion? Is this not a problem that merits deep thought? (It is.) Among those who have accepted this stage of God's work for two or three years, there is no shortage of people with experience and testimony. They testify to how God's words have changed them and made them become honest people; they testify to how God's words have allowed them to understand the truth on the road of pursuing it; they testify to how God's words have resolved their corrupt dispositions, their arrogance and deceitfulness, their rebelliousness, their longing for status, their ambitions and desires, and so on. These people are capable of having experience and testimony after just two or three years of believing in God; they have a deep experiential understanding of God's words, and they can feel the trueness of His words. Why, then, have some people believed in God for twenty or thirty years and paid

so many prices, suffered so much, and run about so much, but the depths of their hearts and their spiritual worlds remain empty and hollow? Lots of people who are in this kind of condition often feel lost. They always say, “I’m so lost.” I say, “You have believed in God for twenty or thirty years now. How are you still lost? It is plain to see that you have gained nothing.” To this day, some people are still negative and weak. They say, “I’ve believed in God for so many years, and what have I gained?” Often, when they are negative and weak, or when they are deprived of their status and benefits, or when their vanity goes unsatisfied, they blame God and regret having believed in Him for so many years. They regret having believed His words in the first place, they regret having resolutely let go of their job, of marriage and family, of their chance to go to college, in order to follow God. Some of them even think of leaving the church. They are so filled with regrets about their faith now—why did they even bother with it in the first place? They have believed in God for twenty or thirty years, they have heard so many truths and they have experienced so much of God’s work, yet the depths of their hearts are still empty, and they often sink into conditions of chaos, confusion, regret, reluctance, and even uncertainty about their futures—what causes this? Are such people deserving of pity? (No.) Whenever I see these people, whenever I hear news of them and learn of their recent goings-on, I get a premonition about them. A thought comes to Me about them. How is it that their condition and their inner worlds seem so familiar to Me? They remain even now in God’s house, performing duties—what is it that they are relying on? Is it a mindset of salvation by grace? Is it a mindset that if one follows God to the end, this will inevitably lead to salvation? Or is it a mentality based on luck and chance? It is none of these. What is it, then? It is just like what Paul said: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: From now on there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness” (2 Timothy 4:7–8). To analyze this passage and to put it simply, these words have a transactional quality to them, there is an attitude, idea, and plan to make a deal within them, and they come from a place of desire and ambition. What fact do you see in these words? What do people pursue in their belief in God? (A crown and blessings.) Yes. They pursue blessings and a good destination. And what would they trade for that good destination and blessings? What would they exchange for those? (Their toil and labor, their sacrifices and expenditures, their suffering and price-paying.) To use Paul’s words, they have fought their fights, they have run their courses. They believe that they have done everything they were supposed to, and that they should therefore gain the good destination and blessings that God has prepared for mankind. They think that it goes without saying that this is what God should do—what He must do—and if He did not, He would not be God. Obviously, there is no obedience toward God in this, no attitude of pursuing the truth, no attitude or plan to fulfill the duty of a created being. It is just a wish to trade a few things that they are able to do for the blessings that God has promised mankind. So, the people we were just talking about often feel that there is a void in their inner worlds and that they have nothing to rely on

in the depths of their hearts, yet they go on as they always have, paying such prices and suffering so, persisting in fighting their fights and running their courses. What do they rely on? It is those quotes of Paul's that they cling to and blindly believe in that prop up their "faith." They rely on their ambitions and desire to be rewarded and crowned. They rely on their dreams of using a transactional exchange to receive great blessings. They do not rely on the understanding of God's work or the experience and knowledge gained by pursuing the truth while expending themselves for God. That is not what they rely on.

Looking at what we have just fellowshiped on, one can see that though there are many practical challenges on the path of pursuing the truth, as well as the fetters and constraints of corrupt dispositions, and a great many difficulties and obstacles, one should believe that as long as one has true faith, then by relying on the guidance of God's words and the work of the Holy Spirit, they will be wholly able to embark on the path of pursuing the truth. Peter is a precedent for this. In their faith in God, many people focus solely on working for God, they are satisfied with merely suffering and paying a price, but they do not pursue the truth at all. As a result, they lack true knowledge of God's work after believing in Him for ten years, twenty years, thirty years, and they cannot speak about any experience or knowledge of the truth or God's words. During gatherings, when they try to talk a little about their experiential testimony, they have nothing to say; whether they will be saved or not is a complete unknown to them. What is the problem here? This is how people who do not pursue the truth are. No matter how many years they have been believers, they are incapable of understanding the truth, much less practicing it. How could someone who does not accept the truth at all enter into the truth reality? There are some who cannot see through to this problem. They believe that if people who parrot the words and doctrines practice the truth, they can enter into the truth reality too. Is this correct? People who parrot the words and doctrines are inherently incapable of understanding the truth—so how could they practice it? What they practice appears to not violate the truth, and to be good deeds and good behaviors, but how could those good deeds and good behaviors be called the truth reality? People who do not understand the truth do not know what the truth reality is; they consider people's good deeds and good behaviors to be the practice of the truth. This is absurd, is it not? How is this any different from the thoughts and views of religious people? And how can such problems of fallacious comprehension be resolved? People must first understand the will of God from His words, they should know what understanding the truth is, and what practicing the truth is, in order to be able to look at others and discern them for what they really are, and to be able to tell whether or not they possess the truth reality. God's work and salvation of man is meant to make people understand and practice the truth; only then will people be able to shed their corrupt dispositions, act according to the principles, and enter into the truth reality. If you do not pursue the truth, and are merely satisfied with expending, suffering, and paying a price for God as per your own notions and imaginings, will everything you do represent your practice of the

truth and submission to God? Will it prove that you have changed your life disposition? Will it represent that you possess true knowledge of God? No. And so what will everything you do represent? It can only represent your own personal preferences, comprehension, and wishful thinking. It will purely be things that you like to do, that you are willing to do; everything you do merely satisfies your own desires, will, and ideals. Clearly, that is not pursuing the truth. None of your actions or behaviors have anything to do with the truth, or with God's requirements. All of your actions and behaviors are for yourself; you are only working, fighting, and running about for the sake of your own ideals, reputation, and status—this makes you no different from Paul, who toiled and worked all his life solely in order to be rewarded, crowned, and to enter the kingdom of heaven—this shows that you are clearly walking the path of Paul. Some say, "I toil and work willingly. I haven't tried to strike a deal with God." It does not matter one way or the other whether or not you have tried to strike a deal with God, whether or not you have in your mind or attitude an explicit intent to strike a deal with God—whether or not you have such a plan and goal—you are trying to exchange your toil and work, your hardships, and the prices you have paid for the rewards and crown of the kingdom of heaven. The essence of this problem is that you are trying to make a bargain with God—it is just that you are not aware that you are doing so. Regardless, as long as someone undergoes hardships and pays prices in order to gain blessings, the essence of their pursuit is the same as Paul's. In what way are they the same? They are both attempts to trade one's good behaviors—their labor, the hardships they go through, the prices they pay, and so on—for God's blessings, for the blessings He promises mankind. Are these things not in essence the same? (They are.) They are the same in essence; there is no real difference. If you do not wish to walk the path of Paul, but that of Peter, and you wish to gain God's approval, how should you practice? There is no doubt: You must learn to pursue the truth. You must be able to accept the truth, as well as God's judgment and chastisement, and being pruned and dealt with; you must focus on knowing yourself, and bringing about a change in your disposition, and seek to practice loving God. That is what it means to walk the path of pursuing the truth and to set off on the path of Peter. To walk the path of Peter, you must first understand what God requires of man and what path it is that God has pointed out to man. You must be able to discern the path of belief in God that leads to salvation from the path that leads to perdition and destruction. You need to truly reflect on why it is that you were able to walk the path of Paul, and ascertain just what disposition it is that commands you to walk that path. You should discern the most prominent and obvious things that are in your corrupt dispositions, such as arrogance, or deceitfulness, or evil. Beginning with these corrupt dispositions, reflect, analyze, and gain knowledge of yourself. If you can achieve true self-knowledge and hatred of yourself, it will be easy for you to shed your corrupt dispositions, and it will be easy for you to put the truth into practice. So, how is this to be practiced, specifically? Let us fellowship simply about this, using the example of an arrogant disposition. In your

daily life, when speaking, conducting yourself and handling matters, performing your duty, fellowshiping with others, and so on, whatever the matter at hand is, or where you are, or what the circumstances are, you must focus at all times on examining what kind of arrogant disposition you have poured forth. You must excavate all the outpourings, thoughts, and ideas that come from your arrogant disposition that you are aware of and can perceive, as well as your intents and goals—in particular, always wanting to lecture others from on high; not obeying anyone; seeing yourself as better than others; not accepting what others say, no matter how right they may be; making others accept and submit to what you say, even when you are wrong; having a constant tendency toward leading others; being uncompliant and offering justifications when leaders and workers prune and deal with you, condemning them as false; always condemning others and elevating yourself; always thinking that you are better than everyone else; always wishing to be a renowned, eminent person; always loving to show off, so that others regard you highly and worship you…. Through the practice of reflecting on and analyzing these outpourings of corruption, you can come to know how ugly your arrogant disposition is, and you can loathe and abhor yourself, and hate your arrogant disposition even more. You will thus be willing to reflect on whether or not you have poured forth an arrogant disposition in all matters. One part of this is reflecting on what arrogant and self-righteous dispositions pour forth in your speech—what boastful, arrogant, senseless things you say. The other part is reflecting on what absurd, senseless things you do while acting according to your notions, imaginings, ambitions, and desires. Only this kind of self-reflection can yield self-knowledge. Once you have gained true knowledge of yourself, you should seek the paths and principles of practice for being an honest person in God's words, and then practice, perform your duty, and approach and interact with others according to the paths and principles indicated in God's words. When you have practiced in this way for a while, perhaps a month or two, you will feel a brightness of heart about it, and you will have gained something from it and gotten a taste of success. You will feel that you have a path for becoming an honest, sensible person, and you will feel much more grounded. Though you will not yet be able to speak of a particularly deep knowledge of the truth, you will have gained some perceptual knowledge of it, as well as a path of practice. Though you will not be able to express it clearly in words, you will have some discernment of the harm that an arrogant disposition does to people and how it distorts their humanity. For instance, arrogant, conceited people often say boastful, wild things, and tell lies to trick others; they speak high-sounding words, shout slogans, and spout lofty harangues. Are these not various manifestations of an arrogant disposition? Is it not quite senseless to pour forth these arrogant dispositions? If you are able to truly understand that you must have lost your normal human reason to pour forth such arrogant dispositions, and that living within an arrogant disposition means that you are living out devilishness rather than humanity, then you will have truly recognized that a corrupt disposition is a satanic disposition, and you will be able to hate Satan and

corrupt dispositions from your heart. With six months or a year of such experience, you will be capable of true self-knowledge, and if you pour forth an arrogant disposition again, you will immediately be aware of it, and you will be able to forsake and renounce it. You will have begun to change, and you will be able to gradually cast off your arrogant disposition, and get along normally with others. You will be able to speak honestly and from the heart; you will no longer tell lies or say arrogant things. Will you not then possess a little reason and some likeness of an honest person? Will you not have gained that entry? This is when you will begin to gain something. When you practice being honest in this way, you will be able to seek the truth and reflect on yourself no matter what sort of arrogant disposition you pour forth, and after experiencing being an honest person in this way for some time, you will unconsciously and gradually come to understand the truths and relevant words of God about being an honest person. And when you use those truths to dissect your arrogant disposition, in the depths of your heart there will be the enlightenment and illumination of God's words, and your heart will begin to feel brighter. You will see clearly the corruption that an arrogant disposition brings to people and the ugliness that it makes them live out, and you will be able to discern each of the corrupt states that people find themselves in when they pour forth an arrogant disposition. With more analysis, you will see Satan's ugliness all the more clearly, and you will hate Satan even more. It will thus be easy for you to cast off your arrogant disposition. When your knowledge reaches this extent, the relevant truth in God's words will be transparently comprehensible to you, and you will know that all God requires of man is that which people of normal humanity ought to possess and live out. With that, practicing the truth will no longer feel hard to you. Instead, you will believe that practicing the truth is perfectly natural and justified, that it is how man should live. At that point, your practice of God's words and the truth will be entirely spontaneous, positive, and proactive, and at the same time you will love the truth even more. The number of positive things in your heart will increase, and true knowledge of God will gradually arise there. That is what it means to genuinely understand the truth. You will have a correct view and perspective on all matters, and this true knowledge and these correct views will gradually take root in your heart. That is what it means to have entered the truth reality—it is something that no one can deprive you of or rob you of. After you have accumulated these positive things bit by bit, you will feel greatly enriched in the depths of your heart. You will no longer feel that there is no point in believing in God, and the hollow feeling in your heart will be gone. When you have felt how wonderful it is to understand the truth and seen the light of human life, true faith will arise in you. And when you have the faith to experience God's work, and see how real and practical pursuing the truth and achieving salvation are, you will positively and proactively practice and experience God's words. You will fellowship about your true experience and knowledge, thus bearing witness to God and helping more people to know the power of God's words and the benefits that the truth brings to man. You will then have more faith to practice the truth

and perform your duty well—and with that, you will have truly submitted to God. When you speak about your true experiential testimony, your heart will grow ever brighter. You will feel that you have more of a path to practice the truth, and at the same time, you will see that you have so many deficiencies, that there are so many truths you should practice. Such experiential testimony is not only beneficial and edifying for others—you, too, will feel that you have gained something in your pursuit of the truth, and that you have truly received God's blessings. When someone experiences God's work in this way until they are capable of testifying for Him, not only can it lead more people to know their corrupt dispositions, to cast off the fetters, constraints, and affliction of those dispositions, and enable them to emerge from Satan's power—it can also give that person more and more faith to walk the path of pursuing the truth and being made perfect. Does such experience not become true testimony? That is what true testimony is. Would a person capable of giving such testimony for God feel that believing in Him is boring, or pointless, or hollow? Absolutely not. When a person can testify for God and when they have true knowledge of Him, the depths of their heart are filled with peace and joy, and they feel enriched and incredibly grounded. When one lives in such a condition and realm, it is natural that they would not compel themselves to suffer, to pay a price, to be restrained. They would not just compel themselves to discipline their body and forsake the flesh. What they would do more of is positively gain knowledge of their corrupt dispositions. They would also pursue knowledge of God's disposition, of what God has and is, and understand what one should do in order to submit to God and satisfy Him. They would thereby grasp God's will amid His words, and find the principles of practicing the truth, rather than dwelling on the fleeting feelings within them. For instance, not being able to restrain themselves when things occur, being bad-tempered, being in a bad mood, having gotten angry again that day, having done something poorly or less than ideally again that day, or any such trivial matter. So long as these things do not impede your practice of the truth, there is no need to worry about them. You should stay focused on resolving your corrupt dispositions and seeking how to practice in a way that satisfies God and accords with His will. Practice the truth like this, and you will make fast life progress, and you will have set off on the path of pursuing the truth and being made perfect. Your heart will no longer be hollow; you will have true faith in God, and you will be ever more interested in God's words and the truth, and cherish them ever more. You will come to understand more and more of God's will and His requirements. When one arrives at this level, they have wholly entered into God's words and the truth reality.

What many people are practicing and entering into now is not the truth reality, but they enter into a kind of condition, in which they display external good behaviors, and they are willing to pay a price, and ready to suffer, and ready to expend everything. The depths of their hearts, however, remain empty, and they have nothing to support them in their inner worlds. Why do they have no support? Because they lack a path when anything befalls them; they rely on wishful thinking, and they do not have the principles

for practicing the truth. When a corrupt disposition pours forth from them, they can only practice self-restraint, they are not able to seek the truth to resolve it. Lucky for people, that old flesh of theirs has an instinctive ability: It can suffer. There is a saying among the unbelievers that goes, “There’s no suffering that can’t be endured, just blessings that can’t be enjoyed.” Man’s flesh has an inborn, instinctive ability: It cannot enjoy too many blessings, but it is able to suffer anything, and endure it, and restrain itself. Is this a good thing? Is it a strength or a flaw, a deficiency? Is that saying of theirs the truth? (No.) It is not, and if something is not the truth, it is nonsense. That saying is just empty words, it cannot resolve any of your problems, nor can it resolve your practical difficulties. To put it accurately, it cannot resolve your corrupt dispositions. So, there is no use in saying it. Though you may have some knowledge of it, be aware of it, and have experienced it deeply, still it has no use. The unbelievers have other sayings, too, like, “I’m not afraid of dying, so why be afraid of living?” and “When winter’s already here, how far off can spring be?” These are pretty grand statements, no? Quite inspirational and philosophical, are they not? The unbelievers call these sayings “chicken soup for the soul.” Do you like these kinds of sayings? (No.) Why not? Some may say, “We just don’t like them. They’re what unbelievers say; we like the words of God.” Which part of God’s words do you like, then? Which phrase do you take to be the truth? Which phrase have you experienced, practiced and entered, and gained? It is useless, just disliking these unbelievers’ sayings; you may not like them, but you cannot clearly discern their essence. Are these sayings right? (No.) Right or not, the words of unbelievers have nothing to do with the truth. Even if people regard them as good and right, they are not in accordance with the truth, and they cannot rise to the level of the truth. All of them are in violation of the truth and in enmity to it. Unbelievers do not accept the truth, so there is no need to argue with them about what is right and wrong. All we can do is treat their words as muddled nonsense, and be done with them. What does “nonsense” mean? It means words that are not at all edifying or valuable to people, to their lives, to the paths that they walk, or to their salvation. All such talk is nonsense; it can also be called empty words. It has nothing to do with man’s life and death or the paths that they walk, and is nonsense that can serve no positive function at all. People hear such a phrase and live their lives as they would, as they always have; such a phrase will not change any facts, because it is not the truth. The truth alone is edifying to man; it is of immeasurable value. Why do I say this? Because the truth can change people’s fates, and their thoughts and views, and their inner worlds. Most importantly, the truth can dispel man’s corrupt dispositions; it can change a person’s attributes, turning their satanic attributes into the attributes of the truth—it can take a person who lives by their corrupt dispositions and turn them into one who lives by the truth and God’s words. When a person lives out the truth reality, with God’s words as their basis, is their life not thus changed? When one’s life changes it means that their thoughts and views have changed; it means that their outlook, attitudes, and views on people and things have changed; it means that their stance and

views regarding events and things are different from before. Those sayings from the unbelievers are all empty words and nonsense. They cannot resolve any problems. The one that I just said—"There's no suffering that can't be endured, just blessings that can't be enjoyed"—is that not nonsense and empty words? (It is.) You can suffer—so what? You do not suffer in order to gain the truth; you suffer in order to enjoy prestige and status. Your suffering has no value or significance at all. Look at the facts: You have suffered so much and paid so great a price, yet you still do not know yourself, and you cannot even get a grasp on the thoughts and ideas that arise from your corrupt disposition, nor can you resolve them. Do you think that you can have life entry, then? Does your suffering have value? It has no value at all. Some people's suffering has value. The suffering that people undergo in order to gain the truth, for instance, has value: When one has gained the truth, they can edify and supply others. Many people suffer and pay a price in order to spread the gospel, helping to expand the work of the church and God's house, and spread the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. From this, we can see that whoever suffers and pays a price in order to gain the truth and satisfy God will gain something from it. These people will meet with God's approval. But there are some who do not pursue the truth, and though they may expend of themselves and suffer for God, and receive His kindness, that kindness is no more than God's pity and tolerance and a reflection of the favor He shows man, as well as the grace that He extends to man. What sort of grace? A few material blessings—no more than that. Is that what you want? Is that your ultimate goal in believing in God? I think not. Since the day you came to believe in God, have you only wished for His kindness, His protection, and a few of the material blessings that He bestows? Are those the things that you want? Are they what you pursue in your belief? (No.) Can these things resolve the issue of your salvation? (No.) It seems that you are thinking quite clearly. You understand what is crucial and what is important. You are not confused. You know what carries weight and what does not. Whether you can set off on the path of pursuing the truth, however, remains to be seen.

Believing in God is not about gaining grace or God's tolerance and pity. What is it about, then? It is about being saved. So, what is the mark of salvation? What are the standards required by God? What does it take to be saved? The resolution of one's corrupt disposition. This is the crux of the matter. So, at the end of the day, when all is said and done, no matter how much you have suffered or how great a price you have paid, or however much of a true believer you proclaim yourself to be—if, in the end, your corrupt disposition has not been resolved at all, it means that you are not someone who pursues the truth. Or it can be said that because you do not pursue the truth, your corrupt disposition has not been resolved. This means that you have not embarked at all on the path of salvation; it means that all that God says and all the work that He does to save man has achieved nothing in you, it has led to no testimony from you, and it has borne no fruit within you. God will say, "Because you have suffered and paid a price, I have

given you the grace, blessings, care, and protection that you deserve in this life and this world. But you have no part in that which man deserves after being saved. Why is that? It is because I have already bestowed upon you that which you deserve in this life and this world; as for what man deserves after salvation, there is nothing for you, because you did not set off on the path of pursuing the truth." You are not among those who will be saved, you have not become a true created being, and God does not want you. God does not want those who merely work, run about, suffer, and pay a price for Him, who somewhat truly believe and have a bit of faith, and nothing more. Such people can be found everywhere within groups of His believers. In other words, there are just so many of them, those who work and render service for God, in numbers beyond reckoning. If they are a person who God has predestined and chosen, who has been led back to God's house by God, then none of them would be unwilling to work and render service for Him. Why is that? Because it is just so easy to do. This is why there are so many people who render service and labor for God. There are even antichrists and evil people who are able to do this too, like Paul. Are there not too many people like Paul? (There are.) If you went into a church and preached in this way—"So long as you are willing to run about, suffer, and pay a price for God, then a crown of righteousness will be waiting for you"—do you think a lot of people would respond to your call? So many would. But unfortunately, in the end, these are not the people whom God will save or who can be saved. Such people just linger at the stage of rendering service; they are only willing to render service to God. In other words, these people are merely willing to trade their labor for God's good fortune, for His grace and blessings. They do not wish to change their methods of survival, or their ways of living, or the foundation that they rely on to survive; they do not want to accept God's judgment and chastisement in order to change their corrupt dispositions or pursue the truth to achieve salvation. Naturally, you could also say that these people are only willing to suffer and pay a price, that they are only willing to abandon and offer up everything they have, that they expend all that they can, no matter what the cost, and that they are willing to labor in any way possible—yet if you ask them to know themselves, to accept the truth, to resolve their corrupt dispositions, to forsake the flesh, to practice the truth, and to set down their evil and turn back toward God, as the Ninevites did, and heed His words, and live by His words, it would be extremely difficult for them. Is that not so? (It is.) Is this not quite troublesome? God has done so much work and spoken so many words, so why do people feel that pursuing the truth is so hard? Why are they always apathetic toward it? Even after hearing years of sermons, they still have no intention of changing. They have never sincerely repented to God in the depths of their hearts, nor have they ever truly acknowledged or accepted the fact that they have corrupt dispositions. In both their views on things and actions, they have never let go of their own outlooks and sought the truth; they do not approach every matter with an attitude of reversing their outlooks and repenting to God. So, there are many people who have experienced a lot and done much work, who have been at their

duties for quite a while, but still cannot produce any testimony. They still have no knowledge or experience of God's words, and when they talk of their experience and knowledge of God's words, they are very embarrassed and helpless, and they appear extremely inept. The reason for this is that they have no knowledge of the truth or they are uninterested in it. Laboring, on the other hand, is so simple, so easy. So, everyone is willing to render service for God, but they do not choose to pursue the truth.

Now, with that said, what does it mean, exactly, to pursue the truth? We have said so much; should we not define what it means to pursue the truth? Can you define it? It should be a pretty simple definition, no? Will it come to you if you just ponder, ruminate, and deliberate on the words? There may be some who would say, "Pursuing the truth is a big topic. It can't be expressed clearly in just a few sentences. I don't know what to say about it. What words can describe it? Pursuing the truth is a great matter, and nothing short of the grandest words could describe and define it appropriately—that's the only way to really impress everyone!" Do you think that is how it has to be? (No.) Well then, define pursuing the truth, in everyday language. (Pursuing the truth means using the truth to resolve our corrupt disposition.) Does that qualify as a definition? Are you drawing a conclusion with this? Is pursuing the truth easy to define? Defining it is no easy task; you need to put some effort into contemplating it. What does it mean to pursue the truth? Let us try defining it, shall we? The best of all human language is that which is simple, colloquial, and true-to-life. We will not speak in an alien language or with some grand words. We will speak the everyday language of ordinary people, in a way that is fluent, colloquial, and easy to comprehend, so that people can understand what we have said immediately. Apart from minors, or those too simple or mentally unwell to understand it, any adult who thinks normally will be able to understand the language we have used as soon as they hear it. That is what it means for language to be colloquial; that is what is called everyday language. So, what does it mean to pursue the truth? To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly based on God's words, according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion—that is what it means to pursue the truth. That is what an accurate definition of pursuing the truth sounds like. Question: What does it mean to pursue the truth? Answer: To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion. That is the definition of pursuing the truth. Simple, no? Some of you may say, "You've been fellowshiping all this time on what it means to pursue the truth, when its definition is just that one sentence. It's as simple as that?" Yes, it is as simple as that. It is such a simple definition, yet it touches on so many related topics—and those related topics all touch on the topic of pursuing the truth. These topics include man's difficulties, and man's thoughts and outlooks, as well as all the myriad excuses, justifications, methods, and attitudes man has toward pursuing the truth. There is also the topic of man's resistance to pursuing the truth and refusal to do so, which are brought about by man's corrupt dispositions. Of course, the things that I have told you about—the several

paths and steps for pursuing the truth, the way in which one pursues the truth, the results that are achieved by pursuing the truth, and the truth reality that can be seen in people who are living it out—these also touch on the topic of pursuing the truth. The final result of this is the experiential testimony to God's words and God's work of saving man that arises when people pursue the truth and practice and experience His words. This is the greatest result. One feature of such testimony is that it bears witness to the results of God's work; another is that it bears witness to the positive effects that can be seen in people who have pursued the truth, which is that their corrupt dispositions have been resolved, to a greater or lesser extent. For instance, someone who used to be very arrogant, who was arbitrary, reckless, and a law unto themselves in their actions, learns that this is a corrupt disposition through reading God's words, and then goes on to accept this and acknowledge it. Gradually, they come to know the harm that this corrupt disposition brings upon others and themselves: From a smaller perspective, it is harmful to people, and from a larger perspective, it disturbs, disrupts, and damages the work of the church. This is one part of the results; it is something that a person learns when they understand God's words. Furthermore, on the basis of the revelation of God's words, they acknowledge their corrupt disposition, and then, in situations arranged by God, they gradually come to repent, and they let go of the lifestyles and the outlooks of their comportment and actions that they once held to. They find principles and paths of practice among God's words and they handle matters according to the principles of practice that God has given them. This is true repentance and truly turning oneself around. They are able to comport themselves and act based on God's words, and ultimately, they come to seek the truth principles whenever they act, and they live out part of the reality of taking God's words as their basis. This is an example of resolving an arrogant disposition. The final result achieved by this is that this person no longer lives out arrogance; instead they have a conscience and reason, they are able to seek the truth principles, and they truly submit to the truth; what they practice and live out is no longer dominated by their corrupt disposition, instead they take the truth as their criterion, and they live out the reality of God's words—that is the result. Is this result not achieved by pursuing the truth? (It is.) This is the kind of result that pursuing the truth brings about in a person. And to God, living in this way is true testimony to Him and His work; it is a result that is achieved when a created being undergoes the judgment, chastisement, and exposure of God's words. It is true testimony, and that is a glorious thing to God. To man, of course, it is not a glorious thing; it could only be called an honorable and proud thing, and it is the testimony that a created being ought to have and live out after experiencing God's work. It is a positive effect that is achieved in a person who pursues the truth. God also regards such experience and knowledge, and what these people live out as results achieved by His work. To Him, it is testimony that strikes back at Satan with great force. This is what God loves and what He treasures.

We have just defined what it means to pursue the truth. Through this definition, has your view of what it means to pursue the truth come closer to reality? (Yes.) Now that we have defined pursuing the truth in a way that you understand, how should you regard your former pursuits? It is possible that the vast majority of you are not people who pursue the truth. This may be a bit upsetting for you to hear, no? Read the definition once more. (What does it mean to pursue the truth? Answer: To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion.) You can now say it accurately. On further consideration, is it correct? (It is.) If you measure your former pursuits and practices based on this definition, what will the result be? You will be able to learn whether or not you currently possess the truth reality, and you will be able to verify whether your current conduct is the pursuit of the truth. This is not an abstract way to put it, is it? It is quite colloquial language, is it not? (It is.) It is ordinary language that any ordinary person can understand. Though it may seem quite easy to understand, people have a problem. What problem is that? That once they have understood the definition, they feel uncomfortable and upset. Why are they upset? Because they feel that their past sufferings and the prices they have paid have been condemned, that they have given them forth in vain, and this makes them feel out of sorts. Some people, having heard this, will say, "Oh—so that's the definition of pursuing the truth. If we go by that definition, then weren't all the prices we paid and all of our past expenditures wasted? If You hadn't defined what it means to pursue the truth, we'd have gone on thinking that we were doing well in our pursuits; now that You've given it this definition, haven't our pursuits and the prices we paid all gone down the drain? Haven't all of our dreams of being crowned and rewarded been ruined? When we understand the truth, we should be blessed and our dreams should come true, so why are we being judged now that we understand the truth? Why are we living hopelessly in darkness? Our pasts and presents have been condemned, and there's no telling what the future will be like. It seems like we have no hope of being blessed." Is that how it is? Is it correct for people to think about it in this way? (No.) So, should people think about it in this way? (No.) They should not. But there is one good thing about this: You can repeatedly pray-read this definition of pursuing the truth, then look back at your past, look at your present, and look forward at your future. You may feel upset, but that feeling means that you are not numb. You know to consider your past, present, and future, and you know to make plans for your prospects, and to think about them, to worry about them, and to get agitated about them. That is a good thing. It proves that you are still alive, that you are a living person, and that your heart has not died. What is worrying is when someone remains apathetic no matter what is said to them or how clearly the path of pursuing the truth is fellowshiped to them. They think, "This is just who I am; who cares whether I get blessed or disaster befalls me? Judge me, condemn me—do whatever You like!" No matter what is said to them, they are numb to it. That spells trouble. What do I mean by trouble? It means that however you fellowship about the truth to them, they will not

understand it; they are a dead person that has no spirit. They do not have a clue about things like believing in God, pursuing the truth, being saved, or God's work of saving man, and they do not understand such things. It is like trying to teach a tone-deaf person to sing, or teaching a color-blind person to blend colors: It is just not feasible. Fellowshiping on these things is devoid of any significance or value for them, because no matter what you say, be it deep or shallow, be it specific or broad, it will make no difference—they will feel nothing in any case. They are like a blind person wearing glasses, whether they wear those glasses or not has no effect on their vision. Some people often say, "When winter's already here, how far off can spring be?" and "I'm not afraid of dying, so why be afraid of living?" and "I flick my hands, not even a wisp of cloud will I bring away." These are all words of spiritless, dead people who think themselves to be very clever. To put it in spiritual terms, they lack spiritual understanding. Those who lack spiritual understanding are dead people, even when they are alive. Can dead people understand the words of the living? They think, "All this talk about pursuing the truth, and one's views on people and things, and one's comportment and actions—what does it have to do with me? I'm not afraid of dying, so why be afraid of living?" Whoever thinks like this is done for. They are one of the dead. That is how it is with the definition of pursuing the truth. No matter what intentions or plans you have for your future path after reading this definition, or how you will change, it all comes down to your personal pursuit. These are the words that I need to say and the work that I need to do. I have said everything that I needed to, and I have said all that I have to say. If you really love the truth and have the will to pursue it, you would do well to adopt the definition of pursuing the truth that I have given as the goal and direction for your pursuit when it comes to how you usually view people and things, and comport yourselves and act, or adopt it as a reference, so that you may thereby gradually enter into the reality of God's words and the truth reality. If you do, then in the near future, you will certainly gain something on the path of pursuing the truth. Some may say, "It's never too late to pursue the truth." This is inaccurate—if you do not pursue the truth until after God's work has ended, that will be too late, indeed. How is that idea to be explained? The pursuit of the truth must take place before God's work has ended. In other words, this statement holds true before God has rung the bell to show that His work has come to a close. But when God's work has finished, and He says, "I will do no more of the work of saving man, and I will speak no more words to help people achieve salvation or that involve man's salvation. I will speak no more of such things," then His work will truly have ended. If you wait until then to pursue the truth, it will truly be too late. No matter what, if you begin to pursue the truth now, you will still have time—you still have a chance of attaining salvation. From now on, do your absolute utmost to gradually view people and things, and to comport yourself and act according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. Strive to read and understand all of God's words that expose man's corrupt dispositions in a short period of time, and practice reflecting on yourself and knowing yourself. Doing

so is of enormous benefit to your life entry. Take, for instance, among God's words that expose mankind's corrupt dispositions, those that touch on the disposition of antichrists. Are those not the most fundamental words? (They are.) And what should you do with those words as your basis? Condemn yourself? Curse yourself? Dispossess yourself of your future and destiny? No—you are to use them to know your corrupt disposition. Do not try to escape this. This is a juncture that every person must pass through. What does it mean that every person must pass through it? It is just like how every person is born to a mother and father, then grows up, then grows old, then dies. These are junctures that every person must pass through one by one. How important is pursuing the truth? It is as important as man's daily food and drink. If you stopped eating and drinking each day, your flesh could not survive; your life could not continue. "According to God's words" means that you must view people and things, and comport yourself and act, wholly according to the words of God, which in turn gives rise to your outlooks, methods, and practices. Of course, "according to God's words" is equivalent to "with the truth as one's criterion." So, in the definition of pursuing the truth, "according to God's words" is sufficient on its own. Why must "with the truth as one's criterion" be added? Because there are some specific problems that are not addressed in God's words. In such cases, you should seek the truth principles, and view people and things, and comport yourself and act, within those principles. By doing so you will definitively achieve absolute accuracy. Before achieving absolute accuracy, one must know their corrupt disposition and acknowledge their corrupt outpourings and corrupt essence. After that, they must sincerely repent, and thus genuinely turn themselves around. Each of the processes in this series is indispensable, just like when a person eats: The food must be put in their mouth, and then it must pass through their esophagus into their stomach, after which it is digested and absorbed. Only then can it gradually enter their blood and become the nutrition their body requires. People pursue the truth and come to take it as their criterion, they can then put the truth into practice, and live it out, and enter into the truth reality. Each of the normal processes in this sequence is indispensable; they are mandatory steps that every person who pursues the truth must take in pursuit of any element of the truth. Some may say, "I don't need those steps and processes to pursue the truth. I'll just seek the truth directly and then put it into practice and make it my reality." That is a simplistic understanding, but if it can yield results, then of course it is a better way. It shows that you have already amassed a certain amount of knowledge and success while regularly coming to know your corrupt disposition, so you can dispense with the processes of examining, knowing, accepting, repenting, and so on, and go straight to seeking the truth principles. For a person to go straight to seeking the truth principles, they must be possessed of a certain stature. What does having such stature mean? It means that they have true knowledge of their corrupt disposition, and that when they do not understand the truths about something that befalls them, they no longer need to know themselves, or repent, or reverse their course. All they need to do is directly attain

an understanding of the truth principles, and then go on to practice according to them. That is enough. This is not the stature of an ordinary person. A person with such stature has at the very least experienced the process of being harshly judged, chastised, disciplined, and tested by God. They have submitted to Him and are already on the road toward being made perfect. Such people do not need processes such as knowing their corruption, then acknowledging it, repenting, and turning themselves around. So, what about you, then? Do most of you need to begin with knowing yourselves? If you do not know yourselves, you will be unconvinced, and it will not be easy for you to accept the truth, nor will you be capable of true repentance. If you do not truly repent, can you submit to the truth? Can you submit to God? Certainly not, and in that case, you are not a person who will be saved.

After this fellowship, do you now have a bit of a path for pursuing the truth? Do you have the confidence to pursue it? (Yes.) That is good; it would be worrying if you had none. There may be some of you who feel negative after the sermon. “Oh, no—I have poor caliber. I listened to the sermon, but I can’t understand any of it; I just understand a bit of doctrine. It seems I don’t have much spiritual understanding. I feel listless about pursuing the truth. In performing my duty, all I can do is labor a bit. I have too many shortcomings and I’m full of corrupt dispositions. I guess this can’t be changed. That’s just how it’ll be. Just being a service-doer is enough for me.” Can someone with negative thoughts such as these set out on the path of pursuing the truth? It seems a bit dangerous, as it is these negative thoughts that form a great barrier to one’s pursuit of the truth. If one does not resolve them, then they will not be able to embark on this path, however good it is. Some people have failed and fallen many times on the road of pursuing the truth, and they end up discouraged: “That’s it—I don’t need to pursue the truth anymore. It’s not my fate to be blessed. Did God not say it Himself: ‘Do you have the face of one who could gain blessings?’ A look in the mirror shows me that I’m of average appearance, with spiritless eyes and poorly proportioned features, without the least bit of refinement. However you slice it, I just don’t look like someone who’s blessed. If God didn’t preordain it to be so, people can pursue as much as they like, it won’t be of any use!” Look at these people’s mentality: With so many hideous things in their hearts yet to be resolved, how can they embark on the road of pursuing the truth? Pursuing the truth is the greatest matter in life, and the worst thing you can do is always link it to gaining blessings. One must first resolve their intent to gain blessings. After that, pursuing the truth will go a bit more smoothly. When it comes to the pursuit of the truth, the most critical thing is not to look at whether there are many people on this path, and not to follow what the majority chooses, but to focus only on striving to meet God’s requirements, emulating Peter. The most important thing is to see the present clearly and to live in it, to know what corrupt disposition it is that currently pours forth from you, and to immediately and at once seek the truth to resolve it, first analyzing it and knowing it thoroughly, and then repenting to God. When you repent, putting the truth into practice

is of the utmost importance—it is the only way to achieve real results. If you just say to God, “God, I am willing to repent. I am sorry. I was wrong. Please, forgive me!” and think that this is all you need to do in order to gain God’s approval, will that work? (No.) If you are always willing to say to God, “God, I’m sorry. I was wrong,” hoping, as you do, that God will say, “It’s okay. Carry on”—if you always live in this kind of condition, you will be unable to enter into the truth. So, how should you pray and repent to God? Is there a path? Whoever has experience of this may speak a bit about it. No one? It appears that normally, you never make prayers of repentance, nor do you confess your sins and repent to God. So, how should you let go of your own wishes and intents? How should you resolve your corruption? Do you have a path of practice? To give an example, if you have no path for resolving an arrogant disposition, you should pray to God like this: “God, I have an arrogant disposition. I think that I’m stronger than others, better than others, smarter than others, and I want to make others do as I say. This is so devoid of sense. Why can’t I let go of it, even though I know it is arrogance? I beg that You discipline and reproach me. I am willing to let go of my arrogance and my own will to seek Your will instead. I am willing to listen to Your words, and to accept them as my life and the principles by which I act. I am willing to live out Your words. I beg that You guide me, I beg that You help me and lead me.” Is there an attitude of submission in these words? Is there a wish to submit? (Yes.) Some may say, “Just praying once doesn’t work. When something befalls me, I still live by my corrupt disposition, and I still want to be in charge.” In that case, continue praying: “God, I am so arrogant, so rebellious! I beg You to discipline me, to stop my evildoing in its tracks, and to restrain my arrogant disposition. I beg You to guide me and lead me, so that I may live out Your words, and act and practice according to Your words and Your requirements.” Come before God more in prayer and supplication, and let Him work. The more sincere your words are, and the more sincere your heart is, the greater your wish to forsake your flesh and yourself will become. When this overwhelms your wish to act according to your own will, your heart will gradually turn itself around—and when that happens, there will be hope for you to practice the truth and act according to the truth principles. When you pray, God will not say anything to you, or indicate anything to you, or promise you anything, but He will examine your heart and the intent behind your words; He will observe whether what you say is sincere and true, and whether you are supplicating and praying to Him with an honest heart. When God sees that your heart is honest, He will lead and guide you, as you asked and prayed for Him to do, and, of course, He will also rebuke and discipline you. When God fulfills that which you have supplicated for, your heart will be enlightened and somewhat changed. Conversely, if your prayers and supplications to God are insincere, and you have no true wish to repent, but are merely trying to perfunctorily appease God and fool Him with your words, then when God has examined your heart, He will do nothing for you, and He will detest and reject you. Under these circumstances, you will also not feel that God says anything to you, or does anything, or takes any action

at all, but God will not do any work in you, because you are dishonest at heart. And when God does no work, what will happen? Just like you intended, your heart will lack the desire to repent, and it will not have turned around at all. And so, in that environment and in the event that has befallen you, what you do will still be dictated by human will and corrupt dispositions, rather than being based in the truth principles. You will still be acting and practicing according to what you want and desire. The outcome of your prayers to God will be the same as before you prayed; there will be no change. You will still do whatever you like, without turning yourself around at all. This means that, in the process of pursuing the truth, people's subjective efforts are important, as is whether they understand the truth. At the same time, when people understand the truth and wish to practice it, but find it difficult to do so, they must rely on God, and offer up their hearts and their sincere prayers. That is also very important; these things are all indispensable. If all you do is pray to God in a cursory, superficial way, saying: "God, I was wrong. I'm sorry," and if you are as perfunctory with God in your heart as you are in the words of your prayer, then God will do no work, nor will He pay attention to you. If you say, "God, I'm sorry. I was wrong," God certainly will not say: "It's okay." Because of the cursory, superficial words you have spoken to Him, God will ask you: "In what way were you wrong? What do you intend to do? Will you repent? Will you abandon your evil and turn yourself around? Will you let go of your own will, intentions, and interests, and rush to turn yourself around? Can you make a resolution to turn yourself around?" You may not hear God asking you anything as this is happening, but if you say to God, "God, I'm sorry. I was wrong," from God's perspective, His attitude will be as I just said: He will question you with these words. How will He question you? He will go on to watch what you do and the choices you make after saying: "God, I'm sorry. I was wrong." He will look to see if you have genuine repentance that is born from truly acknowledging and hating your own corruption. God will look to see what your attitude toward Him is, what your attitude toward the truth is, how you regard your own corrupt disposition and what views you have on it, and whether you intend to let go of your mistaken views and mistaken ways; He will look at your choices, at whether you choose to walk the road of pursuing the truth, at how you should act and the principles you ought to uphold going forward, at whether you can practice the truth and submit to Him. God will survey your every move, your every intention and choice, and as He does, He will look to see whether the things that you do after making those choices really are actions of repentance and you turning yourself around. That is the crucial issue.

Once people have chosen to repent, how are they to go about turning themselves around? By letting go of your wishes, your thoughts and views, and your old ways of doing things to practice the truth, and to truly change. That is what it means to truly turn yourself around. If you just claim to be willing to turn yourself around, but at heart, you are still clinging to your own wishes, abandoning the truth, and continuing with your old ways, then you are not truly turning yourself around. If all you say to God when you pray

is “God, I’m sorry. I was wrong,” yet in all your behavior that follows, you still make choices, act, practice, and live according to your own will, running counter to the truth in all of these things, then from God’s perspective, how should you be defined? You have not turned yourself around. At the very least, He will say that you do not mean to turn yourself around. You may say to God, “God, I’m sorry. I was wrong,” but these are just cursory words, they are not repentance and confession that comes from the depths of your heart. They do not reflect an attitude of admitting fault and repenting; they are just empty words. God does not listen to what you say—He looks at what you are thinking, planning, and plotting. And when God sees that the basis and principles for your actions are still contrary to the truth, He will pass a true, real, and accurate verdict on you. He will say, “You have not turned yourself around, and you are not turning yourself around.” And when God says this, when God passes this verdict on you, He will no longer concern Himself with you. And when God does not concern Himself with you, your heart will be dark in the ensuing days, and you will lack enlightenment and illumination in all that you do, and you will not be at all aware when you pour forth a corrupt disposition, nor will you be disciplined for it. You will go on, numb and dull, and you will feel hollow, and that you have nothing to rely on. Worst of all, you will continue to indulge in your arbitrary, reckless behavior, and you will continue to let your corrupt disposition swell and grow unchecked. That is what will happen. What will be the ultimate consequence of a person acting in this way? When a person forsakes the truth, the consequence they bring upon themselves is that God will not concern Himself with them. Though God may not say anything or clearly indicate anything to you, you will be able to feel it. Based on your thoughts and ideas, your real states, and your attitude toward the truth, it will be clear that your overall condition is one of numbness, dullness, intransigence, and other such manifestations. These things are reflected in people. So, after comparing your real lives and the things that you practice to this, you may want to study or investigate the following: When you have not turned back toward God at all, you may say a great deal of nice-sounding, sweetened words to Him, but what sort of state and condition are you in when you do so? And when you have truly turned yourself around, though you may not pray to God with sweetened or nice-sounding words, and just speak a little from your heart, what sort of state and condition are you in then? The two states are entirely different. God may not clearly indicate anything to people in their daily lives or speak to them in obvious words, but people should be able to feel the work of the Holy Spirit, and everything that He does, and every will that He wishes to express, in their daily lives. Naturally, observers can detect these things, too. A person who was numb and dim-witted may suddenly become smart, or a person who is usually smart may suddenly become numb, dim-witted, and useless. These two conditions or states can occur at the same time in one person, or in different people—this is something that happens quite often. From this, one can see that in many cases, a person being smart or foolish is not about their brain, thoughts, or caliber; it is determined by God. Is that clear? (Yes.) You

will never understand these things until you have experienced them. Once you have experienced them, you will know—the deeper your experience of them, the more thorough your understanding will be, and the deeper your appreciation of them will be. God's will is in His actions; He will not give you an obvious indication of it, nor will He explicitly tell you about it or speak of it to you, but this does not mean that He has no stance on you. It does not mean that God has no views on any of the thoughts, ideas, states, or attitudes that you have. When somebody harbors their own personal intentions and plans when something befalls them, when they clearly pour forth a corrupt disposition—these are exactly the moments when they need to reflect on themselves and seek the truth, and these are also critical moments when God examines that person. Therefore, whether you are able to seek the truth, accept the truth, and truly repent—these are the moments that most reveal a person. At such times, you should admit that you have a corrupt disposition and be willing to truly repent. You should make a sincere declaration to God, rather than being offhanded with Him by saying, "God, I'm sorry. I was wrong." What God needs from you is not your offhandedness, but an attitude of sincere repentance. If you have difficulties, God will help you, guide you, and lead you step-by-step in turning yourself around, toward the path of accepting and pursuing the truth. Of course, if your repentance merely exists in words, or if you intend to repent and wish to let go of your intents and desires, but you are not sincere about it and do not have the will to do so, God will not force you. When it comes to God, there is no "must" in His attitude toward man; God gives you freedom and God gives you a choice, and He is waiting. What is He waiting for? He is waiting to see what choice you end up making and whether you intend to repent. If you intend to repent, when are you going to do it? How will your repentance manifest? If you intend to repent and are willing to do so, yet you still try to protect your own interests when you act, and you still do not wish to lose your status, then it is clear to see that you are not genuinely repentant, that you are not sincere about it. You just slightly wish to repent, but you are not truly repentant. Will God work in you if you merely intend to repent but are not genuinely repentant? He will not. He will say, "Well, when do you intend to repent?" You will not know. Will God ask you again? No—He will say, "So, you are not genuinely repentant, then. I'll just wait, then." You may not intend to repent, you may be unwilling to repent, or to let go of your status and your interests. Fine, then. God gives you freedom, and you can make any choice you like. God will not force you. But there is one fact for you to consider, like the Ninevites, if you do not turn yourself around and repent, what will come of it? You will be destroyed. If, at present, you merely intend to repent, but have taken no real action toward repenting, then God will not concern Himself with you. Why will He not concern Himself with you? God says, "You are not genuine, you do not declare where you stand, and your heart is still wavering." After a moment's thought, you may say that you are willing to repent, but that is just a thought of yours, a hollow statement, without any action or any concrete plan. That is why God says, "I will just brush people like you to the side.

You are of no concern to Me. Do as you will!" When one day, you realize, "Oh no, I need to repent," how should you go about it? God will not be fooled by those words of yours and go blindly to work, saying, "He intends to repent, so now I have to bless him, don't I?" God will not do that. What will He do? He will examine you. You intend to repent, you wish to repent, and your demand for it is a bit stronger than before, but who knows how long it will be before you actually do it. If you haven't made concrete steps or have no concrete plan to practice repentance, that is not true repentance. You must take real action. Once you have taken real action, God's work will follow. Are there not principles to God's work and to His treatment of people? When God goes to work, a person gains enlightenment, their eyes shine, they are able to understand the truth and enter into reality, and their gains multiply by a hundredfold, a thousandfold. Once this happens, you are truly blessed. So, what foundation must people build upon in order to achieve these things? (The ability to truly repent.) That is right. When people truly let go of their own interests and desires, when they genuinely repent to God—meaning that they stop their evildoing in its tracks; and let go of their evil, and their desires and intentions; and confess to God; and accept God's requirements and His words—they will then begin to enter into the reality of turning themselves around. Only this is true repentance.

We just fellowshiped on problems that are frequently found in the course of man's pursuit of the truth, and problems that those who pursue the truth can recognize and come to know. They are the very problems that ought to be resolved. We may not have explained or dissected these problems too much in the past, we may not even have come to any clear conclusions about them, but regarding each of the steps that man experiences in the process of pursuing the truth, and the different behaviors and states that they have during this process, God has corresponding words and work, and He has relevant ways and methods of approaching and resolving them. People can experience and understand a bit of all these things; they should not misunderstand God, or harbor any notions or imaginings about God that do not fit with reality. Moreover, God gives people sufficient freedom and sufficient agency to make choices regarding every step, every way of acting, and every way of practicing that is involved in the pursuit of the truth—He does not compel people. And though these words and requirements are printed in text and spoken of in clear, precise language, still, it is up to every person to make their own free choice as to how they will approach these truths. God does not force people. If you are willing to pursue the truth, then you have hope of being saved. If you are unwilling to pursue the truth, if you do not care about these truths and dismiss them, if you are not interested at all in these ways of practicing the pursuit of the truth—that is fine, too. God will not force you. It is fine, too, if you are merely willing to labor for God. So long as you do not violate the principles, God's house will let you make your own choice. Although the pursuit of the truth is inextricably linked to attaining salvation and closely connected to it, there is still no shortage of people who are uninterested in pursuing the truth, who have no thoughts about it or intention to do it, nor any plans to.

Are these people condemned, then? Not exactly. If these people meet with the requirements of God's house in the performance of their duties, they can continue performing their duties there. God's house will not strip you of your right to perform a duty because you do not pursue the truth. But performing one's duty in this way has, to this day, been classified as "laboring." "Laboring" is a nice way of putting it, it is the term that God's house uses, but in fact, it could also simply be called "performing a job." Some of you may be saying, "When you do a job, you get paid wages." Yes, you can get wages for doing a job. So, what are your wages? All of the graces that God has given you—those are your wages. And as for the pursuit of the truth, whatever you intend to do, or plan to do, or wish to do, I can tell you clearly now that you are free. You can pursue the truth, that is fine; if you do not, that is fine, too. But the last thing I will tell you is that one can only be saved through pursuing the truth. If you do not pursue the truth, your hope of being saved is nil. That is the fact I would tell you. You must be told this fact, so that it is clearly, expressly, precisely, and distinctly seared into your hearts—so that you may know clearly in your hearts what foundation it is that hope of salvation is built upon. If you are content just to labor, thinking, "Things are fine if I can just perform my duty and not get expelled from God's house; I don't have to bother myself with something as hard as pursuing the truth," will this view of yours stand? Although you still believe in God now, or perform a duty, are you confident that you can follow God unto the end? No matter what, pursuing the truth is a great matter in life, it is more important than marrying and having children, than raising your sons and daughters, than living your life and making your fortune. It is even more important than performing a duty and pursuing a future in God's house. When all is said and done, pursuing the truth is the most significant thing on a person's life path. If you have not as yet developed an interest in the pursuit of the truth, no one will pass a verdict on you and say that you will not pursue the truth in the future. I, too, will not pass a verdict on you and say that if you do not pursue the truth now, you will never do it in the future. That is not what is happening. There is no such logical relationship; this is not the fact. No matter what, I do hope that in the near future, or even in this very moment, you can embark on the path of pursuing the truth, and become people who pursue the truth, and number among those who have hope of salvation.

Pursuing the truth is directly related to attaining salvation, so the subject of pursuing the truth is not a small one. Though it may be a common topic, it touches on very many truths. In fact, this subject is closely bound up with man's prospects and destiny, and though we fellowship about it often, people are still not very clear on the various truths and problems that they need to understand regarding the pursuit of the truth. Instead, in a muddled way, they just take various behaviors and approaches that people regard as good, as well as some thoughts and views that people see as relatively active, upward-looking, and positive, and pursue them as the truth. This is a terrible mistake. There are many things which people see as good, right, and correct that, to put it accurately, are not the truth. Some of them may, at the very most, accord with the truth, but one cannot

say that they are the truth. Most people have profound misunderstandings about the pursuit of the truth, and they harbor quite a few erroneous understandings and biases toward it. That is why it is necessary for us to fellowship on this clearly, and to make people understand the truths within it that they ought to understand and the problems that they ought to resolve. Do you have any thoughts about the specific content relating to the pursuit of the truth that we just fellowshiped on? Do you have any plans or intentions? Now that we have given a more specific definition of what it means to pursue the truth through our fellowship, many people are a bit puzzled about the things they used to do and pour forth, as well as what they intend to do in the future. They are upset, and some even feel that they have no hope, and that they are in danger of being cast out. If the truth has been fellowshiped on clearly, and yet people feel listless, is their state correct? Is it normal? (No, it's not normal.) If you had pursued the truth before and received confirmation of that by listening to this fellowship, would you not feel more energized? (Yes.) So why would people feel listless? What is the root of that listlessness? The more transparently and clearly the truth is fellowshiped on, the more of a path people ought to have—so why, if people possess more of a path, would they feel more listless? Is there not a problem here? (There is.) What problem? (If someone knows that it's good to pursue the truth but is unwilling to pursue it, it's because they do not love the truth.) People do not love the truth or intend to pursue it—that is why they feel listless. And what of their previous actions? (They are condemned.) "Condemned" is not quite the right word—to put it precisely, their previous actions have not been recognized. What sort of outcome is that, to not have one's actions recognized? What is happening, when one's actions go unrecognized? What does it mean? That is simple—if a person's actions are not recognized, it shows that they are not pursuing the truth, and that they are instead pursuing things that man regards as right and good, and that they are still living by their notions and imaginings. Is this not what is happening? (It is.) That is what is happening. When people's actions are not recognized by God, they feel upset. At such times do they not have something of a positive and correct path of practice? Would it be right for someone to become negative, to abandon their duty, and to give up themselves as hopeless just because their actions were not recognized? Is that the right path of practice? (No.) It is not the right path of practice. When something like this befalls a person, and they discover their own problems, they should promptly reverse their course. If you discover, through our fellowship about what it means to pursue the truth, that your previous actions and behaviors had nothing to do with the pursuit of the truth, then regardless of whether it upsets you or not, the first thing you should do is reverse your old, mistaken ways and methods of practice, as well as the incorrect path of your pursuit. You should reverse those things right away. When their previous actions are dismissed and not recognized by God, when God says that these actions were just labor, and that they have nothing to do with pursuing the truth, some people will think, "Oh, we humans are indeed foolish and blind. We don't understand the

truth and cannot see things for what they are—and this whole time, we believed that we were practicing the truth, and pursuing the truth, and satisfying God. Only now do we learn that the things we did in our so-called ‘pursuit of the truth’ were just good human behaviors—they were just things that people do based on the various instinctive abilities, calibers, and talents of their flesh. They are far removed from the essence, definition, and requirements of the pursuit of the truth; they simply have nothing to do with it. What should we do about this?” This is a major problem, and it should be resolved. What is the way to resolve this? The question has been raised: Given that the behaviors and approaches that people previously held to be good have uniformly been dismissed, and God does not remember them, nor has He defined them as the pursuit of the truth—what, then, is the pursuit of the truth? To answer this, one must carefully pray-read the definition of the pursuit of the truth, and find a way to practice from that definition, and turn it into the reality of their life. People did not practice the pursuit of the truth in the past, so from now on they must take the definition of the pursuit of the truth as their basis, and as the foundation of their comportment. So, what is the definition of the pursuit of the truth? It is this: To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God’s words, with the truth as one’s criterion. This could not be put more clearly or explicitly. What were all of man’s previous actions and behaviors? Were they in accordance with God’s words, with the truth as their criterion? Think back—were they? (No.) It may be said that such actions and behaviors are found once in a blue moon, they are virtually nowhere to be found. So, has man truly achieved nothing at all in so many years of believing in God, and reading and fellowshiping of His words? Have people not practiced a single thing according to God’s words? What is the definition, “To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God’s words, with the truth as one’s criterion,” that we spoke of here directed at? What problem is it meant to resolve? Which of man’s problems and which aspects of the essence of man’s disposition is it directed at? People may now understand the definition of pursuing the truth, but when it comes to why their previous actions were not recognized, and why they were defined as not being the pursuit of the truth, these things remain unclear, incomprehensible, and obscure to them. Some will say, “We have given up so much since we accepted the name of God: We gave up our families and our work, and we abandoned our prospects. Some of us resigned from good jobs; some of us abandoned happy families; some of us had great careers that were well-paid with boundless prospects, and let go of it all. These are the things that we’ve renounced. Since coming to believe in God, we have learned to be humble, patient, and tolerant. We do not get into arguments with others when we interact with them, we do our best to handle any matters that come up in the church, and we do our utmost to lovingly assist our brothers and sisters whenever they have any difficulties. We avoid inflicting harm upon others and we avoid damaging the interests of other people as much as possible. Do these approaches really have nothing to do with pursuing the truth?” Think carefully, now: What

are man's renunciations, expenditure, exertions, tolerance, patience, and even suffering related to? How are these things achieved? What are they based upon? What motivating force drives people to do these things? Reflect on this. Are these things not worthy of deep thought? (They are.) Well, since they are worthy of deep thought, let us explore and investigate them today; let us see whether or not these things that man has always held to be good, right, and noble have anything to do with the pursuit of the truth.

We will begin by looking at man's renunciations, exertions, and the prices that man pays. Regardless of the context or environment of these renunciations, exertions, and prices, where does the prime motivating force for these things come from? In My summation, there are two sources. The first is when people, in their ideas and notions, think, "If you believe in God, you should renounce, and expend yourself, and pay a price for Him. God likes it when people do that. He doesn't like it when people indulge in comfort and pursue worldly things, or when they remain indifferent and continue living their own lives after they have claimed to accept His name, and become His followers. God doesn't like it when people do that." In terms of people's subjective will, this thought is a certainty. Whatever someone's reason for accepting God and His new work, their subjective will agrees to act in this way, believing that God only likes it when people act like that, and that they will only receive God's happiness and satisfaction by acting in this way. They think that so long as people assiduously struggle and make an effort, and exert without asking for anything in return, and that so long as people disregard their own weal or woe to pay a price, and keep exerting, and paying a price, and expending and offering themselves up to God, then God will surely be happy. And so, once someone believes this, they bow their head without a second thought, and regardless of all else, they renounce everything they can renounce, and offer up everything they can offer up, and endure any suffering that they can endure. People carry out these approaches, but have any of them raised their heads to ask God, "God, are the things that I'm doing what You need? God, do You recognize my expenditures, my exertions, my suffering, and the prices I've paid?" People never ask this of God, and without knowing what God's reaction or His attitude is, they go on optimistically exerting, and offering up, and expending themselves, believing that God will only be happy and satisfied if they suffer in this way. Some people go so far as to give up eating dumplings, fearing that God would be unhappy if they did. Instead, they eat steamed cornbread, believing that eating dumplings is indulging in comfort. They only feel at ease when they are eating steamed cornbread, stale flatbreads, and pickled vegetables, and when they feel at ease, they think that God must surely be satisfied. They mistake their own feelings, their own joy, sorrow, anger, and happiness for God's feelings, for His joy, sorrow, anger, and happiness. Is that not absurd? Many people treat things that man holds to be correct as the truth, and they impose them upon God, describing them as God's requirements of man, because that is what all people believe. And so long as people hold such a belief, it is very likely and natural that they will unconsciously

characterize those statements and behaviors and approaches as the truth. And as people have determined that those things are the truth, they will think that they must be the principles of practice that man is required to abide by, and that if someone practices and abides by them in this way, they are practicing God's words, pursuing the truth, and, of course, doing His will. And since people are "doing God's will," are their hardships not worthwhile? Are they not paying this price correctly? Is this not something that God is satisfied by and remembers? People would think that it certainly is. This is the distance and distinction between what man believes to be the "truth" and God's words. People uniformly categorize everything that, in their notions and imaginings, accords with human moral character and is good, noble, correct as the truth, and then they go on to act and endeavor to practice in that direction, while making strict demands of themselves. They believe that they are thus pursuing the truth, that they are nothing short of a person who pursues the truth, and that, of course, they are also absolutely someone who can be saved. The fact is that God's words and the truth have nothing to do with those things that people hold in their notions to be good, right, and positive. Yet even as people read and hold God's words in their hands, they take everything that—in their notions—is good, right, beautiful, kind, positive, and advocated for by man to be the truth, to be positive things, and they tirelessly pursue them, not only requiring themselves to pursue and achieve them, but also that others pursue and achieve them. People tirelessly mistake things that man sees as good for the truth, and then they pursue according to the standards and direction demanded by those things, and thus believe that they are already pursuing the truth and living out the truth reality. This is one facet of the mistaken understandings that people have about the pursuit of the truth. This mistaken understanding is people taking what they believe—in their notions—to be good, right, and positive as their standards, superseding God's requirements of man, and the demands and standards of His words. People mistake these things that they believe to be right and good in their notions for the truth, and not just that—they abide by these things and pursue them, too. Is this not a problem? (It is.) It is a problem with man's thoughts and views. What are people motivated by, when they do these things? What is the root cause that leads them to have these ideas and mistaken understandings? The root cause is that people believe God likes these things, so they impose them upon Him. For instance, traditional culture tells people to be diligent and thrifty; diligence and thriftiness are human merits. "You have to endure great suffering in order to come out on top," is another such merit, as is, "Do as your master commands, or you won't gain anything from even your most painstaking efforts," and other such ideas. In every race and group, people believe that everything they regard as good, right, positive, active, and upward-facing is the truth, and they treat these things as the truth, supplanting all of the truths that God has expressed. They mistake things that man firmly believes, which are of Satan, for the truth and the standards of God's requirements. They point their pursuit toward the ideals, directions, and goals that they imagine and believe to be right.

This is a terrible mistake. These things that come from man's notions and imaginings are not at all in line with God's words, and they are entirely contrary to the truth.

I will give a few examples of people mistaking things that, in their notions, they hold to be good and right for the truth, so that this idea will not be so abstract, and you will be able to understand it. For instance: Some women stop wearing makeup and jewelry after coming to believe in God. They set their makeup and jewelry aside, thinking that believers in God ought to behave themselves, and that they cannot wear makeup or dress up. Some people own cars but do not drive them, they ride bicycles instead. They think that driving is indulging in comfort. Some people have the means to eat meat, but do not do so, thinking that if they always ate meat, and a time came when circumstances did not allow them to eat it anymore, they would become negative and weak, and betray God. So, they learn to suffer without it preemptively. Others think that, as a believer in God, they must appear well-behaved, so they take stock of their flaws and bad habits, and they work hard to alter their tone of speaking, they restrain their temper, and they do their best to make themselves refined, and not vulgar. They think that once a person has come to believe in God, they must restrict and restrain themselves, that they must be a good person in the eyes of others and well-behaved. They think that in doing so, they are paying a price, satisfying God, and practicing the truth. Some people get dressed up and go out shopping from time to time, and feel guilty when they do so. They think that now they believe in God, they cannot wear makeup and get dressed up, and that they cannot wear nice clothes. They believe that if they do their makeup, dress up, and wear nice clothes, God will loathe and dislike it. They believe that God likes primitive humankind, that God does not like industry, or modern science, or any trends. They think that they are only pursuing the truth if they let go of the pursuit of these things. Is this not a warped comprehension? (It is.) Have these people read God's words carefully? Have they taken His words as the truth? (No.) And since they have not taken God's words as the truth, are they pursuing the truth? (No.) That is why these approaches and manifestations are simply people mistaking things that they hold in their notions to be right and good for the truth, and using those things to supplant the truth. They optimistically practice these things, after which they think that they are pursuing the truth, and that they are people who possess the truth reality. For example, there are people who have not watched a television show, or watched the news, or even gone out shopping since they came to believe in God. They have slept many nights in haystacks and spent many days staying beside kennels because they have been spreading the gospel and performing their duties. They have gotten many stomachaches from eating cold food, they have lost many pounds and suffered a lot from lack of sleep and a meager diet. They know all of these things very well, they tally them up, one by one. Why do they keep such clear records of these things? The reason is that they believe these behaviors and approaches are practicing the truth and satisfying God, and that if they achieve all of these good behaviors, God will approve of them. And so, people do not complain, and

they practice these things without hesitation. They never tire of harking on about them, and replaying them, and recalling them, and their hearts feel very full. And yet, when they meet with God's trials, when the environment that He arranges is not as they wish it to be, when what He requires of them and His actions do not conform to their notions, then the things that these people hold to be right, as well as the prices that they pay and their practices, will be of no use at all. These things will not help them, in even the slightest way, to submit to God or to know Him within the environments they are faced with. On the contrary, they will become stumbling blocks and obstacles to them entering into the reality of God's words and submitting to God. The reason for this is that people have never learned that the things they believe to be right are fundamentally not the truth, and that what they practice is not the pursuit of the truth. What, then, do people stand to gain from these things? Merely a kind of good behavior. People will not gain the truth and the life from them. And yet they mistakenly believe that these good behaviors are the truth reality, and they feel even more resolved in their determination that these things that they hold to be right in their notions are the truth and positive things, and consequently, that determination takes root in their hearts. The more that people worship and blindly believe in these things which they hold to be right in their notions, the more they reject the truth, and the further they grow from God's requirements and His words. And at the same time, the more prices that people pay, the more they think that they are gaining capital, and the more they believe that they are qualified to be saved and to receive God's promise. Is this not a vicious cycle? (It is.) What is the root of this problem? What is the main culprit? (People mistaking their notions for positive things and supplanting God's words with them.) People replace God's words with their own notions, they put God's words aside, and they essentially ignore them. In other words, they do not take God's words to be the truth at all. It is safe to say that people, after coming to believe in God, may read God's words, yet what they pursue, choose, and practice is still based on man's notions and imaginings, and they have not embarked on the path of belief in God according to His words and requirements. Where, exactly, does the problem of people believing in God based on their own notions and imaginings stem from? From where do man's notions and imaginings arise? Where do they come from? It can be said that they primarily come from traditional culture, and from man's inheritance, as well as from the conditioning and influence of the religious world. Man's notions and imaginings are directly related to these things.

What other things do people, in their thoughts and views, believe to be good, right, and positive? You can go ahead and name a few, as examples. People often say, "The good have peaceful lives," and "Guileless people ever prevail"—these are a few, no? (They are.) And there are also: "Good is repaid with good, and evil with evil; if not today, it's on its way," "Persisting in evil brings about self-destruction," "Whom God would destroy, He first drives mad," "You have to endure great suffering in order to come out on top," "Other pursuits are small, books excel them all," and so on. All this nonsense is

sickening. I become seized with fury when I hear such words, yet people say them so easily. Why can they say these words so easily? Why is it that I cannot seem to say them? I do not like these words, these sayings. The fact that you have them at the ready, that they flow right off your tongues, and the way that you recite them so smoothly prove that you especially adore and worship these things. You worship these empty, illusory, unreal things, and at the same time, you take them as your mottos, and as the principles, criteria, and basis for your actions. And then, you even think that God also believes these things, and that His words are just a different approach to these same ideas, and that these things are the general meaning of His words: a call for people to be good. Is this view correct? Are these things the meaning of God's words and the truths that He expresses? Not at all; what God means has nothing to do with these things. Therefore, people's attitude toward the truth must be reversed, and their recognition of the truth needs to be corrected—which means that the standard by which they position the truth needs to be corrected and reversed. Otherwise, it will be hard for them to accept the truth, and they will have no way to embark on the path of pursuing it. What is the truth? Broadly speaking, all of God's words are the truth. More specifically, then—what is the truth? I have told you before. What did I say? ("The truth is the criterion for man's comportment, actions, and worship of God" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eight (Part Three)).) That is right. The truth is the criterion for man's comportment, actions, and worship of God. So, does the truth have anything to do with the things that people, in their notions, believe to be right and good? (It does not.) Where do those human things come from? (From Satan's philosophy for living, and from some thoughts that are instilled in man by traditional culture.) That is right. To be precise, these things stem from Satan. And who are the eminent, famous people who instilled these things in man? Are they not Satan? (They are.) All those patriarchs of yours are Satan—they are Satan, living and breathing. Just look at those sayings that Chinese people espouse: "What a joy it is, when a friend comes from afar," "Once you have arrived, you might as well stay," "Do not travel far while your parents yet live," "Filial piety is a virtue to be held above all else," "Of the three filial impieties, having no heir is the worst," "The dead are great in the eyes of the living," "When a person draws close to death, their words are true and kind." Analyze these words carefully—are any of them the truth? (No.) They are all nonsense and fallacies. Tell Me, how foolish must people be to mistake these fallacies and nonsense for the truth after they have accepted God's work? Do these people have the ability to comprehend the truth? (No.) Such people are absurd types and they are entirely incapable of comprehending the truth. And you—having now read so many of God's words, do you not possess a bit of knowledge of the truth? (We do.) Where does the truth come from? (It comes from God.) The truth comes from God. Do not believe any words that are not spoken by God. Those satanic philosophies for living and those ideas from traditional culture are not the truth, and one must not view people and things, or comport themselves and act according to them, or with such things as their criteria,

because they do not come from God. So long as something comes from man, it does not matter whether it is from traditional culture or some famous person, or whether it is a product of learning or society, or what dynasty or race of people it hails from—it is not the truth. Yet these are precisely the things that people take to be the truth, that they pursue and practice in lieu of the truth. And all the while, they think that they are practicing the truth and that they are close to satisfying God's will, when in fact, exactly the opposite is true: When you pursue and practice based on these things, you grow ever further from God's requirements and ever further from the truth.

It is inherently absurd for people to mistake things that man sees as good and positive for the truth, and to pursue them as though they were the truth. How is it that people who have accepted God's work and read many of His words can still persist in mistaking those things that man sees as good for the truth, and pursuing them as though they were the truth? What is the problem here? This suffices to show that people do not understand what the truth is, and that they have no real knowledge of the truth. This is one factor in the question that I just asked: "Given that these things are not the truth, how can people go on practicing them and think that they are practicing the truth?" I will speak about another factor, one that touches on man's corrupt disposition. People believe that the things they hold to be good, right, and positive in their notions are the truth, and upon this foundation, they form a plot, believing that when they have satisfied God and God is happy, He will bestow upon them the blessings that He has promised man. Is this plot not an attempt to strike a deal with God? (It is.) In one respect, people uphold and pursue these things while harboring an incorrect, absurd understanding, and at the same time, they try to strike a deal with God with their own desires and ambitions. Is that not another factor? (It is.) We have frequently fellowshiped about this factor in the past, so we will not speak on it in detail now. So, I ask you: When someone who believes in God renounces, suffers, expends themselves, and pays prices for God, do they not have an intent and goal in doing so? (They do.) Is there anyone who says, "I desire nothing and ask for nothing. I will renounce, and expend myself, and pay a price, no matter what the circumstances are. That is all there is to it. I do not have any personal desires and ambitions. However God treats me is fine. He may reward me, He may not—in any case, I've acted in accordance with His requirements, I've offered myself up, I've renounced everything, I've paid a price and suffered"? Are there such people? (No.) To date, a person like this has not been born. Some may say, "A person like that would have to live in a vacuum." Even if a person lived in a vacuum, they would not be like this: They would still have a corrupt disposition and ambitions and desires, and they would still attempt to strike a deal with God. So, the second factor in this question is that once people treat things that they, in their notions, believe to be right as the truth, they form a plot. And what is that plot? To practice these things in order to exchange them for the blessings that God has promised man, and for a beautiful destination. They believe that so long as something is regarded by man as positive, it must be right, so they do and

pursue whatever they believe to be right, and they think that by practicing in this way, they are bound to be blessed by God. That is man's plot. This second factor purely concerns people trying to satisfy their own ambitions and desires and attempting to strike a deal with God. If you do not believe this, try forbidding people from making deals, and strip them of their desires and ambitions—have them let go of their desires and ambitions. They will immediately lose the energy to suffer and pay prices. Why will they lose the energy to do these things? Because they will feel that they have lost their prospects and their destiny, that there is no longer any hope of them being blessed, and that they have nothing to gain. What they practice is not the truth, and what they pursue is not the truth, but things that they imagine to be positive, and yet, when their desires and ambitions are dashed, they are no longer willing to even pay forth these things. Tell Me, what do people have? Do they have true faith? (They do not.) To take this a step further, are people loyal? Some may say, "Whatever God says now, we follow Him. No matter what He says, we do not become negative or discouraged, and we do not back down, much less do we give up. Even if God doesn't want us, and He says that we are service-doers and laborers, that we are not people who pursue the truth, and that we have no hope of being saved, we will still follow Him without hesitation and persist in performing our duties. Is that not loyalty? Is that not having faith? Is being loyal and having faith not the same as pursuing the truth? Does it not mean that we are pursuing the truth, to some extent?" Tell Me, is that pursuing the truth? (No.) What does it mean, to say that it is not pursuing the truth? It means that all of man's "lifelines" have been sealed off, that they do not even have any straws to clutch at. What is to be done then? Is there anything that can be done? Regardless of whether there is anything they can do about it or not, how do people feel after hearing this? They feel extremely disappointed: "Does this really mean that I have no hope of being blessed? What on earth is happening?" People completely lose their bearings in these circumstances. Now that My words have stripped you of all your "lifelines," I will see where you go from here. Some say, "It's not right to labor, or to try to strike deals, or to have warped understandings, or to suffer and pay a price—so what on earth is the right thing to do? Whatever God says, we will not leave Him. We will keep on performing our duties. Does that not amount to practicing the truth?" This question must be understood clearly. Because people do not understand the truth and always harbor warped understandings of what it means to practice the truth, they believe that renouncing, expending, suffering, and paying prices is practicing the truth and submitting to God. This is a terrible error. To practice the truth is to practice God's words, but people must practice them with principles—they absolutely must not do so based on man's notions and imaginings. What God wants is a sincere heart, a God-loving heart, and a heart that satisfies Him. Only practicing God's words in this way is practicing the truth. If one always wishes to strike a deal with God when they expend themselves for Him, and to satisfy their own ambitions and desires, they are not practicing the truth, they are playing games with it and trampling on it, and

they are a hypocrite. So, if someone is able to accept God's words of judgment, and does not leave God and persists in performing their duty despite having their intents and desires to gain blessings dashed, and despite having nothing to look forward to and nothing to motivate them, does this amount to pursuing and practicing the truth? As I see it, if we measure this based on the definition of what it means to pursue the truth, then this is still not pursuing the truth, and it falls entirely short of the standard of pursuing the truth. Now that we have an accurate definition of the pursuit of the truth, we should strictly adhere to it when evaluating people's actions, conduct, and manifestations. What evaluation can be made based on someone's ability to remain with God and persist in performing their duty, though they have no blessings to look forward to? That people, as created beings, are born with two commendable things in their humanity, and that if you can make use of them, it will ensure that you—to the most minimal degree—follow God. Do you know what those two things are? (Conscience and reason.) Correct. There are two things that are most valuable within man's humanity—when people do not understand the truth, when they have very poor caliber, and they are devoid of any knowledge or entry regarding God's requirements and the truth, and they can still stand fast in their station, what is the basic precondition that allows them to achieve this? They must have the conscience and reason of normal humanity. The answer, then, is clear. Since people do not pursue the truth, and have no desire or ambition to be blessed, since they have been stripped of their desire to be blessed, if they can still follow God and fulfill their duties, on what basis do they do so? What is motivating them? There is no basis or motivation for their actions—so long as people possess the conscience and reason of normal humanity, they can do these things. This is how things stand now: You do not understand the truth, that is a fact—and your understanding of doctrines is useless, it does not mean that you have entered into the truth reality. You know that attempting to strike a deal with God in order to pursue prospects and destiny for yourself is wrong, but what would be really remarkable is if you were still happy to follow God and perform your duty after the pursuit of prospects and destiny, and the desire to be blessed have been condemned and stripped from you. If you were able to follow God without having gained the truth, what would that depend on? It would depend on your conscience and reason. A person's conscience and reason can sustain their normal existence, life, and treatment of people and things. So, what is the gap between performing your duty based on your conscience and reason and practicing the truth? The manifestation of a person who pursues the truth is that they view people and things, and comport themselves and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as their criterion, whereas those who just act based on their conscience and reason may not pursue the truth, but they can still labor, perform their duties, and remain in God's house, without any bad marks on their record. What does that depend on? They view people and things, and they comport themselves and act, based on the criteria of their conscience and reason, rather than doing so according to God's words, with the truth as their criterion.

So, with that in mind, if you merely perform your duty based on your conscience and reason, is there not a gap between that and pursuing the truth? (There is.) To perform a duty based on one's conscience and reason is to be content with just laboring; it is to take as one's standards things such as laboring well, not causing disruptions or disturbances, obeying and submitting, possessing good behaviors and good relationships with other people, and having no bad marks on one's record. Does that rise to the level of pursuing the truth? It does not. No matter how many good behaviors a person possesses, if they do not have any knowledge at all of their corrupt dispositions, nor any knowledge of their rebelliousness, notions, misconceptions about God, and their various negative states; and if it is impossible for them to resolve these things; if it is impossible for them to understand the principles of practicing the truth; and if not one of their outpourings of corrupt dispositions has been resolved; and if they are still arrogant and self-righteous, arbitrary and reckless, crooked and deceitful, and there are times when they even grow negative and weak and doubt God, and so on—if these things still exist within them, can they achieve true submission to God? If there are still these corrupt dispositions inside them, will they be able to truly experience God's work? If a person merely possesses good behaviors, is that a manifestation of the pursuit of the truth? (It is not.) What are the best things in man? Merely man's conscience and reason; these are the only two positive things, and they are what is commendable in man. However, neither of them is related to the truth; they are no more than the most basic preconditions for man's pursuit of the truth, meaning that if you possess the normal conscience and reason of humanity, and you are able to understand the truth, you will be able to make the correct choices when things befall you. The conscience and reason that man possesses is this: God is the Lord of creation, and you are a created being; God has chosen you, so it is only right that you devote yourself and expend yourself for God, and it is only right that you listen to His words. This "only right" is determined by your conscience and reason—but have you listened to God's words? What are the principles and methods behind your actions? You have a corrupt disposition—have you forsaken it? Have you resolved it? Such things have nothing to do with what is "only right." If you do not go any further than this foundation of what is only right to do and how it is only right to act, and you live amid the parameters of what is "only right," is that not an effect of your conscience and reason? (It is.) Your conscience tells you, "God has saved me, so I should expend myself for Him. God has saved my life and given me a second one, so it is only right that I repay His love. God is the Lord of creation, and I am a created being, so I ought to submit to His arrangements." Is this not an effect of your conscience and reason? (It is.) The various behaviors, modes of practice, attitudes, and views that arise in people due to the effect of their conscience and reason go no further than the parameters of what their conscience and reason are naturally capable of, and they fall short of practicing the truth. Is that not so? (It is.) Some people may say, for instance, "God's house has exalted me by allowing me to perform a duty, and God's house feeds

me, clothes me, and sees to my housing. God's house takes care of every aspect of my life. I've enjoyed so much of God's grace, so I should repay His love; I shouldn't deceive God by being perfunctory in my duty, much less should I do anything disruptive or disturbing. I am willing to submit to whatever God's house arranges for me. Whatever God's house has me do, I won't complain." This kind of declaration is fine; is it not quite easy for someone with conscience and reason to do this? (It is.) Can it rise to the level of practicing the truth? (It cannot.) It falls short of practicing the truth. Therefore, no matter how noble of conscience or normal of reason someone is, or whether they are able to do everything under the governance of their conscience and reason, and regardless of how proper and decent their actions are, or how much others admire these actions, they go no further than being good human behaviors. They can only be classified within the realm of good human behaviors; they fundamentally fall short of being the practice of the truth. When you base your interactions with others on your reason, you will be a little more gentle in speech, and you will not attack others, or get angry, you will not suppress, or control, or bully, or seek leverage over other people, and so on—these are all things that can be achieved by the reason of normal humanity—but are they related to practicing the truth? No, they are not. They are things that can be achieved by man's reason, and there is a certain distance between them and the truth.

Why do I say that acting based on one's conscience and reason is unrelated to practicing the truth? I will give an example. Say that a person has been kind to you, and you are on good terms with them, and they accept God's work of the last days, and then spread the gospel to you—which is the same as God using them to spread the gospel to you. After you have accepted God's new work, you feel even more grateful toward them, and always wish to repay them. So, you give them a bit of leeway in whatever you do, and in whatever you say to them, you are always particularly polite. You are especially respectful, deferential, and tolerant toward them, and no matter what bad things they do, or whatever their character is like, you are patient and accommodating toward them, so much so that whenever they reach out to you for assistance when they are facing a challenge, you help them unconditionally. Why would you do this? What is affecting your actions? (My conscience.) This is done as an effect of your conscience. This effect of your conscience cannot be called positive or negative; all one can say is that you have a conscience and a bit of humanity, and that when someone is kind to you, you are grateful and repay them. From that perspective, you are an alright person. But if we were to measure this using the truth, we might come to a different conclusion. Suppose that one day, that person does evil and they are going to be cleared out by the church, and you still measure them using your conscience, and say, "They were the one who spread the gospel to me. I won't forget their kindness as long as I live; if it weren't for them, I wouldn't be where I am now. Even though they did evil today, I can't expose them. Even though I saw that what they did was wrong, I can't say so, because they have helped me so much. I may not be able to repay them, but I can't attack them. If

someone else wants to report them, they can go ahead, but I won't. I can't rub salt into their wounds—if I did, what sort of person would that make me? Wouldn't it make me a person without a conscience? Isn't a person without a conscience simply a beast?" What do you think? What is the effect that conscience has in circumstances like that? Is the effect that conscience has there not in violation of the truth? (It is.) We can see from this that sometimes, the effects of one's conscience are constrained and influenced by their feelings, and as a result, their decisions conflict with the truth principles. As such, we can see one fact clearly: The effect of one's conscience is inferior to the standard of the truth, and sometimes people violate the truth while acting based on their consciences. If you believe in God, but do not live by the truth, and instead act based on your conscience, can you do evil and resist God? You will truly be able to do some evil things—it absolutely cannot be said that it is never wrong to act based on one's conscience. This shows that if one wishes to satisfy God and conform with His will, merely acting based on one's conscience is greatly insufficient. One must act based on the truth in order to fulfill God's demands. When you treat your conscience as the truth and regard it as superior to all else, where have you placed the truth, then? You have replaced it with your conscience; is that not resisting the truth? Is that not opposing the truth? If you live by your conscience, you can violate the truth, and to violate the truth is to resist God. There are many people who take their consciences as the standards for their speech and actions after coming to believe in God, and comport themselves based on their consciences, too. Is acting based on one's conscience practicing the truth, or is it not? Can one's conscience stand in for the truth? In what way, exactly, is acting based on one's conscience different from acting based on the truth? Some people always insist on acting based on their consciences, and think that they are a person who pursues the truth. Is that view right? (It is not.) Can the feelings of a person's conscience stand in for the truth? (They cannot.) What mistake are these people making? (Contravening the truth, which is resisting God.) That is right. They equate the feelings of their consciences with the truth, which makes them liable to violate the truth. This kind of person always views people and things, and comports themselves and acts based on the standard of their conscience, with their conscience as their criterion. They are entangled and controlled by their conscience, and at the same time, their reason is controlled by it too. If someone is controlled by their conscience, can they still seek the truth and practice according to it? They cannot. Can conscience stand in for the truth, then? It cannot. Some may ask, "Since we can't use our consciences to measure how we treat other people, and we can't treat our consciences as the truth, is it right to use the standards of our consciences to measure how we treat God?" This question is worthy of consideration. In any case, a person's conscience cannot stand in for the truth. If you do not possess the truth and you approach God based on your conscience, that would be considered fine according to human standard, but you will not be able to achieve love or submission toward God by relying on this standard—at the very most, you will be able

to avoid violating the truth or resisting God, which is quite good in itself. Some may say, “You don’t need to use your conscience with other people, and you don’t need to use your conscience with God, either.” Is that right, or not? From the perspective of doctrines and theory, it seems wrong, does it not? Then, use the truth to measure it—does it look right to you? Does God tell people to approach Him using their consciences? What does God require of man? How does He require man to approach Him? You may have a conscience, but are you sincere? If you have a conscience but are not sincere, that just will not do. What God requires is that man approaches Him with sincerity. It is written in the Bible, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). What does God require? (That people love God with all their hearts, and with all their minds, and with all their souls.) What does God want from people? (Their sincerity.) Correct. Has God said, “You must love Me with your consciences and reason, and your instincts”? Did God say that? (No, He didn’t.) Why does God not say that? (Because conscience is not the truth.) What is conscience? (The lowest standard of humanity.) That is right, conscience and reason are the lowest and most basic standards of humanity. How can you tell whether a person is good, and whether they have humanity? How can you measure this? With what do you measure this? The lowest and most basic standard is whether that person has a conscience and reason. That is the standard by which you can measure whether a person possesses humanity. What, then, is the standard for measuring whether a person pursues the truth? You can tell if a person pursues the truth or not based on whether they have a conscience and reason—are these words the truth? Are they right? (No.) Then what is it God wants from man? (Sincerity.) God wants man’s sincerity. What is that sincerity made up of? What should one do to demonstrate sincerity? If one merely says when they pray that they offer their sincerity up to God, but afterward, they do not sincerely expend themselves for God or perform their duty loyally, is that sincerity? That is not sincerity—that is deception. So, what behavior is a manifestation of sincerity? What is the specific practice? Do you know? Is it not an attitude of submission toward God? (It is.) A person is only sincere if they have an attitude of submission. Is this not far superior to conscience? Man’s conscience and reason are not even close to sincerity, there is a distance between them. People’s consciences and reason are no more than the most basic conditions for maintaining their existence, their normal lives, and their relationships with other people. If people were to lose their consciences and reason, they would not be capable of existing, or having normal lives, or relationships with other people at even the most basic level. Just look at those people who have no conscience or reason, those evil people—would anyone in a group willingly interact with them? (No.) No one would willingly interact with them. What do people feel while interacting with them? Disgust, loathing—they may even feel afraid, constrained, and bound by them. Such people do not even possess the conscience and reason of normal humanity, and no one would willingly interact with them. Tell Me, would God save these people? (No.)

If an evil person responds to anyone who offends them by saying: “Should the circumstances ever permit it, I’ll kill you—I’ll destroy you!” then regardless of whether they are actually capable of doing those things, does the fact that they could say such things not make them an evil person? (It does.) So, what sort of person are they, whose words invoke fear in others? Are they someone with conscience and reason? (No.) And do those without conscience and reason have humanity? (No.) Who would dare to interact with the sort of evil person that has no humanity? Do those evil people have normal relationships with other people? (They do not.) What is the condition of their relationships with other people? Everyone fears them, everyone is restricted and constrained by them—they wish to bully every person that they meet, and to punish everyone. Do such people have normal humanity? No one dares to interact with this sort of person, who does not possess conscience and reason. They cannot even live a normal human life, so they are no different from devils and beasts. In groups, they are always lashing out at others, punishing one person and then another. In the end, everyone keeps their distance from them, everyone avoids them. How frightening they must be! They are even incapable of normal human relationships and they cannot gain a foothold within a group—what sort of thing are they? Such people do not even possess humanity—can they pursue the truth? (No.) What sort of person has no humanity? Beasts, devils. God bestows the truths that He expresses upon humankind, not on beasts and devils. Only those with conscience and reason are fit to be called human. Tell Me again: Is being possessed of conscience and reason all that it takes for a person to completely live out normal humanity? One may say that there remains a gap, because people have corrupt dispositions. They must pursue the truth before they can get rid of their corrupt dispositions and live out normal humanity. Some may say, “I have conscience and reason. So long as I make sure to do no evil, I’ll possess the truth reality.” Is that right? If someone has conscience and reason, that does not mean that they are already pursuing the truth—and neither does the fact that they are living by their conscience and reason. So, what are conscience and reason, exactly? Man’s conscience and reason are merely the most basic markers and qualities of humanity that people must possess to pursue the truth. Living by these two things does not mean that a person is pursuing the truth, and less still does it prove that they possess the truth reality. From the example that I just spoke about, it can be seen that when one views people and things, and comports themselves and acts based on their conscience and reason, they are liable to violate the truth and the principles. They fall far short of the standard of doing those things according to God’s words, with the truth as one’s criterion. Therefore, no matter how much conscience you possess, and no matter how normal your reason is, if you cannot view people and things, and comport yourself and act according to God’s words, with the truth as your criterion, you are not pursuing the truth. Likewise, no matter how much you suffer and labor within the scope of the instincts of your conscience and reason, it cannot be said that you are pursuing the truth.

We just analyzed three things, all of which were biases and misunderstandings that people have about the pursuit of the truth. Tell Me, what were those three things? (The first was that people mistake things that they hold in their notions to be good, right, and positive for the truth, and use them as their standards—supplanting God's requirements of man, and the requirements and standards of His words—after which, they pursue and practice those things. The second was that, upon the foundation of people clinging to fallacious understandings, they try to strike deals with God while harboring desires and ambitions. People believe that once they have satisfied God and God is happy, God will bestow His promise upon them. The third was that people believe that by comporting themselves and acting based on their consciences and reason, they are already practicing the truth.) Putting those three things aside, what exactly does it mean to pursue the truth? Let us return to our definition of the pursuit of the truth: "To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion." These words are enough to make people understand what it means to pursue the truth and how to do so. We have already spoken a lot about what it means to pursue the truth. How, then, does one pursue it? We have fellowshiped a great deal about that, both right now and previously: Whether you are viewing people and things, or comporting yourself and acting, it must be according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. That is the pursuit of the truth. Anything else that is unrelated to these words is not the pursuit of the truth. Of course, if, "to view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion," is not directed at man's corrupt dispositions, it does address some of man's thoughts, views, and notions. And if it addresses these things, and it is meant to achieve the goal of enabling man to practice according to the truth principles, and to submit to God's words and the truth, then naturally, that will be its ultimate effect. "To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion," is quite clear and explicit. The path that it ultimately gives people enables them to cast off their biases in their practices, and to let go of their desires and ambitions. At the same time, people must not live in hiding behind a belief that they are superior, that they possess humanity, and conscience and reason, and use this to supplant the principle of practice of taking God's words as one's basis, and the truth as one's criterion. Whatever justifications you have, whatever strengths and advantages you possess, they are not sufficient to supplant viewing people and things, and comporting yourself and acting according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. That is an absolute certainty. By contrast, if the starting point for your views on people and things, and your comportment and actions is completely according to God's words, with the truth as your principles of practice, then you are practicing the truth. Otherwise, you are not. In sum, people living amid human notions and imaginings, acting with the intent to strike deals, or constantly supplanting the pursuit of the truth and its practice with the belief that they possess a great deal of good moral conduct—such approaches

are all foolish. None of them are manifestations of the pursuit of the truth, and ultimately, the outcome of these foolish approaches will be that people do not understand the truth, that they are unable to comprehend God's will, and that they are incapable of embarking on the road of salvation. Do you understand? (Yes.) Of course, among those who do not pursue the truth—apart from those who cannot be saved—there are some who are willing to be service-doers that will survive. This is quite fine, it can be regarded as a good alternative to not pursuing the truth. Which path you choose in particular is up to you. Perhaps some people will say, "After all that fellowship, You still haven't told us how to view people and things, or how to comport oneself and act." Did I not? (You did.) What should one view people and things, and comport themselves and act according to? (According to God's words.) And with what as one's criterion? (With the truth as one's criterion.) What are God's words, then? Where is the truth? (God's words are the truth.) There are so many words of God, they tell people about every aspect of how to view people and things, and how to comport themselves and act, so we will not go into detail about these things now. Read once again what it means to pursue the truth. (What does it mean to pursue the truth? To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion.) You must inscribe these words in your hearts, and use them as your life motto. Take them out often so that you may think about them and consider them; hold your behavior, your attitude in life, your views on things, and your intents and goals up against them for comparison. You will then be able to clearly feel what your true state is, and what the essence of the dispositions you pour forth is. Compare them to these words, and take these words as your principles of practice, and as the path and direction for your practice. When you pursue in this way, when you are able to completely enter into and live out these words, you will understand what it means to pursue the truth. Naturally, when you enter into the reality of these words, you will have already embarked on the path of pursuing the truth. When you embark on the path of pursuing the truth, what would come of it? The distress caused by the disturbance, control, and constraints of your corrupt disposition will become increasingly lighter. Why is that? Because you will feel that you have a path for resolving your corrupt disposition, and that there is hope for you to be saved. Only then will you feel that a life of truly believing in God and eating and drinking of His words is fulfilling, peaceful, and joyful. After many years of believing in God, those who do not love the truth still feel that life is very hollow, and that there is nothing for them to rely on. Often, they even feel that it is truly painful to live within a corrupt disposition, and though they wish to cast it off, they cannot. They remain forever constrained, fettered, and bound by their corrupt disposition, which causes them great distress, yet they have no path at all to follow. These bitter days of theirs are endless. If they could accept the truth and attain salvation, then these bitter days would pass. However, the results of all this depend on your future pursuit and entry.

January 29, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (3)

These days, those performing duties are getting busier and busier. They feel that time is going by too fast, that there isn't enough of it. Why is that? The fact is that it's because they now understand the truth and have insight into many matters. A sense of responsibility weighs more and more on them, and they are performing their duties ever more assiduously, doing ever more detailed work. So, they feel there are more and more duties they should perform. That's why they are getting busier and busier with their duties. And apart from that, every day, most who perform duties must also read God's words and fellowship about the truth. They must reflect on themselves, and when a problem befalls them, they must seek the truth to resolve it. They must learn some professional skills, as well. They always feel there isn't enough time, that each day goes by too fast. At night, they think through what they did that day, and it seems to them that what they did didn't have much value, that nothing great came of it. They feel so small of stature and deficient, and they are eager to grow quickly in stature. Some of them say, "When will the busyness of this work be done? When will I be able to quiet my heart and read God's words properly, and properly furnish myself with the truth? There's such a limit to what I gain from one or two gatherings a week. We should be gathering more and listening to more sermons—that's the only way to understand the truth." So they wait and yearn, and in the blink of an eye, three, four, five years have gone by, and they feel that time goes too fast. Some people can't offer much experiential testimony even after ten years of belief. They get restive, afraid they will be abandoned, and wish hurriedly to equip themselves with more of the truth. That is why they feel the press of time. There are many who think in this way. All who carry the burden of performing a duty and who pursue the truth feel that time goes by so quickly. Those who do not love the truth, who covet comfort and enjoyments, don't feel that time moves quickly; some of them even complain, "When will God's day come? They're always saying His work is reaching its end—why hasn't it ended yet? When will God's work expand throughout the universe?" People who say such things feel that time moves so slowly. At heart, they are uninterested in the truth; they wish always to go back out into the world and get on with their little lives. This state of theirs is obviously different from that of people who pursue the truth. No matter how busy people who pursue the truth are with their duties, they can still seek the truth to resolve problems that befall them, and seek fellowship about things that are unclear to them in sermons they have heard, and quiet their hearts daily to reflect on how they performed, then consider God's words and watch videos of experiential testimony. They gain things from this. No matter how busy they are with their duties, it doesn't hamper their life entry at all, nor does it delay it. It is natural for people who love the truth to practice in this way. People who do not love the truth do not seek the truth and are unwilling to quiet themselves before God to reflect on themselves and know themselves, regardless of whether they are busy with their duty and of what problems

befall them. So, no matter whether they are busy or at leisure in their duty, they do not pursue the truth. The fact is that if someone is of a heart to pursue the truth, and longs for the truth, and carries the burden of life entry and dispositional change, then they will grow closer to God at heart and pray to Him, however busy they are with their duty. They are sure to gain some of the enlightenment and brilliance of the Holy Spirit, and their life will grow without cease. If someone does not love the truth and does not carry any of the burden of life entry or dispositional change, or if they are uninterested in these things, then they cannot gain anything. Reflecting on what outpourings one has of corruption is a thing to be done anywhere, at any time. For instance, if one has poured forth corruption while performing their duty, then in their heart, they must pray to God, and reflect on themselves, and know their corrupt disposition, and seek the truth to resolve it. This is a matter of the heart; it has no bearing on the task at hand. Is this easy to do? That depends on whether you are someone who pursues the truth. People who do not love the truth are uninterested in matters of growth in life. They do not consider such things. It is only people who pursue the truth who are willing to apply themselves to growth in life; it is only they who frequently ponder problems that actually exist, and how to seek the truth to resolve those problems. In fact, the process of resolving problems and that of pursuing the truth are the same thing. If one is constantly focused on seeking the truth to resolve problems while performing their duty, and has resolved quite a few problems over several years of such practice, then their performance of their duty is certainly up to standard. Such people have many fewer outpourings of corruption, and they have gained much true experience in performing their duties. They are thus able to testify for God. How do such people undergo the experience that began when they first took up their duty, until they were able to testify for God? They do so by relying on seeking the truth to resolve problems. That’s why no matter how busy people who pursue the truth are with their duties, they will seek the truth to resolve problems and succeed in performing their duties according to the principles, and they will be able to practice the truth and submit to God. This is the process of life entry, and it is also the process of entering the truth reality. Some people are always saying they are so busy with their duties that they have no time to pursue the truth. This doesn’t hold. With someone who pursues the truth, whatever work they may be doing, as soon as they detect a problem, they will seek the truth to resolve it, and come to understand and gain the truth. That is a certainty. There are many who think the truth can only be understood by gathering daily. This could not be more wrong. The truth is not a thing that can be understood merely by gathering and listening to sermons; one also needs to practice and experience God’s words, and they also need that process of discovering and resolving problems. What is crucial is that they must learn to seek the truth. Those who do not love the truth do not seek it, whatever problems befall them; lovers of the truth seek it, no matter how busy they are with their duties. So, we can say with certainty that those people who are always complaining that they’re so busy with their duties that they have no time to gather,

so they consequently have to put off their pursuit of the truth, are not lovers of the truth. They are people of absurd comprehension who do not understand spiritual matters. When they read God's words or listen to sermons, why can they not practice or apply them in their performance of their duties? Why can they not apply God's words to their real lives? This suffices to show that they do not love the truth, and so whatever difficulty they may encounter in performing their duties, they do not seek or practice the truth. Clearly, these people are service-doers. Some people may wish to pursue the truth, but their caliber is too poor. They cannot even arrange their own lives well; when they have two or three things to do, they do not know which to do first and which last. If two or three problems befall them, they do not know how to resolve them. Their heads spin. Can such people gain access to the truth? Can they succeed in seeking the truth to resolve problems? Not necessarily, because their caliber is too poor. Many people are willing to pursue the truth, yet having believed in God for ten or twenty years, they wind up unable to offer any experiential testimony, and they have gained no truth at all. The main reason for this is that their caliber is too poor. Whether someone pursues the truth is not a matter of how busy they are with their duty or how much time they have; it depends on whether they love the truth at heart. The fact is that everyone has the same abundance of time; what's different is where each person spends it. It is possible that anyone who says they do not have time to pursue the truth is spending their time on fleshly enjoyments, or that they are busy with some external endeavor. They do not spend that time on seeking the truth to resolve problems. This is how people are who are negligent in their pursuit. This delays the great matter of their life entry.

In our last two gatherings, we fellowshiped on the topic of "What It Means to Pursue the Truth," as well as some specifics that topic entails. Let's begin by going over what we fellowshiped about in our last gathering. We established an accurate definition of "What It Means to Pursue the Truth," then went on to fellowship about some specific problems and specific ways people behave that are involved in what it means to pursue the truth. What was the final item of our fellowship in our last gathering? (God put forth a question: Given that what man holds to be good and right is not the truth, why does he still pursue them as if they were the truth?) Given that those things man holds to be good and right are not the truth, why does he still uphold them as if they were, while thinking himself to be pursuing the truth? We fellowshiped last time on three things that address this question. The first: These things man pursues are not the truth, so why does he still practice them as if they were? Because to man, the things he sees as right and good seem as if they were the truth, so man pursues those things he thinks are good and right as if they were the truth. Is that not a clear way to put it? (It is.) So, what is the accurate answer to this question? People uphold the things they think are right and good as if they were the truth, and in doing so, think they are pursuing the truth. Is that not the full answer? (It is.) The second: Why, in upholding things he thinks are good and right as if they were the truth, does man think he is pursuing the truth? This may be answered

thus: Because man has a desire to be blessed. Man goes into pursuing these things he holds to be right and good with desire and ambition, and thus thinks he is practicing and pursuing the truth. In essence, this is trying to strike a bargain with God. The third: If a person is possessed of normal conscience and reason, then in cases where they do not understand the truth, they will instinctively choose to act according to their conscience and reason, following regulations, laws, rules, and so on. We may say that man instinctively upholds the things he considers in his conscience to be positive, constructive, and aligned with humanity, as though they were the truth. This can be achieved within the parameters of man's conscience and reason. There are many who can give their labor normally in God's house; they are willing to render service and submit to the arrangements of God's house because they are possessed of normal conscience and reason. In order to gain blessings, they will even undergo suffering and pay any price. So, man also takes what he is capable of within the parameters of his conscience and reason to be the practice and pursuit of the truth. These are the three main pieces to the answer to that question. Last time, we fellowshiped about these three pieces in a general way; today, we will conduct specific, detailed fellowship about the problems these three points leave in their wake, and analyze the problems that each point entails, as well as how each element is different from, or in conflict with, the pursuit of the truth, so that you may know more clearly what it is to pursue the truth and how, exactly, that pursuit is to be practiced. Doing so will act as a better incentive for people to practice and pursue the truths accurately in their daily lives.

We'll begin by fellowshiping about the first item. Simply put, our fellowship for the first item will focus on things that man holds in his notions to be right and good. Why should our fellowship focus on that content? What are the problems that content entails? Think about that first, in detail. Would you be capable of accurate knowledge of them if we didn't properly fellowship about it in gatherings? If we did no specific fellowship about it, and you just went by your contemplation of it, or if you spent time experiencing it and getting to know it? Would you then know what truths this content touches on? Would you be able to figure those out with contemplation? (No.) We'll begin by considering the literal words of the phrase "things that man holds in his notions to be right and good" and see how far your knowledge of it goes. First, what does the important part of this phrase, which we're going to fellowship about, address? Can you not tell? Is it an abstract phrase? Is there a mystery to it? (It addresses notions and imaginings in man.) That's a general way to put it; give an example. (Man believes in his notions that so long as he can renounce, expend of himself, suffer, and pay prices, he will be able to meet with God's approval. There's some traditional culture, too—things like filial piety and women attending to their husbands and raising their children. People take these to be good things, too.) You got a few of them. Have you caught the point? What parts are there that touch on our topic? (Renunciation, expenditure, suffering, and price-paying.) (Filial piety, and women attending to their husbands and raising their children.) Yes. Is there

more? (A show of devoutness, patience, and tolerance, like the Pharisees.) Humility, patience, tolerance—it has to do with a few specific, behavioral demonstrations and sayings. Since we're going to fellowship about such content, we'd best fellowship specifically, using specific sayings. People can gain a more accurate and precise understanding if we focus like that on the question. As of now, you can't offer any leads, so I'll just go ahead and fellowship, alright? (Yes.) China's five thousand years of culture is "vast and profound," replete with all manner of popular sayings and idioms. It also has a host of vaunted "ancient sages," such as Confucius, Mencius, and the like. They created the Chinese teachings of Confucianism, which comprise the main part of traditional Chinese culture. There's a lot of language, vocabulary, and sayings in Chinese traditional culture that were drawn up by generations of people. Some of them allude to antiquity, some don't; some of them come from common folk, and others from famous men. It may be that you don't like traditional culture much, or you've removed yourself from base, traditional culture, or you're young enough not yet to have engaged in deep study or research of China's "vast and profound" traditional culture, and that's why you don't yet know about it or understand such things. That's actually a good thing. Though one may not understand it, their thinking and notions are subliminally inculcated and infected by the things of traditional culture. They end up living by those things without their knowing it. That which is passed down from the forebears, meaning the traditional culture passed down from man's forefathers, makes many claims of all sorts about how man should speak, act, and comport himself. And though people may have different understandings and views of traditional culture's various statements, they're by and large sure about such things of traditional culture. From this observation, we can see that the sources of influence on mankind's life and existence, on its view of people and things, and on its comportment and action are all things of traditional culture. Although the various ethnicities of mankind differ in their statements about the moral standards and moral criteria they uphold, the general ideas behind them are alike. Today, we will fellowship about and analyze a few of them in detail. Though we won't be able to mention and analyze everything that man holds to be right and good, their general content is nothing else than those two elements touched on in the definition of pursuing the truth: one's views on people and things, and how one comports oneself and acts. One is views, the other is behaviors. This means that man regards the people and events of the world through things he holds in his notions to be right and good, and he takes those things as the foundation, basis, and criteria by which he comports himself and acts. So, what, exactly, are these good and right things? Put broadly, the things man holds in his notions to be right and good are nothing but requirements that man behave well and that he have good human morals and character. It's those two things. Think on it: Is it not basically those two things? (It is.) One is good behavior; the other is human character and morals. Mankind has basically established two things as the standards by which to measure the humanity with which someone lives and how they comport themselves:

One is the requirement for man to behave well externally, the other is that he conduct himself morally. They use these two factors to measure a person's goodness. Because they use these two factors to measure a person's goodness, standards by which to judge people's behavior and morals arose to that end, and as they did, people naturally began to hear all sorts of statements about man's moral conduct or his behavior. What specific sayings are there? Do you know? Something simple, for example: What standards and sayings are there for measuring people's behavior? Being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined—these have to do with outward behaviors. Is being courteous one? (Yes.) The rest are similar, more or less, and by analogy, you'll know which words and statements are standards for measuring man's behavior, and which statements are standards for measuring his morals. Now, "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral"—is that a standard for external behavior or morals? (It's about morals and ethics.) How about magnanimity? (That's about morals, too.) That's right. These have to do with morals, with man's moral character. The main statements that have to do with man's behavior are those such as being courteous, being gentle and refined, and being well-educated and sensible. These are all things that man holds in his notions to be right and good; they are things he believes are positive, based on the claims of traditional culture, or at least in line with conscience and reason, not negative things. What we're talking about here are things that people generally acknowledge to be right and good. So, what other statements are there about man's good behavior, apart from the three I just said? (Respecting the old and caring for the young.) Respecting the old and caring for the young, being amiable, being approachable—these are all things people are somewhat familiar with and understand. Being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined, being courteous, respecting the old and caring for the young, being amiable, being approachable—in man's mind, everyone with these behaviors is believed to be a good person, a kind person, a person with humanity. Everyone measures others based on their behavior; they judge someone's goodness by their external behavior. People judge, determine, and measure whether a person is cultivated and has humanity, whether they are worthy of interaction and of trust, according to the thoughts and ideas of traditional culture and the behaviors of that person they can see. Do people have the ability to penetrate the material world? Not a bit of it. People can only judge and distinguish whether a person is good or bad, or what sort of person they are, by their behavior; only by interacting, talking, and collaborating with someone can people observe and determine those things. Regardless of whether you explicitly use statements such as "Be well-educated and sensible," "Be amiable," and "Respect the old and care for the young" in your measurements, the standards of your measurements do not go beyond these statements. When someone cannot see another's internal world, they measure whether they are good or bad, noble or base, by observing their behavior and actions and applying these criteria for behavior. These are essentially all they use. Is that not so? (It is.) Based on the statements just outlined, what standards for measurement does

mankind have? What are the things mankind holds to be good and right in its notions? Rather than beginning with stuff about moral conduct, let us begin our fellowship and analysis with the good, right, and positive things that man pours forth and manifests in his behavior. Let us look at whether these truly are positive things. So, is there anything in the statements we just listed that touches on the truth? Is any of their content in accord with the truth? (No.) If someone's pursuit is to be such a person, a person with such behaviors and such an exterior, is that person pursuing the truth? Is what they pursue related to the pursuit of the truth? Is someone possessed of these behaviors practicing and pursuing the truth? Is someone possessed of these behaviors and demonstrations a good person, in the term's true significance? The answer is negative—they are not. This is plain to see.

Let's look first at the statement that one is to be well-educated and sensible. Talk about what the statement "Being well-educated and sensible" means on its own. (It describes someone who is fairly seemly and well-mannered.) What does it mean to be "seemly"? (It means to be somewhat regulated.) Correct. What regulations does such a person heed? The more specific your answer, the more thorough your understanding of this matter and its essence will be. So, what does it mean to be regulated? Here's an example. When eating, the younger generation must not sit until their elders are seated, and they must stay quiet when their elders are not speaking. With food left for the elders, none may eat it unless the elders say so. Beyond that, no talking while eating, or baring one's teeth, or loud laughter, or lip-smacking, or any rummaging around the plate. When the elder generation has finished, the younger must stop eating at once and stand up. They may only continue eating once they have seen their elders off. Is this not the observance of regulations? (It is.) These regulations are there, to greater or lesser extents, in every home and household, in families of every name and lineage. People all observe these regulations, to a greater or lesser extent, and as they do, they are restricted by them. There are different regulations in different families—and who is it who set them? That family's forebears and venerable elders of different eras past set them. They take on special importance when celebrating important holidays and days of memorial; everyone must then follow them, without exception for anyone. If someone should break the regulations or violate them, they will be severely punished by the family's strictures. Some may even have to kneel for forgiveness at the family altar. That's what regulations are. What we were talking about just now were merely some of the regulations that may apply in a given household or family. Are such regulations not a part of what it means to be "seemly"? (They are.) One can tell whether a person is seemly just by watching them eat. If they smack their lips when they eat, or pick at the food, or are always serving morsels to others, and talking while eating, and loudly laughing, and even, in some cases, pointing at whom they're speaking to with their chopsticks, then in all of this, they are demonstrating their unseemliness. To say a person is unseemly implies that others admonish, question, and despise them in terms of their behavior. As for those who are seemly, they do not

speak when eating, or giggle, nor do they pick through the food or serve morsels to others. They are quite regulated. Others see their behavior and performance, and say on that basis that this is a seemly person. And because of this seemliness of theirs, they gain the respect and esteem of others, as well as their fondness. This is a part of what underlies seemliness. So, what is seemliness, really? We just said: “Seemliness” has to do only with people’s behavior. In these last examples, say, there has been an order of generational precedence when eating. Everyone must locate their seats according to the regulations; they must not sit in the wrong spot. The elder and younger generations alike follow the family regulations, which no one may violate, and they seem so regulated, so genteel, so noble, so dignified—yet no matter how much they may seem so, it all comes back to mere outward good behavior. Does this involve corrupt dispositions? No; it is no more than a standard by which to measure people’s outward behaviors. What behaviors? Mainly their speech and actions. For instance, one shouldn’t talk when eating or make noise while chewing. When sitting for a meal, there is an order to who sits first. There are proper ways to stand and sit in general. All these are no more than behaviors, external behaviors, all of them. So, are people really willing to follow these regulations? What do people think to themselves about the issue? How do they feel about it? Is following these pathetic regulations of benefit to people? Can they confer on them advancement in life? What is the problem with following these pathetic regulations? Does it have to do with the issue of whether there is a change in someone’s outlook on things and life disposition? Not at all. It has to do only with people’s behavior. It just makes a few requirements of people’s behavior, requirements concerning which regulations people are to achieve and follow. Whatever someone may think of these regulations, and even if they hate and despise them, they have no choice but to live bound by them because of their family and forebears, and because of their domestic code. Yet no one sets out to investigate what specific thoughts people have about these regulations, or how people view and regard them in their thinking, or their outlook and attitude toward them. It’s enough for you to demonstrate good behavior and follow these rules in this specified ambit. Those who do so are seemly people. “Be well-educated and sensible” places its various demands only on people’s behavior. It is used only to delimit people’s behavior, behavior that encompasses people’s posture when sitting and standing, their bodily movements, the gestures of their sensory organs, how their eyes are to seem, how their mouth is to move, how their head is to turn, and so on. It gives people a standard for external behavior, without a care for how their minds, dispositions, and essence of their humanity are. Such is the standard of being well-educated and sensible. If you meet this standard, then you are a well-educated and sensible person, and if you are possessed of the good behavior that is being well-educated and sensible, then in the eyes of others, you are someone who calls for esteem and respect. Is that not how it is? (It is.) So, is this statement’s focus man’s behavior? (Yes.) What is the use, really, of this behavioral standard? Mainly, its use is to measure whether a person is seemly and well-regulated, whether they might earn others’ respect and

esteem in their dealings with them, and whether they are worthy of admiration. Measuring people in this way is entirely out of line with the truth principles. It is insignificant.

Our fellowship just now mainly had to do with a person's cultivation, which is one of the requirements imposed by the statement, "Be well-educated and sensible." What does "being sensible" refer to? (Showing an understanding of manners and etiquette.) That's a bit superficial, but it's part of it. Does "being sensible" not mean having the politesse to see reason, to be amenable to reason? May we go so far with it? (Yes.) To show an understanding of manners and etiquette, and to have the politesse to see reason. So, to put it all together, if someone is possessed of the behaviors entailed in "being well-educated and sensible," how, exactly, do they show it, on the whole? Have you seen a person who is well-educated and sensible? Is there a well-educated and sensible person among your elders and relations, or among your friends? What is their distinguishing feature? They follow an exceptional number of regulations. They are quite particular about their speech, which is neither coarse, nor crude, nor hurtful to others. When they sit, they seat themselves properly; when they stand, they stand with posture. In every regard, their behavior seems refined and poised to others, who feel fondness and envy to see them. When they meet people, they lower their head and incline their body, and they bow and genuflect. They speak politely, adhering strictly to the rules of public decency and order, without the habituality or hooliganism of the lower strata of society. On the whole, their external behavior elicits comfort and praise in those who see it. There's one troubling thing about this, though: There are regulations for everything to them. Eating has its regulations; sleeping has its regulations; walking has its regulations; even leaving home and coming back have regulations. One feels quite constrained and ill at ease when they're with such a person. You don't know when they're going to pop up with a regulation, and if you carelessly violate it, you look quite reckless and ignorant, while they appear so refined. They are just so refined even in their smile, which bares no teeth, and in their crying, which they never do in front of others, but in the folds of their blanket late at night, while others are asleep. Whatever they do, it's regulated. That's what's called "upbringing." Such people live in a land of etiquette, in a great big family; they have a great many regulations and a great deal of upbringing. However you put it, the good behaviors entailed in being well-educated and sensible are behaviors—outwardly good behaviors that are inculcated in a person by the environment in which they were raised, and gradually tempered into in a person by the high standards and strict requirements they place on their own behavior. Whatever influence such behaviors might exert on people, they touch on nothing more than man's outward behavior, and though such outward behaviors are held by man to be good behaviors, behaviors that people strive toward and approve of, they are a different thing from man's disposition. However good one's outward behavior is, it cannot cover up their corrupt disposition; however good one's outward behavior is, it cannot stand in for a change in their corrupt disposition. Though the behavior of a well-educated and sensible person is quite

regimented, eliciting quite a bit of others' respect and esteem, that good behavior of theirs is of no use at all when their corrupt disposition pours forth. However noble and mature their behavior may be, when something that touches on the truth principles befalls them, that good behavior of theirs is of no use at all, nor does it prompt them to understand the truth—instead, because they believe in their notions that being well-educated and sensible is a positive thing, they go on to take that thing as the truth, with which they measure and question the words God says. They measure their own speech and acts according to that statement, and it is their standard for measuring others, too. Look now at the definition of "What It Means to Pursue the Truth"—to view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as their criterion. Now, does the standard for external behavior that calls for being well-educated and sensible have anything at all to do with God's words and the truth? (No.) They're not just unrelated—they're in conflict. Where's the conflict there? (Such sayings would only have people focus on external good behavior while ignoring the intents and corrupt dispositions inside them. They make it so that people are beguiled by these good behaviors and don't reflect on what is in their own thoughts and ideas, and so that they're unable to see into their corrupt disposition, and even blindly envy and worship others according to their behavior.) Such are the consequences of accepting the statements of traditional culture. So, when man sees a performance of these good behaviors, he will treasure those behaviors. He begins by believing that these behaviors are good and positive things, and on the basis of their being positive things, he treats them as if they were the truth. Then, he uses this as the criterion by which he inhibits himself and measures others; he takes it as the basis for his views on people and things, and as he does, he also takes it as the basis for his comportment and actions. Is this not then in conflict with the truth? (It is.) We will put aside for now whether the statement that one is to be well-educated and sensible beguiles people and speak on the statement itself. "Be well-educated and sensible"—it's a civilized, noble phrase. Everyone likes this statement, and man uses this statement to measure others and to view people and things, founded on the assumption that it is right, good, and a criterion. And as he does, he also takes it as the basis for his comportment and actions. For instance, man does not base his measurement of someone's goodness in God's words. What does he base it on? "Is this person well-educated and sensible? Is their outward behavior cultivated? Are they well-regulated? Are they respectful of others? Do they have manners? Do they adopt a humble attitude when talking with others? Do they have the good behaviors as Kong Rong once did in giving up larger pears?[a] Is that the sort of person they are?" On

a. Kong Rong features in a well-known Chinese story, traditionally used to educate children about the values of courtesy and fraternal love. The story tells of how, when his family received a basket of pears, the four-year-old Kong Rong gave up the larger pears to his elder brothers and took the smallest for himself.

what basis do they raise these questions and views? It is firstly based on the criterion of being well-educated and sensible. Is it right of them to use that as their criterion? (No.) Why isn't it right? Such a simple answer, yet you cannot come up with it. Because that is not how God measures, and He would not have man do so. If man does so, he is mistaken. If someone should measure a person or an event in this way, if they use it as a standard with which to view people and things, they are violating the truth and God's words. That is the conflict between traditional notions and the truth. Is that not so? (It is.) In what does God have man base his measurements of others? According to what does He have man view people and things? (His words.) He has man view people according to His words. Specifically, this means measuring whether a person has humanity according to His words. That's part of it. Beyond that, it's based in whether that person loves the truth, whether they have a God-fearing heart, and whether they can submit to the truth. Are these not the specifics of it? (They are.) So, in what does man base his measurements of another's goodness? In whether they are cultivated and well regulated, in whether they smack their lips or tend to rummage around for morsels when they eat, in whether they wait for their elders to sit before seating themselves at meals. They use such things to measure others. Is using these things not using the standard for behavior as being well-educated and sensible? (It is.) Are such measurements accurate? Do they align with the truth? (They don't.) It's quite clear that they don't align with the truth. What, then, ultimately comes of such measuring? The measurer believes that anyone who is well-educated and sensible is a good person, and if you have them fellowship about the truth, they'll always be inculcating people with those domestic rules and teachings, and good behaviors. And what ultimately comes of their inculcating these things in people is that they will lead people into good behaviors, but those people's corrupt essence will not change at all. This way of doing things is a far departure from the truth and God's words. Such people are merely possessed of a few good behaviors. So, can the corrupt dispositions inside them be changed because of good behavior? Can they achieve submission and loyalty to God? Not by a long shot. Whom have these people turned into? Pharisees, who have only outward good behavior but fundamentally do not understand the truth, and who cannot submit to God. Is that not so? (It is.) Look at the Pharisees—by appearances, were they not impeccable? They kept the Sabbath; on the Sabbath, they did nothing. They were courteous in speech, quite well regulated and rule-abiding, quite cultivated, quite civilized and learned. Because they were good at disguise and did not fear God at all, but passed judgment on Him and condemned Him, they were cursed by Him in the end. God proclaimed them as hypocritical Pharisees, who are all evildoers. Likewise, the sort of people who use the good behavior of being well-educated and sensible as the criterion for their comportment and action are evidently not people who pursue the truth. When they use this rule to measure others, and to comport themselves and act, they are, of course, not pursuing the truth; and when they make a judgment about someone or something, the standard and basis for that judgment do not

align with the truth, but are in violation of it. The only thing they focus on is a person's behavior, their ways, not their disposition and essence. Their basis is not God's words, not the truth; instead, their measurements are based on this standard for behavior in traditional culture as being well-educated and sensible. The upshot of such measurement is that a person is good and in line with God's will to them, so long as that person has such external good behaviors as being well-educated and sensible. When people adopt such classifications, they have obviously taken an opposing stance to the truth and God's words. And the more use they make of this behavioral criterion to view people and things, and to comport themselves and act, what comes of it brings them all the further away from God's words and the truth. Even then, they enjoy what they are doing and believe that they are pursuing the truth. In upholding a few of the good statements of traditional culture, they believe that they are upholding the truth and the true way. Yet however they adhere to those things, however they insist on them, they will ultimately not have any experience or exposure to God's words, the truth, nor will they submit to God in the least. Less still can this give rise to true fear of God. That is what happens when people uphold any and all such good behaviors as being well-educated and sensible. The more man focuses on good behavior, on living it out, on pursuing it, the further his remove from God's words—and the further removed man is from the words of God, the less able he is to understand the truth. This is only to be expected. If someone's behavior improves, does that mean their disposition is changed? Do you have experience of this? Have you ever unconsciously sought to be well-educated, sensible people? (Yes.) That's because everyone understands that by being a well-educated, sensible person, one seems to others to be quite respectable and noble. Others regard them highly. That's how it is, yes? (Yes.) So, it shouldn't be a bad thing to be possessed of these good behaviors. But can gaining these good behaviors, these good displays, resolve man's corrupt disposition? Can it keep people from doing bad things? If not, what use is there in such good behaviors? It's just a good look; it's of no use. Can people with such good behavior submit to God? Can they accept and practice the truth? Clearly not. Good behavior cannot replace man's practice of the truth. It is just as it was with the Pharisees. Their behavior was great, and they were quite pious, but how did they treat the Lord Jesus? No one would have imagined that they could go on to crucify the Savior of mankind. So, those who only have outward good behaviors but have not gained the truth are in danger. They may go on as they have, resisting and betraying God. If you cannot see through this, you may yet be beguiled by people's good behavior, as ever.

Being well-educated and sensible is a traditional notion of man's. It is totally out of line with the truth. Given that it is in conflict with the truth, what exactly should man possess if he would put the truth into practice? What reality is it, which, when lived out, aligns with the truth and God's requirements? Do you know? With such fellowship, some may say, "You say being well-educated and sensible is out of line with the truth, that it's just an external good behavior. So, we just won't be well-educated, sensible people

anymore. Life will be more carefree, without any restraints, unconstrained by any rules. We'll be able to do what we want, live how we want. How carefree we'll be then! We're freer now, given that man's good behavior is unrelated to his outcome. We don't need to concern ourselves with cultivation, rules, or anything like that." Is that the right thing to take from this? (No.) It is an absurd apprehension; they make the mistake of going to extremes. So, is there anyone who would make such a mistake? There may be some who say, "Since cultivated people may still resist and betray God, I just won't be a cultivated person. I'm starting to feel contempt for cultivated people. I despise those who are well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, courteous, who respect the old and care for the young, who are amiable. I look down my nose at anyone I see who displays these things, and publicly rebuke them: 'Your behavior is that of the Pharisees. It's meant to beguile others. It's not pursuing the truth, much less practicing it. Stop trying to trick us—we won't be deceived by you or fall for your tricks!'" Would you act like that? (No.) It's right of you that you wouldn't. It would be so absurd of you, if you would do something so senseless. Some people of absurd understanding lack a pure comprehension of the truth—they don't have the comprehension ability. All they can do is follow rules, so that's how they act. So, why do we fellowship about and analyze this problem? Mainly, to get people to understand that to pursue the truth is not to pursue external good behavior, nor is it meant to make you a well-behaved, well-regulated, cultivated person. Rather, it is meant to have you understand the truth, practice it, and be able to act based on the truth, meaning that all you do has its basis in God's words, that it all aligns with the truth. The behaviors that align with the truth and have God's words as their basis are not the same as being well-educated and sensible, nor are they the same as the standards required of man by traditional culture and traditional morality. They are two different things. God's words are the truth, and they alone are the sole criterion by which man's good and evil, his right and wrong, are measured. Traditional culture's standard of being well-educated and sensible, on the other hand, falls far short of the standard of the truth principles. When was it, during which stage of work, did God tell you that you must be a well-educated, sensible person, a cultivated, noble person without any base interests about you? Has God said such a thing? (No.) He has not. So, what statement and requirement does God make regarding man's behavior? Comport yourselves and act wholly according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. What, then, is that basis of God's words? That is, which truths should you use as your criteria, and what sort of life must you live so that you are pursuing and practicing the truth? Is this not something that ought to be understood? (It is.) So, what are the standards of God's words' behavioral requirements of man? Can you find words of His that are clear about this? (God's words say, "I have a lot of hopes. I hope you can conduct yourselves in a proper and well-behaved manner, faithfully fulfill your duty, possess truth and humanity, be people who can give up everything they have and even their lives for God, and so on. All of these hopes stem from your insufficiencies and your corruption and disobedience"

(The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Transgressions Will Lead Man to Hell).) All those words are principles and requirements for man's comportment. So, what other words of God are there that relate to specific practice? (There's another passage that says, "Your heart must be in a constant state of quietude, and when things befall you, you must not be rash, prejudiced, stubborn, radical, artificial, or fake, so that you are able to act with reason. This is the proper manifestation of normal humanity" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Path of Resolving a Corrupt Disposition).) That's a bit of specific practice. Those are specific prescriptions and requirements for man's external behavior and ways. Can those be regarded as the basis of God's words? Are they specific enough? (Yes.) Read them again. ("Your heart must be in a constant state of quietude, and when things befall you, you must not be rash, prejudiced, stubborn, radical, artificial, or fake, so that you are able to act with reason. This is the proper manifestation of normal humanity.") Take note of those items; they are the principles you should uphold when you take action in the future. They tell people that they should learn to face things rationally in their comportment and acts, and that they must furthermore be able to seek the truth principles from a foundation of acting with conscience and reason. Comport yourself and act like this, and there will be principles, as well as a path of practice.

Those few things we just spoke of: "When things befall you, you must not be rash, prejudiced, stubborn, radical, artificial, or fake, so that you are able to act with reason"—are they easy things to do? Really, they're all achievable, with a period of training. If there's someone who truly can't do them, what's to be done then? It will be fine, so long as you do just one thing, meaning that when you encounter an issue or interact with others, there's one thing, at least, to be upheld: You must comport yourself and act in a way that edifies others. This is the most fundamental point. If you practice and abide by this, according to it and with it as your criterion, you won't, in the main, cause any great harm to others, nor will you incur any great losses yourself. Comport yourself and act in a way that edifies others—are there details in that? (Yes.) Do not base your self-satisfaction on damage to others' interests; do not build your happiness and joy atop others' suffering. That is what it means to edify. What is the most basic way to understand such edification? It means that your behavior must be tolerable to others, as measured by the conscience and reason of humanity; it must be in alignment with the conscience and reason of humanity. Is it not so that anyone of normal humanity can live up to this? (It is.) Say someone is resting in the room, and you go in, heedless of your surroundings, and start singing and playing music. Would that be appropriate? (No.) Would that not be building your fun and happiness atop another's suffering? (It would.) If someone is in the middle of reading God's words or fellowshiping about the truth, and you just have to talk about your own issues with them, is that respectful of them? Is that not unedifying to them? (It is.) What does it mean to be unedifying? At its least, it means that you aren't respectful of others. You must not interrupt others' speech or actions. Is

that not something normal humanity can achieve? If you can't even achieve that, you really have no conscience or reason. Can those without conscience or reason gain access to the truth? They cannot. Practicing the truth is something that only those with conscience and reason, at least, can achieve, and if you would pursue the truth, you must at least accord with the standards of conscience and reason in your speech and acts; you must have those around you find you tolerable, and pass muster with all. It's what we just said: Let your actions at least seem decent to others and be edifying to them. Is being edifying the same as being of benefit to others? No, in fact—to be edifying is to be mutually respectful of others' space, and not to disrupt, interrupt, or intrude upon them; it is not to let them come to harm or feel suffering because of your behavior. That's what it means to be edifying. How do you understand it? Being edifying is not about how much you benefit others; it's about their being able to avail themselves of the interests and rights that are properly theirs, without being interrupted in using them and deprived of them by your willfulness and your improper behavior. Is that not so? (It is.) You now know a few of God's words that have to do with His requirements for man's comportment and actions, but still, I tell you, the most fundamental thing is that you must be edifying to others in your comportment and actions. That is the principle for action. Have you understood what it is to be edifying? (Yes.) There are a few who give no thought to whether others are edified by their speech and action, yet claim to be well-educated, sensible people. Is that not fraud? Being edifying to others in comportment and action—is there not a lesson to be learned from that? It may be a behavioral demonstration, yet is it easy to accomplish? If someone understands a bit of the truth, they'll know how to act in line with the principles, how to act in a way that edifies others, and how to act in a way that benefits others. If someone does not understand the truth, they will not know what to do; they can only act in reliance on their notions and imaginings. Some people never seek the truth in their daily lives, no matter what befalls them. They just act according to their preferences, without a care for how it makes others feel. Are there principles to such action? You should be able to see whether there are, shouldn't you? All of you gather and read God's words often; if you're really able to understand a bit of the truth, you'll be able to practice and engage with some affairs according to the truth principles. How does such practice make you feel? How does it make others feel? If you try hard to feel that out, you'll know what sort of practice is edifying to others. Usually, when something befalls you, whatever it is, you give no thought to the real issues of how to act in a way that touches on normal humanity or the practice of the truth. So, when something befalls you, if one were to ask you what sort of practice or action would be edifying to others, you'd find it hard to answer, as if there were no clear path. All that I fellowship about in gatherings are these real-life problems, yet when you encounter them, you are never able to keep up and your minds always go blank. Is there not a discrepancy there? (There is.) What have you gained from your belief in God, then? A few doctrines, a few slogans. How poor and pathetic you are!

In one of the things we've discussed as something man holds in his notions to be right and good—being well-educated and sensible—there are some of man's specific notions and imaginings, as well as some traditional ways man has of understanding this behavior. In brief, to look now at this behavioral display, we see that it shares no relationship with the truth or with true humanity. This is because it falls far short of the truth and cannot be mentioned in the same breath as it, and beyond that, such behavior is fundamentally unaligned with the standards of God's requirements for man's views on people and things, as well as his comportment and action, with which it is entirely incompatible and has no relationship. It is just man's behavior. However well man displays such behavior, and however adequately he practices it, it is merely a form of behavior. It does not even qualify as true normal humanity. The statement that one must be well-educated and sensible is a mere way to put a bow on man's external behavior. Man, in order to wrap himself up nicely and prettify himself, strives hard to be a well-educated and sensible person, whereby he wins others' esteem and respect, and raises his station and value in his group. But the fact is that such behavior does not even rise to the level of the morality, integrity, and dignity of which a true person should be possessed. Being well-educated and sensible is a statement that comes from traditional culture, and it is a set of behavioral displays that corrupt mankind has set out for itself as something it believes should be upheld. These behavioral displays are meant to augment a person's standing in their group and to increase their worth, so that they may win the respect of others and be the strongest of all, one not liable to be despised or bullied in their group. This outward behavior has absolutely nothing to do with the morality or quality of humanity, yet man places it so high and gives it so much weight. See for yourselves how much fraudulence there must be in that! Therefore, if your current pursuit is to be a well-educated, sensible person, and you are regulating your behavior, striving hard in your pursuit and practice toward the goal of being well-educated and sensible, I urge you to put a stop to it right away. Such behaviors and methods can only make you disguise yourself more and more and make you more and more of a hypocrite, and as that happens, you will grow further from being an honest person, a simple, open person. The more you strive to be a well-educated, sensible person, the more you will disguise yourself, and the more you disguise yourself—the deeper your disguise, the harder it will be for others to take your measure or understand you, and the deeper your corrupt disposition will be concealed. Do that, and it will be very hard to achieve acceptance of the truth and salvation. So, in light of these points, is the road of pursuing being a well-educated, sensible person the same as the road of pursuing the truth? Is it the proper pursuit? (No.) Is there not more fraudulence against others and oneself behind the behavior of being well-educated and sensible, quite apart from its negative substance and its negative results? (There is.) A well-educated, sensible person conceals behind themselves many unspeakable secrets, and more than those, they conceal all manner of mistaken thoughts, notions, views, attitudes, and ideas

that are unknown to others, vile, nasty, evil, and odious to others. Behind the good behavior of a well-educated, sensible person lurks a more corrupt disposition of theirs. Such a person, under the cover of that behavioral display, does not have courage to face their corrupt disposition, nor do they have the confidence to admit to their corrupt disposition. Less still do they have the courage and confidence to open up about their corrupt disposition, about their absurd knowledge, about their evil thoughts, intents, and goals—or as it may be, even malicious, venomous thoughts of theirs. They have so many things hidden behind them, and none can see them; all people see is the so-called "good person" before them, who has the good behavior of being well-educated and sensible. Is this not a case of fraud? (It is.) The whole of that person's behavior, performance, pursuit, and essence is a case of fraud. They are defrauding others, and they are defrauding themselves. What will the ultimate outcome be for such a person? To be a well-educated, sensible person, they forsake God, turn their backs on the true way, and are detested and rejected by God. In every hidden corner behind the good behavior of being well-educated and sensible, man conceals his techniques and behaviors of disguise and of fraud, and as he does, he conceals his dispositions that are arrogant, evil, sick of the truth, vicious, and intransigent. So, the more well-educated and sensible one is, the more fraudulent they are, and the more one strives to be a well-educated, sensible person, the less they are a lover of the truth, and the more they are someone who is sick of the truth and God's words. Tell Me, is that not how it is? (It is.) We will conclude our fellowship about the good behavior of being well-educated and sensible here, for the time being.

Just now, we fellowshiped about one statement about good behavior in traditional culture: being well-educated and sensible. We won't fellowship individually about the other few. As a group, all statements about good behavior are merely a way to put a bow on man's external behavior and image. "Put a bow on" is phrasing it nicely; to put it more precisely, it is, in fact, a form of disguise, a way to use a false front to trick others into good feelings about oneself, to trick them into positive evaluations of oneself, to trick them into respect for oneself, whereas the dark side of one's heart, one's corrupt dispositions, and one's true face are all hidden and wrapped up nicely. We may also put it like this: What is hidden beneath the halo of these good behaviors are the corrupt true faces of each and every member of corrupt humanity. What is hidden is each and every member of evil humanity with an arrogant disposition, a deceitful disposition, a vicious disposition, and a disposition of being sick of the truth. It does not matter if a person's outward behavior is well-educated and sensible, or gentle and refined, nor whether they are amiable, approachable, respectful of the old and caring for the young, or any such thing—whichever of these they evince, it is no more than an external behavior that others can see. It cannot lead them through good behavior to knowledge of their nature essence. Though man looks well on the outward behaviors of being well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, approachable, and amiable, such that the whole human

world is well disposed toward them, what cannot be denied is that man's corrupt dispositions really exist beneath the cover of these good behaviors. Man's being sick of the truth, his resistance and rebelliousness against God, his nature essence of being sick of the words spoken by the Creator, and of resisting the Creator—these truly do exist there. There's nothing false about that. No matter how well someone fakes it, no matter how presentable or becoming their behaviors, how nicely or beautifully they package themselves, or how deceptive they are, what cannot be denied is that each and every corrupt person is filled with satanic disposition. Under the mask of these outward behaviors, they still resist and rebel against God, resist and rebel against the Creator. Of course, with these good behaviors as its cloak and its cover, mankind pours forth corrupt dispositions every day, every hour and moment, every minute and second, in every affair, during which they live amid corrupt dispositions and sin. This is an uncontested fact. Despite man's presentable behaviors, pleasing words, and false exteriors, his corrupt disposition has not abated in the least, nor has it been changed at all due to those outward behaviors of his. On the contrary, it is because he has the cover of these outward good behaviors that his corrupt disposition pours constantly forth, and he never stops his steps toward doing evil and resisting God—and of course, governed by his vicious and evil dispositions, his ambitions, desires, and extravagant requirements are constantly expanding and developing. Tell Me, where is the courteous, amiable, approachable person whose lived image and whose basis for their comportment and actions are positive and aligned with God's words, the truth? Where is the well-educated, sensible, gentle, and refined person who loves the truth, who is willing to find in God's words the direction and goal of their life, who has made a contribution to mankind's salvation? Can you find such a single person? (No.) The fact is that among mankind, the more knowledgeable a person is; the more educated they are; and the more they have ideas, status, and reputation—though they may be called a well-educated and sensible, amiable, approachable person—the more the claims they lay out in writing may deceive people, and the more evil they do, and the more severe their resistance to God. Those of greater reputation and status deceive others all the more, and are all the wilder in their resistance against God. Look throughout humanity at its famous people, its great people, its thinkers, educators, writers, revolutionaries, statesmen, or any such luminary in a field—who among them has not been well-educated and sensible, approachable, and amiable? Which of them did not behave outwardly in a way that garnered others' praise and was worthy of others' respect? Yet what, factually, have they contributed to mankind? Have they led mankind onto the right path, or have they led it astray? (Astray.) Have they led mankind under the dominion of the Creator, or have they led it beneath Satan's feet? (Beneath Satan's feet.) Have they let mankind partake of the sovereignty, provision, and guidance of the Creator, or have they let it face the trampling, cruelty, and abuse of Satan? Of all the heroic personages, the famous, great, elevated, extraordinary, empowered people of history, which of their authority and status was not

gained from the murder of millions upon millions? Which of their reputation was not gained from their fraud, beguilement, and inducement of mankind? From the outside, they seem approachable in their daily encounters with others, and quite easy-going, putting themselves on an equal footing with others and amiable in their speech—yet what they do behind the scenes is altogether different. Some of them plot to ensnare others; some engage in trickery in order to harry and harm others; others look for chances to take revenge. Most statesmen are cruel and harmful to people beyond counting. They won their status and influence with their feet planted firmly on countless people's heads and in their blood, yet in public settings, what people see is their approachable mien and amiable behavior. What people see is the gentle and refined, well-educated and sensible, self-effacing figures they cut. On the outside, they are courteous and gentle and refined, but behind that, they murder countless people, grab countless people's assets, dominate and toy with countless people. They say every fine word and do every evil thing, and shamelessly, brazenly, they sermonize from their stage, teaching others how to be approachable, well-educated and sensible people, how to be people who contribute to the country and mankind, how to serve the people and be servants of the public, how to dedicate themselves to the nation. Is that not shamelessness? Audacious, insatiable scum, the lot of them! In short, to be a person of good behavior who conforms to the traditional notions of morality is not to pursue the truth; it is not the pursuit of being a true created being. On the contrary, many dark and unmentionable secrets are hidden behind the pursuit of these good behaviors. No matter what sort of good behavior man pursues, the goal behind it is none other than to win more people's affection and respect, to increase their own standing, and to make people think they are respectable and worthy of trust and commission. If you pursue being such a well-behaved person, is this not in quality the same as those who are famous and great? If you are a person who is merely well-behaved, but does not love God's word and does not accept the truth, then in quality, you are the same as they. And what is the result? What you have forgone is truth; what you have lost is your chance at salvation. This is the most foolish of behavior—it is an idiot's choice and pursuit. Have you ever wished to be that great, famous, larger-than-life person on stage, whom you have admired for so long? That amiable and approachable person? That courteous, gentle and refined, well-educated and sensible person? That person who, from the outside, looks to be friendly and lovely? Have you not followed and worshiped people like this before? (Yes.) If you are still following people like this now, still idolizing people like this, let Me tell you: You are not far from death, because the people you idolize are evil people who pretend to be good. God will not save evil people. If you idolize evil people and do not accept the truth, in the end you will be destroyed, too.

The essence behind good behavior such as being approachable and amiable can be described in one word: pretense. Such good behavior is not born of the words of God, nor as a result of practicing the truth or acting according to principle. What is it produced

by? It comes from people's motives, schemes, from them pretending, putting on an act, being deceitful. When people cling to these good behaviors, the aim is to get the things they want; if not, they would never aggrieve themselves in this way, and live contrary to their own desires. What does it mean, to live contrary to their own desires? It is that their true nature is not as well-behaved, guileless, gentle, kind, and virtuous as people imagine. They do not live by conscience and sense; instead, they live in order to achieve a certain aim or demand. What is man's true nature? It is muddle-headed and ignorant. Without the laws and commandments bestowed by God, people would have no idea what sin is. Is this not what mankind used to be like? Only when God issued the laws and commandments did people have some concept of sin. But still they had no concept of right and wrong, or of positive and negative things. And how, with this being the case, could they be aware of the correct principles for speaking and acting? Could they know which ways of acting, which good behaviors, ought to be found in normal humanity? Could they know what produces truly good behavior, what kind of way they should follow to live out a human likeness? They could not. Because of people's satanic nature, because of their instincts, they could only pretend and put on an act to live decently, and with dignity—which is what gave rise to deceits such as being well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, courteous, respecting the old and caring for the young, and being amiable and approachable; thus emerged these tricks and techniques of deception. And once they emerged, people selectively clung to one or several of these deceits. Some chose to be amiable and approachable, some chose to be well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, some chose to be courteous, to respect the old and care for the young, some chose to be all of these things. And yet I define people with such good behaviors with one term. What is that term? "Smooth stones." What are smooth stones? It is those smooth stones in rivers that have been scoured and polished of any sharp edges by long years of passing water. And though they may not hurt to step on, without care people can slip on them. In appearance and shape, these stones are very beautiful, but once you have taken them home, they are quite useless. You can't bear to throw them away, but there is no point in keeping them, either—which is what a "smooth stone" is. To Me, people with these apparently good behaviors are tepid. They pretend to be good on the outside, but do not accept the truth at all, they say nice-sounding things, but don't do anything real. They are nothing but smooth stones. If you fellowship with them on the truth and the principles, they'll talk to you about being gentle and refined, and courteous. If you speak to them about discerning antichrists, they'll talk to you about respecting the old and caring for the young, and being well-educated and sensible. If you tell them that there must be principles to one's comportment, that one must seek the principles in their duty and not act willfully, what will their attitude be? They'll say, "Acting in accordance with the truth principles is another matter. I just want to be well-educated and sensible, and for others to approve of my actions. As long as I respect the old and care for the young, and have other people's approval, that's enough."

They only care about good behaviors, they do not focus on the truth. They are generally able to respect the elderly, their seniors, those with qualifications, those of good moral standing and reputation within their group, while also taking great, loving care of the communities of the young and vulnerable. They strictly uphold the social rule of respecting the old and caring for the young in order to demonstrate themselves to be noble. What cannot be denied, though, is that when their interests and that rule come into conflict, they'll put the rule off to the side and go, headlong and without "suffering" anyone's restraints, to protect their interests. Though their good behavior garners the approval of everyone they encounter, are acquainted with, or are familiar with, what cannot be denied is that even as they perform these good behaviors that are praised by others, they incur not the slightest loss to their own interests, and they fight for their interests by any means necessary, without "suffering" anyone's restraints. Their respect for the old and care for the young is just a transient behavior, built on the foundation of not interfering with their own interests. It is limited in scope to a mode of deportment. They can do it, in cases where it does not touch or infringe on their interests at all, but when their interests are at the fore, those are what they'll fight for, in the end. So, their respect for the old and care for the young does not, in fact, interfere with their pursuit of their interests, nor can it restrict that pursuit. The behavior of respecting the old and caring for the young is a good behavior that people can only do in certain circumstances, on the condition that it does not interfere with their interests. It is not something that arises from inside a person's life, their bones. However much someone can practice such behavior, however long they can persist, it cannot alter the corrupt dispositions on which man depends to live. This means that though someone may not have this good behavior, they pour forth corrupt dispositions all the same—yet once they have gained this good behavior, their corrupt dispositions are not ameliorated or altered in the least. On the contrary, they hide them deeper and deeper. These are essential things that are hidden behind such good behaviors.

That's about it for our fellowship about and analysis of traditional culture's good behaviors of being gentle and refined, courteous, respectful of the old and caring for the young, amiable, and approachable. They are like being well-educated and sensible, and more or less the same in essence. They are insubstantial. People should let go of these good behaviors. What people should strive to achieve most is to make the words of God their basis, and the truth their criterion; only then can they live in the light and live like a normal human being. If you wish to live in the light, you should act according to the truth; you should be an honest person who says honest words and does honest things. What is fundamental is to have the truth principles in one's comportment; once people lose the truth principles, and focus only on good behavior, this inevitably gives rise to fakery and pretense. If there is no principle to people's comportment, then no matter how good their behavior is, they are hypocrites; they may be able to dupe others for a time, but they will never be trustworthy. Only when people act and comport themselves according to God's

words do they have a true foundation. If they do not comport themselves according to God's words, and only focus on pretending to behave well, can they become good people as a result? Absolutely not. Good doctrines and behavior cannot change man's corrupt dispositions, and they cannot change his essence. Only the truth and the words of God can change people's corrupt dispositions, thoughts, and opinions, and become their life. The various good behaviors that man, in his traditional culture and his notions, holds to be so, such as being well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, courteous, respectful of the old and caring for the young, being amiable, and being approachable, are mere behaviors. They're not life, much less the truth. Traditional culture is not the truth, nor are any of the good behaviors it promotes. However much of traditional culture man grasps and however many good behaviors he lives out in his life, it cannot alter his corrupt dispositions. So, for thousands of years, mankind has been inculcated with traditional culture, and its corrupt disposition hasn't changed at all; instead, its corruption has gotten ever deeper, and the world ever darker and more evil. This is directly related to the education of traditional culture. Humans can only live their lives as true people by taking God's words as their life. This is beyond dispute. So, what sort of parameters and requirements do God's words set for man's behavior? Apart from what's established in the laws and the commandments, there are also the Lord Jesus' requirements for man's behavior, especially the requirements and rules for man in God's judgment of the last days. These are the most precious words of all, as far as mankind is concerned, and they are the most basic principles for its comportment. You must locate the most basic behavioral criteria for your comportment and action in God's words. When you do, you will be able to rid yourselves of the misguidance and trickery of Chinese traditional culture's good behaviors. You will then have found the path and principles for comportment and action, which also means that you will have found the path and principles of salvation. If you take God's current words as your basis and the truth now fellowshiped about as your criterion, and use them to supplant those standards for good behavior, as mankind, in its notions, would have it, then you are someone who is pursuing the truth. God's requirements of man are in all cases about what sort of person he should be and what road he should walk. He never requires that man should be possessed of some behavior in isolation. He requires that people be honest people, not deceptive ones; He requires man to accept and pursue the truth, and to be faithful to Him, and submissive, and bearing of witness to Him. He has never required that man merely have a few good behaviors, that that would be fine on its own. Yet China's traditional culture has man focus only on good behavior, on having good outward displays. It does nothing at all to shed light on what man's corrupt dispositions are or where his corruption originates, much less is it able to point out the path along which his corrupt dispositions are cast off. Therefore, however traditional culture may advocate for whichever good behaviors man should be possessed of, when it comes to mankind's casting off its corrupt dispositions and living their lives as true people, it is of no avail.

However noble or appealing its statements about morality, it can do nothing to change mankind's corrupt essence. Under the inculcation and sway of traditional culture, many subconscious things have come about in corrupt mankind. What does "subconscious" mean here? It means that once man has been imperceptibly inculcated and infected by traditional culture, in the absence of any clear words, statements, rules, or cognizance of how to act appropriately, he instinctively practices and abides by people's conventional ideas and methods. Living in such circumstances, in such a condition, as all people do, they come obliviously to think, in their subconscious, "Being well-educated and sensible is great—it's positive, and it aligns with the truth; being gentle and refined is great—it's how people ought to be, God likes it, and it aligns with the truth; being courteous, respectful of the old and caring for the young, amiable, and approachable are all demonstrations from within normal humanity—they align with God's words and the truth." Despite not having found a clear basis in God's words, they feel in their hearts that God's words and requirements of man and the required standards of traditional culture are about the same, with no major difference between them. Is this not a distortion and false interpretation of God's words? Have God's words said such things? They have not, nor are they what He wills; those things are man's distortions and false interpretations of God's words. God's words never said these things, so what's yours to do is not, under any circumstances, to think on those terms. You should read God's words in detail and locate exactly the behavioral requirements His words make of man, then find a few more passages of His words, assemble them, and pray-read and fellowship about them in synthesis. Once you have knowledge of them, that's when you're to practice and experience them. This brings God's words into your real life, where they become the basis for your views on people and things, as well as your comportment and actions. What should the basis of people's speech and actions be? God's words. So, what are the requirements and standards God has for people's speech and actions? (That they be constructive to people.) That is right. Most fundamentally, you must tell the truth, speak honestly, and benefit others. At the very least, your speech must edify people, and not trick, mislead, make fun of, satirize, deride, mock, constrict them, expose their weaknesses, or hurt them. This is the expression of normal humanity. It is humanity's virtue. Has God told you how loudly to speak? Has He required that you use standard language? Has He required that you make use of flowery rhetoric or a lofty, refined linguistic style? (No.) There's not a bit of any of those superficial, hypocritical, false, nugatory things. All God's requirements are things of which normal humanity should be possessed, standards and principles for man's language and behavior. It doesn't matter where someone was born or what language they speak. In any case, the words you say—their verbiage and content—must be edifying to others. What does it mean, for them to be edifying? It means that others, having heard them, feel them to be true, and derive enrichment and help from them, and can understand the truth, and are no longer confused, nor susceptible to the beguilement of others. So, God demands that people

tell the truth, say what they think, and not trick, mislead, make fun of, satirize, deride, mock, or constrict others, or expose their weaknesses, or hurt them. Are these not the principles of speech? What does it mean to say one should not expose people's weaknesses? It means not to get dirt on other people. Do not hold on to their past mistakes or shortcomings in order to judge or condemn them. This is the least you should do. On the proactive side, how is constructive speech expressed? It is mainly encouraging, orienting, guiding, exhorting, understanding, and comforting. Also, in some special instances, it becomes necessary to directly expose other people's errors and deal with and prune them, so that they gain knowledge of the truth and desire to repent. Only then is the due effect achieved. This way of practicing is of great benefit to people. It is a real help to them, and it is constructive for them, is it not? Say, for example, you are especially willful and arrogant. You've never been aware of this, but someone who knows you well comes right out and tells you the problem. You think to yourself, "Am I willful? Am I arrogant? No one else dared to tell me, but he understands me. That he could say such a thing suggests that it really is true. I must spend some time reflecting on this." After that you say to the person, "Other people only say nice things to me, they sing my praises, no one ever gets personal with me, no one has ever pointed out these shortcomings and issues in me. Only you were able to tell me, to get personal with me. It was so great, such a big help to me." This is having a heart-to-heart, is it not? Little by little, the other person communicates to you what is on his mind, his thoughts about you, and his experiences of how he had notions, imaginings, negativity and weakness in this matter, and was able to escape it by seeking the truth. This is having a heart-to-heart; it is a communion of souls. And what, in sum, is the principle behind speaking? It is this: Say what's in your heart, and speak of your true experiences and what you really think. These words are the most beneficial to people, they provide for people, they help them, they are positive. Refuse to say those fake words, those words that do not benefit or edify people; this will avoid harming them or tripping them up, plunging them into negativity, and having a negative effect. You must say positive things. You must strive to help people as much as you can, to benefit them, to provide to them, to produce in them true faith in God; and you must allow people to be helped, and to gain much, from your experiences of God's words and the way you solve problems, and to be able to understand the path of experiencing the work of God and entering the truth reality, allowing them to have life entry and making their life grow—which is all the effect of your words having principles, and being edifying to people. This aside, when people come together to gossip and giggle idly, that is unprincipled. All they pour forth is their corrupt dispositions. It is not based in God's words, and they are not upholding the truth principles. All of it is man's philosophies for living—they are living as their corrupt dispositions manipulate them to.

God requires that man be principled and edifying to others in his speech. Does this have anything to do with those external good behaviors of man's? (No.) It has nothing

at all to do with those. Say you're not domineering of others or false and tricky in your speech, yet you're also able to encourage, guide, and comfort others. If you're able to do both of these things, is there any need for you to do them with an approachable attitude? Must you achieve approachability? Can you only do those things within a behavioral framework of such externalities as being courteous, gentle, and refined? There's no need. The precondition for your speech being edifying to others is that it is based in God's words and His requirements—that it's based in the truth, rather than good behaviors established amid traditional culture. Once your speech is principled and edifying to others, you may speak sitting, or you may speak standing; you may speak in a loud voice, or in a quiet one; you may speak with gentle words, or with severe ones. So long as the end result is positive, with you having fulfilled your responsibility and the other party having benefited, then it's in alignment with the truth principles. If what you pursue is the truth, and what you practice is the truth, and the basis of your speech and actions is God's words, the truth principles, and if others can profit and gain from you, would that not be of benefit to both of you? If living constrained by the thinking of traditional culture, you put on an act while others do the same, and you offer mannered niceties while they bow and scrape, each putting on an act for the other, then neither of you is any good. You and they bow and scrape and engage in niceties all day long, without a word of truth, embodying in life only good behavior as promoted by traditional culture. Though such behavior is conventional as seen from the outside, it is all hypocrisy, behavior that tricks and dupes others, behavior that takes people in and tricks them, without a sincere word to be heard. If you make friends with such a person, you are bound to be taken in and tricked in the end. There is nothing that would edify you to be gained from their good behavior. All it has to teach you is falsehood and trickery: You trick them, they trick you. What you will feel, ultimately, is an extreme degradation of your integrity and dignity, which you will just have to endure. You will still have to present yourself with courtesy, in a well-educated and sensible way, without quibbling with others or demanding too much of them. You will still have to be patient and tolerant, affecting nonchalance and broad-minded magnanimity with a beaming smile. How many years of effort it must take to achieve such a condition! If you demand of yourself that you live like this before others, will your life not exhaust you? To pretend to have so much love, knowing full well that you do not—such hypocrisy is no easy thing! You would feel ever more strongly the exhaustion of comporting yourself in this way as a person; you would rather be born as a cow or horse, a pig or dog in your next life than as a human being. You would find them just too false and evil. Why does man live in a way that exhausts him so? Because he lives amid traditional notions, which constrain and fetter him. In reliance on his corrupt disposition, he lives in sin, from which he cannot extricate himself. He has no way out. What he lives out is not the likeness of a true person. Between people, one cannot hear or obtain a single word of basic sincerity, even between man and wife, mother and daughter, father and son, the people who are closest to each

other—there's not an intimate word to be heard, not a warm word or one from which others might derive comfort. So, what function do these outward good behaviors serve, then? They serve temporarily to maintain a normal distance and normal relationships between people. Yet behind these good behaviors, no one dares engage deeply with anyone else, which mankind has ended up summarizing in the phrase: "Distance begets beauty." This reveals the true nature of mankind, does it not? How could distance beget beauty? In the false and evil reality of such a life, man lives in ever-increasing loneliness, withdrawal, depression, indignance, and discontent, without a path forward. This is the true condition of unbelievers. However, you believe in God today. You have come into God's house and accepted the provision of His words, and you often listen to sermons. In your heart, though, you still like the good behaviors traditional culture promotes. This proves something: You do not understand the truth and have no reality. Why, in your life now, are you still so depressed, so lonely, so pathetic, so self-abasing? The only reason for this is that you do not accept the truth and have not changed at all. In other words, you do not view people and things, and comport yourself and act, according to God's words, nor with the truth as your criterion. You are still living in reliance on corrupt dispositions and traditional notions. That's why your life is still so lonely. You have no friends, no one to confide in. You cannot obtain from others the encouragement, guidance, help, or edification you should have, nor can you bestow encouragement, guidance, or help on others. Even in these, the most minimal of behaviors, you don't take God's words as your basis and the truth as your criterion, so there's even less need to mention your views on people and things or your comportment and action—those are a hundred thousand miles away from the truth, God's words!

We have just fellowshiped about what requirements God has of man's behavior: He requires that man's speech and actions be principled and edifying to others. So, based on that, does everyone now know whether there's any value to those good behaviors man comes up with—whether they're worth treasuring? (They're not.) So, what should you do, given that you don't believe they're worth treasuring? (Renounce them.) How does one renounce them? To renounce them, one must have a specific path and steps for their practice. First, one must examine themselves for whether they have the behavioral displays of being well-educated and sensible and being gentle and refined, as promoted by traditional culture. What form does such examination take, and what are its contents? Those would be to look at yourself to see what the basis is for your views on people and things, as well as your comportment and action, and to see which things of Satan have taken deep root in your heart and soaked into your blood and bones. For instance, say there's someone who's been coddled since childhood, who doesn't know much about self-regulation, yet whose humanity isn't bad. They're a true believer, and they believe in God and perform their duty with sincerity, and they can suffer and pay prices. There's just one thing wrong with them: When they eat, they tend to pick around for morsels and smack their lips. It bothers you so much to hear it that you can't swallow

your food. It used to be that you'd feel a special antipathy for such people. You'd think that they had no breeding and didn't know how to self-regulate, that they weren't well-educated or sensible. In your heart, you despised them, believing that such people are base and undignified, that there's no way they'd be people whom God chooses, much less those whom He loves. What was your basis for believing so? Had you seen through to their essence? Were you measuring them based on their essence? What was the basis of your measurement? Obviously, you were measuring people based on the various statements of Chinese traditional culture. So, when you come to learn of this problem, what should you think, based on the truths we've fellowshiped about today? "Gosh, I used to look down on them. I never listened willingly to their fellowship. Whenever they said or did anything, no matter how right they were to do it or how practical the words of their fellowship were, as soon as I thought of them smacking their lips and rummaging around for morsels at meals, I wouldn't want to hear them talk. I always took them for an ill-bred person of no caliber. Now, through such fellowship from God, I'm seeing that my views on people aren't based on God's words; instead, I treat the bad habits and behaviors that people have in their lives—those places where they lack breeding or are indecent, specifically—as if they were outpourings of their humanity essence. Now, measured based on God's words, all those things are little faults that don't implicate their humanity essence. They're nowhere near being problems of principle." Is this not self-examination? (It is.) Those who can accept God's words and understand the truth can see these things clearly. So, what's to be done from there? Is there a path? Would it work if you demanded that they drop these bad habits immediately? (No.) Such little defects are ingrained and hard to change. They're not something one can change in a day or two. Behavioral problems aren't so hard to solve, but with defects in one's life-habits, one needs some time in order to get rid of them. They don't implicate the quality of someone's humanity, though, or their humanity essence, so don't give them too much weight or refuse to let go of them. Everyone has their own habits and ways in life. No one comes from a vacuum. Everyone has a few defects, and whatever they are, if they affect others, they must be corrected. That's how to achieve amicable interactions. However, it's not possible to be ideal in every regard. People come from very different places, and their habits in life are all different, so they must be tolerant of each other. This is something normal humanity ought to possess. Don't take trifling problems to heart. Exercise tolerance. That's the most appropriate way to treat others. This is the principle of tolerance, the principle and method by which such matters are handled. Don't try to determine people's essence and humanity based on their little defects. That basis is totally out of line with the principles, because whatever defects or flaws someone might have, they don't speak to that person's essence, nor do they mean that that person isn't a sincere believer in God, much less not someone who pursues the truth. We must look at people's strengths and base our views on people on God's words and His requirements of man. That's the way to treat people fairly. How

should someone who pursues the truth view people? Their views on people and things, and their comportment and actions, must all be according to God's words, with the truth as their criterion. So, how do you regard each and every person according to God's words? Look at whether they are possessed of a conscience and reason, at whether they're a good person or an evil one. In your contact with them, you may see that though they have their share of little defects and deficiencies, they are quite good in their humanity. They are tolerant and patient in their interactions with people, and when someone is negative and weak, they are loving to them and can provide for them and help them. That is their attitude toward others. What, then, is their attitude toward God? In their attitude toward God, it is even more measurable whether they have humanity. It may be that with all God does, they are submissive, and seeking, and longing, and in the course of performing their duty and interacting with others—when they take action—they have a God-fearing heart. It's not that they're daredevils, acting outrageously, and it's not that they'd do anything and say anything. When something happens that involves God or His work, they're very cautious. Once you've ascertained that they have these displays, how, based on the things that pour forth from their humanity, are you to measure whether that person is good or bad? Measure that based on God's words, and measure it based on whether they have a conscience and reason, and on their attitude toward the truth and toward God. By measuring them in these two regards, you will see that though there are a few problems and defects in their behavior, they may yet be someone with a conscience and reason, who has a heart of submission and fear toward God and an attitude of love and acceptance toward the truth. If so, then in God's eye, they're someone who may be saved, someone whom He loves. And given that in God's eye, they're someone who may be saved and whom He loves, how should you treat them? You must view people and things according to God's words and take measurements according to His words. They're a true brother or sister, and you should treat them correctly and without prejudice. Don't regard them through a colored lens or measure them according to traditional culture's statements—measure them instead with God's words. And as for their behavioral defects, if you're kind at heart, you should help them. Let them know how to act appropriately. What do you do if they can accept that but can't drop their behavioral defects right away? You should fall back on tolerance. If you aren't tolerant, that means you aren't kind at heart, and you should seek the truth in your attitude toward them, and reflect on and know your own deficiencies. That's how you can come to treat people correctly. If, conversely, you say, "That person has so many defects. They're ill-bred, they don't know how to self-regulate, they don't know about respecting others, and they don't know their manners. They're an unbeliever, then. I don't want to associate with them, I don't want to see them, and I don't want to hear whatever they have to say, however right it is. Who'd believe that they fear God and submit to Him? Are they up to that? Do they have the caliber?" then what attitude is that? Is it kind helpfulness, to treat others like that? Does it align with the truth principles? Is

such treatment of others on your part an understanding and practice of the truth? Is it loving? Do you fear God at heart? If someone's belief in God lacks even basic kindness, does such a person have the truth reality? If you go on clinging to your notions, and your views on people and things remain based in your own feelings, impressions, preferences, and notions, that's sufficient proof that you don't understand a shred of the truth and are still living in reliance on satanic philosophies. It's sufficient proof that you are not a lover of the truth or someone who pursues it. Some people are so self-righteous. However you fellowship with them, they still cling to their own views: "I'm a courteous person who respects the old and cares for the young—what of it? I'm a good person, at least. What's not good in how I comport myself? At least everyone respects me." I don't object to your being a good person, but if you keep on pretending as you are, will you be able to gain the truth and life? Being a good person in the way that you are may not violate your integrity or go against the goal and direction of your comportment, but there's one thing you must understand: Go on like that, and you won't be able to understand the truth or enter the truth reality, and in the end, you won't be able to gain the truth or the life, or God's salvation. That's the only possible outcome.

I have just fellowshiped about how to regard the good behaviors of people's notions, and how to identify those good behaviors such that one pursues the truth. Do you have a path now? (Yes.) What should you do? (First, reflect on whether one has the behaviors oneself. Then, reflect on what one's usual bases and criteria are for one's views on people and things.) That's right. You should begin by clearly seeing whether there's anything in your prior views on people and things, or in your comportment and actions, that has been in conflict with what I have fellowshiped about today, or that goes against it. Reflect on what the basis is for the perspective and view you adopt when you view people and things, on whether your basis is the standards of traditional culture or the sayings of some great and renowned person, or whether it is God's words, the truth. From there, go on to reflect on whether the thoughts and views of traditional culture and those of great, renowned people are aligned with the truth, on where they come into conflict with the truth, on where, exactly, they go wrong. These are the specifics of the second step of self-reflection. Now, for the third step. When you discover that the views, ways, basis, and criterion for your views on people and things, as well as your comportment and action, are born of man's will, of the evil trends of society and of traditional culture, and that they are contrary to the truth, what should you do then? Shouldn't you seek out relevant words of God and take those as your basis? (Yes.) Seek out the truth principles in God's words that touch on viewing people and things, as well as comportment and action. You should mainly base it on what God's words say, or, to put it accurately, on the truth principles of God's words. Those truth principles should become the basis and criterion for your views on people and things, and your comportment and actions. This is the most difficult thing to accomplish. One must first deny their own views, notions, opinions, and attitudes. This involves some incorrect,

warped views of man's. One must unearth those views, come to know them, and subject them to thorough dissection. The other part of it is that when people have found the proper statement in the relevant words of God, they should mull it over and fellowship about it, and when they have clarified what the truth principles are, it immediately becomes a question of how they are to accept and practice the truth. Tell Me, once one has understood the truth principles, are they soon able to accept and submit to them? (No.) Man's rebelliousness and corrupt dispositions cannot be resolved in an instant. Man has corrupt dispositions, and though he may know what God's words mean, he cannot put them into practice right away. Putting the truth into practice is in each case a battle for him. Man has a rebellious disposition. He cannot let go of his prejudice, capriciousness, intransigence, haughtiness, self-righteousness, or self-importance, nor his host of justifications and excuses, nor his self-worth, status, reputation, or vanity. So, when you let go of something you hold in your notions to be good, what you must renounce are these interests of yours and the things you treasure. When you can renounce and let go of all these things, that is when you will have hope or a chance of practicing based on God's words, according to the truth principles. To let go of yourself and deny yourself—this is the most difficult juncture to break through. As soon as you've gotten past it, though, there will be no great difficulties left in your heart. When you have understood the truth and are able to penetrate the essence of good behaviors, your views on people and on things will change, and you will then be able, gradually, to let go of such things from traditional culture. So, to change man's mistaken views on people and things, and the ways and manners of his actions, and the origin and motives behind his actions—this is no simple thing to do. What is hardest to change is that man has corrupt dispositions. Man's views on things and his lifestyle are engendered by his corrupt dispositions. Corrupt dispositions make you arrogant, self-righteous, and willful; they make you disdain others, focusing always on upholding your name and status, on whether you can garner esteem and come to the fore among others, always taking your future prospects and fate into account, and so on. All these things are those that are born out of your corrupt disposition and touch on your interests. When you have taken each of these things and broken it down, seen through it, and denied it, you will be able to renounce them. And it's not until you can let go of them, bit by bit, that you will be able, uncompromisingly and absolutely, to take God's words as your basis and the truth as your criterion in your views on people and things, and in your comportment and actions.

Take God's words as your basis in your views on people and things, and in your comportment and actions—everyone understands these words. They're easy to comprehend. In his rationality and in his thoughts, in his will and ideals, man is able to apprehend these words and is willing to follow them. There should be no difficulties there. But in reality, they're hard for man to live up to when he practices the truth, and the obstacles and troubles in doing so aren't mere difficulties presented by his external environment. The main reason has to do with his corrupt disposition. Man's corrupt

disposition is the origin of his various troubles. Once it is resolved, all man's troubles and difficulties no longer amount to any major problem. It follows, then, that all man's difficulties in practicing the truth are caused by his corrupt disposition. Therefore, as you practice these words of God's, and enter this reality of practicing the truth, you will grow ever more aware of this: "I have a corrupt disposition. I'm the 'corrupt mankind' God speaks of, corrupted to my core by Satan, someone who lives by satanic dispositions." Is that not how it happens? (It is.) Therefore, if man would pursue the truth and enter the truth reality, knowing and seeing through negative things is merely the first step of life entry, the step at its very beginning. So, why is it that many people understand a few truths yet cannot put them into practice? Why can they all preach a great many words and doctrines, but have gone on unable to enter the truth reality? Is it that they understand nothing of the truth? No—it is exactly the opposite. Their theoretical, word-and-phrase level understanding of the truth is very much where it should be. It even trips off their tongue when they recite it. They have a will, of course, and they have a good mindset and aspirations; they are all willing to strive toward the truth. Yet why is it that they cannot put the truth into practice, but go on unable to enter the truth reality? It is because the words and letters and theories that they grasp remain unable to be made manifest in their real life. Where does this problem come from, then? Its origin is in the presence of their corrupt disposition there in the middle, hindering things. That is why there are some people who lack spiritual understanding and don't understand what it is to pursue the truth, who make a pledge and declare their will each time they fail or fall or cannot put the truth into practice. They make an untold number of such pledges and declarations, and still, it does not resolve the problem. They keep stopping at that stage of resolving their will and making pledges. They remain stuck there. Many people, when they practice the truth, are always setting their will and making oaths, saying they're going to struggle. Every day, they cheer themselves on. Three, four, five years of struggle—and how does it turn out in the end? Nothing has been accomplished, and all ends in failure. The bit of doctrine they understand is inapplicable anywhere. When something befalls them, they do not know how to view it and cannot see through it. They cannot find words of God to serve as their basis; they don't know how to view things according to God's words, nor do they know which element of the truth in God's words applies to the matter that has befallen them. They are then stricken with great anxiety, and they hate themselves, and they pray, asking God to give them more strength and faith, still cheering themselves on in the end. Is that not a foolhardy person? (It is.) They're just like children. Is man's quotidian treatment of the pursuit of the truth not, in fact, as infantile as this? Man wishes always to encourage himself to pursue the truth by resolving his will and making pledges, by restraining himself and cheering himself on, but the practice of the truth and entry into it does not come from man's self-encouragement. Instead, you truly must enter and practice according to the way and the steps that I tell you, with a firm and steady tread, one foot after the last. Only thus will you see results; only thus will you be practicing the

truth and able to enter the truth reality. There is no shortcut that circumvents this. This doesn't mean that with a bit of heart, a bit of a desire to expend of yourself, a great will, and a grand goal, the truth will become your reality, but that man must learn the fundamental lessons of seeking, entering, practice, and submission in his real life, amid people, events, and things. Only after learning these lessons can man come into contact with the truth and God's words, or experience them, or know them. Without having done so, what man will gain is no more than a bit of doctrine with which to fill the void in his heart, no matter how many years he spends motivating himself, encouraging himself, and cheering himself along. He will only feel a fleeting bit of spiritual satisfaction, but he will not have gained anything of true substance. What does it mean not to have gained anything of true substance? It means that the basis of your views on people and things, and of your comportment and actions, is not God's words. There are no words of God to be found that serve as a basis in your views on people and things or in your outlook on comportment and actions. You live a confused life, a life without aid, and the more it happens that you are faced with an issue, one that requires you to lay out your views, your principles and stance, the more evident your ignorance, foolishness, hollowness, and helplessness will be. Under normal circumstances, you are able to rattle off some number of correct doctrines and catchphrases, as if you understood everything. But when a problem has arisen, and someone comes to you in seriousness to have you declare your position and establish where you stand, no words will come to you. Some will say, "No words? It's not that—it's that I wouldn't dare say them." Well, why wouldn't you? That goes to show that you're unsure of whether what you're doing is right. Why would you be unsure of that? Because when you were doing the thing, you never confirmed what the basis was for what you were doing, nor what your principles were in doing it, nor less, of course, whether you have been viewing and doing the matter according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. So, when a problem occurs, you are left looking awkward and impotent. Some people are unconvinced. They say, "I'm not like that. I went to college. I got my master's," or "I'm a philosopher, a professor, an intellectual of a high order," or "I'm a cultured person. You can take what I say to print," or "I'm a scholar of note," or "I'm a talent." Is trotting these things out of any use to you? They aren't merits of yours. At the very most, these things mean you have a bit of knowledge. Whether that will be of use in God's house is hard to say, but it is at least sure that that knowledge of yours is not the same thing as the truth, and it doesn't reflect your stature. What is it meant to say that your knowledge doesn't reflect your stature? Such things are not your life; they are external to your body. What is your life, then? It is a life whose basis and criteria are the logic and philosophy of Satan, and even with your knowledge, your culture, that brain of yours, you cannot suppress these things or control them. So, when a problem occurs, your fount of talent and intellect and your plentiful knowledge will be of no avail at all—or it may be that when one aspect of your corrupt disposition pours forth, your patience, breeding, knowledge, and such-all will not avail

you in the least. You'll feel helpless then. All these things are the awkward ways in which not pursuing the truth and lacking entry into the truth reality manifest in man. Is it easy to enter the truth? Is there a challenge in it? Where? There's no challenge, if you ask Me. Don't focus on resolving your will or making pledges. Those are useless. When you have time to resolve your will and make pledges, put that time instead into making an effort into God's words. Consider what they say, which portion of them touches on your present state. It's useless to set your will. You could crack your head open and let the blood flow, setting your will, and still, it'd be useless. It can't resolve any problems. You can trick man and demons like that, but you cannot trick God. God doesn't delight in that will of yours. How many times have you set your will? You make your pledges, then you drop them, and having dropped them, you make them again, and drop them again. What kind of person does that make you? When will you keep your word? It doesn't matter whether you keep your word, or whether you set your will. Whether you make a pledge has no bearing, either. What is it that's important? It's that you put the truth you understand into practice right now, immediately, at once. Even if it's the most obvious truth, the one that catches others' eyes the least and you yourself put the least emphasis on, practice it right away—enter it right away. If you do, you will enter the truth reality right away, and right away, you will embark on the path of pursuing the truth. You will be on the verge of becoming someone who pursues the truth. On that foundation, you will soon be able to become a person who views people and things, and who comports themselves and acts, according to God's words, with the truth as their criterion. What a bounty that will be—what tangible value!

After fellowshiping on sayings about good behavior in traditional culture, have you gained any understanding with them? How should you approach this sort of good behavior? Some people might say, "Beginning from today, I will not be a well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, or courteous person. I will not be a so-called 'good' person; I won't be one who respects the old or cares for the young; I won't be an amiable, approachable person. None of that is a natural outpouring of normal humanity; it is deceptive behavior that is fake and false, and it does not rise to the level of practicing the truth. What sort of person will I be? I will be an honest person; I will begin by being an honest person. In my speech, I can be uneducated, not understand the rules, be lacking in knowledge, and looked down on by others, but I will speak frankly, with sincerity, and without falseness. As a person and in my actions, I will not be fake and will not put on an act. Every time I speak, it will be from the heart—I will say what I think inside. If I have hatred toward someone, I will examine myself and not do anything hurtful toward them; I will only do things that are constructive. When I speak, I will not give consideration to my own personal gain, nor will I be constricted by my reputation or face. Moreover, I will not have the intent of making people think highly of me. I will only place importance on whether God is happy. Not hurting people will be my baseline. What I do will be done in accordance with God's demands; I will not do things to harm others, nor

will I do things detrimental to the interests of the house of God. I will only do things that are beneficial to others, only be an honest person, and a person that makes God happy." Is this not change in a person? If they truly practice these words, then they will have truly changed. Their future and fate will have changed for the better. They will soon embark on the path of pursuing the truth, soon enter into the reality of the truth, and soon become a person with hope of salvation. This is a good thing, a positive thing. Does it require you to set your will or make a pledge? It requires nothing: Neither that you set your will to God; nor that you take inventory of your prior transgressions, mistakes, and rebelliousness, hurry to confess to God and ask His forgiveness. There's no need for such formalities. Just say something true and from the heart, right now, immediately, at once, and do something solid, without lies or trickery. You'll then have achieved something, and there will be hope for you to become an honest person. When someone becomes an honest person, they gain the truth reality and begin living as a human being. Such are they of whom God approves. Of this, there is no doubt.

February 5, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (4)

Let us start by recalling what we fellowshiped on at our last gathering. (At our last gathering, we fellowshiped on the topic of “What It Means to Pursue the Truth.” We first focused on this question: “Given that the things people hold to be good and right are not the truth, why do people still cling to those things as if they were the truth and think that in doing so, they are pursuing the truth?” You laid out three reasons for this. You mainly talked about the first of those, which was what those things are, exactly, that people hold to be good and right in their notions.) At our last gathering, we mainly fellowshiped about the first reason. We spoke of things that people hold to be good and right in their notions, and we split those things into two broad categories: the first being “good behaviors,” the second being “good moral conduct.” In total, I gave six examples for the first category of “good behaviors”: being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined, being courteous, respecting the old and caring for the young, being amiable, and being approachable. We have not yet fellowshiped about the second category, “good moral conduct.” There are some issues that we must review a little after fellowshiping on them, smoothing out and clarifying the truths and principles of that fellowship, making everything crisp and clear. Doing this will make it easier for you to understand the truth. Our fellowship last time was constituted of some broad sections, as well as some specific examples. It seems like a lot, but really, we just fellowshiped about some specific things within those broad sections, and we broke those specifics down further, so that the fellowship would be a bit clearer and more distinct. We gave six examples of good behaviors, but we did not fellowship in detail about each of them, one by one. Among those examples, being well-educated and sensible is a classic representation of what people hold to be right and good in their notions. We gave a bit more fellowship on this example. The rest are similar to it; you can use a similar method to analyze and discern them.

Today, before we get to the proper content of our fellowship, I will tell you two short stories. Do you like listening to stories? (Yes.) It is not so tiring, listening to a story, and it does not require too much concentration. It is not very strenuous, relatively speaking, and it can be quite interesting. So, listen attentively, and while you listen to the content of the stories, consider also why I am telling them—what specific, central ideas are contained within them, or in other words, what practical things people can gain by listening to them. Alright—let us begin our stories. These are the stories of Xiaoxiao and Xiaoji.

The Stories of Xiaoxiao and Xiaoji

For some time, Xiaoxiao had felt a pain in his eyes, along with blurred vision, sensitivity to light, tears brought about by the wind, the feeling that there was something in his eyes, and other such symptoms. He would rub them, but it did not help much. Xiaoxiao did not know what was wrong with him. He thought, “I’ve never had a problem with my eyes before, and my vision’s fine. What’s happening?” When he looked in the

mirror, his eyes looked much the same as before—just a bit redder, and sometimes a little bloodshot. This was baffling to Xiaoxiao, and a bit unsettling. He did not pay the issue too much mind when it first began, but when his symptoms started to come on with increasing frequency, he eventually could not take it any longer. He gave it some thought: “Should I go to the doctor, or try to look it up myself? Finding information on this would be a pain, and I may misdiagnose what the actual problem is. I’d better go straight to the doctor; he’ll be sure to give an accurate diagnosis.” So, Xiaoxiao went to the doctor. The doctor examined him and found no major problems. He prescribed some regular eye-drops and advised Xiaoxiao to take care of his eyes and not to overwork them. Xiaoxiao was very relieved to know there was not a major problem with his eyes. After he got back home, Xiaoxiao used the eye-drops every day, at the times and in the dosage the doctor had ordered him to, and within a few days, his symptoms improved. A great weight was lifted from Xiaoxiao’s heart: He felt that if medicine could cure it, the problem could not be serious. But that feeling did not last for long, and a while later, his symptoms came back. Xiaoxiao upped his eye-drop dosage, and his eyes felt a bit better, and his symptoms were somewhat relieved. But a few days later, his eyes went back to the way they were before, and the symptoms got worse and more frequent. Xiaoxiao could not make sense of it, and he felt another wave of unhappiness rush over him: “What should I do? The medicine the doctor gave me isn’t working. Does this mean there’s something seriously wrong with my eyes? I can’t ignore this.” He decided not to see the doctor again or to consult him about his eye troubles this time. Instead, he chose to solve the problem on his own. He went online and found all sorts of videos and information relating to his symptoms. Most of them said that these problems were caused by the improper use of one’s eyes, that he needed to take care of his eyes, and that it was even more important for him to use them properly. Xiaoxiao felt that this advice was not helpful, and that it could not solve his problem. So, he continued looking for information. One day, he came upon a resource that said his symptoms may be caused by a retinal hemorrhage, which could be a precursor to glaucoma. It was also possible that his symptoms could develop into cataracts as they progressed. When Xiaoxiao read the words “glaucoma” and “cataracts,” it set his head abuzz. Everything went black and he nearly fainted, his heart was thumping in his chest. “Oh, God, what is happening? Am I really going to have glaucoma and cataracts? I’ve heard that cataracts require surgery, and that if you have glaucoma, you’re likely to go blind! That would be the end of me, wouldn’t it? I’m still young—if I do go blind, how will I, as a blind person, get through the rest of my life? What would I have to look forward to from there? Wouldn’t I have to spend my life in darkness?” When Xiaoxiao looked at the words “glaucoma” and “cataracts” on the page, he found that he could not sit still anymore. He was distraught, and he was plunging deeper into depression and despondency. He did not know what to do, or how he would face the days to come. He was filled with sadness and everything that lay before him was lost in a haze. In the face of this problem, Xiaoxiao fell completely

into despair. He lost interest in living, and he could not muster the energy to perform his duty. He did not want to go back to the doctor or mention his eye problems to other people. Of course, he was afraid of people learning that he was going to develop glaucoma or cataracts. And just like that, Xiaoxiao passed day after day, in depression, negativity, and confusion. He did not dare to make predictions or plans for his future, because to him, the future was a terrible, heartbreaking thing. He lived his days in depression and despair, in a dreadful mood. He did not want to pray or read God's words, and he certainly did not want to speak with other people. It was as if he had become a completely different person. After a few days of this, Xiaoxiao had a sudden thought: "This is a sorry condition that I seem to be in. Since my future is bleak and God, instead of protecting me, allowed me to get this disease, why should I keep performing my duty properly? Life is short; why don't I take the opportunity, while my eyesight is still good, to do some of the things that I like and treat myself? Why should my life be so exhausting? Why should I hurt myself and treat myself so badly?" And so, when Xiaoxiao was not sleeping, eating, or working, he spent most of his time on the internet, playing games, watching videos, binge-watching shows, and when he went out, he even took his phone with him and played games on it incessantly. He spent his days engrossed in the world of the internet. Naturally, as he did so, the pain in his eyes got worse and worse, and his symptoms became more severe, too. When he could not stand it anymore, he used some of his eye-drops to relieve his symptoms, and when they got a bit better, he would re-immerse himself in the internet, watching the things that he liked. This was his way to alleviate the fear and terror deep in his heart, and this was his way to pass the time, to get through his days. Whenever his eyes hurt and his symptoms got worse, Xiaoxiao would subconsciously look at the people around him and think, "Other people use their eyes like I do. Why don't their eyes get red, and tear up all the time, and feel like there's something stuck in them? Why am I the one with this disease? Isn't this God playing favorites? I have expended myself so much for God; why won't He protect me? God is so unfair! Why is everyone else lucky enough to gain God's protection, yet I can't? Why does all the rotten luck always fall to me?" The more Xiaoxiao thought, the angrier and more annoyed he became, and the angrier he got, the more he wanted to use online entertainment and pastimes to dispel his bitterness and anger. He wanted to be rid of his eye disease as soon as possible, but the more he wanted to get rid of his bitterness and anger, the less joy and peace he had, and the more unlucky he felt, no matter how engrossed he became in the internet. And in his heart, he complained about God being unfair. Days went by like this, one after another. Xiaoxiao's eye problem did not get any better, and his mood got worse and worse. Against that backdrop, Xiaoxiao felt all the more powerless and unlucky. Xiaoxiao's life went on like this. No one could help him, and he sought no help. He just went through every day in a haze, depressed, and powerless.

That was Xiaoxiao's story. We will finish it there. Next is Xiaoji's story.

While performing his duty, Xiaoji encountered the same problem as Xiaoxiao. His vision got blurry, and his eyes often felt swollen and sore. This was frequently accompanied by the sensation that there was something stuck in his eyes, and his eyes did not feel any better after he rubbed them. He thought, “What’s going on here? My eyes used to be great; I’ve never been to an eye doctor before. What has been happening to them recently? Could there be a problem with my eyes?” When he looked in the mirror, his eyes did not look any different from before. He just felt a burning sensation in his eyes, and when he blinked hard, they felt even sorer and swollen, and they began to water. Xiaoji felt that there was something wrong with his eyes, and he thought, “Eye problems are a big deal. I shouldn’t ignore this. Even so, I don’t feel that bad, and it hasn’t affected my life or my duty. Things have been so busy with the church’s work recently, and going to the doctor would have repercussions on my duty. I’ll just look for information about it when I have free time.” After making this decision, Xiaoji sought out relevant information when he had some time away from his duty, and he learned that there was no major problem with his eyes—his discomfort came from long-term, over-use of his eyes. With proper eye use, appropriate care, and some suitable exercises, his eyes would go back to normal. Xiaoji was very happy when he read that. “It’s not a major problem, so there’s no need to be too worried about it. This source says that I’ve got to use my eyes properly and exercise them correctly—so, I’ll just look into how to use my eyes properly and what exercises I should do to get them back to normal.” He then sought out more relevant information and from it, he picked a few methods and approaches that suited his situation. From then on, in addition to his normal life and performing his duty, Xiaoji had a new job: the work of caring for his eyes. He practiced the eye-care techniques that he had learned every day. As he tried them out, he felt out whether they were alleviating the symptoms that his eyes had exhibited. After a period of testing them out and trying them, Xiaoji felt that some of the methods were workable, while others were good only in theory, not in practice—they could not fix his problem, at least. And so, based on his findings from that initial period, Xiaoji picked a few methods and techniques for maintaining eye-health that worked for him. He practiced proper eye-use and eye care every day, whenever it would not delay his duty to do so. After a while, Xiaoji’s eyes really did feel better and better; his previous symptoms—redness, soreness, the burning sensation, and so on—slowly began to fade, and they occurred less and less frequently. Xiaoji felt very fortunate. “Thanks be to God for His leadership. This is His grace and His guidance.” Though his eyes exhibited fewer problems and his symptoms were getting less severe, Xiaoji continued to practice those eye-care methods and using his eyes correctly, without slacking off. And after a while, his eyes returned entirely back to normal. From this experience, Xiaoji learned some ways to keep his eyes healthy, and he also learned how to use his eyes and live correctly. He added some positive, commonsense knowledge to his repertoire in life. Xiaoji was very happy. He felt that though he had experienced some ups and downs and had some unusual experiences,

he had ultimately gained some precious life experience from it. Whenever someone around him said that their eyes hurt, that they were puffy and sore, Xiaoji would tell them candidly about his experience and the approaches and techniques that he had used. With Xiaoji's help, those experiencing symptoms of eye problems also learned ways and methods to use their eyes correctly and to keep their eyes healthy. Xiaoji was happy, and he was of great help to the people around him. And so, over that time, Xiaoji and the others gained some commonsense knowledge that people ought to have in their lives as humans. Everyone worked and performed their duties together, happily and joyfully. Xiaoji did not succumb to negativity or powerlessness because of his eye problem, nor did he ever complain about his bad luck. Though he saw some of the alarming claims when looking for information that Xiaoxiao did, he did not pay them too much mind. Instead, he actively and properly resolved his problem. When the same thing happened to Xiaoxiao, he fell repeatedly into depression, into powerlessness and confusion. Xiaoji, on the other hand, not only avoided falling into depression and confusion, he also did not get caught up in resentment against God—and he even gained from these events a more beneficial, active, and positive attitude toward life. He helped himself, and he helped others.

Those were the stories of Xiaoxiao and Xiaoji. You have now heard both of their stories. Have you understood them? Which of them do you like: Xiaoxiao or Xiaoji? (Xiaoji.) So, what is bad about Xiaoxiao? (When things befell him, he wasn't able to face them properly. He was negative and resistant.) To be negative and resistant is to bring about one's own destruction. When things befall other people, they can seek the truth to resolve them, but when something befell Xiaoxiao, he was not able to seek the truth, he opted for negativity and resistance. He was courting his own ruin. Information may be advanced nowadays, but in this satanic world, lies and trickery abound. The world is full of lies and trickery. When facing any issue or any kind of information in this chaotic world, people must have wisdom, they must be intelligent and perceptive, and they must be discerning. They must filter different kinds of information stringently, from a proper standpoint. People must not readily believe any claim, and they certainly must not readily accept any kind of information. In Satan's world, people all lie, and liars are never held accountable. They tell their lies and that is it. No one in this world denounces lies; no one denounces trickery. Man's heart is difficult to fathom, and behind every liar, there is an intent and a goal. For instance, you see the doctor, and he says, "Your disease needs to be treated quickly. If we don't, it may develop into cancer!" If you are timid, you will be afraid: "Oh no! It may develop into cancer! Let's treat it right away!" And as a result, the more you try to cure it, the worse it grows, and you wind up in the hospital. What the doctor actually said was that your disease may develop into cancer, which means that it is not yet cancer, yet you misunderstood this to mean that it must be treated urgently as if it were cancer. Are you not courting death by doing this? If you treat it as cancer, then the more you try to cure it, the quicker you will die. Would you be able to survive much

longer, then? (No.) What you are sick with is not, in fact, cancer, so why would the doctor tell you that if you do not treat it, it will develop into cancer? He says this in order to cheat you out of money, to get you to treat your disease as if it were a serious one. If you knew it was a minor ailment, you would not try to cure it, and he would not be able to get your money. When many doctors see their patients, they grab hold of them, like a demon grabs hold of a person, and they hold on tightly and they do not let go. This is a common approach that most doctors use with their patients. They begin by telling you how renowned they are, how good they are at medicine, how many people they have cured, what diseases they have cured, and how long they have been practicing medicine. They get you to trust them, to sit straight down and accept their treatment. Then, they tell you that you are going to contract a major illness, and that if you do not undergo treatment, you may die. Everybody dies, but will it really be this disease that kills you? Not necessarily. The life and death of every person are in God's hands. It is He who decides them, not doctors. Doctors often use this ploy to trick people. Those who are timid and death-fearing seek medical advice everywhere and let doctors make pronouncements about their health. If their doctor says that they have a chance of developing cancer, they believe them, and they rush to let the doctor treat it, to dispel the risk of them dying from cancer. Are they not just scaring themselves? (They are.) We will stop talking about doctors now and continue speaking about Xiaoxiao and Xiaoji. Their perspectives, viewpoints, and stances regarding everything that happens around them could not be more different. Xiaoxiao is nothing but a bundle of negativity, whereas Xiaoji is able to approach things that befall him properly. He has the reason and judgment of normal humanity and he faces things in an active way. He also keeps on performing his duty. The two of them could not be more different. When something befalls Xiaoxiao, he writes the situation off as hopeless, and acts recklessly. He does not seek the proper method and means to address it, and he is also undiscerning, muddled, foolish, pig-headed, and intransigent—and quite malicious, too. When he gets sick, or when he encounters some difficulty, or something bad happens to him, he hopes that it will happen to everyone else, too. He hates God for not protecting him, and he wishes to vent his anger. But he does not dare to vent and take out his anger on others, so he vents his rage and takes out his anger on himself. Is this not a vicious disposition? (It is.) To be resentful, hateful, and envious when some small thing does not go your way—that is viciousness. When something befalls Xiaoji, he has the reason and judgment of normal humanity. He has the wisdom and he makes the choices that someone with normal humanity ought to. Though Xiaoji had the same ailment as Xiaoxiao, his problem was resolved in the end, whereas Xiaoxiao was never able to resolve his problem, and it deteriorated steadily and grew ever more intense. Xiaoxiao's problem is a serious one, and it is not merely one of fleshly sickness—he exposed the disposition that lay in the depths of his heart; he exposed his own stubbornness, intransigence, foolishness, and maliciousness. That is the difference between the two of them. If you have more detailed knowledge and

understanding of how these two people live, as well as their attitudes and methods for dealing with things, you can continue fellowshiping about it later, holding yourself up against it for comparison, and derive a lesson from it. Of course, you should enter into things in an active way, like Xiaoji. You should approach life properly, and strive to view people and things, and to comport yourself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion, such that you become one who pursues the truth. You must not be like Xiaoxiao. Is that not so? (It is.) That is how you should pursue and practice.

Now, we will take a look back at what we fellowshiped on at our last gathering. We talked about the first aspect of things that people hold in their notions to be right and good—good behaviors—and we listed six examples of good behaviors. All of them were things promoted by traditional culture, and good behaviors that people like in their real lives. Can you tell Me what they were? (Being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined, being courteous, respecting the old and caring for the young, being amiable, and being approachable.) We did not give any other examples. It may be that there are some differences from the six representative good behaviors put forward by traditional Chinese culture within the traditional cultures of other countries, but we will not list these. Last time we fellowshiped on and analyzed some of the specific content of these six good behaviors. Overall, these external good behaviors do not represent the positive things within humanity, and much less do they represent that a person's disposition has changed—they certainly do not prove that someone understands the truth and lives out the truth reality. They are merely external behaviors that can be seen by man. Simply put, they are man's external manifestations. These external manifestations and outpourings are merely formalities that happen when people interact, get along with each other, and live with each other. What does "formalities" refer to? It refers to the most superficial things that put people at ease when they see them. They represent nothing of people's essence, nor their thoughts and views, nor their attitude toward positive things, and less still do they represent people's attitude toward the truth. The requirements and standards of evaluation that mankind has regarding external behaviors are just formalities that people can comprehend and achieve. They have nothing whatsoever to do with man's essence. However amiable or approachable people may seem on the surface, and no matter how much others like, respect, revere, and worship the external behaviors that they live out, it does not mean that they have humanity, nor does it mean that their nature essence is good, or loving of positive things, or possessed of a sense of righteousness, and, of course, less still does it mean that they are people who can pursue the truth. All of the good behaviors that have been summarized by mankind are no more than some external manifestations and lived out things that mankind promotes in order to differentiate itself from other forms of life. For example, being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined, and being courteous—these good behaviors only show that a person is externally quite well-behaved, polite, educated, and cultured,

unlike animals, which follow no rules. People wipe their mouths with their hands or napkins after they eat or drink, cleaning themselves up a little. If you tried to wipe a dog's mouth after it ate or drank, it would not be happy about it. Animals do not understand such things. Why do people, then? Because people are "higher animals." They ought to understand these things. So, these good behaviors are just what man uses to regulate the behavior of the biological group that is mankind, and they do no more than differentiate mankind from lower forms of life. They have nothing at all to do with comportment, or the pursuit of the truth, or worshiping God. This means that though you may outwardly live up to the standards and requirements of being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined, and so on, though you may have these good behaviors, it does not mean that you are someone who has humanity, or someone who possesses the truth, or someone who fears God and shuns evil. It does not mean any of those things at all. On the contrary, it only means that after going through the system of behavioral education, and of the norms of etiquette, your speech, facial expressions, bearing, and so forth have become a bit more disciplined. It shows that you are better than animals and have a bit of human likeness—but it does not show you to be someone who pursues the truth. It may even be said that it has nothing whatsoever to do with the pursuit of the truth. That you are possessed of these good behaviors does not at all mean that you possess the right conditions for pursuing the truth, and less still does it mean that you have already entered into the truth reality and gained the truth. It is completely undemonstrative of those things.

Anyone who has kept a cat or a dog as a pet will feel that there is something lovable about them. A few cats and dogs actually have some manners. When some cats want to go into their master's room, they will meow a few times at the door before entering. They will not go in if their master says nothing, they will only enter once their owner says: "Come in." Even cats can practice this kind of etiquette, they know to ask permission before entering their master's room. Is that not a sort of good behavior? If even animals can possess this kind of good behavior, how much higher can the good behaviors that people possess make them than animals? This is the minimum level of common sense that people ought to possess—it does not need to be taught, it is a very normal thing. People may feel that this kind of good behavior is relatively appropriate, and it may make them feel somewhat more comfortable, but does living out these good behaviors represent the quality or essence of their humanity? (No.) It does not. They are merely rules and methods that one should have in their actions—they have nothing at all to do with the quality and essence of one's humanity. Take cats and dogs, for instance—what do they have in common? When people give them something to eat, they express intimacy and gratitude. They possess this kind of conduct, and they can exhibit this kind of behavior. What is different about them is that one of them specializes in catching mice, while the other specializes in guarding the house. A cat may leave its master at any time and any place; when there is fun to be had, a cat will forget its master and pay them no

mind. A dog will never leave its master; if it identifies you as its master, then even if it changes owners, it will still recognize you and treat you as its master. That is the difference between cats and dogs, in terms of the moral quality of their behavior and their essence. Now, let us talk about people. Among the behaviors that man believes to be good, like being well-educated and sensible, being courteous, being approachable, and so on, though there are some that surpass the behavior of other species—meaning that what man is able to do exceeds the capabilities of other species—these are no more than external behaviors and rules, they are simply approaches that are meant to regulate people's behavior and differentiate them from other forms of life. Possessing these good behaviors may make people feel that they are different from or better than other forms of life, but the fact is that in some respects, people behave worse than animals. Take respecting the old and caring for the young, for instance. In the animal kingdom, wolves do this better than people. In a wolfpack, adult wolves will care for a pup, no matter who it belongs to. They will not bully it or harm it. This, man fails to do, and in this way, mankind is worse than a pack of wolves. What sort of respect for the old and care for the young does mankind possess? Are people truly capable of achieving this? Most people are not capable of "caring for the young," people are not possessed of that sort of good behavior, which means that they do not possess that kind of humanity. For example: When a child is with their parents, people will be quite amiable and approachable when speaking to that child—but when their parents are not there, people's demonic side pours forth. If the child speaks to them, they will ignore them, or even find the child disagreeable and abuse them. How wicked they are! In many countries in the world, child trafficking is not uncommon—it is a global problem. If people do not even possess the good behavior of respecting the old and caring for the young, and they feel no pang of conscience when they bully children, tell Me, what kind of humanity is that? They still pretend to respect the old and care for the young, but this is just a facade. Why do I give this example? Because even though mankind has put forward these good behaviors and proposed these requirements and standards for people's behavior, man's corrupt essence can never be changed, regardless of whether people are capable of achieving them, or how many good behaviors they possess. The criteria for man's views on people and things, and for his comportment and actions, arise entirely from corrupt mankind's thoughts and views, and they are determined by corrupt dispositions. Though the requirements and standards that mankind has put forward are recognized as good and high standards, are people capable of achieving them? (No.) That is a problem. Even if a person acts a bit better outwardly, and is rewarded and recognized for it, that, too, is adulterated with pretense and trickery, because, as everyone acknowledges, doing a bit of good is easy—what is hard is doing good for a lifetime. If they are truly a good person, why is it so hard for them to do good things? So, no person can live up to mankind's so-called "good" and recognized standards. It is all bragging, fraud, and fiction. Even if people can outwardly fulfill a few of these standards and possess a bit of good behavior—like

being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined, being courteous, respecting the old and caring for the young, being amiable, and being approachable—though people can do and possess a few of these things, it is only for a short time, temporarily, or in some passing environment. They only possess these manifestations when they need to. As soon as something touches on their status, pride, wealth, interests, or even their fate and their prospects, their nature and ferocious inner self will burst forth. They will no longer appear well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, courteous, respectful toward the old and caring toward the young, amiable, or approachable. Instead, they will fight and scheme against one another, each trying to outwit the other, framing and killing each other. Such things happen all too often—for the sake of their interests, their status, or their authority, friends, relatives, and even fathers and sons will try to massacre each other until only one of them is left standing. The miserable situation that exists between people is clear to see. That is why being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined, being courteous, respecting the old and caring for the young, being amiable, and being approachable can only be called the products of passing circumstances. No person can truly live them out—not even the sages and great men worshiped by the Chinese were capable of these things. So, these teachings and theories are all absurd. They are all pure nonsense. People who pursue the truth are able to resolve matters that touch on their personal interests according to God's words, and with the truth as their criterion, and they are able to practice the truth and submit to God. In this way, the truth reality that they possess surpasses the standards for good behavior acknowledged by mankind. Those who do not pursue the truth cannot break through the barrier of their own interests, and as such, they cannot put the truth into practice. They cannot even uphold rules like good behaviors. What, then, are the basis and criteria for their views on people and things, and for their comportment and actions? Certainly, they are just rules and doctrines, they are Satan's philosophies and laws, and not the truth in God's words. This is because those people do not accept the truth, and they are only looking out for their own interests, so naturally, they cannot put the truth into practice. They cannot even uphold good behaviors—they try to fake it, but they cannot keep up their disguises. In this, they expose their true colors. For the sake of their own interests, they will struggle, snatch, and rob, they will plot, scheme, and engage in trickery, they will punish others, and even kill someone. They can do all these vicious things—is their nature not exposed in that? And when their nature is exposed, others can easily see the intents and bases for their words and actions; others can tell that those people are living entirely by Satan's philosophies, that the basis for their views on people and things, and for their comportment and actions, is Satan's philosophies. For example: "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," "Money makes the world go round," "Where there is life there is hope," "A small mind makes no gentleman, a real man is not without venom," "If you're unkind, I won't be fair," "Here's a taste of your own medicine," and so on—these satanic lines of logic and laws take charge within

people. When people live by these things, good behaviors like being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined, being courteous, respecting the old and caring for the young, and so forth become masks that people use to disguise themselves, they become facades. Why do they become facades? Because the foundation and laws that people truly live by are things inculcated in man by Satan, and not the truth. And thus, man's most rudimentary conscience and morality have no effect on a person who does not love the truth. When something happens that is connected to their interests, their true self will burst forth, and at that time people will see their real face. People will say with shock, "But aren't they usually so gentle, courteous, and gentlemanly? Why is it that when something befalls them, they seem to turn into an entirely different person?" In fact, that person did not change; it is just that their true self had not been revealed and exposed until then. When things do not touch on their interests and before the gloves come off, everything they do is trickery and a disguise. The laws and basis of their existence that they reveal when their interests are affected or threatened, and when they stop disguising themselves, are their nature, their essence, and who they really are. So, whatever sort of good behaviors a person has—no matter how impeccable their external behavior seems to other people—it does not mean that they are someone who pursues the truth and loves positive things. At the very least, it does not mean that they have normal humanity, and less still does it mean that they are trustworthy or worth interacting with.

Within good behaviors, we have raised the examples of being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined, being courteous, respecting the old and caring for the young, being amiable, and being approachable. We will now take respecting the old and caring for the young as an example, and fellowship on it in detail. Respecting the old and caring for the young is a very normal occurrence in human life. It can even appear within some animal populations, so, naturally, it should appear even more among humans, who possess conscience and reason. Humans should observe this behavior better, more concretely, and more practically than other species, rather than merely scratching at the surface of it. Humans should be better than other species at adhering to this good behavior of respecting the old and caring for the young, because humans possess conscience and reason, which other species do not. Humans should be able to demonstrate, in their observance of this good behavior, that their humanity is greater than the essence of other species, that it is different. But do humans really do this? (No.) Do educated, knowledgeable people do this? (They don't, either.) Let us put the common folk aside and talk about the affairs of the elite, and the affairs of the court. At present, several countries are producing a number of palace dramas, exposing many of the tumultuous stories of the royal households. Members of the palace and common folk are alike in that they both place great emphasis on hierarchies of seniority. Those within royal households have had a deeper, more specific education about the good behavior of respecting the old and caring for the young than the common folk, and the younger generations in royal households are better at being deferential and respectful toward

their elders than the common folk—there is a great deal of etiquette involved. When it comes to respecting the old and caring for the young, those within royal households have especially high requirements for this aspect of good behavior, which they must follow to the letter. On the surface, they appear to be adhering to traditional culture's requirement of respecting the old and caring for the young, just as the common people do—and yet, however well or fittingly they do so, however decent and irreproachable they appear to be, behind the facade of this irreproachable behavior are hidden all sorts of transferences of power and jockeying among various forces. Between sons and fathers, grandsons and grandfathers, servants and masters, ministers and monarchs—on the surface, they all seem to be observing that most fundamental criterion for behavior: respecting the old and caring for the young. But because monarchical authority and various other forces are all in the mix, this external behavior serves no function at all. It is completely incapable of affecting what ultimately comes from the transference of monarchical power and the jockeying of various forces. Naturally, this kind of good behavior is fundamentally incapable of restraining anyone who covets the throne or has ambitions for power. The common folk uphold the rule of respecting the old and caring for the young, which was passed down to them by their ancestors. They, too, live amid the constraints of this rule. No matter how many interests intersect, or whatever struggles arise when those interests clash, the common folk are still able to live together afterward. But things are different within royal households, because their interests and power disputes are more significant. They fight and fight, and the ultimate outcome is that the winners become kings and the losers become criminals—either one party dies, or the other does. The winners and losers alike all uphold this rule of respecting the old and caring for the young, but because each wields a different amount of power and has different desires and ambitions, or because of the disparities between the strength of each party, some survive in the end, while others are destroyed. What determines this? Is it determined by the rule of respecting the old and caring for the young? (No.) So, what determines it? (Man's satanic nature.) What do I mean by all this? I mean that these rules, mankind's novel, so-called good behaviors, can determine nothing at all. The path a person walks is not in the least decided by whether they are well-educated and sensible, amiable, or respectful of the old and caring for the young in terms of their external behavior, it is determined by man's nature. In brief, God's house does not promote these statements about good behavior that have arisen among mankind. These behaviors that man sees as good are no more than a kind of good behavior and manifestation; they do not represent the truth, and if someone possesses these good behaviors and manifestations, it does not mean that they are practicing the truth, less still does it mean that they are pursuing the truth.

Since these behaviors, which man holds to be good, do not come from God, nor are they promoted by His house, and even less are they in accordance with His will, and since they are at odds with God's words and the requirements that He puts forward,

does God also have some requirements for mankind's behavior? (He does.) God, too, has put forward some statements about the behavior of believers who follow Him. They are different from the requirements that God has made of man regarding the truth, and they are somewhat simpler, but they do contain some specifics. What requirements does God have for those who follow Him? Possessing saintly decency, for instance—is that not a requirement for man's behavior? (It is.) There is also not being dissolute, being restrained, not wearing unusual clothes, not smoking or drinking, not hitting or verbally abusing others, as well as not worshiping idols, honoring one's parents, and so on. These are all behavioral requirements that God has put forward for His followers. They are the most basic requirements and they must not be ignored. God has specific requirements for the behavior of those who follow Him, and they are different from the good behaviors put forward by unbelievers. The good behaviors proposed by unbelievers do no more than make people into higher animals, distinguishing them from other lower animals. Whereas, the requirements that God makes of His followers, differentiate them from unbelievers, from people who do not believe in God. They are not about being different from animals. In the past, there was also talk of "sanctification." This is a somewhat exaggerated, inaccurate way of putting it, but God has put forward some requirements for His followers regarding their behavior. Tell Me, what are they? (To possess saintly decency, to not be dissolute, to be restrained, to not wear unusual clothes, to not smoke or drink, to not hit or verbally abuse others, to not worship idols, and to honor one's parents.) What else, besides those? (To not misappropriate others' possessions, to not steal, to not give false witness, to not commit adultery.) There are those, too. They are parts of the law, they are some requirements that God put forward regarding mankind's behavior in the very beginning, and they remain real and practical today. God uses these requirements to regulate the behavior of His followers, meaning that these external behaviors are the sign of those who follow God. If you possess these behaviors and manifestations, such that when others look at you, they know that you are a believer in God, then they will at least approve of you and admire you. They will say that you possess saintly decency, that you look like a believer in God, and not like an unbeliever. Some people who come to believe in God remain the same as unbelievers, often smoking, drinking, fighting, and brawling. There are even some who commit adultery and steal. Even their behavior is unrestrained, and does not comply with God's words, and when an unbeliever sees them, they say, "Are they really a believer in God? Why are they just like people who don't believe in God, then?" Others do not admire that person or trust them, so when that person tries to spread the gospel, people do not accept it. If someone can do what God requires of man, then they are a lover of positive things, they are kind-hearted, and they possess normal humanity. Such a person can put God's words into practice right after hearing them, and there is no pretense to what they practice, because they have, at the very least, acted in that way based on their conscience and reason. In what way do God's specific requirements of man differ from

the good behaviors that mankind promotes? (God's requirements of man are distinctly practical, they can enable people to live out normal humanity, whereas traditional culture only demands some behaviors that are for show, which have no tangible function.) That is right. The good behaviors that traditional culture requires of man are all counterfeit and they are all disguises. They are a sham. Those who abide by them may speak pleasant words, but on the inside, things are completely different. These good behaviors are a mask, an illusion. They are not things that pour forth from the essence of one's humanity, they are disguises that man dons for the sake of his pride, for his reputation and status. They are a show, a kind of hypocritical approach, something that a person deliberately acts out for others to see. Sometimes people cannot discern whether a person's behavior is real or fake, but in time, everyone will see that person's true colors. It is just as it was with the hypocritical Pharisees, who had so many external good behaviors and so many manifestations of their so-called piety, yet when the Lord Jesus came to express the truth and do the work of redemption, they condemned Him and crucified Him, because they were sick of the truth and hated it. This shows that people's good behaviors and external approaches do not represent their nature essence. They are unrelated to people's nature essence. Whereas, the rules that God demands man to fulfill can be put into practice and really lived out, so long as one truly believes in God and possesses a conscience and reason. You should do these things, no matter whether you are doing so in front of others or behind their backs; no matter what your humanity essence is like, you must fulfill these requirements that God has put forward. Since you follow God, you must restrain yourself and practice according to His words, no matter how severe your corrupt disposition is. After a period of such experience, you will have true entry, and you will have truly changed. That true change is real.

Let us do a quick summary: What kind of requirements does God have for people's behavior? People must remain principled and restrained, and they must live with dignity, such that others respect them, without any pretense. These are God's behavioral requirements of man. This means that one must practice in this way and possess this kind of reality, regardless of whether they are in the presence of others or not, or what environment they are in, or whomever they are faced with. Normal humans should possess these realities; it is the least one should do in terms of their comportment. Say, for example, that somebody speaks very loudly, but they do not verbally abuse others or use foul language, and what they say is truthful and accurate, and it does not attack other people. Even if that person calls someone bad or says that someone is no good, it is factual. Though their external words and actions do not accord with the requirements of being amiable or being gentle and refined that unbelievers have put forward, the content of what they say, and the principles and basis for their speech allow them to live with dignity and integrity. That's what it means to be principled. They do not speak blithely about things they do not know, nor do they arbitrarily evaluate people who they cannot perceive clearly. Though they do not seem very gentle on the surface, and they

do not meet the behavioral standard of being cultured and rule-abiding that unbelievers speak of, because they possess a God-fearing heart, and they are restrained in word and deed, what they live out far surpasses the behaviors of being well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, and courteous, that mankind speaks of. Is this not a manifestation of being restrained and principled? (It is.) In any case, if you look closely at the requirements of good behavior that God puts forward for His believers, which of them is not a concrete rule about what people should practically live out? Which of them asks people to disguise themselves? None of them, right? If you have any doubts, you may raise them. For example, some may say, “When God says not to hit or verbally abuse other people, it feels a little false, because there are people right now who sometimes verbally abuse others, and God doesn’t condemn them.” When God says not to verbally abuse other people, what does “verbal abuse” refer to? (When a person vents their emotions due to their corrupt disposition.) Venting one’s emotions, speaking in obscenities—that is what verbal abuse is. If what is said about a person is unpleasant, but it is consistent with their corrupt essence, then that is not verbal abuse. For example, someone might have disrupted and disturbed the work of the church and done a lot of evil, and you say to them, “You’ve done so much evil. You’re a scoundrel—you’re not human!” Does that count as verbal abuse? Or as an outpouring of a corrupt disposition? Or as venting one’s emotions? Or as not possessing saintly decency? (It is in line with the facts, so it does not count as verbal abuse.) That is right, it does not count. It is in accordance with the facts—these are true words, spoken truly, and nothing is concealed or hidden. It may not line up with being well-educated and sensible or gentle and refined, but it does line up with the facts. The scolded person will compare themselves to those words and examine themselves, and they will see they were scolded because they did something wrong and committed so much evil. They will hate themselves, thinking, “I really am a good-for-nothing! Only a jerk would have done what I did—I’m not a human being! It was right and good of them to scold me like that!” After accepting it, they will gain a bit of knowledge about their nature essence, and after a period of experience and exposure, they will truly repent. In the future, they will then know to seek the principles while performing their duty. Did being scolded not wake them up? Is there not then a difference between such scolding and the “verbal abuse” in God’s requirement that people do not verbally abuse others? (There is.) What is the difference? What does the “verbal abuse” in God’s requirement that people do not verbally abuse others mean? One aspect of this is that if the content and words are obscene, that is not good. God does not wish to hear any foul language from the mouths of His followers. He does not like to hear those words. But if some unpleasant words are used while revealing the facts, exceptions are made for such cases. That is not verbal abuse. Another aspect is: what is the essence of the behavior of verbal abuse? Is it not an outpouring of hot-headedness? If a problem can be explained clearly and transparently through normal fellowship, exhortation, and communication, why verbally abuse the person instead?

Doing so is not good, it is inappropriate. If compared to those positive approaches, verbal abuse is not a normal course to take. It is venting one's emotions and exposing one's hot-headedness, and God does not wish for people to use venting their emotions or pouring forth hot-headedness as a way of handling any kind of matter. When humans pour forth hot-headedness and vent their emotions, the behavior they often display is that of using language to verbally abuse and attack. They will say whatever is most unpleasant, and they will say whatever will hurt the other party and relieve their own anger. And when they are through, not only will they have sullied and hurt the other party—they will have sullied and hurt themselves, too. This is not the attitude or method that followers of God should adopt in handling things. Moreover, corrupted humans always have a mentality of revenge, of venting their emotions and dissatisfaction, of pouring forth their hot-headedness. They want to verbally abuse others at every turn, and when things come up, both big and small, the behavior that they immediately demonstrate is that of verbal abuse. Even when they know that such behavior will not resolve an issue, they do it anyway. Is that not a satanic behavior? They will even do it when they are alone in their homes, when no one can hear them. Is that not venting one's emotions? Is that not revealing one's hot-headedness? (It is.) Revealing one's hot-headedness and venting one's emotions, generally speaking, means using one's hot-headedness as a way to approach and handle something; it means facing all matters with a hot-headed attitude, and one behavior and manifestation of that is verbal abuse. Since that is the essence of verbal abuse, is it not a good thing that God requires man not to do that? (It is.) Is it not reasonable of God to require man not to verbally abuse others? Does it not benefit man? (It does.) Ultimately, the goal of God's requirement that man should not hit or verbally abuse others is to have people exercise restraint, and keep them from always living amid their emotions and hot-headedness. No matter what they say when they verbally abuse someone, the thing that pours forth from those who live amid their emotions and hot-headedness is a corrupt disposition. What corrupt disposition is that? At the very least, a disposition of viciousness and arrogance. Is it God's will for any problem to be resolved by pouring forth a corrupt disposition? (No.) God does not wish for His followers to use such methods to approach any of the things that happen around them, the implication being that God does not like it when people approach everything that happens around them by means of hitting others and verbally abusing them. You cannot resolve any problems by verbally abusing people, and doing so impacts your ability to act according to the principles. At the very least, it is not a positive behavior, nor is it a behavior that those with normal humanity ought to possess. That is why God put forward a requirement of those who follow Him that they do not hit or verbally abuse others. Within "verbal abuse," there are emotions and hot-headedness. "Emotions"—what does that refer to, in particular? It includes hatred and curses, wishing others ill, hoping that others will get their just deserts according to one's wishes, and that others will come to a bad end. Emotions specifically encompass negative things like

these. What, then, does “hot-headedness” mean? It means venting one’s emotions using extreme, passive, negative, and evil methods, and wishing for the things and people that one does not like to disappear, or to meet with disaster, so that one may rejoice in their misfortune, as they wished to. That is hot-headedness. What does hot-headedness encompass? Hatred, animosity, and curses, as well as some ill will—all these are things encompassed by hot-headedness. Are any of them positive? (No.) What condition is someone in when they live amid these emotions and hot-headedness? Are they not about to turn into a mad demon? The more you verbally abuse people, the angrier you get, and the crueler you become, and the more you wish to verbally abuse others, and in the end, you will want to reach out and hit someone. And when you hit someone, you will want to mortally wound them, to take their life, which means: “I’ll destroy you! I’ll kill you!” One little emotion—a negative emotion—leads to the inflation and eruption of one’s hot-headedness, and, in the end, it causes people to wish for the loss and destruction of a life. Is that something those with normal humanity ought to have and possess? (No, it is not.) What is this the face of? (It is the face of the devil.) It is the devil betraying its true appearance. It is the same face that a demon has, when it is about to devour a person. Its demonic nature rises to the surface, and it cannot be controlled. That is what it means to be a mad demon. And how mad do these people become? They turn into a demon that wishes to devour man’s flesh and his soul. The most severe consequence of verbal abuse is that it may flip a simple matter one hundred and eighty degrees, and lead to someone’s death. Many issues begin with a bit of friction between two people, which leads to them shouting at and verbally abusing each other, then to striking at one another, which is followed by the urge to kill, which then becomes a matter of fact—one of them is killed, and the other is convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Both parties lose in the end. This is the ultimate result. They are done with their verbal abuse, they are done venting their emotions, they have revealed all of their hot-headedness, and they have both gone to hell. That is the result. Such are the consequences that come to man from the venting of his emotions and the inflation and eruption of his hot-headedness. This is not a good result, it is an evil one. You see, this is the sort of outcome that man faces as a result of the behavior caused by a simple, negative emotion. People do not want to see such an outcome, nor are they willing to face it themselves, but because people live amid all manner of bad emotions, and because they are entangled and controlled by hot-headedness, which often expands and bursts forth, such consequences are what ultimately arise. Tell Me, is verbal abuse a simple behavior? The verbal abuse that people engage in during their daily lives may not yield such an evil result—that is, such an evil result will not necessarily ensue from all incidents of verbal abuse. Yet this is the essence of verbal abuse. It is the venting of one’s emotions and the inflation and eruption of one’s hot-headedness. Therefore, God’s requirement of mankind to not verbally abuse others is assuredly of benefit to man—it benefits him in a hundred ways and harms him in none—and at the same time, this is

part of the significance of God putting forward this requirement for mankind. The requirement of not verbally abusing others may not rise to the level of practicing or pursuing the truth, but this kind of requirement should still be observed by man.

Can people fulfill God's requirement that they must not verbally abuse one another by relying on self-restraint alone? When people get angry, a lot of the time they are unable to restrain themselves. So, how can people fulfill this requirement of not verbally abusing each other? When you are about to verbally abuse someone, particularly when you are unable to restrain yourself, you should hurry to pray. If you pray for a while and earnestly supplicate to God, your anger will likely wane. At that time, you will be able to effectively restrain yourself, and control your emotions and hot-headedness. For example, sometimes people may say something that makes you feel insulted, or they may judge you behind your back, or they might knowingly or unknowingly hurt you, or they may take advantage of you a little, steal something from you, or even hurt your vital interests. When these things befall you, you will think: "He hurt me, so I hate him, I want to shout abuse at him, I want to get my revenge on him, I even want to hit him. I want to play a dirty trick behind his back to teach him a lesson." Is this not all brought about by bad emotions? The consequence brought about by bad emotions is that you will wish to do these things. The more you think about it, the more enraged you will become, and the more you will think that this person is bullying you, and that your dignity and character have been insulted. You will feel uncomfortable inside, and you will want to get revenge. Is this not the hot-headed impulsiveness that these negative emotions have brought about in you? (It is.) What kind of behavior is this desire of yours to take revenge? Are you not about to pour forth hot-headedness? At times like these, you must quiet yourself; first of all, you must pray to God, restrain yourself, ponder and seek the truth, and act wisely. That is the only way to avoid a situation where you become agitated, and where hatred, emotions, and hot-headedness arise within you. Some may say: "If two people work together all day, then there's no way to avoid this kind of situation." Even if you cannot avoid this situation, you must not retaliate, you must be restrained. How can you restrain yourself? First of all, you must think to yourself: "If I were to retaliate, it would definitely not please God, so I can't do that. Hatred, revenge, and loathing are all things that God dislikes." God dislikes these things, but you still want to do them, and you cannot control yourself. How should you resolve this? Naturally, you must rely on God; if you do not pray to God, you will not be able to resolve this. Moreover, if your stature is too small, and you are too hot-headed, and you really cannot restrain your emotions and hot-headedness, and you wish to get revenge, you still absolutely must not open your mouth to verbally abuse that person. You can leave wherever it is that you are, and allow someone else to intervene and resolve the situation. You should pray to God quietly and recite a few relevant phrases of God's words. Pray to God in this way, and your hot-headedness will slowly disappear. You will realize that verbally abusing people cannot resolve problems, and that it would be a revelation of corruption, and that it could only

bring shame to God. Will praying in this way not resolve your problem? What do you think of this solution? (It's good.) That is all for My fellowship on the behavioral regulation put forward by God: "Do not hit or verbally abuse others."

I just fellowshiped on the good behaviors that God asks people to uphold, what were they? (To possess saintly decency, to not be dissolute, to be restrained, to not wear unusual clothes, to not hit or verbally abuse others, to not smoke or drink, to not worship idols, to honor one's parents, to not steal, to not misappropriate others' possessions, to not commit adultery, and to not give false witness.) Yes, these are all correct. Tell Me, are the requirements put forward in the law, like those about not stealing and not taking advantage of others, still tenable now? Are they still effective? (They are still tenable and effective.) Then, what about the commandments from the Age of Grace? (They are still tenable, too.) So, why did God put forward these specific requirements? What aspect of man's practice do these specific requirements touch on? If God did not put forward these requirements, would people understand these things? (They would not.) People would not understand them. These specific requirements that God put forward to regulate man's behavior are, in fact, all related to the living out of normal humanity. The point of putting forward these specific requirements was to enable people to accurately discern and identify positive and negative things, as well as what is right and what is wrong; it was to teach people that adultery is a negative thing, that it is shameful, loathed by God, disdained by man, and that people should restrain themselves in this matter, that they should not commit this act, or make mistakes in this regard; it was also to teach people that behaviors like taking advantage of others, stealing, and so on are all negative things, and that people should not do them. If you like doing these things, and you have done these things, then you are not a good person. How can one differentiate between a person with good humanity and a person with bad humanity, or between a positive figure and a negative figure? First of all, you must confirm this—people can only be accurately discerned, and positive and negative figures can only be differentiated based on God's words. People can only be discerned and perceived clearly based on the requirements and standards that God has put forward to regulate man's behavior. I will give an example: If a person has sticky fingers, and likes to steal from other people, how is their humanity? (Bad.) Stealing is a serious evil deed, so those who steal are evil people. Other people all guard against them, and distance themselves from them, and regard them as thieves. In people's minds, thieves are negative characters, stealing is a negative thing, and it is a sinful behavior. Is this not then confirmed? Here is another example: Say that there is an adulterer, and some people do not know whether that is a positive or negative thing—the only way for them to measure this accurately is according to God's words, as only God's words are the truth. Regardless of what new claims legal systems and morality now make about the act of adultery, they are not the truth. The words spoken by God, "do not commit adultery," are the truth, and the truth will never pass away. From the moment that God put forward the requirement, "do not commit

adultery," everyone should have begun spurning and distancing themselves from adulterers. People like that do not have humanity, and, at the very least, if you measure them from the perspective of humanity, they are not good people. Any person who engages in this kind of behavior, and possesses this kind of humanity is shameful, they are loathed by man, they are looked down upon and spurned within groups, and they are rejected by the masses. Based on God's words, we can confirm that committing adultery is a negative thing, and that people who do so are negative figures. No matter how evil the trends of society become, adultery and fornication are negative things, and people who engage in them are negative figures. This is absolutely certain, and you must see through to this; you must not be misled or seduced by society's evil trends. In addition to these, there are some more specific requirements: God tells people to not worship idols, to honor one's parents, to not hit or verbally abuse others, to possess saintly decency, and so on. These specific requirements are all standards by which God regulates man's behavior. In other words, before God supplied people with the truth, He taught them which acts are right and positive, and which are wrong and negative, He told them how to be a good person and which good behaviors they must possess in order to be a person of normal humanity, as well as what things they must and must not do as a person with normal humanity, so that they can make the right choices. All of these demands that regulate man's behavior are things that every normal person should truly live out, and the basis upon which every person actually faces and handles everything that they encounter. For example, say you see that another person has something nice, and you want to take it for yourself, but then you think: "God says that it's wrong to steal from other people, He said that we must not steal or take advantage of others, so I won't steal from them." Has the behavior of stealing not then been restrained? And at the same time as being restrained, has your behavior not been regulated? Before God put forward these requirements, when people saw something nice in another person's possession, they would want to take it for themselves. They did not think that doing so was wrong or shameful, or that God loathed it, or that it was a negative thing, or that it was even a sin; they did not know these things, they did not possess these concepts. After God put forward the requirement, "do not steal," people were endowed with a mental boundary when it came to doing these kinds of things, and through this boundary they learned that there is a difference between stealing and not stealing. Stealing is equivalent to doing something negative, to doing something bad or evil, and it is shameful. Not stealing is adhering to the morality of humanity, and there is humanity in it. God's demands regarding man's behavior not only resolve people's negative behaviors and approaches, at the same time, they regulate man's behavior, and enable people to live with normal humanity, to possess normal behaviors and manifestations, and to at least look like people, like normal people. Tell Me, are these requirements that God has put forward to regulate man's behavior not very meaningful? (They are.) They are meaningful. However, these specific requirements that regulate

man's behavior are still quite far removed from the truths that God is expressing now, and they cannot be elevated to the level of the truth. This is because, long ago, during the Age of Law, these requirements were just laws that regulated man's behavior, they were God using the most simple and straightforward language to tell people what things they should and should not do, and creating some rules for them. In the Age of Grace, these requirements were just commandments, and in the present day, it may only be said that they are criteria for measuring one's own behavior, and for evaluating things. Though these criteria cannot be elevated to the level of the truth, and there is a certain distance between them and the truth, they are an essential precondition for man's pursuit and practice of the truth. When a person holds to these rules, to these laws and commandments, to these requirements and behavioral criteria that God has established to regulate man's behavior, it can be said that they possess the basic preconditions for practicing and pursuing the truth. If a person smokes and drinks alcohol, if their behavior is dissolute, and they commit adultery, and take advantage of other people, and often steal, and you were to say, "This person loves the truth, and they can certainly practice it and attain salvation," would that statement hold water? (It would not.) Why would it not hold water? (That person is not capable of fulfilling even the most basic of God's requirements, they could not possibly practice the truth, and if one were to say that they loved the truth, that would be a lie.) That is right. This person does not even have the most basic level of self-restraint. The implication of this is that they do not have even the most basic degree of conscience and reason that a person ought to possess. In other words, this person does not possess the conscience and reason of normal humanity. What does not possessing conscience and reason mean? It means that this person has heard the words that God has spoken, and the requirements that God has put forward for man, and the rules that God has established, and they have not taken them seriously at all. God says that stealing from other people is bad, and that people should not steal, and this person wonders: "Why are people not allowed to steal? I'm so poor, how could I live if I didn't steal? Could I get rich if I didn't steal things or take advantage of other people?" Do they not lack the conscience and reason of normal humanity? (They do.) They are unable to hold to the demands that God created to restrain man's behavior, so they are not a person who possesses normal humanity. If one were to say that a person who does not possess normal humanity loves the truth, would that be possible? (It would not.) They do not love positive things, and though God says that people must not steal or commit adultery, they are unable to meet these requirements, and they are fed up with these words of God—so are they capable of loving the truth? The truth is much higher than these behavioral criteria—can they attain it? (No.) The truth is not a simple behavioral criterion, it is not merely a matter of people thinking of the truth when they are sinning or being arbitrary and reckless, and then being restrained, and no longer sinning or acting arbitrarily and recklessly. The truth does not merely restrain people's behavior in this simple way—the truth can become a person's life, and it can dominate everything

about a person. When people accept the truth as their life, this is achieved by them experiencing God's work, coming to know the truth, and practicing the truth. When people accept the truth, a struggle will arise within them, and it is likely that their corrupt dispositions will pour forth. When people are able to use the truth to resolve their corrupt dispositions, the truth can become their life, and the principle by which they comport themselves and live. This is something that only people who love the truth and possess humanity can achieve. Can those who do not love the truth and who lack humanity rise to this level? (No.) That is right, even if they may wish to, they cannot.

If we look at these requirements that God has created to regulate man's behavior, of all of the words that God has spoken, and of all of the specific stipulations that He has put forward, are any of them redundant? (No.) Are they meaningful? Do they have value? (Yes.) Should people abide by them? (Yes.) That is right, people should abide by them. And at the same time as abiding by them, people should discard the statements that traditional culture has indoctrinated them with, like being well-educated and sensible, being gentle and refined, and so on. They should comply with each of the requirements that God has put forward to regulate man's behavior, and comport themselves in strict accordance with God's words. They should live out normal humanity by closely following all of the requirements that God has put forward, and naturally, they should also evaluate people and things, comport themselves and act in strict accordance with these requirements. Though these requirements do fall short of the standards of the truth, they are all God's words, and because they are God's words, they can have a positive and active guiding effect on people. How did I define the pursuit of the truth? To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion. God's words encompass a great range of things. Sometimes one phrase of His words represents an element of the truth. Sometimes it takes several phrases, or a passage to lay out one element of the truth. Sometimes a whole chapter is needed to express an element of the truth. The truth seems simple, but in actuality, it is not simple at all. To describe the truth in broader terms, God is the truth. All of God's words are the truth, God's words are voluminous and they cover a lot of content, and they are all expressions of the truth. For example, the laws and commandments that God has laid out, as well as the behavioral requirements that God has put forward in this new era, are all God's words. Though some of these words do not rise to the level of the truth, and though they do not qualify as the truth, they are positive things. Though they are only words that restrain man's behavior, people must still hold to them. People must, at the very least, possess these kinds of behaviors, and they must not fall short of these standards. Therefore, a person's views on people and things, and their comportment and actions must be based on these words of God. People should abide by them because they are God's words; everyone should view people and things, and comport themselves and act according to God's words, because they are God's words. Is that not right? (It is.) I have said something like this before: God means what He has spoken,

and His words will be accomplished, and that which His words accomplish lasts forever, which means that God's words will never pass away. Why do they not pass away? Because no matter how many words God speaks, and no matter when it is that God speaks them, they are all the truth, and they never pass away. Even when the world enters a new age, God's words will not change, and they will not pass away. Why do I say that God's words do not pass away? Because God's words are the truth, and whatever is the truth will never change. So, all of the laws and commandments that God has put forward and spoken, and all of the specific requirements that He has put forward regarding man's behavior will never pass away. Every requirement in God's words is beneficial to created mankind, they all regulate man's behavior, and they are edifying and valuable with regard to the living out of normal humanity and to how people should comport themselves. All of these words can change people, and make them live out true human likeness. By contrast, if people deny these words of God, and deny the requirements that God has made of mankind, and instead, they abide by those statements about good behavior that man has put forward, then they are in great danger. Not only will they not become increasingly possessed of humanity and reason, they will become increasingly deceitful and false, and they will become more and more capable of trickery, and the humanity that they live out will contain more and more trickery. Not only will they trick other people, they will try to trick God, too.

Among the demands that God has put forward regarding man's behavior, there is the requirement: "honor one's parents." People usually do not have any thoughts or notions about the other demands, so what are your thoughts about the requirement: "honor one's parents"? Is there a contradiction between your views and the truth principle spoken by God? If you are able to see this clearly, that is good. Those who do not understand the truth, who only know how to follow rules and spout the words and doctrines lack discernment; when they read God's words, they always harbor human notions, they always feel that there are some contradictions, and they cannot see His words clearly. Whereas those who understand the truth do not find any contradictions in God's words, they think that His words are incredibly clear, because they understand spiritual matters and they are able to comprehend the truth. Sometimes, you cannot see God's words clearly, and you cannot ask any questions—if you do not ask any questions, it seems as though you do not have any problems, but in actuality, you have many problems and many difficulties, you just are not aware of this. This shows that your stature is too small. First, let us look at God's requirement that people must honor their parents—is this requirement right or wrong? Should people abide by it or not? (They should.) This is certain, and it cannot be denied; there is no need to hesitate or ponder on this, this requirement is right. What is right about it? Why did God put forward this requirement? What does the "honoring one's parents" that God speaks of refer to? Do you know? You do not. Why do you always not know? So long as something involves the truth, you do not know it, and yet you can speak endlessly about the words and

doctrines—what is the problem here? How do you practice these words of God, then? Does this not involve the truth? (It does.) When you see that there is a phrase of God's words that says, "You must honor your parents," you think to yourself, "God is asking me to honor my parents, so I'll have to honor them, then," and you begin to do this. You do whatever your parents ask you to—when your parents are sick you serve them by their bedside, pouring them something to drink, cooking them something nice to eat, and at holidays, you buy your parents things they like as gifts. When you see that they are tired, you rub their shoulders and massage their backs, and whenever they have a problem, you are able to think of a solution to resolve it. Because of all this, your parents feel very satisfied with you. You are honoring your parents, practicing according to God's words, and living out normal humanity, so you feel steady at heart, and think: "Look—my parents say that I've changed since I began believing in God. They say that I'm able to honor them now and that I'm more sensible. They're really pleased, and they think that believing in God is great, because not only do sons and daughters who believe in God honor their parents, they also walk the right path in life and live out human likeness—they're much better than unbelievers. After coming to believe in God, I have begun practicing according to God's words and acting according to His requirements, and my parents are really happy to see this change in me. I feel so proud of myself. I'm bringing glory to God—God surely must be satisfied with me, and He will say that I am a person who honors their parents and possesses saintly decency." One day, the church arranges for you to go elsewhere to spread the gospel, and it is possible that you will not be able to return home for a long time. You agree to go, feeling that you cannot set aside God's commission, and believing that you must both honor your parents at home and uphold God's commission outside of it. But when you discuss the matter with your parents, they become enraged, and say: "You disobedient child! We have worked so hard to raise you, and now you're just up and leaving. When you're gone, who's going to take care of an old couple like us? If we get sick or if there's some kind of disaster, who is going to take us to the hospital?" They do not agree to your departure, and you worry: "God tells us to honor our parents, but my parents won't let me go and do my duty. If I obey them, I have to set God's commission aside, and God will not like that. But if I obey God and go and do my duty, my parents will be unhappy. What am I supposed to do?" You ponder and ponder: "Since God put forward the requirement that people must honor their parents first, I'll uphold that demand. I don't need to go away and do my duty." You set aside your duty and choose to honor your parents at home, but you do not feel steady at heart. You feel that though you have honored your parents, you have not fulfilled your duty, and you think that you have let God down. How can this problem be resolved? You should pray to God and seek the truth, until one day you understand the truth and realize that doing your duty is the most important thing. Then, you will naturally be able to leave home and fulfill your duty. Some people say: "God wants me to do my duty, and He also wants me to honor my parents. Is there not a contradiction and a conflict here? How on

earth am I supposed to practice?" "Honoring one's parents" is a requirement that God put forward regarding man's behavior, but is renouncing everything to follow God and completing God's commission not God's requirement? Is it not even more what God demands? Is it not even more the practice of the truth? (It is.) What should you do if these two requirements clash? Some people say: "So, I have to honor my parents and complete God's commission, and I have to abide by God's words and practice the truth—well, that's easy. I'll get everything settled at home, prepare all of my parents' living necessities, hire a nurse, and then go out to perform my duty. I'll be sure to return once a week, I'll check that my parents are alright, and then I'll leave; if something is wrong, I'll just stay for two days. I can't always be away from them and never come back, and I can't stay at home forever and never go out to do my duty. Is this not the best of both worlds?" What do you think of this solution? (It will not work.) It is an imagining; it is not realistic. So, when you encounter this kind of situation, how exactly should you act in line with the truth? (It's impossible to get the best of both worlds when it comes to loyalty and filial piety—I must put my duty first.) God told people to honor their parents first, and afterward, God put forward higher requirements for people with regard to them practicing the truth, performing their duties, and following the way of God—which of these should you adhere to? (The higher requirements.) Is it right to practice according to the higher requirements? Can the truth be divided into higher and lower truths, or older and newer truths? (No.) So when you practice the truth, what should you practice according to? What does it mean to practice the truth? (Handling matters according to the principles.) Handling matters according to the principles is the most important thing. Practicing the truth means practicing God's words in different times, places, environments, and contexts; it is not about obstinately applying rules to things, it is about upholding the truth principles. That is what it means to practice the truth. So, there is simply no conflict between practicing God's words and abiding by the requirements put forward by God. To put it more concretely, there is no conflict at all between honoring your parents and completing the commission and duty that God has given you. Which of these are God's current words and requirements? You should consider this question first. God demands different things of different people; He has distinct requirements for them. Those who serve as leaders and workers have been called by God, so they must renounce, and they cannot stay with their parents, honoring them. They should accept God's commission and renounce everything to follow Him. That is one kind of situation. Regular followers have not been called upon by God, so they can stay with their parents and honor them. There are no rewards for doing this, and they will not gain any blessings as a result of it, but if they do not show filial piety, then they lack humanity. In fact, honoring one's parents is just a kind of responsibility, and it falls short of the practice of the truth. It is obeying God that is the practice of the truth, it is accepting God's commission that is a manifestation of obedience to God, and it is those who renounce everything to do their duties who are followers of God. In sum, the most important task that lies before

you is to perform your duty well. That is the practice of the truth, and it is a manifestation of obedience to God. So, what is the truth that people should primarily practice now? (Performing one's duty.) That is right, loyally performing one's duty is practicing the truth. If a person does not perform their duty sincerely, then they are just rendering service.

What question were we just discussing? (God first required people to honor their parents, and then He put forward higher requirements with regard to them practicing the truth, performing their duties, and following the way of God, so which one should people abide by first?) You just said that people should practice according to the higher requirements. On a theoretical level, this statement is right—why do I say that it is right on a theoretical level? This means that if you were to apply rules and formulas to this matter, then this answer would be right. But when people are faced with real life, this statement is often unworkable, and hard to carry out. So, how should this question be responded to? First, you should look at the situation and living environment that you are faced with, and the context that you are in. If, based on your living environment and the context you find yourself in, honoring your parents does not conflict with you completing God's commission and performing your duty—or, in other words, if honoring your parents does not impact your loyal performance of your duty—then you can practice them both at the same time. You do not need to formally separate from your parents, and you do not need to formally renounce or reject them. In what situation does this apply? (When honoring one's parents does not conflict with the performance of one's duty.) That is right. In other words, if your parents do not try to hinder your belief in God, and they are also believers, and they really support and encourage you to perform your duty loyally and complete God's commission, then your relationship with your parents is not a fleshly relationship between relatives, in the regular sense of the word, and it is a relationship between brothers and sisters of the church. In that case, aside from interacting with them as fellow brothers and sisters of the church, you must also fulfill a few of your filial responsibilities to them. You must show them a bit of extra concern. As long as it does not affect the performance of your duty, that is, so long as your heart is not constrained by them, you can call your parents to ask them how they are doing and to show a bit of concern for them, you can help them to resolve a few difficulties and handle some of their life problems, and you can even help them to resolve some of the difficulties they have in terms of their life entry—you can do all of these things. In other words, if your parents do not obstruct your belief in God, you should maintain this relationship with them, and you should fulfill your responsibilities to them. And why should you show concern for them, take care of them, and ask them how they are doing? Because you are their child and you have this relationship with them, you have another kind of responsibility, and because of this responsibility, you must ask after them a little more and provide them with more substantive assistance. So long as it does not affect the performance of your duty, and so long as your parents do not hinder or disturb your faith in God and your performance of your duty, and they do not hold you back either, then it

is natural and fitting for you to fulfill your responsibilities to them, and you must do this to the extent where your conscience does not reproach you—this is the lowest standard that you must meet. If you cannot honor your parents at home due to the impact and hindrance of your circumstances, then you do not have to hold to this rule. You should put yourself at the mercy of God's orchestrations and submit to His arrangements, and you do not need to insist on honoring your parents. Does God condemn this? God does not condemn this; He does not force people to do this. What are we fellowshiping on now? We are fellowshiping about how people should practice when honoring their parents conflicts with the performance of their duty; we are fellowshiping on principles of practice and the truth. You have a responsibility to honor your parents, and if circumstances allow, you can fulfill this responsibility, but you should not be constrained by your emotions. For example, if one of your parents falls ill and has to go to the hospital, and there is no one to take care of them, and you are too busy with your duty to return home, what should you do? At times like these, you cannot be constrained by your emotions. You should give the matter over to prayer, entrust it to God, and put it at the mercy of God's orchestrations. That is the kind of attitude that you should have. If God wants to take the life of your parent, and take them away from you, you should still submit. Some people say: "Although I have submitted, I still feel miserable and I've been crying about it for days—is this not an emotion?" This is not an emotion, it is human kindness, it is possessing humanity, and God does not condemn it. You can cry, but if you cry for several days and are not able to sleep or eat, and you are not in the mood to do your duty, and even wish to go home and visit your parents, then you cannot do your duty well, and you have not put the truth into practice, which means that you are not fulfilling your responsibilities by honoring your parents, you are living amid your emotions. If you honor your parents while living amid your emotions, then you are not fulfilling your responsibilities, and you are not abiding by God's words, because you have abandoned God's commission, and you are not someone who follows the way of God. When you encounter this kind of situation, if it does not cause delays to your duty or impact your loyal performance of your duty, you may do some things that you are able to in order to show filial piety to your parents, and you can fulfill the responsibilities that you are capable of fulfilling. In sum, this is what people ought to do and are capable of doing within the scope of humanity. If you get trapped by your emotions, and this holds up the performance of your duty, then that completely contravenes God's intentions. God never required you to do that, God only demands that you fulfill your responsibilities to your parents, that is all. That is what it means to have filial piety. When God speaks of "honoring one's parents" there is a context to it. You just need to fulfill a few responsibilities that can be achieved under all kinds of conditions, that is all. As for whether your parents fall gravely ill or die, are these things up to you to decide? How their lives are, when they die, what disease kills them, or how they die—do these things have anything to do with you? (No.) They have nothing to do with you. Some people say:

“I must fulfill my responsibilities so that I may honor my parents. I must ensure that they do not fall ill, especially not with cancer or some kind of fatal disease. I must make sure that they live until 100 years old. Only then will I have truly fulfilled my responsibilities to them.” Are these people not absurd types? This is clearly man’s imagining, and it absolutely is not God’s demand. You do not even know whether you will be able to live to 100 years old, and yet you demand that your parents live to that age—that is a fool’s dream! When God speaks of “honoring one’s parents,” He is just asking you to fulfill your responsibilities that fall within the scope of normal humanity. As long as you do not mistreat your parents or do anything that contravenes your conscience and morality, that is enough. Is this not in line with God’s words? (It is.) Of course, we also mentioned just now the case where your parents hinder your belief in God, their nature essence is that of nonbelievers and unbelievers, or even of evil people and devils, and they are not on the same path as you. In other words, they are not the same kind of person as you at all, and though you lived in the same household as them for many years, they simply do not have the same pursuits or character as you do, and they certainly do not have the same preferences or aspirations as you. You believe in God, and they do not believe in God at all, and they even resist God. What should be done in these circumstances? (Reject them.) God has not told you to reject them or curse them in these circumstances. God did not say that. God’s requirement of “honoring one’s parents” still stands. This means that while you are living with your parents, you should still uphold this requirement of honoring your parents. There is no contradiction in this matter, is there? (No.) There is no contradiction in this at all. In other words, when you do manage to return home for a visit, you can cook them a meal or make them some dumplings, and if possible, you can buy them some health products, and they will be very satisfied with you. If you speak about your faith, and they do not accept it or believe, and they even verbally abuse you, then you do not have to preach the gospel to them. If it is possible for you to see them, practice in this way; if it is not, that is just the way it should be, and it is God’s orchestration, and you must hurry to distance yourself from them and avoid them. What is the principle for this? If your parents do not believe in God, and they do not share a common language or common pursuits and goals with you, and they are not walking the same path as you, and they even hinder and persecute your belief in God, then you can discern them, see through to their essence, and reject them. Of course, if they verbally abuse God or curse you, you can curse them in your heart. So, what does the “honoring one’s parents” that God speaks of refer to? How should you practice it? That is, if you can fulfill your responsibilities, then fulfill them a bit, and if you do not have that chance, or if the friction in your interactions with them has already become too great, and there is conflict between you, and you have already reached the point where you can no longer see each other, then you should hurry to separate yourself from them. When God speaks of honoring these kinds of parents, He means that you should fulfill your filial responsibilities from the perspective of your position as their child, and do the things that

a child ought to do. You should not mistreat your parents, or argue with them, you should not hit or shout at them, you should not abuse them, and you should fulfill your responsibilities to them to the best of your ability. These are things that ought to be carried out within the scope of humanity; these are the principles that one should practice with regard to “honoring one’s parents.” Are they not easy to carry out? You do not need to deal with your parents hot-headedly, saying: “You devils and nonbelievers, God curses you to the lake of fire and brimstone and the bottomless pit, He will send you to the eighteenth level of hell!” That is not necessary, you do not need to go to this extreme. If circumstances allow, and if the situation requires it, you can fulfill your filial responsibilities to your parents. If this is not necessary, or if circumstances do not allow it and it is not possible, you can dispense with this obligation. All you need to do is fulfill your filial responsibilities when you meet with your parents and interact with them. When you have done that, you have completed your task. What do you think of this principle? (It’s good.) There must be principles to how you treat all people, including your parents. You cannot act impetuously, and you cannot verbally abuse your parents just because they persecute your belief in God. There are so many people in the world who do not believe in God, there are so many unbelievers, and there are so many people who insult God—are you going to go curse and shout at all of them? If not, then you should not shout at your parents either. If you shout at your parents but not at those other people, then you are living amid hot-headedness, and God does not like this. Do not think that God will be satisfied with you if you verbally abuse and curse your parents without good cause, saying that they are devils, a living Satan, and Satan’s lackeys, and cursing them to hell—that is just not the case. God will not find you acceptable or say that you have humanity because of this false display of proactivity. Instead, God will say that your actions carry with them emotions and hot-headedness. God will not like you acting in this way, it is too extreme, and it does not accord with His will. There must be principles to how you treat all people, including your parents; regardless of whether they believe in God or not, and regardless of whether or not they are evil people, you must treat them with principles. God has told man this principle: It is about treating others fairly—it is just that people have an extra degree of responsibility toward their parents. All you need to do is fulfill this responsibility. Regardless of whether your parents are believers or not, regardless of whether they pursue their belief or not, regardless of whether their outlook on life and their humanity line up with yours or not, you just need to fulfill your responsibility to them. You do not need to avoid them—just let everything take its natural course, according to God’s orchestrations and arrangements. If they hinder your belief in God, then you should still fulfill your filial responsibilities to the best of your ability, so that your conscience at least does not feel indebted to them. If they do not hinder you, and they support your belief in God, then you should also practice according to the principles, treating them well when it is fitting to do so. In sum, no matter what, God’s requirements of man do not change, and the truth principles that people should practice

cannot change. In these matters, you simply need to uphold the principles, and fulfill the responsibilities that you are able to.

I will now talk about why God put forward a requirement regarding man's behavior like "honor one's parents." God's other requirements are all behavioral regulations that concern the individual comportment of each person, so why did God lay out a different kind of demand regarding the matter of filial piety? Tell Me: If a person cannot honor even their own parents, what is their nature essence like? (Bad.) Their parents suffered a lot to give birth to them and raise them, and bringing them up would certainly not have been easy—and actually, they do not expect that their child will bring them great happiness or contentment, they just hope that after their child grows up, they will live a happy life, and that they will not have to worry about them too much. But their child does not strive or work hard, and they do not live well—they still rely on their parents to take care of them, and they have become a leech, who not only does not honor their parents, but also wishes to bully and blackmail their parents out of their property. If they are capable of carrying out this kind of vile behavior, what sort of person are they? (A person with poor humanity.) They do not fulfill any of their responsibilities to the people who birthed and raised them, and they do not feel guilty about it at all—if you look at them from this perspective, do they have a conscience? (They do not.) They will hit and verbally abuse anyone, their parents included. They treat their parents just like anybody else—hitting them and verbally abusing them at whim. When they feel unhappy, they take out their anger on their parents, smashing bowls and plates, and terrifying them. Does a person like this possess reason? (No.) If someone does not possess conscience or reason, and is capable of casually abusing even their own parents, then are they a person? (No.) What are they, then? (A beast.) They are a beast. Is this statement accurate? (It is.) In fact, if a person fulfills some of their responsibilities to their parents, and cares for them, and loves them dearly—are these not things that people with normal humanity ought to possess as a matter of course? (They are.) If a person were to mistreat and abuse their parents, could their conscience accept it? Could a normal person do something like that? People who possess conscience and reason could not do this—if they were to anger their parents, they would feel miserable for several days. Some people have fiery tempers, and they may get mad at their parents in a moment of desperation, but after they do, their conscience will reproach them, and even if they do not apologize, they will not do it again. This is something that people with normal humanity ought to possess, and it is an outpouring of normal humanity. Those who do not possess humanity can abuse their parents in any way without feeling anything, and that is what they do. If their parents hit them once when they were a child, they will remember it for the rest of their life, and after they grow up, they will still wish to strike their parents and hit them back. Most people will not strike back when their parents hit them as a child; some people in their 30s will not strike back when their parents hit them, and they will not utter a word about it, even if it hurts. This is what people with normal

humanity ought to possess. Why will they not utter a word about it? If someone else were to hit them, would they allow that and let the person hit them? (No.) If it were someone else, no matter who it was, they would not allow that person to hit them—they would not even allow them to speak a word of verbal abuse to them. So why do they not strike back or get angry no matter how their parents hit them? Why do they tolerate it? Is it not because there is conscience and reason within their humanity? They think to themselves: "My parents raised me. Even though it's not right for them to hit me, I must bear it. Besides, it was me who made them angry, so I deserve to be hit. They're only doing it because I disobeyed them and made them angry. I deserve to be hit! I won't ever do this again." Is this not the reason that people with normal humanity ought to possess? (It is.) It is this reason of normal humanity that allows them to endure their parents treating them in this way. This is normal humanity. So, do the people who cannot endure this kind of treatment, who strike back at their parents, possess this humanity? (They do not.) That is right, they do not possess it. People who do not possess the conscience and reason of normal humanity are even capable of hitting and verbally abusing their own parents, so how will they be capable of treating God and their brothers and sisters in the church? They are capable of treating the people who birthed and raised them in this way, so will they not care even less about other people who are not related to them by blood? (Yes.) How will they treat God, who they cannot see or touch? Will they be able to treat God, who they cannot see, with conscience and reason? Will they be able to submit to all of the environments that God has orchestrated? (No.) If God were to deal with and prune them, or judge and chastise them, would they resist Him? (Yes.) Consider this: What function do a person's conscience and reason serve? To a certain extent, a person's conscience and reason can restrain and regulate their behavior—it enables them to have the correct attitude and to make the correct choices when things happen to them, and to approach everything that befalls them with their conscience and reason. Most of the time, acting based on conscience and reason will allow people to avoid a great deal of misfortune. Of course, people who pursue the truth are able to choose to walk the path of pursuing the truth upon this foundation, entering into the truth reality, and submitting to God's orchestrations and arrangements. Those who do not pursue the truth lack humanity, and they do not possess this kind of conscience and reason—the consequences of this are dire. They are capable of doing anything to God—just like how the Pharisees treated the Lord Jesus, they are capable of insulting God, taking revenge on God, blaspheming God, or even accusing and betraying God. This problem is very serious—does this not spell trouble? People who lack the reason of humanity often take revenge on others by means of their hot-headedness; they are not restrained by the reason of humanity, so it is easy for them to develop some extreme thoughts and views, and to then engage in some extreme behavior, and to act in many ways that are devoid of conscience and reason, and ultimately, the consequences of this get completely out of hand. I have more or less

finished fellowshiping on “honoring one’s parents” and the practice of the truth—in the end it comes down to humanity. Why did God put forward a demand like “honor one’s parents”? Because it relates to man’s comportment. In one respect, God uses this demand to regulate man’s behavior, and at the same time, He tests and defines people’s humanity with it. If a person does not treat their own parents with conscience and reason, then they certainly do not have humanity. Some people say: “What if their parents don’t have good humanity, and haven’t completely fulfilled their responsibilities to their child—should that person still show filial piety to them?” If they possess a conscience and reason, then as a daughter or a son, they will not abuse their parents. People who abuse their parents absolutely do not possess conscience and reason. So, no matter what requirement God puts forward, whether it relates to the attitude with which people treat their parents, or to the humanity that people usually live out and reveal, in any case, since God has laid out these approaches concerning external behaviors, He must have His own reasons and objectives for doing so. Although these behavioral requirements put forward by God are still somewhat removed from the truth, they are nevertheless standards that God has set out to regulate man’s behavior. They are all significant and they are still valid today.

I just fellowshiped on the various connections and differences between the behavioral criteria that God has put forward for man and the truths that He demands. At this point, have we not more or less finished fellowshiping on the good behaviors which are part of things that people hold in their notions to be right and good? After concluding our fellowship on this, we communed on some standards and sayings that God has put forward to regulate man’s behavior and what man lives out, and we listed some examples, for example: do not hit or verbally abuse others, honor one’s parents, do not smoke or drink, do not steal, do not take advantage of others, do not give false witness, do not worship idols, and so on. Of course, these are just the major ones, and there are a lot more details that we will not get into. So, after fellowshiping about these things, what truths should you have gained? What principles should you practice? What should you do? Do you need to respect the old and care for the young? Do you need to be a courteous person? Do you need to be amiable and approachable? Do women need to be gentle and refined or well-educated and sensible? Do men need to be great, ambitious, and accomplished men? They do not. Of course, we have carried out a great deal of fellowship. These things that traditional culture advocates for are clearly used by Satan to mislead people. They are very misleading things, and they are things that trick people. You should examine yourself and see whether you still harbor any of these thoughts and views or behaviors and manifestations. If you do, then you should hurry to seek the truth to resolve them, and you should then accept the truth, and live by God’s words. That way, you will be able to gain God’s approval. You should reflect on what your inner state was like when you lived by traditional culture, and how you felt in the depths of your heart, what you gained, and what the outcome was, and then see how it

feels to comport yourself according to the standards that God has demanded of man, like being restrained, possessing saintly decency, not hitting or verbally abusing others, and so on. See which of these ways of life allows you to live more easily, freely, steadily, and peacefully, and enables you to live with more humanity, and which makes it feel as though you are living under a false mask, and makes your life very false and miserable. See which of these ways of life allows you to live closer and closer to God's requirements, and makes your relationship with God more and more normal. When you actually experience this, you will know. Only practicing God's words and the truth can bring you release and freedom, and allow you to gain God's approval. Say, for instance, that in order to make other people say that you respect the old and care for the young, that you abide by the rules, and that you are a good person, whenever you meet an older brother or sister, you call them "elder brother" or "elder sister," never daring to call them by their name, and feeling too embarrassed to call them by their name, and thinking that to do so would be very disrespectful. This traditional notion of respecting the old and caring for the young is hidden in your heart, so when you see an old person, you act very gentle and kind, and as if you are very rule-abiding and cultured, and you cannot help but bend at the waist, from a 15-degree angle to a 90-degree angle. You treat older people respectfully—the older the person in front of you is, the more well-behaved you pretend to be. Is being well-behaved like this a good thing? It is living without a backbone and without dignity. When people like this see a young child, they act cute and playful, just like a child. When they see one of their peers, they stand up quite straight, and act like an adult, so that others do not dare to disrespect them. What kind of person are they? Are they not a person with many faces? They change so quickly, do they not? When they see an old person, they call them "elder grandpa" or "elder grandma." When they see someone a bit older than them, they call them "uncle," "auntie," "older brother," or "older sister." When they meet someone younger than them, they call them "little brother" or "little sister." They give people different titles and nicknames according to their ages, and they use these forms of address very precisely and accurately. These things have taken root in their bones, and they are able to employ them with great ease. Especially after they come to believe in God, they feel even more convinced that: "Now I'm a believer in God, I must be rule-abiding and cultured; I must be well-educated and sensible. I can't break the rules or be rebellious like those unbelieving, problem youths—people will not like that. If I want everyone to like me, I have to respect the old and care for the young." So, they regulate their behavior even more strictly, dividing people of different age groups into different levels, giving them all titles and nicknames, and then constantly putting this into practice in their daily lives, and then they think more and more that: "Look at me, I've really changed after coming to believe in God. I'm well-educated, sensible, and courteous, I respect the old and care for the young, and I'm amiable. I'm really living with human likeness. I know how to call every person I meet by their proper title, no matter how old they are. I didn't need my parents to teach me this, and I didn't

need the people around me to tell me to do it, I just knew how to do it." After practicing these good behaviors, they think that they really have humanity, that they are really rule-abiding, and that God must like this—are they not deluding themselves and others? From now on, you must abandon these things. Before, I told the story of Daming and Xiaoming—that story was related to respecting the old and caring for the young, was it not? (It was.) When some people see an old person, they think that calling them "elder brother" or "elder sister" is not gracious enough, and that it will not make people think that they are cultured enough, so they call them "elder grandpa" or "elder auntie." It seems that you have given them enough respect, and where does your respect for them come from? You do not have the face of a person who respects others. You have a frightening and ferocious, brash, and arrogant look to you, and you are more arrogant in your actions than any other person. Not only do you not seek the truth principles, you also do not consult anyone else; you are a law unto yourself, and you do not have the slightest bit of humanity. You look to see who has status, and then you call them "elder uncle" or "elder auntie," hoping to receive people's praise for this—is pretending like this useful? Will you have humanity and morals if you pretend like this? On the contrary, when other people see you do this, they will feel even more disgusted by you. When matters arise that involve the interests of God's house, you are capable of veritably selling out the interests of God's house. You only live to satisfy yourself, and while possessing this kind of humanity, you still call people "elder auntie"—is this not pretense? (It is.) You really are good at pretending! Tell Me, are people like this not disgusting? (They are.) People like this are always selling out the interests of God's house—they do not protect them at all. They bite the hand that feeds them, and they do not deserve to live in God's house. Examine yourself, and see what thoughts, views, attitudes, approaches, and ways of treating people you still harbor that are things which humanity commonly recognizes as good behaviors, that are, in fact, precisely the things that God loathes. You should hurry to let go of these worthless things, and you absolutely must not cling to them. Some people say: "What's wrong with acting like that?" If you act like that, I will be disgusted by you and I will loathe you, you absolutely must not act like that. Some people say: "It doesn't matter if You're disgusted by us, we don't live with You, after all." You still must not act like that, even though we do not live together. I will feel disgusted by you because you are not able to accept or practice the truth, which means that you cannot be saved. Therefore, it would be better if you abandoned those things as soon as possible. Do not pretend and do not live behind a false mask. I think that Western people are very normal in this regard. For example, in America, you just need to call people by their names. You do not need to awkwardly call this person "grandpa" and that person "grandma," and you do not have to worry about people judging you—you can just call people by their names, in a dignified way, and when people hear you do so, they will feel very happy, both adults and children alike, and they will think that you are being respectful. By contrast, if you know their name, and you still call them

“sir” or “auntie,” they will not be happy, and they will give you the cold shoulder, and you will find this very strange. Western culture is different from Chinese traditional culture. Chinese people have been indoctrinated and influenced by traditional culture, and they always want to stand on high, to be the elder in the group, and to make other people respect them. It is not enough for them to be called “grandpa” or “grandma,” they want people to add an “elder” in front of that, and call them “elder grandpa,” “elder grandma,” or “elder uncle.” Then there is also “big auntie” or “big uncle”—if they are not called “elder,” then they want to be called “big.” Are people like this not disgusting? What kind of disposition is this? Is it not wretched? It is so disgusting! Not only are these kinds of people incapable of gaining others’ respect, other people loathe and disdain them, and they distance themselves from them and reject them. So, there is a reason why God exposes these aspects of traditional culture and hates these things. It is because these things contain Satan’s tricks and its disposition, and they can impact the methods and direction of a person’s comportment. Of course, they can also impact the perspective from which a person views people and things, and at the same time, they also blind people, and affect their ability to choose the right path. So, should people not abandon these things? (They should.)

Chinese people have been very deeply influenced by traditional culture. Of course, every country in the world has its own traditional culture, and these traditional cultures only differ in small respects. Although some of their sayings are different from those of Chinese traditional culture, they are of the same nature. These sayings all exist because people have corrupt dispositions and lack normal humanity, so they use some very deceptive behaviors, that appear on the surface to be good, that accord with man’s notions and imaginings, that are easy for people to carry out, to package themselves, so that they appear very gentlemanly, noble, and respectable, and so that they seem to have dignity and integrity. But it is precisely these aspects of traditional culture that cloud people’s eyes and trick them, and it is precisely these things that hinder people from living out true human likeness. Worse still, Satan uses these things to corrupt people’s humanity, and to lead them away from the right path. Is that not the case? (It is.) God tells people not to steal, not to commit adultery, and so on, whereas Satan tells people that they must be well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, courteous, and so on—are these not precisely the opposite of the demands that God has put forward? Are they not deliberate contradictions of God’s demands? Satan teaches people how to use external methods, behaviors, and what they live out to trick other people. What does God teach people? That they should not use external behaviors to falsely obtain the trust of other people, and that they should instead comport themselves based on His words and the truth. That way they will become deserving of other people’s trust and confidence—only people such as these have humanity. Is there not a difference here? There is a vast difference. God tells you how to comport yourself, whereas Satan tells you how to pretend and how to trick other people—is that not a big difference? So, do

you understand now what people should choose, in the end? Which of these is the right path? (God's words.) That is right, God's words are the right path in life. No matter what kind of requirement God's words put forward regarding man's behavior, even if it is a rule, a commandment, or a law that God has spoken to man about, they are all undoubtedly correct, and people must abide by them. This is because God's words will always be the right path and positive things, whereas Satan's words trick and corrupt people, they contain Satan's schemes, and they are not the right path, no matter how much they accord with people's tastes or notions and imaginings. Do you understand this? (Yes.) How do you feel after hearing the content of today's fellowship? Does it relate to the truth? (It does.) Did you understand this aspect of the truth before? (Not clearly.) Do you understand it clearly now? (More so than before.) In sum, understanding these truths will be of benefit to people later on. It will be advantageous for their future pursuit of the truth, their living out of humanity, and the goal and direction of what they pursue in life.

February 26, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (5)

What did we fellowship on at our last gathering? (God first fellowshiped on the stories of Xiaoxiao and Xiaoji. After that, You fellowshiped on what the behaviors that man regards as good represent, You also talked about some of the requirements that God has for man, and there was a particular emphasis on the truth principles that we should understand regarding honoring one's parents.) Last time, we fellowshiped on a topic related to the pursuit of the truth which was most fitting for man's notions. It was also a negative topic, namely the behaviors that are considered right and good according to man's notions. We gave some examples that addressed this topic, and then we gave another few examples of the demands that God has put forward to regulate man's behavior. These were more or less the specific things that we fellowshiped on. There were not a lot of big sections to this fellowship, but we discussed many details regarding people's knowledge, practice, and their understanding of the truth. Today, we will take a brief look back at these things. Generally speaking, what does man regard as good behaviors? Should we not have a conclusion or a broad definition of this? Have you come up with a conclusion? Have you fellowshiped on these things at gatherings? (We have. After God fellowshiped with us several times, we were able to see that the good behaviors which man perceives as right are merely a sort of behavior. They do not represent the truth, they are just ways for people to disguise themselves.) Based on some of the statements that mankind has summarized regarding external behaviors—what, exactly, is the essence of these behaviors? Is there a relationship between man's essence and the external good behaviors of mankind? These external good behaviors make people appear very decent and dignified; those who possess them are respected and praised by others, they are highly regarded and give off a good impression. Is this good impression consistent with the essence of man's corrupt disposition? (No, it is not.) Then, from this perspective, what is the nature of man's good behaviors? Are they not simply surface-level approaches and packaging? (Yes, they are.) Are these surface-level approaches and packaging the proper manifestations of normal humanity? (No, they are not.) That is why the behaviors that people regard as right and good within their notions are really just mankind's surface-level approaches and packaging. That is the nature of those behaviors. They do not constitute living out normal humanity, nor are they outpourings of normal humanity; they are merely external approaches. These approaches cover up man's corrupt dispositions, they cover up man's satanic nature essence, and they deceive the eyes of other people. People practice these good behaviors in order to win the favor, esteem, and respect of others—such behaviors cannot help people to treat one another with honesty, or to interact with each other with sincerity, let alone to live out human likeness. These good behaviors are not approaches that originate in heartfelt honesty, nor are they natural outpourings of normal humanity. They do not, in any way, represent man's essence; they are purely a guise and a false

front which man puts on—they are the adornments of corrupt mankind. They cover up mankind's evil essence. That is the essence of man's good behaviors, that is the truth behind them. So, what is the essence of the behaviors that God demands from man? The last two times we fellowshiped, we mentioned some of the approaches that God demands and what He requires people to live out, with regard to their behavior. What did they include? (People shall not smoke, or drink alcohol, and they shall not hit or verbally abuse others. They shall honor their parents, and have saintly decency. They shall not worship idols, commit adultery, steal, misappropriate others' possessions, or give false witness, and so on.) What is the essence of these demands? In other words, upon what premise does God make these demands? What fundamental condition are they based on? Were these demands not put forward within the context and upon the premise that mankind has been corrupted by Satan and that man has a sinful nature? And are these demands not within the scope of normal humanity? Are they not things that those with normal humanity can achieve? (Yes, they are.) These demands are put forward entirely based on the fundamental condition that a person with normal humanity can achieve them. In this regard then, what is the essence of the behaviors that God demands from man? Can we say that it is the true likeness lived out by normal humanity, as well as the bare minimum that normal humanity ought to possess? The examples that we have given: that people shall have saintly decency, and restrain themselves, and not be dissolute, that they shall not hit or verbally abuse others, or smoke, drink alcohol, commit adultery, steal, or worship idols, and that they shall honor their parents, and in the Age of Grace, people were also told to be patient, tolerant, and so on—are these demands that God has put forward merely limited to a kind of approach? No, God has laid out criteria for how people should live out normal humanity. What do I mean by "criteria"? I mean the standards of God's requirements. As a person, what do you need to live out in order to possess normal humanity? You must fulfill the requirements that God has put forward. We only listed a portion of the demands that God has made of man. Demands such as not hitting or verbally abusing others, not smoking, drinking alcohol, committing adultery, or stealing, and so on, are things that those with normal humanity can achieve. Although these things are inferior to the truth and fall short of the truth, they are some basic standards for evaluating whether or not a person has humanity.

What was the essence of the behaviors that God demands of man that we have just summarized? Living out normal humanity. If a person can live out or behave in the ways that God demands, then this person possesses normal humanity in the eyes of God. What does it mean to possess normal humanity? It means that a person already possesses the behavioral criteria that God demands, and meets the standard of normal humanity, in terms of their behavior, approaches, and what they live out, because they pour forth and live out normal humanity in the way that God demands. Can it be put like that? (Yes.) Regardless of whether a person believes in God or not, regardless of whether they have true faith or not, if they steal from, trick, or take advantage of other

people; or if they frequently use filthy language; or if they hit and hurt other people when their own reputation, status, image, or other interests are at stake, without any scruples at all; or if they even go so far as to commit the sin of adultery—if they still have these problems in the way that they live out humanity, especially after they start believing in God, then is their humanity normal? (No, it is not.) No matter whether you are evaluating unbelievers or believers, these behavioral standards which God has laid out are merely the lowest and minimum standards for evaluating a person's humanity. There are some people who, after becoming believers, renounce and expend themselves a little, and are able to pay a bit of a price, but never meet the behavioral standards that God has laid out. It is clear that people of this sort do not live out normal humanity—they do not even live out the most basic human likeness. What does it mean when a person does not live out normal humanity? It means that they do not possess normal humanity. Because they cannot even meet the standards of requirements that God has for mankind's behavior in terms of living out humanity, their humanity is very poor, and they can only be given a poor evaluation. The minimum standard for evaluating a person's humanity is to look at whether their behavior meets the standards of requirements that God has set for mankind's behavior. Look at whether, after coming to believe in God, they restrain themselves; whether they have saintly decency in what they say and do; whether or not they take advantage of others when interacting with them; whether they treat their family members and brothers and sisters in the church with love, tolerance, and patience; whether they fulfill their responsibilities toward their parents to the best of their ability; whether they still worship idols when no one is looking, and the like. We can use these things to evaluate a person's humanity. Putting aside whether the person loves and pursues the truth, first evaluate whether they have normal humanity—whether their words and behavior meet the behavioral standards that God has set. If they do not meet those behavioral standards, then you can evaluate their humanity according to the degree of what they live out, whether it be: average, poor, very poor, or terrible, in that order—this is accurate. If a believer shoplifts and pickpockets when they go to supermarkets or public places, if they are sticky-fingered, what kind of humanity do they have? (Bad humanity.) There are some people who shout abuse and even hit others when something makes them angry. Their insults are not fair assessments of another person's essence, rather, they are arbitrary accusations and they are full of foul language. Such people say whatever allows them to vent their hatred, holding nothing back. Some people, in particular, say things to their parents, to their brothers and sisters, to their relatives who are unbelievers, and even to their friends who are unbelievers, which you would not want to hear, lest it sully your ears. What kind of humanity does this sort of person have? (Bad humanity.) You could also say that they have no humanity. Then there are others whose eyes are always fixed on money. When these people see someone who has money, who eats well and wears nice clothes, and who has an affluent life, they always want to take advantage of them. They are always asking for things from

them in a roundabout way, or eating their food and using their things, or borrowing items from them and not returning them. Although they have not taken advantage of others in any major way, and their actions do not amount to embezzlement or bribery, these sticky-fingered behaviors of theirs are truly lowly and despicable, and they incur the disdain of others. More seriously, there are those who are fixated on the beauty of the opposite sex. They frequently make eyes at the opposite sex, and even commit adultery, committing a sin between the sexes. Some of these people are single, while others have families—there are even some who engage in adultery despite being of very advanced age. Even more seriously, some people try to seduce members of the same sex, and get physical with them. It is truly disgusting. What is even more unbelievable, are those people who have believed in God for years, but do not believe that the truth is superior to all else or that God's words accomplish everything. These people often visit fortunetellers in secret to have their fortunes told, they burn incense to worship Buddha or other idols, and some even use voodoo dolls to curse other people, or hold séances, and the like. Performing these kinds of evil magic is an even more serious issue; people such as these are nonbelievers, and they are no different from unbelievers. Regardless of whether the circumstances are minor or severe, once a person has these manifestations, we can say that they are living out humanity in a way that is abnormal and tainted, and that some of their behaviors are even erroneous or absurd—that they are truly sinful behaviors. After coming to believe in God, some people dress very provocatively, they place as much importance on looking sexy as unbelievers, and they follow worldly trends. They do not resemble saints at all. Some people dress more tastefully when they go to gatherings, but change into the trendy clothes of unbelievers when they get home. From what they are wearing, they do not look like believers; there is no difference between them and unbelievers. They giggle and make a joke out of things; they are extremely self-indulgent and show no restraint. Are people such as this living out normal humanity? (No, they are not.) They pursue worldly trends, and to be sexy, and to attract others, and to make heads turn. They spend all day dressing themselves up nicely, and slapping on makeup, trying to attract the opposite sex. What these people live out is relatively poor. They cannot even restrain themselves in terms of how they dress, speak, and behave, and they do not have saintly decency, so when we evaluate them according to the behavioral criteria that God demands, it is obvious that the humanity they live out is very poor. From these concrete examples, we can see that God's demands regarding people's behavior and what they live out are completely in line with the demands of normal humanity—so, naturally, those with normal humanity are capable of achieving them. What does this statement mean? It means that you only possess human likeness, resemble a normal person, and have the minimum level of normal humanity if this is what you live out. By looking at the specific details of God's demands, we can see that living out humanity in this way is not fake, or putting on an act, nor is it tricking others. Rather, it is the way that normal humanity should manifest, and the reality that it ought to possess. Only those

who live out these outpourings of normal humanity possess human likeness, without the slightest bit of trickery. People can only gain the respect of others, and live with dignity by living out normal humanity in this way. And it is only by living out normal humanity in this way and possessing saintly decency, that people's normal outpourings bring glory to God. Because then, everything you live out will be positive, and the reality of positive things, and it will not be an act. You will be living out human likeness in accordance with God's demands.

The essence of man's good behavior and the essence of the behavior that God demands have both been explained clearly and comprehensibly. Therefore, how people should practice, and how they should live out normal humanity should also be clear, should it not? People will not go overboard or split hairs on questions about living out normal humanity. Does living out normal humanity relate to trivial things in people's lives that have nothing to do with humanity? There are some ridiculous people who cannot see this matter clearly. They say, "Since God's fellowship is so detailed, we must also be meticulous when it comes to every little aspect of our lives. For example, are sweet potatoes more nutritious when they are steamed or roasted?" Does this relate to living out normal humanity? Not at all. What people should eat and how they should eat is common sense that all people now possess. So long as there is no problem with eating something, you can eat it however you want. If someone thinks that they need to seek the truth in such simple matters of common sense, and that they need to practice such things as though they were the truth, is that person not ridiculous and absurd? There are some people now who are very meticulous in matters like this, which have nothing to do with the truth. These people think that they are pursuing the truth, and they investigate and examine minuscule matters as if they were the truth. Some even get red in the face arguing about these things. What kind of problem is this? Is it not a case of a severe lack of spiritual understanding? The fact that some people seek on the matter of eating sweet potatoes, as though it were the truth, is truly laughable and annoying. People like this are hopeless cases, because they do not understand God's words, and they do not know what it means to pursue the truth. They cannot see through to the simplest matters of common sense in life, and they cannot resolve these issues—so what is the point of them living for all these years? How can these people bring such inconsequential matters into gatherings and discuss and fellowship on them as though they were topics in which one could seek the truth? The reason is mainly that these people have warped comprehensions and lack spiritual understanding. In what context are they being meticulous? Why did these thoughts and ideas arise in them? How could they discuss and fellowship on how to eat sweet potatoes in gatherings? Is it because the issues I have been fellowshiping on are too concrete, and this has led to some misconceptions arising among people who like to split words and split hairs? When these problems and situations come up, I feel like talking to these people is a bit like treating monkeys as though they were human. Monkeys are creatures that live in mountains and jungles.

Although they resemble humans, and many of their behaviors and habits are similar to those of humans, and although there was a time when humans saw monkeys as their ancestors, no matter what, monkeys are still monkeys. They should live in forests and mountains. Would it not be a mistake to put them in a house to live with humans? Should we treat monkeys as if they were human? (No, we should not.) So, are you monkeys, or are you human? If you are human, then no matter how much I have to talk or how hard I have to work, it is appropriate and worthwhile for Me to say these things to you. If you are monkeys, is it appropriate for Me to treat you like humans, and to waste My breath discussing the truth and God's will with you? Is it worthwhile? (No, it is not.) Then are you human, or are you monkeys? (We are human.) Hopefully, you are. How do you view fellowshiping on how to eat sweet potatoes at gatherings? Would you be meticulous in matters such as this, too? For example, some people ask: "Should I wear blue clothes or white? If I wear white clothes, what kind of white? What kind of white represents holiness, and is befitting of a saint? If blue is appropriate for me, then which blue? Which blue most befits the demands and criteria that God has toward man, and can bring the most glory to God?" Have you ever been meticulous in these matters? Has anyone ever considered which hairstyle, or which manner of speaking and tone of voice befits a saint? Have you ever been meticulous about these things? Some people have been meticulous and put effort into these things. There are some people who used to like bleaching their hair blonde, or dyeing it red or other strange colors, but after they came to believe in God, they saw that the other brothers and sisters in the church did not dye their hair, so they stopped. Only after several years did they fully understand that whatever color or style of hair one has is not crucial. What is crucial is whether one is living out normal humanity, and whether one loves the truth. People who have been meticulous in such matters that have nothing to do with living out normal humanity are gradually coming to understand that it is pointless to put effort into these things, because these matters do not relate to the truth at all. They are just some issues within the scope of normal humanity, and they fall short of the truth. If the humanity that you live out meets God's demands and standards, that is enough. Have you not all felt somewhat perplexed by these issues in the past, and been confused by them? (Yes, we have.) Even if it was not as extreme as debating about how to eat sweet potatoes during gatherings, you too have been perplexed by some small, insignificant matters of life. These are facts. So, should there not be a definitive conclusion on these matters? Are you clear on which principles people should follow when living out normal humanity according to God's demands and standards? Do you know how to seek the truth when you next encounter some particular circumstances? Some people say, "Although I don't go to the extremes, like asking how to eat sweet potatoes, if certain issues were to arise in my daily life, I would still feel confused for a while." So, give Me an example—what issue would make you feel confused for a while? Would you say that it is wrong for women to wear makeup? Is it in line with God's demands for living out normal humanity? (It is not wrong.) What does "it

is not wrong" refer to here? (So long as one's makeup is befitting of a saint, and it is not too heavy, then it is fine.) So long as it is not heavy makeup, it is appropriate. There are some who ask, "If it is appropriate to wear makeup that is not too heavy, does that mean You want us to wear makeup?" Did I say that? (No, You did not.) Wearing makeup is not a problem, it is in line with living out normal humanity. The determining principle for this is that so long as the makeup is not too heavy, it is fine. That is the standard. So, what scope must women keep their makeup within in order for it to comply with living out normal humanity? Where is the line? What does "heavy makeup" mean? What kind of makeup is considered heavy? If the boundary is drawn clearly, people will know what to do. Is this not a detail? Give Me an example explaining what heavy makeup means. (It is when one's face is painted very white, their lips very red, and their eyes very black, so that it is extremely unnatural and uncomfortable to look at.) It makes people jump when they see it, like a ghost, and others cannot see the person's natural form or face. People in some countries and ethnicities, as well as certain professions, wear particularly heavy makeup. For example, is the makeup worn by people in bars and nightclubs not one representation of this? These people all wear heavy makeup, and it is not edifying—the point of their makeup is to seduce others. This kind of makeup is heavy makeup. Then, what sort of makeup is in line with living out normal humanity? Light makeup, like that worn by women in the workplace, which looks very dignified and elegant. So long as your makeup does not stray outside of this boundary, then it is fine. In China, it is not fashionable among older generations to wear makeup. If a regular, older person who does not have any particular status or standing in society always dresses up and wears makeup when leaving the house, people will say they are not acting respectably for their age. However, it is different in the West. If you are meeting someone or going to work and you do not put on a bit of makeup and groom yourself a little, people will say that you do not respect your job, that you are unprofessional, and that you are being disrespectful toward other people. This is a kind of culture. Naturally, in this sort of situation, wearing makeup should be restricted to a level where you appear dignified and upright, and like a respectable person to other people. To sum it up in one sentence: If you wear makeup, it should make you look like a respectable person, and not stir up lust in people's hearts—this kind of makeup is appropriate. That is the principle, and it is as simple as that. Some people ask, "Is it alright if I don't wear makeup when I leave the house? I'm not used to wearing makeup." You should seek within God's words. Did God say it is wrong not to wear makeup? God did not say this. The house of God has never required people to wear makeup. If you like to wear makeup, I have given you this criterion and limit, and told you what you should do so that your makeup is appropriate. If you do not like to wear makeup, the house of God does not require it. However, you must remember one thing: Although you are not required to wear makeup, you cannot leave the house looking messy and unkempt, like a beggar. For example, when you go out to share the gospel, if you do not make yourself look presentable or wash your face

before leaving the house, and dress in a sloppy manner, saying, “It’s fine. So long as we understand the truth, it doesn’t matter how we dress!” is that constructive? As someone who believes in God, you should have principles for your clothing and appearance as well. The minimum standard of this principle is that you must live out normal humanity, and you must not do anything to humiliate God, or to humiliate your own character and dignity. At the very least, you should make others respect you. Even if you fall short of piety, you should at least be able to restrain yourself, and be dignified and upright, and have saintly decency. If you can give people this impression, then that is enough. This is the most basic requirement for living out normal humanity.

For those who believe in God, these questions about people’s external behaviors and living out normal humanity should not be burdens or difficulties, because they are the most basic things that a normal person should, at the very least, possess. These issues should be easy to understand; they are not abstract. Therefore, these questions about people’s external behaviors and living out normal humanity should not become important issues that are discussed frequently in church life. Talking about them on occasion is fine, but if you treat them as topics to seek the truth on, and bring them up often, discussing them earnestly and seriously, then you are somewhat neglecting your proper duties. Which people are usually the ones who neglect their proper duties? Bringing up questions like how to eat sweet potatoes, and treating these questions as though they are topics to seek the truth on, investigating and fellowshiping on them at gatherings, sometimes at multiple gatherings, while the church leaders do nothing to stop it—are these not all manifestations of warped people who lack spiritual understanding? (Yes, they are.) What questions should be discussed the most in gatherings? Those pertaining to the truth and people’s corrupt dispositions. The truth and God’s words are the unchanging topics of church life; matters pertaining to the most basic and ordinary topic of external behaviors of normal humanity should not be the main subject of fellowship in church life and gatherings. If the brothers and sisters advise, remind, and fellowship with each other about these things outside of gatherings, that is enough to solve these problems. It is not necessary to spend vast amounts of time fellowshiping and discussing them. That would impact people’s normal gathering and eating and drinking of God’s words, and it would have an effect on their life entry. Church life is a life of eating and drinking God’s words. Its emphasis should be on fellowshiping about the truth and resolving practical problems, that way, one’s life progress will not be delayed. If you possess the sense of normal humanity, it should be clear to you how to practice these matters in accordance with the principles. If you are always nitpicking about trivial matters and things which have nothing to do with the truth principles, if you are always splitting hairs, yet feel that you are knowledgeable and learned, should this issue not be dissected? For example, some people put a lot of emphasis on the way they dress, and always ask whether believers can wear unusual clothes; some people who have recently come to believe in God always ask whether believers should drink

alcohol; some people enjoy doing business, and always ask whether believers should earn a lot of money; and some people always ask when God's day will come. These people are not willing to seek the truth in these matters to find the correct answers. Although there are no precise words on these subjects, God has explained the principles for approaching these issues very clearly. If a person does not put effort into reading God's words, they will not find the answers. In fact, everyone knows the purpose of believing in God, and what is to be gained from it. It is just that there are some people who do not love the truth, but still wish to gain blessings. That is where their difficulty lies. Therefore, the most crucial thing is whether a person can accept the truth. There are some people who have never put importance on eating and drinking God's words or on fellowshiping about the truth. They just get hung up on questions of no importance, and they always want to fellowship on these questions at gatherings and get definitive answers to them, and the leaders and workers cannot restrain them. What sort of problem is this? Are these people not neglecting their proper duties? If you do not practice the truth and always want to walk the wrong path, why do you not reflect on, come to know, and analyze yourself? You are always a people-pleaser, you are not responsible in your duty, you are willful, a law unto yourself, arbitrary, and reckless. How can you not be conscientious about this matter? How can you not investigate and dissect it to find out what, exactly, is going on? Why do you blame and misunderstand God whenever anything befalls you? Why do you always reach a verdict on yourself, and grumble that God is not righteous and that the church is unfair? Are these not problems? Should you not fellowship and dissect these issues in church life? When the house of God divides the church and cleanses people away, you never submit and you are never satisfied, you always have notions and spread negativity. Is this not a problem? Should you not investigate and dissect this issue? You always pursue status, and play politics, and manage your status. Is this not a problem? Should you not fellowship and dissect these issues? The church is currently carrying out the work of cleansing, and some say, "As long as people are somewhat effective in their duties, they won't be removed, so if I just continue to be somewhat effective in my duty and don't get removed, that's enough." What is the problem here? Are these people not in passive opposition? If one can pour forth this kind of deceitful disposition, does this not need to be resolved? Are problems to do with corrupt dispositions and man's nature essence not much more serious than how to eat sweet potatoes? Are they not worth bringing up, fellowshiping on, and dissecting at gatherings and in church life, so that God's chosen people can gain discernment? Are these not good, typical examples of negative behaviors? Problems concerning corrupt dispositions directly relate to man's dispositional change, and they touch on man's salvation. These are not small matters, so why do you not fellowship on and dissect these issues in gatherings? If you never seek the truth to resolve crucial matters such as these in gatherings, and instead, you fellowship endlessly on trivial and boring things, spending an entire gathering fellowshiping on one small issue, unable to

resolve any substantive problems, wasting time as well—are you not neglecting your proper duties? If you continue in this way, all of you will become useless individuals of poor caliber, who are muddle-headed, and do not perform their duties well, and fall short of the truth. You do not fellowship on the things that you should fellowship on in gatherings, and you fellowship endlessly on things that you should not fellowship on in gatherings. You always fellowship on things in gatherings that have nothing to do with the truth, that belong to your own skewed understandings and trivial personal issues, making everyone investigate them along with you, pointlessly wasting time. Not only does this impact the life entry of God's chosen people, it also delays the normal progression of the church's work. Is this not disturbing and disrupting the church's work? Behavior such as this should be labeled as a disturbance. It is an intentional disturbance, and people who act in this way should be restricted. In the future, gatherings should be limited to eating and drinking the words of God, fellowshiping on the truth, solving issues to do with corrupt dispositions, and resolving difficulties and problems in people's duties. Any trivial and inconsequential matters or those concerning issues of everyday common sense should not be fellowshiped on in gatherings. Brothers and sisters can resolve these issues by fellowshiping among themselves; they do not need to be fellowshiped about in gatherings.

There are always people with warped understandings about God's words in the church who split hairs. When I fellowship about man's good behaviors, these people truly put effort into their behavior. They do not know why we must fellowship on these things. Tell Me, why do we need to fellowship on this issue? What do we want to achieve by fellowshiping on this issue? Let us talk first about why we must fellowship on this issue. In what context was the topic of man's good behaviors and the criteria for the behaviors that God demands raised? It was raised while we were fellowshiping on the topic of "What It Means to Pursue the Truth." This issue directly relates to how man should pursue the truth. The good behaviors that people exhibit as a result of practicing the truth concern the truth and are related to the truth. No matter how good a behavior may appear to man, if it does not involve practicing the truth, then it is something unrelated to the truth. Some people will say, "That's wrong! Didn't You say that good behaviors fall short of the truth? I don't understand." Can you explain this issue? In the context of fellowshiping on "What It Means to Pursue the Truth," I dissected the behaviors that people believe to be good according to their notions, and I critiqued and condemned them. At the same time, I informed people what criteria God has put forward regarding man's behavior, and I gave them a correct path by which to live out normal humanity, thus enabling them to possess criteria by which to evaluate the living out of normal humanity. Upon this foundation, the effect that I ultimately achieved was informing people that the behaviors they think are good according to their notions are not the criteria of the truth, nor do they involve the truth, and nor are they related to the truth, thus stopping people from mistakenly believing that observing these good behaviors is

the pursuit of the truth. At the same time, I informed people that they have only fulfilled the standards for living out normal humanity when they have met the criteria for behavior that God demands. Since I have told people that all of the good behaviors advocated for by man are guises and false, that they are all an act and for show, and that they are all incorrect, that they are all adulterated with Satan's schemes, now that these things have been taken away and people have been deprived of them, do they not know how to practice? They think to themselves, "Then what should I be living by? What are the actual criteria of the behavior that God demands?" The demands, criteria, and concrete statements that God has about man's behavior—it is as simple as that. So long as people live out the realities that God demands, they will have met the standards for living out normal humanity. They will not split hairs, or be perplexed, or confused about this matter. When a person meets the standards that should be lived out by normal humanity, have they not resolved a practical problem on the road to pursuing the truth? Have they not removed an obstacle, and resolved a hindrance to living out normal humanity? At least, by now, external approaches that are praised by humanity, such as being well-educated and sensible, amiable, and approachable, are no longer the goals of man's pursuit. Or to put it in more precise terms, it is no longer a goal that people who are pursuing the truth strive to live out externally, nor is it a standard which normal humanity ought to live out. It has been replaced with the need to be restrained, to possess saintly decency, and so on. These demands of God's are the criteria for man to live out normal humanity; they are the likeness which normal humanity should live out. In this way, has the most basic condition, goal, and direction for pursuing the truth not been confirmed? The most fundamental, basic thing has been confirmed, which is that the goal of living out normal humanity is not for people to be well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, amiable, courteous, to respect the old and care for the young, and so on. Rather, it is for them to live out normal humanity as God demands. There are no guises and none of Satan's schemes in this; instead, it is the actual living out, outpourings, and behavior of normal humanity. Is this not how it is? (Yes, it is.) From this perspective, when we fellowship on man's good behaviors which fall under the topic of things that man holds in his notions to be right and good, as well as fellowship on the criteria for the behavior that God demands—are these things related to pursuing the truth? (Yes, they are.) Yes, they are related. To a certain degree, this confirms the basic direction and goal for man's pursuit of the truth. This means that, at the very least, your goal for living out normal humanity will be correct before you begin to pursue the truth. This goal is not a man-made approach, it is not packaging, or a disguise. Rather, it is the normal living out of the humanity that God demands. Although this topic is still somewhat removed from the real pursuit of the truth, it is essential to the overarching direction of the pursuit of the truth. It is the simplest and most basic criterion for behavior that man should understand. No matter how far removed this fellowship topic is from pursuing the truth, and how far removed it is from the criteria of the truth, because it pertains to God's demands and to

the behavioral criteria that God has given humanity, naturally, it also pertains to the criteria of the truth, to a certain degree. Therefore, people should understand these issues. These demands that God has for man's behavior are criteria that people should adhere to, and they must not be ignored. After understanding these issues, people will, at least, not seek to be a well-educated and sensible, gentle and refined, courteous, approachable, or amiable sort of person in living out normal humanity, and in their external approaches—like how Western people, in particular, expect men to be gentlemen, to open doors for women, to pull out a woman's chair for her when she is sitting down, and to give women priority in public places—once people gain discernment over these good behaviors, they will, at the very least, not take them as their standards when they strive to live out normal humanity, or when they pursue the behaviors of normal humanity. Instead, they will abandon these things in their hearts and minds; they will no longer be influenced and bound by them. This is something that you ought to do. If there is someone who still says, "Well, that person isn't very well-educated and sensible," what will your reaction be? You will glance at them, and indicate to them, "You misspoke. This is God's house. What do you mean, 'well-educated and sensible'? That isn't the truth, and it isn't the human likeness that we're meant to live out." Some people say, "Our leader doesn't respect the old and care for the young. I'm already advanced in age, yet she doesn't call me Auntie, she just calls me by my first name. She shouldn't be doing that. My grandchildren are older than her! By doing this isn't she looking down on me? She isn't friendly or good with people either. Judging from her behavior, she doesn't seem fit to be a leader." What do you think of this view? Respecting the old and caring for the young is not the truth. You should not evaluate people based on their external behaviors and manifestations, but according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. Only these are the principles for evaluating people. Then, how should we evaluate leaders and workers? You should look at whether they do practical work, at whether they can lead God's chosen people to eat and drink the words of God and understand the truth, at whether they can use the truth to resolve problems in the church and complete some crucial jobs. For example, how is the gospel work going? How is the church life? Are God's chosen people performing their duties well? How are all the different specialist tasks progressing? Have nonbelievers, evil people, and antichrists been cleared out? These are the church's crucial jobs. Evaluating leaders and workers is mainly done by looking at how well they perform these jobs. If they are effective in all these areas, then they are a competent leader. Even if their behavior is slightly lacking, it is not a big issue. Just looking at external behaviors is not the standard for evaluating whether a leader or worker is suitable. If a person looked at this through man's perspective, it would seem like the leader was rude because she never called an older woman Auntie or Grandma. But if they used God's words to evaluate her, this leader is satisfactory, and God's chosen people elected the right person because she can shoulder every aspect of the church's work, she is helpful and beneficial to the life entry

of every one of God's chosen people, and she does the gospel work well. Everyone should accept her leadership and cooperate with her work. If someone does not cooperate with this leader's work, or makes things difficult for her, or if they look for leverage so that they can criticize her just because this leader does not possess good external behaviors like respecting the old and caring for the young, this is not beneficial to the church's work. This is acting in an unprincipled way toward a leader and worker, and it is a manifestation of disrupting and disturbing the church's work. People like this are not in the right; they are doing evil. If you see a leader or worker who does not respect their elders, and as a result, you think that they are not such a good person, and you do not accept their leadership, and you even condemn them, what mistake are you making? This is the evil result of evaluating people using the standards of man, according to the views of traditional culture. If everyone can evaluate people and elect leaders and workers in accordance with God's words and the truth, it will be accurate and in line with God's will. People will be able to both treat others fairly, and to maintain the normal progression of the church's work. God will be satisfied, and man will be satisfied. Is this not the case?

Since I dissected man's so-called "good behaviors," and fellowshiped on the standards of demands that God has for man's behavior, the perspective from which people view others, and the standards which they use to evaluate them have changed; since the field of vision in which people see others is different, the results of people's evaluations are different, too. If people use God's words as the basis of their evaluations, then the result will definitely be correct, just, objective, and in everybody's interests. If the perspective, method, and basis for people's evaluations are the things that man thinks are right and good, then what will the result be? Someone may end up wrongly accusing or condemning good people, or they may be misled by hypocrites, and be unable to assess and treat a person justly. As man's basis is erroneous, the final result will certainly be wrong, unjust, and not in line with God's will. So, is it necessary to dissect and fellowship about the essence of people's notions of good behavior? Does this have any relation to the pursuit of the truth? They are very closely related! Even though this topic only touches on people living out normal humanity, and man's external approaches and outpourings, when people have the correct criteria that God demands for living out normal humanity, they will have correct and standardized bases and criteria for evaluating others, for viewing people and things, and for comporting themselves and acting. So, in this regard, will the direction, path, and goal of their pursuit of the truth not be more accurate? (Yes, it will be.) It will be more accurate, and more standardized. Although these topics are somewhat simple, they are related to man's views on people and things, and to man's comportment and actions in the most practical, real, and closest way—they are not empty at all.

I have spoken a lot already on the topic of things that man holds in his notions to be right and good—I have repeated Myself over and over in order to make you understand

that although these topics are, to an extent, removed from the truth, and they do not reach as high as the truth, they are related to man's views on people and things, and to man's comportment and actions. Therefore, do not regard these topics as non-truths, or as a type of knowledge or theory. They are not empty. The things that people regard as right and good in their notions are always in the depths of their hearts, controlling their thoughts, controlling the perspective and standpoint from which they view people and things, and how they comport themselves and act. Therefore, these things must be clearly explained, so that people can understand and gain discernment over them, and thereby let go of man's notions of good behavior and things of this sort, and never again treat these things as positive, or as the behavioral criteria for their views on people and things, and for their comportment and actions. Those things are absolutely not God's words, let alone the truth. What you need to do is constantly correct the viewpoint and stance from which you view people and things, and comport yourselves and act, while also constantly examining whether each notion and viewpoint that arises in your mind is in line with the truth. You must promptly reverse your fallacious notions and viewpoints, and then hold to the correct stance, and view people and things, and comport yourselves and act according to God's words, using the behavioral criteria that God requires. This is the most basic practice of the pursuit of the truth. It is also a sort of direction and goal of pursuit which you should possess when striving to attain salvation and to live out normal humanity. As you have just finished listening to these words, your understanding of them may not be that deep or concrete, but do not worry. After your experience of God's words continuously deepens, and after you continuously dissect and discern the things that are believed to be right within the notions of traditional culture, you will ultimately be able to abandon the various claims of traditional culture. Never again will you evaluate people's behavior according to traditional culture; instead, you will evaluate people according to God's words and the truth. In this way, you will have completely cleared out and abandoned the notions of traditional culture. If you do not understand the truth, and just understand simple doctrines, and you know that the behaviors demanded by traditional culture are invalid, you may think, "I am a modern person, set apart from the worldly masses. I'm not very traditional and I'm really fed up with traditional culture, I don't like to observe tedious customs and rites." But when you view people and things, you will still very naturally use your past notions to view and evaluate them. At that time, you will realize that all your claims about being a modern person, who is not old-fashioned or very traditional, and who can accept the truth, were actually false and wrong, and that you were tricked by your own feelings. Only then will you realize that old thoughts, views, and notions had rooted themselves deep within your heart long ago, and that they do not immediately disappear when you change your notions or abandon certain thoughts. Saying that you are a person of the new age, a modern person, is just a surface-level label; it is only because you are born in a different generation and age, but all of those things which are old-fashioned and antagonistic

toward God, that are common to all mankind are present in you too, without exception. So long as you are human, you will have these things in you. If you do not believe this, then gain more experience. There will come a day when you say “Amen” to these words of Mine. Those people who do not understand spiritual matters, and those who are haughty and egotistical, think, “I have a master’s and a doctorate. I have lived many years in this society, and I have been exposed to the culture and education of the new age, especially Western education. How could I still harbor those old-fashioned things? Traditions are the worst. I loathe those pointless rules. When my family gets together and talks about traditional things and rules, I don’t want to listen at all.” Do not rush to deny it. There will eventually come a day when you let go of these ideas of yours. You will admit that there could not be a more ordinary member of the Satan-corrupted human race than you. Although you did not willingly accept or pour forth the old-fashioned notions inside of you, traditional culture and the ancestors of the human race infected and conditioned you with them long ago. These things exist, without exception, in your inner landscape, and in your thoughts and notions. Why is this? Because these aspects of traditional culture are not simple statements, nor are they simple sayings or approaches. Rather, they are a type of thinking and theory. They have the effect of misleading and corrupting man. These sayings and approaches do not come from corrupt humanity, they come from Satan. So long as you are living under Satan’s power, you cannot avoid being conditioned, misled, and corrupted by these things. Now that you have heard My words, you will feel that they are all facts and the truth. When you have experienced these words of Mine, you will discover that, although you do not like traditional culture, or tedious customs and rites, or pointless rules, the bases for your views on people and things, and for your comportment and actions inevitably come from man. They belong to the core of traditional culture, they are things within traditional culture. Your views on people and things, and your comportment and actions are not based in God’s words, with the truth as your criterion. At that time, you will know, you will be able to clearly see that before people have gained the truth, if they do not pursue or understand the truth, then they carry Satan’s poison, a piece of Satan, and Satan’s schemes with them as they live out the most basic normal humanity. Everything they live out is negative, and despised and rejected by God. It is all of the flesh, and has nothing to do with the positive things that God puts forward, and likes, and that conform with His will. There is no overlap at all, there is not even any similarity between them. It is very important to see these problems clearly, otherwise, people will not know what it means to practice the truth. They will forever cling to the good behaviors that man believes to be positive things, so their behavior and manifestations will never meet with God’s approval. If a person loves the truth, they will be able to accept and pursue it. They will view people and things, and comport themselves and act, wholly according to God’s words, with the truth as their criterion. In this way, they will be able to embark on the life path that God has indicated to man. Viewing people and things, and comporting oneself

and acting, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion—this truth principle is extremely important and imperative for man. It is a truth principle which one must possess when pursuing salvation and striving to live out a meaningful life. You must accept this. There is no room for choice in this matter, and there are no exceptions for anyone. If you do not pursue the truth, and do not accept this truth principle, no matter whether you are old or young, knowledgeable or not, no matter if you are a person of faith or a person of little faith, and regardless of what social class you belong to, or what ethnicity you are, without exception, you will have nothing to do with the standards that God demands. What you must do is strive to view people and things, and to comport yourself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. This is the one and only road that you should pursue. You should not pick and choose, saying, "I will accept something as the truth if it fits with my notions, but if it doesn't, I will refuse to accept it. I will do things my own way, there's no need for me to pursue the truth. I don't need to look at people, matters, and things from the standpoint of God's words; I have my own views, and they are quite noble, objective, and positive. They aren't that different from God's words, so, of course, they can replace God's words and the truth. I don't need to practice God's words in this regard, or act according to them." This kind of view and method of pursuit are wrong. No matter how good or right a person's views are, they are still wrong. They can in no way replace the truth. If you cannot accept the truth, whatever you pursue will be wrong. That is why I say that you have no choice in the matter of "viewing people and things, and comporting oneself and acting, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion." All you can do is dutifully act according to this phrase, and carry out and personally experience it, gradually gaining knowledge of it, recognizing your own corrupt disposition, and entering into the reality of this phrase. Only then will the goal you ultimately achieve be the goal one ought to achieve by pursuing the truth. Otherwise, your hard work, everything you have renounced, and all the prices that you have paid will evaporate, they will all be in vain. Do you understand?

What does it mean to pursue the truth? (To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion.) That is right. Practice these words conscientiously, absolutely, and comprehensively. Make this phrase the goal of your pursuit, and the reality of your life, then you will be a person who pursues the truth. Do not be contaminated in any way, do not be contaminated with any will of man, and do not hold onto any mentality of luck. That is the right way to act, and you will then have hope of gaining the truth. So, is it necessary to fellowship and dissect man's notions of good behavior? (Yes, it is.) What positive guidance and assistance can it provide you? Can these words become the basis and criterion for how you view people and things, and comport yourself and act? (Yes, they can.) If they can, then pray-read these two fellowships well during your gatherings and devotionals. Once you have a thorough grasp of these words, you will be able to accurately view people

and things, and comport yourself and act according to God's words. That way, you will have a basis and criterion for what you say and do. You will see people accurately, and the perspective and stance from which you view things will be correct too. You will no longer view people and things based on your emotions or feelings, nor based on traditional culture or satanic philosophies. When you have the right basis, the results of your views on people and things will be relatively accurate. Is this not how it is? (Yes.) Therefore, you cannot just take or leave these words. I am not gathering with you and fellowshiping on these topics just to pass the time or just to amuse Myself because I am bored. I do it because these problems are common to all people, and they are problems that people must understand on their path of pursuing the truth and achieving salvation. Yet, people are still not clear on these issues. They often become bound and entangled in these issues. These problems obstruct and bother them. Of course, people do not understand the path to achieving salvation, either. No matter whether it is from a passive or active perspective, or whether it is from a positive or negative perspective, people should make sure that they are clear on and understand these problems. This way, when you encounter problems like this in real life and are faced with a choice, you will be able to seek the truth; the perspective and stance from which you view the problem will be correct, and you will be able to adhere to the principles. That way, your decisions and choices will have a basis, and be in line with God's words. Never again will you be misled by satanic philosophies and fallacies; never again will you be troubled by Satan's poisons and absurd claims. Then, when it comes to viewing people and things, which is the most basic of levels, you will be capable of being objective and just in how you see a thing or person; you will not be influenced or controlled by your feelings or by satanic philosophies. Therefore, although recognizing and discerning the behaviors that people believe to be good according to their notions is not a major matter in the process of pursuing the truth, it is closely linked to people's daily lives. In other words, people frequently encounter these things in their daily lives. For example, say something happens, and you want to act in one way, but another person puts forward a different view, and you are not comfortable with the way that person typically behaves—how should you treat their view? How should you handle this matter? It would be wrong for you to just ignore them. Because you harbor a particular view or assessment of them, or a conclusion that you have drawn about them, these things will sway your thinking and judgment, and they are likely to influence your verdict on this matter. That is why you must approach their differing view calmly, discerning it and seeing it clearly according to the truth. If what they said is in line with the truth principles, then you should accept it. If you cannot see the matter clearly, when you encounter a situation or a person like this again, you will always feel confused, unprepared, agitated, and flustered. Some people may even adopt extreme measures to approach and deal with the situation, the ultimate results of which surely no one wants to see. If you use the standards of measurement that God demands to view a person, the ultimate result is likely to be good

and positive—there will be no conflict between the two of you, and you will get along. However, if you use Satan's logic and the standards of man's notions of good behavior to view the person, it is likely that the two of you will end up fighting and arguing. The result will be that you are unable to get along, and many things will follow from that: You may undermine each other, belittle each other, and judge one another, in serious cases you may even get into a physical fight, and in the end, both sides will be hurt and lose. No one wants to see that. Therefore, the things that Satan instills in people can never help them to view a person or thing objectively, justly, or reasonably. Whereas, when people view and evaluate a thing or person according to the behavioral criteria that God demands and has informed man of, and according to God's words and the truth, the end result will certainly be objective, because it is not contaminated with impetuousness, or man's emotions and feelings. Only good things can come from this. In light of this, what do people need to accept: man's notions of good things, or the behavioral criteria that God demands? (The behavioral criteria that God demands.) All of you know the answer to that question, and can respond to it correctly. Alright, we will leave our fellowship on this topic here. What you need to do next is continue to ponder and fellowship on these things, organize these issues in a systematic fashion, come up with several principles of practice and paths of practice, and then continually undergo and experience them in your daily lives, and enter into the reality of these words. Naturally, entering into the reality of these words is the first truth reality that people pursue and enter into. In this way, through the course of experience, people gradually come to varying degrees of understanding and knowledge of each facet of the content of this fellowship, and they progressively make gains from different perspectives. The more you gain, the deeper your experiential knowledge and entry into these words will become. The deeper you enter and experience them, the deeper your entry into and experiential knowledge of your views on people and things, and your comportment and actions will become. By contrast, if you do not enter into these words at all, and just look at and understand the literal meaning of these words, and leave it at that, living as you always have, not seeking the truth when problems arise, and not holding those problems up against God's words for comparison, or resolving them according to God's words, then you will never be able to enter into the reality of God's words. What does it mean to say that you will never be able to enter into the truth reality? It means that you are not someone who loves the truth, and you will never practice the truth, because you will never view people and things, or comport yourself and act according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. You say, "I still live well even though I don't take God's words as my basis, or the truth as my criterion." What do you mean "live well"? Are things going well so long as you are not dead? The goal of your pursuit is not to achieve salvation, and you do not accept or understand the truth, yet you say that you are living well. If that is the case, your quality of life is very subpar, and the quality of the humanity that you live out is very low. To borrow from a colloquial saying, you are more like a fiend than a person, because

you do not eat and drink God's words and you do not understand the truth, you still live by a satanic disposition and satanic philosophies—you are merely a non-human cloaked in human skin. What quality or value does the life of a person like that have? It has no benefit to you or to others. The quality of this sort of life is so poor—it has no value.

Do you know why I am fellowshiping and dissecting these traditional notions and traditional culture today? Is it just because I do not like them? (No, that is not the reason.) Then what is the significance of fellowshiping on these topics? What is the ultimate goal of it? (It helps us to examine which behaviors and manifestations we still harbor that are dictated by traditional culture, and living by satanic philosophies. After we come to understand the truth and gain discernment, we will be able to live out normal humanity according to the demands and criteria that God has given us, and walk the path of pursuing the truth.) This is correct, but a bit wordy. What is the simplest and most direct answer? There is only one ultimate goal of fellowshiping these topics, and that is to make people understand what the truth is, and what the practice of the truth is. Once people are clear on these two things, they will have discernment over the good behaviors that traditional culture promotes. They will no longer treat those good behaviors as standards for practicing the truth or for living out human likeness. Only by understanding the truth can people cast off the shackles of traditional culture, and cast off their erroneous understandings and views about practicing the truth and the good behaviors that people ought to possess. Only in this way can people practice and pursue the truth correctly. If people do not know what the truth is and they take traditional culture to be the truth, then the direction, goals, and path of their pursuit will all be wrong. They will have parted from God's words, contravened the truth, and strayed from the true way. As such, they are walking their own path and going astray. If people who do not understand the truth are incapable of seeking it and practicing it, what will the end result be? They will not gain the truth. And if they do not gain the truth, then no matter how hard those people believe, it will amount to nothing. Therefore, today's fellowship and dissection of these traditional notions and these claims of traditional culture is a very important and highly significant topic for all believers. You believe in God, but do you actually understand what the truth is? Do you really know how to pursue the truth? Are you sure of your goals? Are you sure of your path? If you are not sure of anything, how can you pursue the truth? Could you be pursuing the wrong thing? Could you be straying from the path? This is extremely likely. So, although the words that I am fellowshiping on today seem very simple on the surface, words that people immediately understand as soon as they hear them, and from your perspective, they do not even seem worth mentioning, this topic and this content directly relates to the truth, and concerns God's demands. This is what the majority of you are not aware of. Although, in terms of doctrine, you understand that traditional culture and mankind's social sciences are not the truth, and that ethnic customs and practices are certainly not the truth, do you actually see the essence of these things clearly? Have you really cast off the shackles of these things? Not necessarily. God's

house has never required people to put effort into studying ethnic culture, customs, and practices, and God's house certainly has not made people accept anything from traditional culture. God's house has never mentioned these things. However, the topic that I am fellowshiping on today is very important. It is necessary for Me to say this clearly so that you understand. The goal of Me saying these things is none other than to make people understand the truth and God's will, but can you all understand what I am saying? If you put in some effort, pay a bit of a price, and put some energy into it, you will ultimately be able to make gains in this area and succeed in understanding these truths. And by coming to understand these truths, and then seeking to enter into the truth reality, it will be easy for you to get results.

One aspect of the things that man holds in his notions to be right and good that we fellowshiped on before was man's good behavior. What was the other aspect? (Morality and the quality of man's humanity.) In simple terms, it is man's moral conduct. Although corrupted humans all live according to their satanic dispositions, they are exceptionally good at disguising themselves. In addition to sayings related specifically to surface-level approaches and behaviors, they have also produced many sayings and requirements concerning man's moral conduct. What sayings about moral conduct are circulated among people? List ones that you know and are familiar with, then we will pick a few common sayings to dissect and fellowship on. (Don't pocket the money you pick up. Derive pleasure from helping others.) (A kindness received should be gratefully repaid.) (Sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others.) (Requite evil with good.) (A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral.) (Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others.) Yes, all of those are good examples. In addition, there is, "When drinking the water of a well, one should never forget who dug it," "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings," and "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible." These are all requirements put forward regarding man's moral conduct. Are there any others? (The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring.) This is also a requirement that mankind's traditional culture has put forward concerning man's moral conduct, and a standard for evaluating people's moral conduct. What else is there? (Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire.) This one is a bit simpler, it also counts. There is also, "I'd take a bullet for a friend," "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands," "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force," and "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day." Are these not some other examples? (Yes, they are.) As is this one, "The silkworms of spring weave till they die, and candles burn out till their tears run dry." Look at how high their expectations are for man's conduct and comportment! They want people to burn through their entire lives like a candle and become ash. A person is only deemed to possess high moral character when they comport themselves in this way. Is this not a high expectation? (Yes, it is.) People have been influenced and bound

by these aspects of traditional culture for thousands of years, and what is the result? Are they living out human likeness? Are they living out meaningful lives? People live for these things that traditional culture demands, sacrificing their youths, or even their whole lives for them, all the while believing that their lives are very proud and glorious. In the end, when they die, they do not know what they died for, or whether their deaths had any value and meaning, or whether they met the demands of their Creator. People are completely ignorant of these things. What other sayings and requirements does traditional culture have concerning people's moral conduct? "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," and "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you," these fit the bill. There is also, "A gentleman's word is his bond," this is a requirement that concerns man's trustworthiness. Is there anything else? (Grow like a lily from the mud unsullied.) This phrase has some overlap with this topic. I think we have listed enough examples. The sayings that we have just covered include requirements that have been put forward regarding man's dedication, patriotism, trustworthiness, chastity, as well as principles for interacting with others, and how people should treat someone who has helped them, or how to repay kindness, and so on. Some of these sayings are simpler, while others are a bit deeper. The simplest are: "Derive pleasure from helping others," "Don't pocket the money you pick up," and, "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force." These are demands that concern man's comportment. "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands," is a demand relating to people's moral integrity and chastity. These more or less fall within the scope of the concepts of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness of traditional Chinese culture. How many sayings did we list just now? (Twenty-one.) Read them out for Me. ("Don't pocket the money you pick up," "Derive pleasure from helping others," "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others," "Requite evil with good," "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," "Sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others," "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral," "When drinking the water of a well, one should never forget who dug it," "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings," "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible," "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring," "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," "I'd take a bullet for a friend," "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands," "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force," "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day," "The silkworms of spring weave till they die, and candles burn out till their tears run dry," "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you," "A gentleman's word is his bond," and "Grow like a lily from the mud unsullied.") Today, we will do an advance study of all the sorts of "good" qualities that mankind has summarized regarding moral

conduct. Traditional culture's various claims about moral conduct put forward different requirements for man's humanity and moral conduct. Some require people to repay kindnesses that they receive, some demand that people take joy in helping others, some are methods for dealing with people that one dislikes, while others are methods for dealing with other people's flaws and shortcomings, or with people who have problems. In these areas, they provide people with limits, and put forward some demands and standards. All of these are demands and standards that traditional culture has regarding man's moral conduct, and they are all things that are circulated among people. Anyone who grew up in China will have heard these sayings frequently, and know them by heart. These claims about moral conduct from traditional culture more or less all fall within the scope of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. Of course, there are some sayings that fall outside of this scope, but the major ones more or less all fall within it. You should be clear on this.

Today, we will not fellowship in a concrete way about what a particular statement on moral conduct is all about, nor will we analyze in a concrete way what the essence of any particular saying is. I will get you to do a bit of preparatory study first. Look at what differences there are between traditional culture's claims about moral conduct, and the standards that God demands of man for living out normal humanity. Which sayings from traditional culture clearly conflict with God's words and the truth? If interpreted literally, which sayings resemble God's words and the truth, or are somewhat connected to them? Which of these sayings do you believe to be positive things, and which of these sayings did you once strictly hold yourself to after you came to believe in God, practicing and complying with it as though it were the criterion for your pursuit of the truth? For example, "Sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others." Are you all familiar with this saying? After coming to believe in God, did you not think that you ought to be a good person like this? And when you sacrificed your own interests for the sake of others, did you not think that you had pretty good humanity, and that God would surely like you? Or, before you believed in God, maybe you believed that people who possess the quality of "requiting evil with good" were good people—you were just not willing to do it, you were unable to do it, and could not hold to it, but after you came to believe in God, you held yourself to that standard, and you were able to practice "forgiving and forgetting" toward those people who hurt you in the past, or whom you used to resent or hate. You may think that this saying about moral conduct aligns with when the Lord Jesus said to forgive people seventy times seven times, and thus be very willing to restrain yourself according to it. You may even practice and adhere to it as though it were the truth, and think that people who practice requiting evil with good are people who practice the truth and follow the way of God. Do you possess thoughts or manifestations like these? Which saying do you still think is similar to the truth and God's words in its essence, to the extent that it could even replace the truth, that it would not be too much to say that it is the truth? Of course, it should be easy to discern the saying: "Every person shares responsibility for

the fate of their country." Most people can see that this saying is not the truth, and that it is just a misleading, high-sounding slogan. "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," is something said to unbelievers who do not have faith in God; it is a requirement that a country's government makes toward its people, to teach people to love their country. This saying is inconsistent with the truth, and it has no basis at all in God's words. It can be said that this saying is fundamentally not the truth, and that it cannot replace the truth. This saying is a viewpoint that comes entirely from Satan and originates in Satan, and it serves the ruling class. It has nothing at all to do with God's words or the truth. That is why the saying "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," is absolutely not the truth, nor is it something that a person with normal humanity ought to uphold. So, what kind of people are capable of mistaking this saying for the truth? People who are always devising ways to acquire reputation, status, and personal profit, and those who want to be officials. They practice this saying as though it were the truth in order to curry favor with the ruling classes and achieve their own aims. There are some sayings that are not easy for people to discern. Although people know that these sayings are not the truth, they still feel in their hearts that the sayings are correct and in line with doctrine. They want to live according to these sayings and comport themselves in that way in order to raise the level of their morality, and heighten their personal charisma, and at the same time, make it so that others think that they have humanity and that they are not non-human. Which sayings were hard for you to discern? (I think that "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," was very hard to discern. I treated it as though it were a positive thing, and thought that those who gratefully repaid kindnesses were people who possessed conscience. "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" is another one. It means that since one has accepted a task from someone else, they should do everything they can to make sure that it is done well. I felt that this was a positive thing, and something that a person with conscience and reason ought to do.) Who else? (There is also, "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring." I thought that a person who could do this was someone of relative humanity and morality.) Anything else? ("A gentleman's word is his bond." I thought that if someone did what they said and was trustworthy, that was good moral conduct.) Before, you thought that this was good moral conduct. How do you see it now? (We have to look at what the nature of that "word" is—is it right or is it wrong? Is it positive or is it negative? If somebody says to evil people and antichrists, "I will protect you. A gentleman's word is his bond," and then, when the house of God investigates and looks into the situation, this person protects those evil people and antichrists, then they are doing evil and resisting God.) This discernment is correct. You must look at the nature of this "word"—whether it is positive or negative. If someone is doing something bad or evil while practicing "A gentleman's word is his bond," then the footsteps of their evildoing are like the mad rush of fast horses, running straight into hell and dropping into the bottomless pit. But if their "word" is in line with the truth, and it has

a sense of righteousness, and it protects the work of God's house, and pleases God, then it is correct to practice "A gentleman's word is his bond." From these examples, you can see that you must be discerning toward the words of traditional culture. You must discern between different situations and backgrounds, and you cannot use these words indiscriminately. There are some words that obviously do not correspond with reality, and are clearly wrong. You must be particularly cautious when dealing with these words. You must handle them like heresies and fallacies. There are some words that are only right within certain contexts and scopes. In a different context or environment, the words no longer hold up; they are wrong and harmful to people. If you cannot discern them, you are likely to be poisoned and harmed by them. No matter whether the words of traditional culture are right or wrong, or whether or not they hold water in the eyes of man, none of them are the truth and none of them are in line with God's words. This is certain. The things that man views as right are not necessarily the things that God views as right. The words that man views as good are not necessarily beneficial toward people when they are put into practice. In any case, regardless of whether people practice them or not, or whether they have use for them, things that are not in line with the truth, that are not the truth, are all harmful to man, they should not be accepted and must not be used. There are many people who are unable to discern these things. They treat things which man views as right, or which corrupted mankind commonly agrees are right, as the truth, and adhere to them and practice them as though they were the truth. Is this appropriate? Can one gain God's approval by practicing false truths and pseudo-truths? Anything that mankind commonly agrees is right and the truth is false, an imitation, and should be rejected forever. Now, are the things that you think are right and positive actually the truth? In thousands of years, no person has ever denied these words; people all believe that these words are correct and positive, but can these words actually become the truth? (No, they cannot.) If these words cannot become the truth, then are they themselves the truth? (No, they are not.) They are not the truth. If people treat these words as the truth, and mix them in with God's words and practice them together, can those words and sayings rise to the level of the truth? They absolutely cannot. No matter how people pursue or cling to these things, God will never approve of them, because God is holy. He absolutely does not permit corrupted humans to mix satanic things in with the truth, or with His words. All of the things that arise from man's thoughts and views come from Satan—no matter how good they are, they still are not the truth, and cannot become a person's life.

Traditional culture's sayings about moral conduct come from Satan. They have arisen among corrupted humans, and they are only suitable for unbelievers and those who do not love the truth. People who believe in God and pursue the truth should first be able to discern these things, and reject them, because these sayings will have some negative effects on people, they will disorientate them and make them take the wrong path. For example, among the examples we just gave, there is the saying: "A loyal

subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands." Let us first talk about, "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings." If this king is a wise, capable, and positive figure, then you supporting him, following him, and defending him shows that you have humanity, morals, and noble character. But if the king is despotic and fatuous, is a devil, and you still follow him, defend him, and do not turn against him, what is this "loyalty" that you possess? It is a foolish, blind loyalty; it is blind and foolish. In that case, your loyalty is wrong and it has become a negative thing. When it comes to this kind of demon king and devil, you should no longer adhere to the saying: "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings." You should abandon, reject, and distance yourself from this king—you should abandon the darkness and choose the light. If you still choose to remain loyal to this demon king, then you are his lackey and accomplice. So, in certain circumstances and contexts, the idea, or positive meaning and values that this saying is extolling do not exist. From this you can see that although this saying sounds very righteous and positive, its application is limited to a few particular circumstances and contexts; it is not applicable in every circumstance or context. If people blindly and foolishly adhere to this saying, they will only lose their way and fall onto the wrong path. The consequences of this are unthinkable. The next clause in this saying is: "a good woman cannot marry two husbands." What does a "good woman" refer to here? It refers to a woman who is pure, who is faithful to just one husband. She must be faithful to him until the end, and never have a change of heart, regardless of whether he is a good person or not. Even if her husband dies, she must remain a widow until the end of her days. That is a so-called pure and faithful wife. Traditional culture requires all women to be pure and faithful wives. Was this a fair way of treating women? Why could men have more than one wife, but women could not remarry even if their husbands died? Men and women did not have equal status. If a woman was constrained by the words, "a good woman cannot marry two husbands," and chose to be a pure and faithful wife, what could she gain? At most, a monument commemorating her purity would be erected after she died. Is this meaningful? Would you agree that women had a hard lot in life? Why did they not have the right to remarry after their husbands died? This is the view that traditional culture extols, and it is a notion that mankind has always clung to. If a woman's husband died leaving behind several children and she could not afford to take care of them, what could she do? She had to beg for food. If she did not want her children to suffer and she wished to find a way to survive, she had to remarry and live with her name being sullied, and the condemnation of public opinion, and being shunned and looked down upon by society and the masses. She had to eat dirt and put up with society's insults so that her children could have a normal upbringing. From this perspective, although she did not live up to the standard of "a good woman cannot marry two husbands," were her behaviors, approaches, and sacrifices not worthy of respect? At least when her children grew up and understood their mother's love for them, they would respect her, and they would certainly not look down on or shun her for her behavior. Instead, they would be grateful,

and think that a mother like theirs was exceptional. However, popular opinion would not agree with them. From the perspective of society's opinion, which is the same as the perspective of "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands," which man advocates for, no matter how you look at it, this mother was not a good person, because she contravened this traditional notion of morality. As a result, they would label her as having problematic moral conduct. So, why would her children's thoughts and views toward her differ from traditional culture's view of her? Because her children would view this issue from the perspective of survival. If this woman had not remarried, she and her children would have no means of survival. If she had held to this traditional notion, then there would have been no way for her to live—she would have starved to death. She chose to remarry to save her children's lives and her own. In light of this context, is traditional culture's and popular opinion's condemnation of her not completely wrong? They care nothing for whether people live or die! So, what is the meaning and value of holding to this traditional notion of morality? It may be said that there is no value in it at all. It is something that hurts and harms people. As victims of this notion, this woman and her children had firsthand experience of this fact, but nobody heeded them or sympathized with them. They could do nothing but swallow their pain. What do you think, is this society fair? Why is this kind of society and country so evil and dark? It is because the traditional culture that Satan has implanted in man still controls people's thinking and dominates public opinion. To this day, no person has been able to see this issue clearly. The unbelievers still cling to the notions and views of traditional culture, and think that they are correct. To date, they have not abandoned these things.

Now, when we look at the saying, "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands," you can see that no matter what perspective we view it from, it is not a positive thing, it is purely man's notion and imagining. Why do I say that it is not a positive thing? (Because it is not the truth, it is man's notion and imagining.) In fact, very few people can do what this phrase asks. It is just an empty theory and man's notion and imagining, but because it took root in people's hearts, it became a sort of popular opinion, and many people judged matters of this sort according to it. So, what is the essence of the perspective and stance from which popular opinion judged matters of this sort? Why did popular opinion judge a woman who remarried so harshly? Why did people criticize this kind of person, and shun and look down on her? What was the reason? You do not understand, do you? You are unclear when it comes to facts; you just know that it is not the truth and that it is not in line with God's words. Well, I will tell you, and when I am done you will be able to see this sort of thing clearly. It is because popular opinion judged this woman based solely on one thing and one action—her remarrying—and narrowly defined the quality of her humanity based upon that one thing, rather than looking at the real quality of her humanity. Is that not unfair and unjust? Popular opinion did not look at how the woman's humanity was usually—whether she was an evil person or a kind person, whether she loved positive things,

whether she had hurt or harmed other people, or whether she was a loose woman before remarrying. Did people in society and popular opinion evaluate this woman comprehensively based on these things? (No, they didn't.) Then what did people at the time base their evaluation on? They based it on the saying, "a good woman cannot marry two husbands." Everyone thought, "Women should only marry once. Even if your husband dies, you should remain a widow for the rest of your life. You are a woman, after all. If you remain faithful to your husband's memory and do not remarry, we will erect a monument commemorating your purity—we can even erect ten! No one cares how much you suffer, or how difficult it is for you to raise your children. No one will care even if you have to beg on the streets for food. You must still adhere to the saying: 'a good woman cannot marry two husbands.' Only by doing this will you be a good woman, and possess humanity and morals. If you remarry, then you are a bad woman and a slut." What this implies is that only by not remarrying can a woman become a good, pure, and faithful person with noble moral conduct and character. Within traditional culture's concepts of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness, the saying, "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands," became the basis for appraising people. People treated this saying as though it were the truth, and used it as a standard for evaluating others. That is the essence of this matter. Because someone possessed one kind of behavior that did not conform with the requirements and standards put forward by traditional culture, they were labeled as having low-quality humanity and low moral conduct, as having poor and terrible humanity. Is that fair at all? (No, it's not.) Then, in order to be a good woman, what must the circumstances be, and what price must you pay? If you want to be a good woman, you must be faithful to only one husband, and if your husband dies, you must remain a widow. You and your children must go down the streets begging, and endure being mocked, hit, yelled at, bullied, and insulted by others. Is that an appropriate way to treat women? (No, it is not.) Yet that is what humans do, they would rather see you begging along the streets, living with no roof over your head, not knowing where your next meal is coming from, and no one will care, sympathize, or pay any attention to you. No matter how many children you have or how hard your life is, even if your children starve to death, no one will care. But if you remarry, you are not a good woman. You will be inundated with words of scorn and loathing, and you will meet with more than a few words of abuse and condemnation. You will have all sorts of things said to you, and only your children and a small number of your relatives and friends will lend you words of sympathy and support. How did this come to be? It is directly connected to the education and conditioning of traditional culture. It is the result of the saying, "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands," that traditional culture advocates for. What can one see from these things? What is hidden within the saying: "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands"? Man's falseness, hypocrisy, and brutality. A woman may have nothing to eat, she may

be unable to survive, and be on the verge of dying from starvation, and no one will sympathize with her; instead, everyone will require that she preserve her purity. People would rather see her starve to death and erect a monument in her honor than let her choose to survive. In one respect, this issue exposes mankind's obstinance. In another respect, it exposes mankind's falseness and viciousness. Mankind does not offer any sympathy, understanding, or help to vulnerable groups or to those deserving of pity. On top of that, mankind adds insult to injury by using the ridiculous theory and rule that, "a good woman cannot marry two husbands," to condemn people and push them to death. That is not fair to people. Not only does this go against God's words, and the demands that the Lord of creation makes of mankind, at the same time, it contradicts the standards of man's conscience and reason. Is the perspective from which the woman's children viewed this issue fair, then? Did they not benefit tangibly from their mother's second marriage and the price that she paid? With regard to the act itself, the children respected and supported their mother, but where did that support come from? It is simply because their mother chose to remarry for the sake of their survival, allowing them to go on living, and saving their lives. That is all. If their mother had not done it to save their lives, they would not approve of or support her decision to remarry. Therefore, as her children, their view of their mother's remarriage was not truly fair. Either way, whether it was from the perspective of popular opinion or from the perspective of her children, the way that people treated this mother and the standards they used to evaluate her were not based upon the true nature of her humanity. That was the mistake that humans made in how they treated a woman who remarried. From this, it is plain to see that the saying put forward by traditional culture, "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands," does not come from God, but from Satan, and it has nothing at all to do with the truth. The perspectives from which people view all things, and the ways that they regard the morality or immorality of any given person are not based in the truth or in God's words, they are based in the views of traditional culture, and in the demands made of man by traditional culture's concepts of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. What are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness? Where do these concepts come from? On the surface, it seems as though they come from sages of old and famous people, but in reality, they come from Satan. They are various sayings that Satan has put forward in order to control and restrict people's behavior, and to establish a benchmark, model, and template for people's moral conduct. In truth, these sages of old and famous people all had satanic natures and they all rendered service for Satan. They were devils who misled people. So, it is completely factual to say that these concepts came from Satan.

When people evaluate others' moral character and whether their humanity is good or bad, they only do so based on a famous saying from traditional culture; they reach a verdict and conclusion on the quality of other people's humanity based merely upon how

they approach a single matter. This is obviously wrong and incorrect. So, how can a person evaluate whether someone's humanity is good or bad in an accurate, objective, and fair way? What are the principles and standards for evaluating them? In accurate terms, the principles and standards for this evaluation must be the truth. Only the Creator's words are the truth, and only they have authority and power. The words of corrupted humans are not the truth, they have no authority, and they should not be used as the basis or principles for evaluating someone. Therefore, the only accurate, objective, and fair way of evaluating people's moral character and whether their humanity is good or bad, is by using the Creator's words and the truth as one's basis. "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands," is a famous saying among corrupted humans. Its source is not right, it comes from Satan. If people measure the quality of others' humanity based on Satan's words, then their conclusions will definitely be wrong and unfair. So, how can one fairly and accurately evaluate the quality of a person's morals and whether their humanity is good or bad? One must base it on the intent, goal, and results of that person's actions, as well as the meaning and value of what they do, while also basing it on their views and the choices they make in terms of how they treat positive things. That will be completely accurate. The person does not necessarily need to be a believer in God—you can see that there are some unbelievers who, though they were not chosen by God, objectively have decent humanity, to the extent that their humanity is even of higher quality than some who believe in God. Just like how some religious people, who have accepted God's work of the last days, and have believed in God for many years, always think about asking for money from the church when they host the brothers and sisters, and always lament to the brothers and sisters that they are poor, while harboring greed for money and things. When the brothers and sisters give them some meat, vegetables, grains, and so on to use while they are hosting, they secretly keep them for their own family to eat. What kind of people are these? Is their humanity good or bad? (It is bad.) People like this are greedy, they like to take advantage of people, and they have low character. Some unbelievers, who accepted God's work of the last days directly, are very willing to host the brothers and sisters. They insist on using their own money to host them, and refuse the church's money. No matter how much money the church gives them, they do not use one cent of it, and they do not lust after any of it—they save it all and give it back to the church later. When brothers and sisters buy things for them to use while hosting, they save all of them for the brothers and sisters that they host to use and eat. Once those brothers and sisters have left, they put these things into storage, and only bring them out again the next time that some brothers and sisters come to stay. There is a very clear distinction in their minds, and they have never misappropriated any of the church's things. Who taught them this? No one told them, so how did they know what to do? How were they able to do it? The majority of people are unable to do this, but they can. What is the problem here? Is it not a difference in humanity? It is a difference in the quality of

their humanity, and a difference in their morals. Since there is a difference between the morals of these two types of people, is there a difference between their attitudes toward the truth and positive things? (Yes, there is.) Of these two types of people, which type will find it easier to enter into the truth? Which type is more likely to pursue the truth? People with good morals are more likely to pursue the truth. Is this how you see it? You do not see it this way, all you do is blindly apply the rules, thinking that religious people who know how to recite the words and doctrines should be capable of doing this, and that unbelievers who have just begun believing in God, who are not yet able to recite the words and doctrines, are incapable of doing it. However, reality is just the opposite. Is it not wrong and ridiculous for you to view people and things in this way? I do not view things in this way. When I interact with people, I look comprehensively at the attitude they have toward different things, especially at how two different types of people behave when approaching the same situation, and what choices they make. This is a better illustration of what their humanity is like. Which of these two approaches is fairer and more objective? It is fairer to evaluate a person based on their nature essence, rather than their external actions. If one bases their evaluation on the views of traditional culture, taking a person's actions in one situation and holding it over them in order to pass a verdict and conclusion on them, that is wrong and it is unfair to that person. One must make an accurate evaluation based on the quality of their humanity, their behavior as a whole, and the path that they walk. Only this is just and reasonable, and it is also fair to the person.

None of the claims about moral conduct that we have listed here today have anything to do with God's words, and none of them are in line with the truth. No matter how traditional or positive a saying is, it cannot become the truth. Sayings about moral conduct originate from things extolled by traditional culture, and they have nothing to do with the truths that God requires man to pursue. No matter how well people speak of these different sayings about man's moral conduct, or how well people live up to them, or how firmly people cling to them, it does not mean that these sayings are the truth. Even if the majority of people on earth cling to and believe in these things, they will not become the truth—just like how a lie is still a lie, even if you tell it a thousand times. Lies can never become the truth. Lies are false constructs that contain Satan's schemes, therefore, they cannot replace the truth, let alone become it. In the same way, the different requirements that people put forward regarding moral conduct cannot become the truth. No matter how much you cling to them or how well you cling to them, all that says about you is that you have good moral conduct in the eyes of man—but do you have humanity in the eyes of God? Not necessarily. On the contrary, if you held very well and closely to every aspect and rule of traditional culture's concepts of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness, you would have strayed too far from the truth. Why is that? Because you would be viewing people and things, and comporting yourself and acting according to these claims about moral conduct, and

using them as your criteria. That is just like tilting your head to look at a clock—your perspective would be incorrect. The final result of this would be that your views on people and things, and your comportment and actions would have nothing to do with the truth, or with God's demands, and you would be far from the way of God which you ought to be following—you may even be running in the opposite direction, and acting in a way that defeats your own goals. The more that you cling to and cherish these sayings about moral conduct, the more God will become sick of you, the farther you will move from God and the truth, and the more you will be in opposition to God. No matter how correct you think one of these sayings about moral conduct is, or how long you cling to it, it does not mean that you are practicing the truth. No matter which of traditional culture's behavioral standards you think to be correct and reasonable, it is not the reality of positive things; it is absolutely not the truth, nor is it in line with the truth. I urge you to hurry and reflect on yourself: Where does this thing that you cling to come from? Does using it as the principle and standard for evaluating and making demands of people have a basis in God's words? Does it have a basis in the truth? Are you clear on what the consequences of you practicing this demand of traditional culture are? Does it have anything to do with the truth? You should discern and dissect whether, by using this demand of traditional culture as the basis for your actions, and as your criterion, and by seeing it as a positive thing, you are contradicting the truth, resisting God, and violating the truth. If you blindly cling to the views and sayings extolled by traditional culture, what will the consequence of that be? If you are misled or tricked by these sayings, you can imagine what your outcome and end will be. If you view people and things from the perspective of traditional culture, it will be hard for you to accept the truth. You will never be able to view people and things according to God's words and the truth. A person who understands the truth should analyze the various claims and demands of traditional culture regarding moral conduct. You should dissect which of them you cherish the most, and always cling to, that always serves as the basis and criterion for how you view people and things, and how you comport yourself and act. Then, you should hold the things that you cling to against God's words and requirements for comparison, and look at whether these aspects of traditional culture oppose or conflict with the truths that God expresses. If you truly do find a problem, you must analyze at once where it is, exactly, that these aspects of traditional culture are wrong and absurd. When you are clear on these issues, you will know what is the truth and what is fallacy; you will have a path of practice, and you will be able to choose the path you should walk. Seek the truth in this way, and you will be able to mend your ways. No matter how standardized mankind's so-called requirements and sayings about people's moral character are, or how much they suit the tastes, outlooks, wishes, and even interests of the masses, they are not the truth. This is something you must understand. And since they are not the truth, you should make haste to deny and abandon them. You must also dissect their essence, as well as the consequences that come from people living by them. Can they really bring about true

repentance in you? Can they really help you to know yourself? Can they really make you live out human likeness? They can do none of these things. They will only make you hypocritical and self-righteous. They will make you more cunning and evil. There are some who say, “In the past, when we held to these aspects of traditional culture, we felt like good people. When other people saw how we behaved, they thought we were good people, too. But actually, we know in our hearts what sort of evil we are capable of. Doing a bit of good only disguises that. But if we abandon the good behaviors that traditional culture demands of us, what should we do instead? What behaviors and manifestations will bring glory to God?” What do you think of this question? Do they still not know what truths believers in God should practice? God has expressed so many truths, and there are so many truths that people should be practicing. So why do you refuse to practice the truth, and insist on being false good people and hypocrites? Why are you pretending? There are some who say, “There are many good aspects of traditional culture! Like, ‘The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring’—this is a wonderful saying! This is what people should practice. How can You just toss it aside? And ‘I’d take a bullet for a friend’—how loyal and heroic! It’s ennobling in life, to have a friend like that. There is also, ‘The silkworms of spring weave till they die, and candles burn out till their tears run dry.’ This saying is so profound and rich in culture! If You don’t let us live by these sayings, then what should we live by?” If this is what you think, then the years you have spent listening to sermons have all been wasted. You do not even understand that one must, at the very least, comport themselves by living according to the standards of conscience and reason. You have not gained an ounce of the truth, and you have lived these years in vain.

In short, though we have listed these sayings about moral conduct from traditional culture, the goal of this is not merely to inform you that they are the notions and imaginings of people, and that they come from Satan, and nothing more. It is to make you understand clearly that the essence of these things is false, disguised, and deceptive. Even if people possess these behaviors, it does not in any way mean that they are living out normal humanity. Rather, they are using these false behaviors to cover up their intents and goals, and to conceal their corrupt dispositions, and their nature essence. As a result, people are getting better and better at pretending and tricking others, which in turn causes them to become even more corrupt and evil. The moral standards of traditional culture that corrupt humanity clings to are incompatible with the truths that God expresses, nor are they consistent with any of the words that God teaches people, they have no connection whatsoever. If you still cling to aspects of traditional culture, then you have been thoroughly misled and poisoned. If there is any matter in which you cling to traditional culture and abide by its principles and views, then you are rebelling against God and violating the truth, and running counter to God in that matter. If you cling to and commit yourself to any of these claims about moral conduct, and treat it as a criterion or basis for how you view people or things, then that is where

you have erred, and if you judge or harm people to a certain degree, you will have committed a sin. If you always insist on measuring everyone by the moral standards of traditional culture, then the number of people that you have condemned and wronged will keep multiplying and you will certainly condemn and resist God, and then you will be an arch-sinner. Do you not see that all of mankind is becoming increasingly evil under the education and conditioning of traditional culture? Is the world not getting darker? The more that someone is of Satan and devils, the more they are worshiped; the more that someone practices the truth, bears witness for God, and pleases God, the more they will be suppressed, excluded, condemned, or even put to death by crucifixion. Is this not a fact? Going forward, you should fellowship often on what we have fellowshiped about here today. If there are things you do not understand after fellowshiping on them, then set them aside for the moment and fellowship on the parts that you can handle until you understand them. Fellowship on these words until they are perfectly clear and you completely understand them, then you will be able to accurately practice the truth and enter into reality. When you are able to clearly discern whether any saying or thing is the truth, or whether it is traditional culture and not the truth, then you will have more of a path by which to enter into the truth reality. Finally, when you are able to understand every truth that you ought to practice through fellowship, and you have reached a consensus, when you are consistent in your views and understandings, when you know which things are positive and which are negative, which things come from God and which come from Satan, and you have fellowshiped on the subject until these things are clear and transparent to you, only then will you have understood the truth. Then, pick out the truth principles which you should practice. This way, you will meet the behavioral standards that God has laid out, and at the very least, you will have some human likeness. If you are able to understand the truth and enter into reality, then you will be able to completely live out human likeness. Only then will you be completely in line with God’s will.

March 5, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (6)

Do you remember what content we fellowshiped on at our last gathering? (God first fellowshiped on the differences between what people see as good behaviors compared to living out normal humanity as God demands, and then fellowshiped on man's moral conduct in traditional culture and summarized twenty-one claims about man's moral conduct.) In our last gathering, I fellowshiped on two topics. First, I provided some additional fellowship on the subject of good behavior, and then I gave a bit of simple, introductory fellowship on man's character, conduct, and virtue, without going into great detail. We have already fellowshiped several times on the topic of what it means to pursue the truth, and I have finished fellowshiping on all of the good behaviors that relate to the pursuit of the truth which needed to be exposed and analyzed. Last time, I also fellowshiped a bit on some fundamental topics regarding man's moral conduct. Despite not providing detailed revelation or dissection of these statements about moral conduct, we did list quite a few examples of different claims about man's moral conduct—twenty-one, to be exact. These twenty-one examples are essentially the various statements that traditional Chinese culture instills in people, which are dominated by the ideas of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. For instance, we mentioned various sayings about man's moral conduct that relate to loyalty, righteousness, propriety, and trust, as well as to how men, women, officials, and children ought to act, and so on. Irrespective of whether these twenty-one sayings are comprehensive or all-encompassing, in any case, they are able to basically represent the essence of the various demands that traditional Chinese culture puts forward in relation to man's moral conduct, from both an ideological and substantive perspective. After we listed these examples, did you ponder over and fellowship on them? (We fellowshiped a bit on them during our gatherings and found that it is easy to confuse some of these statements with the truth. For instance, "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible," "I'd take a bullet for a friend," as well as "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you," among others.) Other sayings include: "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring," "A gentleman's word is his bond," "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings," "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others," "When drinking the water of a well, one should never forget who dug it," and so on. Upon close inspection, you will see that most people essentially base their comportment and their evaluations of the moral conduct of themselves and others upon these statements about moral conduct. These things exist in the heart of every person to some degree. One primary reason for this is the societal environment in which people live and the education they receive from their governments, another is due to the upbringing they receive from their families and the traditions that are passed down from their ancestors. Some families teach their children to never pocket the money they pick up, other families teach their

children that they must be patriotic and that “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country,” because every family is reliant on their country. Some families teach their children “One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force,” and that they should never forget their roots. Some parents use clear statements to teach their children about moral conduct, while others cannot express their ideas about moral conduct clearly, but serve as a model for their children and teach by way of example, influencing and educating the next generation through their words and actions. These words and actions may include, “The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring,” “Derive pleasure from helping others,” “A kindness received should be gratefully repaid,” as well as more high-sounding statements like, “Grow like a lily from the mud unsullied,” and so on. The themes and essence of what parents teach their children generally all fall within the scope of the moral conduct demanded by traditional Chinese culture. The first thing that teachers tell students when they arrive at school is that they should be kind to others and derive pleasure from helping others, that they should not pocket the money they pick up, and that they should honor their teachers and revere their teachings. When the students learn about ancient Chinese prose or the biographies of heroes from antiquity, they are taught that, “I’d take a bullet for a friend,” “A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands,” “Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day,” “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country,” “Nobody should take lost items that they find on the street,” and so on. These things all derive from traditional culture. Nations also advocate for and propagate these ideas. In actuality, national education promotes more or less the same things as familial education does—they all revolve around these ideas from traditional culture. Ideas deriving from traditional culture basically permeate all requirements relating to human character, virtue, comportment, and so on. In one respect, they demand that people outwardly display etiquette and manners, that people act and bear themselves in a way that others approve of, and that people exhibit good behaviors and actions for others to see, while hiding the dark aspects of the depths of their hearts. In another respect, they elevate attitudes, behaviors, and actions that relate to how one comports themselves, approaches people, and handles matters; to how one treats their friends and family; and to how one approaches various types of people and things, to the level of moral conduct, thus attaining praise and respect from others. The demands which traditional culture puts upon people basically revolve around these things. Whether it is the ideas that people advocate for on a greater societal scale, or, on a smaller scale, the thoughts about moral conduct that people promote and uphold within families, and the requirements that are presented to people with regard to their comportment—these all essentially fall within this scope. So, among people, whether it be traditional Chinese culture, or the traditional cultures of other countries including Western cultures, these ideas about moral conduct all consist of things that people can achieve and think up; they are things that people

can carry out on the basis of their conscience and reason. At the very least, there are some people who can fulfill some of the moral conduct that is required of them. These demands are merely restricted to the scope of people's moral character, temperament, and preferences. If you do not believe Me, I encourage you to have a close look and see which of these demands relating to people's moral conduct address their corrupt dispositions. Which of them address the fact that people are sick of the truth, dislike the truth, and resist God in their very essence? Which of these demands have anything to do with the truth? Which of these demands can rise to the level of the truth? (None of them.) No matter how one looks at these demands, none of them can rise to the level of the truth. None of them have anything to do with the truth, none of them have even the slightest relation to it. Up until now, those who have believed in God for a long time, who have some experience, and who understand a bit of the truth will have just a modicum of true understanding of this matter; but most people still only comprehend doctrines, and agree with this idea in theory, while failing to reach the level of truly understanding the truth. Why is this? This is because most people only come to understand that these aspects of traditional culture do not accord with the truth and are not related to the truth by comparing these regulations from traditional culture to God's words and demands. They might completely acknowledge that these things have nothing to do with the truth verbally, but in the depths of their hearts, what they aspire to, approve of, prefer, and easily accept are essentially these ideas that have come out of humanity's traditional culture, some of which are things that their country advocates for and promotes. People regard them as positive things or treat them like the truth. Is that not the case? (Yes.) As you can see, these aspects of traditional culture have taken deep root in man's heart, and they cannot be eradicated and uprooted within a short period of time.

While the twenty-one demands about man's moral conduct that we listed are just one part of traditional Chinese culture, to a certain degree, they can serve as a representative for all of the requirements that traditional Chinese culture has put forward regarding man's moral conduct. Every one of these twenty-one claims is regarded by man as a positive thing, as noble and correct, and people believe that these claims enable them to live with dignity, and that they are a kind of moral conduct that is worthy of admiration and esteem. We will put aside for now relatively superficial sayings like not pocketing the money that you pick up or deriving pleasure from helping others, and instead speak of the moral conduct that man especially holds in high esteem and believes to be noble. For instance, take the saying: "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force"—the simplest way to sum up the meaning of this statement is that one should not forget their roots. If a person possesses this moral conduct, then everyone will think that they are of such a noble personality, and that they have really "grown like a lily from the mud unsullied." People hold this in very high esteem. The fact that people hold this in high esteem means that they really approve of and agree with this kind of statement. And of course, they also greatly admire those

who can carry out this moral conduct. There are many people who believe in God, but still really approve of these things that are promoted by traditional culture, and they are willing to put those good behaviors into practice. These people do not understand the truth: They think that believing in God means being a good person, helping other people, deriving pleasure from helping others, never deceiving or harming other people, not pursuing worldly things, and not being greedy for wealth or pleasure. In their hearts, they all agree that the statement “One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force” is right. Some will say: “If, before coming to believe in God, someone already abides by moral conduct like ‘One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force,’ if they’re a great, kind person who doesn’t forget their roots, then after they join the faith, they’ll quickly be able to attain God’s joy. It’s easy for people like that to enter God’s kingdom—they can gain His blessings.” When many people evaluate and view others, they do not look at their essence based on the words of God and the truth; instead they evaluate and view them according to traditional culture’s demands about people’s moral conduct. From this perspective, is it not likely that people who do not understand the truth will mistake things that man believes to be good and right for the truth? Are they not likely to regard people who man believes to be good as those who God believes to be good? People always want to impose their own ideas onto God—in so doing, are they not committing an error of principle? Does this not offend God’s disposition? (It does.) This is a very serious problem. If people truly possess reason, they should seek the truth in matters they cannot grasp, they should come to understand God’s will, and they should not carelessly spout a load of nonsense. In God’s standards and principles for evaluating man, is there a line that states: “Those who do not forget their roots are good people and they possess the characteristics of a good person”? Has God ever said anything like that? (No.) In the specific demands that God has put forward for man, has He ever said, “If you are poor, you must not steal. If you are rich, you must not be sexually promiscuous. When you are faced with intimidation or threats you must never submit”? Do God’s words contain such demands? (No.) Indeed, they do not. It is quite obvious that the statement “One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force” is spoken by man—it does not conform with God’s demands of man, it is incompatible with the truth, and it is fundamentally not the same thing as the truth. God has never demanded that created beings do not forget their roots. What does it mean to not forget your roots? I will give you an example: If your ancestors were farmers, you must always cherish their memory. If your ancestors engaged in a craft, you have to maintain the practice of that craft and pass it down from generation to generation. Even after you begin believing in God, you cannot forget these things—you cannot forget the teachings or the crafts or anything that was passed down from your ancestors. If your ancestors were beggars, then you must keep the sticks they used to beat dogs. If the ancestors once had to survive off chaff and wild plants, then their descendants must also try eating chaff and wild plants—that is recalling the sorrows

of the past to savor the joys of the present, that is not forgetting one's roots. Whatever your ancestors did, you must uphold it. You cannot forget your ancestors just because you are well-educated and have status. Chinese people are most particular about these things. In their hearts, it seems that only those that do not forget their roots have conscience and reason, and that only such people can behave in an upright way, and live with dignity. Is this view correct? Is there anything like this in God's words? (No.) God has never said anything like this. From this example, we can see that though a realm of virtue may be held in high esteem and aspired to by man, and though it may look like a positive thing, something that can regulate man's moral conduct, and prevent people from walking the path of evil and becoming depraved, and though it is circulated among people and accepted by all of them as a positive thing, if you compare it to God's words and the truth, you will see that these claims and thoughts from traditional culture are utterly absurd. You will see that they are simply not worth mentioning, that they do not have even the slightest relation to the truth, and that they are even further from being God's demands and God's will. In advocating for these ideas and views, and putting forward various statements regarding man's moral conduct, people are doing nothing more than using certain things that transcend the realm of man's thinking to make a show of being original and novel, to flaunt their own greatness and correctness, and to make people worship them. Be it in the East or the West, people basically all think the same. The ideas and starting points of the demands that people advocate for and put forward regarding man's moral conduct, and the goals that they wish to achieve through them, are essentially all the same. Although people from the West do not have the specific ideas and views like "Requite evil with good" and "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring" that people from the East emphasize, and though they do not possess explicit sayings like those from traditional Chinese culture, their own traditional culture is filled with nothing but these ideas. Though the things that we have been fellowshiping on and speaking of belong to traditional Chinese culture, to a certain degree, and in essence, these claims and demands about moral conduct represent the dominant ideas of all corrupt mankind.

Today, we have primarily fellowshiped about what kind of negative influence traditional culture exerts upon people through its claims and demands relating to man's moral conduct. After understanding this, the next most important thing for people to understand is actually what requirements God, the Lord of creation, has toward mankind's moral behavior, what He has specifically said, and what demands He has put forward. This is what mankind must come to understand. We have now clearly seen that traditional culture does not bear even the slightest testimony to what God's demands of man are or to the words that He has spoken, and that people have not sought the truth regarding this subject. And so, traditional culture was what people learned first and it has dominated them, it has entered into people's hearts, and it has guided the way humanity has lived for thousands of years. This is the main way in which Satan has corrupted

mankind. Having clearly recognized this fact, the most important thing for people to now understand is what demands the Lord of creation has for created humans regarding their humanity and morality—or, in other words, what standards there are with respect to this aspect of the truth. At the same time, people must come to understand which of the following is the truth: the demands put forward by traditional culture or what God demands of mankind. They must understand which of them can purify and save people, and guide them onto the right path in life; and which of them is a fallacy, that can mislead and harm people, and sets them down the wrong path, into a life of sin. Once people have this discernment, they can recognize that the Lord of creation's demands of mankind are perfectly natural and justified, and that they are the truth principles that people should practice. As for the claims about moral conduct and standards of measurement from traditional culture that influence people's pursuit of the truth, and their views on people and things, and their comportment and actions—if people can discern them a little, and see through to and recognize that they are absurd in essence, and renounce them from their hearts, then some of the confusions or issues that people have concerning moral conduct can be resolved. Would resolving these things not reduce a fair number of the obstructions and difficulties that people face on the path of pursuing the truth? (It would.) When people do not understand the truth, they are liable to mistake generally acknowledged ideas about moral conduct for the truth, and to pursue and abide by them as though they were the truth. This greatly impacts people's ability to understand and practice the truth, as well as the results they attain while pursuing the truth to achieve dispositional transformation. This is something that none of you would like to see; of course, it is something that God does not want to see, either. So, with regard to these supposedly positive statements, ideas, and viewpoints about moral conduct that man upholds, people must first know and discern them clearly on the basis of God's words and the truth, and see through to their very essence, and thus form an accurate evaluation and position for these things in the depths of their hearts, after which they can dig them out, little by little, and weed them out and abandon them. In the future, every time people see those supposedly positive statements conflicting with the truth, they should choose the truth first, and not the statements that are regarded as positive within man's notions, because these supposedly positive statements are just the views of man, and they do not actually accord with the truth. No matter what angle we are speaking from, our main goal in fellowshiping on these topics today is to remove various obstacles that arise in the process of people pursuing the truth, especially uncertainties that come about in people's minds with regard to God's words and the criteria of the truth. These uncertainties mean that when you are accepting and practicing the truth, you cannot tell which things are the sayings about moral conduct that humanity advocates for, and which are God's requirements of mankind, and which of them are the true principles and criteria. People are not clear on these things. Why is that? (Because they don't understand the truth.) In one respect, it is because they do not understand the

truth. In another, it is because they lack discernment of the claims about moral conduct made by humanity's traditional culture and they still cannot see through to the essence of these claims. In the end, in a muddled state of mind, you will determine that those things which you learned first, and that are entrenched in your mind, are correct; you will determine that those things which everyone generally acknowledges to be right are correct. And then you will choose these things that you like, that you can achieve, and that accord with your taste and notions; and you will approach, cling to, and adhere to these things as though they were the truth. And as a result of this, people's behavior and conduct, as well as what they pursue, choose, and cling to, will all be completely unrelated to the truth—they will all belong to human behaviors and human displays of morality that fall outside of the scope of the truth. People approach and cling to these aspects of traditional culture as though they were the truth, while pushing to the side and ignoring truths about God's demands concerning man's behavior. Regardless of how many of the behaviors that man perceives to be good a person possesses, they will never attain God's approval. This is a case of people wasting a great deal of effort on things outside of the scope of the truth. Moreover, by treating these things that derive from man and that do not accord with the truth as the truth, people have already gone astray. People learned these aspects of traditional culture first, and are thus dominated by them; these things give rise to all kinds of fallacious views within them, and they cause great difficulties and disturbances for people when they attempt to understand and practice the truth. People all believe that if they possess virtuous behaviors, God will approve of them, and that they will be qualified to receive His blessings and His promise, but can they accept God's judgment and chastisement when they harbor this view and mindset? How great of an obstacle does such a mentality pose to people's purification and salvation? Will these imaginings and notions not lead people to misunderstand, rebel against, and resist God? Will these not be the consequences? (They will.) I have more or less expressed the significance of fellowshiping on this topic, this is the general idea.

Next, we will dissect and analyze the traditional Chinese culture's various sayings about moral conduct one by one, and then reach a conclusion on them. That way, everyone will have a basic confirmation and answer regarding them, and everyone will, at the very least, have a relatively accurate understanding and view of these sayings. Let us begin with the first saying: "Don't pocket the money you pick up." What would be an accurate explanation of this proverb? (If you pick up something, you must not take it and claim it as your own. It refers to a kind of good morality and social custom.) Is this easy to achieve? (It is relatively easy.) For most people, it is easy to achieve—if you pick something up, then no matter what it is, you must not keep it for yourself, because it belongs to someone else. You do not deserve to have it, and you should return it to its rightful owner. If you cannot find its rightful owner, you should forfeit it to the authorities—in any case, you should not take it for yourself. This is all in the spirit of not coveting other people's possessions and not taking advantage of others. It is a demand placed

on man's moral behavior. What is the purpose of placing this kind of demand on people's moral behavior? When people possess this kind of moral conduct, it has a good and positive impact on the social climate. The point of imbuing people with such ideas is to stop them from taking advantage of others, thereby maintaining their own good moral conduct. If every person possesses this kind of good moral conduct, the social climate will improve, and it will reach the level where nobody takes lost items they find on the street, and no one needs to lock their doors at night. With this kind of social climate, public order will improve, and people can live more peacefully. There will be less theft and fewer robberies, less fighting and murders of vengeance; people living in this sort of society will have a sense of security, and greater overall well-being. "Don't pocket the money you pick up" is a demand put forward regarding people's moral conduct within societal and living environments. The goal of this demand is to protect the social climate and people's living environment. Is this easy to achieve? Regardless of whether or not people can achieve it, those who put forward this idea and demand about man's moral conduct were aiming to realize the ideal societal and living environment that people yearn for. "Don't pocket the money you pick up" has nothing to do with the criteria for man's comportment—it is merely a demand placed on people's moral conduct whenever they pick up something. It has little relation to man's essence. Mankind has been making this demand about man's moral conduct for thousands of years already. Of course, when people abide by this demand, a country or society may experience a period where there is less crime, and it may even reach the point where people do not need to lock their doors at night, where nobody takes lost items they find on the street, and where the majority of people do not pocket the money they pick up. In these times, the social climate, public order, and living environment will all be relatively stable and harmonious, but this climate and societal environment can only be maintained temporarily, or for a period, or for a given time. That is to say, people can only achieve or hold to this kind of moral conduct within certain societal environments. As soon as their living environment changes, and the old social climate breaks down, it is likely that morals such as "not pocketing the money you pick up" will change, alongside transformations to the societal environment, social climate, and social trends. Look at how, after the great red dragon came to power, it beguiled people by promoting all kinds of sayings in order to ensure societal stability. In the 80s, there was even a popular song with the following lyrics: "On the side of the road, I picked up one cent off the ground, and handed it to a police officer. The officer took the cent, and gave me a nod. I happily said, 'See you later, sir!'" Even the small matter of handing over one cent was apparently worth mentioning and singing about—it was such a "noble" social moral and behavior! Was it really, though? People are able to hand over one cent that they find to a police officer, but would they hand over a hundred yuan or a thousand yuan? It is hard to say. If a person spotted some gold, silver, or precious things or something even more valuable, they would not be able to control their greed, their inner monster would be unleashed, and they would be capable

of hurting and harming people, of framing and entrapping others—they would be capable of actively robbing a person of their money, and of even killing someone. At that time, what would be left of man's fine traditional culture and traditional morals? Where would the moral criterion of "Don't pocket the money you pick up" be then? What does this show us? Regardless of whether people possess this spirit and moral conduct, this demand and saying is just something that people imagine, desire, and wish that they could realize and achieve. In specific social contexts, and within suitable environments, people who possess a certain amount of conscience and reason can practice not pocketing the money they pick up, but this is just a passing good behavior, it cannot become the criterion of their comportment, or their lives. As soon as the societal environment and context in which those people live changes, this tenet and this ideal moral conduct according to man's notions will be so distant from people. It will not be able to satisfy their desires and ambitions, and, of course, it will be even less capable of limiting their evil deeds. It is merely a transient good behavior, and a relatively noble moral quality according to man's ideals. When it clashes with reality and self-interest, when it conflicts with people's ideals, this kind of moral cannot restrain people's behavior, or guide their behavior and thoughts. Ultimately, people will decide to go against it, they will breach this traditional notion of morality, and choose their own interests. So, when it comes to the moral of "not pocketing the money you pick up," people can hand over one cent they pick up to the police. But if they find a thousand yuan, ten thousand yuan, or a gold coin, will they still give it to a police officer? They will not be able to. When the benefit of taking that money surpasses the scope of what man's morality can achieve, they will not be able to hand it over to the police. They will not be able to realize the moral of "Don't pocket the money you pick up." So, does "not pocketing the money you pick up" represent a person's humanity essence? It cannot represent their humanity essence at all. It is quite apparent that this demand about man's moral conduct cannot be used as a basis for evaluating whether someone possesses humanity, and that it cannot serve as a criterion for man's comportment.

Would first looking at whether a person pockets the money they pick up be an accurate way of evaluating their morals and character? (No.) Why not? (People are incapable of truly abiding by that requirement. If they find a small amount of money or something of little value, they will be able to hand it over, but if it's something valuable, they will be less likely to do so. If it's a very precious item, they will be even less likely to hand it over—they might even hold onto it at all costs.) You mean that "Don't pocket the money you pick up" cannot serve as a criterion for evaluating people's humanity because people are incapable of achieving it. So, if people could abide by this requirement, would it count as a criterion for evaluating their humanity? (No, it wouldn't.) Why would it not count as a criterion for evaluating people's humanity, even if people could abide by it? (Someone's ability or lack thereof to abide by "Don't pocket the money you pick up" does not really reflect the quality of their humanity. It has nothing to do with how good or bad

their humanity is, and it is not a criterion for evaluating people's humanity.) This is one way of understanding the issue. There is little relation between a person not pocketing the money they pick up and the quality of their humanity. So, if you encounter someone who is really capable of not pocketing the money they pick up, how will you view them? Can you regard them as a person who possesses humanity, an honest person, and someone who submits to God? Can you classify not pocketing the money one picks up as a standard for possessing humanity? We should fellowship on this issue. Who will speak about it? (Someone's ability to not pocket the money they pick up is irrelevant to defining that person's humanity essence. Their essence is evaluated according to the truth.) What else? (Some people are able to not pocket the money they pick up, even when it's a large sum of money, or they do many other such good deeds, but they have their own goals and intents. They want to be rewarded for their meritorious actions and to gain a good reputation, so their external good behaviors cannot determine the quality of their humanity.) Anything else? (Suppose someone is capable of not pocketing the money they pick up, but they approach the truth with a resistant attitude, with an attitude that is fed up with the truth. If we evaluate them based on God's words, they do not possess humanity. So, it is inaccurate to use this standard to judge whether or not someone possesses humanity.) Some of you have already realized that using "Don't pocket the money you pick up" to evaluate whether someone possesses humanity is wrong—you do not agree with it being used as a standard for evaluating whether someone has humanity. This viewpoint is correct. Regardless of whether someone is capable of not pocketing the money they pick up, this has little to do with the principles of their comportment and the path that they choose. Why do I say this? First of all, when a person does not pocket the money they pick up, this only represents a momentary behavior. It is difficult to say whether they did it because the thing that they picked up was worthless, or because other people were watching them, and they wanted to gain their praise and esteem. Even if their action was unadulterated, it is just a kind of good behavior, and it has little relevance to their pursuit and comportment. At most, it can only be said that this person has a bit of good behavior and noble character. Though this behavior cannot be called a negative thing, it cannot be classified as a positive thing either, and a person certainly cannot be defined as positive just because they do not pocket the money they pick up. This is because it has no relation to the truth, and it has nothing to do with God's demands of man. Some people say: "How could it not be a positive thing? How could such a noble behavior not be considered positive? If someone was immoral and lacked humanity, would they be capable of not pocketing the money they pick up?" That is not necessarily an accurate way to put it. The devil is capable of doing a couple of good things—so would you say that it is not the devil? Some demon kings do one or two good deeds in order to make a name for themselves and cement their place in history—so would you call them good people? You cannot determine whether someone possesses humanity or not, or whether their character is good or bad,

merely on the basis of one good or bad thing that they did. For an evaluation to be accurate, you should base it on their overall conduct, and on whether or not they have the correct ideas and views. If someone is able to return a very valuable item that they found to its rightful owner, this only shows that they are not greedy, and that they do not covet other people's possessions. They possess this aspect of good moral conduct, but does this have anything to do with their comportment and their attitude toward positive things? (No.) It is likely that some people will not agree with this, they will deem this assertion to be a little subjective and inaccurate. However, considering this from a different perspective, if someone loses something useful, will they not be very worried about it? So, for the person that finds the item, no matter what they find, it is not theirs, therefore they should not keep it. No matter if it is a material object or money, no matter if it is valuable or worthless, it does not belong to them—so is it not their duty to return the item to its rightful owner? Is this not what people ought to do? What is the value of promoting this? Is this not making a big deal about nothing? Is it not over the top to treat not pocketing the money one picks up as a kind of noble moral quality and to elevate it to a lofty, spiritual realm? Is this one good behavior even worth mentioning in the midst of good people? There are so many better and loftier behaviors than this one, so not pocketing the money one picks up is not worth mentioning. However, if you were to vigorously propagate and promote this good behavior among beggars and thieves, it would be appropriate, and it might be of some use. If a country vigorously promotes "Don't pocket the money you pick up," it shows that the people there are already very evil, that the country is overrun with robbers and thieves, and unable to guard against them. So, their only recourse is to promote and propagate this kind of behavior to resolve the issue. In fact, this behavior has always been people's duty. For instance, if someone finds fifty yuan on the street and easily returns it to its rightful owner, is that not so insignificant that it is not even worth mentioning? Does it really need to be praised? Is it necessary to make such a big thing out of nothing, and to sing the praises of this person, and to even commend them for their noble and honorable moral conduct, just because they gave back money to the person who lost it? Is returning lost money to its rightful owner not just the normal and natural thing to do? Is this not something that a person who possesses normal reason ought to do? Even a little child who does not understand social morals would be capable of doing this, so is it really necessary to make such a big thing of it? Is this behavior really worthy of being elevated to the level of man's morality? In My opinion, it cannot be elevated to this level, and it is not worthy of praise. It is just a transient good behavior and it has no relation to truly being a good person on a fundamental level. Not pocketing the money one picks up is a very trifling matter. It is something that any normal person, and anyone who cloaks themselves in human skin or speaks in human language should be able to do. This is something that people can do if they try hard, they do not need an educator or thinker to teach them to do it. A three-year-old child is capable of doing this, and yet, thinkers and educators have treated it as

a crucial requirement of man's moral conduct, and in doing so, they have made a bit of a big fuss out of nothing. Though "Don't pocket the money you pick up" is a statement that evaluates man's moral conduct, it fundamentally does not rise to the level of measuring whether someone possesses humanity or noble morality. Therefore, it is both inaccurate and unsuitable to use "Don't pocket the money you pick up" to evaluate the quality of someone's humanity.

"Don't pocket the money you pick up" is the most superficial of traditional culture's demands about moral conduct. Although all human societies have promoted and taught this sort of idea, because people have corrupt dispositions, and due to the prevalence of mankind's evil trends, even if people can practice "Don't pocket the money you pick up" or possess this kind of good moral conduct for some period of time, it does not change the fact that people's corrupt dispositions are constantly dominating their thoughts and behaviors, while also dominating and controlling their comportment and pursuits. Transient instances of good moral conduct have no bearing on a person's pursuit, and they certainly cannot change a person's adulation, admiration, and following of evil trends. Is this not the case? (It is.) So, the song that people sang in the past, "On the side of the road, I picked up one cent off the ground," is now nothing more than a nursery rhyme. It has become a memory. People cannot even abide by the basic good behavior of not pocketing the money they pick up. People wish to change mankind's pursuits and corrupt dispositions by promoting good moral conduct, and they try to stop mankind's degradation, and the day-by-day degeneration of society, but they have ultimately failed to accomplish these objectives. The moral of "Don't pocket the money you pick up" can only exist in man's ideal world. People treat this moral as a kind of ideal, as an aspiration for a better world. This moral exists within man's spiritual world. It is a kind of hope that man places upon the world of the future, but it is incompatible with the reality of human life and with people's actual humanity. It is at odds with man's principles of comportment and the paths that people walk, as well as what they pursue, and what they ought to possess and achieve. It is incompatible with the manifestations and outpourings of normal humanity, and with the principles of interpersonal relationships and of handling affairs. Thus, this standard for judging mankind's moral conduct has always been invalid, from ancient times to present day. This idea and viewpoint of "Don't pocket the money you pick up" that man promotes is particularly meaningless, and most people ignore it, because it cannot change the direction of their comportment, or their pursuits, and it certainly cannot change people's depravity, selfishness, self-interest, or their growing tendency to rush toward evil. This most superficial demand of "Don't pocket the money you pick up" has become an amusing, satirical joke. Now, even children do not want to sing, "On the side of the road, I picked up one cent off the ground"—it is not even remotely meaningful. In a world filled with corrupt politicians, this song has become very ironic. The reality, which people are well aware of, is that a person may hand over a lost cent to the police, but if they pick up a million yuan, or ten million yuan, it would go

right in their pocket. From this phenomenon, we can see that people's attempts to promote this demand about moral conduct to mankind have failed. This means that people are incapable of practicing even basic good behaviors. What does it mean to be incapable of practicing even basic good behaviors? It means that people are incapable of practicing even the basic things that they ought to do—like not taking something that they pick up if it belongs to someone else. Moreover, when people do something wrong, they will not speak one honest word about it, they would rather die than admit to their wrongdoing. They cannot even abide by something as basic as not telling lies, so they certainly are not fit to talk about morality. They do not even wish to possess conscience and reason, so how can they talk about morality? Officials and those with authority rack their brains thinking of ways to squeeze and wrest more profit from other people, and to seize things that are not theirs. Even the law cannot hold them back—why is this? How has man come to this point? This is all due to people's corrupt satanic dispositions, and the control and domination that their satanic nature has over them, which gives rise to all manner of deceitful, harmful behaviors. These hypocrites do many despicable and shameless things under the guise of "serving the people." Have they not lost all sense of shame? Nowadays, there are so many hypocritical people. In a world where evil people run rampant and good people are oppressed, a doctrine like "Don't pocket the money you pick up" is simply incapable of restraining people's corrupt dispositions, and it simply cannot transform their nature essence, or the path that they walk.

Have you understood the things that I have said in this fellowship on the topic of "Don't pocket the money you pick up"? What meaning does the saying hold for corrupt humans? Just how should one comprehend this moral? ("Don't pocket the money you pick up" has no relation to people's comportment or to the path that they walk. It cannot change the path that man walks.) That is right, it is not suitable for people to evaluate someone's humanity based on the saying "Don't pocket the money you pick up." This saying cannot be used to measure a person's humanity, and it is also wrong to use it to measure someone's morals. It is nothing more than a transient behavior of man. It simply cannot be used to evaluate a person's essence. The people who proposed the saying about moral conduct, "Don't pocket the money you pick up"—these so-called thinkers and educators—are idealists. They do not understand man's humanity or essence, and they do not comprehend the degree to which man has become depraved and corrupted. As such, this saying about moral conduct that they put forward is very empty, it is simply impractical, and it does not suit man's real circumstances. This saying about moral conduct does not have even the slightest relation to man's essence or to the different corrupt dispositions that people pour forth, or to the notions, views, and behaviors that people may give rise to while dominated by corrupt dispositions. This is one point. Another point is that not pocketing the money one picks up is just something that a normal person ought to do. For instance, your parents gave birth to you and raised you, but when you were still ignorant and immature, all you would do was ask your parents

for food and clothes. However, once you matured and had a better understanding of things, you naturally knew to love your parents dearly, to avoid making them worried or angry, to try not to add to their workloads or suffering, and to do everything you were capable of on your own. You naturally came to understand these things and did not need anyone to teach you. You are a person, you have a conscience and reason, so you are able to and ought to do these things—none of this is even worth mentioning. By elevating "Don't pocket the money you pick up" to the level of noble moral character, people are making something out of nothing and taking things a bit too far; this behavior should not be defined in that way, is that not the case? (It is.) What can be learned from this? Doing what one ought to do and is able to do within the scope of normal humanity is a marker of a person having normal humanity. This means that if a person has normal reason, they can do those things that people with normal humanity would think to and realize they ought to do—is this not a very normal phenomenon? If you do something that anyone with normal humanity is capable of doing, can it really be called good moral conduct? Is it necessary to encourage it? (No, it is not.) Does this really count as noble humanity? Does it count as possessing humanity? (No, it doesn't.) Displaying such behaviors does not elevate one to the level of possessing humanity. If you say that a person has humanity, it means that the perspective and stance from which they view problems is relatively positive and active, as are their ways and methods of handling problems. What is a marker of positivity and activeness? That person will have a conscience and a sense of shame. Another marker of positivity and activeness is a sense of righteousness. It may be that this person has some bad habits like going to bed and waking up late, being a picky eater, or preferring foods with a strong flavor, but apart from these bad habits, they will have certain good qualities. They will have principles and limits when it comes to their comportment and actions; they will have a sense of shame and righteousness; and they will have more positive traits and fewer negative ones. If they could accept and practice the truth, that would be even better and it would be easy for them to embark on the path of pursuing the truth. Conversely, if a person loves evil; seeks fame, profit, and status; adores money; likes living a life of luxury; and enjoys idling away their time seeking pleasure, then the perspective from which they view people and things, and their outlook on life and value system will all be negative and dark, and they will lack a sense of shame and righteousness. This kind of person will not possess humanity, and it certainly will not be easy for them to accept the truth or to attain God's salvation. This is a simple principle for evaluating people. An evaluation of a person's moral conduct is not a standard by which to measure whether they possess humanity. In order to evaluate if a person is good or bad, you must judge them based upon their humanity, not their moral conduct. Moral conduct tends to be superficial, and it is influenced by one's social climate, background, and environment. Some approaches and manifestations change constantly, so it is hard to determine the quality of a person's humanity based solely on their moral conduct. For example, a person may be very

respectful of social morals, and follow the rules wherever they go. They may show restraint in everything they do, hold to the government's laws, and refrain from making a ruckus in public or from infringing upon other people's interests. They may also be respectful and helpful, and care for the young and elderly. Does the fact that this person has so many good traits mean that they are living out normal humanity and that they are a good person? (It does not.) A person may practice "Don't pocket the money you pick up" very well, they might consistently abide by this moral that mankind promotes and advocates for, but how is their humanity? The fact that they practice not pocketing the money they pick up does not say anything about their humanity—this moral conduct cannot be used to evaluate whether their humanity is good or bad. Now how should their humanity be measured? You must strip them of the packaging of this moral conduct, and take away the behaviors and moral conduct that man views as good, and that are the bare minimum that any person with normal humanity is capable of achieving. After that, look at their most important manifestations, such as the principles of their comportment, and the lines that they will not cross in their comportment, as well as their attitude toward the truth and God. This is the only way to see their humanity essence, and their inner nature. Viewing people in this way is relatively objective and accurate. That will be all for our discussion on the moral: "Don't pocket the money you pick up." Have you all understood this fellowship? (Yes.) I often worry that you have not really understood what I have said, that you only comprehend a bit of doctrine regarding it, but still do not understand the parts relating to its essence. So, all I can do is elaborate a bit further on the idea. I will only feel at ease when I get the sense that you have understood. How can I tell that you have understood? When I see a look of joy on your faces, you have probably understood what I am saying. If I can achieve that, then speaking a little bit more on this topic is worthwhile.

I have more or less completed My fellowship on "Don't pocket the money you pick up." Though I have not told you directly how this moral conflicts with the truth, or why it cannot be elevated to the level of the truth, or what demands God places on people's behavior and moral conduct, have I not covered all these things? (You have.) Does God's house promote morals like "Don't pocket the money you pick up"? (No.) Then how does God's house view this saying? You may share your understanding. ("Don't pocket the money you pick up" is just something that anyone with normal humanity ought to abide by and do, so it does not need to be promoted. Also, "Don't pocket the money you pick up" is just a manifestation of man's morality, it is not related to the principles of people's comportment, to the views that they have about their pursuits, to the paths that they walk, or to the quality of their humanity.) Is moral conduct a sign of humanity? (It is not a sign of humanity. Some aspects of moral conduct are just things that people with normal humanity ought to possess.) When God's house talks about humanity and discerning people, it does so within the major context of the pursuit of the truth. Generally speaking, God's house will not evaluate how a person's moral conduct is—at the very

least, God's house will not evaluate whether a person is able to abide by the saying: "Don't pocket the money you pick up." God's house will not examine this. Instead, God's house will examine the quality of that person's humanity, whether they love positive things and the truth, and what kind of attitude they have toward the truth and God. A person may not pocket the money they pick up while they are in secular society, but if they do not protect the interests of God's house at all after becoming a believer—if they are capable of stealing, squandering, or even selling out offerings when they are given the chance to manage them—if they are capable of doing all manner of bad things, what are they? (An evil person.) They never take a stand to protect the interests of God's house when issues arise. Are there not people such as these? (There are.) So, would it be suitable to use the saying, "Don't pocket the money you pick up" to evaluate their humanity? It would not be suitable. Some people say: "They used to be a good person. They had noble moral character and everyone approved of them. So why did they change after coming to God's house?" Did they really change? The truth is, they did not change. They possessed a little bit of moral conduct and good behavior, but aside from that, this was always their humanity essence—that has not changed at all. Wherever they go, they always comport themselves like this. It is just that previously people evaluated them using the criterion of moral conduct, instead of using the truth to judge their humanity. People think that they underwent some kind of change, but in reality, they did not. Some say, "They weren't like that before." They were not like that before because they were not faced with these situations before and they did not find themselves in this kind of environment before. Furthermore, people did not understand the truth, and were unable to discern them. What is the ultimate consequence of people viewing and judging others based on one good behavior instead of on their humanity essence? Not only will people be unable to see others clearly, they will also be blinded and misled by the external good moral conduct of others. When people cannot see others clearly, they will put their trust in, promote, and assign the wrong people, and they will be misled and cheated by other people. Some leaders and workers frequently make this mistake when choosing and assigning people. They are blinded by people who outwardly possess some good behaviors and good moral conduct, and arrange for them to take on important work or to keep some important items. As a result, something goes wrong, and it causes God's house to suffer some losses. Why did something go wrong? It went wrong because the leaders and workers could not see through to the nature essence of these people. Why were they unable to see through to their nature essence? Because these leaders and workers do not understand the truth, and they are not able to evaluate and discern people. They cannot see through to people's nature essence, and they do not know what kind of attitude people have toward God, the truth, and the interests of God's house. Why is that? Because these leaders and workers view people and things from the wrong perspective. They only view people based on human notions and imaginings, they do not view their essence according to God's words and the truth

principles—instead, they view people based on their moral conduct and external behaviors and manifestations. It is because their views on people lack principles that they put their trust in the wrong people, assigned the wrong people, and consequently they were blinded, cheated, and used by those people, and ultimately the interests of God's house suffered. These are the consequences of being unable to perceive people or see through to them. So, when someone wants to pursue the truth, the first lesson they must learn is how to discern and view people—this lesson takes a long time to learn, and it is one of the most fundamental lessons that people must learn. If you want to see a person clearly and to learn to identify them, you must first understand what standards God uses to evaluate people, what warped thoughts and views control and dominate the way that people view and evaluate others, and whether they conflict with the standards that God uses to evaluate people, and how they conflict. Are the methods and criteria by which you evaluate people based in God's demands? Are they based in God's words? Do they have a basis in the truth? If not, and you rely entirely on your experiences and imaginings to evaluate others, or if you even go so far as to base your evaluations on the social morals that are promoted within society, or on what you observe with your own two eyes, then the person that you are trying to discern will remain unclear to you. You will not be able to see through to them. If you put your trust in them and assign duties to them, you will be taking on a certain level of risk, and inevitably, there is a possibility that this will cause damage to God's offerings, the church's work, and the life entry of God's chosen. Discerning people is the first lesson you must learn if you want to pursue the truth. Of course, it is also one of the most basic aspects of the truth that people ought to possess. Learning to discern people is inseparable from the subject of today's fellowship. You must be able to discern between man's good moral conduct and qualities, and the things that a person with normal humanity ought to possess. Being able to discern between these two things is very important. Only then will you be able to recognize and accurately perceive a person's essence, and ultimately determine who has humanity and who does not. What must one first be equipped with in order to discern these things? One must understand God's words, as well as this aspect of the truth, and reach the point where they view people according to God's words, with the truth as their criterion. Is this not a truth principle that one ought to practice and possess while pursuing the truth? (Yes.) So, it is imperative for us to fellowship on these topics.

I just fellowshiped on the first saying, "Don't pocket the money you pick up," which is clearly a kind of human moral conduct. It is a kind of moral character and transient behavior that leaves a good impression on people, but, unfortunately, it cannot serve as a standard by which to evaluate whether someone possesses humanity or not. The second saying, "Derive pleasure from helping others," is the same. Based on the wording of the statement, it is clear that this is also something that people like and regard as a good behavior. Those who display this good behavior are held in high esteem as people who possess good moral conduct and noble character—in sum, they are taken to be

people that derive pleasure from helping others and have excellent moral character. “Derive pleasure from helping others” has some similarities to “Don’t pocket the money you pick up.” It is also a good behavior that arises in people within certain social climates. The literal meaning of “Derive pleasure from helping others” is to find pleasure in assisting other people. It does not mean that it is one’s duty to help people—the saying is not “It is your responsibility to help others”—it is “Derive pleasure from helping others.” From this, we can see what motivates people to help others. They do not do it for the sake of other people, but rather for themselves. People are filled with worry and pain, so they find others that need help and provide them with charity and assistance; they lend a helping hand, and do whatever good things they are capable of doing in order to make themselves feel happy, pleased, at peace, and joyous, and to fill their days with meaning, so that they do not feel so empty and anguished—they improve their moral conduct in order to achieve their goal of purifying and elevating the realm of their hearts and minds. What kind of behavior is this? If you view people who derive pleasure from helping others from the perspective of this explanation, then they are not good people. At the very least, they are not motivated by their morality, conscience, or humanity to do what they ought to do, or to fulfill their social and familial responsibilities; rather, they help people in order to attain pleasure, spiritual consolation, emotional comfort, and to live happily. What should be made of this kind of moral conduct? If you look at the nature of it, it is even worse than “Don’t pocket the money you pick up.” At least “Don’t pocket the money you pick up” does not have a selfish aspect to it. Then what about: “Derive pleasure from helping others”? The word “pleasure” signifies that this behavior contains elements of selfishness and base intents. It is not about helping people for their sake or as a selfless offering, it is done for the sake of one’s own pleasure. This is simply not worth encouraging. For example, say you see an elderly person fall down on a main road and you think to yourself: “I’ve been feeling down these days. This elderly person falling down is a great opportunity—I’m going to derive pleasure from helping others!” You go over and help the elderly person up, and when they get to their feet, they praise you, saying: “You’re really a good person, kiddo. May you be safe and happy and live to a great old age!” They shower you with these pleasant words, and after hearing them, all of your worries vanish and you feel pleased. You think that it is good to help people, and resolve to walk the streets in your spare time and help anyone that falls over back to their feet. People display some good behaviors under the influence of this kind of thinking, and human society has classified this as the fine tradition of deriving pleasure from helping others, and as a kind of noble moral character that passes on this great tradition. The sub-context of deriving pleasure from helping others is that those who do the helping usually consider themselves to be the pinnacle of morality. They fashion themselves as great philanthropists, and the more people praise them, the more willing they are to help, to provide charity, and to do more for others. This satisfies their desire to be a hero and the savior of humanity, as well as their desire to derive a kind of gratification from being

needed by others. Do humans not all want to feel needed? When people feel needed by others, they think that they are particularly useful and that their lives have meaning. Is this not just a kind of attention seeking? Seeking attention is the only thing that brings people pleasure—it is their way of life. In fact, no matter what perspective we view the matter of deriving pleasure from helping others from, it is not a standard for evaluating man's morals. Oftentimes, the act of deriving pleasure from helping others really only requires the slightest effort. If you are willing to do it, then you will have fulfilled your social responsibility; if you are not willing to do it, no one will hold you responsible, and you will not become the subject of public condemnation. When it comes to the good behaviors that man commends, one can choose to practice them or refrain from doing so, either is fine. There is no need to constrain people with this saying, or to make them learn how to derive pleasure from helping others, because it is, in and of itself, just a transient good behavior. Regardless of whether someone is motivated by a desire to fulfill their social responsibility or if they practice this good behavior out of a sense of civic virtue, what will the ultimate outcome be? They will just be satisfying their desire to be a good person and to embody the spirit of Lei Feng in this one instance; they will derive some pleasure and comfort from doing so, and thereby elevate the realm of their thinking to a higher level. That is all. This is the essence of what they are doing. So, what was your understanding of the saying "Derive pleasure from helping others" prior to this fellowship? (I didn't recognize the selfish and despicable intents behind it before.) Take a scenario in which you have a duty to do something, a responsibility that you must not shirk, something quite difficult, and you must endure a little suffering, renounce some things, and pay a price in order to accomplish it, but you are able to fulfill this responsibility anyway. You will not feel so pleased while you are doing it, and after paying a price and fulfilling this responsibility, the results of your labor will not bring you any pleasure or comfort, but because it was your responsibility and duty, you did it anyway. If we compare this to deriving pleasure from helping others, which displays more humanity? (People who fulfill their responsibilities and duties have more humanity.) Deriving pleasure from helping others is not about fulfilling a responsibility—it is just a requirement about people's moral conduct and social responsibilities that exists within certain social contexts; it comes from popular opinion, social morals, or even the laws of a country, and it serves to evaluate whether a person has morals and the quality of their humanity. In other words, "Derive pleasure from helping others" is just a saying that limits people's behavior, which human society has put forward in order to elevate the realm of man's thinking. This kind of saying is just used to make people practice a few good behaviors, and the standards for evaluating those good behaviors are social morals, public opinion, or even the law. For instance, if you see someone that needs help in a public space and you are the first person that ought to go help them, but you do not, what will others think of you? They will scold you for your lack of manners—is that not what we mean by public opinion? (Yes.) Then what are social morals? They are positive

and upward-facing things and habits that society promotes and encourages. Naturally, they include a lot of specific requirements, for instance: supporting vulnerable people, lending a helping hand when others encounter hardships, and not just standing idly by. People are supposed to practice this kind of moral conduct, that is what it means to possess social morals. If you see someone suffering and you turn a blind eye to it, ignore them, and do nothing, then you lack social morals. So, what demands does the law place on man's moral conduct? China is a special case in this regard: Chinese law does not have any express stipulations concerning social responsibilities and social morals. People just learn a bit about these things through their family upbringing, school education, and what they hear and observe from society. By contrast, in Western countries these things are enshrined in law. For instance, if you see that someone has fallen on the road, at the very least you should go up to them and ask, "Are you OK? Do you need help?" If that person replies, "I'm OK, thank you," then you do not need to help them, you are not required to fulfill that responsibility. If they say, "I need help, please," then you have to help them. If you do not help them, you will be held legally responsible. This is a special requirement that certain countries put forward regarding people's moral conduct; they place this demand on people through express stipulation in their laws. These demands placed on people's moral conduct by public opinion, social morals, and even the law are limited only to people's behavior, and these basic behavioral criteria are the standards by which a person's moral conduct is evaluated. On the surface, these moral standards appear to be evaluating people's behavior—in other words, whether or not people have fulfilled their social responsibilities—but at their essence, they are evaluating people's inner quality. Be it public opinion, social morals, or the law, these things only measure or make demands about the things that people do, and these measurements and demands are limited to people's behavior. They judge a person's quality and moral conduct based on that person's behavior—that is the scope of their assessment. That is the nature of the statement: "Derive pleasure from helping others." When it comes to deriving pleasure from helping others, Western countries place demands on people through the stipulations of the law, whereas in China, traditional culture is used to educate and condition people with these ideas. While there is this difference between the East and the West, they are the same in nature—both use sayings to restrict and regulate people's behavior and morality. However, be it the laws of Western countries or traditional culture in the East, these are all just demands and regulations placed on man's behavior and moral conduct, and these criteria only regulate people's behavior and moral conduct—but do any of them target man's humanity? Can regulations that only stipulate what behaviors a person ought to practice be used as standards for evaluating their humanity? (No.) If we look at the saying "Derive pleasure from helping others," some evil people are able to derive pleasure from helping others, but they are motivated by their own intents and goals. When devils do some small good deed, they are even more likely to have their own intents and goals for doing so. Do you

think that everyone who derives pleasure from helping others is a righteous lover of the truth? Take those who supposedly derive pleasure from helping others in China, like those chivalrous figures, or people who rob from the rich and give to the poor, or those who frequently come to the aid of vulnerable groups and the disabled, and so on—do they all have humanity? Do they all love positive things and have a sense of righteousness? (No.) At most, they are just people who have relatively better character. Because they are governed by this spirit of deriving pleasure from helping others, they perform many good deeds that bring them pleasure, comfort, and allow them to thoroughly enjoy a feeling of happiness, but practicing such behaviors does not mean that they have humanity, because both their faith and what they pursue at a spiritual level are unclear, they are unknown variables. So, can they be regarded as people with humanity and conscience based on this good moral conduct? (No.) Some institutions like foundations and welfare agencies that supposedly derive pleasure from helping others, who assist vulnerable groups and the disabled, are, at the very most, fulfilling a bit of their social responsibility. They do these things in order to improve their image in the public eye, to increase their visibility, and to satisfy the mentality of deriving pleasure from helping others—this absolutely does not rise to the level of signifying that they "possess humanity." Furthermore, are the people that they derive pleasure from helping really in need of assistance? Is deriving pleasure from helping others in and of itself righteous? Not necessarily. If you survey all of the various major and minor events that occur throughout society for long enough, you will see that some of them are purely a matter of people deriving pleasure from helping others, whereas, in many other cases, more untold secrets and dark aspects of society are wrapped up in instances where people derive pleasure from helping others. In any case, there are intents and goals behind deriving pleasure from helping others, whether these be to become famous and to rise above the rest, or to abide by social morals and not break the law, or to gain a more positive appraisal from society at large. No matter how one views it, deriving pleasure from helping others is just one of man's external behaviors, and, at the very most, it amounts to a kind of good moral conduct. It has nothing at all to do with the normal humanity that God demands. Those who are capable of deriving pleasure from helping others may well be average people without any real ambitions, or they might be major figures in society; they could be relatively kindhearted people, but they also might be malicious at heart. They could be any kind of person, and everyone is capable of practicing this behavior in a passing moment. So, the statement about moral conduct, "Derive pleasure from helping others," certainly does not qualify as a standard for evaluating people's humanity.

"Derive pleasure from helping others"—this saying about moral conduct does not, in fact, represent the essence of people's humanity, and it has little relation to people's nature essence. Therefore, it is inappropriate to use it to evaluate the quality of somebody's humanity. So, what is an appropriate way to evaluate someone's humanity?

At the very least, a person who has humanity should not decide whether to help someone or to fulfill their responsibilities based on whether or not doing so will make them feel happy; instead, their decision should be based on their conscience and reason, and they should not consider what they have to gain, or what consequences helping that person will have on them, or what effect it might have on them in the future. They should not consider any of these things, and they should fulfill their responsibilities, help others, and prevent others from experiencing suffering. They should help people in a pure way, without any selfish aims—that is what a person who truly possesses humanity would do. If a person's goal in helping others is to please themselves or to build a good reputation for themselves, then there is a selfish and base quality to this—those who truly possess conscience and reason would not act in this way. People who have true love for others do not act solely in order to fulfill their desire to feel a certain way, instead, they do so in order to fulfill their responsibilities, and to do everything in their power to help others. They do not help people in order to get a reward, and they do not have any other intents or motives. Even though acting in this way can be difficult, and though they may be judged by others or even face a bit of danger, they recognize that this is a duty that people ought to fulfill, that it is people's responsibility, and that if they do not act in this way, they will have fallen short of what they owe to others and to God, and they will be left with a lifelong regret. As such, they proceed without hesitation, they do their utmost, they obey the will of Heaven, and they fulfill their responsibility. No matter how others judge them, or whether or not others show them gratitude and esteem them, so long as they are able to help that person to do whatever it is that they need to do, and can do so with all their heart, they will feel satisfied. Those who are able to act in this way have conscience and reason, they possess the manifestations of humanity, and not just a kind of behavior that is limited to the scope of moral character and moral conduct. Deriving pleasure from helping others is just a kind of behavior, and sometimes it is just a behavior that arises in certain specific contexts; a person's decision to engage in this kind of transient behavior is made based on their mood, emotions, social environment, as well as the immediate context, and what benefits or drawbacks may come from acting in that way. Those with humanity do not consider these things when they help people—they make their decision based on a standard of judgment that is more positive, and more in keeping with the conscience and reason of normal humanity. Sometimes, they are even able to persevere in helping people when doing so contradicts and conflicts with the standards of morality. The criteria, ideas, and views of morality can only restrain people's transient behaviors. And whether these behaviors are good or bad will change depending on the person's mood, emotions, the good and evil within them, and their passing good or bad intentions; naturally, the social climate and environment will also have an impact on this. There are many impurities within these behaviors; they are all superficial behaviors, and people cannot judge whether someone has humanity or not using them. By contrast, it is much more accurate and practical to judge whether

someone has humanity or not based on their humanity essence, what they pursue, their outlook on life and their value system, the path that they walk, and the basis for their comportment and actions. Tell Me, which accords with the truth: the bases for evaluating humanity or the bases for evaluating moral conduct? Is it the standards for evaluating moral conduct that accord with the truth, or the standards for evaluating whether someone has humanity? Which of these standards accord with the truth? In actuality, it is the standards for evaluating whether someone possesses humanity that accord with the truth. This is an unquestionable certainty. The reason why the things used to evaluate people's moral conduct cannot serve as criteria is because they are inconstant. They are filled with many impurities, like people's transactions, interests, preferences, pursuits, emotions, evil thoughts, corrupt dispositions, and so on. There are just too many mistakes and impurities within them—they are not straightforward. Therefore, they cannot serve as criteria for judging people. They are full of all kinds of things which Satan instills in man and additional conditions that arise due to man's corrupt satanic disposition, and as such, they are not the truth. In summary, no matter whether people consider these criteria of moral conduct easy or difficult to meet, or whether people estimate them to be of high, low, or average value, in any case, they are all just sayings that restrict and regulate people's behavior. They only rise to the level of man's moral quality; they do not have the slightest relation to God's demand that the truth be used to judge a person's humanity. They do not even include the most basic standards that those with humanity ought to possess and fulfill; they fall short of all those things. When viewing others, people only focus on evaluating their displays of moral conduct; they view and evaluate other people entirely according to the demands of traditional culture. God does not view people merely based on their displays of moral conduct—He focuses on their humanity essence. What is included in a person's humanity essence? Their preferences, their views on things, their outlook on life and value system, what they pursue, whether they have a sense of righteousness, whether they love the truth and positive things, their ability to accept and submit to the truth, the path that they choose, and so on. It is accurate to judge a person's humanity essence according to these things. This more or less concludes My fellowship on deriving pleasure from helping others. Through this fellowship on these two demands about moral conduct, do you now have an understanding of the basic principles of discernment regarding both how to evaluate moral conduct, as well as the difference between God's standards for evaluating people and the moral conduct that man speaks of? (Yes.)

I have just fellowshiped about two of the demands placed on man's moral conduct by traditional culture, "Don't pocket the money you pick up" and "Derive pleasure from helping others." What have you learned from My fellowship on these two sayings? (I learned that people's moral conduct is unrelated to their humanity essence. At most, people who display these kinds of moral conduct possess some good behaviors and manifestations in terms of the quality of their morality. This does not mean, however,

that they have humanity or that they live out human likeness. I have gained a somewhat clearer understanding of this issue.) People who display good moral conduct do not necessarily have humanity—everyone can recognize this, and it is, indeed, the way that things are. People all follow society's evil trends and they have all gradually lost their conscience and reason—few are able to live out human likeness. Has every person who once handed over one cent that they found on the sidewalk to the police turned out to be a good person? Not necessarily. What outcome did those who were once praised as heroes meet with later on? In their hearts, people all know the answers to these questions. What became of those paragons of social morality and grand philanthropists who often derived pleasure from helping others, who were adorned with red flowers, and lauded by man? Most of them turned out to not be good people. They just purposefully did a few good deeds in order to become famous. In truth, most of their actual behavior, lives, and character are not that good at all. The only thing they are really good at is flattery and sycophancy. When they take off their red flowers and that superficial veneer of being a paragon of social morality, they do not even know how to comport themselves or how they should go about their life. What is the problem here? Have they not been trapped by the crown of "moral paragon" that society bestowed upon them? They do not really know what they are—they have been flattered so excessively that they have begun to think themselves too great, and they can no longer be normal people. In the end, they do not even know how to live, their day-to-day existence becomes a complete mess, and some even end up abusing alcohol, becoming depressed, and killing themselves. There are certainly people that fall into this category. They are always chasing a feeling, wishing to be heroes and exemplars, to become famous, or to be the pinnacle of moral excellence. They can never return to the real world; the quotidian necessities of real life are a constant source of vexation and suffering for them. They do not know how to rid themselves of this pain or how to choose the right path in life. In search of a thrill, some turn to drugs, while others choose to end their lives to escape feelings of emptiness. Some of those that do not kill themselves often end up dying of depression. Are there not many examples of this? (Yes.) This is the kind of damage that traditional culture inflicts upon people. Not only does it not allow people to gain an accurate understanding of humanity or guide them onto the path that they should follow—that is not all—it actually leads them astray, steering them toward a realm of delusion and fancy. This damages people, and it does so in quite a deep way. Some might say: "That's not true in all cases! We're doing just fine, aren't we?" Is the fact that you are doing well now not just the result of God's protection? It is only because God chose you and you have His protection that you were lucky enough to accept His work, and can read His words, attend gatherings, exchange fellowship, and fulfill your duty here; it is only because of His protection that you can live the life of a normal human, and possess the normal reason to deal with all aspects of your daily life. However, it is undeniable that in the deep reaches of your mind, there are still ideas and views like: "Don't pocket the money

you pick up" and "Derive pleasure from helping others." And at the same time, you are still imprisoned by these ideological and moral criteria that come from mankind. Why do I say that you are imprisoned by these things? Because the path that you choose to take in life; the principles and direction of your actions and comportment; and the principles, methods, and criteria by which you view people and things; and so on are all still influenced, or even fettered and controlled, by these ideological and moral criteria, to differing extents. Whereas, God's words and the truth have yet to become the basis and criteria for your views on people and things, and your comportment and actions. As of now, you have only chosen the right direction in life, and you have the will, aspiration, and hope to embark on the path of pursuing the truth. Yet, in reality, most of you have not made your way onto this path at all—in other words, you have not so much as set foot on the right path that God has prepared for man. Some will say: "If we have not set foot on the right path, then why are we still able to fulfill our duties?" This is a result of man's choice, cooperation, conscience, and will. Right now, you are cooperating with God's demands and trying your best to improve, but just because you are trying to improve, it does not mean that you have already set foot on the path of pursuing the truth. One reason for this is that you are still influenced by the ideas that traditional culture has inculcated in you. For instance, you might have a good understanding of the essence of the statements, "Don't pocket the money you pick up" and "Derive pleasure from helping others," after hearing Me fellowship about them and expose them, but in a few days, you may change your mind. You might come to think: "What is so bad about 'Don't pocket the money you pick up'? I happen to like people that don't pocket the money they pick up. At least they aren't greedy. What's wrong with 'Derive pleasure from helping others'? At the very least, when you're in need, you can count on somebody lending you a helping hand. This is a good thing and it is something everyone needs! Besides, no matter how you look at it, people finding pleasure in helping others is just a good, positive thing. It is our incumbent duty and it should not be criticized!" You see, only a few days after being awoken, one night's sleep will be enough to change you; it will send you back to where you were before, and return you once more to the imprisonment of traditional culture. In other words, these things lodged in the depths of your mind influence your thoughts and views from time to time, as well as the paths you choose. And inevitably, while they are influencing you, they are also constantly holding you back, stopping you from fulfilling your desire to set foot on the correct path in life, to embark on the path of pursuing the truth, and to take the path in life where God's words are your basis, and the truth is your criterion. Even if you are very willing to walk this path, even if you long to do so, and feel agitated about it, and you spend your days thinking and planning, making resolutions, and praying for this, things will still not go as you wish them to. The reason for this is that these aspects of traditional culture are too profoundly rooted in the depths of your heart. Some may say: "That's not right! You say that traditional culture is too deeply rooted in people's hearts, but I don't think that's true.

I’m only in my twenties, I’m not in my seventies or eighties, so how could these things have already taken deep root in my heart?” Why do I say that these ideas are already deeply rooted in your heart? Think about it: From the time of your earliest memories have you not always aspired to be a noble person, even if your parents did not instill such ideas in you? For instance, most people like to watch movies and read novels about heroes, and they deeply sympathize with the victims in these stories, while despising the villains, and the cruel characters who hurt other people. When you grow up against this kind of background, you unconsciously accept the things that general society has collectively agreed upon. So, why did you accept those things? Because people are not born possessing the truth and they do not have an innate ability to discern things. You do not possess this instinct—the instinct that humans possess is an inherent tendency to like some good, positive, and active things. These active and positive things make you aspire to do better, to become a good, heroic, and great person. These things gradually begin to take form in your heart when you come into contact with sayings that stem from public opinion and social morals. Once statements that come from the morality of traditional culture infiltrate you, and enter your inner world, they take root in your heart, and they begin to dominate your life. When this occurs, you do not discern, resist, or reject these things, and instead you feel deeply that you need them. Your first move is to pander to these sayings. Why is that? Because these sayings are so well-suited to people’s tastes and notions, they conform to the needs of people’s spiritual worlds. As a result, you accept these statements as a matter of course and without guarding against them at all. Gradually, through your family upbringing, school education, and the conditioning and indoctrination of society, along with your own imaginings, you end up becoming deeply convinced that these sayings are positive things. Through the refinement of time, and as you gradually grow older, you strive to follow these sayings in all sorts of contexts and situations, and follow these things that humans innately prefer and believe to be good. They increasingly take form within you, and become more and more entrenched within you. At the same time, these things dominate your outlook on life and the goals that you pursue, and they become the standards by which you judge people and things. Once these sayings from traditional culture take shape within people, the basic conditions that lead them to resist God and the truth are all in place; it is as if people find their own reasons and their own basis for doing so. And so, when God exposes people’s corrupt dispositions and essence, and showers them with chastisement and judgment, people form all kinds of notions about Him. They think: “People often say, ‘If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings,’ and ‘Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible,’ so how could God speak like that? Was that really God? God wouldn’t speak that way—He ought to take the highest ground, and talk to people with a gentle tone, the tone of Buddha who delivers all human beings from suffering, the tone of a Bodhisattva. That’s what God is like—an incredibly gentle and grand figure.” This series

of ideas, views, and notions continue to gush from your heart in ever-increasing volume, and, ultimately, you just cannot bear it any longer and you do something to rebel against and resist God in spite of yourself. In this way, you are ruined by your notions and imaginings. From this we can see that no matter how old you are, as long as you have received the education of traditional culture, and possess the mental capacity of an adult, your heart will be filled by these aspects of traditional culture's morality, and they will gradually become entrenched within you. They have already dominated you, and you have already lived by these things for many years. Your life and your very nature have long been occupied by these aspects of traditional culture's morality. For instance, from five or six years of age, you learned to derive pleasure from helping others, and not to pocket the money you pick up. These things influenced you and they completely dictated the way that you behaved. Now, as a middle-aged person, you have already lived by these things for many years; this means that you are far off from the standards that God demands of man. Ever since you accepted these sayings about moral conduct that traditional culture promotes, you have strayed further and further from God's demands. The gap between your own standards of humanity and the standards of humanity that God demands has grown bigger and bigger. As a result, you have strayed further and further from God. Is this not the case? Take your time to ponder these words.

Let us now fellowship on the next saying regarding moral conduct—"Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others"—what does this saying mean? It means that you should make strict demands of yourself and be lenient with other people, so that they can see how generous and magnanimous you are. Why should people do this, then? What is it meant to achieve? Is it doable? Is it really a natural expression of people's humanity? You must compromise yourself so much in order to take this on! You must be free of desires and demands, requiring yourself to feel less joy, suffer a bit more, pay more of a price and work more so that others do not have to wear themselves out. And if others whine, complain, or perform poorly, you must not ask too much of them—more or less is good enough. People believe that this is a sign of noble morals—but why does it ring false to Me? Is it not false? (It is.) Under normal circumstances, the natural expression of an ordinary person's humanity is to be tolerant of themselves and strict with others. That is a fact. People can perceive everyone else's problems—"This person is arrogant! That person is bad! This one is selfish! That one is careless and perfunctory in doing their duty! This person is so lazy!"—while to themselves they think: "If I'm a bit lazy, that's fine. I'm of good caliber. Though I'm lazy, I do a better job than others!" They find fault with others and like to nitpick, but with themselves they are tolerant and accommodating wherever possible. Is this not a natural expression of their humanity? (It is.) If people are expected to live up to the idea of being "strict with yourself and tolerant of others," what agony must they put themselves through? Could they really bear it? How many people would manage to do so? (None.) And why is that? (People are selfish by nature. They act according to the principle that it is "Every man for himself and the devil take the

hindmost.") Indeed, man is born selfish, man is a selfish creature, and is deeply committed to that satanic philosophy: "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." People think that it would be catastrophic for them, and unnatural, not to be selfish and look out for themselves when things befall them. This is what people believe and it is how they act. If people are expected not to be selfish, and to make strict demands of themselves, and to willingly lose out rather than take advantage of others, is that a realistic expectation? If people are expected to happily say, when someone takes advantage of them, "You're taking advantage but I'm not making a fuss about it. I'm a tolerant person, I won't badmouth you or try to get my own back on you, and if you haven't taken enough advantage yet, feel free to carry on"—is that a realistic expectation? How many people could manage to do this? Is this the way that corrupt mankind normally behaves? Obviously, for this to happen is anomalous. Why so? Because people with corrupt dispositions, especially selfish and mean people, struggle for their own interests, and giving thought to others will absolutely not make them feel satisfied. So, this phenomenon, when it does happen, is an anomaly. "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others"—this claim about moral conduct is clearly just a demand that does not tally with either the facts or humanity, which is placed upon man by social moralists who do not understand humanity. It is like telling a mouse that it is not allowed to make holes or telling a cat that it is not permitted to catch mice. Is it right to make such a demand? (No. It defies the laws of humanity.) This demand clearly does not square with reality, and it is very hollow. Are those who exact this demand capable of abiding by it themselves? (No.) They expect others to abide by a demand which they themselves cannot fulfill—what is the issue here? Is this not a bit irresponsible? At the very least, it can be said that they are irresponsible and talking nonsense. Now, taking this a step further, what is the nature of this issue? (Hypocrisy.) Right, this is an example of hypocrisy. They clearly cannot abide by this demand themselves, yet they still claim themselves to be so tolerant, big-hearted, and of such high moral stock—is this not just hypocrisy? No matter how you frame it, this is an empty saying that carries a certain falseness to it, so we will classify it as a hypocritical saying. It is similar to the kind of sayings that the Pharisees promoted; there is an ulterior motive behind it, which is clearly to show off, to characterize oneself as a person of noble moral conduct, and to be praised by others as an exemplar and a model of noble moral conduct. So, what kind of people are able to be strict with themselves and tolerant of others? Are teachers and doctors able to abide by this saying? Were the so-called famous people, great people, and sages like Confucius, Mencius and Laozi able to abide by this saying? (No.) In summary, regardless of how ridiculous this saying that man has put forward is, or whether or not this demand is tenable, it is ultimately just a demand placed upon people's moral character and behavior. At the very least, people are not willing to abide by this demand and it is not easy for them to practice it, because it runs counter to the standards that man's normal humanity is capable of achieving. But, in any case, it is still a standard and

a demand about man's moral conduct that is promoted by traditional culture. Even though "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others" is an empty phrase that few can abide by, it is the same as "Don't pocket the money you pick up" and "Derive pleasure from helping others"—regardless of what motives or intents the people who practice it harbor, or if anyone is even capable of practicing it at all—in any case, based simply on the fact that the people who promote this requirement place themselves at the pinnacle of morality, does this not make them arrogant and self-righteous, and possessed of somewhat abnormal reason? If you were to ask them if they can abide by the saying, "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others," they would say, "Of course!" And yet, when they are actually compelled to abide by it, they will not be able to. Why will they be unable to abide by it? Because they have an arrogant, satanic disposition. Ask them to abide by this moral when others are vying with them for status, power, prestige, and profit, and see if they can do it. They will simply be unable to do it, and they will even turn hostile toward you. If you ask them, "Why do you still promote this saying when you cannot even abide by it yourself? Why do you still demand that others conform to it? Is this not hypocritical of you?" will they accept it? If you expose them, they will not accept it—no matter how you expose them, they will not accept it or admit fault—this shows that they are not good people. The fact that they affect a high moral tone despite being unable to conform to their own demands just shows that they are rightly called great frauds and hypocritical posers.

"Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others," as with sayings about "Don't pocket the money you pick up" and "Derive pleasure from helping others," is one of those demands that traditional culture makes regarding people's moral conduct. By the same token, regardless of whether someone can attain or exercise this moral conduct, it is still not the standard or norm for measuring their humanity. It may be that you really are capable of being strict with yourself and tolerant of others, and that you hold yourself to particularly high standards. You may be squeaky clean and you may always think of others and show consideration for them, without being selfish and seeking after your own interests. You may seem particularly magnanimous and selfless, and have a strong sense of social responsibility and social morals. Your noble personality and qualities may be on display to those close to you, and to those you encounter and interact with. Your behavior may never give others any reason to blame or criticize you, eliciting instead profuse praise and even admiration. People may regard you as someone who is truly strict with themselves and tolerant of others. However, these are nothing more than external behaviors. Are the thoughts and wishes deep in your heart consistent with these external behaviors, with these actions that you live out externally? The answer is no, they are not. The reason you can act in this way is that there is a motive behind it. What is that motive, exactly? Could you bear for that motive to see the light of day? Certainly not. This proves that this motive is something unmentionable, something dark and evil. Now, why is this motive unspeakable and evil? It is because people's humanity is

governed and driven by their corrupt dispositions. All the thoughts of humanity, regardless of whether people put them into words or pour them forth, are undeniably dominated, controlled, and manipulated by their corrupt dispositions. As a result, people's motives and intents are all sinister and evil. Regardless of whether people are able to be strict with themselves and tolerant of others, or whether or not they outwardly express this moral perfectly, it is inevitable that this moral will have no control or influence over their humanity. So, what does control people's humanity? It is their corrupt dispositions, it is their humanity essence that lies obscured beneath the moral "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others"—that is their true nature. A person's true nature is their humanity essence. And what does their humanity essence consist of? It mainly consists of their preferences, what they pursue, their outlook on life and their value system, as well as their attitude toward the truth and God, and so on. Only these things truly represent people's humanity essence. It can be said with certainty that most of the people who require themselves to fulfill the moral of being "strict with yourself and tolerant of others," are obsessed with status. Driven by their corrupt dispositions, they cannot help but pursue prestige among men, social prominence, and status in the eyes of others. All of these things are related to their desire for status, and are pursued under the cover of their good moral conduct. And how do these pursuits of theirs come about? They entirely come from and are driven by their corrupt dispositions. So, no matter what, whether someone fulfills the moral of being "strict with yourself and tolerant of others" or not, and whether or not they do so to perfection, this cannot change their humanity essence at all. By implication, this means that it cannot in any way change their outlook on life or their value system, or guide their attitudes and perspectives on all manner of people, events, and things. Isn't that the case? (It is.) The more that someone is capable of being strict with themselves and tolerant of others, the better they are at putting on an act, disguising themselves, and at beguiling others with good behavior and pleasing words, and the more deceitful and evil they are by nature. The more that they are this type of person, the deeper their love and pursuit of status and power becomes. However great, glorious and correct their external moral conduct seems to be, and however pleasing it is for people to behold, the unspoken pursuit that lies in the depths of their heart, as well as their nature essence, and even their ambitions, may burst forth from them at any time. Therefore, however good their moral conduct is, it cannot conceal their intrinsic humanity essence, or their ambitions and desires. It cannot conceal their hideous nature essence which does not love positive things and is sick of and hates the truth. As these facts show, the saying "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others" is more than just absurd—it exposes those ambitious types who attempt to use such sayings and behaviors to cover up their unspeakable ambitions and desires. You can compare this to some of the antichrists and evil people in the church. In order to solidify their status and power within the church, and to gain a better reputation among other members, they are able to undergo suffering and pay a price while performing their

duties, and they may even renounce their work and families and sell off everything they have to expend themselves for God. In some cases, the prices that they pay and the suffering they undergo in expending themselves for God exceed what an average person can withstand; they are able to embody a spirit of extreme self-denial in order to maintain their status. Yet, no matter how much they suffer or what prices they pay, none of them safeguard God's testimony or the interests of God's house, nor do they practice according to God's words. The goal that they pursue is just to attain status, power, and God's rewards. Nothing that they do has the slightest relation to the truth. Regardless of how strict they are with themselves and how tolerant they are of others, what will their ultimate outcome be? What will God think of them? Will He determine their outcome based on the external good behaviors that they live out? He certainly will not. People view and judge others based on these behaviors and manifestations, and because they cannot see through to the essence of other people, they end up being deceived by them. God, however, is never deceived by man. He absolutely will not commend and remember people's moral conduct because they were able to be strict with themselves and tolerant of others. Instead, He will condemn them for their ambitions and for the paths they have taken in pursuit of status. Therefore, those who pursue the truth should have discernment of this criterion for evaluating people. They should thoroughly deny and abandon this absurd standard, and discern people according to God's words and the truth principles. They should mainly look at whether a person loves positive things, whether they are able to accept the truth, and whether they can submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements, as well as the path that they choose and walk, and classify what kind of person they are, and what kind of humanity they have based on these things. It is just too easy for aberrations and errors to arise when people judge others based on the standard of "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others." If you wrongly discern and view a person based upon principles and sayings that come from man, then you will be violating the truth and resisting God in that matter. Why is this? The reason is that the basis for your views on people will be wrong, and incompatible with the words of God and the truth—it may even be in opposition to and contrary to them. God does not evaluate people's humanity based upon the statement about moral conduct, "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others," so if you still insist on judging people's morality and determining what kind of person they are according to this criterion, then you have completely violated the truth principles, and you are bound to make errors, and to cause some mistakes and deviations. Is this not the case? (It is.) Once people comprehend these things, they will at least have a certain level of understanding of the basis, principles, and criteria by which God views people and things—you will at least have an understanding and appreciation of God's approach to these things. So, what about from your perspective? You should at least know what the correct basis for viewing a person is, and which criterion for viewing people is in keeping with the truth and the actual facts, and will absolutely not lead to any errors or deviations.

If you really become clear on these matters, you will have discernment of these aspects of traditional culture, as well as man's various statements, theories, and ways of viewing other people, and you will be able to thoroughly relinquish these aspects of traditional culture, and all of the different sayings and views that derive from man. In this way, you will view and discern people based on the truth principles, and, to a certain extent, you will be compatible with God, and you will not rebel against, resist, or run counter to Him. As you gradually achieve compatibility with God, you will develop an increasingly clear insight into the essences of people and things, and you will find confirmation of this in God's words. You will see that God's various statements that expose mankind, and His characterizations and definitions of mankind are all right, and that they are all the truth. Of course, as you find confirmation of this, you will gain more and more faith and knowledge of God and His words, and you will become increasingly certain that God's words are the truth and the reality that man ought to live out. Is this not what the process of accepting and attaining the truth consists of? (Yes.) This is the process of accepting and attaining the truth.

The goal of pursuing the truth is to accept the truth as one's life. When people are able to accept the truth, their inner humanity and life begin to gradually transform, and, in the end, this transformation is their reward. In the past, you viewed people and things according to traditional culture, but now you have realized that this was wrong, and you will no longer view things from that perspective, or view any person based on what traditional culture dictates. So, on what basis will you now view people and things? If you do not know, it proves that you still have not accepted the truth. If you already know which truth principles you should view people and things according to, if you can accurately and clearly state your basis, path, criteria, and principles, and if you can also discern and approach people according to these truth principles, then the truth has already begun to take effect within you, it is guiding your thoughts and dominating the perspective from which you view people and things. This proves that the truth has already taken root in you and become your life. So, how will the effect that the truth has on you ultimately help you? Will it not influence how you comport yourself, the path that you choose, and your direction in life? (Yes.) If it is able to influence how you comport yourself and the path that you walk, then will it not influence your relationship with God? (It will.) What result will come from the truth influencing your relationship with God? Will you become closer or more distant? (I will become closer with God.) You will certainly become closer with Him. When you become closer with God, will you be more willing to follow Him and to bow down before Him, or will you reluctantly believe in His existence while hampered by doubts and misunderstandings? (I will be willing to follow God and to bow down before Him.) That is certain. Now, how will you achieve this willingness? You will find confirmation of God's words in your real life; the truth will begin to take effect in you, and you will find confirmation of it. In the process of the unfolding of all things, the hidden source of all these things will be confirmed within you and you will find it to

be entirely consistent with God's words. You will verify that God's words are all the truth, and this will increase your faith in God. The more faith you have in God, the more normal your relationship with Him will become, you will be increasingly willing to act as a created being, and willing to take God as your Sovereign, and the parts of you that submit to God will increase in number. What do you think about this improvement in your relationship? It is great, is it not? This is the result of a good and positive course of development. Then, what will the consequences of a bad and malignant course of development be? (My faith in God's existence will become increasingly weak, and I will have misunderstandings and doubts about God.) At the very least, these will be the consequences. You will not receive confirmation in any matters, and you will not only fail to attain the truth in your faith, you will also form all kinds of notions—you will misunderstand, reproach, and guard against God, and you will ultimately deny Him. If you deny God in your heart, will you still be able to follow Him? (No.) You will no longer wish to follow Him. Subsequently, what will occur? You will lose interest in what God does and says. When God says, "The end of mankind is in sight," you will reply, "I don't see anything!" You will not believe Him. When God says, "You will gain a good destination after pursuing the truth," you will reply, "Where is this good destination You speak of? I don't see it!" You will be disinterested. When God says, "You must act like a true created being," you will reply, "Is there any benefit to acting like a true created being? How many blessings can I attain from it? Can I really attain blessings from doing that? Is it related to attaining blessings?" When God says, "You must accept and submit to God's sovereignty!" you will reply, "What sovereignty? Why can't I feel God's sovereignty? If God really does reign sovereign, why has He allowed me to live in poverty? Why has He allowed me to fall ill? If God reigns sovereign, why are things always so difficult for me?" Your heart will be full of complaints, and you will not believe anything that God says. This will demonstrate your lack of true faith in God. And that is why, while encountering various issues, all you will do is complain, without the slightest degree of obedience. That is how you will arrive at this malignant outcome. Some people say, "Since God reigns sovereign, He ought to help me to recover from my illness immediately. He ought to help me to achieve all that I wish. Why is my life now filled with inconveniences and suffering?" They have lost their faith in God, and they are left without even the slightest trace of the vague faith that they once had—it has completely disappeared. This is the malignant consequence and evil result of all this. Do you want to get to this point? (No.) How can you avoid stooping to this level? You must put in effort when it comes to the truth—the key and pathway for all of this lie in the truth and in God's words. If you put in effort when it comes to God's words and the truth, without knowing it, you will begin to see the path that God has taught you and guided you to more clearly, and you will see the essence of the people, events, and things that God orchestrates. Through every step of this experience, you will gradually discover the principles and basis for viewing people and things, and for comporting yourself and acting within God's words. By accepting and coming to understand the truth,

you will find the principles and paths of practice in the people, events, and things that you encounter. If you practice according to these paths, God's words will enter you and become your life, and without realizing it, you will start to live under God's sovereignty and orchestrations. When you live under God's sovereignty and orchestrations, you will unconsciously learn how to view people and things according to God's words, and you will view things from the proper stance, perspective, and outlook; the outcomes of your views on things will be in keeping with God's words and the truth, and they will allow you to grow ever closer to God and to thirst ever more for the truth. However, if you do not pursue the truth, or put in effort regarding the truth, and if you have no interest in the truth, then it is hard to say what point you will end up reaching. Ultimately, the worst possible outcome is when people fail to see the actions of God or to feel His sovereignty, no matter how they try to believe in Him; it is when they fail to perceive God's omnipotence and wisdom, no matter how many things they experience. In such cases, people will only acknowledge that the words that God expresses are the truth, but they will see no hope of their being saved, much less will they see that God's disposition is righteous and holy, and they will always feel that their faith in God is hazy. This goes to show that they did not attain the truth or God's salvation, and that they gained nothing at all after believing in God for years. This concludes My fellowship on the third saying: "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others."

What is the fourth statement on moral conduct? (Requite evil with good.) Do people harbor certain intentions when they requite evil with good? Are they not taking a step back in order to make things easier for themselves? Is this not a conciliatory way of dealing with things? People do not want to get caught up in a never-ending cycle of revenge, they wish to smooth things over so that they can live a bit more peacefully. A person's life is not particularly long, and whether they live to be a hundred years old or several hundred years old, they find their lives to be short. All day, they preoccupy themselves with thoughts of revenge and slaughter, their inner worlds are filled with turmoil, and they live unhappy lives. So, they try to find a way to live a happier, more joyful life, and to treat themselves right—which is requiting evil with good. It is inevitable that people will offend each other and be the victims of each other's schemes during their lives, they are always plagued by vengeful and bitter emotions, and they live out quite poor existences, so, for the sake of the social climate and social stability and unity, with that as their motivation, moralists promote this moral criterion to the world. They caution people not to requite evil with evil, and to refrain from hatred and slaughter, urging people instead to learn to requite evil with good. They say that even if someone harmed you in the past, you should not take revenge on them, but rather you should help them, forget their past wrongdoings, interact with them normally, and slowly reform them, defusing the enmity between you, and achieving a harmonious relationship. Will this not lead to harmony in society overall? They say that no matter who has offended you, be it a family member, friend, neighbor, or co-worker, you must requite their evil with good,

and refrain from holding grudges. They claim that if everyone is able to do this, it will be just like how people say: “If everyone gives a little bit of love, the world will become a wonderful place.” Are these claims not based on imaginings? A wonderful place? As if! Take a look at who it is that runs this world and who it is that corrupts mankind. What change can the statement about moral conduct, “Requite evil with good,” really achieve? It cannot change anything. Like the others, this statement places certain demands on people’s moral quality, or enforces certain regulations on them. It requires that they refrain from resorting to hatred and slaughter when faced with hatred and slaughter from other people, and that they treat the people who harm them calmly, with an even temper, and use their moral conduct to defuse that enmity and slaughter, and to lessen the amount of bloodshed. This saying about moral conduct is, of course, effective on people to a certain degree; it can quell enmity and resentment, and reduce murders of revenge, to a certain extent; and it can have a certain degree of positive effect on the social climate, public order, and social harmony, but what preconditions are there for this saying to have that effect? There are significant preconditions in terms of the social environment. One is the normal reason and judgment that people possess. People think: “Is this person that I want to take revenge on more or less powerful than me? If I take revenge on them, will I be able to achieve my goal? If I take my revenge and kill them, will I be signing my own death warrant?” They first weigh up the consequences. After thinking things over, most people realize: “They are well connected, they have a lot of social influence, and they are vicious and cruel, so even though they have harmed me, I can’t seek revenge on them. I must silently swallow the insult. But if I do ever get a chance to get revenge on them in this life, I will take it.” As the popular sayings go, “He who does not seek revenge is not a man” and “It is never too late for a gentleman to take his revenge.” People still harbor these kinds of philosophies for living. The philosophy for living of requiting evil with good is held by people, in one respect, because it is directly connected to the social environment and to the deep corruption of man—it arose due to people’s notions and the judgments of their reason. When most people encounter these kinds of situations, they can only swallow the insults silently, and outwardly practice requiting evil with good, putting aside their hatred and vendettas. Another reason why people hold to this philosophy for living, is that in some cases there is a large imbalance of power between the two parties involved, so the wronged party does not dare to seek revenge, and they are forced to requite evil with good, as there is nothing else they can do. If they were to take revenge, they might endanger the lives of their entire family, and the consequences of that are unimaginable. In such cases, people find it preferable to just go on living by swallowing the insult. However, in so doing, have they overcome their resentment? Is any person capable of forgetting a grudge? (No.) Especially in cases of very serious grudges, for example when someone has killed your close kin and ruined your family, and brought shame upon your name, leading you to develop deep enmity toward them—no one can let a grudge like that go. This is a part of humanity and it is

something that humanity cannot overcome. People instinctively develop feelings of hatred in such situations—this is quite normal. No matter whether they arise due to hot-headedness, instinct, or conscience, in any case, it is a normal response. Even dogs grow close to people who treat them well and regularly feed or help them, and they begin to trust them, while despising those that abuse and mistreat them—and that is not all, they will even despise people who smell or sound like their abusers. You see, even dogs possess this instinct, to say nothing of people! Given that people have much more complex minds than animals, it is perfectly normal for them to feel enmity when faced with revenge killing or unjust treatment. However, for several reasons and due to particular circumstances, people are often forced to make concessions and swallow insults, and put up with things temporarily—but this does not mean that they desire to or are capable of requiting evil with good. What I have just said is based on the perspective of humanity and man's instinctual reactions. If we look at this now from the perspective of objective facts about society—if someone did not requite evil with good, and instead took revenge and committed murder, what would the consequences be? They would be held legally responsible, they might be detained, sentenced to jail time, and even possibly given the death penalty. Based on this, we can conclude that, whether it be from the perspective of humanity or the restrictive power of society and the law, when people are met with unjust treatment and revenge killing, not a single person is capable of striking hatred from their minds or from the depths of their heart. Even when falling victim to slight harms like being verbally attacked, ridiculed, or mocked, people are still unable to requite evil with good. Is the ability to requite evil with good a normal manifestation of humanity? (No.) So, when a person is being bullied or harmed, what does their humanity need and demand, at the very minimum? Would any person cheerfully and happily say: "Go ahead and bully me! You are powerful and evil, you can bully me however you want, and I will requite your evil with good. You will get a strong sense of my noble character and morality, and I certainly will not take revenge on you or develop any opinions about you. I won't get angry at you—I'll just take it all as a joke. No matter how much the things that you say insult my character, hurt my pride, or damage my interests, it's all fine and you should feel free to say whatever you like." Do such people exist? (No.) Absolutely no one is truly capable of letting go of their grudges—they are already doing well if they can go a while without killing their enemy in revenge. So, no one is truly capable of requiting evil with good, and even if people do practice this moral conduct, it will be because they were forced to act in that way due to the constraints of specific circumstances at the time, or because the whole instance was actually fabricated and fictional. Under normal circumstances, when people fall prey to serious persecution or abuse, they will form grudges and become vengeful. The only circumstance in which someone might not be aware of or respond to their own hatred would be if that hatred was too great, and they suffered such a serious shock, that they ended up losing their memory or their wits. But any person who has normal humanity

and reason would not want to be treated with insults, discrimination, disparagement, derision, taunting, mockery, harm, and so on, or someone going so far as to trample on and violate their character and dignity; no person would be happy to insincerely repay those who previously offended or harmed them with moral conduct—no one is capable of doing that. Thus, this claim concerning moral conduct of requiting evil with good appears very weak, anemic, empty and meaningless to corrupted mankind.

If we look at this from the perspective of the conscience and reason of normal humanity, no matter how corrupt a person is, and regardless of whether they are an evil person or a person possessed of relatively good humanity, they all hope that others will treat them well and with a basic level of respect. If someone started flattering and fawning over you for no reason, would that make you happy? Would you like that? (No.) Why would you not like that? Would you feel as though you were being fooled? You would think: "Do I look like a three-year-old to you? How am I failing to understand why you feel the need to say these things to me? Am I as good as you say? Did I do any of those things? What is all this foolish flattery for? How are you not disgusted with yourself?" People do not like to hear words of flattery, and they take them to be a kind of insult. Other than a baseline of respect, how else do people wish others will treat them? (With sincerity.) Asking people to treat others with sincerity would be impossible—if they refrain from bullying others, that is already quite good. Asking people not to bully each other is a comparatively objective demand. People hope that others will respect them, not bully them and, most importantly, treat them fairly. They hope that others will not harass them when they are vulnerable, or ostracize them when their faults are exposed, or constantly flatter and fawn over them. People find these kinds of behaviors disgusting and just wish to be treated fairly—is that not the case? Treating others fairly is a relatively positive ideal in the world of man and in the realm of man's thinking. Why do I say that? Think about it: Why do people all like Bao Zheng? People love watching depictions of Bao Zheng deciding cases even though these cases are fictional and completely fabricated. Why do people still enjoy them? Why are they still willing to watch them? Because, in their ideal world, in the realm of their thinking, and in the depths of their hearts, they all wish for a positive and slightly better world. They wish that man could live in a relatively fair and just social environment, in a world in which everyone is guaranteed this. That way, at the very least, when you are harassed by evil forces, there would be a place where justice is upheld, where you could file a complaint about your grievances, where you would have the right to complain, and ultimately, where some light would be shed on the injustices that you have suffered. In this society and mankind, there would be a place where you could clear your name, and protect yourself from ever suffering any humiliation or shouldering any grievances. Is this not man's ideal society? Is this not what every person pines for? (Yes.) This is every person's dream. People hope that they will be treated fairly—they do not wish to be the subject of any unfair treatment, or to have nowhere to complain if they are treated unfairly, and they find that very distressing.

It can be said that the standard and demand placed on man's moral conduct of "Requite evil with good" is far removed from the reality of mankind's corruption in real life. And so, this demand placed on man's moral conduct is not considerate toward man, and it is far removed from objective fact and from real life. It is a statement proposed by idealists who have no understanding of the inner worlds of the underprivileged people who have been wronged and humiliated—these idealists have no sense of the extent to which these people have been wronged, and their dignity and characters insulted, or even how much their own personal safety has been under threat. They do not understand those realities, and yet they still demand that these victims reconcile with their assailants and refrain from taking revenge on them, saying things like: "You were born to be mistreated and you must accept your fate. You were born into the lowest class of society and you are made of the stuff of slaves. You were born to be ruled over by others—you should not take revenge against those who harmed you, and you should instead requite evil with good. You should do your part for the good of the social climate and societal harmony, and contribute to society by displaying your positive energy and your best moral conduct." This is all clearly said in order to excuse the exploitation of the lower classes by the upper echelons of society and the ruling classes, to provide them with this convenience, and to quiet the hearts and emotions of the underprivileged on their behalf. Is this not the objective of saying such things? (Yes.) If every country's legal and social systems, and the systems and regulations of every race and clan were fair and strictly enforced, would it still be necessary to promote this unobjective saying that runs contrary to the laws of humanity? It would not be necessary. The saying "Requite evil with good" has clearly just been promoted as an avenue and a convenience for the ruling classes and those evil people who possess authority and power to exploit and trample on the underprivileged. At the same time, in order to placate the underprivileged classes and prevent them from seeking revenge or becoming hostile toward the rich, the elites, and the ruling class, these so-called thinkers and educators position themselves at the pinnacle of moral supremacy, promoting this saying under the pretense of requiring that everyone practices good moral conduct. Does this not create even more contradictions within society? The more you suppress people, the more unfair society proves to be. If society was truly fair and just, would it still be necessary to judge and place demands on people's moral conduct using this saying? This is clearly due to the fact that there is no justice in society or among mankind. If evildoers could be punished by the law, or if those with money and power were also answerable to the law, then the saying, "Requite evil with good," would be invalid and would not exist. How many common people would be able to harm an official? How many poor people would be able to do harm to the rich? That would be difficult for them to achieve. Thus, the saying, "Requite evil with good," is clearly aimed at the common people, the poor, and the lower classes—it is an immoral and unjust saying. For instance, if you demanded that a government official requite evil with good, they would say to you: "What evil do I have to requite? Who would dare to

mess with me? Who would dare to offend me? Who would dare to say ‘no’ to me? I will kill whoever says no to me—I’ll exterminate their whole family and every one of their relatives!” See, there is no evil for officials to requite, so the saying, “Requite evil with good,” does not even exist to them. If you say to them: “You must practice this moral conduct of requiting evil with good, you must possess this moral conduct,” they will reply: “Sure, I can do that.” This is a deceptive lie, through and through. In any case, “Requite evil with good” is essentially just a saying promoted by social moralists as a way of placating the lower classes, and even more than that, it is a saying that is promoted in order to enslave the lower classes. It is promoted to further stabilize the authority of the ruling class, to court the favor of the ruling class, and to perpetuate the enslavement of the lower classes, so that they will not complain even if they are enslaved for generations. From this we can see that, in this kind of society, the laws and systems are clearly unjust; this kind of society is not governed by the truth, and it is not ruled by the truth, justice, or righteousness. Instead, it is governed by man’s evil and power, regardless of who serve as officials. If the common people were to serve as officials, the situation would be just the same. This is the essence of this social system. “Requite evil with good” exposes this fact. The phrase clearly has a certain political quality to it—it is a demand placed on man’s moral conduct in order to strengthen the ruling classes’ domination and enslavement of the lower classes.

Not only is the demand that people requite evil with good not in keeping with the normal needs or demands of humanity, or the character and dignity of humanity, naturally, it is much less a proper standard for evaluating the quality of a person’s humanity. This demand is so far removed from actual humanity; it is not just that it is unachievable, it should never have been promoted in the first place. It is just a saying and a strategy employed by the ruling class to strengthen their rule and control over the masses. Naturally, God has never promoted this kind of saying, whether it be in the Age of Law, the Age of Grace, or the current Age of Kingdom, and God has never used this kind of method, saying, or demand as a basis for evaluating the quality of people’s humanity. This is because, regardless of whether someone is moral or immoral, and no matter how good or bad their moral conduct may be, God only considers their essence—these sayings about moral conduct just do not exist in God’s purview. Thus, the saying about moral conduct, “Requite evil with good,” is invalid in God’s house, and it is not worthy of analysis. Regardless of whether you requite evil with good, or requite evil with vengeance, how should believers in God view the matter of “requiting evil”? With what attitude and from what viewpoint should they view and approach this matter? If someone commits an act of evil in the church, God’s house has its own administrative decrees and principles for handling that person—there is no need for anyone to take vengeance for the victim or to defend them against injustice. There is no need for that in God’s house, and the church will naturally handle the problem according to the principles. This is a fact that can be both observed and encountered by people. To put it very clearly and

precisely: The church has principles for handling people and God's house has administrative decrees. What about God, then? With regard to God, any person who does evil will be punished accordingly, and God will dictate when and how they are punished. God's principles of punishment are absolutely inseparable from His disposition and essence. God has a righteous and unoffendable disposition, He has majesty and wrath, and all who commit evil will be punished accordingly by Him. This is far greater than the laws of man, it surpasses humanity and all of the secular laws. Not only is it fair, reasonable, and in keeping with the desires of humanity, it also does not require everyone's plaudits and affirmation. It does not require you to judge matters from the pinnacle of moral supremacy. When God does these things, He has His own principles and timing. It should be left up to God to act as He may, and people should refrain from interfering, as this has nothing to do with them. What does God ask of people with regard to the matter of "requiting evil"? That they do not act or take revenge on other people out of hot-headedness. What should you do if someone offends you, harasses you, or even wishes to harm you? Are there principles for handling such things? (Yes.) There are solutions and principles for these things, and a basis in God's words and the truth. Regardless of anything else, the saying about moral conduct, "Requite evil with good," is also not a standard by which to judge the quality of people's humanity. At most, if someone is capable of requiting evil with good, it can be said that they are relatively tolerant, simple, good-natured, and magnanimous, that they are not petty, and that they are possessed of passable moral conduct. However, can the quality of this person's humanity be evaluated and judged on the basis of this one saying? No, absolutely not. One must also take into account what they pursue, the path they walk, their attitude toward the truth and positive things, and so on. That is the only way to accurately judge whether or not they have humanity.

This concludes our fellowship for today.

March 26, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (7)

Recently, I have provided fellowship on all kinds of sayings from traditional culture about moral conduct. Regarding certain specific sayings, I have fellowshiped a great deal. Now, does this subject and content have anything to do with the truth? (Yes.) Does anyone think that this subject and content seem unrelated to the truth? If they think that, then they are of truly poor caliber and lack even the slightest discernment. Has My fellowship on this subject been easy to understand? (Yes.) If I had not fellowshiped and dissected in this way, would you have mistaken these sayings about moral conduct that people regard as relatively positive for the truth and continued to uphold them? Firstly, I can say for certain that most people regard these sayings as positive things, as things that accord with humanity and ought to be abided by, and as being in keeping with conscience, reason, demands, notions and other such things relating to humanity. It can be said that prior to My fellowshiping on this topic, almost everyone regarded these various sayings about moral conduct as being positive and in keeping with the truth. After hearing My fellowship and dissection, are you now able to distinguish between these sayings on moral conduct and the truth? Do you possess this kind of discernment? Some will say: “I’m unable to distinguish between them, but in any case, hearing God’s fellowship, I now see that there is a difference between these things and the truth. They cannot take the place of the truth, much less can they be said to be positive or be the truth. Of course, it would be out of the question to consider them as being in keeping with God’s words and demands or criteria of the truth. They do not have any relation to God’s words, God’s demands or criteria of the truth. All told, regardless of whether they conform to the conscience and reason of humanity, I no longer worship these things in my heart and no longer consider them to be the truth.” This shows that these aspects of traditional culture no longer serve a guiding role in people’s hearts. When people hear these sayings about moral conduct, they will subconsciously distinguish them from the truth and will, at most, take them to be something that people approve of in their conscience. However, they know that these sayings are still different from the truth and absolutely cannot replace the truth. Once people grasp the essence of these sayings on moral conduct, they will stop regarding them as truth and abiding by, worshiping, or seeking them as such—this is the baseline effect achieved. Now what positive effects does understanding all of this have on people’s pursuit of the truth? It will certainly have a positive effect, but the magnitude of that effect will depend upon the degree to which you understand the truth or how much truth you know. Considering these points, it is clearly quite necessary to dissect these aspects of traditional culture that people uphold and which conform with their notions. At the very least, this dissection will have the effect of helping people attain a pure understanding of the truth and preventing them from being fruitless in their efforts or walking the wrong path in their pursuit of the truth. These are effects that can be achieved.

Last time we fellowshiped on and dissected four sayings about moral conduct, namely, “Don’t pocket the money you pick up,” “Derive pleasure from helping others,” “Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others,” and “Requite evil with good.” Today, we will continue by fellowshiping on other sayings. Chinese traditional culture has put forward many explicit claims about moral conduct—no matter during which era or period of history these claims were originally advanced, they have all been passed down to the present and have firmly taken root in people’s hearts. As time has passed and new things have gradually arisen, man has proposed many new and different claims about moral conduct. These claims are basically demands made on people’s moral character and behavior. Are you all more or less clear on the four sayings about moral conduct we fellowshiped on last time? (Yes.) Now let us continue by fellowshiping on the next saying: “A kindness received should be gratefully repaid.” The idea that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid is one of the classic criteria in Chinese traditional culture for judging whether a person’s conduct is moral or immoral. When evaluating whether someone’s humanity is good or bad, and how moral their conduct is, one of the benchmarks is whether they return the favors or help that they receive—whether or not they are someone who gratefully repays the kindness they receive. Within Chinese traditional culture, and within the traditional culture of mankind, people treat this as an important measure of moral conduct. If someone does not understand that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid, and they are ungrateful, then they are considered to be devoid of conscience and unworthy of associating with, and should be despised, spurned or rejected by all. On the other hand, if someone does understand that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid—if they are grateful and return the favors and help they receive with every means at their disposal—they are deemed a person of conscience and humanity. If somebody receives benefits or help from another person, but does not repay them, or just expresses a little gratitude to them with a simple “thank you” and nothing more, what will the other person think? Might they feel uneasy about it? Might they think, “That guy doesn’t deserve to be helped, he’s not a good person. If that’s how he responds when I’ve helped him so much, then he has no conscience or humanity, and isn’t worth associating with”? If they ran into this kind of person again, would they still help them? They wouldn’t wish to, at least. Wouldn’t you, in similar circumstances, wonder whether you really ought to help or not? The lesson you would have learned from your previous experience would be, “I can’t help just anybody out—they have to understand that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid. If they’re the ungrateful type who won’t repay me for the help I’ve given them, then I’m better off not helping.” Wouldn’t that be your view on the matter? (Yes.) Generally, when people help others, what exactly do they think about their act of assistance? Do they have certain expectations or demands of the person they help? Does anyone say, “I’m helping you with no expectation of being compensated. I don’t wish to gain anything from you. Helping you when you encounter difficulties is just what I ought to do, and it’s my duty.

No matter whether we have some relation to each other and whether you will be able to pay me back in the future or not, I'm just doing my basic duty as an ordinary person and I won't demand any repayment. It doesn't matter to me whether you repay me or not"? Do people who say such things exist? Even if there are such people, they are just fabrications and do not match up with the facts. There are so many made-up heroic characters in Chinese historical novels and the heroes fabricated by the country of the great red dragon in modern society are even more fictitious. Although the people existed, the stories about them were invented. Looking at it based on these facts, are you now clear about the origin of the saying "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," this criterion for judging people's moral conduct, and from whom it derives? Perhaps some people still are not quite clear on this. Within this corrupt human race, people all have a kind of ideal and a certain expectation of human society. What expectation do they have? "If everyone gives a little bit of love, the world will become a wonderful place." In addition to this expectation, people also hope that they are repaid and compensated for their loving hearts and the price they pay. On the one hand, this may be compensation in the material sense, such as a gift of money or a material reward. On the other hand, it might mean compensation in the spiritual sense—that is, bringing people spiritual fulfillment by giving them a reward to bolster their reputation that bestows a title like "model laborer," "moral role model," or "moral exemplar." In human society, nearly everyone has this kind of expectation of society and the world—they all hope to be good people, walk the right path, and extend a helping hand to those in need, allowing people to gain their assistance and derive certain benefits. They hope that those who receive their assistance will remember who gave it, and the ways they benefited from it. Of course, they also hope that when they themselves are in need, there will be someone there to reach out a helping hand. On the one hand, when someone needs assistance, they hope that some people will show loving hearts to them; on the other hand, they hope that when those who show loving hearts fall upon hard times, they will also get the help they need. People have this kind of expectation of society and the world—actually, their ultimate aim is for mankind to abide in a harmonious, peaceful, and stable society. How has this expectation arisen? This expectation and associated claim have[a] naturally arisen because people do not feel safe and happy in this kind of social milieu. As such, people began to evaluate an individual's moral conduct and the nobility of their character based upon whether or not they repaid others for their kindness, and the saying "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," which is a criterion for evaluating people's moral conduct, arose out of this situation. Is it not quite odd how this saying came into being? (Yes.) In the current era, man does not seek and accept the truth, and he has become fed up with the truth. People are in a chaotic state and, despite living among each other, they are all unclear about what responsibilities they should carry out,

a. The original text reads "This claim has."

what duties they ought to fulfill, and what place they should assume and what vantage point they should adopt when viewing people and things. Additionally, people are unclear about what responsibilities and duties they have to society and are unsure from what stance or perspective they should view and approach society. They lack an accurate explanation and verdict for everything that occurs in the world and they fail to find the right path of practice to dictate how they comport themselves and act. Faced with an increasingly dark, frightening world beset with fighting, revenge killing, war and all manner of unfair treatment, people pine for and expectantly await the coming of the Savior. Yet, they have no interest in the truth and no one actively searches for God or His work. Even if they do hear God's utterances, they do not seek, much less accept them. People all live in this helpless state and all feel that society is incredibly unjust and even unsafe. Everyone is thoroughly sick of this society and this world and full of enmity toward them, but despite being full of enmity, they still hope that one day society will improve. What does an improved society look like to them? They envision a society in which fighting and revenge killing no longer exist, in which everyone interacts harmoniously, no one is subject to repression, suffering or the fetters of life, all can live a relaxed, unrestrained, comfortable and happy life, interact normally with others, treat them fairly and, of course, be treated fairly by others. Because in this world and among humankind, there has never been fairness. There are only ever fights and revenge killings, but never harmony among people. This has always been the case, no matter in which period of history. Faced with this brutal societal context and conditions, not a single person knows how to resolve these issues, how to resolve the fights and revenge killings among people, or any of the unfair and unjust situations that arise in society. It is precisely due to the fact that these issues exist and people do not know how to resolve them, what vantage or viewpoint they should approach these issues from, or what method they should use to resolve them, that they develop this sort of utopian vision in their minds. In this utopian vision, people are able to live together in harmony, and everyone is treated fairly by society and people around them. Everyone hopes that "people's respect toward others will be returned tenfold; if you help me, I will repay you; and when you need help, there will be many people in society who can lend a helping hand and fulfill their social responsibilities; and when I need help, those that previously benefited from my assistance will come to my aid. This should be a society in which people help each other." People believe that only in this way can man live happily, harmoniously and in a stable and peaceful society. Only in this way, they believe, can people's struggles against each other be thoroughly eradicated and resolved. They think that once these issues are resolved, the expectations and ideals they harbor for human society in the depths of their hearts will be realized.

In the society of unbelievers there is a popular song called "Tomorrow Will Be Better." People always hope that things will get better in the future—there is nothing wrong with that—but, in reality, will things really be better tomorrow? No, this is impossible; things

can only get worse, because humanity is becoming increasingly evil and the world is increasingly dark. Among humankind, not only do fewer and fewer people gratefully repay the kindness they receive, but also, more and more people are ungrateful and bite the hand that feeds them. This, instead, is the reality of the situation now. Is this not a fact? (Yes.) How did things get this way? Why hasn't the criterion of moral conduct "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," which is promoted by moralists, educators, and sociologists, had a constrictive effect upon men? (Because men have corrupt dispositions.) Because men have corrupt dispositions. But do those moralists, educators, and sociologists know that? (No.) They do not know that the root cause of the revenge killings and struggles between men is not due to a problem with their moral conduct, but rather, it is due to their corrupt dispositions. Men have no sense of the criteria by which they ought to comport themselves. That is to say, they do not know how to comport themselves correctly, and do not know what exactly are the principles and paths of comportment. In addition, men all have corrupt dispositions and satanic natures, live for the sake of profit, and put their own interests before everything. As a result, the problem of revenge killings and struggles between men is becoming increasingly serious. Can such corrupt men abide by criteria of moral conduct such as "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid"? Given that men have lost even the most basic reason and conscience, how can they gratefully repay the kindness they receive? God has always been guiding people, preparing everything they need to survive, supplying them with sunlight, air, food, water, and so on, yet how many among them are thankful to Him? How many among them are able to perceive God's true love for mankind? There are many believers who, despite enjoying so much of God's grace, fly into a rage, berate God, and complain about the injustice of Heaven as soon as God does not fulfill their desires one or two times. Is this not the way people are? Even if there are certain individuals who are able to gratefully repay the kindness they receive from some people, what problems will that resolve? Of course, the people who proposed this saying about moral conduct had good intentions—they were motivated only by the hope that men could resolve their enmity, avoid conflict, help each other, live in harmony, have a corrective influence on each other, show warmth to each other, and band together to help each other in times of need. What a wonderful society it would be if mankind could enter into such a state, but alas, such a society will never exist, because society is just the sum total of all the corrupt individuals within it. Due to man's corruption, society is becoming increasingly dark and evil, and man's ideal of a harmonious society will never be achieved. Why can this ideal society never be achieved? From a fundamental and theoretical perspective, such a society cannot be achieved due to man's corrupt dispositions. In reality, momentary good behaviors, one-off acts of good moral conduct, and temporary displays of love, help, support toward others, and so on just cannot resolve man's corrupt dispositions. Of course, even more importantly, these things cannot resolve the questions of how people ought to comport themselves and how they

should walk the correct path in life. Given that these issues cannot be resolved, will it be possible for this society to achieve the harmonious state that people idealize and hope for? It is essentially just an idle dream, and the chances of it happening are remote. By advocating moral scriptures and educating people, these moralists try to encourage them to use good moral conduct to help others and exert a corrective influence over others, with the goal of influencing and improving society. Yet, is this idea, this aspiration of theirs right or wrong? It is certainly wrong and cannot be realized. Why do I say that? Because they only understand people's behaviors, thoughts and viewpoints, and moral conduct, but are completely oblivious when it comes to more profound issues like man's essence, man's corrupt dispositions, the source of man's corruption and how to resolve man's corrupt dispositions. As a result, they propose foolish criteria of moral conduct like "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid." Then, they hope to use this kind of saying, this kind of criterion for moral conduct, to influence mankind, influence generation after generation, transform man's behavioral criteria, and transform the direction and goals for man's behaviors, while at the same time gradually transforming the social climate, and transforming relations between men and relations between the rulers and the ruled. They believe that once these relations are transformed, society will stop being so unjust and so rife with fighting, enmity, and slaughter. This will be of some benefit to the common people, who will obtain an equitable social living environment, and lead more contented lives, relatively speaking. But the greatest beneficiary will not be the common people, but rather the rulers, the ruling class, and the aristocrats of every age. These so-called eminent personages and sages who promote moral doctrines continually use these moral doctrines, which are perceived by mankind to be relatively noble and in keeping with humanity and the sense of their conscience, to educate and influence people, and to transform their moral outlooks, so that they will voluntarily live in a social environment that is civilized or has certain moral standards. This benefits the everyday lives of common people in one respect, as it makes the social environment in which they live more harmonious, peaceable, and civilized. In another respect, this also creates more favorable conditions for the rulers to govern over the people. These sayings that convey criteria for moral conduct are in keeping with most people's ideas and notions, and they also conform to people's utopian visions of a glorious future. Of course, their main intent in promoting these sayings is to create more favorable conditions for the rulers to govern. Under such conditions, the common people will not cause trouble, will live in harmony and without conflict, and will all be able to willingly abide by the moral criteria that govern social behavior. To put it plainly, the intent of promoting these sayings is to make it so that the ruled subjects of the state, the common masses, act obediently and properly under the constraints of society's moral criteria, learn to obey rules, and become docile citizens. Would the rulers not then be relatively at ease and reassured? If the rulers didn't have to worry about the masses rising up against them and usurping their authority, would this not give rise to a so-called

harmonious society? Would this not cement the political power of the rulers? This is basically the origin of these moral scriptures and the context in which they have arisen. To put it charitably, it was in order to regulate the behaviors and moral conduct of the masses that some basic criteria for social morality were formulated for them. That is to say, these sayings are for the sake of individuals; in essence they are actually promoted for the sake of the stability of society and the country, and to enable the rulers to govern for a long time, in perpetuity. This is the true aim of so-called moralists in promoting traditional culture. The rulers do not actually care about the well-being of the masses, and even when they do seem to care, they just do so in order to maintain the stability of their political power. They only care about their own happiness, the stability of their power and status, their ability to rule over the masses in perpetuity and the possibility of ruling over even more countries, with the eventual goal of taking over the entire world. These are the motives and intentions of devil kings. For instance, some people say: “We come from a long line of peasants, who toiled as long-term hired farm hands working for landowners and never had any land to call their own. After the establishment of the PRC, the Communist Party brought down the landowners and the capitalists, gave us our own plot of land, and we went from being peasants to owners. We owe everything to the Communist Party, they are the saviors of the Chinese people, and we must gratefully repay their kindness and not be unappreciative. Some people want to rise up against the Communist Party—how ungrateful they are! Are they not biting the hand that feeds them? People should not be so lacking in conscience and forgetful of their roots!” What is implied in this statement is that no matter what kind of living environment you currently reside in, no matter what kind of treatment you have been subjected to, and whether or not your human rights are guaranteed, or your right to exist is under threat or has been stripped away, you must always remember to gratefully repay the kindness you have received and not forget your roots. You should not act like a nasty, ungrateful person and should continually and perpetually repay their kindness with no expectation of remuneration. Aren’t such people still living as slaves? They think that they used to be slaves to landowners and capitalists, but did the capitalists and landowners really exploit the common people? Were peasants actually worse off then compared with people now? No, this is a lie fabricated by the Communist Party. The facts and reality of the situation are now coming to light, little by little. Their claim that the capitalists exploited the sweat and toil of so many common people and the story of the “White-haired Girl” are all fabrications and falsehoods—none of it is true. What is the goal of these fabrications and falsehoods? To make people hate those landowners and capitalists and perpetually sing the praises of the Communist Party and submit to them forever. In the past, many people would sing the song “Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China.” This song was sung in every corner of China for several decades, but now no one sings it. There are just too many examples of the Communist Party’s fabrications and falsehoods, all of which run counter to the objective facts. Now some people are

exposing the truth publicly to show everyone the reality of the situation. In human society, whatever the era, the criterion of moral conduct “A kindness received should be gratefully repaid” has always had a degree of effectiveness in constraining people’s behaviors and serving as a benchmark for people’s humanity. Of course, a more important effect of such a saying is that it has been used to help rulers bolster their reign over the masses. In a certain sense, this saying can be claimed to serve as a way of constraining people’s behaviors and moral conduct, making people think about and view problems within the framework of this criterion of moral conduct and then make judgments and choices based on this criterion. It does not exhort people to fulfill all the responsibilities that people should fulfill, both to their family and to society at large, but rather, in severe violation of the norms and desires of normal humanity, it forcibly tells people what to think and how to think, what to do and how to do it. This saying acts as a sort of imperceptible method and invisible framework to guide, restrict, and fetter people and inform them what they should and should not do. The goal of this is to use this kind of public opinion and criterion for social morality to influence people’s thoughts, viewpoints, and the ways they comport themselves and act.

Statements on moral conduct like “A kindness received should be gratefully repaid” do not tell people exactly what their responsibilities are within society and among mankind. Instead, they are a way of binding or forcing people to act and think in a certain way, regardless of whether they want to or not, and no matter the circumstances or context in which these acts of kindness befall them. There are plenty of examples from ancient China of kindness being repaid. For example, a starving beggar boy got taken in by a family who fed him, clothed him, trained him in martial arts, and taught him all kinds of knowledge. They waited until he had grown up, and then started using him as a source of income, sending him out to do evil, to kill people, to do things that he didn’t want to do. If you look at his story in light of all the favors he received, then him being saved was a good thing. But if you consider what he was forced to do later, was it really good or bad? (It was bad.) But under the conditioning of traditional culture like “A kindness received should be gratefully repaid,” people cannot make this distinction. On the surface, it appears that the boy had no choice but to do evil things and hurt people, to become a killer—things that most people would not wish to do. But didn’t the fact that he did these bad things and killed at the behest of his master come, deep down, from a desire to repay him for his kindness? Particularly due to the conditioning of Chinese traditional culture such as “A kindness received should be gratefully repaid,” people can’t help but be influenced and controlled by these ideas. The way that they act, and the intentions and motivations behind these actions are certainly constrained by them. When the boy was put in that situation, what would his first thought have been? “I was saved by this family, and they have been good to me. I can’t be ungrateful, I must repay their kindness. I owe my life to them, so I must devote it to them. I should do whatever they ask of me, even if that means doing evil and killing people. I cannot consider whether it

is right or wrong, I must simply repay their kindness. Would I still be worthy of being called human if I didn't?" As a result, whenever the family wanted him to murder someone or do something bad, he did it without any hesitation or reservations. So weren't his conduct, actions, and unquestioning obedience all dictated by the idea and view that "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid"? Wasn't he fulfilling that criterion of moral conduct? (Yes.) What do you see from this example? Is the saying "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid" a good thing, or not? (It's not, there is no principle to it.) Actually, a person who repays a kindness does have a principle. Namely, that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid. If someone does you a kindness, you must do one in return. If you fail to do so, then you are not human and there is nothing that you can say if you are condemned for it. The saying goes: "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring," but in this case, the boy received not a small act of kindness but a life-saving kindness, so he had all the more reason to repay it with a life in return. He did not know what the limits or principles of repaying kindness were. He believed that his life had been given to him by that family, so he had to devote it to them in return, and do whatever they demanded of him, including murder or other acts of evil. This way of repaying kindness has no principles or limits. He served as an accomplice to evildoers and ruined himself in the process. Was it right for him to repay kindness in this way? Of course not. It was a foolish way of doing things. It is true that this family saved him and allowed him to continue living, but there must be principles, limits, and moderation to one's repayment of kindness. They saved his life, but the purpose of his life is not to do evil. The meaning and value of life, as well as man's mission, are not to do evil and commit murder, and he should not live for the sole purpose of repaying kindness. The boy mistakenly believed that the meaning and value of life were to gratefully repay kindness received. This was a grave misunderstanding. Was this not the result of being influenced by this criterion of moral conduct, "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid"? (Yes.) Had he been led astray by the influence of this saying about repaying kindness, or found the correct path and principles of practice? He had quite obviously been led astray—this is as clear as day. If this criterion of moral conduct did not exist, would people be able to make judgments in simple cases of right and wrong? (Yes.) The boy would have thought: "This family might have rescued me, but it seems that they only did so for the sake of their business and their future. I am just a tool they can use to harm or kill anyone that disrupts or impedes their business ventures. This is the real reason they saved me. They pulled me back from the brink of death only to make me do evil and commit murder—are they not just sending me on my way to hell? Won't this make me suffer even more? In that case, I would have been better off if they'd have just let me die. They didn't really rescue me!" This family did not rescue the beggar boy out of a philanthropic urge and to allow him to live better, they did so just to gain control over him and to make him hurt, harm, and kill others. So were they actually doing good or evil? They were quite clearly doing evil, not good—these

benefactors had become evil people. Are evil people worthy of being repaid? Should they be repaid? They should not. So, as soon as you find out that they are evil, what should you do? You should keep your distance from them, avoid them, and find a way to flee from them. This is wisdom. Some might say: “These evil people already have control over me, so it’s not so easy to flee from them. Escape is impossible!” More often than not, these are the consequences of gratefully repaying kindness received. Because there are just too few good people and so many evil people, if you happen upon a good person it is fine to repay their kindness, but if you fall into the hands of an evil person, that is tantamount to falling into the hands of a demon, of Satan. They will scheme against you and toy with you, and no good can come from falling into their hands. There are just too many examples of this throughout history. Now that you know that gratefully repaying kindness received is not a legitimate criterion for how to comport yourself and act, how should you act when someone bestows kindness on you? What are your views on this? (No matter who helps us, we should decide whether or not to accept their help based on the situation. In some cases, it is alright to accept help, but in others we mustn’t blindly accept their help. If we do accept help, we still need to be principled and set limits on how we repay their kindness, to avoid being deceived or taken advantage of by evil people.) This is a principled way of approaching the situation. Additionally, if you cannot see the situation clearly or are at a dead end, you must pray to God and ask Him to open up a path for you. This will allow you to avoid temptation and escape from Satan’s claws. At times, God will use Satan’s services to help people, but we must be sure to thank God in such cases and not repay kindness to Satan—this is a question of principle. When temptation comes in the form of an evil person bestowing kindness, you must first be clear about exactly who is helping you out and providing assistance, what your own situation is, and whether there are other paths you can take. In such cases, you must think on your feet. If God wants to save you, no matter whose services He uses to accomplish it, you should first thank God and accept it from God. You should not direct your gratitude solely toward people, to say nothing of offering up your life to someone in gratitude. This is a grave mistake. The crucial thing is that your heart is grateful to God, and you accept it from Him. If the person who bestows kindness on you, helps you, or rescues you is a good person, then you should repay their kindness, but you should only do what you are capable of given your means. If the person who helped you has the wrong intentions and is looking to scheme against you and use you to achieve their own goals, then there is no need to repay them at any cost. In short, God scrutinizes man’s heart, so as long as you don’t have a guilty conscience and you have the right motivations, it is not an issue. That is, before you come to understand the truth, your actions at least need to be in keeping with human conscience and reason. You should be able to approach this situation reasonably so that you will never be regretful of your actions, at any point in the future. You are all adults and have all been through quite a lot in the country of the great red dragon—has there been any lack of suppression,

persecution, abuse, or humiliation in your life? You all clearly see how deeply corrupted humanity has become, so no matter what temptation you encounter, you must approach it with wisdom and not fall for Satan's treacherous plots. Whatever situation you may face, you must seek the truth and only make decisions after coming to an understanding of the principles through prayer and fellowship. In these past few years, the church has been carrying out the work of cleansing and many evil people, nonbelievers, and antichrists have been exposed and cleared out or expelled. Most people never predicted that this would happen. Given that even within the church there are still so many muddle-headed people, evil people, and nonbelievers, I assume that you are clear on how corrupted and evil unbelievers must be? Without the truth and wisdom, people cannot see anything clearly and will just be deceived and hoodwinked, and toyed with by evil people and Satan. As such, they become Satan's lackeys. Those who do not understand the truth and lack principles do only foolish things.

When some people are in difficulty or danger and happen to receive help from an evil person that allows them to extricate themselves from their plight, they come to believe that the evil person is a good person and they are willing to do something for them to show their gratitude. However, in such cases, the evil person will try to involve them in their nefarious doings and use them to carry out bad deeds. If they are unable to refuse, then it can become dangerous. Some such people will feel conflicted in these situations, because they think that if they do not help their evil friend in doing a few bad deeds, it will seem as though they are not sufficiently reciprocating this friendship, and yet it would violate their conscience and reason to do something wrong. As such, they get caught up in this dilemma. This is a result of being influenced by this idea in traditional culture of repaying kindness—they become fettered, bound, and controlled by this idea. In many instances, these sayings from traditional culture take the place of the sense of man's conscience and his normal judgment; naturally, they also influence man's normal way of thinking and correct decision-making. The ideas of traditional culture are incorrect and directly affect man's views on things, causing him to make bad decisions. From ancient times up until the present day, countless people have been influenced by this idea, view, and criterion of moral conduct regarding the repayment of kindness. Even when the person who bestows kindness on them is an evil or bad person and compels them to do nefarious acts and bad deeds, they still go against their own conscience and reason, blindly complying in order to repay their kindness, with many disastrous consequences. It could be said that many people, having been influenced, fettered, constrained, and bound by this criterion of moral conduct, blindly and mistakenly uphold this view of repaying kindness, and are even likely to aid and abet evil people. Now that you have heard My fellowship, you have a clear picture of this situation and can determine that this is foolish loyalty, and that this behavior counts as comporting oneself without setting any limits, and recklessly repaying kindness without any discernment, and that it lacks meaning and value. Because people fear being castigated by public

opinion or condemned by others, they reluctantly devote their lives to repaying the kindness of others, even sacrificing their lives in the process, which is an absurd and foolish way to go about things. This saying from traditional culture has not only fettered people's thinking, but it has also placed an unnecessary weight and inconvenience upon their life and saddled their families with additional suffering and burdens. Many people have paid great prices in order to repay kindness received—they view repaying kindness as a social responsibility or their own duty and may even spend their whole lives repaying the kindness of others. They believe this to be a perfectly natural and justified thing to do, an unshirkable duty. Is this viewpoint and way of doing things not foolish and absurd? It completely reveals how ignorant and unenlightened people are. In any event, this saying about moral conduct—a kindness received should be gratefully repaid—may be in keeping with people's notions, but it does not accord with the truth principles. It is incompatible with God's words and is an incorrect view and way of doing things.

Given that repaying kindness is unrelated to the truth and God's demands of men, and has been the subject of our criticism, how exactly does God view this saying? What kinds of views and actions should normal people have in response to this saying? Are you clear on this? If someone previously bestowed you with kindness that benefited you greatly or did you a big favor, should you repay them? How should you approach this kind of situation? Is this not a matter of people's views? It is a matter of people's views as well as their paths of practice. Tell Me your view on this matter—if someone is kind to you, should you repay them? It will be problematic if you still cannot fathom this issue. Before, you did not understand the truth and practiced repaying kindness as if it were the truth. Now, after listening to My dissection and criticism, you have seen where the problem lies, but you still do not know how to practice or deal with this issue—can you still not fathom this issue? Before you had comprehended the truth, you lived by your conscience and no matter who bestowed kindness on you or helped you, even if they were evil people or gangsters, you would definitely repay them, and felt compelled to take a bullet for your friends and even put your life on the line for them. Men should enslave themselves to their benefactors as repayment, while women should pledge themselves in marriage and bear children for them—this is the idea that traditional culture impresses upon people, commanding them to gratefully repay kindness received. As a result, people think, "Only people who repay kindness have a conscience, and if they do not repay kindness, then they must lack conscience and be inhuman." This idea is firmly rooted in people's hearts. Tell Me, do animals know to repay kindness? (Yes.) That being the case, can humans really be considered advanced just because they know to repay kindness? Can man's practice of repaying kindness be considered a sign of humanity? (No.) So, what view should people have of this matter? How should this kind of thing be understood? After understanding it, what approach should one take toward it? These are the questions you should all aim to resolve at this moment. Please share your views on this matter. (If someone did really help me resolve an issue or problem, I

would first thank them sincerely, but I wouldn't be constrained or controlled by this situation. If they were to encounter difficulties, I would do what I could for them within my power. I would help them where I could, but would not force myself to go beyond my means.) This is the right view and this way of acting is acceptable. Does anyone else want to share their view on this? (In the past, my view was that if someone helped me, I should help them in return when they encountered trouble. Through God's fellowship and dissection of the views "Derive pleasure from helping others" and "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," I have come to realize that one must follow principles when helping others. If someone has been kind to me or helped me, my conscience dictates that I should help them as well, but the help that I offer must be based on my circumstances and what I am capable of providing. Also, I should only help them resolve their difficulties and attend to life's necessities; I should not help them commit evil or carry out bad deeds. If I see that a brother or sister is experiencing difficulty, I will help them not because they once helped me, but because it is my duty, my responsibility.) Anything else? (I remember the words of God who said, "Should anyone do us a good turn, we should accept it from God." That is to say, whenever someone acts nicely toward us, we should accept it from God and be able to handle it correctly. That way, we can correctly understand this view about repaying kindness. Also, God says that we must love what God loves and hate what God hates. When helping other people, we must discern whether the person is someone that God loves or hates. This is the principle we must act by.) This relates to the truth—it is a correct principle and has a basis to it. Let us not speak now about that which relates to the truth, but rather let us address how people should approach this matter from the perspective of humanity. In reality, the situations that you may encounter are not always so simple—they do not always occur within the church and among brothers and sisters. Oftentimes, they occur outside the scope of the church. For instance, an unbelieving relative, friend, acquaintance, or colleague may show kindness to you or help you. If you are able to approach this matter and treat the person who helped you in the right way, namely, in a way that both accords with the truth principles and seems appropriate to others, then your attitude toward this matter and your ideas about it will be relatively accurate. The traditional cultural concept that "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid" needs to be discerned. The most important part is the word "kindness"—how should you view this kindness? What aspect and nature of kindness is it referring to? What is the significance of "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid"? People must figure out the answers to these questions and under no circumstances be constrained by this idea of repaying kindness—for anyone who pursues the truth, this is absolutely essential. What is "kindness" according to human notions? On a smaller level, kindness is someone helping you out when you are in trouble. For example, somebody giving you a bowl of rice when you are starving, or a bottle of water when you're dying of thirst, or helping you up when you fall down and can't get up. These are all acts of kindness. A

great act of kindness is someone rescuing you when you're in desperate straits—that is a life-saving kindness. When you are in mortal danger and someone helps you to avoid death, they are essentially saving your life. These are some of the things that people perceive as "kindness." This sort of kindness far surpasses any petty, material favor—it is a great kindness that cannot be measured in terms of money or material things. Those who receive it feel a kind of gratitude that is impossible to express with just a few words of thanks. Is it accurate, though, for people to measure kindness in this way? (It is not.) Why do you say that it is not accurate? (Because this measurement is based on the standards of traditional culture.) This is an answer based in theory and doctrine, and while it may seem right, it does not get to the essence of the matter. So, how can one explain this in practical terms? Think about it carefully. A while ago, I heard about a video online in which a man drops his wallet without realizing it. The wallet gets picked up by a small dog who chases after him, and when the man sees this, he beats the dog for stealing his wallet. Absurd, isn't it? The man has less morals than the dog! The dog's actions were in complete accordance with human standards of morality. A human would have called out "You dropped your wallet!" But because the dog couldn't speak, it just silently picked up the wallet and trotted after the man. So, if a dog can carry out some of the good behaviors encouraged by traditional culture, what does that say about humans? Humans are born with conscience and reason, so they're all the more capable of doing these things. As long as someone has the sense of their conscience, they can fulfill these kinds of responsibilities and obligations. It is not necessary to put in hard work or pay a price, it requires little effort and is simply a matter of doing something helpful, something of benefit to others. But does the nature of this act really qualify as "kindness"? Does it rise to the level of an act of kindness? (It doesn't.) Since it does not, do people need to talk of repaying it? That would be unnecessary.

Let us now turn our attention to the matter of man's so-called kindness. For instance, take the case of a kind person who rescues a beggar that collapsed from hunger in the snow outside. They take the beggar into their home, feed and clothe him, and allow him to live among their family and do work for them. Regardless of whether the beggar volunteered to work of his own free will, or whether he did so to repay a debt of kindness, was his rescue an act of kindness? (No.) Even small animals are able to help and rescue each other. It requires just a slight effort for men to perform such deeds, and anyone with humanity is able to do such things and rise to them. One could say that such deeds are a societal responsibility and obligation that anyone with humanity ought to fulfill. Isn't man's characterization of them as kindness going a little overboard? Is it an apt characterization? For instance, during a time of famine when many people may go hungry, if a rich person dispenses bags of rice to poor households to help them get through this difficult time, is this not just an example of the kind of basic moral help and support that should occur among men? He just gave them a little bit of rice—it is not as if he gave away all his food to others and went hungry himself. Does this really count as

kindness? (No.) The societal responsibilities and obligations that man is capable of fulfilling, those deeds that man should be instinctively capable of doing and ought to do, and simple acts of service that are helpful and beneficial to others—these things can in no way be considered kindness, as they are all cases where man is simply lending a helping hand. Giving help to someone who happens to need it, at an appropriate time and place, is a very normal phenomenon. It is also the responsibility of every member of the human race. This is simply a sort of responsibility and obligation. God gave people these instincts when He created them. What instincts am I referring to here? I am referring to man's conscience and reason. When you see someone fall to the ground, your instinctive reaction is "I should go help them up." If you saw them fall but pretended you did not see, and you didn't go to help them up, it would weigh on your conscience and you would feel bad for having acted this way. Someone who truly has humanity will immediately think to help someone up that they see has fallen. They will not care whether that person is thankful to them, because they believe this is what they ought to do, and see no need to consider the matter any further. Why is that? These are the instincts given to men by God, and anyone with conscience and reason would think to do this and be able to act in this way. God gave man conscience and a human heart—because man has a human heart, he therefore possesses human thoughts, as well as the perspectives and approaches he should have with respect to some matter, so he is able to do these things naturally and easily. He doesn't need any help or ideological guidance from any outside forces, and he doesn't even need education or positive leadership—he does not need any of that. It is just like how people will look for food when they are hungry or seek water when they are thirsty—it is an instinct and does not need to be taught by parents or teachers—it comes naturally, because man has the thinking of normal humanity. In the same way, people are capable of fulfilling their duties and responsibilities in God's house and this is what anyone with conscience and reason ought to do. Thus, helping people and being kind to them is near effortless for humans, it is within the scope of human instinct, and something which people are completely capable of accomplishing. There is no need to rank it as highly as kindness. However, many people equate the help of others with kindness, and are always talking about it and constantly repaying it, thinking that if they don't, they have no conscience. They look down on themselves and despise themselves, even worrying they will be reprimanded by public opinion. Is it necessary to worry about these things? (No.) There are many people who cannot see past this, and are constantly constrained by this issue. This is what it is to not understand the truth principles. For instance, if you went with a friend into the desert and they ran out of water, you would certainly give some of your water to them, you would not just let them die of thirst. Even though you would know that your one bottle of water will last half as long with two people drinking from it, you would still share the water with your friend. Now, why would you do that? Because you could not bear to drink your water while your friend stood by suffering from thirst—you just could not bear the sight. What would cause

you to be unable to bear the sight of your friend suffering from thirst? It is the sense of your conscience that gives rise to this feeling. Even if you did not want to fulfill this kind of responsibility and obligation, your conscience would make it such that you could not bear to do otherwise, it would make you feel upset. Is this not all the result of human instincts? Is this not all decided by man's conscience and reason? If the friend said, "I owe a debt of gratitude to you for giving me some of your water in that situation!" would it not also be wrong to say this? This has nothing to do with kindness. If the tables were turned, and that friend had humanity, conscience and reason, they would also share their water with you. This is just a basic societal responsibility or relationship between people. These most basic of societal relationships or responsibilities or obligations all arise due to the sense of man's conscience, his humanity and the instincts that God bestowed man with at the time of man's creation. Under normal circumstances, these things do not need to be taught by parents or inculcated by society, and much less do they require repeated admonishment from others telling you to do them. Education would only be necessary for those who lack conscience and reason, for those who lack normal cognitive faculties—for example, mentally challenged people or simpletons—or for those who have poor caliber, and are ignorant and stubborn. Those with normal humanity do not need to be taught these things—people with conscience and reason all possess them. So, it is inappropriate to vastly overstate some behavior or act as being a form of kindness when it was just instinctive and accorded with conscience and reason. Why is it inappropriate? By elevating such behaviors to this realm, you saddle every person with a heavy weight and burden, and of course this ties people down. For instance, if in the past, someone gave you money, helped you through a difficult situation, helped you find work, or rescued you, you will think: "I cannot be ungrateful, I must be conscientious and repay their kindness. If I don't repay kindness, am I still human?" In all actuality, regardless of whether or not you repay them, you are still human and still live within the framework of normal humanity—such repayment will not change a thing. Your humanity will not undergo change and your corrupt disposition will not be subdued just because you repaid them well. Likewise, your corrupt disposition will not worsen just because you repaid them poorly. The fact of whether you repay and bestow kindness or otherwise has absolutely no connection to your corrupt disposition. Of course, regardless of whether or not a connection exists, for Me, this kind of "kindness" simply does not exist, and I hope the same is true for you. How should you regard it, then? Simply regard it as an obligation and a responsibility, and something that a person with human instincts should do. You should treat it as your responsibility and obligation as a human being, and do it to the best of your ability. That is all. Some people may say: "I know that this is my responsibility, but I don't want to carry it out." That is fine as well. You can choose for yourself based upon your situation and circumstances. You can also decide more flexibly based upon your mood at the time. If you are worried that after carrying out your responsibility, the beneficiary will continually try to repay you, and ask after you, and

thank you so frequently that it becomes an inconvenience and a disturbance, and as a result you do not want to carry out that responsibility, that is also okay—it is up to you. Some will ask: “Do people who don’t want to fulfill this kind of societal responsibility have poor humanity?” Is this the correct way to judge a person’s humanity? (No.) Why is it incorrect? In this evil society, man must be measured in his behavior and have a sense of propriety in everything he does. Of course, it is even more necessary that he recognizes the environment and context at that moment in time. As the unbelievers say, in this chaotic world, people must be clever, intelligent, and wise in whatever they do—they must not be ignorant, and they certainly mustn’t carry out foolish acts. For example, in public places in some countries, people set up certain scams in which they stage a fake accident to then fraudulently claim compensation. If you do not see through their scam, and blindly act according to your conscience, you are liable to be fooled and get yourself into trouble. For instance, if you see an elderly woman who has fallen in the street, you might think: “I must carry out my responsibilities to society, I don’t need her to repay me. Because I have humanity and the sense of my conscience, I ought to lend her a hand, so I’ll go help her up.” Yet, when you go to pick her up, she extorts you and you end up having to take her to the hospital and pay her medical bills, compensation for emotional damages, and retirement expenses. If you do not pay up, you will be summoned to the police station. Looks like you got yourself in trouble, right? How did this situation come about? (By following one’s good intention and lacking in wisdom.) You were blind, lacked discernment, failed to recognize current trends, and did not discern the setting of the situation. In an evil society such as this, one has to pay a price just for casually helping up an elderly person who has fallen. If she really had fallen and needed your help, you should not be condemned for carrying out societal responsibilities, you should be praised, as your behavior was in keeping with humanity and the sense of man’s conscience. Yet this elderly lady had an ulterior motive—she did not really need your help, she was just scamming you, and you did not see through her cunning scheme. By carrying out your responsibility to her as a fellow human, you fell for her plot, and now she will not let go, extorting even more money from you. Carrying out societal responsibilities should be about helping people in need and fulfilling one’s own responsibilities. It should not result in getting tricked or caught in a trap. Many people have fallen prey to these scams and have clearly come to see how evil people are now, and how adept they are at cheating others. They will cheat anyone, regardless of whether they are strangers or friends and relatives. What a horrible state of affairs! Who brought about this corruption? It was the great red dragon. The great red dragon has profoundly and brutally corrupted mankind! The great red dragon will do all manner of immoral things to advance its own interests, and people have been led astray by its bad example. As a result, scammers and thieves now abound. Based on these facts, one can see that many people are no better than dogs. Perhaps some will be unwilling to listen to this kind of talk, they will feel uncomfortable about it and think: “Are we really no

better than dogs? You are showing disrespect for us and looking down on us by always comparing us to dogs. You have no regard for us as humans!" I would love to view you as humans, but what kind of behavior have men displayed? In all actuality, some people really are no better than dogs. That is all I have to say on this matter for now.

I just fellowshiped about how people helping others out a bit cannot be considered kindness and is just a societal responsibility. Of course, people can choose which societal responsibilities they can fulfill to the best of their abilities. They can fulfill the responsibilities they are suited to fulfill and choose not to fulfill those they find unsuitable. This is a freedom and choice that man has. You can choose which societal responsibilities and obligations you ought to fulfill based upon your circumstances, capabilities, and, of course, the context and circumstances at that moment in time. This is your right. In what context did this right come about? The world is too dark a place, mankind is too evil, and society lacks justice. Under these circumstances, you have to first protect yourself, refrain from acting foolishly and ignorantly, and exercise wisdom. Of course, by protecting yourself, I do not mean protecting your wallet and property from being stolen, but rather protecting yourself from harm—this is of chief importance. You should fulfill your responsibilities and obligations to the best of your ability while also ensuring your own safety. Do not pay attention to gaining the respect of others, and do not be swayed or constrained by public opinion. All you need to do is fulfill your responsibilities and obligations. You should decide how to fulfill your duty based on your own situation; do not take on more than you can handle given your circumstances and capacities. You should not try to impress people by feigning abilities that you do not possess and you should not fear the disrespect, judgment, or condemnation of others. It is wrong to do things for the sake of satisfying your own vanity. Just do as much as you are able to, take on as much as your sense of responsibility dictates, and fulfill as many obligations as you are capable of fulfilling. This is your right. You do not need to force yourself to do things that God has not demanded of you. There is no meaning in following your conscience to do things that have nothing to do with the truth. No matter how much you do, God will not commend you for it, and it will not signify that you have borne a true testimony, let alone that you have furnished yourself with good deeds. For things not pertaining to God's demands, but which people demand that you do, you should have your own choice and principles. Do not be constrained by people. It is enough if you do not do anything that violates your conscience, reason, and the truth. If you help someone by resolving a momentary issue for them, then they will come to depend on you, and believe you should and must solve their problems. They will become fully dependent on you and turn on you if you fail to resolve their issues even just once. This has brought you trouble and is not the kind of outcome you want to see. If you predict this kind of outcome, you can opt not to help them. In other words, it would not be wrong in this case to refrain from carrying out that responsibility or obligation. This is the kind of view and attitude you should have toward society, mankind, and, more specifically, the community

in which you live. That is, just extend to someone however much love you have to give, and do as much as you are able to. Do not go against your convictions in an effort to show off, do not try to do things you are incapable of doing. There is also no need to force yourself to pay a price that the average person is incapable of paying. In short, do not ask too much of yourself. Just do what you are capable of doing. How does this principle sound? (It sounds good.) For instance, your friend asks to borrow your car and you think it over: "He has lent me things in the past, so by rights, I should let him borrow my car. But he doesn't take good care of things or use them sparingly. He might even end up ruining my car. I'd better not let him borrow it." So you decide not to let him borrow your car. Is this the right thing to do? It's not a big issue whether or not you lend the car—as long as you have an accurate and insightful understanding of the matter, you should just take whatever you believe to be the most suitable course of action, and you will be in the right. However, what if you think to yourself, "Fine, I'll let him borrow it. He never refused me when I asked to borrow things from him before. He is not so economical or careful when using things, but it's fine. If my car is damaged, I'll just spend a little money to fix it," and then you agree to lend him your car and don't reject him—is this the right thing to do? There is nothing wrong with this either. For example, if someone who had previously helped you comes to you when their family has encountered some difficulties, should you help or not? This depends on your own situation, and your decision to help or not will not be a matter of principle. All you need to do is come from a place of sincerity and instinct and fulfill your responsibilities to the best of your ability. By doing this, you will be acting within the scope of your humanity and the sense of your conscience. Whether or not you completely fulfill this responsibility or do it well is not important. You have the right to agree or to refuse—you cannot be said as lacking a conscience if you refuse, and your friend cannot be said as having shown an act of kindness for helping you out. These acts do not rise to that level. Do you understand? (Yes.) This has been a discussion about kindness, namely, how you should view kindness, how to approach the matter of helping others, and how you should fulfill your societal responsibilities. In these matters, people must seek the truth principles—you cannot resolve these issues just by relying on your conscience and reason. Some special circumstances can be quite complicated, and if you do not handle them in accordance with the truth principles, you are liable to bring about trouble and negative consequences. Thus, in these matters, God's chosen people must understand His will and act with humanity, reason, wisdom, and the truth principles. This would be the most appropriate approach.

With regard to the saying "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," another situation that may arise is that the help you receive is not some small matter like a bottle of water, a handful of vegetables, or a sack of rice, but a form of assistance that affects you and your family's livelihood, and which even has implications for your destiny and future prospects. For instance, someone may give you some tutoring or financial aid that enables you to attend a good university, find a good job, marry well, and have a whole

series of good things happen in your life. This is not just a small favor or a trifling bit of help—many people view this kind of thing as an act of great kindness. How should you approach this kind of situation? Such forms of assistance are related to societal responsibility and the obligations man carries out that we just discussed, but because they have implications for man's survival, fate, and future prospects, they are far more valuable than a mere bottle of water or a sack of rice—they have a much greater effect on people's lives, their livelihoods and their time on this earth. As such, their value is much greater. Now, should these forms of assistance be elevated to the level of kindness? Just the same, I do not recommend viewing these kinds of help as kindness. Given that these forms of help should not be taken as kindness, then what is a suitable and proper way to deal with this kind of situation? Is this not a problem that men face? For instance, perhaps someone diverted you from a life of crime, set you straight, and got you a job in a legitimate line of work, allowing you to lead a good life, get married and settle down, and change your fate for the better. Or, perhaps, when you were in a difficult situation and feeling down and out, a good person gave you some help and guidance, which changed your future prospects in a positive way, allowing you to rise above the rest and lead a good life. How should you approach such situations? Should you remember their kindness and repay them? Should you find ways to compensate and requite them? In this case, you should allow principles to guide your decisions, should you not? You should determine what kind of person your helper is. If they are a good, positive person, then in addition to saying "thank you" to them, you can continue interacting normally with them, become friends and then, when they need help, you can fulfill your responsibility and obligation to the best of your ability. However, this fulfillment of responsibility and obligation should not be an unconditional form of giving, but should rather be limited by what you are able to do given your circumstances. This is the appropriate way to treat such people in these situations. There is no difference in level between the two of you—although they helped you and bestowed kindness on you, they still cannot be called your savior, because only God can save mankind. All they did was to act through God's sovereignty and arrangements to lend you a hand—this certainly does not mean they are superior to you, much less does it mean they own you and can manipulate you and control you. They have no right to hold sway over your fate and should not criticize or remark upon your life; you are still equals. Given that you are equals, you can interact with each other as friends and, when appropriate, you can help them to the best of your ability. This is still fulfilling your societal responsibility and obligation within the scope of humanity and doing what you ought to do on the basis and within the scope of humanity—you are carrying out your responsibilities and obligations in a targeted way. Why should you do this? They helped you in the past and allowed you to reap benefits and make substantial gains, so the sense of conscience that comes from your humanity dictates that you should treat them as a friend. Some people will ask: "Can I treat them as a close confidant?" This depends on how the two of you get

along, and whether your humanity and preferences, as well as what you seek and how you view the world, are similar. The answer will depend on yourself. Now in this unique kind of relationship, should you repay your benefactor with your life? Given that they helped you so much and had such a tremendous influence on you, should you repay them with your life? This is not necessary. You are the eternal owner of your own life—God gave you your life, and it is yours and no one else's to manage. There is no need to carelessly allow someone else to manage your life due to this context and situation. This is an extremely foolish way of doing things and is, of course, also irrational. No matter how close you are as friends or how strong a bond you have, you can only carry out your responsibility as a person, interact normally and provide aid to each other within the scope of humanity and reason. This level of relationship is more rational and equal. The ultimate reason you became friends is basically because the person once helped you, and so you felt that they were worth having as a friend and that they met the standard you demand of your friends. It was only for this reason that you were willing to be friends with them. Consider, also, this situation: Someone helped you in the past, was kind to you in certain ways and had an impact on your life or some major event, but their humanity and the path they walk are not in line with your own path and what you seek. You do not speak a common language, you do not like this person and, perhaps, on some level you could say that your interests and what you seek are completely different. Your paths in life, your worldviews, and your outlooks on life are all different—you are two completely different kinds of people. So, how should you approach and respond to the help that they previously gave you? Is this a realistic situation that may arise? (Yes.) So, what should you do? This is also an easy situation to deal with. Given that the two of you are walking different paths, after providing them with whatever material reimbursement you can afford given your means, you find that your beliefs are just too divergent, you cannot walk on the same path, cannot even be friends and can no longer interact. How should you proceed, given that you can no longer interact? Keep your distance from them. They might have been kind to you in the past, but they swindle and cheat their way through society, perpetrating all kinds of nefarious deeds and you do not like this person, so it is entirely reasonable to keep your distance from them. Some may say, "Isn't that lacking in conscience to act in that way?" This is not lacking in conscience—if they were really to encounter some difficulty in their life, you could still help them out, but you cannot be constrained by them or go along with them in doing evil and unconscionable deeds. There is also no need to slave away for them just because they helped you or did a big favor for you in the past—that is not your obligation and they are not worthy of that kind of treatment. You are entitled to choose to interact with, spend time with, and even become friends with people whom you like and get along with, people who are correct. You can fulfill your responsibility and obligation to this person, this is your right. Of course, you can also refuse to become friends with and have dealings with people that you do not like, and you need not fulfill any obligation or

responsibility to them—this is also your right. Even if you decide to abandon this person and refuse to interact with them or fulfill any responsibility or obligation to them, this would not be wrong. You must set certain limits on the way you comport yourself, and treat different people in different ways. You should not associate with evil people or follow their bad example, this is the wise choice. Do not be influenced by various factors such as gratitude, emotions, and public opinion—this is taking a stance and having principles, and is what you ought to do. Can you accept these methods and claims? (Yes.) Even though the views, paths of practice, and principles I have been discussing are criticized in traditional notions and culture, these views and principles will vigorously protect the rights and dignity of every person who has humanity and the sense of their conscience. They will enable people to not be constrained and fettered by traditional culture's so-called standards of moral conduct, and to break free from the deception and delusion of these falsely pious and specious things. These views and principles will also allow them to understand the truth through God's words, live by God's words and the truth, not be influenced by these public opinions on morality, and free themselves from the constraints and fetters of so-called worldly ways, so that they can treat people and all things according to God's words and using correct views, and thoroughly cast off the fetters and misguidance of worldly things, tradition, and social morality. As such, they will be able to live in the light, live out normal humanity, exist with dignity, and attain God's commendation.

What kind of change can sayings on social morality like "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid" and "Derive pleasure from helping others" actually affect in men? Can they transform man's status- and profit-grabbing satanic disposition? Can they transform man's ambition and desire? Can they resolve the conflict and slaughter among men? Can they allow men to set foot on the right path in life and lead happy lives? (No.) Then what effect do these criteria of social morality really have? At most, do they just encourage a few good people to do good deeds and contribute to the safety and security of society? (Yes.) That is all they do, and they do not resolve even a single issue. Even if, under the conditioning of these so-called criteria of moral conduct, people were ultimately able to abide by them and live them out, this does not mean that they would be able to break free from their corrupt dispositions and live out a human semblance. For instance, say a person has done a favor for you, so you do everything you can to repay them—when they give you a sack of rice, you repay them with a big bag of noodles, and when they give you five pounds of pork meat, you repay them with five pounds of beef. What will be the result of your continuously repaying each other? Privately, you will both calculate who got the better end of the deal and who got the worse end, and this will lead to misunderstandings, fighting and scheming between the two of you. What do I mean by this? I mean that the requirement for moral conduct "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid" not only constrains and misguides people's way of thinking, but it also saddles people's lives with many inconveniences,

burdens and even distress. And if it turns you into someone's enemy, then you are in for even more trouble, and unspeakable suffering! Engaging in these relationships built on give-and-take is not the path that people should walk. People always live by such emotions and worldly ways, which will ultimately only bring about a lot of unnecessary trouble. This is just self-torture and pointless torment. This is how traditional culture and claims about moral conduct implant themselves in people's minds and lead them astray. Due to their complete lack of discernment, people mistakenly believe that these aspects of traditional culture are correct and they take them as their criteria and compass, strictly abiding by these sayings and living under the supervision of public opinion. Gradually and unwittingly, they become conditioned, influenced, and controlled by these things and come to feel helpless and anguished, and yet are powerless to break free. When God speaks out to expose and judge these aspects of traditional culture that are inside people, it even upsets many people. When these things are thoroughly cleansed from people's minds, thoughts, and notions, they suddenly feel quite empty as if they have nothing to hold onto, and will ask, "What should I do in the future? How should I live? Without these things, I have no path or direction in my life. Why do I feel so hollow and aimless now that these things have been cleansed from my mind? If people do not live by these sayings, can they still be considered human? Will they still have humanity?" This is an incorrect way of thinking. In reality, once you are cleansed of these aspects of traditional culture, your heart is purified, you are no longer constrained and fettered by these things, you gain freedom and liberation and no longer have these vexations—how could you not want to be cleansed of them? At the very least, when you abandon these aspects of traditional culture that are not of the truth, you will be subject to less suffering and anguish and can do away with many of the meaningless constraints and worries. If you can accept the truth and live by God's words, you will set foot on the right path in life and be able to live in the light. It might seem perfectly justifiable to uphold traditional culture's standards of moral conduct, but are you living out a human semblance? Have you set foot on the right path in life? These aspects of traditional culture just cannot change anything. They cannot transform people's corrupt thinking, nor their corrupt dispositions, and much less can they change people's corrupt essence. They do not have any positive effects and, instead, cause man's humanity to become twisted and perverse through their teachings, conditioning and influence. People clearly recognize that the person who bestowed kindness on them is not a good person, but they still go against their own convictions and repay him, just because he did a favor for them in the past. What causes people to repay others despite their own convictions? They do this because this idea of gratefully repaying kindness received from traditional culture has taken root in their hearts. They fear that if they do not go against their convictions and repay those who have helped them, they will be castigated by public opinion, and will be seen as ingrates who have failed to repay kindness received, and as mean, vile characters, and as people with no conscience or humanity. It is precisely because they

fear all this and worry that no one will help them in the future, that they have no choice but to live under the conditioning and fetters of this idea in traditional culture of gratefully repaying kindness received. As a result, all people live perverse, anguished lives in which they act against their own convictions and cannot speak out about their own hardships. Is this worth all the trouble? Hasn't this idea of gratefully repaying kindness caused people to suffer?

Regarding the saying, "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," I have just fellowshiped about what exactly "kindness" is, how God views man's definition of kindness, how man should treat this kindness, how to treat those who have shown kindness to you or saved your life, what the correct perspective and path really are and how they should be positioned in your life, how people should perform their obligations, and how man should handle certain special circumstances and from what perspective they should be viewed. These are relatively complicated matters that cannot be made clear with just a few brief remarks, but I have shared with you the key issues, the essence of the issues on this topic, and so on. Should you encounter this kind of issue again, do you not now feel that you are more or less clear on what viewpoint you should adopt and what path of practice you should take? Some people say, "In theory, I am clear, but men are of flesh and blood. Living in this world, we are bound to be influenced by these moral criteria and swayed by public opinion. Many people live in this way, valuing acts of kindness and gratefully repaying any kindness received. If I do not live in this way, I will definitely be castigated and spurned by others. I fear that people will denounce me as inhuman, living like a pariah, and I can't bear that." What is the problem here? Why are people constrained by this? Is this an easy problem to resolve? It is, and I will tell you how. If you feel you would live like a social pariah when you did not live according to the traditional culture's view that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid; if you feel that you no longer resemble a traditional Chinese person, that by straying from traditional culture you are not living like a human and lack the traits that make you human; if you worry that you won't fit into Chinese society, that you will be despised by fellow Chinese people and seen by them as a rotten apple; then choose to follow societal trends—no one is forcing you and no one will condemn you. However, if you feel that living according to how traditional culture dictates and always valuing acts of kindness hasn't brought you much benefit over the years, has been a tiring way to live, and if you are determined to let go of this lifestyle and to try to view people and things and comport yourself and act all according to My words, then that would, of course, be even better. Even though you now understand these things in principle and have a good grasp of the situation, how exactly you view people and things and how you live and comport yourself going forward are your own affairs. To what degree you can accept what I have said, to what extent you can put it all into practice, and how far you will take it are your choice and are all up to you. I am not forcing you. I am merely showing you the way. However, one thing is for sure: I'll tell you the truth in saying if you live according to traditional culture, you

will live an increasingly inhuman and undignified life, and you will find that the sense of your conscience will become more and more desensitized. Gradually, you'll live a miserable life where you'll resemble neither human nor ghost. However, if you practice according to My words and the principles of which I have spoken, I guarantee you will live with ever more human likeness, conscience, reason and dignity—this is certain. When you later encounter such situations, you will be able to live free and liberated and will feel peaceful and joyous. The shadows and burdens in your heart will diminish, and you will feel confident and be able to stand tall. You will no longer be plagued, deluded, or influenced by the ways of the secular world, and you will live with dignity. Every day you will feel grounded and will treat and handle each and every affair in the most precise manner, avoiding numerous detours and a great deal of suffering that you should not have to undergo. You will not do anything that you ought not to do, nor will you pay any price that you should not pay. No longer will you live for other people. You will no longer be influenced by people's perspectives and opinions. You will no longer be constrained by the opinions and condemnations of society. Is this not a life of dignity? Is this not a free and liberated life? It is at this time that you will feel that living by God's words is the only right path in life, and only by living in this way does one bear the likeness of a human and have happiness. Living in the fog of traditional culture, you cannot see the path clearly and mistakenly believe you are on your way to some idealistic utopia situated in the world of man. Ultimately, however, you end up being led astray, and made a fool of and tormented by Satan. Today, now that you have heard God's voice, discovered the truth, and seen the light come to the world of man, you have dispersed the fog and seen clearly the path and direction your life must take. You head forward with haste and come back before God. Is this not the grace and blessing of God? So, have you dispersed that fog now and seen the clear skies above? Perhaps you have already seen a glimmer and are moving toward the light—this is the greatest blessing. If you can hear the voice of God, accept and understand the truth, disperse the fog, abandon all these incorrect things in traditional culture, and remove all obstacles, you can set foot on the path to salvation. That is all I have to fellowship regarding the saying of moral conduct "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid." Going forward, you can fellowship further about these words together, and you will come to a complete understanding. One cannot gain immediate entry to these matters after just one gathering for fellowship. Even though I have now concluded My fellowship on this saying about moral conduct, and you understand it in theory and principle, shedding these old, traditional notions is not easy in real life. You may still cling to these old ideas and struggle with them for some time. At the very least, it will take some time before you can completely abandon these aspects of traditional culture and fully accept the truth of God's words. You must gradually experience, live through, and find confirmation in real life and when facing society and mankind. Through these experiences, you will gradually come to know God's words and will comprehend the truth. In doing so, you will begin to benefit, derive advantages, and

reap rewards, and you will correct your mistaken views and ideas about all kinds of people, events, and things. This is the process and the path of pursuing the truth.

Next, I will fellowship on the saying, “Sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others.” This saying refers to a virtue in Chinese traditional culture that is seen by people as noble and great. Of course, these opinions are a bit exaggerated and unrealistic, but regardless, it is universally recognized as a virtue. Whenever anyone hears about this virtue, their minds conjure up certain scenes such as: people putting food onto each other’s plates when eating together and leaving the best food for others; people allowing others to go in front of them when in line at the grocery store; people letting others buy tickets first at the train station or the airport; people yielding to others when walking or driving and letting them go first…. These are all such “beautiful” examples of “all for one, and one for all.” Each one of these scenes shows how warm, harmonious, happy, and peaceful, society and the world are. The level of happiness is so high that it is off the charts. If someone asks them, “Why are you so happy?” they reply, “Chinese traditional culture advocates for sacrificing one’s own interest for the sake of others. We all put this idea into practice, and it is not at all difficult for us to do so. We just feel so blessed.” Have such scenes crossed your minds? (Yes.) Where can these scenes be found? They can be found in the spring festival paintings that used to be posted on walls during Chinese New Year before the 1990s. They can be found in people’s minds and even in so-called mirages, or castles in the sky. In short, such scenes do not exist in real life. “Sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others” is, of course, also a demand made by moralists with regard to moral criteria. It is a saying regarding man’s moral conduct which demands that people should first consider others over themselves before acting. They should first consider other people’s interests and not their own. They should think about others and learn to sacrifice themselves—that is, they must abandon their own interests, demands, desires, and ambitions, and even go so far as to abandon all that is theirs and think of others first. Regardless of whether this demand is achievable by man, it must first be asked: What kind of people are the ones proposing this view? Do they understand humanity? Do they understand the instincts and humanity essence of this creature that is man? They do not have the slightest understanding. The people who put forward this saying must have been extremely foolish to place the unrealistic demand to sacrifice one’s interest for the sake of others on the likes of man, a selfish creature that not only has thoughts and free will, but is also full of ambitions and desires. Regardless of whether people are capable of achieving this demand, given people’s essence and instincts as creatures, the moralists who advanced this demand were truly inhumane. Why do I say they were inhumane? For instance, when someone is hungry, they will instinctually feel their own hunger and will not consider whether someone else is hungry. They will say, “I’m hungry, I want to eat something.” They first think of “I.” This is normal, natural, and appropriate. No one who is hungry themselves will go against their true feelings and ask, “What do you want to eat?” Is it normal for someone to ask another

what they want to eat when they themselves are hungry? (No.) At night, when someone is tired and exhausted, they will say, “I’m tired. I want to go to sleep.” No one will say, “I’m tired, so can you go to bed and sleep for me? When you sleep, I feel less tired.” Would that not be abnormal if they expressed themselves in this manner? (Yes.) Everything that people are capable of thinking and doing instinctually is all for their own sakes. They are already doing quite well if they are able to take care of themselves—this is human instinct. If you are able to live independently, having reached the point where you can live and handle matters on your own, can take care of yourself, know to go to a doctor when you get sick, understand how to recover from illness, and know how to resolve all the issues and difficulties that arise in life, then you are already doing quite well. However, sacrificing your own interests for the sake of others requires you to abandon these necessities that you have in favor of the interests of others; to do nothing for yourself, instead being required to consider first the interests of others and do everything for the sake of others—is this not inhumane? As I see it, this downright deprives people of their right to live. The basic necessities of life are something you should handle on your own, so why should others sacrifice their own interests to do these things and handle them for you? What kind of person would that make you? Are you somehow mentally challenged, disabled, or a pet? These are all things that people should do instinctually—why should others abandon the things they ought to be doing and sacrifice their energy to do these things for you? Is that appropriate? Is not this requirement to sacrifice one’s interest for the sake of others just some big talk? (Yes.) How does this talk sound, and where does it come from? Is it not borne out of these so-called moralists lacking the slightest understanding of man’s instincts, needs, and essence, and their eagerness to boast about their moral superiority? (Yes.) Is this not inhumane? (Yes.) If everyone sacrificed their own interests for the sake of others, then how would they handle their own affairs? Do you really see everyone else as disabled, incapable of managing their own lives, as idiots, mentally challenged, or imbeciles? If you do not, then why must you sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others, and demand that others abandon their own interests for you? Even some disabled people do not want others to lend them a helping hand, but instead want to earn their own living and manage their own lives—they do not need others to pay an extra price for them or give them any additional help. They want others to treat them properly; it is a way for them to preserve their dignity. What they need from others is respect, not sympathy and pity. This is even more so the case for those who can take care of themselves, right? Thus, this requirement to sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others does not hold up in My view. It violates man’s instincts and the sense of his conscience, and is, at the very least, inhumane. Even if the aim is to maintain social norms, public order, and normal interpersonal relationships, there’s no need to demand in this unreasonable and inhumane manner that everyone go against their will and live for others. Wouldn’t it be a bit twisted and abnormal if people lived for others and not themselves?

In which circumstances is the requirement to sacrifice one's own interests for the sake of others applicable? One such circumstance is when parents act for the sake of their children. This is likely to be done for only a limited time. Before the children become adults, parents should do their best to look after them. To raise their children into adulthood and ensure they live healthy, happy, and joyous lives, parents sacrifice their youth, expend their energy, put aside pleasures of the flesh, and even sacrifice their careers and hobbies. They do all of this for their children. This is a responsibility. Why must parents fulfill this responsibility? Because every parent has an obligation to raise their children. It is their unshirkable responsibility. However, people do not have this obligation to society and humankind. If you take care of yourself, do not cause trouble, and do not make trouble for other people, then you are already doing quite well. There is another circumstance where people with physical impairments are unable to look after themselves and require their parents, siblings, and even social welfare organizations to assist them in their lives and help them survive. Another special circumstance is when people or regions are struck by a natural disaster, and they cannot survive without emergency relief. This is a case where they need the help of others. Are there any other circumstances besides these, in which people should sacrifice their own interests for the sake of helping others? Perhaps not. In real life, society is fiercely competitive, and if one does not put every last bit of mental energy into doing one's work well, it is difficult to get by, to survive. Humankind is incapable of sacrificing their own interests for the sake of others; it is already quite good if they can ensure their own survival and not infringe upon the interests of others. In fact, the true countenance of mankind is even more accurately reflected by the conflicts and vengeful killings in which they engage amidst the social context and circumstances of real life. In sporting events, you see that when athletes exert every last ounce of energy to show who they are and ultimately emerge victorious, not one of them will say, "I don't want the title of champion. I think you should have it." No one would ever do that. It is people's instinct to compete to be first, to be the best, and to be on top. In reality, people are simply incapable of sacrificing their own interests for the sake of others. It is not within man's instincts to have this need or will to sacrifice his interests for the sake of others. Given man's essence and nature, he can and will only act for himself. If a person acts for their own interests and, in so doing, is able to take the right path, this is a good thing, and this person can be considered a good creation among men. If, in acting in your own self-interest, you are able to take the right path, pursue the truth and positive things, and have a positive influence on the people around you, you are already doing quite well. Promoting and advancing the idea of sacrificing one's own interests for the sake of others is nothing more than big talk. It does not align with the needs of man, much less the current state of humankind. Despite the fact that the requirement to sacrifice one's interests for the sake of others does not align with reality and is inhumane, it still holds a certain place deep within people's hearts, and, to varying degrees, their thoughts are still influenced

and fettered by it. When people only act for themselves, do not act for others, do not help others, or do not think of others or show consideration for them, they often feel condemned at heart. They feel an invisible pressure and sometimes even the critical eyes of others staring at them. Such feelings all arise due to the influence of traditional moral ideology rooted deep within their hearts. Have you also been influenced to varying degrees by traditional culture mandating you must sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others? (Yes.) Many people still approve of the requirements that traditional culture has, and if someone is able to abide by these requirements, people will think well of them and no one will reproach or oppose them, no matter how many of these requirements they fulfill. If someone were to see a person watch someone fall down in the street and not go help them up, everyone would be unhappy with that person, saying that person is so inhumane. This shows that the standards required by traditional culture that are applied to men hold a certain place in people's hearts. So, if a person is measured based on these things from traditional culture, is it accurate? Those who do not understand the truth will never be able to fully understand this issue. It could be said that traditional culture has been a part of human life for millennia, but what effect has it actually achieved? Has it changed the spiritual outlook of mankind? Has it brought civilization and progress to society? Has it solved issues of public safety in society? Has it been successful in educating mankind? It has solved none of these. Traditional culture has not been effective at all, so we can safely say that its required standards that are applied to man cannot be considered criteria—they are merely constraints meant to bind people's hands and feet, restrict their thoughts, and regulate their behavior. They make it so that no matter where man goes, he is well-behaved, follows the rules, has a semblance of humanity, respects the old and cares for the young, and knows how to respect seniority. They make it so a person does not upset others by appearing naive and impolite. At most, all these standards do is get people to appear a bit more presentable and refined—in reality, this has nothing to do with people's essence and is only good for gaining a momentary approval from others and satisfying one's vanity. You feel so delighted when people tell you what a good person you are for running errands for them. When you show that you can care for the young and elderly by giving up your seat for them on the bus, and others say what a good kid you are, and that you are the nation's future, you also feel delighted. You also delight when you are lining up to buy tickets and you let someone behind you buy theirs first, and others praise you for being thoughtful. After following a few rules and displaying a few acts of good behavior, you feel that you are of noble character. If you believe that you are of a higher status than others after a few one-off good deeds—is this not foolish? This foolishness can cause you to lose your way and your reason. It is not worthwhile to spend too much time fellowshiping about this saying of moral conduct to sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others. The problems associated with it are fairly easy to discern, because it warps and distorts people's humanity, character, and dignity to such a large degree. It

makes them become more insincere, impractical, self-satisfied, and less capable of knowing how they should live, how to discern people, events, and things in real life, and how to deal with the various problems that befall them in real life. People are only capable of lending some help and relieving others of their worries and problems, but lose their bearings on the path they should take in life, are manipulated by Satan and become the subject of its mockery—is this not a mark of humiliation? In any case, this so-called moral standard of sacrificing one's own interests for the sake of others is an insincere and perverse saying. Of course, in this regard, God just demands of men that they fulfill the obligations, responsibilities, and duties with which they have been charged, that they do not cause hurt, harm, or detriment to people, and that they act in a way where others can profit and benefit—that is good enough. God does not demand that people take on any extra responsibilities or obligations. If you can fulfill all your work, duties, obligations, and responsibilities, you are already doing well—is that not simple? (Yes.) This is easily accomplished. Given that it is so simple and everyone understands it, there is no need to fellowship about it in more detail.

Next, I will discuss the statement on moral conduct, "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral." The difference between this statement and the other required standards for moral conduct is that this standard is directed specifically at women. "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral" is an inhumane and impractical demand of women proposed by so-called moralists. Why do I say that? This standard demands that all women, be they daughters or wives, must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral. In order to be considered a good and respectable woman, they must practice this kind of moral conduct and possess this moral character. What this implies to men is that women must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, whereas men do not—men need not be virtuous or kind, and much less do they need to be gentle or moral. What must men do? If their wives fail to be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, they can divorce them or abandon them. If a man cannot bear to abandon his wife, what should he do? He should turn her into a virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral woman—this is his responsibility and obligation. Men's societal responsibility is to strictly oversee, guide and supervise women. They must thoroughly embody their roles as superiors, they must suppress virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral women, serve as their lords and heads of house, and make sure that women do what they ought to and fulfill their rightful obligations. Men, by contrast, do not need to practice this kind of moral conduct—they are an exception to this rule. Given that men are an exception to this rule, this claim on moral conduct is just a standard by which men can judge women. That is, when a man wants to marry a woman with good moral conduct, how should he judge the woman? He can just determine whether the woman is virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral. If she is virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, he can marry her—if she is not, then he should not marry her. If he were to marry such a woman, others would look down on her and even say that she was not a good person. So, what specific requirements do moralists say that women must

fulfill in order to be considered virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral? Do these adjectives have specific meanings? There is a great deal of meaning behind each of the four words “virtuous,” “kind,” “gentle,” and “moral,” and not one of these traits is easy for anyone to live up to. No man or intellectual can live up to these traits, and yet they demand that ordinary women do so—this is incredibly unfair to women. So, what are the basic behaviors and specific forms of moral conduct that women must display in order to be considered virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral? Firstly, women must never set foot outside the inner chambers of their residence, and they must bind their feet to a length of around four inches, which is less than the length of a small child’s palm. This restricts women and ensures that they cannot go wherever they please. Before marriage, women are not allowed out of the inner chambers of their residence, must confine themselves to their cloistered boudoirs, and must not show their faces in public. If they can abide by these rules, then they possess the moral character of a virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral unmarried woman. After marrying, a woman must show filial obedience to her parents-in-law and treat her husband’s other relatives graciously. No matter how her husband’s family treats her or abuses her, she must put up with the hardship and criticism, like a faithful workhorse. Not only must she serve all members of the family, both young and old, she must also bear children to carry on the ancestral line, and all without the slightest complaint. No matter how much she is beaten or suffers wrongs at the hands of their parents-in-law and no matter how fatigued she gets and how hard she must work, she can never complain to her husband about any of this. No matter how much she is bullied by her parents-in-law, she cannot let anyone outside the family know and spread any gossip about her family. No matter how she has been wronged, she cannot speak out and must swallow the insults and humiliation silently. Not only must she put up with hardship and criticism, but she must also learn to meekly submit to oppression, stifle her indignation, and endure humiliation and the burden of responsibility—she must learn the arts of endurance and forbearance. Whatever fine foods there might be at a meal, she must first let other members of the family eat them; to show her filial obedience, she must first allow her parents-in-law to eat, then her husband and children. After everyone else has eaten and all the fine food is gone, she is left to fill her stomach with whatever leftovers remain. In addition to the requirements I have just discussed, in modern times, women are also expected to “shine at social gatherings as well as in the kitchen.” When I heard this phrase, I wondered, what are all the men doing if women are expected to shine at social gatherings as well as in the kitchen? Women must cook for the whole family, do chores and take care of the children at home, and go out into the fields and do laboring—they have to excel both at home and outside it, by getting all these jobs done. By contrast, men only have to go to work, then come home and idle away their time in pleasure and do not do any domestic chores. If something angers them at work, they take it out on their wife and children—is this fair? What have you observed from these matters I have discussed? No one places any demands on the moral conduct of

men, yet women are expected to shine at social gatherings as well as in the kitchen on top of maintaining a virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral character. How many women are able to fulfill such requirements? Is it not unfair to make such demands of women? If a woman makes the slightest mistake, she is beaten, insulted, and might even be abandoned by her husband. Women just have to endure all of this, and if they really cannot take it any longer, they can only choose to commit suicide. Is it not kind of oppressive to specifically make such inhumane demands of women, when they are physically weaker, and less powerful and physically capable than men? Of the women here today, would you not find it excessive if people made such demands of you in real life? Are men really meant to have control over women? Are they meant to be their slavemasters and drive them to endure hardship? Given this perverse state of affairs, can we not conclude that the saying “A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral” is effectively causing rifts in society? Is it not clearly elevating men’s status in society, while intentionally diminishing the status of women? This requirement causes men and women to firmly believe that the latter’s social status and value to society is lesser than, rather than equal to, that of men. Therefore, women ought to be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, suffer mistreatment, and be discriminated against, humiliated, and deprived of human rights in society. By contrast, it is taken for granted that men should be the head of the household and reasonably demand that women be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral. Is this not intentionally causing conflict within society? Is this not intentionally creating rifts within society? Will not some women rise up in revolt after suffering mistreatment over a long period of time? (Yes.) Wherever injustice occurs, there will be revolt. Is this saying about moral conduct fair and just to women? At the very least, it is not fair and just to women—it just gives license to men to act even more brazenly, deepens the divides in society, increases men’s status in society and diminishes the status of women, while also depriving women even more of their right to exist, and subtly exacerbating the inequality in status of men and women in society. I can summarize the role women play at home and in society at large, as well as the kind of moral conduct they display, in just two words: punching bag. The saying regarding moral conduct that “A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral” demands that women respect the family elders, love and care for junior members of the family, be particularly deferential to their husbands, and wait on them hand and foot. They must handle all the family’s affairs inside and outside the home, and no matter how many hardships they endure, they can never complain—is this not depriving women of their rights? (Yes.) This is depriving women of their freedom, their right to free speech, and their right to live. Is it humane to deprive women of all their rights and still demand that they fulfill their responsibilities? This is tantamount to trampling on women and casting a scourge on them!

It is quite obvious that the moralists who imposed this requirement on women, and cast a scourge on them in the process, were men and not women. Women would not choose to trample down their own kind, so it was certainly the work of men. They worried

that if women became too capable, gained too much authority and had too much freedom, they would become men's equals unless they were put under strict supervision and control. Gradually, capable women would gain higher status than men, stop doing their duties in the household, and this—they believed—would impact on domestic harmony. If individual households lacked harmony, then society as a whole would become disharmonious and this was worrying for the country's rulers. You see, no matter what we discuss, the conversation always seems to return to the ruling class. They harbor evil intentions and wish to deal with women and take action against them—this is inhumane. They demand that, whether at home or in society at large, women must be utterly obedient, meekly submit to oppression, humble and degrade themselves, swallow all insults, be well-educated and sensible, meek and considerate, and put up with all hardship and criticism, and so on. Clearly, they just expect women to be like punching bags and doormats—if they were to do all this, would they still be human? If they really were able to abide by all these demands, they would not be human; they would be like the idols worshiped by unbelievers that do not eat or drink, are detached from worldly material concerns, never get angry, and have no personality. Or they might be like puppets or machines that do not think or react autonomously. Any actual person will have opinions and viewpoints on the sayings and restrictions of the outside world—they could not possibly meekly submit to all oppression. This is why women's rights movements have emerged in the modern era. Women's status in society has gradually risen in the last hundred or so years, and they have finally broken free of the fetters that once bound them. For how many years were women subjected to this bondage? In East Asia, they were subjugated for at least many thousands of years. This bondage was incredibly cruel and brutal—their feet were bound to the point that they could not even walk and no one ever defended these women against injustice. I have heard that in the 17th and 18th centuries, some Western countries and regions also put certain restrictions on women's freedom. How did they restrict women in those days? They made them wear hoop skirts that were fixed to their waists with metal clasps and propped up with heavy, pendulous metal rings. This made it very inconvenient for women to leave the house or walk around and dramatically reduced their mobility. Women therefore found it very difficult to walk longer distances or to leave their homes. What did women do in these difficult circumstances? All they could do was acquiesce in silence and stay at home, and they could not walk longer distances. Going outside to walk around, see the sights, broaden their horizons, or visit friends was out of the question. This was the method used in Western society to restrict women—it didn't want women leaving the house and coming into contact with whomever they wanted. In those days, men could ride their horse-drawn carriages wherever they wanted without any limitations, yet women were subject to all kinds of restrictions when leaving the house. In the modern age, fewer and fewer restrictions are now placed on women: Foot-binding has been outlawed and oriental women are free to choose who they want to be in a relationship

with. Women are relatively liberated now and are gradually emerging from the shadow of bondage. As they have emerged from this shadow, they have entered society and have slowly begun to take on their fair share of responsibility. Women have achieved relatively high status in society, and enjoy more rights and privileges than before. Gradually, female prime ministers and presidents have started getting elected in certain countries. Is it a good or bad thing for humanity that women's status is gradually increasing? At the very least, this increase in status has allowed women a measure of freedom and liberation—this is certainly good as far as women are concerned. Is it beneficial to society for women to be free and have the right to express themselves? Actually, it is beneficial; women happen to be capable of doing many things that men either do not do well or do not want to do. Women excel in many lines of work. These days, women can not only drive cars, they also can fly airplanes. Some women are also serving as officials or presidents presiding over the affairs of nations, and they are doing their jobs just as well as men—this is a clear reflection that women are equal to men. Now the rights that women should enjoy are being fully promoted and protected, which is a normal phenomenon. Of course, it is proper that women should enjoy their own rights, but it is only now, after the situation had been distorted for thousands of years, that it has once again become the norm, and that equality between men and women has basically been achieved. Looking at it from the perspective of real life, women are gradually increasing their presence in all social classes and in all industries. What does this tell us? It tells us that women with all kinds of different specializations are gradually putting their talents to play and contributing value to humankind and society. No matter how one looks at this situation, it is certainly of benefit to mankind. If women's rights and status in society had not been restored, what kind of work would they be doing? They would be at home attending to their husbands and raising their children, attending to the affairs of the household, and exercising their virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral conduct—they would not be able to fulfill their societal responsibilities at all. Now that their rights are being promoted and protected, women can contribute to society normally, and mankind has enjoyed the benefit of the value and contributions that women have brought to society. From this fact, it is entirely certain that men and women are equals, and that men should not belittle or mistreat women, and that women's social status should be increased, which all signifies that society is improving. Mankind has a more insightful, correct, and regulated understanding of gender now, and as a result, women have begun to crop up in jobs that people used to think they were incapable of doing. Not only are female workers now often employed in private enterprises, but it has become common for women to fill positions in scientific research departments, and the proportion of women serving in national leadership roles is also increasing. We have also all heard of female writers, singers, entrepreneurs, and scientists, many women have become champions and runners-up in sporting events, and there have even been female heroines in times of war, all of which proves that women are just as able as their male

counterparts. The proportion of women employed in every industry is increasing and this is relatively normal. Across all trades and professions in contemporary society, there is less and less bias against women, society is fairer and there is true equality between men and women. Women are no longer constrained and judged by phrases and criteria of moral conduct like “A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral” or “A woman must confine herself to her cloistered boudoir.” Women’s rights are relatively more protected now, truly reflecting the social climate of gender equality.

We only seem to see men demanding that women be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, but we never see women demanding the same of men. This is a terribly unfair way to treat women, and even somewhat selfish, despicable, and shameless. One could also say that it is illegal and abusive to treat women like this. In contemporary society, many countries have established laws prohibiting the abuse of women and children. In fact, God does not have anything specific to say regarding mankind’s genders, because both men and women are God’s creations and derive from God. To use a phrase spoken by humankind, “Both the palm and the back of the hand are made of flesh”—God has no particular bias toward men or women, nor does He make distinct demands of one or the other gender, they are both the same. Therefore, God uses the same few standards to judge you regardless of whether you are male or female—He will look at what kind of humanity essence you have, what path you walk, what your attitude is toward the truth, whether you love the truth, whether you have a God-fearing heart, and whether you can submit to Him. When choosing someone and cultivating them to do a certain duty or carry out a certain responsibility, God does not look at whether they are a man or a woman. God promotes and uses people, regardless of whether they are male or female, by looking at whether they have conscience and reason, whether they have acceptable caliber, whether they accept the truth and what path they walk on. Of course, when saving and perfecting mankind, God does not pause to consider their gender. If you are a woman, God does not consider whether you are virtuous, kind, gentle, or moral, or whether you are well-behaved, and He does not evaluate men based upon their virility and masculinity—these are not the standards by which God evaluates men and women. Yet, among the ranks of corrupted mankind, there are always those who discriminate against women, who place certain immoral and inhumane demands on women to deprive them of their rights, of their rightful social status, of the value they should have to society, and who endeavor to restrict and constrain women’s positive development and existence within society, warping their psychological mindsets. This leads women to live their entire lives in a depressed and anguished state, with no choice but to endure a humiliating lifestyle in these twisted and unhealthy social and moral environments. The only reason why this has occurred is because society and the whole world are controlled by Satan, and all manner of demons are wantonly deceiving and corrupting mankind. As a result, people fail to see the true light, do not seek God, and instead unwillingly or unknowingly live under Satan’s trickery and manipulation, unable to extricate

themselves. Their only way out is to seek God's words, His appearance and His work in order to achieve understanding of the truth and be capable of clearly seeing and discerning various fallacies, heresies, lies, and preposterous claims that all derive from Satan and evil mankind. Only then will they be able to break free from these constraints, pressures, and influences. And only by viewing people and things and comporting oneself and acting according to God's words and the truth is one able to live out a human semblance, live with dignity, live in the light, do what one ought to do, fulfill the obligations one should fulfill and, of course, contribute one's value, and complete one's mission in life with God's leadership and guided by correct thoughts and views—is it not very meaningful to live this way? (Yes, it is.) As you reflect back on how Satan has used the saying "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral" to place demands on women and restrict, control, and even enslave them for many millennia, what kind of feelings do you have? When all of you women hear people bring up the phrase "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral," do you immediately feel opposed to it and say, "Don't bring that up! It has nothing to do with me. Although I am a woman, God's words say that this phrase has nothing to do with women"? Some men will say: "If it has nothing to do with you, then who is this phrase directed at? Are you not a woman?" And you will reply: "I am a woman, that is the truth. But those words do not come from God, they are not the truth. Those words come from the devil and from mankind, they trample women down and deprive them of the right to life. Those words are inhumane and unfair to women. I am rising up in resistance!" Rising up in resistance is actually not necessary. All you need to do is have the right approach to these kinds of phrases, reject them, and not be influenced and constrained by them. If, in the future, someone says to you, "You don't look like a woman, and you speak so coarsely, like a man. Who would ever want to marry you?" how should you reply? You can say, "If no one marries me, so be it. Do you really mean to say that the only way to live with dignity is to be married? Do you mean to say that only women who are virtuous, kind, gentle, moral, and loved by all are real women? That can't be right—virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral should not be the words by which women are truly defined. Women should not be defined by their gender, and their humanity should not be judged based upon whether they are virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, but rather, they should be judged using the standards by which God evaluates man's humanity. This is the fair and objective way to evaluate them." Do you now have a basic understanding of this saying, "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral"? My fellowshiping should by now have made clear the relevant truths of this saying and the correct viewpoints with which people should approach it.

There is another saying which goes: "When drinking the water of a well, one should never forget who dug it." I do not want to fellowship on this saying. Why do I not want to fellowship on this saying? This saying is similar in nature to the phrase "Sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others," and there is something a bit perverse about it as well. How inconvenient would it be if one had to commemorate the digger of a well every

time they went to take water from it? Some wells are adorned with red ribbons and talismans—would it not be a bit odd if people also burnt incense and made offerings of fruit there? Compared with the phrase “When drinking the water of a well, one should never forget who dug it,” I much prefer the saying, “Future generations enjoy the shade of trees that were planted by past generations,” because this saying reflects a reality that people can actually personally experience and live through. It takes ten to twenty years for a planted tree to grow to the size where it can provide shade, so the person who planted the tree will not be able to rest in its shade for long, and only subsequent generations will benefit from it throughout their whole lives. This is the natural order of things. By contrast, there is something slightly neurotic about memorializing the digger of a well every time one drinks water from it. Would it not appear a bit mental if every person had to commemorate and remember the digger of the well every time they came to draw water? If there were a drought that year and many people needed to draw water from that well, would it not prevent people from getting their water and cooking food, if everyone had to stand there and reflect on the well-digger prior to drawing water? Would this be really necessary? It would just hold everyone up. Does the well-digger’s soul reside by the well? Can he hear their commemoration? None of this can be confirmed. So this phrase, “When drinking the water of a well, one should never forget who dug it” is absurd and totally meaningless. Chinese traditional culture has proposed many such sayings with regard to moral conduct, the majority of which are absurd, and this particular saying is even more absurd than most. Who was it that dug the well? For whom did he dig it and why? Did he really dig the well for the sake of all people and later generations? Not necessarily. He just did it for himself and to allow his family to have access to drinking water—there was no consideration for later generations. Is it not, then, deceiving and misguiding people to make all later generations commemorate and give thanks to the well-digger and make them think that he dug it for all people? Therefore, the person who proposed this saying was just forcing their own thoughts and viewpoints onto others and compelling them to accept their ideas. This is immoral and will make even more people feel disgust, revulsion and loathing toward such a saying. Those who promote this kind of saying just have certain intellectual impairments that make it inevitable that they will say and do certain ridiculous things. What effects do ideas and views from traditional culture, like the sayings “When drinking the water of a well, one should never forget who dug it” and “The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring,” have upon people? What do educated people and those with a little bit of knowledge gain from these sayings in traditional culture? Have they actually become good people? Have they lived out a human semblance? Absolutely not. These morality experts who worship traditional culture sit on their high perches at the pinnacle of morality and make moral demands on people that do not accord in the slightest with the true state of their lives—this is immoral and inhumane to all who live on this earth. The moral viewpoints from traditional culture that they promote can turn someone with fairly normal rationality

into someone with an abnormal sense of reason, who is capable of saying things that others will find unthinkable and inscrutable. Such people's humanity is warped and their minds perverted. It is no wonder, then, that many Chinese people tend to say things at sporting events, public venues and in official settings that are a bit off and that people struggle to fathom. Everything they say is empty, ridiculous theory and does not contain the slightest bit of sincere or practical speech. This is the authentic proof, the result of Satan's corruption of mankind, and the consequence of Chinese people being educated by traditional culture for many millennia. All of this has turned people who lived sincerely and authentically into people who deal in falsehoods, and who excel at disguising and masking themselves to deceive others, people who appear to be incredibly cultured and capable of eloquently opining on theory, yet who, in reality, have warped mentalities and are incapable of speaking sensibly or interacting and communicating with people—they are basically all of this nature. Strictly speaking, such people are verging on mental illness. If you cannot accept these words, I encourage you to experience them. This concludes today's fellowship.

April 2, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (8)

Last time, we fellowshiped on four statements of traditional culture about moral conduct. Tell Me what they were. (“A kindness received should be gratefully repaid,” “Sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others,” “A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral,” and “When drinking the water of a well, one should never forget who dug it.”) Do you have a clear understanding of what in each statement should be dissected and understood? Every statement in traditional culture is closely related to people’s real lives and how they conduct themselves. There is no question that these statements of traditional culture have a certain influence over people’s real lives and the way they conduct themselves. The principles of people’s words, actions and self-conduct in real life are basically derived from these statements and viewpoints of traditional culture. Clearly, traditional culture’s influence and inculcation of people runs fairly deep. After I finished fellowshiping in the last gathering, did you engage in further contemplation and fellowship with each other? (We fellowshiped and understood a bit of these statements on moral conduct, and we were able slightly to alter our views and perspectives on these kinds of things, but we still don’t have a thorough understanding of them.) One part of achieving a thorough understanding is that you must base your understanding on what I fellowshiped about; the other part is that you must understand in light of the viewpoints that you hold in real life, as well as the thoughts and actions that occur when something happens to you. Listening to sermons alone is not nearly enough. The purpose of listening to sermons is to be able to recognize negative things in real life, to be able to distinguish negative things more accurately, and then to be able to apprehend positive things and have a pure understanding of them, so that God’s words become the criteria for how to behave and comport oneself in real life. In one respect, exercising discernment on these negative things has a corrective effect on people’s behavior and comportment, insofar as it can correct people’s mistaken ideas, viewpoints, and attitudes toward events and things; moreover, in its positive role, it can make people adopt correct ways and methods as well as accurate principles of practice when it comes to their views on people and things, and in their comportment and actions. This is the purpose and the intended effect of fellowshiping on and dissecting these statements regarding moral conduct.

Twice now, we have fellowshiped on statements regarding moral conduct in traditional Chinese culture, which are basically requirements for people’s moral conduct that arose within a large social context. On an individual level, these statements can restrict and regulate people’s behavior to a certain extent; from a larger perspective, they were intended to create good social ethos, and, of course, to enable the rulers to rule the people better. If the people have their own ideas, can think freely, and seek out their own moral standards of comportment, or if they can express their own opinions, live by their own ideas, comport themselves as they see fit, and adopt their own way of regarding

things, people, their society, and the country they live in, it is undoubtedly not a good thing or a good sign for the rulers, because it directly threatens their position of dominance. In brief, these statements on moral conduct were basically put forward by so-called moralists, thinkers, and educators as a way to please and pander to the rulers, with the aim of showing that they could use these thoughts and theories, as well as their own reputation and prestige, to serve the rulers. This is basically the nature of all these statements on moral conduct that we fellowshiped about; their purpose was nothing more than to restrict people's thoughts, moral conduct, and views on things to within a moral range that people thought was a bit better, more positive, and nobler, in order to reduce conflict between people, bring harmony to their interactions, and engender tranquility, thereby benefiting the rulers' dominion over the people, and further, consolidating the status of the ruling class, and maintaining social harmony and stability. Thus, these people who advanced standards of moral conducts got all they wished for, which was to be appreciated and assigned to important posts by the ruling class. This was very much the career path they aspired to and hoped for, and even if they couldn't be high-ranking officials, at the very least, they would be remembered for generations to come and go down in history. Think about it—which of the people who put forward these statements on moral conduct is not revered by this society? Which one is not admired by the human race? Even today, among Chinese people, these so-called thinkers, educators, and moralists, such as Confucius, Mencius, Laozi, Han Feizi and the like, are enduringly popular, highly regarded, and revered. Of course, we have listed a limited few of the statements on moral conduct, and the examples given are just some of the more representative ones. Although these statements on moral conduct come from many people, the ideas and viewpoints advocated by these so-called luminaries accord completely with the wish of rulers and the ruling class, and all their concepts of governance and central ideas are the same: To formulate some moral norms of comportment and actions for human beings to follow so that they behave themselves, meekly contribute to society and to their country, and live meekly among their fellows—that is basically all. Their ideas and viewpoints have the same aim, regardless of which dynasty or person these statements of moral conduct originated from: to serve the ruling class, and to mislead and control humankind.

We have already fellowshiped about eight statements on moral conduct. The nature of these eight statements is basically the requirement that people forgo their selfish desires and their own will, instead serving society, the human race, and their own country, and achieving selflessness. For example, no matter to which group such statements about moral conduct as "Sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others," "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral," and "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others" are put forth, all require people to exercise self-restraint—restraint over their own desires and immoral conduct—and to hold favorable ideological and moral viewpoints. No matter how much these statements influence humankind, and no

matter whether that influence is positive or negative, the aim of these so-called moralists was, put succinctly, to restrict and regulate people's moral conduct by putting forward such statements, so that people would have a basic code for how they should comport themselves and act, how they should view people and things, and how they should perceive their society and country. To look at the positive, the invention of these statements on moral conduct has, to a certain extent, played a role in restricting and regulating the moral conduct of humanity. But to look at the objective facts, it has led people into embracing some false and pretentious thoughts and viewpoints, making people who are influenced and inculcated by traditional culture more insidious, more treacherous, better at pretending, and more confined in their thinking. Because of the influence and inculcation of traditional culture, people have gradually adopted those mistaken views and statements of traditional culture as positive things, and worship as saints these luminaries and great figures who mislead people. When people have been misled, their minds become muddled, numb, and dulled. They don't know what normal humanity is, or what people with normal humanity should pursue and adhere to. They don't know how people should live in this world or what kind of mode or rules of existence they should adopt, much less what the proper aim of human existence is. Due to the influence, inculcation, and even confinement of traditional culture, the positive things, requirements and rules from God, have been suppressed. In this sense, the various statements on moral conduct in traditional culture have, to a large extent, deeply misled and influenced people's thinking, confining their thoughts and leading them astray, away from the correct path in life, and further and further away from God's requirements. This means that the deeper you are influenced by the various ideas and viewpoints on moral conduct in traditional culture, and the longer you are inculcated by them, the further you stray from the thoughts, aspirations, goal to be pursued, and rules of existence that people with normal humanity should have, and the further you stray from the standard that God requires of people. Having been infected, indoctrinated, and inculcated by these ideas from traditional culture, people adopt them as codes, even regarding them as truths, and as criteria by which to view people and things, and to comport themselves and act. People no longer think about or doubt whether these things are correct or not, nor do they go beyond traditional culture's various statements regarding benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness to think about how they should live. People don't know that, nor do they think about it. Why don't they think about it? Because people's thoughts have been filled and occupied by these moral scriptures that preach benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. Even though many people believe in the true God and read the Bible, they still confuse God's words and the truth with the many statements on moral conduct that stem from benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. Some people even regard many of these statements in traditional culture as scriptures on positive things and pass them off as the truth, preaching them and promoting them as such, and going

so far as to quote them as a way of instructing others. This is a very serious problem; it is something that God does not want to see, something that disgusts Him. So, can all who accept God's work of the last days see through the things of traditional culture and discern them clearly? Not necessarily. There must be some people who remain quite worshipful and approving of the things of traditional culture. If these satanic poisons are not thoroughly cleared out, it will be difficult for people to understand and gain the truth. God's chosen people must see through one fact: God's word is God's word, the truth is the truth, and human words are human words. Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness are human words, and traditional culture is human words. Human words are never the truth, nor will they ever become the truth. This is a fact. No matter how much people identify with benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness in their thoughts and views, those things cannot replace God's words; no matter how correct such values have been verified and confirmed to be, over thousands of years of human existence, they cannot become God's words or replace them, much less be confused with God's words. Even if statements regarding benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness accord with people's conscience and reason, they are not God's words, nor can they replace His words, much less be called the truth. Statements and requirements concerning benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness in traditional culture only serve society and the ruling class. These statements and requirements are only intended to restrict and regulate people's behavior in order to achieve better social ethos, one that is conducive to stabilizing the power of the ruling class. Naturally, no matter how well you abide by the values of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness, you will not be able to understand the truth, and you will not be able to obey God, nor will you ultimately become a passable created being. No matter how well you abide by these things, if you do not understand the truth, you cannot perform your duty to an acceptable standard. What would you then be in the eyes of God? You would still be an unbeliever and belong to Satan. Does someone of supposedly exceptional moral quality and noble ethics have the conscience and sense of normal humanity? Can they genuinely accept the truth? Can they believe in God and follow Him? Absolutely not! Because what they worship is Satan, devils, pretend saints, and false holy men. Deep down in their heart and bones, they are sick of the truth and hate it. Therefore, they must be people who resist God and who are His enemies. People who worship the devil Satan are the most arrogant and conceited and senseless people—they are the degenerates of the human race, whose bones are full of satanic poison, full of satanic heresies and fallacies. As soon as they see God's words and the truth, their eyes turn red and they bristle with anger, revealing the hideous face of a devil. Therefore, anyone who reveres traditional culture and blindly believes in such traditional fallacies as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness is sick of the truth and hates it. They do not possess the sense of normal humanity at all, and they will never accept the truth. The stuff of traditional culture

and statements on moral conduct regarding benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness do not accord with the truth or God's words at all. No matter how scrupulously people put these values into practice or how well they uphold them, it is not the same as living out normal humanity. This is because people have corrupt dispositions. That is the fact of the matter. They are filled with all kinds of satanic teachings, and "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost" has become people's nature essence. Regardless of how nice you make them sound, how lofty your language, or how grand your theories, these statements of traditional culture regarding moral conduct cannot be put into practice. Even if you adhere to each of the rules imposed based on the values of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness in traditional culture, you are no more than superficially well-behaved. But when it comes to believing in God, following Him and performing your duty, and obeying God, as well as your attitude and views toward Him and the truth, these values of traditional culture serve no purpose at all. They cannot rein in your rebelliousness, nor reverse your notions of God, nor fix people's corrupt dispositions, let alone resolve the issue of people being careless and perfunctory in the performance of their duty. These values are of no help at all in restricting people's corrupt behavior in any way, and they are fundamentally unable to make people live out normal humanity.

Most people, when they have just begun believing in God, think that faith is very simple. They think that believing in God and following God means learning to be patient and tolerant, readily giving to charity, being willing to help others, being measured in one's words and actions, not being too arrogant, or too harsh on others. They feel that if they conduct themselves in this way, God will be satisfied, and that they will not be pruned and dealt with while performing their duty. If they serve as a leader or worker, they believe that they will not be replaced or cast out. They believe that they are guaranteed to attain salvation. Is believing in God really such a simple matter? (No.) No small number of people hold this point of view, but ultimately, their ideas, viewpoints, and the way they conduct themselves in life all end in failure. In the end, some people who don't know their place in the universe sum everything up in a single sentence: "I've been a failure as a human!" They think that comporting themselves as a human means adhering to the values of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. But can that be called comporting oneself as a human? That's not comporting oneself as a human; it's the comportment of a demon. To those people who say, "I've been a failure as a human," I would ask, have you comported yourself as a human? You haven't even tried to comport yourself as a human, so how can you say, "I've been a failure as a human"? This is a failure of traditional cultural values, such as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness, to perform their function on people, not a failure to comport yourself as a human. When people perform their duty in the house of God, such things as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness are of absolutely no service and are no longer of use. Before they know

it, people end up concluding, “Oh, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness—they don’t work! I used to think that comporting myself was simple, and that believing in God was also very simple and not that complicated. Only now do I realize that I’ve been oversimplifying belief in God.” After listening to sermons for a long time, they finally realize that it won’t do for people not to understand the truth. If people don’t understand some area of the truth, they are liable to make mistakes in that area and get dealt with, fail, and be judged and chastised. Those things that they previously believed were right, good, positive, and noble pale into insignificance and become worthless in the face of the truth. All the various statements about benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness have had some influence on people’s thoughts and viewpoints, as well as on the ways and means by which they conduct their affairs. If God’s management work of saving mankind were not involved, and mankind continued living as they are, under the power of Satan, then benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness, being relatively positive things, would play a minor positive role in people’s thinking and in the social ethos and environment. At the very least, those things do not incite people to commit evil, murder, and arson, or to go about raping and looting. However, when it comes to God’s work of saving people, not one of these things—benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, or trustworthiness—is relevant to the truth, the way, or the life that God wants to bestow on humankind. And that’s not all: To look at the various ideas advocated by the values of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness, the requirements they place on people’s moral conduct, and their influences and constraints on people’s moral conduct, none of them has played a role in guiding people back to God or leading them onto the correct path in life. Instead, they have become major obstacles that keep people from pursuing and accepting the truth. The statements about moral conduct that we fellowshiped on and dissected before—don’t pocket the money you pick up; derive pleasure from helping others; be strict with yourself and tolerant of others; requite evil with good; a kindness received should be gratefully repaid; sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others; a woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral; when drinking the water of a well, one should never forget who dug it—we have basically made them clear in fellowship, and everyone at least understands their general meaning. The fact is that whatever aspect of moral conduct such statements concern, they confine people’s thinking. If you can’t distinguish such things, and can’t clearly understand the essence of these statements, and don’t turn these erroneous views around, then you cannot let go of these statements on moral conduct, nor rid yourself of their influence on you. If you cannot let go of these things, it will be difficult for you to accept the truth from God, the criteria of God’s words, and the Creator’s specific requirements for people’s moral conduct, and it will be difficult to observe and practice God’s words as the principles and criteria of the truth. Is this not a serious problem?

Today, let us continue by fellowshiping on and dissecting the next statement about moral conduct: “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings.” This describes a method for interacting with others that Satan has inculcated in people. It means that when you interact with others, you must give them some leeway. You should not be too harsh with others, you cannot bring up their past faults, you have to maintain their dignity, you cannot damage good relationships with them, you must be forgiving toward them, and so on. This saying about morality mainly describes a kind of philosophy for living that dictates interactions among human beings. There is a tenet in philosophies for living that says, “Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship.” It means that in order to preserve a friendly relationship, one must keep silent about their friend’s problems, even if they see them clearly—that they should abide by the principles of not striking people in the face or calling out their shortcomings. They are to deceive each other, hide from each other, engage in intrigue with each other; and though they know with crystal clarity what sort of person the other is, they do not say it outright, but employ cunning methods to preserve their friendly relationship. Why would one want to preserve such relationships? It is about not wanting to make enemies in this society, within one’s group, which would mean subjecting oneself often to dangerous situations. Knowing someone will become your enemy and harm you after you have called out their shortcomings or hurt them, and not wishing to put yourself in such a situation, you employ the tenet of philosophies for living that runs, “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings.” In light of this, if two people are in such a relationship, do they count as true friends? (No.) They are not true friends, much less each other’s confidant. So, what sort of relationship is this, exactly? Is it not a fundamental social relationship? (It is.) In such social relationships, people cannot offer their feelings, nor have deep exchanges, nor speak about whatever they wish. They cannot say out loud what is in their heart, or the problems they see in the other, or words that would benefit the other. Instead, they pick nice things to say, to keep the other’s favor. They dare not speak the truth or uphold the principles, lest it give rise to animosity toward them in others. When no one is threatening to someone, does that person not live in relative ease and peace? Is this not people’s goal in promoting the saying, “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings”? (It is.) Clearly, this is a cunning, deceptive way of existence with an element of defensiveness, whose goal is self-preservation. People who live like this have no confidants, no close friends with whom they can say whatever they like. They are defensive with each other, and calculating, and strategic, each taking what they need from the relationship. Is this not so? At its root, the goal of “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings” is to keep from offending others and making enemies, to protect oneself by not causing hurt to anyone. It is a technique and method one adopts to keep themselves from being hurt.

Looking at these several facets of its essence, is the demand of people's moral conduct "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" a noble one? Is it a positive one? (No.) Then, what does it teach people? That you must not upset or hurt anyone, otherwise, you are the one who will end up getting hurt; and also, that you should not trust anyone. If you hurt any one of your good friends, the friendship will quietly start to change: They will go from being your good, close friend to a stranger or an enemy. What problems can it resolve, teaching people to act so? Even if, by acting in this way, you do not make enemies and even lose a few, will this make people admire and approve of you, and always keep you as a friend? Does this fully achieve the standard for moral conduct? At the very best, this is no more than a philosophy for living. Can abiding by this statement and practice be considered good moral conduct? Not at all. This is how some parents educate their children. If their child gets beaten up while out somewhere, they tell the child, "You're a wimp. Why didn't you fight back? If he punches you, just kick him!" Is this the correct way? (No.) What is this called? It is called incitement. What is the purpose of incitement? To avoid losses and to take advantage of others. If someone punches you, it will hurt for a couple days, at the most; if you then kick them, won't there be more serious consequences? And who will have caused this? (The parents, with their incitement.) So is the character of the statement "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" not somewhat similar to this? Is it right to interact with other people according to this statement? (No.) No, it is not. To look at it from this angle, is this not a way of inciting people? (Yes, it is.) Does it teach people to be wise when interacting with others, to be able to differentiate people, to see people and things in the right way, and to interact with people in a wise way? Does it teach you that if you meet good people, people with humanity, you should treat them with sincerity, provide them help if you are able to, and if you cannot, you should then be tolerant and treat them properly, learn to tolerate their shortcomings, put up with their misunderstandings and judgments of you, and learn from their strengths and good qualities? Is that what it teaches people? (No.) So, what comes in the end of what this saying teaches people? Does it make people more honest, or more deceitful? It results in people becoming more deceitful; people's hearts grow further apart, the distance between people widens, and people's relationships become complicated; it is equivalent to a complication in people's social relationships. Heart-to-heart communication between people is lost, and a mutually guarded mindset arises. Can people's relationships still be normal this way? Will the social climate improve? (No.) So, that's why the saying "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" is obviously wrong. Teaching people to do this cannot make them live out normal humanity; moreover, it cannot make people aboveboard, upright, or candid. It absolutely cannot achieve anything positive.

The saying "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" refers to two actions: one being that of striking, and the

other that of calling out. In people's normal interactions with others, is striking someone right or wrong? (Wrong.) Is striking someone a demonstration and behavior of normal humanity in one's interactions with others? (No.) Striking people is definitely wrong, whether you strike them in the face or elsewhere. So, the statement "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face" is inherently wrong. According to this saying, it is apparently not right to strike someone in the face, but it is right to strike elsewhere, because after the face is struck it becomes red, swollen, and injured. This makes the person look bad and unpresentable, and it also shows you to treat people in a very rude, unsophisticated, and ignoble way. So, is it noble to strike people elsewhere? No—that is not noble, either. In fact, the focus of this saying is not where to strike someone, but the word "strike" itself. When interacting with others, if you are always striking others as a way of confronting and dealing with problems, your method itself is wrong. It is done out of impetuousness and is not based on the conscience and reason of one's humanity, and of course, less still is it the practice of the truth or adherence to the truth principles. Some people don't attack others' dignity in their presence—they are careful in what they say and refrain from striking the other in the face, but are always playing dirty tricks behind their back, shaking their hand over the desk but kicking them under it, saying good things to their face but conspiring against them behind their back, working an angle on them, waiting for opportunities to take vengeance, framing and scheming, spreading rumors, or engineering conflicts and using other people to get at them. How much better are these insidious methods than striking someone in the face? Are they not even more severe than striking someone in the face? Are they not even more insidious, vicious, and devoid of humanity? (Yes, they are.) So then, the statement "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face" is inherently meaningless. This viewpoint is itself a mistake, with a hint of false pretenses. It is a hypocritical method, which makes it all the more abhorrent, disgusting, and loathsome. Now we are clear that striking people is itself done out of impetuousness. On what basis do you strike someone? Is it authorized by law, or is it your God-given right? It is none of these things. So, why strike people? If you can get along with someone normally, you can use correct ways to get along with them and interact. If you cannot get along with them, you can go your separate ways without needing to act impetuously or come to blows. Within the scope of the conscience and reason of humanity, this should be something that people do. As soon as you act impetuously, even if you don't strike the person in the face but somewhere else, it is a serious problem. This is not a normal way of interacting. This is how enemies interact, not the normal way that people interact. It is beyond the pale of the sense of humanity. Is the phrase "call out" in the saying "if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" good or bad? Does the phrase "call out" have a level on which it refers to people's being revealed or exposed within the words of God? (It does not.) From My understanding of the phrase "call out" as it exists in human language, it does not mean that. Its essence is one of a somewhat malicious form of exposure; it means to reveal

people's problems and deficiencies, or some things and behaviors unknown to others, or some intrigue, ideas, or views operating in the background. This is the meaning of the phrase "call out" in the saying "if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings." If two people get along well and are confidants, with no barriers between them, and they each hope to be of benefit and assistance to the other, then it would be best for them to sit together and lay out each other's problems in openness and sincerity. This is proper, and it is not calling out others' shortcomings. If you discover another person's problems but see that they are not yet able to accept your advice, then simply do not say anything, so as to avoid quarrel or conflict. If you want to help them, you can seek their opinion and first ask them, "I see that you have a bit of a problem, and I hope to give you some advice. I don't know if you'll be able to accept it. If you will, I'll tell you. If you won't, I'll keep it to myself for now and not say anything." If they say, "I trust you. Whatever you have to say won't be out of bounds; I can accept it," that means that you have been granted permission, and you can then communicate their problems to them, one by one. Not only will they completely accept what you say, but also benefit from it, and the two of you will still be able to maintain a normal relationship. Is that not treating each other with sincerity? (It is.) This is the correct method for interacting with others; it is not calling out others' shortcomings. What does it mean not to "call out others' shortcomings," as the saying in question goes? It means not to speak of others' deficiencies, not to speak of their most taboo problems, not to expose the essence of their problems, and not to be so blatant in calling it out. It means just to make some surface-level remarks, to say things that are commonly said by all, to say things that the person themselves is already able to perceive, and not to reveal mistakes the person has made previously or sensitive issues. What does it benefit the person if you act in this way? Perhaps you will not have offended them or made an enemy of them, but what you have done in no way helps or benefits them. Therefore, the phrase "don't call out others' shortcomings" itself is evasive and a form of trickery that does not allow sincerity in people's treatment of each other. One could say that to act in this way is to harbor evil intentions; it is not the correct way of interacting with others. Unbelievers even see "if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" as something a person of noble morals should do. It is clearly a deceitful manner of interacting with others, which people adopt to protect themselves; it is not at all a proper mode of interaction. Not calling out others' shortcomings itself is insincere, and in calling out others' shortcomings, there may be an ulterior intent. Under what circumstances can you generally see people call out each other's shortcomings? Here's an example: In society, if two candidates are running for a certain office, they will call out each other's shortcomings. One will say, "You've done some bad thing, and you've embezzled however much money," and the other will say, "You've harmed however many people." They expose such things about each other. Is this not calling out others' shortcomings? (Yes, it is.) Those who call out each other's shortcomings on the political stage are political opponents, whereas when ordinary people do it, they are enemies. In

lay terms, one would say that these two people don't get along. Whenever they meet, they start arguing, calling out each other's shortcomings, judging and condemning each other, and even creating things out of nothing and making false accusations. As long as there is anything dubious about the other person's affairs, they will expose it and condemn the other person for it. If people call out many things about each other but not others' shortcomings, is that a noble thing to do? (No.) It is not, but people still regard this tenet as noble moral conduct and praise it, which really is disgusting! The saying "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" fails in itself at advocating anything positive. It is unlike the sayings "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," "Requite evil with good," and "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral," which at least advocate praiseworthy moral conduct. The expression "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" is a statement on moral conduct that incites negative behavior and has no positive function on people at all. It doesn't tell people what the correct ways or principles are for conducting themselves in life in this world. It provides no such information. All it does is tell people not to strike others in the face, as if it were fine to strike them anywhere but the face. Strike them all you like; leave them black and blue, maimed, or even half-dead, as long as they're still breathing. And when people are in conflict with each other, when enemies or political opponents meet, they can call out whatever they want about each other, as long as they don't call out each other's shortcomings. What kind of mode is that? Were you previously not quite approving of this saying? (Yes.) Say two people get into a dispute and start arguing. One of them says, "I know that your husband isn't the father of your child," and the other says, "I know what tricks your family business uses to make money." Some people comment on the content of their quarrel, saying, "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings. Look at them raking up each other's few shortcomings and guilty secrets and making a big thing out of them. What petty behavior! And such a lack of integrity, too. You could at least show people a little respect, otherwise how will they be able to conduct themselves in the future?" Is it right or wrong to make comments like this? (It's wrong.) Does it have even the slightest positive effect? Does any of it even slightly accord with the truth? (No.) What kind of ideas and viewpoints must someone have to make such comments? Do such comments come from someone with a sense of righteousness who has understood the truth? (No.) From what basis do such comments arise? Were they made because they are wholly influenced by traditional culture's idea of "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings"? (Yes.) These comments are based entirely on this idea and viewpoint in traditional culture.

Regarding the dispute between the two people that we just talked about, if you look at this matter from the perspective of someone who believes in God, how should it be treated, according to God's words and with the truth as the criterion? Is this not an issue

that people should reflect on? (Yes, it is.) This is something you should reflect on. What principles should believers abide by? They must view people and things, and comport themselves and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as their criterion. If a dispute occurs between brothers and sisters, they must be tolerant and patient with each other, and treat each other with love. They must first reflect and gain self-awareness, then resolve the issue according to the truth in God's words, such that they recognize their own mistakes and can forsake the flesh, and treat others according to the truth principles. In this way, they will resolve the problem at its root. You should gain a thorough understanding of this problem. The saying "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" is not a standard for measuring humanity, but only a baseline philosophy for living, one that cannot restrict people's corrupt behavior at all. This saying is quite meaningless, and there is no need for believers to abide by such a rule. People should interact with each other according to God's words and the truth principles. Those are what believers must abide by. If people believe in God yet still believe in traditional cultural views and satanic philosophies, and use ideas of traditional culture like "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" to measure people and restrict others, or to put demands on themselves, then that is absurd and preposterous of them, and they are nonbelievers. The saying "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" is a satanic philosophy for interacting with one's friends, which cannot resolve the essential, root problems of interpersonal relationships. Therefore, this saying is a most shallow rule, a most shallow philosophy for living. It falls far short of the standards of the truth principles, and abiding by such a superficial rule cannot achieve anything and it is quite meaningless. Is that a fair way to put it? (Yes, it is.) When a dispute occurs between brothers and sisters, what should be the principle for regarding this matter and sorting it out? Is it to abide by the rules of traditional culture, or to take the truth in God's words as the principle? Tell Me your view. (First of all, we should analyze and come to know the nature of their dispute and their impetuous accusations against each other according to God's words, recognizing that these are outpourings of corrupt dispositions. Then, we should fellowship with them on the relevant path of practice. They should treat each other with love, they should have conscience and reason, and what they say and do must build the other up rather than hurt them. If the other has deficiencies or has made mistakes, they should deal with it correctly by helping if they can, rather than attacking, judging, or condemning them.) This is a form of helping people. So, what can be said to help them and resolve their dispute? (They are arguing in the church, and this in itself is unworthy of the saints and out of line with God's requirements. So we can fellowship with them by saying, "When you discover that someone has issues, help if you can. If you cannot help, there is no need to argue, otherwise it will disturb the life of the church, and if you persist despite repeated admonition, the church will handle it according to its

administrative decrees.") It seems that you all know to handle people who disturb the life of the church according to the principles, but you still don't quite know how to handle disputes between people, or which of God's words should be used to handle them—you still don't know how to employ God's words and the truth principles to resolve problems. In this matter, what issues does each party themselves have? Do they both have corrupt dispositions? (Yes.) Given that they both have corrupt dispositions, look at what corrupt dispositions poured forth from each person when the dispute occurred, and what their origins were. Locate the corrupt dispositions that poured forth, and then use God's words to expose and analyze them, so that they both come back before God and gain self-awareness according to God's words. So, what are the main things you should fellowship with them about? You might say something like this: "If you two acknowledge that you are followers of God, then don't argue, because arguments can't resolve problems. Don't treat people who believe in and follow God in that way, and don't treat brothers and sisters in the same way that unbelievers treat people. Doing so does not accord with God's will. How does God require people to treat others? God's words are very clear: Be forgiving, tolerant, and patient, and love one another. If you see that the other person has serious issues and you are dissatisfied with what they have done, you should fellowship about this in a reasonable and effective way, with a forgiving, tolerant, and patient attitude. It is better if the person can take it on board and accept it from God. If they cannot accept it from God, then you will still have fulfilled your responsibility, and don't need to launch impetuous attacks against them. When brothers and sisters argue and call out each other's shortcomings, that is behavior that is unworthy of the saints, and it does not accord with God's will. It's not the way believers should behave. And as for the person being accused, even if you think that you have acted reasonably and should not be criticized by the other person, then still, you should let go of your personal prejudices, and face the issue and the other party's accusations calmly and openly. You should never fight back in an impetuous manner. If both of you are worked up into impetuous states and cannot control yourselves, you should start by removing yourselves from the situation. Calm down and don't keep pursuing the issue, so as not to get caught in Satan's snare and fall into Satan's temptation. You can pray in private, coming before God to seek His help, and endeavoring to use God's words to resolve your issues. When you are both able to calm down and treat each other calmly and rationally, without acting or speaking impetuously, you can then come together to fellowship on the disputed issues, until you reach a consensus, unite in God's words, and achieve a solution to the problem." Would that not be an appropriate thing to say? (Yes.) The fact is that when two people argue, they both pour forth their corrupt dispositions, and they both pour forth their impetuousness. It's all satanic behavior. No one is right or wrong, and neither person's behavior is in accordance with the truth. If you could have regarded and handled the issue according to God's words and the truth, your dispute would not have happened. If only one party could have viewed people and

things, comported themselves and acted according to God's words, the dispute would not have happened. Therefore, if two people call out each other's shortcomings and strike each other in the face, then these people are both impetuous tough guys. There's nothing good about them; neither of them are right, and neither of them are wrong. What is the basis for measuring right and wrong? It depends on the perspective and stance that you adopt with regard to this matter, what your motives are, whether you have the basis of God's words, and whether what you do is in accord with the truth. Obviously, the motive behind your dispute is to subdue and overwhelm the other person. You expose and hurt each other with nasty words. It doesn't matter whether what you expose is right, nor whether the point of your dispute is right or not—because you do not handle this matter according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion, and what you pour forth is your impetuousness, and the method and principles of your actions are entirely based on impetuousness, having been compelled to do so by corrupt satanic dispositions, therefore, no matter who is in the right, nor who is at an advantage and who at a disadvantage, the fact is that both of you are wrong and bear responsibility. The way you are handling the matter is not based on God's words. You should both settle down and carefully consider your own issues. Only when both of you can be silent before God and address the problem with a cool head can you sit down and fellowship on it in a calm and composed manner. As long as both people's views on people and things, and their comportment and actions, are based on God's words and the truth principles, then no matter how different their ideas and viewpoints on a particular matter may be, there is actually no true difference to speak of, and there is no problem. As long as they handle their differences with God's words and the truth as their principle, then ultimately, they will certainly be able to get along and resolve their differences. Is this how you handle problems? (No.) You simply don't know how to use the truth to resolve problems, except for your method of resorting to administrative sanctions. So, what is the main takeaway for handling the matter in its entirety? It is not about requiring people to let go of their differences, but about resolving them in the correct way and achieving unity. What is the basis for resolving differences? (God's words.) That's right: Look for the basis in God's words. It is not about analyzing who is right and who is wrong, who is superior and who is inferior, or who is justified and who isn't. Rather, it is about solving the problem of people's ideas and viewpoints, which means resolving people's mistaken ideas and viewpoints and mistaken ways of dealing with a particular matter. Only by searching for a basis in God's words, and only by understanding the truth principles, can problems be truly resolved and people truly live in harmony with each other, achieving unity. Otherwise, if you use statements of traditional culture and methods such as "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" to handle things, problems will never be resolved, or at least, the differences between people's ideas and viewpoints will not be resolved. Therefore, everyone must learn to search for a basis in God's words. God's words are all truth, and

there is nothing contradictory in them. They are the only criterion for measuring all people, matters and things. If everyone finds a basis in God's words, and their outlooks on things achieve unity in God's words, then is it not easy for people to reach a consensus? If everyone can accept the truth, will there still be differences between people? Will there still be disputes? Will there still be a need to use ideas and viewpoints and statements like "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" as restrictions among people? There will not, because God's words can resolve all problems. Whatever disagreements people have, or however many different viewpoints, they should all be brought before God, and discerned and dissected according to God's words. It will then be possible to determine whether they are in accordance with the truth. When people have understood the truth, they can see that most of the ideas and viewpoints of corrupt mankind come from traditional culture, from the luminaries and great figures whom people worship—yet at their root, they come from satanic philosophies. Therefore, these errant ideas and viewpoints are actually easy to resolve. Why do I say they are easy to resolve? Because, if you measure these human ideas and viewpoints with God's words, you will find that they are all absurd, untenable, and unviable. If people can accept the truth, it is easy to let go of these things, and all problems can be resolved accordingly. What is achieved after the problems are resolved? Everyone can let go of their own opinions and personal, subjective ideas and viewpoints. No matter how noble and correct you think they are, no matter how long they have been circulating among people, so long as they do not accord with the truth, you should deny them and give them up. In the end, once all people have taken God's words as their basis and denied everything that comes from people, will their ideas and viewpoints not become unified? (Yes.) When the ideas and viewpoints that determine people's views on people and things, as well as their comportment and actions, are all unified, what differences will there then be between people? At the very most, there will be some differences in diet and living habits. But when it comes to issues that truly concern people's corrupt dispositions, the path they walk, and the essence of humankind, if people all take God's words as their basis and the truth as their criterion, they will become one with each other. It doesn't matter whether you are an Easterner or a Westerner, old or young, male or female, or whether you are an intellectual, a worker, or a farmer: As long as you can interact with others according to the truth in God's words, will there still be fights and conflicts between people? There will not. So, can infantile requirements such as "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" still be brought out as a solution to people's disputes? Can they still be the maxims that people abide by in their interactions with each other? Such superficial rules have no value to mankind, and they cannot affect people's views on people and things, as well as their comportment and actions, in their everyday life. Think about it: Is that not so? (Yes, it is.) As they are too far removed from the truth, and have no effect at all on people's

views on people and things, or on their comportment and actions, they should be renounced, once and for all.

Looking at what we fellowshiped about above, can it not be said with certainty that God's words and the truth are the criteria by which all people, events, and things are to be measured, and that the traditional culture and moral scriptures of humanity are untenable and not worthy of mention in the face of God's words and the truth? (Yes.) As for that "noble" moral requirement of "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings," which mankind reveres, with what kind of viewpoint and perspective should people now regard it? Should people continue worshiping and obeying such words? (No.) How are they to be renounced, then? Begin by not being impetuous or impulsive when things befall you. Treat everyone and everything correctly, calm down, come before God, seek the truth principles in God's words, and find a path of practice, so that you can treat people and events exactly based on God's words, rather than being fettered or restrained by the saying on moral conduct that goes, "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings." Would living in that way not be easier and more joyful for you? If people do not accept the truth, they have no way to break free from the restraint of corrupt dispositions, and it is difficult for them to interact with others in the group in which they live. There may be someone whom you do not bully, but they want to bully you. You want to get along well with someone, but they are always making trouble for you. You put up your guard against certain people and avoid them, but they go on hounding you and pestering you, regardless. If you don't understand the truth and don't have a basis in God's words, all you can do is keep on struggling with them until the end. If it happens that you encounter a formidable bully, you'll feel you have no choice but to follow the saying, "It is never too late for a gentleman to take his revenge." You'll wait for the right opportunity to take revenge on him, using clever methods to bring him down. Not only will you be able to give vent to your grievance, but you will also get everyone to applaud you for your sense of righteousness, and make them think that you are the gentleman and he is the villain. What do you think about this approach? Is this the right way to carry oneself in the world? (No.) Now you understand. So, who is the good guy: the gentleman or the villain? (Neither is good.) Those gentlemen who are venerated by unbelievers are missing a descriptor: "fake." They are "fake gentlemen." So, whatever you do, don't be a gentleman, because all gentlemen are faking it. So, how must one conduct oneself in order to stay on the correct path? Is it fine to act like a "true gentleman" who, "if he strikes others, doesn't strike them in the face; and if he calls others out, he doesn't call out their shortcomings"? (No.) All those gentlemen and famous people are phony and deceitful, and they are fake gentlemen. They can all go to hell! How, then, should one comport themselves? By being someone who pursues the truth, who views people and things, and comports themselves and acts, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as their criterion. Only with such comportment is one a true person. Is this

the correct way or not? (Yes.) What should you do if someone keeps calling out your shortcomings? You might say, “If you call me out, I’ll call you out, too!” Is it good to target each other like that? Is that the way that people should comport themselves, act, and treat others? (No.) People may know that they should not do this as a matter of doctrine, yet many people still cannot overcome such temptations and snares. It may be that you haven’t heard anyone calling out your shortcomings, or targeting you, or judging you behind your back—but when you do hear someone saying such things, you won’t be able to bear it. Your heart will beat faster and your hot-headedness will come forth; you will say, “How dare you call me out? If you are unkind to me, I’ll do wrong to you! If you call out my shortcomings, don’t think I won’t call out your sore spots!” Others say, “There’s a saying that goes, ‘If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings,’ so I won’t call out your shortcomings, but I’ll find other ways to take care of you and take you down a peg. We’ll see who’s tough!” Are these methods good or not? (No.) For almost anyone, if they find out that someone has called them out, judged them, or said something bad about them behind their back, their first reaction will be one of anger. They will bristle with rage, unable to eat or sleep—and if they do manage to sleep, they will even be swearing in their dreams! Their impetuousness knows no bounds! It’s such a trifling matter, yet they cannot get over it. This is the impact that impetuousness has on people, the evil results that come of corrupt dispositions. When a corrupt disposition becomes someone’s life, where does it primarily show? It shows in that when the person encounters something they find disagreeable, that thing first affects their feelings, and then that person’s impetuousness will burst forth. And as it does, the person will live in their impetuousness and regard the matter by dint of their corrupt disposition. The philosophical views of Satan will arise in their heart, and they will start considering which ways and means they will use to take their revenge, thereby laying bare their corrupt disposition. People’s ideas and viewpoints on dealing with problems such as this, and the ways and means that come to them, and even their feelings and impetuousness all come from corrupt dispositions. So, what are the corrupt dispositions that come up in this case? The first is certainly malice, followed by arrogance, deceit, evil, intransigence, aversion to the truth, and hatred of the truth. Of these corrupt dispositions, arrogance may be the least influential. What, then, are the corrupt dispositions that are most able to dominate a person’s feelings and thoughts, and determine how they will ultimately deal with this matter? They are malice, intransigence, aversion to the truth, and hatred of the truth. These corrupt dispositions bind a person in a death grip, and it is obvious that they are living in Satan’s net. How does Satan’s net arise? Is it not corrupt dispositions that give rise to it? Your corrupt dispositions have woven all kinds of satanic nets for you. For instance, when you hear that someone is doing something like judging you, cursing you, or calling out your shortcomings behind your back, you let satanic philosophies and corrupt dispositions be your life and dominate your thoughts, your views, and your feelings, thus engendering a

sequence of actions. These corrupt actions are mainly the result of your having a satanic nature and disposition. Whatever your circumstances may be, as long as you are bound, controlled, and dominated by Satan's corrupt disposition, everything you live out, everything you reveal, and everything you display—or your feelings, your thoughts and views, and your ways and means of doing things—are all satanic. All of these things violate the truth and are hostile to the words of God and the truth. The further removed you are from the word of God and the truth, the more controlled and ensnared you are by Satan's net. If instead, you can break free from the fetters and control of your corrupt dispositions, and forsake them, come before God, and act and resolve problems with the methods and principles of which God's words tell you, then you will gradually break free from Satan's net. After breaking free, what you then live out is no longer the same old likeness of a satanic person who is controlled by their corrupt dispositions, but that of a new person who takes God's words as their life. Your whole way of living changes. But if you give in to the feelings, thoughts, views, and practices that satanic dispositions give rise to, then you will adhere to a litany of satanic philosophies and various techniques, such as "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings," "It is never too late for a gentleman to take his revenge," "Better to be a true villain than a fake gentleman," "He who does not seek revenge is not a man." These will be in your heart, dictating your actions. If you take these satanic philosophies as the basis for your actions, the character of your actions will change, and you will be doing evil, and resisting God. If you take these negative thoughts and viewpoints as the basis for your actions, it is obvious that you have strayed far from God's teachings and words, and that you have fallen into Satan's net and cannot extricate yourself. You live practically all of your daily lives amid satanic dispositions—you live in Satan's net. The root of people's torment is that they are controlled by their satanic dispositions such that they cannot extricate themselves. They live in sin, and suffer no matter what they do. You feel tormented even when you have defeated your opponent, because you don't know who the next enemy you face will be, nor whether you will be able to defeat them in the same way. You are afraid and tormented. And what about the one who is defeated? Of course, they are likewise tormented. Having been bullied, they feel that they have no dignity or integrity in life. Being bullied is hard to take, so they constantly wait for an opportune moment to strike and seek a chance to retaliate—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth—to show their opponent what for. Such a mindset is torment, too. In short, the one who retaliates and the one who is retaliated against alike both live in Satan's net, constantly doing evil, constantly looking for ways to get out of their precarious situation, and wishing as they do to find peace, happiness, and security. On the one hand, people are controlled by corrupt dispositions and live in Satan's net, adopting the various methods, thoughts, and viewpoints given to them by Satan to resolve issues happening around them. On the other hand, people still hope to attain peace and happiness from God. However, because they are always bound

by Satan's corrupt disposition and trapped in its net, unable consciously to forsake it and emerge from it, and because they grow removed from the word of God and the truth principles, people are never able to attain the comfort, joy, peace, and happiness that come from God. In what state do people live, in the end? They cannot rise to the task of pursuing the truth, though they would like to, and they cannot live up to God's requirements, though they wish to perform their duties properly. They are stuck right where they are. This is an agonizing torment. People live within Satan's corrupt disposition, in spite of themselves. They are more like fiends than people, often living in dark corners, searching for shameful and evil methods by which to resolve the many difficulties they face. The fact is that deep in their souls, people are willing to be good and to aspire toward the light. They hope to live as human beings, with dignity. They also hope that they can pursue the truth and rely on the word of God to live, and make the word of God their life and reality, but they never can put the truth into practice, and despite the many doctrines they understand, they cannot resolve their problems. People are buffeted front and back in this dilemma, unable to go forward and unwilling to go back. They are stuck where they are. And the feeling of being "stuck" is one of agony—tremendous agony. People have a will to aspire toward the light, and they are unwilling to leave the word of God and the right path. However, they do not accept the truth, and cannot put God's words into practice, and remain unable to cast off the bondage and control of their corrupt satanic disposition. Ultimately, they can only live in agony, without any real happiness. Is this not how things are? (It is.) In any event, if people want to practice the truth and obtain the truth, they must experience God's words a bit at a time, starting with the small things, to dispel the influence that these sayings about moral conduct have on their ideas and viewpoints, and on their pursuit of the truth. This is key; these issues must be resolved.

If people want to change their dispositions and attain salvation, they must have not only determination, but also an indomitable mindset. They must draw experience from their failures, and gain a path of practice from their experience. Don't be negative and discouraged when you fail, and certainly don't give up. But neither should you become complacent when you make some modest gain. Regardless of what you fail or grow weak in doing, it doesn't dictate that you will be unable to be saved in the future. You must understand God's will, get back on your feet, abide by God's words, and continue battling your corrupt satanic dispositions. One must begin by seeing clearly the harm and impediment that the various requirements and sayings on moral conduct that come from Satan inflict on people's pursuit of the truth. It is that these sayings on moral conduct constantly bind and constrain people's minds, while also fostering people's corrupt dispositions. Of course, they also detract from people's acceptance of the truth and God's words to varying degrees, causing people to doubt and resist the truth. One such saying is "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings." This philosophy for living has taken root in people's juvenile

souls, and people are subconsciously influenced by these kinds of ideas and views in their regard of others and their manners of handling what occurs around them. These ideas and views effectively whitewash and cover up the dispositions of evil, deceit, and malice among people's corrupt dispositions. Not only do they fail to resolve the problem of corrupt dispositions, but they also make people more cunning and deceitful, further exacerbating people's corrupt dispositions. In brief, these sayings about moral conduct and philosophies for living in traditional culture not only influence people's thoughts and views, but also have a profound impact on people's corrupt dispositions. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the influence that such ideas and views of traditional culture as "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" exert on people. It is not to be ignored.

Just now, we mainly fellowshiped on whether, when disputes arise between people, to approach them by way of the sayings and viewpoints of traditional culture, or to approach them according to God's words and the truth principles; on whether it is the views of traditional culture that can resolve problems, or God's words and the truth that can resolve man's problems. When people have seen these things clearly, they will make the right choices, and it will be easier to resolve disputes with others according to the truth in God's words. When such problems are resolved, the issue of people's thoughts being influenced and fettered by the saying on moral conduct that runs "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" will also basically be resolved. People's behavior will not be affected by these kinds of ideas and views, at least; they will be able to break free from Satan's net of deception, obtain the truth from God's words, find the truth principles for interacting with people, and make God's words their lives. Just dissecting and discerning, according to God's words, the erroneous views of traditional culture and the fetters and bondage of satanic philosophies can enable one to understand the truth and develop discernment. It enables one to cast off the influence of Satan and be liberated from the bondage of sin. In this way, God's words and the truth become your life, replacing that old life of yours, whose essence was satanic philosophies and dispositions. You will then have become a different person. Although this person is still you, it is a new person who has emerged, one who takes God's words and the truth as their life. Are you willing to be such a person? (Yes.) It is better to be such a person—you will at least be happy. When you first start practicing the truth, there will be difficulties, obstacles, and pain, but if you can seek the truth to resolve your difficulties until you have established a foundation in God's words, then the pain will cease, and as your life goes on, you will grow happier and more at ease. Why do I say that? Because the influence and control of those negative things within you will gradually subside, and as they do, more and more of God's words and the truth will enter into you, and the impression of God's words and truths in your heart will become more and more profound. Your awareness in seeking the truth will become stronger and keener, and when things befall you, your inner path,

direction and goal of practice will grow clearer and clearer, and when you battle internally, positive things will gain ever more of the upper hand. Will the happiness of your life not then increase? Will the peace and joy that you receive from God not then increase? (They will.) There will be fewer things in your life that cause you to be troubled, anguished, depressed, and resentful, among other negative feelings. In place of these things, God's words will become your life, bringing you hope, happiness, joy, freedom, liberation, and honor. When these positive things increase, people will change completely. When that time comes, check how you feel and compare things to before: Are they not completely different from your previous way of life? It is only when you have cast off Satan's net and its corrupt dispositions, its thoughts and viewpoints, as well as its various methods, viewpoints, and philosophical tenets for viewing people and things, and for comporting yourself and acting—only when you have cast these things off in their entirety, and are able to practice the truth and view people and things, treat others, and interact with them according to God's words, and experience in His words how truly good it is to treat people according to the truth principles, and live a life of ease and joy—that is when you will have attained true happiness.

Today, we fellowshiped on and dissected the saying about moral conduct, "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings." Do you understand the problems with this expression itself? (Yes.) Do you then also understand what God's requirements of people are? (Yes.) Having understood that, how will you ultimately actualize it in yourselves? By not being impulsive when something befalls you, or looking for a basis in traditional culture, or looking for a basis in social trends, or looking for a basis in public opinion, or, of course, looking for a basis in legal provisions. Instead, look for a basis in God's words. It doesn't matter how profound or superficial your understanding of the truth is; it's enough that it can resolve the problem. You must see clearly that you live in an evil and dangerous world. If you don't understand the truth, you can only follow the trends of society and be swept into the vortex of evil. So, when something befalls you, what should you do first, whatever it may be? You must first settle down, quiet yourself before God, and read His words often. This will enable you to have clarity of sight and thought, and to see clearly that Satan is deluding and corrupting this human race, and that God has come to rescue this human race from the influence of Satan. This, of course, is the most basic lesson you should learn. You must pray to God and seek the truth from Him, and ask Him to guide you—to guide you toward reading His relevant words, to guide you toward receiving relevant enlightenment and illumination, so that you understand the essence of the thing that is happening before you and how you should look upon it and deal with it. Then, use the method that God has taught and told you to face and handle the matter. You should rely wholly and entirely on God. Let God rule; let God be the Master. Once you are settled down, it's not a question of using your own mind to consider what technique or method to use, nor is it a question of acting by your own experience, or by satanic philosophies

and tricks. Rather, it's about waiting for God's enlightenment and the guidance of His words. What you must do is let go of your own will, put aside your thoughts and views, come reverently before God, listen to the words He tells you and the truths He tells you, and the teachings He shows you. Then, you must quiet yourself and contemplate in detail and pray-read over and over the words that God has taught you, so as to understand exactly what God wants you to do and what you should do. If you can clearly comprehend what God really means and what His teachings are, then you should first thank God for arranging the environment and giving you the opportunity to verify His words, make them a reality, and live them out, so that they become the life in your heart, and so that what you live out can testify that God's words are the truth. Naturally, as you handle these problems, there may be many ups and downs, difficulties and hardships, as well as some battles, and some claims and remarks from different people. But as long as you are sure that God's words are very clear on such problems, and that what you understand and obey are God's teachings, then you should put them into practice without hesitation. You should not be hampered by your environment, or by any person, event, or thing. You should remain firm in your stance. Adhering to the truth principles is not arrogance or self-righteousness. Once you have understood God's words and view people and things, and comport yourself and act, according to His words, and are able to adhere to the principles without ever changing, you are practicing the truth. This is the kind of attitude and determination that those who practice and pursue the truth should possess.

We have fellowshiped enough on the problems regarding the expression "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings." Do you still have difficulty in understanding such problems? Have you gained a wholly new understanding of this saying about moral conduct in traditional culture through today's fellowship and analysis? (Yes.) Based on this wholly new understanding you have, would you still hold this saying to be the truth and a positive thing? (No.) It may be that this saying's influence on people still exists deep in their mind, and in their subconsciousness, but through today's fellowship, people have abandoned from their thoughts and consciousness this saying about moral conduct. So, will you still abide by it in your interactions with others? When you are confronted with a dispute, what is it you should do? (First, we should abandon this satanic philosophy of "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings." We should quietly come before God to pray and seek the truth, and search in God's words for the truth principles that should be put into practice.) If we did not fellowship on these things, you would feel that you have never viewed people and things, or comported yourselves or acted, in accordance with the moral criterion of "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings." Now that this problem has been exposed, see for yourself whether you are influenced by such ideas and views when something similar next befalls you, that is, whether these things exist in your ideas and views. At that time, you will naturally

discover that there are many matters in which you are influenced by such ideas and views, meaning that in many environments and when many things happen, you are still influenced by such ideas and views, and they have taken root deep in your soul, and they continue to dictate your words and deeds and dictate your thoughts. If you haven't had this realization, and you don't pay attention to or pursue this issue, you definitely won't be aware of it, and you won't know whether you are influenced by such ideas and views. When you truly pursue the issue and are meticulous with it, you will find that the poisons of traditional culture often pour forth in your mind. It's not that you don't have them, it's just that you didn't take them seriously before, or that you quite failed to realize exactly what the essence of these sayings of traditional culture is. So, what must you do to become aware of such problems in the depths of your mind? You must learn to contemplate and to consider. How should one contemplate and consider? These two terms sound very simple; so, how should one comprehend them? For instance, let's say you are spreading the gospel and testifying about God with some people who are exploring the true way. Initially, they may be willing to listen, but after you have been fellowshiping for a while, some of them don't want to listen anymore. At that point, you must think, "What's going on here? Is my fellowship not quite tailored to their notions and problems? Or is it that I haven't fellowshiped on the truth clearly and comprehensibly? Or have they been disturbed by some rumor or fallacy that they have heard? Why won't some of them continue exploring? What exactly is the problem?" This is contemplation, is it not? Thinking about the matter by taking every aspect into consideration, without leaving out a single detail. What is your goal in considering these things? It is to find the root and essence of the problem, and then to resolve it. If you cannot find the answers to these problems no matter how much you think on them, you should find someone who understands the truth and seek from them. Look to how they spread the gospel and testify about God, and how they get an accurate feel for the main notions of people who are exploring, and how they then resolve them by fellowshiping on the truth according to God's words. Doesn't that get the action started? Consideration is the first step; action is the second step. The reason for acting is to verify whether the problem you are considering is the correct one, whether you have gone off course. When you find out where the problem originates, you will start to verify whether the problem you are considering is the right one or the wrong one. Then, set about resolving the problem you have verified to be the right one. For instance, when people who are exploring the true way hear rumors and fallacies and develop notions, then read God's words to them in a way that targets their notions. Fellowshiping clearly on the truth, thoroughly dissect and resolve their notions, and eliminate the obstacles in their hearts. They will then be willing to continue their exploration. This is starting to resolve the problem, is it not? The first step in resolving the problem is to consider it, contemplate it, and thoroughly work out its essence and root cause in your mind. Once you have verified what it is, start resolving the problem according to God's words. In the end, when the

problem is resolved, the goal will be achieved. So, do statements on moral conduct such as “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings” still exist in your thoughts and views, or do they not? (Yes, they do.) How are such problems to be resolved? You must consider everything that ordinarily befalls you. This is a crucial step. Firstly, think back to how you behaved when such things befell you previously. Were you dominated by sayings such as “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings”? And if you were, what intents did you have? What did you say? What did you do? How did you act? How did you behave? Once you settle down and consider these things, you will discover some problems without even realizing it. At that point, you should seek the truth and fellowship with others, and resolve these problems according to the relevant words of God. Strive in your real life to abandon completely those mistaken views that are advocated by traditional culture, and then adopt God’s words and the truth as principles for interacting with people, and treat people, events, and things according to the truth principles. This is the way to resolve problems, by dissecting the various ideas, views, and sayings of traditional culture according to God’s words, then seeing with utter clarity whether traditional culture really is positive and correct, based on the consequences of humanity’s adherence to these mistaken views. You will then see clearly that “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings” is just an evasive behavioral technique that people adopt in order to maintain their interpersonal relationships. But if people’s nature essence does not change, can people get on together long-term? Sooner or later, things will fall apart. Therefore, there are no true friends in the human world—just being able simply to maintain a physical relationship is pretty good in itself. If people have a little conscience and sense, and are kindhearted, they can maintain a superficial relationship with others, without it falling apart; if they are evil, insidious, and vicious in their humanity, they will then have no way to associate with others, and can only take advantage of each other. Having seen these things clearly—that is, having seen people’s nature essence clearly—the method that people should adopt in their interactions with each other can basically be determined, and it can be correct, inerrant, and in accordance with the truth. With their experience of God’s judgment and chastisement, God’s chosen people can now see a bit of the essence of humanity. So, in interactions between people—that is, in normal interpersonal relationships—they can see the importance of being an honest person, and that treating people according to God’s words and the truth is the highest principle and the wisest method. It will never inflict distress or anguish on people. However, people will inevitably have some strife in their soul when they experience God’s words and practice the truth, in the sense that corrupt dispositions will often emerge to disturb them and prevent them from practicing the truth. Those multifaceted ideas, feelings, and views produced by human corrupt dispositions will always obstruct you from putting the truth and God’s words into practice, to varying degrees, and when

they do, you will face many things that are effectively interferences and obstacles to practicing the truth. When these obstacles appear, you will no longer say, as you do now, that practicing the truth is easy. You won't say that so readily. By then, you will be suffering and sad, off your food and unable to sleep well. Some people may even find believing in God to be too hard and want to give up. I am convinced that many people have suffered greatly in order to practice the truth and enter reality, and have been pruned and dealt with countless times, and fought countless battles in their hearts, and shed countless tears. Is that not so? (Yes.) Undergoing these torments is a necessary process, and everyone, without exception, must go through it. In the Age of Law, David made a mistake, and later repented and confessed to God. How much did he cry? How was it described in the original text? ("All the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears" (Psalm 6:6).) How many tears must he have shed, to make his bed swim! This demonstrates the immensity and profundity of the remorse and torment he felt then. Have you shed that many tears? The number of tears you have shed is not even a hundredth of his, which shows that the degree to which you hate your corrupt dispositions, flesh, and transgressions is far from sufficient, and that your determination and perseverance in practicing the truth are far from sufficient. You are not yet up to standard; you are far from reaching the level of Peter and David. Well, let us end today's fellowship here.

April 16, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (9)

For a while now, we have been fellowshiping on the topic of moral conduct. Last time we fellowshiped about one saying—“If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings.” Today we are fellowshiping about the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible,” which is another of traditional culture’s requirements for human moral conduct. What aspects of people’s moral conduct does this saying touch on? Does it require people to be magnanimous and tolerant? (Yes.) This is a requirement that relates to the generosity of humanity. What is the criterion for this requirement? Where is the key point? (Be lenient wherever possible.) That’s right, it is that you should be lenient wherever possible, and not be so aggressive that you leave people no way out. This saying on moral conduct requires people to be magnanimous and not hold petty grievances. When associating with people or going about your business, if a dispute or conflict or grudge arises, don’t be too demanding, excessive or harsh in dealing with the offending party. Be lenient when necessary, be generous when necessary, and be mindful of the world and mindful of humankind. Do people have such great generosity? (No.) People don’t have such great generosity. People aren’t sure how great the human instinct’s ability to withstand this kind of thing is, and to what extent it is normal. What is the basic attitude of normal people toward someone who has hurt you, regarded you with hostility, or infringed upon your interests? It is hatred. When hatred arises in people’s hearts, are they capable of “being lenient wherever possible”? It isn’t easy to achieve, and most people cannot achieve it. When it comes to most people, can they rely on the conscience and sense that they possess in their humanity to be lenient with the other person and wipe the slate clean? (No.) But it’s not entirely accurate to say that it cannot be achieved. Why is it not entirely accurate? It all depends on what the issue is, and how trivial or important it is. Also, problems have differing degrees of severity, so it depends on how serious it is. If someone hurts you with their words only occasionally, then if you are someone with a conscience and sense you will think, “It’s not that he’s being spiteful. He doesn’t mean what he says, he just shoots straight from the hip. For the sake of all the years we’ve got along together, for the sake of so-and-so, or for the sake of something-or-other, I won’t hold it against him. As the saying goes, ‘Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.’ It was just one remark, it didn’t hurt my pride or harm my interests whatsoever, let alone affect my status or future prospects, so I’ll overlook it.” When facing these trivial matters, people can abide by the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.” But if someone really does harm your vital interests, or your family, or the harm they do to you impacts on your whole life, can you still abide by the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible”? For example, if someone killed your parents and wants to slaughter the rest of your family, could you apply the saying

“Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible,” to someone like that? (No, I couldn’t.) Any normal person of flesh and blood would not be able to do it. This saying cannot restrain people’s deep-seated hatred at all, and of course, less still can it influence people’s attitudes and opinions on this matter. If someone harms your interests or affects your future prospects, whether deliberately or not, or does you physical harm, whether intentionally or otherwise, leaving you disabled or scarred, or casts a shadow on your psyche and deep in your heart, can you abide by the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible”? (No.) You cannot do it. So, traditional culture requires people to be tolerant and magnanimous in their moral conduct, but can people do it? It’s not an easy thing to do. It depends on how much the matter has harmed and affected the person involved, and whether or not their conscience and sense can withstand it. If no great harm has been done, and the person can bear it, and it doesn’t go beyond what their humanity can withstand, meaning that as a normal adult they can put up with these things, and the resentment and hatred can be dispelled, and it’s relatively easy to let go, then they can be tolerant and lenient with the other person. You can do this without any sayings on moral conduct from traditional culture to restrain you, teach you, or guide you on what to do, because this is something that normal humanity possesses and it is achievable. If this matter hasn’t hurt you too deeply or had a big impact on you physically, mentally and spiritually, then you can easily do this. However, if it has had a big impact on you physically, mentally and spiritually, so that it troubles you throughout your whole life, and often makes you depressed and indignant, and you often feel gloomy and despondent because of it, and it makes you regard this human race and this world with hostility, and you have no peace or happiness in your heart, and you live practically all your life in hatred, that is to say, if this matter has gone beyond what normal humanity can withstand, then as someone with a conscience and sense it is very difficult to be lenient wherever possible. If some people can do it, they are exceptional cases, but what must this be based on? What kind of conditions must be fulfilled? Some people say: “Then they should accept Buddhism and let go of hatred to attain Buddhahood.” This may be a path to liberation among common people, but it is merely liberation. What does this term “liberation” mean, anyway? It means steering clear of earthly disputes, hatred, and killing, and equates to the saying “out of sight, out of mind.” If you steer clear of such matters and can’t see them, then they will have little impact on your innermost feelings, and will gradually fade from your memory with the passage of time. But that is not abiding by the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.” People are unable to be lenient, or forgiving and tolerant of this matter, and to let go of it once and for all. These matters have only faded from the innermost depths of people’s hearts, and they no longer care about them. Or it is merely due to some Buddhist teachings that people reluctantly stop living in hatred and getting hung up in these worldly sentiments of love and hate. This is just passively forcing oneself to stay away from these places of conflict

and strife full of love and hate, but this does not mean that one can apply the saying "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible." Why is that? As far as normal humanity is concerned, if something happens to a person that causes serious harm to their body, mind, and soul, such as unbearable pressure or injury, then no matter what capacities they possess, they cannot bear it. What do I mean by "cannot bear it"? I mean that people's normal humanity, ideas and views are unable to resist or dispel these things. In the language of humankind, it can be said that they can't bear it, that it goes beyond the bottom line of human tolerance. In the language of believers, it can be said that they just can't understand this matter, see through it, or accept it. So, as there is no possible way to resist or dispel these feelings of hatred, is it possible to abide by the saying "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible"? (No.) What is the implication of not being able to achieve this? Namely, that normal humanity does not possess this kind of generosity. For example, say someone killed your parents and wiped out your whole family, could you let something like that go? Is it possible to dispel that hatred? Could you look upon your enemy as you would look upon ordinary people, or think of your enemy as you would think of ordinary people, with no feeling in your body, mind or spirit? (No.) No one can do it, unless they believe in Buddhism and witness karma with their own eyes, so that they can give up the idea of killing in revenge. Some people say: "I am good-natured, so if someone killed my parents, I could be lenient with him and wouldn't seek revenge on him, because I'm a big believer in karma. The saying 'Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible' sums it up to a tee: If revenge breeds revenge, will there ever be an end to it? Besides, he has already admitted his mistake and even got down on his hands and knees and begged me for forgiveness. This score is settled now, I'll be lenient on him!" Can people be this magnanimous? (No.) They cannot do this. Leaving aside what you might do once you catch him, even before you catch him, all you can think about constantly every day is getting your revenge. Because this matter has hurt you greatly and affected you greatly, as a normal person, you will certainly never forget it for as long as you live. Even in your dreams you will see images of your family being killed and of yourself exacting revenge. This matter could affect you for the rest of your life, until your last dying breath. Such hatred simply can't be let go of. Of course, there are slightly less serious cases than this one. For example, supposing someone slapped you in the face in public, embarrassing and humiliating you in front of everyone, and insulting you for no reason. Since then, many people look at you with discriminatory glances and even mock you, so you feel ashamed to be around people. This is much less serious than killing your parents and family members. Even so, it is difficult to abide by the saying "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible," because these things that have happened to you are already beyond the tolerance range of normal humanity. They have caused you great physical and mental harm, and greatly injured your dignity and character. There is no way you can forget them or let them go, so it is very difficult

for you to abide by the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible”—which is normal.

Looking at these aspects that we fellowshiped on just now, the saying on moral conduct “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible,” which is referred to in traditional Chinese culture, is a doctrine that restrains and enlightens people. It can only resolve minor disputes and trivial conflicts, but has no effect whatsoever when it comes to people who harbor deep hatred. Do the people who put forward this requirement really understand man’s humanity? One could say that the people who put forward this requirement are by no means ignorant of how great the tolerance range of human conscience and sense is. It’s just that putting forward this theory can make them appear sophisticated and noble, and earn people’s approval and flattery. The fact is, they know very well that if someone hurts a person’s dignity or character, harms their interests, or even impacts on their future prospects and their whole life, then from the perspective of humanity, the offended party must retaliate. No matter how much conscience and sense he has, he will not take it lying down. At most, only the degree and method of his vengeance will differ. In this real society, in this extremely dark and evil social environment and social context that people live in, where human rights don’t exist, people have never stopped fighting and killing each other, just because they can take revenge whenever they get hurt. The more seriously they are hurt, the stronger their desire for vengeance and the crueler the methods by which they exact their revenge. So what will the prevailing tendencies in this society be like? What will happen to relationships between people? Will not this society be awash with killing and retaliation? Therefore, the person who put forward this requirement is telling people in a very veiled way not to retaliate, using this saying on moral conduct—“Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible”—to restrain their behavior. Whenever people suffer unfair treatment, or their character is insulted or their dignity hurt, this saying on moral conduct influences those people by making them think twice before acting, and stops them from being impulsive and overreacting. If people in this society wanted to take revenge whenever they suffered unfair treatment, no matter whether the treatment was meted out by the state, by society, or by people whom they come into contact with, then would not this human race and this society be difficult to manage? Wherever there are crowds, fights would then be unavoidable, and vendettas would be a common occurrence. So would not this human race and this society then be in chaos? (Yes.) Is a society in chaos easy for rulers to manage, or not? (No, it’s not easy to manage.) For this reason, these so-called social educators and thinkers put forward the saying on moral conduct “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible” in order to exhort and enlighten people, so that whenever they are subjected to any unfair treatment or discrimination, insults, or even are abused or trampled down, and no matter how great their spiritual or physical suffering, they first think not of retaliation, but rather of this classic maxim on morality, “Execution does

nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible," making them unconsciously accept the restraints of these sayings on moral conduct in traditional culture, thereby effectively restraining their thoughts and behavior, and dispelling the hatred that they harbor toward others, toward the state, and toward society. When this hostility and rage that humanity necessarily possesses and these instinctive thoughts of defending one's dignity are dispelled, will the struggles and vendettas between people in this society be reduced to a significant degree? (Yes.) For example, some people say: "Let's call it quits, compromise will make a conflict much easier to resolve. It is said that 'Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.' He had his reasons for killing my family. It takes two to make a quarrel, and both sides cling to their own rationale. Besides, my family have been dead for years, what's the point of raking the matter up again? Be lenient wherever possible—people must learn to be magnanimous before they can let go of their hatred, and only when they let go of their hatred can they be happy in life." There are other people who say: "Let bygones be bygones. If he doesn't hold petty grievances against me or regard me with hostility like before, then I won't quarrel with him either, and we'll just turn over a new leaf. As the saying goes, 'Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.'" If such people, whoever they are, suddenly rein themselves in just as they are about to exact retaliation, then do not their words, their actions, and their theoretical basis essentially all stem from the influence of ideas and views such as "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible"? (Yes.) There are still others who say: "Why all the arguments? A fine example of a man you are, you can't even let go of such a trivial matter! Some great men have hearts big enough to sail a boat in. At the very least, make room for a little generosity! Shouldn't people be a bit magnanimous in life? Take a step back and see the bigger picture, rather than holding petty grievances. All this arguing back and forth is laughable to watch." These sayings and ideas encapsulate a kind of human attitude toward worldly matters, an attitude that merely comes from "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible" and other such sayings from classic maxims on morality. People are inculcated and influenced by these sayings, and feel that they play some role in exhorting and enlightening people, so they regard these words as correct and proper things.

Why is it that people can let go of hatred? What are the main reasons? On the one hand, they are influenced by this saying about moral conduct—"Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible." On the other hand, they are worried by the thought that if they hold petty grievances, constantly hate people, and are intolerant of others, they will be unable to gain a footing in society and will be condemned by public opinion and laughed at by people, so they must reluctantly and unwillingly swallow their anger. On the one hand, looking at human instinct, people living in this world cannot bear all this oppression, senseless hurt and unfair treatment. That is to say, it is not in people's humanity to be able to bear these things. Therefore, it is unfair and

inhumane to put forward the requirement “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible” on anyone. On the other hand, it is obvious that such ideas and views also affect or distort people’s views and perspectives on these matters, so they are unable to treat such matters properly and instead regard sayings such as “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible” as correct and positive things. When people are subjected to unfair treatment, in order to avoid the condemnation of public opinion, they have no choice but to bottle up the insults and unequal treatment they have suffered, and wait for an opportunity to retaliate. Even though out loud they say nice-sounding things like “‘Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.’ Never mind, there’s no point retaliating, it’s water under the bridge,” human instinct prevents them from ever forgetting the harm this incident has done to them, that is to say, the harm that it has done to their body and mind can never be erased or fade away. When people say, “Forget the hatred, this matter is over and done with, it’s water under the bridge,” that is just a facade formed solely by the constraint and influence of ideas and views such as “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.” Of course, people are also confined by such ideas and views, insofar as they think that if they don’t manage to put them into practice, if they don’t have the heart or the generosity to be lenient wherever possible, then they will be looked down upon and condemned by everyone, and discriminated even more in society or within their community. What is the consequence of being discriminated against? It is that, when you come into contact with people and go about your business, people will say, “This guy is small-minded and vindictive. Be careful when dealing with him!” It effectively becomes an extra hurdle when you go about your business within the community. Why is there this extra hurdle? Because society as a whole is influenced by ideas and views such as “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.” The mores of society as a whole revere such thinking, and the whole of society is confined, influenced and controlled by it, so if you cannot put it into practice, it will be difficult to gain a footing in society, and survive within your community. Therefore, some people have no alternative but to submit to such social mores and follow sayings and views such as “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible,” living pathetic lives. In the light of these phenomena, didn’t those so-called moralists have certain aims and intentions in putting forward these sayings about moral ideas and views? Did they do it so that humans could live more freely, and their body, mind and spirit be more liberated? Or was it so that people could live happier lives? Quite obviously not. These sayings about moral conduct do not serve the needs of people’s normal humanity at all, and least of all were they put forward to make people live out normal humanity. Rather, they entirely serve the ruling class’s ambition to control the people and stabilize its own power. They do service to the ruling class, and were put forward so that the ruling class could keep social order and social mores in check, using these things to constrain every person, every family, every

individual, every community, every group, and the society formed by all the various groups. It is in such societies, under the indoctrination, influence, and inculcation of such moral ideas and views, that the mainstream moral ideas and views of society emerge and take shape. This taking shape of social morality and social mores is no more conducive to the survival of the human race, nor is it more conducive to the progress and purification of human thought, neither is it more conducive to the enhancement of humanity. On the contrary, because of the emergence of these moral ideas and views, human thinking is confined to within a controllable range. So, who benefits in the end? Is it the human race? Or the ruling class? (The ruling class.) That's right, it is the ruling class that benefits in the end. With these moral scriptures as the basis of their thinking and moral conduct, humans are easier to rule, more likely to be obedient citizens, easier to manipulate, more easily governed by the various sayings of the moral scriptures in everything they do, and more easily governed by social systems, social morality, social mores, and public opinion. In this way, to a certain extent, people who are subordinate to the same social systems, moral environment, and social mores have basically unanimous ideas and views, and a unanimous bottom line for how they should comport themselves, because their ideas and views have undergone processing and standardization by these so-called moralists, thinkers, and educators. What does this word "unanimous" mean? It means that all those who are ruled—including their thoughts and normal humanity—have been assimilated and confined by these sayings from the moral scriptures. People's thoughts are restricted, and their mouths and brains are also restricted at the same time. Everyone is forced to accept these moral ideas and views of traditional culture, using them to judge and constrain their own behavior on the one hand, and to judge others and this society on the other hand. Of course, at the same time, they are also controlled by public opinion, which is centered on these sayings from moral scriptures. If you think that your way of doing things contravenes the saying "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible," you feel very upset and uneasy, and it soon occurs to you that "if I don't manage to be lenient wherever possible, if I'm so petty and small-minded like some blinkered Lilliputian, and I can't let go of even the slightest hatred, but carry it round with me all the time, will I be laughed at? Will I be discriminated against by colleagues and friends?" So, you must pretend to be especially magnanimous. If people have these behaviors, does it mean that they are controlled by public opinion? (Yes.) Objectively speaking, deep within your heart there are invisible shackles, that is to say, public opinion and the condemnation of the whole of society are like invisible shackles to you. For example, some people know that it is good to believe in God, and that by believing in God they can attain salvation, and that believing in God means walking the correct path and not doing bad things, but when they first come to believe in God, they do not dare to be open about it, or to admit their faith, even to the point of not daring to spread the gospel. Why do they not dare to be open about it and let people know? Is it that they are affected by the overall

environment? (Yes.) So what are the effects and constraints that this overall environment has on you? Why do you not dare to admit that you believe in God? Why do you not dare even to spread the gospel? Besides special cases such as authoritarian countries, where people of faith are persecuted, another reason is that the various sayings that come from public opinion are too much for you to bear. For example, some people say that once you start believing in religion, you don't care about your family; some people demonize you, saying that believers in religion want to become immortal, and that they seclude themselves from society; others say that believers can go without eating, and not sleep for days on end without feeling tired; and still others say even worse things. At the outset did you not dare to admit that you believed in God because you were affected by these opinions? Do these opinions within the overall social environment have an effect on you? (Yes.) To a certain extent, they affect your mood and hurt your pride, so you dare not openly admit that you believe in God. Because this society is unfriendly and hostile toward people of faith and those who believe in God, and some people even utter vile insults and slanderous remarks that are too much for you to bear, you dare not openly admit that you believe in God, and have to sneak out to gatherings in secret, like a thief. You are afraid that others will say slanderous things if they find out, so all you can do is suppress your indignation. In this way, you have endured a great deal of anguish in silence, but suffering all this anguish is greatly edifying and you have gained a clear insight into many things, and understood some truths.

Just now we have fellowshiped extensively on this saying about moral conduct, "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible." From the perspective of humanity, this saying specifies the minimum moral conduct that one should possess in terms of generosity and broad-mindedness. The fact is that, in light of the damage and effect on people's human rights, dignity, integrity, and humanity, using only this saying "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible," which is like the jargon of underworld robbers and bandits, to comfort and constrain people is a great insult to people with conscience and sense, and is inhumane and immoral. Normal humanity inherently possesses joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness. I will say no more about joy, sorrow, and happiness. Anger is also an emotion that normal humanity possesses. Under what circumstances does anger arise, and manifest itself normally? When the rage of normal humanity manifests itself—that is, when people's integrity, dignity, interests, and their spirit and mind are hurt, trampled underfoot, and insulted, they will naturally and instinctively get angry, giving rise to indignation or even hatred—this is the reason why anger arises, and this is its specific manifestation. Some people get angry for no reason. A trivial matter can incite their wrath, or someone accidentally says something that hurts them and it can cause a red mist of anger to descend before their eyes. They are too hot-tempered, are they not? None of these things relate to their spirit, integrity, dignity, human rights or spiritual world, yet they can fly into a rage at the drop of a hat, which may be because they are so hot-tempered. It

is not normal to display feelings of wrath at anything and everything. What we are talking about here is the indignation, anger, rage, and hatred manifested by normal humanity. These are some of people's instinctive reactions. When a person's integrity, dignity, human rights, and spirit are trampled on, insulted, or hurt, that person becomes indignant. This indignation is not a momentary fit of pique, nor is it a momentary feeling, but rather, it is a normal human reaction whenever a person's integrity, dignity and spirit are traumatized. Since it is a normal human reaction, it can be said that this reaction is justified and rational, so it is not a crime, and does not need to be constrained. As for problems that hurt people to this extent, they should be resolved and dealt with fairly. If the matter cannot be resolved reasonably or dealt with fairly, and people are unreasonably expected to put into practice the saying "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible," this is immoral and inhumane to the victim, and is something that people should be aware of.

What points have we discussed regarding the saying about moral conduct "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible"? Let us sum up. The essence of this saying is the same as that of other sayings about moral conduct. They all serve the ruling class and social mores—they are not put forward starting from the perspective of humanity. To say that these moral scriptures serve the ruling class and social mores may be somewhat far beyond the range of what you should understand and be able to attain through your faith in God, though it is somewhat attainable for those who know something about politics, social science, and human thought. From the perspective of humanity, that is to say, from your own perspective, how should you deal with such things? For example, supposing you were previously arrested, imprisoned, and tortured because of your faith. For several days and nights the great red dragon did not let you sleep, and tormented you half to death. Irrespective of whether you are a man or a woman, your body and mind suffered all kinds of abuses and torments, and you were also insulted, derided, and attacked by those devils using all manner of filthy and blasphemous language. After suffering this torment, what do you feel toward this country and this government? (Hatred.) It engenders hatred, hatred toward this social system, hatred toward this ruling party, and hatred toward this country. You used to feel an immense sense of respect whenever you saw the state police, but after having been subjected to their persecution, torment, and defilement, that erstwhile sense of respect has vanished, and your heart is filled with one word—hate. Hate for their lack of humanity, hate for their sheer unscrupulousness, and hate that they act like animals and the devil Satan. Though you have suffered greatly through being tortured, defiled, and insulted by the state police, you have seen their true colors, and have seen that they are all beasts in human skin, and devils who hate the truth and hate God, so you are full of hatred toward them. This is not personal hatred or a personal grievance, it is the result of clearly seeing their evil essence. It is not something you have imagined, deduced, or determined, it is all those memories of them insulting you, defiling you, and persecuting

you—including their every mannerism, action and word—that fill your heart with hatred. Is this normal? (Yes.) Once you are filled with hatred, if someone says to you, “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible. Don’t live in hatred. Dispelling hatred is the best way to deal with it,” how would you feel on hearing this? (Disgusted.) What else could you be but disgusted? So tell Me, is it possible to dispel this hatred? (No.) It cannot be dispelled. How can irreconcilable hatred be dispelled? If anyone uses the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible” to persuade you to let go of your hatred, could you let go of it? How would you react? Your first reaction would be, “All this ‘execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible’ is spurious nonsense, it is irresponsible remarks from idle onlookers! These people who spread the ideas and views of traditional culture persecute Christians and good people every day—are they constrained and affected by these words? They will not stop until they drive away or exterminate every last one! They are the devil Satan in disguise. They brutalize people while they are still alive, then once they’re dead they say a few words of sympathy to delude others. Is that not awfully wicked?” Wouldn’t you react and feel this way? (Yes.) You would certainly feel like this, hating whoever tries to persuade you, to the point of even wanting to curse them. But some people don’t understand. They say, “Why are you doing this? Is this not hateful? Is this not spiteful?” These are irresponsible remarks from idle onlookers. You would retort: “I am a human being, I have dignity and integrity, but they didn’t treat me like a human being. Instead they treated me like an animal or a beast, greatly offending my integrity and dignity. Is it not they who are spiteful? You tacitly accept their spitefulness, yet when we resist and hate them, you condemn us for it. So what does that make you? Is it not you who is wicked? They don’t treat us like human beings, they torture us, but you still tell us to uphold human moral conduct and requite evil with good. Aren’t you just talking nonsense? Is your humanity normal? You are a faker and a hypocrite. Not only are you extremely spiteful, but you are also wicked and shameless!” So, when someone consoles you by saying “Forget about it, it’s over and done with, don’t hold grievances. If you are always this petty, you will be the one who gets hurt in the end. People have to learn to let go of hatred, and practice being lenient wherever possible,” what would you think about that? Would you not think, “All this traditional Chinese culture is just a tool used by the ruling class to delude and control people. They themselves are never constrained by these ideas and views, but delude and cruelly hurt people every day. I am a person with dignity and integrity who was wantonly toyed with and abused like an animal or a beast. I suffered so many insults and degradations in their presence, and was tormented and deprived of my dignity and integrity, so that I did not even appear human. And yet you talk about morality? Who are you to say such high-sounding things? Is it not enough for me to be humiliated once, you want them to humiliate me again? There is no way I’m letting go of this hatred!” Is this a manifestation of normal humanity? (Yes.) This is a manifestation of normal humanity. Some people say: “This is not a

manifestation of normal humanity, this is inciting hatred." In that case, who caused this person's behavior and this hatred? Do you know? If they hadn't been brutally persecuted by the great red dragon, would they behave like this? They were persecuted and are just speaking their mind—how is that inciting hatred? Satanic regimes persecute people like this, and yet they do not allow people to speak their mind? Satan persecutes people and yet wants to keep their mouths shut. It doesn't allow them to hate or resist. What manner of reasoning is that? Shouldn't people with normal humanity oppose oppression and exploitation? Should they just meekly submit? Satan has corrupted and harmed mankind for thousands of years. Once believers understand the truth, they should wake up, resist Satan, expose it, hate it, and forsake it. This is normal humanity, and it is perfectly natural and justified. This is the good and righteous deed that normal humanity should be capable of, and it is praised by God.

Whichever angle you look at it, the saying about moral conduct, "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible," is very inhumane and disgusting. It tells the people of the ruled class not to resist any unfair treatment—regardless of any attacks, degradation, or injuries they suffer to their integrity, dignity, and human rights—but rather to meekly submit to it. They should not take revenge, or think about hateful things, let alone about retaliation, but must make sure to be lenient wherever possible. Is this not inhumane? Quite obviously this is inhumane. Given that it requires the ruled class—ordinary people—to do all this and to conduct themselves with this kind of moral conduct, shouldn't the moral conduct of the ruling class exceed this requirement? Is this something they should be even more obligated to do? Have they done it? Could they do it? Did they use this saying to constrain themselves and measure themselves? Did they apply this saying in their treatment of their people, the people they rule over? (No.) They have never done this. They only tell their people not to regard this society, this country, or the ruling class with hostility, and that no matter what unfair treatment they suffer in society or within their community, and no matter how much they suffer physically, mentally and spiritually, they must learn to be lenient wherever possible. Conversely, if ordinary people—commoners in their eyes—tell them "no," or hold any dissenting opinions and voices about the status, rule, and authority of the ruling class, they will be strictly administered to, and even severely punished. Is this the moral conduct that the ruling class, who advocate "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible" to the people, should possess? If, among the ordinary people of the ruled class, there is the slightest trouble or the slightest shift, or if there is even the slightest opposition to them in people's thoughts, then it will be nipped in the bud. They control people's hearts and minds, and force people to submit to them without compromise. It's just like in the sayings "When the emperor commands his officials to die, they have no choice but to die," and "All the lands under the sky belong to the king, all the people of the world are the king's vassals." What it boils down to is that whatever the ruler does is right, and the people should be duped by him, controlled by him, insulted

by him, toyed with by him, trampled on by him, and finally devoured by him; and that no matter what the ruling class do, they are right, and as long as people are alive, they must be obedient citizens, and must not be disloyal to the king. No matter how bad the king is, no matter how bad his rule is, ordinary people must not say “no,” and must not harbor thoughts of resistance, and must absolutely obey. Since “all the people of the world are the king’s vassals,” meaning that the common people ruled by the king are his vassals, then shouldn’t the king exemplify the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible” to the common people? Because the common people are foolish, ignorant, uninformed, and do not understand the law, they often do some illegal and criminal things. So, shouldn’t the king be the first one of all to apply the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible”? Being as lenient with ordinary people as he is with his own children—isn’t that what a king should do? Shouldn’t a king also have such magnanimity? (Yes.) So does he make this requirement of himself? (No.) When kings ordered the suppression of religious beliefs, did they require themselves to adhere to the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible”? When their army and police force brutally persecuted and tortured Christians, did they ask their government to adhere to the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible”? They never asked their government or their police force to do that. Instead, they urged and forced the government and the police force to strictly suppress religious beliefs, and even issued orders along the lines of “beat them to death with impunity” and “destroy them without making a sound,” which goes to show that the kings of this evil world are devils, they are devil kings, they are Satan. They only allow officials to light fires, but do not allow the people even to light lamps. They use these traditional sayings about moral conduct to constrain and restrict the people, out of fear that the people will rise up against them. Hence, the ruling class use all kinds of sayings about moral conduct to dupe people. They have only one purpose, which is to restrict and bind people’s hands and feet, so that people will submit to their rule, and they brook no resistance. They use these theories about moral conduct to stupefy and deceive people, hoodwinking them so that they may bow down and be obedient citizens. No matter how much the ruling class get away with and trample people underfoot, no matter how much they oppress and exploit people, the people can only meekly submit to it, and cannot resist at all. Even when faced with death, the people can only choose to flee. They cannot resist, nor even dare to harbor thoughts of resisting. They cannot even look at hoes and sickles or keep them by their side, nor even carry pocketknives and nail clippers about their person, with the aim to show that they are obedient citizens, and that they will always submit to the rule of the king and be loyal to the king forever. How far should their loyalty extend? No one dares to say, “As the people, we must use the ideas and views of traditional culture to supervise and constrain our king,” and no one dares to put forward even slightly divergent opinions when they find out that the king is committing evil, otherwise it would

get them killed. Quite obviously, the ruler regards himself not only as the king of the people, but also as the sovereign and controller of the people. In Chinese history, these emperors called themselves “Tianzi.” What is the meaning of “Tianzi”? It means the son of the celestial heaven, or “the Son of Heaven” for short. Why didn’t they call themselves “the Son of Earth”? If they were born on earth they should be sons of earth, and as they were obviously born on earth, why call themselves “the Son of Heaven”? What was the purpose of calling themselves the Son of Heaven? Is it that they wanted to look down on all living beings and on these commoners? Their way of ruling was to control the people with power and status above all else. That is to say, when they assumed power and became the emperor, they thought nothing of riding roughshod on the necks of the people, and the people risked being executed for showing the slightest reticence. That is how this title “the Son of Heaven” came about. If the emperor said that he was the Son of Earth, he would appear to be of lowly status, and would not have the majesty that he claims a king should have, nor would he be able to intimidate the ruled class. So, he upped the ante, claiming that he was the Son of Heaven, and wanted to represent Heaven. Could he represent Heaven? Did he have that essence? If one insists on representing Heaven without having the essence to do so, that is putting up a pretense. On the one hand, these rulers regard Heaven and God with hostility, but on the other hand, they pretend that they are the Son of Heaven, and that they have been mandated by Heaven, so as to facilitate their rule. Is this not shameless? Looking at these facts, the purpose of these various sayings about moral conduct that are spread among mankind is to restrict people’s normal thinking, bind their hands and feet, restrict their behavior, and even restrict their various thoughts, views and manifestations within the scope of normal humanity. Looking at the root of it, their purpose is to form good social mores and social morality. Of course, by achieving this effect they also serve the ruling class’s ambition to rule for a long time. But no matter how they rule, ultimately the victim is mankind. Mankind is confined and influenced by these various ideas and views of traditional culture. Not only have people lost the opportunity to hear the gospel and receive God’s salvation, but they have also lost the opportunity to seek the truth and walk the right path in life. Moreover, under the control of rulers, the people have no choice but to accept many kinds of poisons, heresies and fallacies, and other negative things that come from Satan. For the last few thousand years of mankind’s long history, Satan has educated, inculcated, and duped mankind by spreading knowledge and disseminating various ideological theories, with the result that generations of people have been profoundly influenced and confined by these ideas and views. Of course, under the influence of these ideas and views from Satan, people’s corrupt dispositions intensify and become more serious. That is to say, people’s corrupt dispositions have been fostered and “sublimated” on this basis, and have become deeply rooted in people’s hearts, causing them to deny God, resist God, and sink deep into sin from which they are unable to extricate themselves. As regards the formation of this saying about

moral conduct—“Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible”—as well as the aims in putting forward this requirement, the harm done to people since this saying about moral conduct was formed, and all the various other aspects, we will not fellowship on these things now, and you can take time later to further contemplate them for yourselves.

Chinese people are no strangers to sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture, but these things do not influence people overnight. You live in this kind of social environment, you have received this kind of ideological education on aspects of traditional culture and morality, and you are familiar with these things, but it has never occurred to you that these things could have a tremendously negative effect. How much will these things obstruct you from believing in God, pursuing the truth, and entering into the truth realities, or how much of an influence or obstruction will they be on the path you walk in future? Are you aware of these issues? You should further contemplate and discern the topic that we have fellowshiped about today, to gain a thorough understanding of the role that traditional culture plays in educating mankind, what exactly it is, and how people should treat it correctly. These words that we fellowshiped above are helpful and beneficial for you to understand the things in traditional culture. Of course, this understanding is not only an understanding of traditional culture, but also an understanding of Satan’s corruption of mankind, and the various ways and means through which Satan corrupts mankind, and even specifically the various views it instills in people, as well as the various ways and means, views, perspectives, standpoints and so on, with which it treats the world and mankind. After gaining a thorough understanding of the things of traditional culture, what you should do is not to just avoid and reject the various sayings and views of traditional culture. Instead, you should more specifically understand and dissect what harm, restraints and bonds the sayings about moral conduct that you abide by and uphold have inflicted on you, and what roles they have played in affecting, disturbing, and obstructing your thoughts and views on comporting yourself, as well as your acceptance of God’s words and your pursuit of the truth, and thereby delaying you from accepting the truth, understanding it, practicing it, and obeying God completely and absolutely. These things are precisely what people should reflect on and be aware of. You cannot just evade or reject them, you must be able to discern them and understand them thoroughly, so that you can completely free your mind of these specious and misleading things in traditional culture. Even if some sayings about moral conduct are not deeply rooted in you, but manifest themselves from time to time in your thinking and notions, they can still disturb you for a short period or during a single incident. If you cannot discern them clearly, you may still regard some sayings and views as things that are quite positive or close to the truth, and this is something very troublesome. There are certain sayings about moral conduct that you inwardly quite like. Not only do you agree with them in your heart, but you also feel that they can be aired in public, that people will be interested in hearing them, and that

they will accept them as positive things. These sayings are undoubtedly the hardest ones for you to let go of. Even though you have not admitted them as the truth, you inwardly recognize them as positive things in your heart, and they unconsciously take root in your heart and become your life. Once you come to believe in God and accept the truth expressed by God, these things will naturally emerge to disturb you and obstruct you from accepting the truth. These are all things that obstruct people from pursuing the truth. If you cannot discern them clearly, it is easy to confuse these things with the truth and accord them the same status, which can have some negative effects on people. It may be that you haven't treated these sayings—such as "Don't pocket the money you pick up," "Derive pleasure from helping others," and "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others"—as the truth, and that you don't regard them as the standard for measuring your own moral conduct, and that you don't pursue them as goals for comporting yourself, but this does not mean that you have not been influenced and corrupted by traditional culture. It may also be that you are someone who is indifferent to trivial details, insofar as you don't care whether or not you pocket the money you pick up, or whether you derive pleasure from helping others. But you have to understand and be clear about one thing: You live in this kind of social environment and under the influence of a traditional cultural and ideological education, so you will inevitably follow these sayings that mankind advocates, and will adopt at least some of them as your standard for measuring moral conduct. This is what you should thoughtfully reflect on. It may also be that you do not adopt sayings such as "Don't pocket the money you pick up" or "Derive pleasure from helping others" as your standard for measuring moral conduct, but that deep in your heart you think that other sayings, such as "I'd take a bullet for a friend," are particularly noble, and they have become tenets that influence your life, or have become the highest criterion by which you view people and things, and comport yourself and act. What does this show? Although deep in your heart you do not intentionally revere or follow traditional culture, your tenets of comportment, the ways in which you comport yourself, and your life goals, as well as the principles, bottom line, and tenets for the life goals that you pursue are not free from traditional culture at all. They have not escaped the values of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness that mankind upholds, or some tenet of moral conduct that mankind advocates—you haven't escaped these confines at all. To put it plainly, as long as you are a corrupt human, a living human, and you eat the food of the human world, then the principles of comportment and life that you follow are nothing more than these principles and tenets for moral conduct from traditional culture. You should understand these words I say and these problems I expose. And yet, perhaps you think that you don't have these problems, so you don't care about what I say. The fact is that people all have these problems to varying degrees, whether you realize it or not, and this is something that those who believe in God and pursue the truth should thoughtfully reflect on and understand.

We said just now that the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible” is a requirement placed on humankind’s moral conduct. We have also dissected some of the problems with this saying and some of the effects it has had on humankind. It has introduced some unhealthy ideas and views to humankind, and has had some negative effects on people’s pursuits and survival, which people should be aware of. So, how should believers understand problems to do with magnanimity and broad-mindedness in humanity? How can one understand them from the viewpoint of God in a correct and positive way? Shouldn’t this also be understood? (Yes.) It’s actually not difficult to understand these things. You don’t need to guess, nor to research any information. Simply by learning from the things God has said and the work He has done among people, and from God’s disposition as shown in the different ways that He treats all kinds of people, we can know exactly what God’s opinion is on these sayings and views of traditional culture, and what exactly His intentions are. By looking at God’s intentions and views, people should have a path upon which to pursue the truth. The saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll” which people adhere to means that when a person’s head is chopped off and falls to the ground, that is the end of the matter and it should not be pursued further. Is this not a viewpoint of sorts? Is this not a viewpoint commonly held among people? It means that once a person comes to the end of their physical life, that life is over and finished with. All the bad things that person has done in their life, and all the love, hatred, passion and enmity they have experienced, are declared finished right then, and that life is considered over. People believe this, but from looking at God’s words and all the various signs of God’s actions, is this the principle of God’s actions? (No.) So, what is the principle of God’s actions? On what basis does God do such things? Some people say that God does such things based on His administrative decrees, which is correct, but it is not the complete picture. On the one hand, it is according to His administrative decrees, but on the other hand, He treats people of all kinds based on His disposition and essence—this is the complete picture. In God’s eyes, if a person is killed and their head falls to the ground, does this person’s life come to an end? (No.) So, in what way does God end a person’s life? Is this the way that God deals with a person? (No.) God’s way of dealing with any person is not just to kill them by chopping off their head and have done with it. There is a beginning and an end, a coherency and a steadfastness to how God deals with humankind. From the time when a soul is reincarnated as a human being, to when the soul returns to the spiritual world after the end of the person’s physical life, whatever course it follows, whether in the spiritual world or in the material world, it must be subject to God’s handling. In the end, whether it is rewarded or punished depends on God’s administrative decrees, and there are heavenly rules. This means that how God treats a person depends on the whole life’s destiny that He has ordained for each person. After a person’s destiny ends, they are subject to handling based on God’s ordained law and heavenly rules of punishing evil and rewarding good. If this person has done substantial

evil in the world, then they must undergo substantial punishment; if this person has not done much evil and has even done some good deeds, then they should be rewarded. Whether they can continue being reincarnated and whether they are reborn as a human or an animal depends on their performance in this life. Why am I fellowshiping about these things? Because appended to the saying “Execution does nothing but make heads roll,” there is another phrase, “be lenient wherever possible.” God has no such ways of speaking or doing things that make an unprincipled attempt to smooth things over. God’s actions are revealed in the way He deals with any created being from beginning to end, all of which enables people to plainly see that it is God who holds sovereignty over the destiny of humans, orchestrating and arranging it, and then punishing evil and rewarding good according to a person’s behavior, inflicting punishment where it is due. According to what God has stipulated, a person should be punished for however many years and however many reincarnations, depending on however many evils they have committed, and the spiritual world implements this according to established rules, without the slightest deviation. No one can change it, and anyone who does so violates the heavenly rules ordained by God, and will be punished without exception. In God’s eyes, these heavenly rules cannot be violated. What does this mean? It means that any person, no matter what evil they have done or which heavenly rules and regulations they have violated, will ultimately be handled without compromise. Unlike the laws of the world—where there are suspended sentences, or someone can intercede, or the judge can follow their own inclinations and exercise kindness by being lenient wherever possible, so that the person will not be convicted of the crime and will not be punished accordingly—this is not the way things work in the spiritual world. God will treat the past and present lives of every created being strictly according to the laws He established, that is to say, the rules of heaven. It doesn’t matter how serious or insignificant a person’s transgressions are, or how great or insignificant their good deeds are, nor does it matter how long the person’s transgressions or good deeds have been going on for, or how long ago they happened. None of this changes the way that the Lord of creation treats the humans He has created. That is to say, the heavenly rules made by God will never change. This is the principle behind God’s actions and the way that He does things. Ever since human beings came into existence and God began to work among them, the administrative decrees made by Him, that is, the rules of heaven, have not changed. Therefore, God will ultimately have ways of dealing with humankind’s transgressions, good deeds, and all kinds of evil deeds. Any and all created beings must pay the due price for their actions and behavior. However, each created being is punished by God because of their disobedience to God, the evil deeds they have done, and the transgressions they have left behind, rather than because God has become hateful toward people. God is not a member of the human race. God is God, the Lord of creation. Any and all created beings are punished not because the Lord of creation hates people, but because they have violated the heavenly rules, regulations, laws, and commandments

established by God, and this fact cannot be changed by anyone. From this point of view, in God's eyes there is never any such thing as "being lenient wherever possible." You may not quite fully understand what I am saying, but in any case, the ultimate aim is to let you know that God has no hatred, but only the rules of heaven, administrative decrees, laws, His disposition, and His wrath and majesty which tolerate no offense. Therefore, in God's eyes there is no such thing as "being lenient wherever possible." You should not measure God by the requirement to be lenient wherever possible, nor hold God up for scrutiny against this requirement. What does "hold God up for scrutiny" mean? It means that sometimes when God shows people mercy and tolerance, some will say, "Look, God is good, God loves people, He is lenient wherever possible, He is truly tolerant of human beings, God has the broadest mind, it is much broader than the minds of human beings, and even bigger than that of prime ministers!" Is it right to say that? (No.) If you praise God in this way, is it an appropriate thing to say? (No, it's inappropriate.) This manner of speaking is wrong and cannot be applied to God. Humans endeavor to be lenient wherever possible in order to show their generosity and tolerance, and to flaunt that they are a tolerant and magnanimous person, and a person of noble virtue. As for God, there is mercy and tolerance in God's essence. Mercy and tolerance are God's essence. But God's essence is not the same as the magnanimity and tolerance that human beings show by being lenient wherever possible. These are two different things. In being lenient wherever possible, the aim of humans is to get people to say nice things about them, that they have generosity and grace, and that they are a good person. In addition, it is also due to social pressures, for survival. People only show a little generosity and a little broad-mindedness toward others in order to achieve an aim, not to adhere to or abide by criteria of conscience, but to make people look up to and worship them, or because it is part of some ulterior motive or trickery. There is no purity in their actions. So, does God do things such as being lenient wherever possible? God doesn't do such things. Some people say, "Doesn't God also show leniency to people? So when He does that, is He not being lenient wherever possible?" No, there is a difference here that people should understand. What is it that people should understand? It is that when people apply the saying "be lenient wherever possible," they do it without principles. They do it because they are succumbing to social pressures and public opinion, and to pretend that they are good people. With these impure aims and while wearing a mask of hypocrisy to flaunt themselves as good people, people do this reluctantly. Or perhaps they are compelled by circumstances, and want to take revenge but cannot, and in this situation where there is no other choice, they reluctantly abide by this tenet. It does not come from outpouring of their inner essence. The people who can do this are not truly good people, or people who truly love positive things. So what is the difference between God being tolerant and merciful to people, and people who put the saying "be lenient wherever possible" into practice? Tell Me what differences there are. (There are principles to what God does. For example, the people of Nineveh received

God's tolerance after they truly repented. From this, we can see that there are principles to God's actions, and we can also see that in God's essence there are mercy and tolerance toward people.) Well said. There are two main differences here. The point you mentioned just now is crucial, which is that there are principles to what God does. There is a clear boundary and scope for everything that God does, and this boundary and scope are things that people can understand. The fact is that there are certain principles to everything God does. For example, God showed leniency to the people of Nineveh for their transgressions. When the people of Nineveh let go of their evil and truly repented, God forgave them and promised not to further destroy the city. This was the principle behind God's actions. What can this principle be understood as here? It was the bottom line. According to humans' understanding and way of speaking, it can be said that this was God's bottom line. As long as the people of Nineveh relinquished the evil in their hands and stopped living in sin and renouncing God as they once did, and were able to truly repent to God, this true repentance was the bottom line that God gave to them. If they could achieve true repentance, then God would be lenient with them. If, on the contrary, they failed to achieve true repentance, would God have reconsidered? Would God's previous decision and plan to destroy this city have changed? (No.) God gave them two choices: The first was to continue with their evil ways and face destruction, in which case the whole city would be obliterated; the second was to let go of their evil, truly repent to Him in sackcloth and ashes, and confess their sins to Him from the bottom of their hearts, in which case He would be lenient with them, and regardless of what evil they had done before, or how severe the extent of their evildoing, He would make up His mind not to destroy the city because of their repentance. God gave them two choices, and instead of going with the first, they chose the second—to truly repent to God in sackcloth and ashes. What was the final result? They managed to get God to change His mind, that is, to reconsider, change His plans, show them leniency, and refrain from destroying the city. Isn't this the principle by which God works? (Yes.) This is the principle by which God works. In addition, there is another crucial point, which is that in God's essence there is love and mercy, but of course there is also intolerance of man's offenses, and wrath. In the case of the destruction of Nineveh, both these aspects of God's essence were revealed. When God saw the evil deeds of these people, the essence of God's wrath manifested itself and was revealed. Is there a principle to God's anger? (Yes.) Put simply, this principle is that there is a basis for God's anger. It is not getting angry or enraged indiscriminately, much less is it a kind of feeling. Rather, it is a disposition that arises and is naturally revealed within a certain context. God's wrath and majesty tolerate no offense. In human language, this means that God became angry and enraged when He saw the evil deeds of the Ninevites. To be precise, God was angry because He has a side that is intolerant of people's offenses, so having seen people's evil deeds and the occurrence and emergence of negative things, God will naturally reveal His wrath. So, if God's wrath was revealed, would He immediately

destroy the city? (No.) This is how you can see that there are principles to what God does. It is not the case that once God is angry, He will say, “I have the authority, I will destroy you! No matter what your predicament, I won’t give you a chance!” That’s not how it is. What things did God do? God did a series of things. How should people interpret them? The series of things that God did are all based on God’s disposition. They did not arise purely on the basis of His wrath. That is to say, God’s wrath is not impetuousness. It is not like the impetuousness of humans, who impulsively say, “I have the power, I will kill you, I will fix you,” or as the great red dragon says, “If I catch you, I will do you in, and beat you to death without consequence.” This is the way that Satan and devils do things. Impetuousness comes from Satan and devils. There is no impetuousness in the wrath of God. In what way does His lack of impetuousness manifest itself? When God saw how corrupted the Ninevites were, He became angry and enraged. But after getting angry, He did not destroy them without saying a word due to the existence of the essence of His wrath. Instead, He sent Jonah to inform the people of Nineveh what He was about to do next, telling them what He was going to do and why, so that they would be clear and to give them a glimmer of hope. This fact tells humankind that God’s wrath is revealed due to the appearance of negative and evil things, but that God’s wrath is different from the impetuousness of humankind, and different from human feelings. Some people say, “God’s wrath is different from human impetuousness and feelings. Is God’s wrath controllable?” No, controllable isn’t the right word to use here, it’s not appropriate to say this. To be precise, there are principles to God’s wrath. In His wrath, God did a series of things which further proves that there are truths and principles to His actions, and at the same time also informs humankind that besides His wrath, God also has mercy and love. When God’s mercy and love are invested in humankind, what benefits does humankind receive? That is to say, if people confess their sins and repent in the manner taught by God, they can gain a chance of life from God, and the hope and possibility of survival. This means that people can continue to live with God’s permission, on the proviso that they have truly confessed and truly repented, then they will be able to receive the promise that God gives them. Are there not principles to this whole series of statements? You see, behind everything and every kind of work that God does there is, using human language, a rationale and a fastidiousness, or, using God’s words, there are truths and principles. It is different from humankind’s way of doing things, and less still is it adulterated with the impetuousness of humankind. Some people say, “God’s disposition is calm and not impulsive!” Is this the case? No, it cannot be said that God’s disposition is calm, composed, and not impulsive—this is humankind’s way of measuring and describing it. There are truths and principles to what God does. No matter what He does, there is a basis to it, and this basis is the truth and is God’s disposition.

In dealing with the people of Nineveh, God did a series of things. First, He sent Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (Jonah

3:4). Is forty days a long time? It is exactly one month and ten days, which is a pretty long time, enough for people to think and reflect for a while and achieve true repentance. If it had been four hours, or four days, that wouldn't have been enough time to repent. But God gave forty days, which was a mighty long time and more than enough. How big can a city be? Jonah circulated through the city from one end to the other and informed everyone within just a few days, so that every citizen and every household got the message. Those forty days were more than ample to prepare sackcloth or ashes, and make any other preparations that were necessary. What do you see from these things? God gave the people of Nineveh sufficient time to let them know that He was about to destroy their city, and to let them prepare, reflect, and examine themselves. In human language, God did all that He could and ought to have done. That forty-day period was enough, insofar as it gave everyone—from the king down to the ordinary people—enough time to reflect and prepare. On the one hand, from this it can be seen that what God does for people is to show tolerance, and on the other hand, it can be seen that God cares about people in His heart and has true love for them. God's mercy and love do indeed exist, without any pretense, and His heart is faithful, without any pretense. In order to give people the opportunity to repent, He gave them forty days. Those forty days encapsulated God's tolerance and love. Those forty days were long enough to prove and fully enable people to see that God has genuine concern and love for people, and that God's mercy and love do indeed exist, without any pretense. Some will say, "Didn't You previously say that God doesn't love people, that He hates people? Isn't that a contradiction with what You said just now?" Is it a contradiction? (No, it isn't.) God cares about people in His heart, He has the essence of love. Is this different to saying that God loves people? (Yes.) How is it different? Does God actually love people or hate people? (He loves people.) Why then does God still curse and chastise and judge people? If something so important is not clear to you, you must have misunderstood it. Is this a contradiction between you and God? If this is something you are not clear about, isn't a gulf likely to arise between you and God? Tell Me, if God loves people, does God also hate people? Does God's love for people have a bearing on His hatred for people? Does God's hatred of people have a bearing on His love for people? (No, it doesn't.) So why is it that God loves people? God became flesh to save people—is this not His greatest love? How pitiful it is if you do not know that! If you don't even know why it is that God loves people, then that is ridiculous. Tell Me, where does a mother's love for her child come from? (Instinct.) That's right. Maternal love comes from instinct. So is this love based on whether the child is good or wicked? (No, it isn't.) For example, even if the child is very naughty and sometimes drives his mother up the wall, she still loves him at the end of the day. Why is that? This way in which she treats her child comes from the instinct of her role as a mother. Because of this instinctive maternal love that she has, her love for the child is not based on whether the child is good or wicked. Some people say, "Since a mother instinctively loves her child, why does she still smack him? Why

does she still hate him? Why does she still sometimes get angry and scold him? And why does she sometimes get so mad that she wants to have nothing more to do with him? Did You not say that a mother has love, and that she loves her child? So how could she be so heartless?" Is this a contradiction? No, it is not a contradiction. How a mother treats her child depends on the child's attitude toward the mother and on the child's behavior. But no matter how she treats her child, even if she smacks him and hates him, this has no bearing on the existence of her maternal love. Likewise, what does God's love for people come from? (God has the essence of love.) That's right. You've finally made it clear. The crux here is that God has the essence of love. The reason why God loves and cares about people is that on the one hand, God has the essence of love. Within this love there is mercy, lovingkindness, tolerance, and patience. Of course, there are also manifestations of concern, and sometimes worry and sadness, and so on. All this is determined by the essence of God. This is looking at it from a subjective point of view. From an objective point of view, human beings are created by God, just like a child is born of his mother, and the mother naturally cares about him and there are inseverable blood ties between them. Although human beings and God do not have these blood ties, as humans put it, human beings are nevertheless created by God, and He cares about them and feels affection for them. God wants human beings to be good and to walk the right path, but seeing them corrupted by Satan, walking the path of evil, and suffering makes God sad and anguished. This is normal, is it not? God has these reactions, feelings, and manifestations, all of which arise because of God's essence, and which are inseparable from the relationship formed by God's creation of man. These are all objective facts. Some people say: "Since God's essence has love, why does God still hate people? Doesn't God care about people? How come He still hates them?" There is also an objective fact here, which is that people's disposition, essence, and other aspects are incompatible with God and the truth, so that what people manifest and reveal before God disgusts Him and is detestable to Him. As time goes on, people's corrupt dispositions become more and more serious, their sins become more and more serious, and they are also extremely intransigent, steadfastly unrepentant, and do not accept the slightest bit of truth. They are entirely at odds with God, hence His hatred is stirred. So, where does God's hatred come from? Why does it come about? It comes about because God's disposition is righteous and holy, and God's loathing is stirred by His essence. God abhors evil, detests negative things, and loathes evil forces and evil things. Therefore, God loathes this corrupt human race. So, the love and hatred that God reveals for created beings are normal and determined by His essence. There is no contradiction at all. Some people ask, "So does God actually love or hate people?" How would you answer that? (It depends on people's attitude toward God, or whether people have truly repented.) This is basically true, but not quite accurate. Why isn't it accurate? Do you think that God must necessarily love people? (No.) God's words to humankind and all the work He does in people are the natural manifestations of God's disposition

and essence. God has His principles, He doesn't necessarily have to love people, but He doesn't necessarily have to hate people either. What God asks of people is to pursue the truth, follow His way, and comport themselves and act according to His words. God doesn't necessarily have to love people, but He doesn't necessarily have to hate people either. This is a fact, and people have to understand it. Just now you said that God loves or hates people based on their behavior. Why is it inaccurate to say this? God doesn't necessarily have to love you, nor does He absolutely have to hate you. God may even ignore you. Whether you pursue the truth and comport yourself and act according to God's words, or whether you do not accept the truth and even disobey and resist God, in the end He will recompense every person according to what they have done. Those who do good will be rewarded, whereas those who do evil will be punished. This is called dealing with matters fairly and equitably. That is to say, as a created being, you have no grounds to demand how God should treat you. When you treat God and the truth with longing, and pursue the truth, you think that He must love you, but if God ignores you and does not love you, you feel that He is not God. Or when you disobey God, you think that He must hate you and punish you, but if He ignores you, you feel that He is not God. Is it right to think this way? (No, it is not right.) Relationships between people, such as the relationship between parents and their children, can be evaluated this way—that is to say, the love or hatred of parents for their children is sometimes based on the children's behavior—but the relationship between human beings and God cannot be evaluated this way. The relationship between human beings and God is that between creature and Creator, and there are no blood ties whatsoever. It is solely a relationship between creature and Creator. Therefore, human beings cannot demand that God loves them, or declares where He stands with them. These are unreasonable demands. This kind of view is wrong and incorrect; people cannot make such demands. So looking at it now, do humans actually have an accurate understanding of God's love? Their previous understanding was inaccurate, was it not? (Yes.) There are principles to whether God loves or hates people. If humans' behavior or pursuit accords with the truth and is to God's liking, then He approves of it. However, people have corrupt essences and can reveal corrupt dispositions and pursue ideals and desires that they think are right or that they like. That is something that God hates and does not approve of. But contrary to what people think—which is that God will shower people with rewards whenever He approves of them, or discipline and punish people whenever He doesn't approve—this is not the case. There are principles to God's actions. This speaks of the essence of God, and people must understand it in this way.

I raised a question just now and fellowshiped on the principles of God's actions and on God's essence. What was the question I just asked? (God just asked about the difference between His tolerance and mercy for people and the human practice of being lenient wherever possible. Afterward, You fellowshiped that God does not act according to this philosophy for living. God deals with people's transgressions mainly based on two

aspects: On the one hand, there are principles to what God does, and on the other hand, in God's essence there is both mercy and wrath.) That is indeed the correct way to understand it. God's principles for doing things this way are based on His essence and His disposition, and have nothing whatsoever to do with being lenient wherever possible, which is a philosophy for living that humankind follows. People's actions are based on satanic philosophies, and are governed by satanic dispositions. God's actions are the manifestation of His disposition and essence. In God's essence, there is love, mercy, and of course hatred. So now do you understand what God's attitude is toward humans' evil deeds and their various forms of disobedience and betrayal? What is the basis of God's attitude? Is it produced by His essence? (Yes.) In God's essence there is mercy, love, and wrath. God's essence is righteousness, and it's from this essence that the principles of God's actions come about. So what exactly are the principles of God's actions? Bestow mercy abundantly and vent wrath deeply. This has absolutely nothing to do with being lenient wherever possible, which is practiced among human beings and has the appearance of being a very noble tenet, but in God's eyes it is not worth mentioning. As a believer, on the one hand, you cannot judge God's essence, deeds, and the principles of His actions based on this tenet. In addition, from their own perspective, people should not adhere to this philosophy for living; they should have a principle for how to make choices when things befall them and how to deal with these things. What is this principle? People do not possess the essence of God, and of course they cannot do everything with clear principles like God does, or stand on high and dole out opportunities and be lenient with all and sundry. People cannot do this. What then should you do when you encounter things that disturb you, hurt you, or insult your dignity, character, or even hurt your heart and soul? If you adhere to the saying about moral conduct, "be lenient wherever possible," then you try to smooth things over without regard to principles, and be a people-pleaser, and you feel that it's not easy to get by in this world, and that you can't make enemies and must try to offend people less or not at all, and be lenient wherever possible, sit on the fence at every opportunity, take the middle road, not put yourself in any dangerous situations, and learn to protect yourself. Is this not a philosophy for living? (Yes.) This is a philosophy for living, rather than a principle that God teaches to humankind. So, what is the principle that God teaches people? How is the pursuit of truth defined? To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion. If something happened that aroused your hatred, how would you view it? On what basis would you view it? (Based on God's words.) That's right. If you don't know how to view these things according to God's words, then you can only be lenient wherever possible, suppress your indignation, make concessions and bide your time while seeking opportunities to retaliate—this is the path you would take. If you want to pursue the truth, you must view people and things according to God's words, asking yourself: "Why is this person treating me like this? How can this happen to me? Why can there be such an

outcome?" Such things should be viewed according to God's words. The first thing to do is to be able to accept this matter from God, and actively accept that it comes from God, and that it is something helpful and beneficial to you. To accept this matter from God, you must first regard it as being orchestrated and governed by God. Everything that happens under the sun, all that you can feel, all that you can see, all that you can hear—everything happens with God's permission. After you accept this matter from God, measure it against God's words, and find out what kind of person whoever did this thing is and what the essence of this matter is, irrespective of whether what they said or did hurt you, whether your feelings have been dealt a blow or whether your character has been trampled on. First look at whether the person is a wicked person or an ordinary corrupt person, first discerning them for what they are according to God's words, and then discerning and treating this matter according to God's words. Are these not the right steps to take? (Yes.) First accept this matter from God, and view the people involved in this matter according to His words, to determine whether they are ordinary brothers and sisters, wicked people, antichrists, nonbelievers, evil spirits, filthy demons, or spies from the great red dragon, and whether what they did was a general display of corruption, or an evil deed that was deliberately intended to disturb and disrupt. All of this should be determined by comparing it against God's words. Measuring things by God's words is the most accurate and objective way. People should be differentiated and matters dealt with according to God's words. You should ponder: "This incident has greatly hurt my feelings and left a shadow over me. But what has the occurrence of this incident done to edify me for my life entry? What is God's will?" This leads you to the crux of the matter, which you should figure out and understand—this is following the right path. You must seek God's will, by thinking: "This incident has traumatized my heart and soul. I feel anguish and pain, but I cannot be negative and reproachful. The most important thing is to discern, differentiate, and decide whether this incident is actually beneficial to me or not, according to God's words. If it comes from God's disciplining, and is beneficial for my life entry and my self-understanding, then I should accept and submit to it; if it is temptation from Satan, then I should pray to God and treat it wisely." Is seeking and thinking like this positive entry? Is this viewing people and things according to God's words? (Yes.) Next, whatever matter you are dealing with, or whatever problems arise in your associations with people, you should look for the relevant words of God in order to solve them. What is the purpose of this whole series of actions? The purpose is to view people and things according to God's words, so that your perspective and standpoint with regard to people and things will be completely different. The purpose is not to gain a good reputation and save face to be highly regarded, or to bring about harmony in the country and society and thereby satisfy the ruling class, but to live by God's words and the truth, so as to satisfy God and glorify the Creator. Only by practicing in this way can you be entirely in accordance with God's will. Therefore, you don't need to follow the sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture. You don't need to ponder,

“When such a matter befalls me, shouldn’t I be putting into practice the saying, ‘Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible’? If I can’t do that, what will public opinion think of me?” You don’t need to use these moral tenets to constrain and control yourself. Instead, you should adopt the perspective of someone who pursues the truth, and treat people and things according to the way that God tells you to pursue the truth. Is this not an entirely new mode of existence? Is this not a wholly new life view and life goal? (Yes.) When you adopt this way of viewing people and things, you don’t need to deliberately tell yourself, “I must do this-or-that if I want to be magnanimous and gain a footing among people,” you needn’t be so hard on yourself, you needn’t live contrary to your own will, and your humanity needn’t be so distorted. Instead, you will accept these environments, people, matters and things that come from God naturally and willingly. Not only that, but you can also reap unforeseen gains from them. In dealing with such things that arouse your hate, you will have learned to discern people for what they really are according to God’s words, and to discern and deal with such things according to God’s words. After undergoing a period of experience, encounters, and struggle, you will have found the truth principles for dealing with such things, and learned what kind of truth principles to use when dealing with such people, matters and things. Is this not following the right path? In this way, your humanity will have been improved because you follow the path of pursuing the truth, that is, you no longer simply live by your human conscience and reason, and when things happen, you don’t view them solely with thinking and viewpoints based on conscience and reason, but rather, because you have read many of God’s words and actually experienced God’s work, you have understood some truths, and gained some real understanding of God—the Creator. This is certainly a bountiful harvest, from which you will have gained both truth and life. Based on your conscience and reason, you will have learned to use God’s words and the truth to confront and resolve all the problems you encounter, and gradually come to live by God’s words. What are such human beings like? Are they in accordance with God’s will? Such human beings are increasingly closer to becoming the qualified created beings required by God, and in doing so are gradually able to achieve the expected results of God’s work of salvation. When people can accept the truth and live by God’s words, how easy it is to live like this, without the slightest anguish whatsoever. But as for people who have received a traditional cultural education, everything they do is so contrary to their will, so hypocritical, and the things revealed by their humanity are so distorted and abnormal. Why is this? Because they don’t say what they are thinking. Their lips say, “Be lenient wherever possible,” but their heart says, “I’m not done with you. It is never too late for a gentleman to take his revenge”—is this not contrary to their own will? (Yes.) What does “distorted” mean? It means that outwardly they talk of nothing but benevolence and morality, but behind others’ backs they do all manner of bad things, such as fornication and looting. All this outward talk of benevolence and morality is just a mask and their heart is full of all kinds of evil, all manner of odious ideas and viewpoints;

it is incomparably filthy, exceedingly despicable, low-minded, and shameful. This is what distorted means. In modern language, distortion is called perversion. They are all so perverted, but still pretend to be utterly decent, sophisticated, gentlemanly, and honorable in front of others. They really have no shame, they are so evil! The path that God has pointed out to people is not to make you live like this, but to enable you to follow the correct principles and path of practice that God has pointed out to people in whatever you do, whether before God or other people. Even if you encounter things that harm your interests or that are not to your liking, or that even have a lifelong impact on you, you must have principles in dealing with these matters. For example, you must treat real brothers and sisters with love, and learn to be tolerant, helpful, and supportive toward them. So, what should you do with enemies of God, antichrists, wicked people and nonbelievers, or agents and spies who infiltrate the church? You should reject them once and for all. The process is one of identifying and exposing, feeling hatred, and finally rejecting. God's house has administrative decrees and regulations. When it comes to antichrists, wicked people, nonbelievers and those who are of the same ilk as devils, Satan, and evil spirits, they are not willing to render service, so cut them off from God's house forever. How then should God's chosen people treat them? (Reject them.) That's right, you should reject them, reject them forever. Some people say: "Rejection is just a word. Assuming you theoretically reject them, how do you then actually go about doing it in real life?" Is it okay to be irreconcilably opposed to them? There is no need to tire yourself unnecessarily like that. You don't need to be irreconcilably opposed to them, you don't need to fight them to the death, and you don't need to curse them behind their back. You don't need to do any of these things. Just disassociate yourself from them deep in your heart, and don't have dealings with them under normal circumstances. In special circumstances and when you have no alternative, you can talk normally with them, but then steer clear of them at the first opportunity, and don't get involved in any of their affairs. It means rejecting them from the bottom of your heart, not treating them as brothers and sisters or God's family members, and not treating them as believers. For those who hate God and the truth, who intentionally disturb and disrupt God's work, or who try to destroy God's work, you must not only pray to God to curse them, but also bind and restrain them forever, and reject them once and for all. Is doing this in accordance with God's will? It is completely in accordance with God's will. To deal with these people, it is necessary to take a stand and have principles. What does taking a stand and having principles mean? It means seeing their essence clearly, never regarding them as believers, and absolutely not regarding them as brothers or sisters. They are devils, they are Satan. It is not a question of forgiving them or not forgiving them, but of disassociating yourself and rejecting them once and for all. This is completely justified and in accordance with the truth. Some people say, "Isn't it so ruthless for people who believe in God to do things like this?" (No.) This is what taking a stand and having principles means. We do whatever God tells us to do. We are lenient

with whomever God tells us to be lenient with, and we despise whatever God tells us to despise. In the Age of Law, those who violated the laws and commandments were stoned to death by God's chosen people, but today, in the Age of Kingdom, God has administrative decrees, and He only clears out and expels people who are of the same ilk as devils and Satan. God's chosen people must put into practice and obey God's words and the administrative decrees He issues, without violating them, without being governed or influenced by human notions, and without being afraid of being judged and condemned by religious people. Acting according to God's words is something that is perfectly natural and justified. At all times, only believe that God's words are the truth, and that the words of man are not the truth, no matter how nice they sound. People must have this faith. People should have this faith in God, and they should also have this attitude of obedience. This is a question of attitude.

We have said more or less enough on the saying about moral conduct "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible" and on the principles of God's actions. When it comes to matters such as those that harm people, do you now understand the principle for handling them, which God teaches to people? (Yes.) It is that God does not permit people to be impetuous in dealing with the matters that befall them, let alone to use human moral codes to deal with any matter. What is the principle that God tells people about? What principle should people follow? (View people and things and comport oneself and act according to God's words.) That's right, view people and things and comport oneself and act according to God's words and the truth. Whatever happens, it must be dealt with according to God's words, because in all matters and all things there is a root cause behind everything that happens and any person or matter that emerges, all of which God arranges and has sovereignty over. Everything that happens may have a positive or a negative final outcome, and the difference between them depends on people's pursuits and the path they walk. If you choose to treat matters according to God's words, then the final outcome will be positive; if you choose to treat them by the ways of the flesh and impetuousness, and all the various sayings, ideas and views that come from people, then the final result will definitely be one of impetuousness and negativity. Those things of impetuousness and negativity, if they involve harming people's dignity, body, soul, interests, and so on, will ultimately leave only hatred and a shadow on people that they can never get rid of. Only by following God's words is it possible to find the causes of the various people, matters and things that one encounters, and only by following God's words is it possible to see clearly the essence of such people, matters and things. Of course, only by following God's words can people correctly handle and resolve problems to do with all the various people, matters and things that they encounter in reality. In the end, this will enable people to benefit from all the environments that God creates, their lives will gradually grow, their corrupt dispositions will be changed, and at the same time, they will find therein the correct direction in life, the correct outlook on life, the correct mode of

existence, and the correct goal and path to pursue. We have basically completed our fellowshiping on the saying about moral conduct, “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.” This saying is somewhat superficial, but when dissected according to the truth, its essence is not so simple. As for what people should do in this regard and how to deal with such situations, it is even less simple. This relates to whether people can seek and pursue the truth, and of course it also relates even more to the change in people’s disposition and to people’s salvation. Therefore, no matter whether these problems are simple or complex, superficial or profound, they should be treated correctly and seriously. Nothing that relates to changes in people’s disposition or that involves people’s salvation is a trivial matter, everything is critical and important. I hope that henceforth, in your daily life, you will dig out all the various sayings and views on morality in traditional culture from your own thoughts and consciousness, and dissect them and discern them for what they really are according to God’s words, so that you can gradually understand and resolve them, adopt a totally new direction and goal in life, and completely change your mode of existence. Okay, let us end today’s fellowship here. Goodbye!

April 23, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (10)

In our last gathering, we fellowshiped and analyzed the saying on moral conduct, “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.” Now do you have a real understanding of the various sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture? How do these sayings on moral conduct differ from the truth? Now can you confirm that these sayings on moral conduct are fundamentally not the truth, and that they certainly cannot take the place of the truth? (Yes.) What does it show that you can confirm this? (That I have some ability to discern these sayings in traditional culture for what they really are. In the past, I didn’t realize that I had these things in my heart. Only after these few fellowships and analyses by God have I come to realize that I was under the influence of these things all along, and that I have always viewed people and things based on traditional culture. I also see that these sayings of traditional culture really are at odds with the truth, and that they are all things that corrupt people.) Having confirmed this, first of all you have some discernment of these traditional cultural things. Not only do you have perceptual knowledge, but you can also discern the essence of these things from a theoretical perspective. Secondly, you are no longer affected by things in traditional culture, and can eliminate the effects, control and bondage of these things from your heart and mind. Especially when viewing various things or dealing with various problems, you are no longer influenced and constrained by these ideas and views. In general, through fellowshiping, you have gained some discernment about these ideas and views of traditional culture. This is the outcome achieved from understanding the truth. These things from traditional culture are hollow, pleasant-sounding sayings full of satanic philosophies, especially the sayings on moral conduct “A kindness received should be gratefully repaid,” “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings,” and “Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible.” They constantly influence, control, and bind humans through their thoughts, and do not play a proactive and positive role in people’s moral conduct. Although you now have a little discernment, it is difficult to completely eradicate the influence of these things from the depths of your heart. You must equip yourself with the truth and experience according to God’s words for a period of time. Only then can you clearly see once and for all how deeply harmful, wrong and preposterous these hypocritical things are, and only then can the problem be resolved at its root. If you wanted to renounce these mistaken thoughts and ideas and rid yourselves of their influence, control, and bondage just by understanding some doctrines, this would be very difficult to achieve. Now that you are somewhat able to discern these sayings about moral conduct for what they really are, at least you have some understanding and have made some progress in your thinking. The rest depends on how one seeks the truth and how one views people and things according to God’s words, and on how one experiences in the future.

Following these fellowships and analyses of these sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture, can you clearly see the essence of these sayings? If you really can see clearly, then you can determine that these sayings from traditional culture are not the truth, nor can they stand in for the truth. This much is certain, and most people have already verified this in their hearts through fellowshiping. So how should one understand the essence of all the various sayings about moral conduct? If one does not face this issue according to God's words and the truth, then there is no way to discern and understand it. No matter how noble and positive these sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture are on paper, are they really criteria for people's actions and behavior, or principles of comportment? (No.) They are not principles or criteria of comportment. So what exactly are they? By analyzing the essence of each saying on moral conduct, can you draw a conclusion as to what exactly are the truth and essence of these sayings about moral conduct that have emerged among people? Have you never thought about this question? Leaving aside the aims of those so-called thinkers and moralists who flatter and curry favor with the ruling classes and are only too glad to serve them, let us analyze this from the perspective of normal humanity. Since these sayings on moral conduct are not the truth, let alone can they stand in for the truth, they must be specious. They are definitely not positive things—this much is certain. If, in this way, you can recognize them for what they are, it proves that you have gained some degree of understanding of the truth in your heart, and already have a little discernment. These sayings on moral conduct are not positive things, nor are they criteria for people's actions and behavior, and less still are they principles for people's comportment that should be abided by, so there is something wrong with them. Is this worth getting to the bottom of? (Yes.) If you only consider "moral conduct" and think that these sayings are correct views and positive things, then you are wrong and you will be taken in by them and deceived. That which is hypocritical can never be a positive thing. As for the various displays and acts of moral conduct, one should distinguish whether or not they are done sincerely and from the heart. If they are done out of reluctance, pretense, or to achieve a certain aim, then there is a problem with such acts and displays. Can you discern these sayings on moral conduct for what they really are? Who can tell Me? (Satan uses sayings on moral conduct to confuse and corrupt people, and makes them abide by these sayings and put them into practice in order to achieve the aims of getting them to worship and follow Satan, and of keeping them away from God. This is one of Satan's techniques and methods for corrupting people.) This is not the essence of sayings on moral conduct. This is the aim that Satan achieves by using such sayings to beguile people. First of all, you must know clearly that any sort of saying about moral conduct is not the truth, much less can it stand in for the truth. They are not even positive things. So what exactly are they? It may be said with certainty that these sayings on moral conduct are heretical fallacies with which Satan beguiles people. They are not in themselves the truth reality that people should possess, nor are they positive things that normal humanity ought to

live out. These sayings on moral conduct constitute counterfeits, pretenses, falsifications, and tricks—they are factitious behaviors, and do not at all originate in man's conscience and reason or in their normal thinking. Therefore, all of traditional culture's sayings regarding moral conduct are preposterous, absurd heresies and fallacies. With these few fellowships, the sayings Satan puts forth about moral conduct have on this day been condemned, in their entirety, to death. If they are not even positive things, how is it that people can accept them? How can people live by these ideas and views? The reason is that these sayings on moral conduct align so well with people's notions and imaginings. They evoke admiration and approval, so people accept these sayings on moral conduct into their hearts, and though they cannot put them into practice, inwardly, they embrace and worship them with gusto. And thus, Satan uses various sayings on moral conduct to beguile people, to control their hearts and their behavior, for in their hearts, people worship and have a blind belief in all sorts of sayings on moral conduct, and they would all like to use these claims to affect greater dignity, nobility, and kindness, thereby achieving their goal of being highly regarded and praised. All the various sayings on moral conduct, in brief, ask that when people do a certain kind of thing, they should demonstrate some sort of behavior or human quality in the realm of moral conduct. These behaviors and human qualities seem quite noble, and they are revered, so all people, in their hearts, very much aspire toward them. But what they have not considered is that these sayings about moral conduct are not at all the principles of comportment that a normal person should follow; instead, they are a variety of hypocritical behaviors that one may affect. They are deviations from the standards of conscience and reason, departures from the will of normal humanity. Satan uses false and pretended sayings on moral conduct to beguile people, to make them worship it and those hypocritical so-called sages, thereby causing people to see normal humanity and the criteria for human comportment as ordinary, simple, and even lowly things. People despise those things and think them beneath contempt. This is because the sayings on moral conduct espoused by Satan are so pleasing to the eye and so aligned with man's notions and imaginings. The fact is, though, that no saying on moral conduct, whatever it may be, is a principle that people should follow in their comportment or their dealings in the world. Mull it over—is this not so? In essence, sayings on moral conduct are just demands that people superficially live more dignified, noble lives, enabling them to have others worship or praise them, rather than look down on them. The essence of these sayings shows that they are just demands that people demonstrate good moral conduct through good behavior, thus covering and restraining the ambitions and extravagant desires of corrupt humanity, covering up man's evil and hideous nature essence, as well as the manifestations of various corrupt dispositions. They are meant to enhance a person's personality through superficially good behavior and practices, to enhance the image others have of them and the wider world's estimation of them. These points show that sayings on moral conduct are about covering up man's inner thoughts, views, aims and

intentions, their hideous countenance, and their nature essence with superficial behavior and practices. Can these things be covered up successfully? Does trying to cover them up not make them all the more apparent? But Satan does not care about that. Its purpose is to cover up the hideous countenance of corrupt humanity, to cover up the truth of man's corruption. So, Satan has people adopt the behavioral manifestations of moral conduct to disguise themselves, which means that it uses the rules and behaviors of moral conduct to make a neat package of man's appearance, enhancing a person's human qualities and personality so that they can have others esteem and praise them. Basically, these sayings on moral conduct determine whether a person is noble or lowly on the basis of their behavioral manifestations and moral standards. For example, measuring whether someone is altruistic depends on them demonstrating that they sacrifice their own interests for the sake of others. If they demonstrate it well, disguise themselves well, and make themselves look particularly admirable, then this person will be regarded as someone with integrity and dignity, someone with particularly high moral standards in the eyes of others, and the state will award them a plaque for being a paragon of morality for others to learn from, worship, and emulate. So, how should people evaluate whether a woman is good or wicked? It is by looking at whether the woman's various demonstrated behaviors within her community conform to the saying "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral." If she conforms to it in every respect by being virtuous, kind and meek, showing the utmost respect for the elderly, readily compromising out of consideration for the general interest, being extremely patient and able to endure hardships, without holding things against people or arguing with others, and by respecting her parents-in-law and taking good care of her husband and children, never thinking about herself, never seeking anything in return, nor enjoying the pleasures of the flesh, and so on, then she is indeed a virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral woman. People use these outward behaviors to evaluate women's moral conduct. It is inaccurate and unrealistic to measure a person's worth, goodness and evil by means of their superficial practices and behavior. Making assertions like this is also false, deceptive, and preposterous. This is the essential problem with sayings on moral conduct that is exposed in people.

In light of the several aspects mentioned above, are these sayings on moral conduct in traditional culture really principles of comportment? (No.) They do not meet the needs of normal humanity at all, being completely contrary to it. What they provide to humankind is not principles of comportment, nor principles for people's actions and behavior. On the contrary, they require people to disguise themselves, cover themselves up, comport themselves and act in a certain way in front of others so that they will be highly regarded and praised, not with the aim of making people understand how to comport themselves correctly, or the right way to conduct themselves, but in order to make people live more in step with others' notions and imaginings, and to gain others' praise and recognition. This is not at all what God requires, which is for people to conduct

themselves and act according to the truth principles, without caring what people think and instead only focusing on gaining God's approval. Sayings on moral conduct are more about requiring people to be decent and noble in their behavior, practices and in the appearance that they project—even if it is a disguise—rather than about resolving problems to do with people's thoughts and views, or to do with their nature essence. In other words, the requirements that sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture place on people are not based on people's essence, and less still do they consider the achievable scope of conscience and reason. At the same time, they go against the objective fact that people have corrupt dispositions and are all selfish and despicable, and force people to do this-and-that in terms of their behavior and practices. Therefore, no matter from which perspective they place requirements on people, they cannot fundamentally release people from the bondage and control of corrupt dispositions, nor can they resolve the problem of people's essence, in other words, they cannot resolve problems to do with people's corrupt dispositions. Because of this, they cannot change the principles and direction of people's comportment, nor can they make people understand how to comport themselves, how to treat others, or how to deal with interpersonal relationships from a positive aspect. Speaking from another perspective, sayings about moral conduct are just a kind of rule and behavioral constraint that are given to people. Although to all appearances they seem pretty good, these things unconsciously affect people's thinking and views, constraining and binding them, with the result that people cannot find the correct principles and path of comportment and action. In this context, all people can do is reluctantly accept the influence of traditional cultural ideas and views, and under the influence of these fallacious ideas and views, they unconsciously lose the principles, goals, and direction of comportment. This causes corrupt human beings to fall into darkness and lose the light, so that all they can do is chase after fame and personal gain by relying on falsification, pretense, and trickery. For example, when you see a person in need of help, you immediately think, "Proper comportment means deriving pleasure from helping others. This is a basic principle and moral standard for people's comportment," and so you will help that person unconsciously. After helping them, you feel that by comporting yourself like this you are noble and possess a little humanity, and you even unconsciously praise yourself as a noble person, a person with noble character, a person with dignity and character, and of course a person worthy of respect. If you don't help them, you think, "Alas, I am not a good person. Whenever I come across someone who needs help and think about lending a hand, I always consider my own interests. I'm such a selfish person!" You will unconsciously use the ideological view "Derive pleasure from helping others" to measure yourself, constrain yourself, and evaluate what is right and wrong. When you cannot put this saying into practice, you will despise yourself or look down on yourself, and feel somewhat uneasy. You will cast admiring and appreciative glances at those who can derive pleasure from helping others, feeling that they are nobler than you, more dignified

than you, and have more character than you. However, when it comes to such issues, God's requirements are different. God's requirements are for you to abide by His words and the truth principles. With regard to moral conduct, how should people practice? By adhering to traditional moral and cultural views, or by adhering to God's words? Everyone faces this choice. Are you now clear about the truth principles that God teaches people? Do you understand them? How well do you abide by them? When abiding by them, what thoughts and views are you influenced and hindered by, and what corrupt dispositions are revealed? You should reflect on yourself like this. Exactly how much of the essence of sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture can you see clearly in your heart? Does traditional culture still have a place in your heart? These are all problems that people must resolve. When your corrupt dispositions are resolved, and you are able to obey the truth and abide by God's words absolutely and without compromise, then what you practice accords completely with the truth principles. You will no longer be constrained by corrupt dispositions, or bound by moral ideas and views in traditional culture, and will be able to accurately put God's words into practice and act according to the truth principles. These are the principles that should inform the comportment and actions of believers. When you are able to practice according to God's words, abide by God's words and practice according to the truth principles, you will not only be a person with good moral conduct, but also a person who can follow God's way. When you practice the principles and the truth of comportment, you not only possess standards of moral conduct, but there are also truth principles in your comportment. Is there a difference between abiding by the truth principles and abiding by the criteria of moral conduct? (Yes.) How are they different? Abiding by requirements on moral conduct is only a behavioral practice and manifestation, whereas practicing according to the truth principles also seems from the outside to be a practice, but this practice adheres to the truth principles. From this perspective, adhering to the truth principles relates to comportment and to the path that people walk. This means that, if you practice the truth and abide by the truth principles in God's words, that is walking the correct path, whereas following the requirements of moral conduct in traditional culture is merely a display of behavior, just like obeying rules. It does not involve the truth principles, nor does it relate to the path that people walk. Do you understand what I am saying? (Yes.) Here is an example. For example, the saying on moral conduct "Sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others" requires people to "discard the lesser self and realize the greater self," at any time and in any situation. Among unbelievers, this is a style that is called being noble of character and firm of integrity. "Discard the lesser self and realize the greater self"—what grandiose rhetoric! It's a pity that it only sounds like a style that is noble of character and firm of integrity, but it is not a truth principle that people should abide by. The fact is that the ultimate aim of this saying "Discard the lesser self and realize the greater self" and of making people sacrifice their own interests for the sake of others, is actually to ensure that others serve them. From the point of view of people's aims and

intentions, this saying smacks of satanic philosophies and has a transactional quality to it. From this, can you determine whether there are truth principles in the saying “Discard the lesser self and realize the greater self”? There absolutely are not! It is not a principle of comportment at all, it is purely a satanic philosophy, because the aim of people discarding their lesser self is to realize their greater self. Regardless of whether such a practice is noble or vulgar, it is just a rule that binds people. It seems reasonable, but in essence it is preposterous and absurd. No matter what befalls you, it only requires people to sacrifice their own interests for the sake of others. No matter whether you are willing to or not, or whether you can do it or not, and whatever the environment, it only requires you to sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others. If you are not able to “discard the lesser self,” then the phrase “realize the greater self” is there to tempt you, so that even if you cannot sacrifice your own interests for the sake of others, but still don’t want to let it go. People are seduced by the thought of “realizing the greater self.” Under such circumstances, it is difficult to make a choice. So is sacrificing one’s own interests for the sake of others a principle of comportment? Can it achieve positive outcomes? Every person covers themselves up really well, and displays the utmost nobility, dignity, and character, but what is the outcome in the end? It can only be said that naught will come of it, because doing this can only win the appreciation of other people, but not the approval of the Creator. How did this come about? Is this the result of everyone abiding by sayings on moral conduct in traditional culture and following satanic philosophies? If everyone accepts God’s words, accepts correct ideas and views, sticks to the truth principles, and pursues the direction in life that is guided by God, then it will be easy for people to walk the right path in life. Is it better to practice this way than to sacrifice one’s own interests for the sake of others? Practicing this way is adhering to the truth principles and living in the light according to God’s words, rather than following Satan on the path of hypocrisy. Only by abandoning satanic philosophies, as well as all the various ideas conveyed by sayings on moral conduct in traditional culture, and by accepting the truth and living in accordance with God’s words, can one live out real human likeness and gain God’s approval.

Based on what we have fellowshiped above, have you come to any conclusions about the essence of sayings on moral conduct? All these various sayings about moral conduct are just regulations and conventions that restrict people’s thoughts, views and outward behavior. They are not principles or criteria of comportment at all, and they are not principles that people should abide by when encountering all kinds of people, matters, and things. So, what principles should people abide by? Shouldn’t we fellowship on this? Some people say: “What difference is there between the truth principles that people should abide by and the regulations and conventions of those sayings on moral conduct?” Tell Me, is there any difference? (Yes.) In what respect is there a difference? Sayings about moral conduct are just regulations and conventions that constrain people’s thoughts, views, and behaviors. In regard to all the various matters that befall

people, they have placed requirements on people that restrict their behavior and bind their hands and feet, making them do this and do that, rather than letting them seek the correct principles and right ways to deal with the various people, matters, and things. Whereas, the truth principles are different. The multifaceted requirements that God's words place on people are not rules, regulations or conventions, much less are they various sayings that restrict people's thinking and behavior. Instead, they tell people the truth principles that people should understand and abide by in all kinds of environments and whenever something befalls them. So, what exactly are these principles? Why do I say that only God's words are the truth, or the truth principles? Because the various requirements that God's words place on people are all attainable by normal humanity, insofar as they require people not to be influenced and controlled by emotions, desires, ambitions, and their corrupt dispositions whenever something befalls them, but rather to practice according to God's words and the truth principles, which is a principle that people are capable of abiding by. The truth principles of God's words point out the correct direction and goal that people should follow, and they are also the path that people should walk. Not only do the principles of God's words keep people's conscience and reason functioning normally, but they naturally also add the principles of the truth onto the foundation that is people's conscience and reason. These are the standards of truth that people with conscience and reason can rise to and meet. When people abide by these principles of God's words, what they gain is not the enhancement of their morality and integrity, nor the protection of their human dignity. Instead, they have embarked on the right path in life. When a person obeys these truth principles of God's words, they not only possess the conscience and reason of a normal person, but upon the foundation of possessing conscience and reason, they come to understand more truth principles with regard to how they should comport themselves. To put it simply, they come to understand the principles of comportment, to know which truth principles to use when viewing people and things and when comporting themselves and acting, and are no longer controlled and influenced by their own emotions, desires, ambitions, and corrupt dispositions. This way, they completely live out the likeness of a normal person. These truth principles put forward by God fundamentally solve the problem of corrupt dispositions controlling people and preventing them from extricating themselves from sin, so that people no longer live in their old life, controlled by emotions, desires, ambitions, and corrupt dispositions. And what replaces all this? It is the criteria of God's words and the truth principles, which become a person's life. Generally speaking, once people start abiding by the truth principles that humankind should abide by, they no longer live in the various troubles of the flesh. Putting it more precisely, people no longer live under the deception, dupery, and control of Satan. More specifically, they no longer live under the bondage and control of the myriad ideas and views and philosophies for living that Satan instills in people. Instead, they live not only with dignity and integrity, but also freely and with the semblance of people, which is the true likeness of created

beings under the dominion of the Creator. This is the essential difference between the words and truth of God, and sayings on moral conduct in traditional culture.

The topic of today's fellowship is somewhat profound. After listening to it, you should ponder on it for a while, let it sink in, and see if you grasp what has been said. Based on this fellowshiping, have you completely understood the difference between sayings on moral conduct and the truth? Tell Me in the simplest of terms: What is the essence of sayings on moral conduct? (Sayings on moral conduct are just regulations and conventions that constrain people's thoughts and behaviors, they are not principles and criteria of comportment.) Well said. There is a story in traditional culture of Kong Rong giving up larger pears. What do you think: Is anyone who cannot be like Kong Rong not a good person? People used to think that whoever could be like Kong Rong was noble of character and firm of integrity, sacrificing their own interests for the sake of others—a good person. Is Kong Rong of this historic story a role model whom everyone has followed? Does the character have a certain place in people's hearts? (Yes.) It is not his name, but his thoughts and practices, his morality and behavior, that occupy a place in people's hearts. People esteem such practices and approve of them, and they inwardly admire Kong Rong's moral conduct. Therefore, if you see someone who cannot sacrifice their own interests for the sake of others, someone who is not the kind of person to give up the larger pears like Kong Rong did, you will inwardly be annoyed at them and have a low opinion of them. So are your annoyance and low opinion justified? They must be based on something. First and foremost, you think: "Kong Rong was so young and yet he was able to give up the larger pears, whereas you are all grown up and you're still as selfish as this," and inwardly you hold a low opinion of them. So, are your low opinion and annoyance based on the story of Kong Rong giving up the larger pears? (Yes.) Is it right to view people on this basis? (No.) Why is it not right? Because the origin of your basis for viewing people and things is incorrect, and because your starting point is all wrong. Your starting point is to take Kong Rong giving up the larger pears as the standard for measuring people and things, but this approach and method of measuring are wrong. In what way are they wrong? They are wrong inasmuch as you believe that the idea behind the story of Kong Rong is correct, and you take it as a positive ideological viewpoint from which to measure people and things. When you measure in this way, the result you end up with is that the vast majority of people aren't good people. Are the results of this measuring accurate? (No, they aren't accurate.) Why aren't they accurate? Because your standard of measurement is wrong. If one uses the methods and principles that God has given, how should one measure such a person? By considering whether the person upholds the interests of God's house, whether they are on God's side, whether they have a God-fearing heart, and whether they seek the truth principle in what they do: only a measurement based on these aspects is most accurate. If, whenever something befalls this person, they pray, seek, and discuss it with everyone, and—even though sometimes they aren't able to be altruistic and are a little selfish in

small ways—if what they do is basically adequate when measured against the aspects required by God, then this is someone who can accept the truth, a person who is in the right. So what is this conclusion based on? (It is based on God's words and requirements.) Is this conclusion accurate, therefore? It is much more accurate than if you were to measure using the ideological perspective of Kong Rong giving up the larger pears. The ideological viewpoint of the story of Kong Rong measures people's temporary behavior and practices, but what God requires people to measure is the essence of this person, as well as what exactly the person's attitude is toward the truth and toward God's requirements. What you use sayings on moral conduct for is to measure a person's fleeting behavior, or their actions or fleeting revelations during one incident. If you use them to measure a person's intrinsic qualities, it will not be accurate, because measuring a person's intrinsic qualities using sayings on moral conduct is measuring them using the wrong principles, and the result you arrive at will be inaccurate. The difference lies not in their outward behaviors, but rather in their nature essence. Therefore, it is fundamentally wrong to measure people using sayings on moral conduct. It is only accurate to measure people using the truth principles. Do you understand what I am saying?

The essence of sayings about moral conduct is that they are regulations and conventions that constrain people's behavior and thoughts. To a certain extent, they restrict and control people's thinking, and constrain some of the correct expressions of thought and normal requirements of normal humanity. Of course, it can also be said that to a certain extent, they violate some of the laws of survival of normal humanity, and also deprive normal people of their human needs and rights. For example, the classic saying "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral" forcibly interferes with and destroys women's human rights. What role does it make women play in the whole of human society? They play the role of being enslaved. Is this not the case? (Yes.) From this point of view, the regulations and conventions of these sayings about moral conduct have destroyed human thoughts, stripped away the various needs of normal humanity, and at the same time confined human beings' expression of the various thoughts of normal humanity. These sayings on moral conduct are fundamentally not created based on the needs of normal people, nor based on the standards that normal people can meet, but are all created based on people's imaginings, ambitions and desires. These sayings on moral conduct not only constrain and confine people's thoughts, and constrain people's behavior, but they also make people worship and chase after those things that are false and imaginary. But people can't attain them, so all they can do is use pretense to whitewash and cover themselves up, so that they can live a decent, noble life, a life that seems very dignified. But the fact is that living under these ideas and views of moral conduct means that humanity's thoughts are distorted and confined, and that people live abnormally and pervertedly under the governance of these erroneous ideas and viewpoints, does it not? (Yes.) People don't want to live like this, and they don't want to

do this, but they can't break free from the constraints of these ideological shackles. All they can do is live reluctantly and involuntarily under the influence and confinement of these ideas and views. At the same time, due to the pressure of public opinion and these ideas and views in their heart, they have no choice but to drag out an ignoble existence in this world wearing one mask of hypocrisy after another. This is the consequence of sayings on moral conduct for humankind. Have you understood this? (Yes.) The more we fellowship and analyze these sayings about moral conduct, the more people can see them clearly, and the more they feel that these various sayings in traditional culture are not positive things. They have misled and harmed human beings for thousands of years, to the extent that even after people have listened to God's words and come to understand the truth, they still cannot rid themselves of the influence of these ideas and views from traditional culture, and even aspire to them as if they were positive things. Many people even use them as a substitute for the truth, and practice them as the truth. Through today's fellowship, have you gained a better and more accurate understanding of these sayings on moral conduct in traditional culture? (Yes.) Now that you have some understanding of them, let us continue fellowshiping on other sayings about moral conduct.

Next we will fellowship about the saying on moral conduct "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring." As you can tell, each of these sayings about moral conduct is so overblown and earth-shaking, as if each one is imbued with a kind of heroic spirit and the qualities of great people, and is unachievable by an unremarkable or ordinary person. "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring"—what immense broad-mindedness that would require! How kind, benevolent and great a personality you would need to be in order to do that! "A drop of water" corresponds to "a gushing spring," but at the same time, this correspondence gives the impression that there is an immeasurable gulf and vast difference between the two. It means that you must repay even the kindness of a drop of water, but with what? It should be repaid with a gushing spring, with such a vast number of actions or behaviors or with such sincerity and such great willingness, rather than being forgotten about. This is how much it takes to repay the kindness of a drop of water, and if you repay it with anything less, you have no conscience. According to this logic, is not the person who showed kindness also the one who unfairly benefits in the end? This benefactor sure profits handsomely from their kindness! They show kindness by giving a drop of water and get a gushing spring in return. This is a very lucrative deal, and a way to benefit handsomely at the expense of others. Is this not the case? In this life, every person will accept the kindness of a drop of water. If they must all repay it with a gushing spring, it would take them their whole life to repay, leaving them unable to fulfill any of their family and social responsibilities, let alone consider their path in life. If you enjoy the kindness of a drop of water but fail to repay it with a gushing spring, you will be condemned by your conscience and by society, and regard yourself as a rebel, a villain, an ingrate, and

not human. But what if someone could repay that kindness with a gushing spring? He'd say, "There is no one more conscientious than I, because I can repay the kindness of a drop of water with a gushing spring. This way, the person who once helped me and showed me kindness can see what sort of person I am, and whether or not they lost out by helping me, and whether or not it was worth their while to help me out. This way, they'll never forget it, and they'll even feel embarrassed. What's more, I'll keep on paying them back. Since I can repay the kindness of a drop of water with a gushing spring, am I not a person of noble moral conduct and character? Am I not a gentleman? Am I not a great person? Am I not worthy of admiration?" Everyone praises him and applauds him, and this greatly stirs his emotions, so he says, "Since you praise me as a kind person, a person of noble character, an example among men, and a paragon of humanity's morality, then after my death, you should erect a monument to me and write me an epitaph that says 'This person was a paragon of the maxim "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring," and can be called an example of humanity's morality.'" But even after the monument is in place, he thinks that they should also make a clay statue in his image and put it in the temple, then write on it his distinguished name: "Shrine of the God So-and-So," and set up an incense altar underneath it, where everyone must give him offerings of incense, so that it burns constantly for his benefit. In addition, people must have statuettes of him in their homes, and burn incense, and kowtow to him three times a day, and educate their children and grandchildren and the younger generations to be just like him, telling their sons and daughters that they must marry a person like him, someone who can repay the kindness of a drop of water with a gushing spring—a paragon and a model of humanity's morality. The traditional educational approach of Chinese people is to teach their children to be good people, and places emphasis on acknowledging kindness and seeking to repay it. If you receive the kindness of a drop of water, you must repay it with a life of hard work, that is to say, with a gushing spring. When children grow up, they also teach the later generations in the same way, and so it continues, passed down from one generation to the next. When such a person is able to repay the kindness of a drop of water with a gushing spring, then he has also achieved his ultimate aim. What aim has he achieved? Being recognized and acknowledged by worldly people and by society. Of course, this is secondary. The most important thing is that people hang his portrait on their walls and make offerings to his statue, and that he can enjoy the burning incense of this world from generation to generation, and that his spirit and ideas can be passed down in the world and win praise from generations of people to come. In the end, after gorging himself on the burning incense of this world, what does he become? He becomes a devil king, and his aim is finally achieved. This is the ultimate consequence of Satan's corruption of humankind. At the outset, people merely accept one idea in traditional culture about moral conduct, such as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. Later, they comply with the requirement of this idea, setting an example to others by

rigorously putting this idea and this requirement into practice and abiding by them, and achieve the aim of becoming a model and paragon of morality for the rest of humanity. Then after they die, they leave behind a good reputation, which is passed on through the generations. Finally, they get what they wanted, which is to inhale the burning incense of this world for many years and become a king of demons. Is this a good thing? (No.) Why do you say that it's not a good thing? This is the ultimate goal that an unbeliever aspires to in life. They approve ideas about a certain moral conduct, then lead by example, setting about implementing the requirements about this moral conduct until finally they reach the point where everyone praises them as a good person, a kind person, a distinguished person, and a person of noble character. Word of their behavior and deeds spreads to all of humanity, and their behavior and deeds are studied and revered by generations of people, until finally that person becomes the role model for a whole generation, and of course the king of demons for a whole generation. Is this not the path that worldly people walk? Is this not the result that worldly people aspire to? Does this have a connection with the truth? Is there a connection with God's salvation? There is no connection whatsoever. Such is the final outcome that sayings on moral conduct have in store for people. If a person wholly accepts all the various ideas in traditional culture and abides by them fully, then the path they walk is undoubtedly the way of demons. If you have embarked upon the way of demons once and for all, then you have no connection with God's work of saving people, and absolutely nothing to do with salvation. Therefore, if upon the foundation of understanding the truth, you are still confined and influenced by the ideas of traditional culture, and at the same time, under the influence of these ideas, abiding by their laws, and abiding by these requirements and sayings, you are unable to forsake them or let them go, and cannot accept requirements from God, then you will end up following the way of demons and becoming a king of demons. You understand that, don't you? No theory or saying in the world can replace the path of salvation that God has given to humankind, not even the highest moral standards in the world. If people want to embark on the right path, which is the path of salvation, then only by coming before God, by meekly and steadfastly accepting God's words, by accepting all the various claims and requirements from Him, and by comporting themselves and acting with God's words as the criterion, can they gain God's approval. Otherwise, people have no way to embark on the right path in life, and can only follow Satan's philosophies on the road to perdition. Some people say, "Is there a middle way?" No, you follow either God's way or Satan's devilish way. There are only two ways. If you don't follow God's way, then you undoubtedly abide by the various ideas brought to you by Satan and the various devilish ways engendered by such ideas. If you want to compromise by taking the middle way or some third way, that is impossible. Is this point clear? (Yes.) I won't elaborate further on the saying "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring," because it is more or less similar to the saying "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," which we fellowshiped on

previously. The essence of these two sayings is much the same, so there is no need to discuss it in greater detail.

Now let's talk about the next saying on moral conduct—do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire. This one should be very easy to discern, should it not? Comparing it against the requirements of the sayings about moral conduct that we talked about before, this saying is clearly also an inflexible rule that binds people. Although on paper it looks grandiose and impressive, and there seems to be nothing wrong with it, and it appears to be a simple principle for dealing with people, this simple principle doesn't make any sense when it comes to how to comport oneself or how to treat people, and is of no help to a person's comportment or pursuit of life. It is not a principle that people should abide by in their conduct and behavior, nor is it a principle for people to pursue the correct direction and goal in life. Even if you abide by this requirement, all it does is deter you from doing anything unreasonable when dealing with people, but it doesn't mean that you have real love for people or really help them, much less does it prove that you are on the right path in life. In a literal sense, "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire" means that if you do not like something, or do not like to do something, then you shouldn't force it onto other people either. This seems smart and reasonable, but if you use this satanic philosophy to handle every situation, then you will make many mistakes. It is likely that you will hurt, mislead, or even harm people. Just like how some parents are not fond of studying, but like to make their children study, and always try to reason with them, urging them to study hard. If you were to apply the requirement here to "not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," then these parents shouldn't make their children study, because they themselves do not enjoy it. There are other people who believe in God, but do not pursue the truth; yet in their hearts they know that believing in God is the right path in life. If they see that their children do not believe in God and are not on the right path, they urge them to believe in God. Even though they themselves do not pursue the truth, they still want their children to pursue it and be blessed. In this situation, if they adhered to the saying "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," then these parents should not make their children believe in God. That would be in line with this satanic philosophy, but it also would have destroyed their children's chance at salvation. Who is responsible for this outcome? Does the traditional saying on moral conduct of not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire not harm people? Here is another example. Some parents aren't content with leading a dutiful, law-abiding life. They aren't willing to toil on the land or go to work to support their family. Instead they like to cheat, swindle or gamble, using unrighteous means to make a dishonest fortune, so that they can then live the high life, have fun and enjoy the pleasures of the flesh. They don't like engaging in honest work, or following the right path. This is what they do not desire, is it not? They know in their heart that this is not good. In this situation how should they educate their own children? Normal people would teach their children to

study hard and master a skill so that they can find a good job in future, and make their children follow the right path. This is fulfilling one's responsibility as a parent, is it not? (Yes, it is.) This is correct. But if they adhere to the saying "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," then they would say, "Son, look at me. I can do all sorts of things in life, such as wining and dining, frequenting prostitutes and gambling. I get by in life even without having studied or learned a skill. You learn with me in the future. You don't need to go to school and study hard. Learn to steal, cheat, and gamble. You can still lead a comfortable life for the rest of your days!" Is it right to do that? Has anyone taught their children this way? (No.) This is "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," is it not? Haven't these examples thoroughly refuted this saying? There is nothing correct about it. For example, some people do not love the truth; they covet the comforts of the flesh, and find ways to slack off when performing their duty. They are not willing to suffer or pay a price. They think that the saying "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire" puts it well, and tell people, "You should learn how to enjoy yourselves. You don't need to perform your duty well or suffer hardship or pay a price. If you can slack off, then slack off; if you can muddle through something, then muddle through it. Don't make things so hard on yourselves. Look, I live this way—isn't it great? My life is just perfect! You're exhausting yourselves living that way! You should learn from me." Does this not meet the requirement of "not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire"? If you act this way, are you a person with conscience and reason? (No.) If a person loses their conscience and reason, are they not lacking virtue? This is called lacking virtue. Why do we call it this? Because they crave comfort, they muddle through their duty, and incite and influence others to join them in being perfunctory and craving comfort. What is the problem with this? Being perfunctory and irresponsible in your duty is an act of trickery and resistance to God. If you continue to be perfunctory and do not repent, you will be exposed and cast out. Many people in the church are cleared out in this way. Is this not a fact? (Yes, it is.) So in adhering to this saying and inciting everyone to be like them, so that people don't perform their duties diligently, but instead dupe and deceive God, is this not bringing harm upon people and sending them to their ruin? They themselves are lazy and slippery, and yet they also impede others from performing their duties. Is this not disrupting and disturbing the church's work? Is this not antagonizing God? Can God's house keep such people? Supposing someone who works in a company of unbelievers incites the other employees to not do their jobs properly. Won't the boss fire him if she finds out? She will definitely kick him out. So if he can still do this while performing his duty in God's house, is this a person who believes in God? This is a wicked person and nonbeliever who has infiltrated God's house. He must be removed and cast out! After listening to these examples, are you somewhat able to recognize the essence of the saying on moral conduct "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire"? (Yes we are.) What is the final conclusion you have drawn? Is this requirement

a truth principle? (No.) Quite obviously not. So what is it? It's just a muddled saying, one that sounds nice superficially, but which actually has no practical meaning.

Are you proponents of the saying on moral conduct, "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire"? If someone were a proponent of this phrase, would you think they were great and noble? There are some who would say, "Look, they don't impose, they don't make things hard for others, or put them in difficult positions. Aren't they wonderful? They are always strict with themselves yet tolerant of others; they never tell anyone to do something that they wouldn't do themselves. They give others a lot of freedom, and make them feel an abundance of warmth and acceptance. What a great person!" Is that really the case? The implication of the saying "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," is that you should only give or supply to others things that you yourself like and take pleasure in. But what things do corrupted people like and take pleasure in? Corrupted things, preposterous things, and extravagant desires. If you give and supply to people these negative things, will all of humanity not become more and more corrupted? There will be fewer and fewer positive things. Is this not a fact? It is a fact that humanity is deeply corrupted. Corrupted humans like to pursue fame, gain, status, and pleasures of the flesh; they want to be celebrities, to be mighty and superhuman. They want a comfortable life and are averse to hard work; they want everything to be handed to them. Very few of them love the truth or positive things. If people give and supply to others their corruption and predilections, what will happen? It is just as you would imagine: Humanity will only become more and more corrupt. Those who are proponents of the idea "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," ask that people give and supply to others their corruption, predilections, and extravagant desires, making other people seek evil, comfort, money, and advancement. Is this the right path in life? It is plain to see that "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire" is a very problematic saying. The holes and flaws in it are glaringly obvious; it is not even worth dissecting and discerning it. With the slightest examination, its errors and ridiculousness are plain to see. However, there are many among you who are easily persuaded and influenced by this saying and accept it without discernment. When interacting with others, you often use this saying to admonish yourself and exhort others. By doing this, you think that your character is particularly noble, and that your comportment is very reasonable. But without realizing it, these words have revealed the principle you live by and your stance on issues. At the same time, you have deceived and misled others into approaching people and circumstances with the same view and stance as you. You have acted like a veritable fence-straddler, and completely taken the middle road. You say, "No matter what the issue is, there is no need to take it seriously. Don't make things difficult for yourself or others. If you make things difficult for other people, then you're making them difficult for yourself. Being kind to others is being kind to yourself. If you're hard on other people, then you're being hard on yourself. Why put yourself in a difficult position? Not imposing on others that which

you yourself do not desire is the best thing you could do for yourself, and the most considerate." This attitude is obviously one of not being meticulous in anything. You have no correct stance or perspective on any issue; you have a muddled view of everything. You are not meticulous and just turn a blind eye to things. When you finally stand before God and account for yourself, it will be a big muddle. Why is that? Because you always say you should not impose on others that which you yourself don't desire. This gives you great comfort and enjoyment, but at the same time it will cause you great trouble, making it so that you can't have a clear view or stance on many matters. Of course, it also makes you unable to understand clearly what God's requirements and standards for you are when you encounter these situations, or what outcome you should achieve. These things happen because you are not meticulous in anything; they are caused by your muddled attitude and view. Is not imposing on others that which you yourself don't desire the tolerant attitude you should have toward people and things? No, it is not. It is just a theory which appears right, noble, and kind from the outside, but is actually a thoroughly negative thing. Clearly, even less is it a truth principle that people should be adhering to. God does not demand that people not impose on others that which they themselves do not desire, instead He asks people to be clear on the principles they should observe when handling different situations. If it is correct and in line with the truth in God's words, then you must cling to it. And not only must you cling to it, you must admonish, persuade, and fellowship with others, so that they understand exactly what God's will is, and what the truth principles are. This is your responsibility and obligation. God does not ask you to take the middle road, and even less does He ask you to show off how big your heart is. You should cling to the things God has admonished you for and taught to you, and what God talks about in His words: the requirements, the criteria, and the truth principles that people should be observing. Not only must you cling to them, and hold on to them forever, but you must also practice these truth principles by leading by example, as well as persuading, supervising, helping, and guiding others to cling to, observe, and practice them in the same way you do. God demands that you do this—this is what He entrusts to you. You cannot just make requirements of yourself while ignoring others. God demands that you take the correct stance on issues, cling to the correct criteria, and know precisely what the criteria in God's words are, and that you figure out precisely what the truth principles are. Even if you cannot accomplish this, even if you are unwilling, if you don't like it, if you have notions, or if you resist it, you must treat it as your responsibility, as your obligation. You must fellowship with people on the positive things that come from God, on things which are right and correct, and use them to help, impact, and guide others, so that people can benefit from and be edified by them, and walk the correct path in life. This is your responsibility, and you should not stubbornly cling to the idea "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire" which Satan has put into your mind. In God's eyes, that saying is just a philosophy for living; it is a way of thinking that contains Satan's trickery; it is not at all the correct path, nor is it

a positive thing. All God requires of you, is for you to be an upright person who understands clearly what they should and should not do. He does not call you to be a people-pleaser or a fence-straddler; He has not called you to take the middle road. When a matter concerns the truth principles, you must say what needs to be said, and understand what needs to be understood. If someone does not understand something but you do, and you can give pointers and help them out, then you absolutely must fulfill this responsibility and obligation. You must not just stand by the wayside and watch, and even less should you cling to the philosophies that Satan has put into your mind such as not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire. Do you understand? (Yes.) That which is right and positive is so even if you don't like it, aren't willing to do it, aren't capable of doing and achieving it, are resistant to it, or develop notions against it. The essence of God's words and the truth won't change just because mankind has corrupt dispositions and has certain emotions, feelings, desires and notions. The essence of God's words and the truth will never, ever change. As soon as you know, understand, experience and attain God's words and the truth, it is your obligation to fellowship your experiential testimonies to others. This will allow even more people to understand God's will, comprehend and attain the truth, understand God's demands and standards and have a grasp of the truth principles. By doing this, these people will gain a path of practice when they encounter issues in their daily life and won't become muddled or be fettered by Satan's various ideas and views. The saying on moral conduct "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire" is really and truly Satan's cunning scheme to control the minds of people. If you always uphold this, then you are someone who lives according to satanic philosophies; a person who completely lives in a satanic disposition. If you do not follow God's way, then you do not love or pursue the truth. No matter what happens, the principle you should follow and the most important thing you must do is help people as much as you can. You should not practice what Satan says, which is to "not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," and be a "smart" people-pleaser. What does it mean to help people as much as you can? It means fulfilling your responsibilities and obligations. As soon as you see that something is part of your responsibilities and obligations, you should fellowship on God's words and the truth. This is what it means to fulfill your responsibilities and obligations. Has this fellowship basically clarified the saying on moral conduct "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire"? Have you understood it? (Yes.) This saying is relatively easy to discern, and you can identify what's wrong with it without too much deliberation. It is simply too absurd, so there is no need to fellowship on it in further detail.

Now let's fellowship about the next saying on moral conduct—I'd take a bullet for a friend. This is a seemingly grandiose statement, which is extremely widespread among humankind. In particular, people who value sentiment and attach importance to brotherhood adopt this saying as a maxim to make lots of friends. In whichever era or ethnic group in which it is used, this saying on moral conduct, "I'd take a bullet for a

friend," holds up quite well. That is to say, it accords relatively well with the conscience and reason of humanity. More precisely, this saying accords with the concept of "brotherhood" that people adhere to in their conscience. People who value brotherhood would be willing to take a bullet for a friend. No matter how difficult and dangerous a situation their friend is in, they would step forward and take a bullet for them. This is the spirit of sacrificing one's own interests for the sake of others. What the saying on moral conduct "I'd take a bullet for a friend" instills in people is basically to value brotherhood. The standard that it requires humanity to uphold is that one must value brotherhood: That is the essence of this saying. What does this word "brotherhood" mean? What is the standard for brotherhood? It is being able to sacrifice one's own interests for a friend and do everything to satisfy them. Whatever your friend needs, you are honor-bound to offer whatever help is needed, and if that means risking your life, then so be it. This is what it takes to be a true friend, and only this can be considered true brotherhood. Another interpretation of brotherhood is being able to risk your life, lay down your life, or put your life on the line for a friend, without regard to life or death. This is a friendship that endures through life-threatening ordeals, a life-and-death friendship, and this is true brotherhood. This is the definition of a friend in requirements for moral behavior. You must be willing to take a bullet for your friends in order to be considered a true friend, this is the criterion of moral conduct that a person should adhere to when dealing with their friends, and this is the requirement for people's moral conduct when it comes to making friends. The saying on moral conduct "I'd take a bullet for a friend" comes across as particularly heroic and just, and especially great and noble, and inspires people's admiration and approval, and makes people feel that those who can do such a thing are like otherworldly non-mortals who jump out of cracks in the rocks, and makes them think that these people are especially righteous, like knights or swordfighters. That is why such unsophisticated and forthright ideas and views are readily accepted by human beings, and easily penetrate deep into their hearts. Do you have similar feelings about the saying "I'd take a bullet for a friend"? (Yes.) Although in this day and age, there aren't many people who would take a bullet for a friend, most people hope that their friends would be willing to take a bullet for them, and that they are loyal people, good buddies, and that in times of trouble, their friends would stretch out a helping hand without a second thought and without laying down any conditions, and that their friends would do anything for them, defying all difficulties and undaunted by danger. If you have similar requirements for your friends, might this show that you are still influenced and bound by this idea of taking a bullet for a friend? Would you say that you still live by this old, traditional way of thinking? (Yes.) These days, people often lament that "public morality is in decline nowadays, people don't have the same mentality as their ancestors, times have changed, friends are not what they used to be, people don't value brotherhood anymore, people have lost their human warmth, and interpersonal relationships are becoming more and more distant." Although very few people value brotherhood in friends

nowadays, people still fondly remember those chivalrous and warm-hearted folk in olden times who would lay down their life for a friend, and revere the style they exude. For example, take some of the stories handed down through history about people in olden times laying down their life for a friend, especially stories set in the world of martial arts about people upholding brotherhood. To this day, when people watch these stories in films and television dramas, they still feel a surge of emotion in their hearts, and harbor hopes of returning to an age full of human warmth, when people valued brotherhood. What do these things show? Do they show that this idea of taking a bullet for a friend is revered as a positive thing in people's minds, and that it is held up as a high moral standard for those who want to be or become a good person? (Yes.) Although people don't dare demand such a thing of themselves nowadays, and can't achieve it themselves, they still hope to meet such people in their community, associate with them and become friends with them, so that when they themselves encounter difficulty, their friend can take a bullet for them. Looking at people's attitudes and views about this saying on moral conduct, it is clear to see that people are deeply influenced by such ideas and views that value brotherhood. Given that people are influenced by such ideas and views that encourage them to aspire and adhere to the spirit of brotherhood, of course they are highly likely to live by them. As a result, people tend to become controlled and dominated by such ideas and views, and are likely to view people and things and comport themselves and act according to such ideas and views, and at the same time, they tend to use such ideas and views to judge people, by asking themselves, "Does this person value brotherhood? If they value brotherhood then they are a nice person; whereas if they don't, they aren't worthy of associating with, and they aren't a good person." Of course, you also tend to be influenced by these ideas on brotherhood in terms of governing your own behavior, and in terms of constraining and passing judgment on your own behavior, and take them as the criteria and direction for your interactions with others. For example, under the deep-seated influence of such ideas and views, when you associate with brothers and sisters, you use your conscience to measure everything you do. What does this word "conscience" mean? The fact is that, deep within people's hearts, it means none other than brotherhood. Sometimes helping out one's brothers and sisters is done out of brotherhood, sometimes sympathizing with them is also done out of brotherhood. Sometimes, performing one's duty and making some token effort in God's family, or expending, or having some momentary resolve, all actually comes about under the governance of such ideas that value brotherhood. Don't these phenomena clearly and unequivocally show that people are deeply influenced by such ideas and views, and have already become fettered and assimilated by them? What do I mean by "fettered" and "assimilated"? Can it be said that such ideas and views that value brotherhood are not only able to control people's behavior, but in addition, they have already become people's philosophy of existence and their life, and that people latch onto them and treat them as positive things? Why do I say they treat them

as positive things? It means that when people listen to God's words, put His words into practice and obey Him, perform their duty without being careless and perfunctory, pay more of a price, and are faithful to God, all this behavior is to a large extent governed by the idea of brotherhood, and adulterated with this element of brotherhood. For example, some people say: "We must be conscientious in how we comport ourselves, we cannot muddle through our duty! God has bestowed so much grace on us. In such a dangerous environment, with all this rampant suppression and persecution by the great red dragon, God protects us and saves us from the influence of Satan. We must not lose our conscience, we must perform our duty properly to repay God's love! Our lives are given to us by God, so we must be faithful to Him in order to repay His love. We cannot be ungrateful!" There are other people who are confronted with a duty that requires taking risks and paying a price, and who say: "If others won't step forward, I will. I'm not afraid of danger!" People ask them, "Why are you not afraid of danger?" And they reply, "Have you not even the slightest moral integrity in your comportment? God's family treats me well, and God is good to me. Since I have resolved to follow Him, I should do my bit and take on these risks. I must have this spirit of brotherhood and value it." And so on and so forth. Are these phenomena and these revelations of people dominated to a certain extent by such ideas and views that value brotherhood? Dominated by such ideas and views, the judgments and choices that people make and some of the behaviors that people reveal most of the time have nothing whatsoever to do with practicing the truth. They are just a momentary impulse, a momentary state of mind or a momentary desire. Because this is not abiding by the truth principles, and does not stem from a person's subjective will to perform their duty, and is not done out of love for the truth and for positive things, this brotherhood between people often cannot endure, it cannot last more than a few times, nor can it last too long. After a while people run out of energy, like a deflated ball. Some people say, "Why was I so energized before? Why was I so willing to take on these dangerous jobs for God's house? Why is that energy all gone now?" At the time it was just a momentary impulse, desire or resolve on your part, and inevitably this was adulterated with an element of brotherhood. Speaking of which, what exactly does "brotherhood" mean? Put simply, it is a momentary mood or frame of mind, that is to say, a mood that people develop in special environments and situations. Such a mood is very buoyant, very upbeat, and very positive, which causes you to make positive judgments and choices, or makes you produce some grandiose statements, and creates some willingness to work hard, but this kind of willingness is not a true state of loving the truth, understanding the truth, or practicing the truth. It is just a mood produced under the governance of such ideas and views that value brotherhood. This is how it is in simple terms. On a deeper level, from My point of view, brotherhood is actually an outpouring of impetuousness. What do I mean by "an outpouring of impetuousness"? For example, when people are momentarily happy, they can go all day and night without eating or sleeping, and yet do not feel hungry or tired. Is this normal? Under normal circumstances,

people will be hungry if they do not eat a meal, and listless and lethargic if they do not sleep well all night. But if, on the spur of the moment, they are in a buoyant mood, and don't feel hungry, sleepy, or fatigued, isn't this abnormal? (Yes, it is.) Is this a natural revelation of life disposition? (No.) If this is not a normal revelation, what is it then? It is impetuousness. What else does impetuousness mean? It means that because of abnormal emotions such as momentary happiness or anger, people exhibit some extreme behaviors while in an irrational state. What are these extreme behaviors? Sometimes when they are happy, they give away the most precious things in their home to others, or sometimes in a fit of anger they kill someone with a knife. Is this not impetuousness? These are behaviors bordering on extreme, that occur when people are in an irrational state: This is impetuousness. Some people are especially happy when they first start performing their duty. They don't feel hungry when it's time to eat, and don't feel sleepy when it's time to rest. Instead they cry out, "Expend for God, pay the price for God, and endure any hardship!" Whenever they are unhappy they don't want to do anything, they take a dislike to everyone they see, and they even think about not believing anymore. All of this is impetuousness. How did this impetuousness come about? Did it come about from people's corrupt dispositions? At its root, it is caused by people not understanding the truth and being unable to practice the truth. When people do not understand the truth, they are influenced by various deviant thoughts. Under the influence of various deviant and negative thoughts, they develop various irrational and abnormal moods. While in these moods, they come up with all kinds of hot-headed judgments and behaviors. This is how it goes, is it not? What is the essence of this ideological viewpoint, "I'd take a bullet for a friend"? (It is impetuousness.) That's right, it is impetuousness. So does the saying "I'd take a bullet for a friend" have any rationality? Does it accord with the principles? Is it a positive thing that people should abide by? Quite obviously not. This matter of taking a bullet for a friend is irrational, it is impulsive and it is impetuous. This matter must be treated rationally. Is it okay if you don't value brotherhood so much that you would take a bullet for a friend? Is it okay to just help your friends within the limits of your capability? How to do things right? Why are ideas and views such as I'd take a bullet for a friend, which seem to particularly value brotherhood, all wrong? What's wrong with them? This matter needs to be made clear. Once this matter is clarified, people will completely let go of such ideas and views. The fact is that this matter is very simple. Can you explain it clearly? You have no views on this matter, nothing to say. This confirms one thing, which is that before I analyzed the saying "I'd take a bullet for a friend," you were all people who had adhered to or particularly worshiped this saying, and you all envied people who would take a bullet for a friend, and you were also envious of those who could make friends with someone like that, and feel that having such friends is a joy and an honor. Is that not the case? How do you view this matter? (I think that dealing with people according to the saying "I'd take a bullet for a friend" is without principles and does not accord with the truth.) What do you think

of this reply? Can it release the bonds and fetters that such ideas and views place on you? Can it change the methods and principles by which you deal with such matters? Can it correct your errant views on such matters? If it cannot, then what is this reply? (Doctrine.) What's the use of speaking doctrine? Do not speak about doctrine. How does doctrine come about? It is that you do not clearly see the essence of such ideas and views, and that you do not completely understand the negative impact and harm of such ideas and views with regard to how you view people and things, and how you comport yourself and act. You don't know what is wrong with them, so all you can do is answer and resolve this problem using shallow doctrines. The final outcome is that doctrines cannot solve your problem, and you still live under the governance and influence of such ideas and views.

What is wrong with ideas and views such as "taking a bullet for a friend"? This question is actually quite simple and not difficult. No one who lives in the world jumps out of cracks in the rocks. Everyone has parents and children, everyone has relatives, no one exists independently in this human world. What do I mean by this? I mean that you live in this human world, and you have your own obligations to fulfill. Firstly, you must support your parents, and secondly, you must raise your children. These are your responsibilities within the family. In society, you also have social responsibilities and obligations to fulfill. You must play a role in society, such as being a worker, farmer, businessperson, student or intellectual. From the family to society, there are many responsibilities and obligations that you should fulfill. That is, in addition to your food, clothing, housing and transportation, you have many things that you must do, and also many things that you should do and many obligations that you should fulfill. Leaving aside this right path of belief in God that people walk, as an individual you have many family responsibilities and social obligations to fulfill. You do not exist independently. The responsibility on your shoulders is not just to make friends and have a good time, or to find someone you can talk to and who can help you out. The majority of your responsibilities—and the most important ones—are to do with your family and society. Only if you fulfill your family responsibilities and social obligations well, will your life as a person be considered complete and perfect. So, what do the responsibilities that you should fulfill in the family include? As a child, you should be filial to your parents and support them. Whenever your parents are sick or in difficulty, you should do all that is in your power to do. As a parent, you have to sweat and exert yourself, work hard and endure hardship to provide for the whole family, and take on the heavy responsibility of being a parent, raising your children, educating them to follow the right path, and making them understand the principles of comportment. Thus, you have numerous responsibilities in your family. You must support your parents and take on the responsibility of raising your children. There are many such things that should be done. And what are your responsibilities in society? You must abide by the laws and regulations, you must have principles for dealing with others, you must do your best at work, and manage your

career well. Eighty or ninety percent of your time and energy must be expended on these things. That is to say, no matter what role you play in your family or in society, no matter what path you walk, no matter what your ambitions and aspirations are, each person has responsibilities to bear that are very important to them personally, and which occupy almost all of their time and energy. From the perspective of family and social responsibilities, what is the value of you as a person and your life in coming into this human world? It is to fulfill the responsibilities and missions given to you by Heaven. Your life does not belong to you alone, and of course it does not belong to others. Your life exists for your missions and responsibilities, and for the responsibilities, obligations and missions that you should fulfill in this human world. Your life does not belong to your parents, nor to your wife (husband), and of course it does not belong to your children. Less still does it belong to your descendants. So who does your life belong to? Speaking from the perspective of a person of the world, your life belongs to the responsibilities and missions given to you by God. But from the perspective of a believer, your life should belong to God, as it is He who arranges and has sovereignty over everything about you. Therefore, as a person, living in the world, you should not promise your life to others arbitrarily, and you should not arbitrarily sacrifice your life for anyone for the sake of brotherhood. That is to say, you should not belittle your own life. Your life is worthless to anyone else, especially to Satan, to this society, and to this corrupt human race, but to your parents and relatives, your life is of the utmost importance, because there is an inseparable relationship between your responsibilities and their survival. Of course, what is even more important is that there is an inseparable relationship between your life and the fact that God holds sovereignty over all things and over the entire human race. Your life is indispensable among the many lives that God holds sovereignty over. Perhaps you don’t value your life that highly, and perhaps you shouldn’t value your life that highly, but the fact is that your life is very important to your parents and relatives, with whom you have close ties and an inseparable relationship. Why do I say that? Because you have responsibilities toward them, they also have responsibilities toward you, you have responsibilities toward this society, and your responsibilities toward society relate to your role in this society. Every person’s role and every living entity are indispensable to God, and are all indispensable elements of God’s sovereignty over humankind, this world, this earth, and this universe. In God’s eyes, every life is even more insignificant than a grain of sand, and even more contemptible than an ant; nevertheless, because each person is a life, a living and breathing life, therefore, within the sovereignty of God, even though the role that person plays is not pivotal, they are also indispensable. So, looking at it from these aspects, if a person would readily take a bullet for a friend and not only thinks about doing so, but is prepared to do so at any moment, giving their own life with no regard to their family responsibilities, their social responsibilities, and even the God-given missions and duties on their shoulders, is that not wrong? (Yes.) This is treasonous! The most precious thing God bestows on man is this breath that is called

life. If you casually promise your life to a friend who you think you can entrust it to, is this not being treasonous to God? Is this not disrespecting life? Is this not an act of disobedience against God? Is it an act of rebellion against God? (Yes.) This is clearly giving up the responsibilities that you should fulfill in your family and in society, and shirking the missions that God has given you. This is treasonous. The most important things in a person's life are nothing more than the responsibilities that one should take on in this life—family responsibilities, social responsibilities, and the missions that God has given you. The most important things are these responsibilities and missions. If you lose your life by casually giving it up for another due to a momentary sense of brotherhood and a moment's impetuousness, do your responsibilities still exist? How can you talk of missions then? You clearly do not cherish the life God bestowed on you as the most precious thing, but instead casually promise it to others, give up your life for others, completely disregarding or abandoning your responsibilities to your family and society, which is immoral and unfair. So, what am I trying to tell you? Don't casually give up your life or promise it to others. Some people say, "Can I promise it to my parents? How about promising it to my lover, is that okay?" It's not okay. Why is it not okay? God bestows life on you and allows your life to continue so that you can fulfill your responsibilities to your family and society and fulfill the missions entrusted to you by God. It is not for you to treat your own life as a joke by casually promising it to others, delivering it to others, expending it for others, and dedicating it to others. If a person loses their life, can they still fulfill their family and social responsibilities and their missions? Can it still be done? (No.) And when a person's family and social responsibilities are no more, do the social roles they performed still exist? (No.) When the social roles that a person performed are no more, do that person's missions still exist? No, they don't. When a person's missions and social roles are no more, does that over which God rules sovereign then still exist? What God rules sovereign over is living things, human beings with life, and when their social responsibilities and lives are no more, and their social roles all return to nothing, is this trying to make humankind, over which God rules sovereign, and God's management plan, return to nothing? If you do this, is it not treasonous? (Yes.) This is indeed treasonous. Your life exists only for your responsibilities and missions, and the value of your life can only be reflected in your responsibilities and missions. Besides, taking a bullet for a friend is not your responsibility and mission. As a person endowed with life by God, fulfilling the responsibilities and missions entrusted to you by God is what you should do. Whereas, taking a bullet for a friend is not a responsibility or mission that God has bestowed on you. Rather, it is your acting on a sense of brotherhood, your own wishful thinking, your irresponsible thinking about life, and of course, it is also a kind of thinking that Satan instills in people to heap scorn upon and trample on their lives. So, no matter when the time comes, no matter what kind of bosom friend you have made, even if your friendship with them has endured through life-threatening situations, don't arbitrarily promise to

take a bullet for them, and don't even entertain such thoughts lightly, don't think about dedicating your whole life, your being, to them. You have no responsibility or obligation to them whatsoever. If you have similar interests, similar personalities, and walk the same path, you can help each other, you can talk about whatever you like to each other, and you can be close friends, but this close friendship is not built on the foundation of taking a bullet for each other, nor based on valuing brotherhood. You don't need to take a bullet for them, and you don't need to give up your life or even shed a single drop of blood for them. Some people say: "So what use is my sense of brotherhood? In my humanity and in my heart, I always want to show brotherhood, so what should I do?" If you really want to show brotherhood, then you should tell the other person the truths that you have come to understand. When you see that the other person is weak, support them. Don't stand by the wayside and watch; when they go the wrong way, remind them, counsel them, and give them a hand. When you see the other person's problems, you have the obligation to help them, but you don't need to take a bullet for them, you don't need to promise your life to them. Your responsibility to them is only to help, support, remind, advise, or sometimes to have a little forgiveness and tolerance, but it is not to give up your life for them, let alone show them some so-called sense of brotherhood. To Me, brotherhood is just impetuousness, and it does not belong to the truth. Compared with the life that God bestows on people, brotherhood between people is garbage. It is a kind of impetuousness instilled in people by Satan, a cunning scheme that makes people impulsively do many things for the sake of brotherhood, things that they will struggle to put behind them and that they will regret for the rest of their days. This is inadvisable. Therefore, you had better let go of this idea of brotherhood. Don't live in accordance with brotherhood, but instead live in accordance with the truth and God's words. At the very least, you should live in accordance with your humanity, conscience, and reason, deal with everyone and everything rationally, and do everything properly in accordance with your conscience and reason.

Having fellowshiped on so many sayings and opinions regarding responsibility and life, do you now have discernment of this moral requirement about taking a bullet for a friend? Now that you have discernment, do you have the correct principles for dealing with such a thing? (Yes.) What would you do if someone really asked you to take a bullet for them? How would you answer? You would say, "If you demand that I take a bullet for you, then you are the one who wants to take my life. If you want to take my life, if you demand such a thing from me, then you are depriving me of the right to fulfill my family responsibilities and the right to fulfill my responsibilities in society. This is also depriving me of my human rights, and more importantly, depriving me of the opportunity to submit to God's sovereignty and to perform my duty well. You depriving me of my human rights like this will be the end of me! You are depriving me of so many rights and are making me die for you. How selfish and despicable could you be? And yet you are still my friend? Clearly, you are not my friend, but my enemy." Is it right to say that? (Yes.) That is indeed

the right thing to say. Do you dare to say that? Do you truly understand this? If any friend of yours keeps asking you to take a bullet for them and demanding your life, then you should steer clear of them at the first opportunity, for they are not a good person. Don't think that they should be your friend just because they can take a bullet for you. You say: "I didn't ask you to take a bullet for me, it's you who has volunteered to do that. Even if you were able to take a bullet for me, don't even think about asking me to take a bullet for you. You are not rational, but I understand the truth, I am rational, and I will treat this matter rationally. No matter how many times you've taken a bullet for me, I will not impulsively take a bullet for you. If you're in difficulty, I will do my best to help you, but I absolutely will not forgo the responsibilities and missions entrusted to me by God in this life in order to live solely for your sake. In my world, there is nothing other than responsibilities, obligations, and missions. If you want to make friends with me, then I ask you to help me, assist me to fulfill my responsibilities and complete my missions together. Only then are you my real friend. If you keep on asking me to take a bullet for you, and keep on making me make this kind of promise, to give up my life for you, to promise my life to you, then you should get away from me immediately, you are not my friend, I don't want to make friends with someone like you, and I don't want to be a friend to a person like you." What do you think about saying that? (Good.) How is it good? By not having such a friend as this, you are relieved of pressure, free from worry, without any burden of thought, and not bound by ideas such as valuing brotherhood. If someone actually did say, "People like you who don't take a bullet for a friend are not worthy of associating with, and cannot be anyone's friend," would you feel sad upon hearing this? Would you be affected by these words? Would you feel sad and negative, abandoned by people, with no sense of existence, and no hope in life? This is possible, but when you understand the truth, you will be able to gain a thorough understanding of this matter, and you will not be constrained by these words. Starting from today, you must learn to let go of these things of traditional culture, without needing to carry these burdens. Only this way can you walk the right path in life. Will you put this into practice? (Yes.) Of course, this is not something that can be let go of so quickly. People must first prepare their minds, contemplate little by little, seek the truth little by little, understand little by little, and then put it into practice little by little, according to the truth principles. This is using the truth principles to deal with and handle relationships with people and associations with people. In summary, I would like to give you a few last words: Cherish life and your responsibilities; cherish the opportunity that God has given you to perform your duty, and cherish the missions God has given you. You understand, don't you? (Yes.) Is it not joyful that you have gained a thorough understanding of this matter? (Yes.) If you are not restricted and bound by these erroneous ideas and views, you will feel at ease. But you are not really at ease now. Only once you embark on the path of pursuing the truth in the future, and are no longer troubled by these things, are you truly at ease. It is only those that truly view people and things, conduct themselves and act, wholly

according to God’s words, with the truth as their criterion, who are truly relaxed and at ease, who have peace and joy, who live and comport themselves according to the truth, and who will never have regrets. Let us end today’s fellowship here.

May 7, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (11)

In every period and at every stage, some particular things happen in the church that are at odds with people's notions. For example, some people get sick, leaders and workers get replaced, some people are exposed and cast out, some face the test of life and death, some churches even have wicked people and antichrists who cause disturbances, and so on. These things happen from time to time, but they are by no means accidental. All of these things are the result of God's sovereignty and arrangements. A very peaceful period may suddenly be interrupted by several incidents or unusual events, which happen either around you, or to you personally, and the occurrence of these things breaks the normal order and normality of people's lives. From the outside, these things don't conform to people's notions and imaginings, they are things that people don't want to happen to them or to witness. So does the occurrence of these things benefit people? How should people deal with them, experience them, and understand them? Is this something any of you have thought about? (We should understand that this is the result of God's sovereignty.) Is it just a matter of understanding that this is the result of God's sovereignty? Have you learned any lessons from it? Can you understand further how God holds sovereignty over all these things? What does God's sovereignty involve, specifically? What specific things manifest themselves in people that they should know and understand? Have you learned any lessons from the things that have happened around you? Can you accept them from God, and then gain something from this? Or do you muddle along thinking to yourself, "It's all the result of God's sovereignty, just submit to God, there's nothing in this that requires thinking about," letting it slip by while you think such simple thoughts? Which of those situations apply to you? Sometimes major events occur in the church, for example, in spreading the work of the gospel, unexpectedly good results are achieved, or there are some unexpected difficulties, ups and downs, obstacles, or even disruption and destruction from external forces. Sometimes something unusual happens in a certain church or among some people performing their duties. Whether in ordinary times or unusual times, have you ever contemplated these extraordinary things that happen? What final conclusion did you draw? Or is it that most of the time, you have no understanding at all? Some people just think about it inwardly, and then simply say a brief prayer, without even seeking the truth to gain some understanding of these things. They just admit that these things are from God, and that is the end of it. Isn't this going through the motions? Most people just muddle through. And when people of exceedingly poor caliber encounter these things, such people develop a great deal of incomprehension and confusion, and can easily develop notions and misunderstandings about God, and doubts about God's sovereignty and orchestration. People had no understanding of God to start with, and when they encounter some things that are at odds with their notions, they don't seek the truth or find people to fellowship with, but only treat them based on

their notions and imaginings, before finally coming to the conclusion that “whether these things are from God or not is still uncertain,” and they start to have misgivings about God, and even doubt His words. As a result, their doubts, speculations, and wariness of God become more and more serious, and they lose the motivation to perform their duties. They are unwilling to suffer and make sacrifices, and they slack off, muddling through each day as it comes. Having experienced a few particular incidents, what little enthusiasm, resolve, and desire they had beforehand has deserted them and vanished, and all that remains are thoughts of how to make their own plans for the future and seek their way out. Such people are not in the minority. Because people don’t love the truth and don’t seek it, whenever anything befalls them they view it with their own eyes, without ever learning to accept it from God. They don’t seek the truth in God’s words in order to find the answers, and they don’t seek out people who understand the truth to fellowship with and resolve these things. Instead, they always use their own knowledge and experience of dealing with the world to analyze and judge the things that befall them. And what is the end result? They trap themselves in an awkward state with nowhere to go—this is the consequence of not seeking the truth. Nothing happens by chance, everything is ruled over by God. Although people can understand and accept this in theory, how should people treat God’s sovereignty? This is the truth that people should pursue and understand, and they should specifically practice it. If people only acknowledge the sovereignty of God in theory, but do not have a real understanding of it, and their own notions and imaginings have not been resolved, then no matter for how many years they believe in God and how many things they experience, they will still not be able to gain the truth in the end. If people do not pursue the truth, they cannot know God’s work. The more things they experience, the more notions they will have about God, the more they will question Him and, of course, their speculations, misunderstanding, and wariness of God will become all the more serious. The fact is, everything that happens is the result of God’s sovereignty and arrangement. The purpose and significance of God’s doing all these things is not to increase your misunderstanding and doubts about Him, but to clear up and resolve your inner notions and imaginings as well as your doubts, misunderstanding, and wariness of God, as well as other such negative things. If you don’t resolve problems in a timely manner when they occur, once these problems within you accumulate and become increasingly serious, and your enthusiasm or resolve is already no longer sufficient to support you in the performance of your duties, you will collapse into negativity, even to the point that there is a danger of you leaving God, and you certainly cannot stand firm. Now, some people reluctantly make a token effort in performing their duties, but only in order to gain blessings, without pursuing the truth whatsoever, and they become negative whenever some difficulty befalls them. This is what people who don’t pursue the truth are like. Because they are not entirely clear about the truth of visions, and they don’t have a true understanding of God’s work, even if they do their duties and expend themselves for God, they don’t have strength in their

heart, and the little doctrine they understand cannot sustain them for long before they fall down. If people do not regularly gather, listen to sermons, or seek the truth to resolve their problems, they are unable to stand firm. Therefore, those who perform duties need to regularly fellowship on the truth, and whenever some matters befall them and they develop notions, they must fix this by seeking the truth in a timely manner. Only in this way can they be sure of staying loyal in the performance of their duty and being able to follow God to the very end.

The road of belief in God is rocky and uneven. This is ordained by God. No matter what happens, regardless of whether it is as people wish, or accords with their notions and imaginings, or is foreseeable to them, its happening cannot be dissevered from God's sovereignty and His orchestration. God's doing all that He does is significant in that it allows people to take a lesson from it and know God's sovereignty. The goal of knowing God's sovereignty is not that people should resist God, nor is it that people, having understood God, should have more power and capital with which to compete with Him. Rather, it is that when things befall them, people should learn to accept them from God, seek the truth to understand it, and then practice the truth to achieve true submission, and develop true faith in Him. Do you understand this? (Yes.) Well then, how do you put it into practice? Is your path of practice regarding such things correct? Do you treat each thing that befalls you with a heart of submission and an attitude of seeking the truth? If you are someone who pursues the truth, you will be possessed of such a mindset. Whatever befalls you, you will accept it from God, and you will go on to seek the truth, and grasp His will, and view people and things on the basis of His words. In all the things that befall you, you will be able to experience and know God's work, and capable of submission to Him. If you are not someone who pursues the truth, then no matter what befalls you, you will not deal with it according to God's words, nor will you seek the truth. You will just muddle through, without gaining any truths whatsoever as a result. God makes people perfect by arranging many things that do not conform to their notions, in order to train them to seek the truth, gain an understanding of His deeds, and see His almightiness and wisdom, so that their life gradually grows. Why is it that those who pursue the truth experience God's work, gain the truth and are perfected by God, whereas those who don't are cast out? It is because those who pursue the truth can seek it no matter what befalls them, so they have the work and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and can therefore practice the truth, enter into the reality of God's words, and be perfected by Him; whereas, those who do not love the truth see that God's work does not conform to their notions, and yet do not fix this by seeking the truth, and can even become negative and complain. Over time, their notions of God increase, and they start to doubt and deny Him. As a result, they are thrown off and cast out by God's work. That is why people's attitude toward the truth should be to seek it, practice it, and strive to meet God's requirements, rather than being negative and passive. To experience God's work, they must face many things, and view them all according to God's words, as well

as spending more time contemplating, seeking the truth and fellowshiping on it, so that they can know God's work and keep pace with it. Only this way can they understand the truth, and go deeper into it day by day, and only this way can God's words and every aspect of the truth take root in people. Experiencing God's work cannot be separated from real life, let alone from the environments of various people, matters, and things that God sets out, otherwise people will not be able to understand and gain the truth. Most people don't know how to experience God's work whenever a problem befalls them. They don't know how to seek the truth in order to resolve their notions and imaginings, or fix their mistaken understandings and preposterous views. As a result, despite experiencing many things, they cannot understand the truth and instead gain nothing—this is a waste of time. Whatever matter befalls them, ultimately what people should practice is to submit to God's orchestration and arrangements. This submission does not mean that people should submit negatively, passively, or as a last resort, but rather that they have a positive, proactive intention, and a path of practicing the truth. What does it mean to submit to God's orchestration and arrangements? It means that no matter what God arranges, no matter what matter befalls you, let God do it and learn to submit to Him. Don't have any desires or personal plans, and don't try to do things your own way. Everything that people like, pursue, and long for is preposterous and absurd. People disobey God too much. He asks people to go east, but they don't want to go east. Even if they reluctantly submit, they still inwardly think about going west. This is not true submission. True submission means that when God tells you to go east, you should go east, and abandon and dismiss all thoughts of going south, north or west, and be able to forsake the will of the flesh, and then go practice by following the path and direction that God has shown you. This is what submission means. What are the principles for practicing submission? They are to listen to God's words and submit, and to practice according to what God says. Don't harbor your own intentions, and you also cannot be capricious. Whether you understand God's words clearly or not, you should meekly go about putting them into practice, and doing things according to His requirements. From the process of practicing and experiencing, you will unconsciously come to understand the truth. If your mouth says that you submit to God, but you never let go and forsake your inner plans and desires, isn't this saying one thing and thinking another? (Yes.) This is not true submission. If you do not truly submit, you will have many requirements of God whenever things befall you, and inwardly you will be impatient for God to meet your requirements. If God doesn't do as you wish, you will feel very anguished and upset, you will suffer a great deal, and you will not be able to submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements and the environments that God has set out for you. Why is this? Because you always have your own requirements and wishes, and you cannot let go of your own personal ideas, and you want to be the one calling the shots. Therefore, whenever you encounter things that are at odds with your notions, you cannot submit, and it's hard for you to submit to God. Although people know in theory that they should submit to God

and let go of their own ideas, they just cannot let go of them, constantly fearing that they will be disadvantaged and incur losses. Tell Me, does this not put them in great difficulty? Does their anguish not then increase? (Yes.) If you can give up everything, and let go of the things that you like and demand but which are contrary to God's intentions, if you can proactively and willingly let go of them, and not set terms with God, but be willing to do what God requires, then the difficulty within you will be much smaller and the obstacles will be much smaller. If the obstacles to a person's submission to God are lessened, won't their anguish be lessened? As their anguish lessens, the suffering they are needlessly subjected to drastically lessens. Will you go and experience this way? Probably not yet. When some people see someone encountering difficulties, they immediately look out for themselves by putting themselves in that person's shoes. Whenever they see someone encountering some kind of anguish, sickness, tribulation, or calamity, they immediately think of themselves and wonder, "If this happened to me, what would I do? It turns out that believers can still encounter these things and suffer these torments. So exactly what kind of God is He? If God is so inconsiderate of that guy's feelings, will He treat me the same way? This shows that God is unreliable. At any place and any time, He sets up an unexpected environment for people, and can put them in embarrassing situations constantly, and in any circumstances." They are afraid that if they do not believe, they will not gain blessings, but that if they continue to believe, they will meet with disaster. In this way, when people pray before God, they merely say, "God, I beg You to bless me," and dare not say, "God, I ask that You test me, discipline me, and do as You will, I am willing to accept it"—they do not dare to pray like this. After experiencing a few setbacks and failures, people's resolve and courage lessen, and they have a different "understanding" of God's righteous disposition, His chastisement and judgment, and His sovereignty, and also develop a sense of wariness toward God. In this way, there is a wall, an estrangement, between people and God. Is it okay for people to have these states? (No.) So do these states tend to develop within you? Does it happen that you live in these states? (Yes.) How should such problems be resolved? Is it okay not to seek the truth? If you don't understand the truth and don't have faith, it will be difficult for you to follow God to the end, and you will fall down whenever you encounter disasters and calamities, whether natural or man-made.

After Job underwent a trial, he uttered the words: "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah has taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah" (Job 1:21). Nowadays many people learn to recite this sentence, and they do so articulately. But whenever they recite it, all they think about is that it is Jehovah who gives, yet they never think about what it will be like when Jehovah takes away, and what kind of anguish, difficulty and awkward predicament people will experience then, or how people's hearts will change with the environment. They have never given it a second thought, they just keep on reciting "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah has taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah," even to the point of using this sentence as a slogan and a doctrine that they trot out at every

opportunity. In everyone's mind, the only thing they can think about is all the graces, blessings, and promises that Jehovah bestows on people, but they never think—or cannot envision—what kind of scene will come to pass when Jehovah takes all these things away from them. Everyone who comes to believe in God is only ready to accept God's grace, blessings, and promises, and only willing to accept His kindness and compassion. Yet no one is waiting or preparing to accept God's chastisement and judgment, His trials and refinement, or His deprivation, and not a single person makes preparations to accept God's judgment and chastisement, His deprivation, or His curses. Is this relationship between people and God normal or abnormal? (Abnormal.) Why do you say that it's abnormal? Where does it fall short? It falls short in that people do not have the truth. It is because people have too many notions and imaginings, constantly misunderstand God, and do not fix these things by seeking the truth—this makes it most likely for problems to occur. In particular, people only believe in God for the sake of being blessed. They only want to strike a deal with God, and demand things from Him, but do not pursue the truth. This is very dangerous. As soon as they encounter something that is at odds with their notions, they immediately develop notions, grievances, and misunderstandings with respect to God, and can even go so far as to betray Him. Are the consequences of this serious? What path do most people walk in their faith in God? Though you may have listened to so many sermons and feel that you have come to understand quite a few truths, the fact is that you are still walking the path of believing in God only to eat your fill of bread. If your mind is already prepared to accept judgment and chastisement, trials and refinement, and you have also mentally prepared yourself to suffer disaster, and if, no matter how much you expend for God and how much of a sacrifice you make in performing your duty, you really did face the trials of Job, and God deprived you of all your property, even to the point that your life were about to end, what would you do then? How should you deal with God's sovereignty and arrangements? How should you deal with your duty? How should you deal with what God has entrusted to you? Do you have the correct understanding and the right attitude? Are these questions easy to answer or not? This is a great hurdle placed before you. Since it is a hurdle and a problem, should it not be resolved? (Yes.) How to resolve it? Is it easy to resolve? Supposing that, having believed in God for so many years, read so many of God's words, listened to so many sermons, and understood so many truths, you are already prepared to let God orchestrate everything, whether that be blessings or disaster. And supposing that, despite your forsaking and expending yourself, and the sacrifices you have made, and a lifetime of energy, all you get in return is God uttering curses at you, or depriving you. If, even then, you have no words of complaint, no desires or requirements of your own, but only seek to submit to God and to put yourself at the mercy of His orchestrations, and you feel that being able to have even a little understanding of and a little submission to God's sovereignty still makes your life worthwhile—if you have such a correct attitude, is it not then easy to resolve some of the

difficulties? Do you now have true knowledge of God's sovereignty and arrangements? Do you still have plans for your personal future and destiny deep within your heart? Can you leave everything behind and sincerely expend yourself for God? Have you spent time and energy carefully contemplating and thinking about these issues? Or have you experienced some things to achieve understanding of truths and know God's sovereignty? If you have never even thought about such a practical problem as how people who follow God should deal with His sovereignty and the Creator's orchestration and arrangements, which is also the biggest problem before you, and you don't realize that this is the biggest truth of visions, then if one day a major event or disaster were to happen, would you be able to stand firm in your testimony? It's hard to say, and it's still an unknown factor, is it not? (Yes.) Shouldn't this issue be thoroughly reflected on? (Yes.) So how can you have sufficient stature to face a future that you cannot foresee? How can you stand firm in your testimony within the environments that God sets out? Is this not an issue that should be seriously considered and pondered over? If you constantly think, "I am a good person by nature, and I have enjoyed a great deal of God's grace, blessings, and protection. When others encounter difficulty, they are in a helpless position, but whenever I encounter difficulty, I have God's provision, guidance, and help. Now, I am able to endure hardship and make sacrifices in performing my duty, my faith in God has grown stronger, and I am also fulfilling an important duty. I see that God is especially gracious to me, and I have His protection and blessing. If I keep this up, even if in the future I suffer some chastisement, judgment, trials, and refinement, I should be able to overcome them. In the end, I will definitely be one of those who are blessed, I will definitely be brought into the kingdom by God, and I will definitely see the day when God will be glorified!" How about thinking this way? You believe that you are different, that God shows you special favor, and that if God casts out or forsakes anyone, it won't be you. Are these thoughts right? (No.) Why are they not right? (It is not objective to think this way.) Do these words amount to true knowledge of God? Or is this being too subjective and speculative? Are people who have these thoughts people who pursue the truth? (No.) So can they truly submit to God? (No.) Are they ready to accept God's chastisement, judgment, trials and refinement, and even His curses? (No.) What will they do when God's chastisement and judgment, trials and refinement really happen to them? Will they develop notions or complain about God? Can they accept these things from God and truly submit? (No.) It would be hard to achieve, to say the very least. This is because they believe in God only to seek grace or to eat their fill of bread. They do not know that God also has wrath and majesty, and that God's disposition cannot be offended. God treats everyone fairly, and when it comes to any created being, God's disposition is compassion and love, but also majesty and wrath. In God's dealings with each person, the compassion, love, majesty, and wrath in His righteous disposition are unchanging. God will never show compassion and love only to some people, and majesty and wrath only to others. God will never do this, because He is a righteous God,

and He is fair to everyone. God's compassion, love, majesty, and wrath exist for any person. He can bestow grace and blessings on people, and can give them protection. At the same time, God can also judge and chastise people, curse them, and take away all that He has given them. God can give to people, but He can also take everything away from them. This is God's disposition, and this is what He must do with every person. Therefore, if you think, "I am precious in God's eyes, like the apple of His eye. He absolutely cannot bear to chastise and judge me, and He absolutely will not have the heart to take away everything that He has given to me, lest I be upset and distressed," is this thinking not mistaken? Is this not a notion about God? (Yes.) So, before you come to understand these truths, do you not think only about enjoying God's grace, compassion, and love? As a result, you keep forgetting that God also has majesty and wrath. Though your lips say that God is righteous, and you are able to thank and praise God when He shows you compassion and love, whenever God shows majesty and wrath in chastising and judging you, you feel very upset. "If only such a God didn't exist," you think. "If only it wasn't God who did this, if only God wasn't targeting me, if only this wasn't God's intention, if only these things were done to others. Because I am a kind-hearted person, and I have done nothing bad, and I have paid a heavy price for believing in God for many years, God should not be so merciless. I should be entitled and qualified to enjoy God's compassion and love, as well as God's abundant grace and blessings. God will not judge or chastise me, and neither does He have the heart to do it." Is this just wishful and wrong thinking? (Yes.) In what way is it wrong? What's wrong here is that you don't regard yourself as a created being, as a member of created humanity. You mistakenly detach yourself from created humanity and regard yourself as belonging to a special group or type of created being, bestowing special status on yourself. Is this not arrogant and self-righteous? Is this not unreasonable? Is this a person who truly submits to God? (No.) Absolutely not.

In God's family, among brothers and sisters, no matter how high your status or standing, or how important your duty, and no matter how great your talent and contributions, or how long you have believed in God, in the eyes of God you are a created being, an ordinary created being, and the noble titles and appellations you have bestowed on yourself do not exist. If you always regard them as crowns, or as capital that enables you to belong to a special group or be a special personage, then by doing this you resist and conflict with God's views, and are incompatible with God. What will be the consequences of this? Will it cause you to resist the duties that a created being should perform? In the eyes of God, you are but a created being, but do not regard yourself as one. Can you truly submit to God with such a mindset? You always think wishfully, "God shouldn't treat me like this, He could never treat me like this." Does this not create a conflict with God? When God acts at odds with your notions, your mentality, and your needs, what will you think in your heart? How will you deal with the environments God has arranged for you? Will you submit? (No.) You will not submit, and

you will certainly resist, oppose, grumble, and complain, puzzling over it again and again in your heart, thinking “But God used to protect me and treat me graciously. Why has He changed now? I can’t live anymore!” So you start being petulant and acting up. If, at home, you behaved like this toward your parents, it would be excusable and they wouldn’t do anything to you. But it’s not acceptable in God’s house. Because you are an adult and a believer, even other people won’t stand for your nonsense—do you think God would tolerate such behavior? Will He condone you doing this to Him? No, He won’t. Why won’t He? God is not your parent, He is God, He is the Creator, and the Creator would never allow a created being to be petulant and unreasonable or to throw tantrums in front of Him. When God chastises and judges you, tests you, or takes away from you, when He places you in adversity, He wants to see a created being’s attitude in how they treat the Creator, He wants to see what kind of path a created being chooses, and He will never allow you to be petulant and unreasonable, or to spout preposterous justifications. After understanding these things, shouldn’t people think about how they should deal with everything that the Creator does? First of all, people should assume their proper places as created beings and acknowledge their identity as created beings. Can you acknowledge that you are a created being? If you can acknowledge it, then you should assume your proper place as a created being and submit to the Creator’s arrangements, and even if you suffer a little, you do so without complaint. This is what it means to be someone with sense. If you do not think you are a created being, but reckon that you have titles and a halo over your head, and that you are a person of status, a great leader, conductor, editor, or director in God’s family, and that you are someone who has made worthy contributions to the work of God’s family—if that is what you think, then you are a most unreasonable and brazenly shameless person. Are you people with status, standing, and worth? (We are not.) Then what are you? (I am a created being.) That’s right, you are just an ordinary created being. Among people, you can flaunt your qualifications, play the seniority card, brag about your contributions, or talk about your heroic exploits. But before God, these things do not exist, and you must never talk about them, or show them off, or assume the airs of an old hand. Things will go awry if you flaunt your qualifications. God will regard you as utterly unreasonable and arrogant to the extreme. He will be repulsed and disgusted by you, and sideline you, and you will be in trouble then. You must first acknowledge your identity and standing as a created being. No matter your status among others, or how distinguished your standing, or what advantages you have, or whether God has given you some kind of special talent, so that you can enjoy an ample sense of superiority among people—when you come before God, these things have no value or significance. Therefore, you must not show off, but instead be a created being meekly before God. Before God, you are just a member of created humanity. No matter how renowned you are, how gifted or talented you are, and no matter how great your endeavors among people, before God these things are not worth mentioning, let alone showing off, and you should just assume your proper place

as a created being. This is the first thing. The second thing is not to seek only to enjoy God's grace and blessings while inwardly resisting and rejecting God's chastisement and judgment, or fearing God's trials and refinement for you. These fears and resistance are all to no avail. Some people say: "If I am willing to accept God's judgment, chastisement, trials and refinement, can I then be spared these sufferings?" God does not do all these things according to whether you like them or not, or according to your subjective wish or your choice, but according to His will, His thoughts, and His plans. Therefore, as a created being, in addition to accepting God's grace and blessings, you must also be able to truly accept and experience in your heart the chastisement, judgment, trials and refinement of God's words. There are some people who will say: "Do You mean that God's grace can be bestowed on people anywhere and at any time, but that God's chastisement, judgment, trials, refinement, and calamities can also fall on people anywhere and at any time?" Do you think that God's chastisement, judgment, trials and refinement would befall people arbitrarily, making it impossible for them to guard against? (They would not.) Absolutely not, that is not the case at all. Corrupt human beings are not worthy of God's judgment and chastisement—this is something you should be aware of. But you must understand that God's revealing and exposing you, disciplining, chastening and chastising you, and His judgment, trials and refinement, and even cursing of you are based on your stature, your circumstances, and of course your personal pursuits. If God approves of you, then His judgment, chastisement, trials and refinement will befall you at the appropriate time. Over the course of your belief in God, His blessings and grace accompany you at all times and in all places, as will His revelations, chastening, discipline, chastisement and judgment, trials and refinement, and so on. Of course, at all times and in all places means in just measure, at the right time, and based on God's plan. It doesn't happen to people arbitrarily, and it doesn't mean that a major calamity will suddenly befall people as soon as they stop being careful. It's not like that at all. If you do not have a certain stature and God hasn't yet planned to do anything with you, do not worry, you might only be accompanied by God's grace, blessing, and presence in your life. If you do not have sufficient stature, or you are particularly resistant and afraid of God's chastisement, judgment, trials, and refinement, then God will not force things on you against your will, so you need not worry about this. Regardless of whether these things happen or not, people should know God's work and understand His will. Only with an accurate knowledge of God's words can people have a correct attitude, a normal state, and be able to properly face whatever befalls them. Are you now ready to accept God's chastisement, judgment, trials and refinement? Are you willing to accept? (We are.) Your mouths say yes, but you are still very scared in your hearts. If, right after saying yes, a calamity suddenly descended on you out of the blue, how would you deal with it? Would you burst into tears? Would you be afraid of death? Would you worry that you won't be blessed? Would you worry that you won't be able to see the day when God will be glorified? These are all problems that

people face when things befall them. In short, if one wishes to stand firm amid trials and tribulations, one must be possessed of two things. Firstly, assume your proper place as a created being. You should be clear in your heart that you are an ordinary created being, an ordinary person among corrupt humanity, nothing extraordinary or special, and you should assume your proper place as a created being. Secondly, have a sincere heart that submits to God, and be ready at all times to accept blessings and grace from God, as well as accepting chastisement, judgment, and trials and refinement from Him. As Job said, “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” (Job 2:10), and “Jehovah gave, and Jehovah has taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah” (Job 1:21). This is a fact, and it is a fact that will never change. You understand, don’t you? (Yes.) If you are possessed of these two things, you will basically be able to stand firm and get through general calamities and tribulations. Although you may not be able to bear strong and resounding testimony, at the very least you will be unlikely to go astray, stumble, or do something treacherous. Are you not then secure? (Yes.) Then you should practice according to these two things, and see whether it is easy to achieve, and whether you can accept them deep within your heart. Once you know these things, then when you encounter some trials, how differently you will view and understand them is your own business. Here ends our fellowship on this topic.

With regard to sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture, which sayings did we fellowship on last time? (We fellowshiped on three sayings, “The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring,” “Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire,” and “I’d take a bullet for a friend.”) Last time, we fellowshiped on these three requirements and sayings about moral conduct, and also about the essence of sayings on moral conduct. What did we fellowship on regarding the essence of sayings on moral conduct? (God talked about the differences between sayings on moral conduct and the truth. Sayings on moral conduct only restrict people’s behavior and make them abide by rules alone, whereas the truth of God’s words tells people the truth principles that they should understand, and points out some paths of practice for them, so that they have principles and a direction to their practice whenever things befall them. These are the aspects in which sayings on moral conduct differ from the truth.) Last time, we fellowshiped that sayings about moral conduct mainly require people to abide by certain practices and rules, and place more emphasis on using rules to restrict people’s behavior. Whereas, God’s requirements on people mainly point out paths of practice for them based on what normal humanity can achieve, and these wide-ranging paths of practice are called principles. This means that, whenever a problem befalls you, God will tell you the precise and positive path of practice, and tell you the principles, goals, and direction for your practice. He does not want you to abide by rules, but to adhere to these principles. This way, people live out the truth reality, and the path they walk will be correct. Today let us look further at what other problems of an essential nature there are with sayings about moral conduct. Many sayings about moral conduct

not only confine people's thoughts, but also confuse and benumb their thinking. At the same time, there are some more radical sayings that claim people's lives. For example, the lurid saying in our last fellowship, "I'd take a bullet for a friend," not only controls and confines people's thoughts, but also claims their lives, by making them not only unable to cherish their own lives, but also prone to impetuously giving up their lives for arbitrary reasons, in an impulsive and careless way. Is this not claiming people's lives? (Yes.) Before people have even understood what life is all about, and found the right path in life, they arbitrarily give it up for a so-called friend in return for the slightest modicum of kindness, and regard their own life as being so very base and worthless. This is the consequence of a kind of thinking that traditional culture teaches people. Looking at how the sayings about moral conduct can confine people's thoughts, there is not one positive thing about them, and looking at how they arbitrarily claim people's lives, they certainly do not have positive effects or benefits on people. In addition, people are deceived and benumbed by these ideas. For the sake of their own vanity and pride, and in order not to be condemned by public opinion, they are forced to act according to requirements for moral conduct. People have already become completely bound, constrained, and fettered by these various sayings and ideas about moral conduct, leaving them no other choice. Humankind is willing to live under the fetters of sayings on moral conduct and has no free choice solely for the purposes of living a more respectable life, looking good in front of others, being highly regarded and getting favorable comments from people, as well as to avoid being the target of backbiting, and to bring honor to their family. Looking at these ideas and views of people, as well as these phenomena whereby they are controlled by sayings about moral conduct, although to a certain extent such sayings restrict and constrain human behavior, to a significant extent they conceal the fact that Satan corrupts people, and the fact that people have corrupt dispositions and satanic natures. They use outward behavior to cover people up so that they outwardly live respectable, cultured, elegant, kindhearted, distinguished, and honorable lives. Therefore, others can only determine what kind of person they are—whether they are honorable or lowly, good or evil—through their outward behavior. Under such circumstances, everyone gages and judges whether someone is good or bad based on the various requirements about moral conduct, yet no one can see through people's superficial moral conduct to their corrupt essence, nor are they able to see clearly all the various insidiousness and viciousness hidden behind the veneer of moral conduct. In this way, people use moral conduct as a cloak to conceal their corrupt essence to a greater extent. For example, a woman is outwardly virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, receiving praise and admiration from the people around her. She is properly behaved, well-mannered, especially forbearing in her interactions with others, does not bear grudges, is dutiful to her parents, attends to her husband and raises her children, can endure hardships, and is considered a role model for other women. No problems can be detected from her outward appearance, but no one knows what or how she thinks deep

down. She never says what her desires and ambitions are, nor does she dare to say. Why doesn't she dare to say? Because she wants to comport herself as a woman who is virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral. If she truly opens up and exposes her heart and her ugliness, then she will not be able to be a virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral woman, and will even be criticized and scorned by others, so she can only conceal and window-dress herself. Being under the concealment of this outward behavior of being virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral means that people only see her good deeds and praise her, and thereby she has achieved her aim. But no matter how she disguises herself and deceives others, is she really as good as people make her out to be? Absolutely not. Does she actually have a corrupt disposition? Does she have the essence of corruption? Is she deceitful? Arrogant? Intransigent? Wicked? (Yes.) She certainly is these things, but they are all concealed—this is a fact. Some Chinese historical figures are revered as ancient saints and sages. What is the basis for making this assertion? They are praised as saints and sages solely on the basis of some limited, unsubstantiated records and legends. The fact is, no one knows what exactly their underlying actions and conduct were. Do you have a thorough understanding of these problems now? Some of you should have a somewhat thorough understanding, because you have listened to so many sermons, and seen quite clearly the essence and truth of human corruption. As long as people comprehend some truths, they are able to gain a thorough understanding of some people, matters, and things. Will a virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral woman—no matter how exemplary her outward behavior and moral conduct, and no matter how well she disguises and window-dresses herself—reveal her arrogant disposition? (Yes.) Absolutely she will. So does she have an intransigent disposition? (Yes.) She thinks she is in the right and feels that she is virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, and that she is a good person, which proves that she is very self-righteous and also very intransigent. The fact is that deep down, she recognizes her true self and what shortcomings she has, but she can still trumpet her own virtues. Is this not intransigence? Is this not arrogance? In addition, her proclaiming herself to be a virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral person is entirely for the sake of leaving behind a good reputation and bringing honor to her family. Aren't such thoughts and pursuits preposterous and wicked? She is complimented by people and earns a good name, but deep down she constantly hides her intentions, thoughts, and the shameful things she has done, and says nothing of them to anyone. She is afraid that once people see through her, they will pass comment on her, judge her, and reject her. What disposition is this? Is it not deceitful? (Yes.) So, no matter how proper and respectable her outward behavior, or how honorable her moral conduct, her corrupt disposition does indeed exist, it's just that unbelievers who have never heard God's words and do not understand the truth cannot perceive or know this. She may be able to deceive unbelievers, but she cannot deceive those who believe in God and who understand the truth. Is this not so? (Yes.) This is because she has been subjected to Satan's corruption, and she has a corrupt disposition and a corrupt essence. This is a

fact. No matter how exemplary her moral conduct, or how high a standard she attains, the fact that she has a corrupt disposition is undeniable and immutable. Once people understand the truth, they will be able to discern her for what she is. However, Satan exploits these sayings about moral conduct to deceive human beings, and of course also to benumb and confine their thoughts, making them mistakenly think that if they meet these requirements and standards of moral conduct, they are good people and are walking the right path. In fact the opposite is true. Even if some people exhibit some good behaviors that are in accordance with sayings on moral conduct, they have not embarked on the right path in life. Instead, they have embarked on the wrong path and are living in sin. They have embarked down the path of hypocrisy, and fallen into Satan's net. This is because the corrupt dispositions and corrupt essence of human beings will not be changed in the slightest solely on account of their having some good moral conduct. Outward moral conduct is just decoration, it's just for show, and their true nature and true disposition will still be revealed. Satan sets out to restrict and control people through their behavior and outward appearance, making people disguise themselves and window-dress themselves by means of good behavior, while at the same time using people's good behavior to conceal the fact that Satan has corrupted humankind, and of course, to also conceal the fact that people have corrupt dispositions. Satan's aim is, in one sense, to subject people to the control of these sayings on moral conduct, in order to make them do more good deeds and fewer bad deeds, and certainly not do things that are opposed to the ruling class. This further benefits the ruling class's dominion and control over humankind. In another sense, after human beings accept these sayings on moral conduct as a theoretical basis for their comportment and actions, they tend to distance themselves from and resist the truth and positive things. Of course, when it comes to the words spoken by God, and the positive things or truths that God teaches people, it then becomes a struggle for them to understand and comprehend, or they may develop all sorts of resistances and notions. Once people are possessed of these ideas on moral conduct, it tends to become more difficult for them to accept God's words and the truth, and of course it also becomes more difficult for them to understand corrupt dispositions and to change them. Therefore, all the various sayings and ideas about moral conduct have obstructed people's acceptance and understanding of God's words to a significant extent, and of course they have also impacted on the extent to which people accept the truth. Satan uses the method of indoctrinating people with sayings on moral conduct to make them come up with all sorts of improper and negative ideas and viewpoints, so that they view people and things, and comport themselves and act based on these ideas and viewpoints. When people adopt the ideas behind these sayings on moral conduct as a theoretical basis and standard for their views on people and things, and their comportment and actions, their corrupt dispositions not only cannot be alleviated or changed, but on the contrary, will to some extent become even more severe, and their disobedience and resistance to God will become even worse.

Therefore, when God saves people, when God's words are provided to them, the biggest obstacle is not people's corrupt dispositions, but the various satanic philosophies, sayings on moral conduct, and the various satanic ideas and views that come from Satan. This is a consequence of Satan's corruption of humankind, and it is also the negative impact that the various sayings on moral conduct have on corrupt humans. This is the real aim that Satan wants to achieve by preaching and advocating sayings on moral conduct.

In our last gathering we mainly fellowshiped on three sayings on moral conduct, namely "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring," "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," and "I'd take a bullet for a friend." Today we will fellowship on "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force." This saying on moral conduct has also appeared among humankind, having come from the ideas and views of corrupted human beings. Of course, it more precisely originates from Satan's corruption and deception of humankind. It has the same effect and nature as the sayings about moral conduct that we fellowshiped on previously, albeit with a different approach. They are similarly bold and grandiose statements, so fervent, impassioned, and heroic. If people had never heard God's words and did not understand the truth, they would feel that these statements are so very soul-stirring and set the blood pumping. After hearing these words, they would instantly be empowered and clench their fists. They wouldn't be able to sit still any longer or contain their mood of inner excitement, and would feel that this is what Chinese culture and the spirit of dragons is about. Do you still feel this way now? (No.) How do you feel on hearing these words now? (Now I feel that these words are not good or positive.) Why do you feel differently now compared with before? Is it because once people get older and have been through so much suffering, they lose their youthful and brash vigor? Or is it because once people have come to understand some truths, they can discern that these sayings on moral conduct are too hollow, unrealistic, and useless? (It's mainly that these sayings do not accord with the truth and are impractical.) Indeed, these sayings on moral conduct are too hollow and unrealistic. So, as for the saying on moral conduct "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force," let us analyze and dissect what is wrong with it, considering the principles we previously fellowshiped on, in order to specifically expose the absurdity of this saying and the cunning schemes of Satan that are hidden therein. Do you know how to dissect it? Tell Me about what the meaning of this sentence is exactly. (These are the three criteria proposed by Mencius for becoming a manly, virile man. The modern interpretation is: Glory and riches cannot disturb one's resolve, poverty and lowly circumstances cannot change one's strong will, and the threat of power and violence cannot make one submit.) The saying on moral conduct that we mentioned before—"A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral"—is aimed at women, but this one is obviously aimed at men. Whether it is a life of glory and riches, or impoverished

circumstances, or being confronted with power and violence, requirements are placed on men in all sorts of environments. How many requirements are placed on men, in total? Men are required to have a strong will, inexorable resolve, and be unyielding in the face of power and violence. Think about whether these requirements that are put forward have regard to normal humanity, and whether they regard the real-life environments in which people live. In other words, think about whether these requirements placed on men are hollow and unrealistic. The requirements of traditional culture for women's moral conduct are that a woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral; "virtuous" means possessing feminine virtues, "kind" means being kind-hearted, "gentle" means being a gentlewoman, and "moral" means being a moral person and having good moral conduct. Each of these requirements is so moderate. Men don't need to be virtuous, kind, gentle, or moral, whereas women don't need to have a strong will and inexorable resolve, and can yield whenever they are confronted with power and violence. That is to say, this requirement about moral conduct, "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force," gives sufficient leeway to women, insofar as it is especially tolerant and considerate toward them. What is the meaning of this tolerance and consideration? Can they be understood differently? (They are a form of discrimination.) I think so too. The fact is that this is discrimination against women, the belief that women don't have strong willpower, that they are cowardly, shrinking violets, and that it's enough to expect them to bear children, attend to their husbands and raise their children, take care of housework, and not quarrel with others or gossip. It would be impossible to require them to carve out a career and have a strong will—they're incapable of that. So, looking from another perspective, these requirements for women are downright discriminatory and demeaning. This saying about moral conduct, "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force," is aimed at men. It requires men to have a strong will and an unstoppable resolve, as well as a manly, virile spirit that does not yield to power and violence. Is this requirement correct? Is it reasonable? These requirements toward men show that the person who proposed this saying on moral conduct thinks highly of men, because their requirements toward men are higher than those toward women. This can be understood to mean that, in light of both the essence of their gender, and their social status and male instincts, men should be above women. Was this saying on moral conduct formulated from this perspective? (Yes.) Clearly, this is the product of a society in which men and women are unequal. In this society, men continue to discriminate against and demean women, narrow the ambit of women's lives, ignore the value of women's existence, constantly exaggerate their own value, enhance their own social status, and let their own rights override those of women. What are the effects and consequences of this in society? This society is ruled over and dominated by men. It is a patriarchal society, in which women should be under the leadership, suppression, and control of men. At the same time, men can engage in any line of work, whereas the range of occupations that

women can undertake should be reduced and restricted. Men should fully enjoy all rights in society, whereas the scope of rights enjoyed by women is decidedly limited. Jobs that men don't want or choose to do, or which they would be discriminated against for doing, can be left for women to do. For example, doing the laundry, cooking, service industries, and some occupations with fairly low incomes and lowly social status or which people discriminate against, are reserved for women. In other words, men can enjoy their rights as men to the full, in terms of choice of occupation and social status, and enjoy the special rights that society bestows on men. In such a society, men come first whereas women are second-class, even to the point that they have no leeway to make choices at all, nor even the right to choose. They can only passively wait to be chosen, and in the end are cast out and discarded by this society. Therefore, this society's requirements on women are relatively moderate, whereas the requirements on men are relatively strict and harsh. However, whether they are targeted at men or women, the motive and aim in proposing these requirements for moral conduct is to make people better serve society, the nation, the country, and of course ultimately serve the ruling class and the rulers. It is easy to see from this saying "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force" that the person who proposed this requirement for moral conduct is biased against men. In that person's eyes, men must have a strong will, an inexorable resolve, and a spirit that does not yield to power and violence. From these requirements, can you see what the aim of the person who proposed this saying was? It was to make the useful men and strong-willed men in this society better able to serve society, the nation, and the country, and ultimately able to better serve those in power, and to bring the value and function of men in this society to bear. Only men like this can be called manly and virile. If men fail to meet these requirements, then in the eyes of these moralists and rulers, they are not called manly and virile, but can only be called mediocre people and pariahs and are discriminated against. That is to say, if a man does not have a strong will, inexorable resolve, and a spirit that does not yield to power and violence as they require, but is just an ordinary, mediocre person with no accomplishments, and can only live his own life, and cannot contribute his value to society, to the nation, and to the country, and cannot be assigned to some important position by the rulers, country or nation, then such a person will not be accepted and valued by society, nor will he be valued by those in power, and he will be regarded by the rulers or these moralists as a mediocre person, a pariah, and a degenerate among men. Is this not the case? (Yes.) Do you agree with this saying? Is this saying appropriate? Is it fair to men? (No, unfair.) Must men set their sights on the whole world, the country, and great undertakings for the nation? Can they not just be ordinary, dutiful men? Can they not cry, be lovesick, harbor selfish motives in small ways, or lead a simple life in the company of their loved ones? Must they have the world in their sights to be described as manly and virile? Must they be called manly and virile to be considered men at all? Is the definition of a man that you must be manly and virile? (No.)

These ideas are an insult to men, they are tantamount to a personal attack on men. Do any of you feel the same way? (Yes.) Is it okay for men to not have a strong will? Is it okay for men to not have an inexorable resolve? When men come up against power and violence, is it okay for them to yield and seek compromise in order to survive? (Yes, it is.) Is it also okay for men to not have whatever women do not have? Is it okay for men to give themselves a break by not being manly and virile, but just being ordinary men? (Yes, it is.) That way, people will be liberated, the path to being a man will be broadened, and men will not be so tired in life, but can live normally.

There are still quite a few countries where ideas of traditional culture such as “One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force” confine men. These countries are still patriarchal societies in which men call the shots, and reign supreme from the family to society and the country at large, and take priority across the board, and win out in every situation, and have an all-round sense of superiority. At the same time, such societies, nations, and countries have high requirements for men, which puts great pressure on them and gives rise to many adverse consequences. Some men who lose their job daren’t even tell their families. Day after day they shoulder their bag and pretend to go to work, but they actually go out and traipse the streets. Sometimes they come home late at night and even lie to their family members that they’ve been doing overtime at the office. Then the next day, they keep up the pretense by going back out to pace the streets. These ideas of traditional culture, as well as men’s social responsibilities and positioning in society, are a source of pressure and even humiliation, and also distort men’s humanity, causing many men to feel fretful, depressed, and often on the verge of a breakdown whenever they are beset by difficulties. Why is this the case? Because they think that they are men, that men should earn money to support their family, that they should fulfill their responsibilities as men, and that men should not cry or be sad, and that men should not be unemployed, but should be pillars of society, and the backbone of the family. Just as unbelievers say, “Men do not shed tears easily,” a man should not have weaknesses, nor any shortcomings. These ideas and views are caused by men being wrongly pigeonholed by moralists, as well as by them continually elevating men’s status. These ideas and views not only subject men to all sorts of trouble, vexation, and anguish, but also become shackles within their minds, making their position, situation and encounters in society increasingly awkward. As the pressure on men increases, so too do the negative effects of these ideas and views on men. Some men even pigeonhole themselves as great men due to the misinterpretation of the male sex’s positioning in society, thinking that males are great men and females are little women, and that men must therefore take the lead in everything and be the masters of the house, and that when things don’t work out, they can commit domestic violence against women. These problems all relate to the way that the male sex is wrongly pigeonholed by humankind, is this not so? (Yes.) You can see that in most countries of the world, the social status of men is higher than that of women, especially in the family.

Men don’t have to do anything but go to work and earn money, while women do all the household chores, and can’t argue or complain, or dare tell others about it, no matter how tiring or arduous it is. To what degree is women’s status low? For example, men get first pick of the tastiest food on the dining table, whereas women come second, and in household registration booklets the man is marked as the head of the household, and the woman as a family member. Just from these trivial matters, we can see the disparity in status between men and women. The division of labor between men and women is different because of gender differences, but is it not unfair that the disparity of men’s and women’s status in the family is so huge? Is this not caused by education in traditional culture? In society, not only do women think that men are more distinguished and noble, but even men think that they are noble and high-ranking compared with women, because men can create more value and put their capabilities to greater effect in society, the nation, and the country, whereas women cannot. Is this not distorting the facts? How did such a distortion of the facts come about? Is it directly related to the inculcation and influence of societal education and traditional culture? (Yes.) It is directly related to the education of traditional culture. Among humankind, whether in real society, or in a nation or country, no matter what aberrant problems appear, they are all caused by a few incorrect ideas advocated by a handful of sociologists or rulers, and are directly related to the incorrect ideas advocated by the leaders of a society, nation, or country. If the ideas and views they advocate are more positive, and close to the truth, then there will be relatively fewer problems among humankind; if the ideas they advocate are biased, errant and distort humanity, then many aberrant things will happen within society, within an ethnic group, or within a country. If sociologists advocate men’s rights, elevate the value of men, and play down the value and dignity of women, then in this society, there will obviously be a huge disparity in social status between men and women, accompanied by various inequalities such as inequality of occupation, social status, and social welfare, as well as a huge disparity in the status of the sexes in the family and a completely different division of labor—all of which is aberrant. The emergence of these aberrant problems is related to the people who advocate these ideas and views, and caused by these politicians and sociologists. If humankind had correct viewpoints and correct sayings on these matters from the outset, then there would be a relative reduction of these aberrant problems in the various countries or nations.

In the light of what we fellowshiped on just now, what should be the correct viewpoint for treating men? What kind of behaviors, humanity, pursuits, and social status should men have in order to be normal? How should men approach their social responsibilities? Besides gender differences, should there be differences between men and women in terms of their social responsibility and social status? (No, there shouldn’t.) So how should men be treated in a way that is correct, objective, humane, and in line with the truth principles? This is precisely what we should understand right now. Let’s talk, then, about how exactly men should be treated. Should the social responsibilities of men and

women be differentiated? Should men and women have equal social status? Is it fair to unduly elevate the status of men and play down women? (No, it is unfair.) So, how exactly should the social status of men and women be handled in a way that is fair and rational? What is the principle for this? (That men and women are equal and should be treated fairly.) Fair treatment is the theoretical basis, but how should it be put into practice in a way that reflects fairness and rationality? Does this not have something to do with practical problems? First of all, we must determine that the status of men and women is equal—this is indisputable. Therefore, the social division of labor between men and women should also be equal, and should be considered and arranged according to their caliber and ability to do the job. There should be equality particularly when it comes to human rights, insofar as women should also enjoy that which men can enjoy, in order to ensure equal status between men and women in society. Whoever can do the job, or whoever is competent to be the leader should be allowed to do it, regardless of whether they are a man or woman. What do you think of this principle? (Good.) This reflects equality between men and women. For example, if there are two men and two women applying for a job as a firefighter, who should be hired? Fair treatment is the theoretical basis and the principle. How, then, should one actually go about it? As I said just now, let whoever is up to the job do it, according to their ability and caliber. Just make a selection according to this principle, by seeing who among these candidates is physically fit and not clumsy. Firefighting is all about acting quickly in an emergency. If you are too clumsy, dull-witted, and sluggish, like a tortoise or an old cow, you will delay things. After ascertaining each candidate's characteristics, in terms of their caliber, abilities, experience, degree of competence in firefighting work, and so on, the conclusion arrived at is that one man and one woman are quite suitable: The man is tall, physically strong, has firefighting experience, and has participated in several firefighting and rescue operations; the woman is agile, has undergone rigorous training, is knowledgeable about firefighting and related work procedures, has caliber, and has distinguished herself in other jobs and received awards. So, in the end, both of them are chosen. Is that right? (Yes.) This is called choosing the best of the best, without showing favor to anyone. This means, when selecting this type of person, not having a rule in mind that they must be male or female—men and women are all the same, and whoever is up to the job will do. Therefore, when deciding whether to select a man or a woman to do anything, besides the overriding principle of fair treatment, the specific principle to put into practice is to let whoever is capable and up to the job do it, regardless of whether they are male or female. By doing this, you are no longer constrained or bound by the idea that "Men are superior to women," and no outdated ideas will affect your judgment or choice on this matter. From your point of view, whoever is up to the job should be allowed to do it, regardless of whether they are male or female—is that not being fair? First and foremost, when handling a matter, you have no prejudice against men or women. You believe that there are many outstanding and talented women, and you know quite a few such individuals.

Therefore, your insight convinces you that women's ability to work is not inferior to that of men, and that the value women bring to bear in society is no less than that of men. Once you have this insight and understanding, you will make accurate judgments and choices based on this fact whenever you act in future. In other words, if you don't show favor to anyone, and don't have any gender bias, then your humanity will be relatively normal in this respect, and you can act fairly. The prohibitions of traditional culture, in the sense that men are regarded as superior to women, will be lifted, your thoughts will no longer be confined, and you will no longer be influenced by this aspect of traditional culture. No matter the prevailing trends of thought or conventions in society, in short you will have already transcended these conventions, and will no longer be confined and influenced by them, and can face the facts and the truth. Even better than that, of course, is that you can view people and things, comport yourself, and act according to God's words and the truth principles, with the result that ideas and views such as "men must be manly and virile, whereas women are shrinking violets" do not exist as far as you are concerned. So, are your thoughts and views relatively progressive among human beings? (Yes.) This is progress, relatively speaking. Whether male or female, old or young, everyone can receive fair treatment when they come to you. This is, in effect, edifying people rather than harming them. If you still cling to the views of traditional culture, by claiming that "Since ancient times, men have had higher status than women, and in all walks of life there are more outstanding and talented men than women. Therefore, it can be asserted that men are stronger than women, and that men's value to society is greater than that of women. If their value to society is greater, shouldn't their social status be higher? Therefore, in this society, men should have the final say and assume the position of dominance, whereas women should listen to men, and be regulated and ruled by them"—then this kind of thinking is too backward and decadent, and does not conform to the truth principles in the slightest. If you do have ideas and views such as this, you can only discriminate against and suppress women, and will be condemned and cast out by social trends. Equality between men and women is a correct viewpoint that is already universally recognized, and it is completely in line with God's will. People should be treated fairly, men should not be looked up to, women should not be looked down upon, and women's value should not be ignored, nor should their work ability and caliber be ignored. This is already the basic consensus among the informed populace of every country. If your dominant ideas are still influenced by traditional culture, and you still feel that men are distinguished whereas women are lowly, then whenever you act, your vision and your choices will be predisposed toward the male sex, and you will give men relatively more opportunities. You will think that even if some men are a little less competent, they are still stronger than women, and that women cannot match up to or achieve what men can do. If you think this way, your point of view will be biased, and your judgment and final decisions will be consequently skewed due to your way of thinking. For example, regarding the selection of firefighters we just

mentioned, you puzzle over it, wondering “Can women climb ladders? How much can women do? What use is agility in a woman? Even if she’s been through rigorous training, it’s of no use at all.” But then you think about treating people fairly, so you finally select two men and one woman. The fact is that by choosing one woman in this case, you are going through the motions and making a token gesture to appease the woman and salvage her pride. How about this way of doing things? Not only do you select people in this way, but when assigning work, you adopt a viewpoint that underestimates the woman, even assigning her menial and light tasks. You still think that you have the human touch and that you are taking care of the woman by giving her preferential treatment, and protecting her. The fact is that from the woman’s point of view, you have greatly hurt her self-esteem. How have you hurt it? Because you think that women are weak and vulnerable, that women are shrinking violets and men are manly, so women should be protected. How did these ideas come about? Is it due to the influence of traditional culture? (Yes.) Herein lies the root cause. No matter what you say about treating people fairly, looking at it from your actions, you are undeniably still fettered and confined by this idea in traditional culture that “Men are superior to women.” It is clear to see from your actions that you have not rid yourself of this idea. Is that so? (Yes.) If you want to rid yourself of these fetters, you must seek the truth, understand completely the essence of these ideas, and not act under the influence or control of these ideas of traditional culture. You should abandon and forsake them once and for all, and no longer view people and things, and comport yourself and act according to the ideas and views of traditional culture, nor make any judgments and choices based on traditional culture; but rather, view people and things, comport yourself and act according to the words of God and the truth principles. In this way, you will be walking on the right path, and will be a true created being approved of by God. Otherwise, you will still be controlled by Satan, and you will keep living under Satan’s power, and you will not be able to live in God’s words: These are the facts of the matter.

Now do you understand the essence of this saying on moral conduct, “One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force”? And do you also understand the social context in which this saying was put forward? (Yes.) In order to improve the social status of men and afford them greater rights, it is necessary to place higher requirements on men, establish the image of men in people’s minds, and shape that image into one of manliness and virility. This is the image conveyed by the saying “One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force” that people speak of. One aspect of what the moralists who put forward this saying on moral conduct are telling people, is that those who live up to this saying are real manly men, meaning that they are telling people the definition of a man; the other aspect is that they are advocating that men should stand up and be counted in society, make a show of being unconventional, gain a firm foothold on their social status, and wield power over the social mainstream. This thinking that “Men are superior to women” has persisted until

now. Even though some countries or ethnicities have made improvements in this regard, such thinking still occupies a dominant place in many other countries and nations, where it still controls and dominates national and societal trends, and dominates the division of labor between men and women in society, as well as their social status and social value, and even to this day not much has changed. That is to say, in many countries and nations, women are still discriminated against and excluded. This is a very lamentable thing, and the greatest inequality in the world. The fact of whether or not women are discriminated against and excluded, or are instead equal to men, is a clear marker for gauging whether a country or nation is progressive or backward.

Just now we fellowshiped about how the men and women that God created should be regarded, and what correct views one should have toward them. Both men and women have normal humanity and are possessed of normal human conscience and reason—these things are shared by both men and women. Except for gender differences, men and women are essentially equivalent in terms of their thinking, instincts, their response to various matters, their caliber and ability, and other sorts of aspects. They cannot be said to be exactly the same, but essentially they are more or less similar. Their life habits and rules for living, as well as their ideas, views and attitudes toward society, world trends, people, events, things, and all of God's creations, as well as their responses to some particular matters, including their physical and mental responses, are identical. Why are these things identical? Because both men and women were created by the one and only Creator, and their life's breath, their free will, as well as all the various activities they can undertake, their life routines and so on, all come from the Creator. In light of these phenomena, there is nothing dissimilar between men and women except for gender differences, and also some different things or professional skills that they excel at. For example, many jobs that men can do can also be done by women. There are female scientists, pilots, and astronauts, and also female presidents and government officials, which proves that the jobs that men and women can do are more or less the same, despite their gender differences. When it comes to physical endurance and expressing emotions, men and women are more or less the same. When a woman's relative dies, she cries herself half to death from heartrending grief; when a man's parents or lover dies, he also wails so loudly as to shake the earth; when women are faced with divorce, they become dejected, depressed, and sad, and may even commit suicide, while men will also become depressed if their wife leaves them, and some will even cry in secret under the bed covers. Because they are men, they dare not complain about this suffering in front of others, and must outwardly pretend to be strong, but when no one is around, they will cry like a normal person. Whenever some particular things happen, both men and women get emotional as one would expect, whether that means crying or laughing. In addition, among the personnel who perform various duties and jobs in God's house, women have opportunities to be promoted, trained up, and assigned to important positions, while men also have the same opportunities to be

promoted, trained up, and given important jobs—the opportunities are the same and equal. The various corruptions revealed by women in their daily lives and in performing their duties are no different from those revealed by men. Even among women there are evildoers and antichrists who disturb and disrupt the church's work—is it not the same for men? That is because people's corrupt dispositions are the same. If they are wicked people who do evil, disrupt and disturb the church's work, and try to establish their own independent kingdom, then when they are cleared out, will any distinction be made between men and women? No, they will all be cleared out in the same way. Do you think that, among those who are cleared out, there are more men than women? There are about the same of each. All those who do evil, disrupt and disturb, and count as antichrists and wicked people, regardless of whether they are male or female, must be cleared out. Some people say: "Women can't do things that disrupt and disturb, how shameful it would be for women to do such things, women must be more concerned about preserving their dignity! How could little women commit such big evils? They cannot, they should be given a chance to repent. Men are audacious, they are born to do bad things, they are born to be antichrists and to do evil. Even if they do just a little evil, and even if we don't have a clear understanding of the circumstances, they should still be expelled." Does God's house do this? (No.) God's house does not do this. God's house removes people based on principles. It does not distinguish between men and women, and is not concerned with preserving the dignity of women or men, but treats them fairly. If you are a man who has committed evil and you meet the principles for being cleared out and expelled, then God's house will remove you according to the principles; if you are a woman who has caused disruption and disturbance, and you are a wicked person or an antichrist, you will likewise be cleared out or expelled, and will not be spared just because you are female and you cry or shed a tear. God's house must handle things according to principles. Female believers chase after blessings, and have the desire and intention to be blessed. And do men also have that? Yes, they do, in the same way, men have no less ambition and desire to be blessed than women. Whose resistance to God is more serious, that of men or that of women? It's all the same. There are some who will say: "Now I finally understand the truth, it turns out that men and women are equally corrupt! I used to think that men are manly and virile, and must comport themselves as gentlemen, and do everything justly and honorably, and aboveboard, unlike women, many of whom are narrow-minded, endlessly fuss over trivial matters, constantly gossip behind people's backs, and don't act aboveboard. But I hadn't considered that more than a few bad people are men, and that the bad things they get up to are even bigger and more numerous." Now you understand these matters. In short, whether male or female, everyone's corrupt dispositions are the same, it's just people's humanities that are different—this is the only fair way to view men and women. Is there any bias in this viewpoint? (No.) Is it influenced by the idea that men are superior to women? (No.) It is not influenced by these things at all. In gauging whether a person

is good or bad, one should first look not at whether they are a man or a woman, but at their humanity, and then judge their essence based on the manifestations of their corrupt disposition in all its various aspects—this is how to view people accurately.

Looking at it from the phenomena we fellowshiped about earlier, besides gender differences, there is no difference whatsoever between males and females, whether in the manifestation of their instincts, or in the revelation of their various corrupt dispositions, or in their nature essence. In terms of people's bodily essence and their dispositions, as well as the instinct, willpower, and free will that God endowed people with when He created them, there is no difference between people. Therefore, when people view men and women, they should view them not based on their appearance, let alone based on the ideas of traditional culture that this world teaches people, but rather based on God's words. Why should one view them based on God's words? Why not view them based on the ideas and views of traditional culture? There are some who say: "Throughout the millennia of human history, so many claims have been made and written about in books. Are none of humankind's views and sayings correct? Is there no truth in them at all?" In what way are these words absurd? Human beings count as created beings, they have been corrupted by Satan for millennia, and they are full of satanic dispositions, which is what causes such darkness and evil in human society. No one can clearly see the root causes, or discern Satan, or truly know God. Therefore, the views of corrupted humankind do not accord with the truth, and only the Creator knows everything about this. This is a veritable fact. The truth can only be obtained from God's words, whereas the culture of the human world is produced by Satan's corruption. People have never experienced God's work, and no one can know God, so it is impossible to produce truth in the traditional culture of humankind, because all truth comes from God and is expressed by Christ. Having been corrupted by Satan, human beings all have satanic nature and dispositions. They all worship celebrities and great figures, and all follow Satan. Human beings have their own ulterior motives and aims when viewing or defining some things. No matter whom these motives and aims serve, or what the intended purpose is, they are all governed by corrupt dispositions. Therefore, the things defined by corrupted humans and the thoughts they advocate must be influenced by the cunning schemes of Satan. That is one aspect of it. Another aspect, from an objective point of view, is that no matter how capable humans are, no one understands the functions, instincts, and essence of created human beings. Because human beings are not created by any person, not by some so-called great personages, devil kings, Satan, or evil spirits, humans do not understand the instincts, functions, and essence of people at all. So, who does know people's instincts, functions, and essence best? Only the Creator knows best. Whoever created human beings knows their functions, instincts, and essence best and, of course, is most qualified to define human beings and to determine the worth, identity, and essence of men or women. Is this not an objective fact? (Yes.) That which God uses to create human beings, the instincts He gives people when He creates them, the

functions and laws of their bodies, what they are suited or not suited to doing, and even how long their lifespan should be—all of this is preordained by God. God alone has the best understanding of the human beings He creates, and no one else understands more about created humankind. Is this not a fact? (Yes.) Therefore, God is most qualified to define human beings, and to determine the identity, status, value, and function of men or women, as well as the correct path that people should walk. God knows best what the human beings He created need, what they can achieve, and what is within their capabilities. From another perspective, what created human beings need most are the words spoken by the Creator. Only God can personally lead, provide for, and shepherd human beings. All those sayings of corrupted humankind that do not come from God are deceptive, especially those of traditional culture, which all mislead, benumb, and confine people, and of course act as a kind of restraint and control. There is one other aspect, which is that God created humans, and God's greatest concern for human beings is whether they can walk the right path in life. Whereas, societies, nations, and countries only consider the interests of the ruling class and the stability of the political regime, without concern for the lives of the lower classes. As a result, this causes some extreme and chaotic things to occur. They do not guide people onto the right path, so that people can live a life of value and clarity, and submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements, but rather, they want to exploit people to serve their own rule, their own careers, and their own ambitions and desires. No matter what claims, or what ideas and views they put forward, the aim of all this is to delude people, to confine their thoughts, and control humankind, so that people will serve them and be loyal to them. They do not consider the future or prospects of humankind, nor how human beings can survive better. But what God does is completely different, insofar as what God does is according to His plan. After creating human beings, He guides them toward understanding more truths and principles for comporting themselves, and makes them see clearly the truth of Satan's corruption of humankind. Upon this foundation, according to these truth principles that God teaches people and uses to admonish them, they are then able to embark on the right path in life.

These regulations and conventions on moral conduct in traditional culture are very wide-ranging and influence people's thinking from all sorts of aspects, confusing and confining their thinking. What we have fellowshiped on today are some absurd and fallacious sayings and views of traditional culture regarding gender, which have influenced people's correct views on gender to a significant degree, and have also subjected men and women to so many fetters, bonds, constraints, discrimination, and the like. These are all facts that people can see, and they are also the effects and consequences that traditional culture has on people.

May 14, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (12)

What did I fellowship about at the last gathering, can anyone tell us? (Last time God fellowshiped about two aspects. One aspect was that when some particular incidents occur in the church in different periods or different stages—for example, some people are arrested by the great red dragon, some leaders and workers are replaced, some people get sick, and some people face life-and-death issues—these incidents do not happen by chance, and we need to seek the truth about them. God also communicated some paths of practice. When facing these circumstances, we should abide by two things: The first is to assume the proper place of a created being; the second is to have a sincere and obedient heart—whether facing judgment and chastisement, trials and refinement, or grace and blessings, we should accept all these things from God. In addition, God's fellowship dissected a saying about moral conduct in traditional culture, which is that "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force.") The main topic of the last fellowship was also the problems with sayings on moral conduct. I have fellowshiped on this topic for a long time, exposing some common sayings, requirements and definitions of moral conduct in traditional culture. Having fellowshiped on these topics, do you have any new understanding and new definitions of these sayings about moral conduct? Have you discerned these statements for what they are and seen their essence clearly? Can you let go of these things from deep within your heart, abandon them, stop confusing them with the truth, and stop regarding them as positive things, and pursuing them as truths, and abiding by them? Particularly when encountering some matters in daily life that relate to sayings on moral conduct, is there an awareness inside you, and can you thoughtfully reflect on whether you are still influenced by these sayings on moral conduct? Are you bound, fettered, and controlled by these things? Inwardly can you still use sayings on moral conduct to constrain yourself and influence your speech and deportment, as well as your attitude toward things? Share your thoughts. (Before God fellowshiped on and dissected traditional culture, I wasn't aware that these ideas and views about moral conduct were wrong, or what kind of harm they would do to me, but now I have some awareness.) It is a good thing that you have some awareness. Of course, after a while, you should be able to recognize the mistakes of these sayings about moral conduct. From a subjective point of view, you should also be able to forsake them and stop regarding them as positive things, but from an objective point of view, you still need to carefully perceive, unearth, and discern such sayings about moral conduct in daily life, in order that you can see straight through them and forsake them. Being aware from a subjective point of view does not mean that you can forsake these mistaken ideas and views of traditional culture in your daily life. When encountering such things, you may suddenly feel that these sayings are reasonable, and be unable to forsake them completely. In such cases, you must seek the truth in your experiences, carefully dissect these mistaken views of traditional culture according to

God's words, and reach the point where you can see clearly that the essence of those sayings from traditional culture is contrary to the truth, unrealistic, deceptive, and harmful to people. Only in this way can the toxin of these fallacious views be purged from your heart once and for all. You have now realized the flaws of the various sayings of traditional culture in terms of doctrine, and this is good, but it is only the start. As for whether the toxic influence of traditional culture can be completely eradicated in future, it depends on how people pursue the truth.

No matter what the saying about moral conduct is, it is a kind of ideological viewpoint on moral conduct that is advocated by humankind. We previously revealed the essence of quite a few of the various sayings about moral conduct, but in addition to the aspects that we fellowshiped on previously, certainly there are still some more sayings about moral conduct that should be revealed, so as to achieve a deeper understanding and discernment of the myriad sayings about moral conduct advocated by human beings. This is something that you should do. Regarding the saying on moral conduct "One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force" that we fellowshiped on last time, judging by the meaning of this sentence, it is mainly aimed at men. It is a requirement for men, and it is also a standard for what humankind calls "manly, virile men." We exposed and dissected this standard concerning men. In addition to this requirement toward men, there is also the saying "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral," which we fellowshiped on previously, and which was put forward with regard to women. From both of these sayings it can be clearly seen that the traditional culture of humankind not only puts forward unrealistic, inhumane requirements for women that do not tally with human nature, but also does not spare men, by advancing claims and demands with regard to them that are immoral, inhumane, and which run contrary to human nature, thereby depriving not only women of their human rights, but men too. From this point of view, it seems fair to be impartial, by neither going easy on women, nor sparing men. However, judging from the requirements and standards of traditional culture toward women and men, it is clear that there are serious problems in this approach. Although on the one hand, traditional culture puts forward standards of moral conduct for women and, on the other hand, also sets criteria of conduct for manly, virile men, judging by these requirements and standards there is clearly a lack of fairness. Can that not be said? (Yes.) These requirements and standards for women's moral conduct severely restrict women's freedom, shackling not only women's thoughts, but also their feet, by requiring them to stay at home and live a secluded life, never leaving the house and having minimal contact with the outside world. Besides admonishing women to be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, they even impose strict regulations on women's scope of action and ambit of life, by requiring them not to appear in public, not to travel far, and not to undertake any career, let alone to have any big ambitions, desires and ideals, and even going so far as to put forward a more inhumane claim—that virtue in a woman is to be unskilled. How do you feel on hearing

this? Is this claim that “Virtue in a woman is to be unskilled” actually true? How can virtue in a woman be to have no skills? What exactly is this word “virtue”? Does it mean lacking in virtue, or being virtuous? If all women without skills are regarded as being virtuous, then do all women with skills lack virtue and have no morals? Is this a judgment and condemnation of skilled women? Is this a serious deprivation of women’s human rights? Is it an insult to women’s dignity? (Yes.) Not only does it ignore the existence of women, but it also disregards their existence, which is unfair to women and immoral. So, what do you think of this saying “Virtue in a woman is to be unskilled”? Is it inhumane? (Yes.) How should the word “inhumane” be interpreted? Is it lacking virtue? (Yes.) This is seriously lacking virtue. To use a Chinese saying, it is lacking eight lifetimes of virtue. This kind of claim is decidedly inhumane! People who trumpet the claim that “Virtue in a woman is to be unskilled” harbor ulterior motives and purposes: They do not want women to be skilled, and they do not want women to participate in the work of society and stand on an equal footing with men. They only want women to be tools in the service of men, meekly waiting on men at home and doing nothing else—they think this is what “virtuous” means. They long to define women as useless, and deny their value, turning them into nothing more than slaves to men, and making them serve men forever, without ever allowing them to stand on an equal footing with men and enjoy equal treatment. Does this viewpoint come from normal human thinking, or from Satan? (Satan.) That’s right, it must come from Satan. No matter what instinctive or physical weaknesses women have, none of this is a problem and it should not become an excuse or reason for men to slander women, insult women’s dignity, and deprive women of their freedom or human rights. In God’s eyes, these weaknesses and innate vulnerabilities that people associate with women are not a problem. And why is that? Because women were created by God, these things that people think of as weaknesses and problems come precisely from God. They were created and preordained by Him, and are not actually flaws or problems. These things that seem to be weaknesses and flaws in the eyes of humans and Satan are essentially natural and positive things, and they also conform to the natural laws formulated by God when He created humankind. Only Satan can denigrate the living things created by God in this way, by regarding things that do not conform to human notions as flaws, weaknesses, and problems to do with instinctive inadequacies, and making a fuss over them, and using them to slander, mock, denigrate, and ostracize people, and to deprive women of their right to exist, their right to fulfill their responsibilities and obligations among humankind, and also to deprive them of their right to display their skills and special talents among humankind. For example, terms such as “shrinking violet” or “girly” are often used in society to describe women and to devalue them as worthless. What other such words are there? “Sissy,” “long-haired but short-sighted,” “big-breasted bimbo” and so on, are all terms that insult women. As you can tell, these terms are used to insult women by referring to their distinctive traits or appellations associated with the female sex. Clearly, society and the human race view women from

a completely different perspective to that of men, a perspective that is also unequal. Is this not unfair? This is not speaking or viewing matters from a foundation of equality between men and women, but rather, it is looking upon women with contempt from a perspective of male supremacy, and of complete inequality between men and women. Therefore, in society or among human beings, many terms have emerged that refer to distinctive female traits and appellations for women in order to describe various problems to do with people, events, and things. For example, the expressions “shrinking violet,” “girly,” “sissy” and also “long-haired but short-sighted,” “big-breasted bimbo” that we mentioned just now are used by people not only to describe women and target women, but also to mock, demean, and expose people, events, and things that they despise, using terms associated with female traits and the female gender. It’s just like when describing someone as devoid of humanity, one might say that this person has a wolf’s heart and a dog’s lungs, because people think that neither a wolf’s heart nor a dog’s lungs are nice things, so they put both these things together to describe just how vile someone who has lost their humanity is. Similarly, because human beings despise women and disregard their existence, they use some terms associated with women in order to describe people, events, and things that they despise. This is clearly a denigration of the female sex. Is this not so? (Yes.) In any case, the way in which the human race and society regard and define women is unfair and contrary to the facts. In short, the attitude of humankind toward women can be described in two words, namely “denigrating” and “repressive.” Women are not allowed to stand up and do things, nor to fulfill any social obligations and responsibilities, let alone to play any role in society. In summary, women are not allowed to go out of the home to participate in any work in society—this is depriving women of their rights. Women are not allowed to imagine freely, nor to speak freely, let alone to act freely, and they are not allowed to do any of the things they should be doing. Is this not persecution of women? (Yes.) The persecution of women by traditional culture is evident from the requirements for moral conduct that are placed on them. Looking at the various requirements placed on women by the family, society, and community, the persecution of women officially began when communities first formed and people created clear divisions between genders. When did it reach its apogee? The persecution of women reached its apogee following the gradual emergence of various sayings and requirements on moral conduct in traditional culture. Because there are written regulations and explicit sayings, these written regulations and explicit sayings in society have shaped public opinion and also formed a kind of force. This public opinion and this force have already become a kind of inexorable cage and shackles for women, who can only accept their fate, because living among humankind and in different eras of society, women can only endure injustice and suffer insults, abase themselves, and become slaves to society and even to men. To this day, those long-standing and ancient ideas and sayings advanced on the subject of moral conduct still deeply influence modern human society, including men, and of course women. Women

unwittingly and unknowingly use these sayings about moral conduct and the opinions of society at large to constrain themselves, and of course they are also subconsciously struggling to break free from these shackles and cages. However, because people do not have any resistance to this powerful force of public opinion in society—or to be more precise, humans cannot see clearly the essence of the various sayings in traditional culture, nor see through them—they are unable to break free and step out of these shackles and cages, even though they long to do so. On a subjective level, it is because people cannot see these problems clearly; on an objective level, it is because people understand neither the truth, nor precisely what the Creator's meaning was in creating people, or why He created male and female instincts. Therefore, both men and women live and subsist within this vast framework of social morality, and no matter how hard they struggle inside this vast social environment, they still cannot escape the fetters of sayings on moral conduct in traditional culture, sayings which have become invisible shackles in each person's mind.

Those sayings that persecute women in traditional culture are like invisible shackles, not only for women, but of course for men too. Why do I say that? Because having been born in the midst of humankind, and as equally important members of this society, men are similarly inculcated and influenced by these traditional cultures of morality. These things are also deeply rooted in every man's mind, and all men are unconsciously influenced and fettered by traditional culture. For example, men also firmly believe in expressions such as "shrinking violet," "virtue in a woman is to be unskilled," "women must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral," and "women should be chaste," and are as deeply confined by these things of traditional culture as women are. On the one hand, these sayings that persecute women are of great benefit and help in enhancing the status of men, and from this it can be seen that, in society, men have been greatly assisted by public opinion in this regard. Therefore, they readily accept these opinions and expressions that persecute women. On the other hand, men are also deluded and influenced by these things of traditional culture of morality, so it can also be said that men are—besides women—the other victims of the tide of traditional culture. There are some who say: "Society at large advocates the supremacy of men's rights, so why say that men are also victims?" This must be viewed from the perspective that humankind is tempted, misled, deluded, benumbed, and confined by traditional culture of morality. Women have been deeply harmed by ideas on morality in traditional culture, and men have likewise also been profoundly deluded and suffered a great deal. What does "deluded" mean in another sense? It means that people do not have a correct viewpoint from which to assess men and define women. Regardless of from which angle they look at these things, it is all based on traditional culture, not the truths expressed by God or the various rules and laws formulated by God for humankind, nor is it based on the positive things that He has revealed to humankind. From this point of view, men are also victims who have been tempted, misled, deluded, benumbed, and confined by traditional

culture. Men should therefore not think of women as abjectly pitiful just because the latter have no status in this society, and should not be complacent just because their social status is higher than that of women. Don't rejoice too soon; actually men are also very pitiful. If you compare them with women, they are equally pitiful. Why do I say they are all equally pitiful? Let's take another look at society's and humankind's definition and assessment of men, and at some of the responsibilities that are assigned to them. In light of humankind's requirement on men that we fellowshiped about last time—"One should never be corrupted by wealth, changed by poverty, or bent by force"—the ultimate goal of this requirement is to define men as manly, virile men, which is a standard designation for men. Once this designation "manly, virile man" is placed on a man's shoulders, he is bound to live up to the title, and if he does want to live up to it, he must make many pointless sacrifices and do many things in a way that goes against normal humanity. For example, if you are a man and you want society to recognize you as a manly, virile man, then you can't have any weakness, you can't be timid in any way, you must have a strong will, you can't complain that you are tired, you can't cry, or show any human weakness, you can't even be sad, and you can't slack off. At all times you must have a twinkle in your eyes, a determined and fearless look, and you must be able to bristle with anger at your enemies, in order to live up to the title of being a "manly, virile man." That is to say, you must pluck up your courage and straighten your spine in this life. You cannot be a mediocre, ordinary, common, or unremarkable person. You must go beyond mere mortals and be a superhuman possessed of extraordinary willpower and extraordinary perseverance, endurance, and tenacity, in order to be worthy of being labeled a "manly, virile man." This is just one of the requirements of traditional culture toward men. That is to say, men can go around drinking, whoring, and gambling, but they must be stronger than women and have super-strong willpower. Whatever befalls you, you must not yield, flinch, or say "no," and must not show timidity, fear, or cowardice. You must hide and cover up these manifestations of normal humanity, and must not reveal them in any way, nor let anyone see them, not even your own parents, your closest relatives, or the people you love most. Why is that? Because you want to be a manly, virile man. Another characteristic of manly, virile men is that no person, event or thing can thwart their resolve. Whenever a man wants to do something—when he has any aspirations, ideals, or wishes, such as to serve his country, to show loyalty to his friends, or to take a bullet for them, or whatever career he wants to do, or whatever ambition he has, no matter whether right or wrong—no one can hold him back, and neither his love for women, nor kinship, family, or social responsibilities can change his resolve, nor make him give up his aspirations, ideals, and wishes. No one can change his resolve, the goals he aspires to achieve, or the path he wants to take. At the same time, he should also require himself not to relax at any moment. As soon as he relaxes, slackens up, and wants to get back to fulfilling his family responsibilities, being a good son to his parents, taking care of his children, and being a normal person, and gives up

his ideals, aspirations, the path he wants to take, and the goals he wants to achieve, he will no longer be a manly, virile man. And if he isn't a manly, virile man, what is he? He becomes a big softie, a good-for-nothing, which are characteristics despised by the whole of society, and of course also despised by himself. Once a man realizes that there are problems and shortcomings in his actions and conduct that do not meet the standard for being a manly, virile man, he will inwardly despise himself, and feel that he has no place in this society, no outlet for his abilities, and that he cannot be called a manly, virile man, or even just a man. Another characteristic of manly, virile men is that they cannot be bent by force, which is a kind of spirit that makes it impossible for them to be subdued by any power, violence, threats, or the like. No matter what power, violence, threat, or even mortal danger they encounter, such men are unafraid of death and can overcome a succession of adversities. They are not to be held to ransom or cowed into submission, they will not yield to any force just to survive, and they will not stoop to compromise. Once they succumb to power or any kind of force for the sake of some responsibility, obligation or other reason, even if they survive and keep their life, they will feel revulsion for their behavior because of the traditional culture of morality that they idolize. The spirit of Bushido in Japan is a bit like this. Once you fail or are shamed, you feel that you must commit suicide by self-disembowelment. Is life that easy to come by? People only live once. If even a minor failure or setback prompts thoughts of death, is this caused by the influence of traditional culture? (Yes.) When a problem befalls them and they cannot make a swift decision, or make a choice that meets the requirements of traditional culture, or prove their dignity and character, or prove that they are a manly, virile man, they will seek death and commit suicide. The reason why men can hold these ideas and views is because of the severe impact of traditional culture, and the way that it confines their thinking. If they were not influenced by the ideas and views of traditional culture, there would not be so many men committing suicide or disemboweling themselves. As regards the definition of a manly, virile man, men very affirmatively and assuredly accept these ideas and views of traditional culture, and regard them as positive things by which to measure and restrain themselves, and also measure and restrain other men. Judging by men's thoughts and views, ideals, goals, and the paths they choose, this all proves that all men are deeply influenced and poisoned by traditional culture. The many stories of heroic exploits and beautiful legends are a true portrait of how traditional culture is deeply rooted in people's minds. From this point of view, are men poisoned by traditional culture just as deeply as women are? Traditional culture merely places different standards of requirements on men and women, insulting, denigrating, restricting, and controlling women without restraint while vigorously urging, enticing, instigating, and inciting men to not be cowards or common, ordinary people. The requirement for men is that everything they do must be different from women, surpass them, be above them, and tower over them. They must control society, control the human race, control the trends and direction of society, and control everything in society. Men must even be

all-powerful in society, with the power to control society and human beings, and this power also includes ruling over and controlling women. This is what men should pursue, and this is also the heroic manner of a manly, virile man.

In the present era, many countries have become democratic societies in which the rights and interests of women and children are somewhat guaranteed, and the influence and constraints of these ideas and views of traditional culture on people are no longer so obvious. After all, many women have made headway in society, and their involvement in many fields and many occupations is increasing. However, because the ideas of traditional culture have long been deeply rooted in the minds of human beings—not only in the minds of women, but also in those of men—both men and women unconsciously adopt the perspective and vantage point of traditional culture when thinking about and approaching various things. Of course, they also undertake various careers and jobs under the guidance of ideas and views of traditional culture. In today's society, although equality between men and women has improved somewhat, the idea of male superiority in traditional culture still dominates people's minds, and in most countries, education is fundamentally based on these core ideas of traditional culture. Therefore, although in this society, human beings seldom use these sayings of traditional culture to talk about various issues, they are still imprisoned within the ideological framework of traditional culture. What kind of terms does modern society have for praising a woman? For example, "masculine woman" and "powerful woman." Are these respectful or derogatory forms of address? There are women who say: "Someone called me a masculine woman, which I thought was very flattering. How about that? I've assimilated into male society and my status has been enhanced. Although I'm a woman, by adding the word 'masculine' I become a masculine woman, then I can be someone who is equal to men, which is kind of an honor!" This is a kind of recognition and acceptance of this woman by a community or a group in human society, which is an extremely honorable thing, is it not? If a woman is described as a masculine woman, it proves that this woman is very capable, the same as men, rather than inferior to them, and her career, talents, and even her social status, her IQ and the means by which she gains a footing in society are enough to be compared with men. The way I see it, for most women the designation "masculine woman" is a reward from society, a kind of recognition of social status that modern society gives to women. Do any women want to be masculine women? Although this designation is unpleasant, whatever the circumstances, calling a woman masculine is certainly praising her for being very competent and capable, and is giving her the thumbs-up in the eyes of men. As regards designations for men, people still hold to traditional notions, which never change. For example, some men are not career-minded and don't pursue power or status, but accept their current situation, and are content with their ordinary job and life, and care greatly for their family. What kind of names does this society give to such men? Are such men described as good-for-nothings? (Yes.) Some men are very thorough and fastidious in going about their business, taking things

step-by-step and with great caution. What do some people call them? “A bit girly” or a “shrinking violet.” You see, men are not insulted using dirty words, but rather using expressions associated with women. If people want to elevate the female sex, they use terms like “masculine woman” and “powerful woman” to enhance a woman’s status and affirm their competence, whereas terms such as “shrinking violet” are used to denigrate men and rebuke them for not being manly. Is this not a widespread phenomenon in society? (Yes.) These sayings that have arisen in modern society prove a problem, which is that although traditional culture already seems far removed from modern life, and very far from people’s minds, and although people are now addicted to the Internet or various electronic devices, or obsessed with all sorts of modern lifestyles, and even if people live extremely comfortably in modern living environments, or have human rights and freedoms, this is only a facade; the fact is that much of the poison of traditional culture remains in their minds. Although people have gained some physical freedoms, and some of their overriding views on people and things seem to have changed, and they seem to have gained a certain degree of freedom in their thinking, and they seem to have acquired new insights in this modern society thanks to the rapid circulation of news and the advanced information technology, and they know about and have seen many things in the outside world, human beings still live in the shadow of the myriad sayings on moral conduct advocated by traditional culture. Even if there are some people who say, “I’m the most untraditional person there is, I’m very modern, I’m a modernist,” and they have a gold ring through their nose, a string of studs in their ear, and their clothes are very avant-garde and trendy, their views toward people and things, as well as their views of how they should comport themselves and act, are still inseparable from traditional culture. Why can’t people do without traditional culture? Because their hearts and minds have been immersed in traditional culture and imprisoned by it. Everything that is produced in the innermost depths of their soul, and even the ideas that flash momentarily through their minds, stems from the indoctrination and inculcation of traditional culture, and is all produced within this immense framework of traditional culture, rather than separate from its influence. Do these facts prove that human beings are already imprisoned by traditional culture? (Yes.) Human beings are already imprisoned by traditional culture. No matter whether or not you are well-read or highly educated, as long as you live among human beings, you will inevitably be inculcated and influenced by humankind’s traditional culture of morality, because the things of traditional culture exert a kind of invisible force and power that exist everywhere, not only in schools and in people’s textbooks, but especially in their families, and of course in every corner of society. In this way, people are unknowingly indoctrinated, influenced, deluded, and misled by these things. Human beings therefore live under the bonds, fetters, and control of traditional culture, and cannot hide or escape from it even if they wanted to. They are living in this kind of social environment. This is the current state of affairs, and these are also the facts.

Looking at it based on the sayings of moral conduct and their essence that we fellowshiped on last time, such sayings in traditional culture conceal the corrupt dispositions and essence of humankind, and of course they also conceal the fact that Satan corrupts humankind. The definitions of men and women in traditional culture that we have fellowshiped on today clearly illustrate another essential aspect of sayings on moral conduct. What essence is that? These sayings about moral conduct not only confuse, mislead, and confine people's thinking, but of course they also instill people with the wrong concepts and views about various people, matters, and things. This is a fact, and another essential aspect of the sayings on moral conduct that are advocated by Satan. How can this assertion be proved? Are not the definitions of men and women in the sayings about moral conduct that we fellowshiped on just now sufficient to illustrate this point? (Yes.) They are indeed sufficient to illustrate this point. Sayings about moral conduct only talk about right and wrong behavior, and good and bad practices, and only talk superficially about good and bad, right and wrong. They don't let people know what is positive and negative, good and bad, right and wrong when it comes to people, matters, and things. The things they make people abide by are not correct criteria or principles for conduct and behavior that accord with humanity or that are beneficial to people. Regardless of whether these sayings on moral conduct violate the natural laws of humanity, or whether people are willing to abide by them or not, they compel people to cling rigidly to dogma without distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad. If you fail to abide by them, society will revile and condemn you, and you will even revile yourself. Is this a true portrait of how traditional culture confines human thinking? This is precisely a true reflection of how traditional culture confines human thinking. Once traditional culture gives rise to new sayings, requirements, and rules, or shapes public opinion, or establishes a trend or convention in society, then you will inevitably be carried along by this trend or convention, and not dare to say "no" or refuse, let alone raise any doubts and different opinions. You can only commit to it, otherwise you will be scorned and castigated by society, and even reviled by public opinion and condemned by humankind. What are the consequences of being reviled and condemned? You will no longer be able to face being around people, because you will have no dignity, because you cannot adhere to social ethics, you have no morals, and you do not have the moral conduct that traditional culture demands, and so you will have no social standing. What are the consequences of having no social standing? That you will not be worthy of living in this society, and all facets of your human rights will be stripped away, even to the point that your right to live, your right to speak, and your right to perform your obligations will be curbed and restricted. This is how traditional culture impacts on and threatens humankind. Everyone is its victim, and of course everyone is also its enforcer. You fall victim to these public opinions, you naturally also fall victim to all the various people in society, and at the same time you also fall victim to your own acceptance of traditional culture. In the final analysis, you fall victim to these things of traditional culture. Do these

things in traditional culture have a big impact on humankind? (Yes.) For example, if a woman is the subject of rumors that she is not virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, and that she is not a good woman, then whenever she subsequently goes to start a new job or join any group, as soon as people become aware of the stories about her, and listen to the gossipmongers and judge her, she will not be regarded as a good woman in anyone's eyes. Once this situation arises, it will be difficult for her to make her way or survive in society. Some people even have no alternative but to conceal their identity and relocate to a different city or environment. Is public opinion powerful? (Yes.) This invisible force can ruin and ravage anyone and trample them underfoot. For example, if you believe in God, it is obviously difficult for you to survive in the social environment of China. Why is it so hard to survive? Because once you believe in God, perform your duty and expend yourself for Him, sometimes you inevitably won't get round to caring for your family, and those unbelieving devils will spread rumors that you are "not leading a normal life," "abandoning your family," "running off with someone," and so on and so forth. Although these claims don't accord with the facts, and are all speculation and false rumors, once you are the subject of these accusations, you will be in a very difficult predicament. Whenever you go shopping, people will give you funny looks, and mutter and pass comments behind your back, saying, "This person is religious, lacks womanly virtue, leads an indecent life, and spends all day running off to places. This is a woman who doesn't focus her energies on leading a normal life. What is she doing running off everywhere? Women should follow the Confucian code of the three obediences and four virtues, and attend to their husbands and raise their children." How would you feel on hearing that? Would you be very angry? What business is it of theirs that you believe in God and perform your duty? It's none of their business at all, and yet they can treat it like an after-dinner conversation topic, and pass comments and gossip about it like it's important business. Is this not a phenomenon in society? Is this not a phenomenon that can be seen everywhere? For example, you have a colleague who used to get on well with you, but when they heard that you believe in God, they spread all sorts of gossip about you behind your back, so now many people give you a wide berth, and are no longer on good terms with you. Although you have the same attitude to your work as before, as soon as most people hear this gossip, are you still going to find it easy to make your way in this job? (No, it won't be easy.) Will people's attitudes toward you be different from before? (Yes.) What will they all talk about? "This woman doesn't focus her energies on leading a normal life. What is she doing believing in religion?" and "Why do men believe in religion? Only losers believe in religion! That's something women do, whereas manly, virile men should focus on their career!" Has anyone said these things? (Yes.) Where do these words come from? What business is it of theirs that you believe in God? People are free to believe what they want, and others have no right to interfere. So why can they talk about you? Why do they indiscriminately criticize you once you start believing in God? To some extent, the frame of reference for their remarks is

inevitably based on the ideas and views of traditional culture, and on the national government's attitude toward faith. Although on the surface they are talking about you, the fact is that they are indiscriminately criticizing you, telling tales, and wantonly condemning you. In any case, the basis for people's remarks and judgments, as well as for their views and attitudes toward your faith, is influenced to a significant degree by traditional culture and atheistic ideology. Because in addition to teaching people how to be a woman and how to be a man, what are the essential ideas of traditional culture? That there is no Heaven and no God. In other words, these are atheistic ideas and views. Therefore, they reject people with faith, especially those who believe in the true God. If you engage in superstitious activities, belong to some cult, or engage in any religious activities, they might disregard you. If you are superstitious they may still associate with you, but as soon as you start believing in God, reading His words every day, spreading the gospel, performing your duty, and following God, they will become incompatible with you. What is the source of their incompatibility with you? To be exact, one aspect is because they are unbelievers and all follow Satan and belong to Satan; the other aspect is that they look at things according to the ideas and views of traditional culture, and according to the policies and laws of the great red dragon—these are objective facts. Whenever they see people, events, and things that do not conform to the ideas of traditional culture, and whenever they see that believers are the targets of state suppression and are being rounded up, they despise them, indiscriminately criticize, judge and condemn them, and cooperate with the government to monitor and report on people who believe in God. What is the basis for them doing this? It is mainly based on traditional culture, atheistic ideology, and the sinister policies of the great red dragon. For example, they judge people who believe in God, saying: "This is a woman who doesn't focus her energies on leading a normal life. What is she doing running off everywhere?" and "This is a man who doesn't pursue a proper career. What is he doing believing in religion? Proper men have far-reaching ambitions. Manly, virile men should focus on their careers!" Think about it, aren't all these banal statements clearly derived from traditional culture? (Yes.) They are all derived from traditional culture. These banal and mundane people don't pursue any beliefs, but only pursue eating, drinking and carnal pleasures. Their minds are not only filled with evil trends, but are also deeply bound and confined by these things of traditional culture, whose influence they live under without realizing it, so it's natural for them to adopt these viewpoints when dealing with anyone and anything. This is something that can happen in any corner of modern society, and is quite normal. This is how things are in a world controlled by Satan, and in an era of evil and fornication.

Sayings about moral conduct not only instill wrong concepts and views in people, but also encourage and incite them to follow some extreme thoughts and adopt some extreme behaviors in particular contexts and circumstances. For example, as mentioned earlier, "I'd take a bullet for a friend" is the kind of requirement that Satan puts forward

on the pretext of regulating people's moral conduct when it comes to dealing with their friends. Obviously, sayings on this aspect of moral conduct are intended to make people have irrational and unreasonable thoughts and views when dealing with their friends, and even prompt them to carelessly give up their lives for their friends. This is an extreme and excessive requirement that Satan places on human beings in regard to moral conduct. The fact is that there are some other sayings about moral conduct which are similar to "I'd take a bullet for a friend," and which likewise require people to adopt extreme behaviors. These are all inhumane and irrational sayings. At the same time as instilling people with the ideas and views of traditional culture, Satan also requires people to abide by these irrational thoughts and inhumane sayings, and also makes them rigidly adhere to these ideas and practices. It could be said that this is tantamount to toying with and ruining humankind! What sayings are they? For example, the two sayings "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" and "The silkworms of spring weave till they die, and candles burn out till their tears run dry" tell people—in a more explicit way than "I'd take a bullet for a friend"—not to cherish life, and that life should be squandered in this way. When people are required to give up their lives, they shouldn't cherish life too much, but must instead adhere to the sayings "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" and "The silkworms of spring weave till they die, and candles burn out till their tears run dry." You more or less all understand the literal meaning of these two sayings on moral conduct, but what exactly are they proclaiming and instigating? For whom should you "bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day"? For whom should "the silkworms of spring weave till they die, and candles burn out till their tears run dry"? People should question and reflect on themselves: Is it meaningful to do what these sayings suggest? Such sayings first delude and benumb your mind, disturbing your vision, then strip away your human rights, guiding you in the wrong direction, giving you the wrong definitions and viewpoints, and thereafter compelling you to give up your youth and life for this country, society, and nation, or for a career or for love. In this way, humans unwittingly give up their lives to Satan in a muddled, dazed state, and furthermore they do so willingly and without complaints or regrets. Only at the very moment when they give up their lives do they understand everything, and feel cheated that they are doing it for pointless reasons, but it's too late, and there is no time left for regrets. Thus, they spend their lives being deluded, fooled, destroyed, ruined, and trampled underfoot by Satan, and in the end, the most precious thing they have—life—is also taken away. This is the consequence of human beings being educated with sayings on moral conduct in traditional culture, and it fully proves what a wretched fate awaits those who live under the power of Satan and are deceived and fooled by it. What words are there to describe the various tactics Satan uses in treating humankind? To start with, there is "benumb," "delude," and what else? Tell Me some. (Fool, ruin, trample on, ravage.) There is also "incite," "entice," "demand one's life," and finally, "toy with people and devour them." This is the result of Satan's

corruption of people. People live under Satan's power and according to satanic dispositions. Were it not for God expressing the truth and doing the work of judgment and chastisement to save people, wouldn't all of humankind be devastated, devoured and destroyed by Satan?

What things in traditional culture does humankind proclaim? What does "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" mean? The main requirement of this saying is that whenever people do things, they should be sincere and diligent, give their all, and do their utmost until they die. Who exactly are people serving by doing this? Of course it is society, their native land, and the nation. So who wields control over this society, this native land, and this nation? Undoubtedly it is Satan and devil kings. So what are the aims that Satan and the devil kings want to achieve in using traditional culture to delude people? One is to make the country powerful and the nation prosperous, and another is to make people bring honor to their ancestors and be remembered for generations to come. That way, people will feel that there is no greater honor than to do all these things, and they will be grateful to the devil kings, and willing to give up their lives for the nation, for society, and for the motherland. In reality, all they are doing is serving Satan and the devil kings, and serving the dominant positions of Satan and the devil kings, and giving up their precious life for them. If, rather than telling people to perform their duty as a created being with all their heart, mind, and strength, and live out the likeness of a human being, the sayings of traditional culture instead ask people to die for the sake of the country, for devil kings, or for some other cause, then they are deluding people. On the surface, they tell people to do their part for the country and the nation, using words that are high-sounding and plausible, but the fact is that they compel people to dedicate a lifetime of effort, and even sacrifice their life, in order to serve the dominant positions of Satan and devil kings. Is this not deluding, fooling, and harming people? The various sayings advanced by traditional culture do not demand of people how they should live out normal humanity in real life, nor how to fulfill their responsibilities and duties, but rather, they demand of people what kind of moral conduct they should display within the framework of society at large, that is to say, under Satan's power. Likewise, the saying on moral conduct "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" is also a tenet put forward to compel human beings to be loyal to society, to the nation, and especially to their native land. This kind of tenet requires people to bend themselves to serving the nation, their native land, and society, and to strive to do their utmost until their dying day. Only those who are assiduous and give their all until their dying day are considered noble, virtuous, and worthy of being revered and commemorated by future generations. The first part of this saying, "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost," means to be assiduous and give your all. Is there any problem with this phrase? If we look at it from the perspective of human instinct and the scope of what humanity can accomplish, there are no major issues with this phrase. It requires people to be diligent and give their all when doing things or undertaking a

cause. There is basically nothing wrong with this attitude, which is relatively in line with the standard of normal humanity, and people should have this kind of attitude when doing things. This is a relatively positive thing. That is to say, when doing something, you just need to be assiduous, give your all, fulfill your responsibilities and obligations, and live up to your conscience. For any person with normal humanity, conscience and sense, there is nothing more normal than this, and it is not an excessive demand. But what is excessive? It is the part that requires people not to stop "until their dying day." There is a problem with the phrase "until your dying day," which is that, not only must you be assiduous and give your all, but you must also offer up your life, and can only stop if you die, otherwise you cannot stop. It means you must sacrifice your life and a lifetime of effort. You cannot have selfish motives, and you cannot give up as long as you live. If you give up halfway rather than persevering until death, then this is not considered to be good moral conduct. This is a standard for measuring people's moral conduct in traditional culture. If, in doing something, a person was already assiduous and gave it their all within the scope of what they could achieve and for as long as they were willing to do it, but just didn't keep doing it until death, and gave up halfway and chose to undertake another cause or to rest and take care of themselves in their later years, this is not "bending to a task and striving to do your utmost until your dying day," so this person is not possessed of good moral conduct. How is that as a standard? Is it right or wrong? (Wrong.) Obviously, this standard does not accord with the instincts of normal humanity and the rights that normal people are entitled to. It doesn't just require people to be assiduous, to give their all, and nothing more, but rather, it compels people to keep going and not stop until they die—this is what it demands of people. No matter how assiduous you are, or how much you strive to give your all when doing something, as soon as you give up halfway because you are unwilling to continue, then you are not someone with good moral conduct; whereas, if you exert an average level of diligence and don't give your all, but keep going until death, then you are a person of good moral conduct. Is this a standard for measuring people's moral conduct in traditional culture? (Yes.) This is indeed a standard for measuring people's moral conduct in traditional culture. Looking at it in this way, does the requirement "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" meet the needs of normal humanity? Is this fair and humane as far as people are concerned? (No, it is unfair and inhumane.) Why do you say that? (It is not a requirement that is put forward within the scope of normal humanity, it is something that people are unwilling to choose, and it also goes against conscience and sense.) The main meaning of this standard is that it requires people to give up personal choices, and personal desires and ideals. If your qualities and talents can be put to serve society, the human race, the nation, your native land, and the rulers, then you should obey unconditionally, and you should have no other choices. You should give up your life to society, to the nation, to your native land, and even to the rulers, until you die. There can be no alternatives to the cause you must undertake in this life—you

cannot have any other choices. You can only live for the sake of the nation, the human race, society, your native land, and even the rulers. You can only serve them, and you must not have any personal aspirations, let alone selfish motives. You must not only give up your youth and devote your energy, but you must also give up your life, and that is the only way you can be a person of good moral conduct. What does humankind call such good moral conduct? Greater righteousness. What, then, is another way to express "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day"? How about the saying "Great chivalrous heroes do their part for their country and people," which is commonly heard? It states that so-called great chivalrous heroes must do their part for their country and their people. Must they do it for their family, parents, wives and children, brothers and sisters? Must they do it to fulfill their responsibilities and duties as a person? No. Rather, they must be loyal to and devote themselves to the country and the nation. This is another way of saying "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day." Being assiduous and giving your all, which the requirement "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" talks about, is just a saying that people can accept, and which is used to induce people to willingly "do their utmost until their dying day." Who is the object of this lifelong dedication? (The country and the nation.) So who represents the country and the nation? (The rulers.) That's right, it's the rulers. No one person or independent group can represent the country and the nation. Only the rulers can be called the spokespeople for the country and the nation. On the surface, the saying "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" doesn't tell people that they must assiduously do their part for the country, the nation, and the rulers, and give their all until they die. Nevertheless, the fact is that it compels people to dedicate their lives to rulers and devil kings until they die. This saying is not targeted at just any nonentity in society or among humankind; it is targeted at all those people who can make great contributions to society, to the human race, to their native land, to the nation, and especially to the rulers. In any dynasty, in any era, and in any nation, there are always some people with special gifts, abilities, and talents who are "appropriated" by society, and exploited and revered by rulers. Because of their special talents and abilities, and because they can put their talents and strengths to good use within society, the nation, their native land and the dominion of the rulers, in the eyes of these rulers they are often regarded as the kind of person who can assist them to rule humankind more effectively, and to better stabilize society and pacify public sentiment. This kind of person is often exploited by rulers, who hope that such people have no "lesser self" but only a "greater self," and that they can put their chivalrous spirit to good use and become great chivalrous heroes who have only the country and the people in their hearts, and that they can constantly worry about the country and the people, and even that they can bend to the task and strive to do their utmost until their dying day. If they can really do this, if they can assiduously serve the country and the people with all their strength, and are even willing to do it until death, then they undoubtedly become a capable aide to some ruler,

and are even recognized as the pride of the nation or society, or even of the entire human race, during a certain era. Whenever there is such a group of people in society during a certain era, or there is a handful of righteous loyalists who are feted as great chivalrous heroes, and who can bend themselves to the task of serving society, humankind, their native land, the nation, and the ruler, striving to do their utmost until their dying day, then this era is considered by humankind to be a glorious era of history.

How many great chivalrous heroes in Chinese history were able to bend to the task of serving their country and people, and strove to do their utmost until their dying day? Can you name some of them? (Qu Yuan, Zhuge Liang, Yue Fei, and so on.) In Chinese history, there are really a handful of famous figures who were able to worry about the country and the people, bend to the task of serving their country and nation and ensuring the survival of the people, and strive to do their utmost until their dying day. In every era of history, in China and beyond, whether in the political arena or among the general population, there are people—be they politicians or roving knights—who adhere to such traditional cultural sayings as “Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day.” Such people are able to scrupulously abide by the requirement “Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day” and are also able to rigorously adhere to this idea of serving the country and the people, and worrying about the country and the people. They are able to adhere to such sayings on moral conduct, and strictly require themselves to do these things. Of course, they do it for their fame, so that people remember them in the future. That’s one aspect. The other aspect, it has to be said, is that these behaviors emerge as a result of such people being inculcated and influenced by the ideas of traditional culture. So are these requirements that traditional culture places on people appropriate from the perspective of humanity? (No.) Why are they not appropriate? No matter how much ability a person has, or how gifted, talented, or knowledgeable they are, their identity and instinct are those of a human being, and it is impossible for them to go beyond this scope. They are just a bit more gifted and have a bit more quality than others, and rise above the average person in terms of their viewpoints on things, and have more diverse and flexible ways of doing things, and are more efficient, and achieve better results—that’s all. But no matter how efficient they are, or how good their results, they are still nothing more than common people in terms of their identity and status. Why do I say that they are still common people? Because a person who lives in the flesh, no matter how sharp their mind, or how gifted or high-caliber they are, only ever follows the laws of survival of created human beings, and nothing more than this. Take dogs, for example. However tall, short, fat or thin they are, or whatever breed they are, or however old they are, whenever they come into contact with any other dog, they usually distinguish that dog’s sex, personality, and attitude toward them by smelling its scent. This method of communication is dogs’ survival instinct, and it is also one of the laws and rules for dogs’ survival, which are formulated by God. Similarly, people also survive within the laws formulated by God. No matter how

sharp-witted or knowledgeable you are, no matter how high-caliber or talented you are, no matter how able you are, or how great your endeavors, every day you must have six to eight hours' sleep, and eat three square meals. You will feel hungry if you miss a meal, and thirsty if you don't drink enough. You must also exercise regularly to stay healthy. As you get older, your vision will become blurry and all sorts of ailments may befall you. This is the normal, natural law of birth, aging, illness and death, and it is ordained by God. No one can break this law, nor escape it. Based on this, no matter how capable you are, and irrespective of your caliber and talent, you are still a common person. Even if you could put on wings and fly two circles around the sky, in the end you must still come back down to earth and walk around on two legs, and rest when tired, eat when hungry, and drink when thirsty. This is human instinct, and this instinct is what God has ordained for you. You can never change it, nor can you escape it. No matter how great your abilities, you cannot violate this law, and you cannot go beyond this scope. Therefore, no matter how capable people are, their identity and status as people do not change, and neither do their identity and status as created beings. Even if you can make contributions to humankind that are just that little bit special and outstanding, you are still a human being, and whenever you encounter danger, you will still feel fearful and panicked, go weak at the knees, and even lose control over your bodily functions. Why might you behave like this? Because you are human. Since you are human, you have these behaviors that human beings ought to have. These are the laws of nature, and no one can escape them. Just because you have made many outstanding contributions, it certainly doesn't mean that you become superhuman, or extraordinary, or cease to be a normal person. All of that is impossible. Therefore, even supposing you can bend to the task of serving the country and nation, and strive to do your utmost until your dying day, because you live within the scope of normal humanity you will have to bear a very great pressure deep down in your heart! You require yourself to worry about the country and the people all day long, and to make room for the whole population and country in your heart, in the belief that the size of the stage is determined by the size of your heart—but is that the case? (No.) A person will never become different from ordinary people solely by thinking outside the box, nor will they be different from or superior to ordinary people, or be permitted to violate the rules of normal humanity and the laws of survival just because they have special gifts or talents, or because they have made outstanding contributions to the human race. Therefore, this requirement placed on humankind to "bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" is very inhumane. Even if a person has greater talent and ideas than ordinary people, or better foresight and judgment, or is better than ordinary people at dealing with matters, or better at viewing and reading people—or no matter how they are better than ordinary people—they live in the flesh and must still follow the laws and rules of survival of normal humanity. Since they must abide by the laws and rules of survival of normal humanity, is it not inhumane to make unrealistic demands on them, which do not conform to humanity? Is it not

trampling on their humanity in a way? (Yes.) Some people say: “With these gifts and talents that Heaven has given me, I am extraordinary, and no ordinary person. I should keep everything under heaven in my heart—the people, the nation, my native land, and the world.” Let Me tell you that keeping these things in your heart is an extra burden, imposed on you by the ruling class and Satan, so by doing this you are putting yourself on the path of doom. If you want to keep the world, the people, the nation, your native land, and the ideals and desires of the rulers in your heart, then you will die an early death. If you keep these things in your heart, it is like perching on a powder keg and sitting on a sack of explosives. It is a very dangerous thing to do, and totally meaningless. When you hold these things in your heart, you make demands on yourself, by thinking “I must bend to the task and strive to do my utmost until my dying day. I must contribute to the great cause of the nation and humankind, and I must give up my life to the human race.” Having such great and lofty ambitions will only lead you to a premature end, an unnatural death, or total ruin. Think about it, how many of those famous historical figures who kept the world in their hearts died a happy death? Some committed suicide by throwing themselves into the river, some were executed by rulers, some were beheaded on the guillotine, and some were throttled to death with rope. Is it possible for human beings to keep the world in their hearts? Are the great causes of one’s native land, the prosperity of the nation, the destiny of the country, and the fate of humankind things that one can carry on their shoulders and make room for in their heart? If you can make room in your heart for your parents and children, your nearest and dearest, your own responsibilities and the mission entrusted to you by Heaven, then you are already doing very well, and are already fulfilling your responsibilities. You needn’t worry yourself about the country and the people, and you don’t need to be a great chivalrous hero. Who are those people who always want to keep the world, the nation, and their native land in their hearts? They are all overambitious people who overestimate their abilities. Is your heart really so big? Are you not being overambitious? Where exactly does your ambition come from? What can you do once you keep these things in your heart? Whose destiny can you manipulate and control? You can’t even control your own destiny, and yet you want to keep the world, the nation, and humankind in your heart. Is this not the ambition of Satan? So, for those who regard themselves as able people, scrupulously abiding by the requirement to “bend to the task and strive to do their utmost until their dying day” is following the path to ruin, it is seeking death! Whoever wants to worry about the country and the people, and bend to the task of serving the people and their native land, and strive to do their utmost until their dying day, is heading for their doom. Are these people lovable? (No, they are not lovable.) Not only are these people not lovable, but they are even a bit pathetic and laughable, and really foolish to the extreme!

As a person, you must fulfill your obligations and responsibilities within the family, properly play your role and fulfill your responsibilities in any social or ethnic group, abide by the laws and regulations of society, and act rationally, rather than say high-sounding

things. Doing what people can and should do—this is what is appropriate. As for the family, society, country, and people, you don't need to bend to the task of serving them and strive to do your utmost until your dying day. You only need to do your duty in God's family with all your heart, mind, and strength, and nothing more. How then should you do your duty? It is enough to follow God's words and abide by the truth principles as required by God. You don't need to keep God's will, His chosen people, His management plan, His three-stage work, and His work of saving humankind in your heart all day long. It's not necessary to hold these things in your heart. Why isn't it necessary? Because you are an ordinary person, a nonentity, and because you are a created being in God's hands, the stance you should adopt and the responsibility you should bear is to honestly perform your duty, accept God's sovereignty and arrangements, submit to all that God orchestrates, and that is enough. Is this requirement excessive? (No, it isn't.) Does God ask you to sacrifice your life? (No.) God does not require you to sacrifice your life, whereas this saying on moral conduct requires that "as long as you have even the smallest modicum of ability, heart, and chivalrous spirit, then you should step forward and bend to the task of serving your native land, and serving the nation. Give up your life, abandon your family and relatives, abandon your responsibilities. Place yourself in the midst of this society, among this human race, and take on the great cause of the nation, the great cause of reviving the country, and the great cause of saving all humankind, until you die." Is this an extreme requirement? (Yes.) Once humans accept extreme ideas such as these, they believe themselves to be lofty. Particularly in the case of some people with special talents and especially big ambitions and desires, they seek to go down in history, and be remembered for generations to come, and require themselves to undertake some cause in this life, so they especially value and venerate the views of traditional culture. Just like the sayings "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day," and "Death may be weightier than Mount Tai, or lighter than a feather," which are put forward by traditional culture, such people are determined to be weightier than Mount Tai. What is meant by the saying "Death may be weightier than Mount Tai"? It's not about dying for insignificant gains, nor is it for the sake of leading the life of an ordinary person, or fulfilling the duty of a created being, or following the laws of nature. Rather, it's about dying for the great cause of humankind, for the revival of the nation, for the prosperity of the country, and for the development of society, and to steer the course of humankind. These unrealistic thoughts of humans have thrust them into the eye of the storm. Is this any way for people to live happily? (No.) They will not live happily. Once people live in the eye of the storm, they think and act differently from ordinary people, and also chase after different things. They want to enact their ambitious plans, accomplish major undertakings and great exploits, and achieve big things with a wave of their arm. Gradually some people get into politics, because only the political arena can satisfy their desires and ambitions. Some people say: "The political arena is too murky, I won't get involved in politics, but I still have this desire to

contribute something to the just cause of humankind." So they join a nonpolitical organization. Some others say: "I won't join a nonpolitical organization. I'll be a lone hero, putting my expertise to best use by robbing the rich to help the poor, and specializing in killing corrupt officials, local tyrants, evil gentry, wicked police, bandits and bullies, and helping the common people and the poor." No matter which path they take, they do it under the influence of traditional culture, and none are the right path. No matter how much people's expressions accord with social trends and popular tastes, they are inevitably influenced by traditional culture, because humankind always regards expressions such as "worry about the country and the people," "keep everything under heaven in one's heart," "great chivalrous heroes," and "the just cause of one's native land" as goals to pursue and devote themselves to, bending to the task and striving to do their utmost until their dying day. This is the reality of the situation. Has anyone ever said, "What I want in life is to become a farmer, bending to the task and striving to do my utmost until my dying day"? Has anyone ever said, "I'll herd cattle and sheep for the rest of my life, bending to the task and striving to do my utmost until my dying day"? Has anyone used this saying in these circumstances? (No.) People use the saying "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" with a kind of ambition and unrealistic desire, using this pleasant-sounding rhetoric to conceal the desires and ambitions inside themselves. Of course, the saying "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" has also spawned such unrealistic and perverted thoughts and practices as worrying about the country and the people, and having everything under heaven in one's heart, which have harmed a significant number of idealists and visionaries.

Now that we have dissected the saying "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" and fellowshiped extensively on it, do you understand everything that was said? (Yes.) In summary, we can now be certain that this saying is not positive, and has no positive or practical meaning. So what kind of effect does it have on people? Is this saying deadly? Does it demand people's lives? Is it appropriate to call it a "deadly saying"? (Yes.) The fact is that it takes your life away. It uses nice-sounding words to make you feel how great and glorious it is to be able to spend your life bending to a task and striving to do your utmost until your dying day, and what a big-hearted person that makes you. Having such a big heart means you no longer have room for thoughts of firewood, rice, oil, salt, soy sauce, vinegar, tea, and other such trappings of domesticity, let alone taking care of your wife and children, or longing for a warm bed. How can it be okay for a big-hearted person to do without a few special things? Is it too mundane for you to only have room in your heart for things like firewood, rice, oil, salt, soy sauce, vinegar, and tea? You must make room in there for things that the average person cannot, such as the nation, the great enterprises of your native land, the destiny of humankind, and so on—this is "when Heaven is about to confer great responsibility on a person." Once people get this kind of idea, they will aspire even more to bend to the

task and strive to do their utmost until their dying day, using this saying about moral conduct to constantly spur themselves on, and thinking, “I must bend to the task of serving the destiny of my native land and humankind, and strive to do my utmost until my dying day, this is my lifelong endeavor and aspiration.” But it turns out that they are not able to shoulder the great cause of their native land and nation, and become so tired that they vomit blood—bending to the task and striving to do their utmost ultimately causes their death. Such people don’t know how people should live, or what humanity is, or what human feelings are, or what love is, or what hate is, and even cry so hard worrying about the country and the people that they run out of tears, and until their dying breath they still cannot let go of the great undertaking of their native land and nation. Is “Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day” a deadly saying that demands people’s lives? Don’t such people die a pitiful death? (Yes.) Even at the point of death, such people refuse to abandon their hollow thoughts and ideals, and in the end they die with grievances and hatred inside them. Why do I say that they die with grievances and hatred inside them? Because they can’t let go of the nation, their native land, the fate of humankind, and the mission entrusted to them by the rulers. They think, “Alas, my life is too short. If only I could live a few thousand years more, I would see where the future of humankind is headed.” They spend their lifetime holding everything under heaven in their hearts, and in the end they still can’t let go of it. Even at the point of death, they don’t know what their own identity is, or what they should or shouldn’t do. The fact is that they are ordinary people, and ought to lead the lives of ordinary people, but they have accepted the deception of Satan and the poison of traditional culture, and regard themselves as the world’s saviors. Is that not pitiful? (Yes.) It is pitiful in the extreme! Tell Me, if Qu Yuan hadn’t been influenced by this traditional idea of the greater righteousness of the nation, would he have committed suicide by throwing himself into a river? Would he have taken such extreme action by ending his own life? (No.) He most certainly would not have. He was a victim of traditional culture, who rashly ended his life before he had lived it to the end. If he had not been influenced by these things, and hadn’t worried about the country and the people, and had instead focused on living his own life, would he have been able to reach old age and die naturally? Could he have died a normal death? If he hadn’t aspired to bend to a task and strive to do his utmost until his dying day, could he have been happier, freer, and more at peace in life? (Yes.) That is why “Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day” is a deadly saying that demands people’s lives. Once a person is infected with this kind of thinking, they start spending all day agonizing over the country and the people and end up worrying themselves to death, without however being able to change the current state of affairs. Is their life not robbed by this idea and view of bending to a task and striving to do their utmost until their dying day? Such ideas and views are indeed deadly and demand people’s lives. Why do I say that? Who can make room in their heart for the fate of a country or nation? Who can shoulder such a burden? Is this not overestimating one’s

abilities? Why do people tend to overestimate their abilities? Do some people bring it all upon themselves? Is it that they are willing to do this on their own initiative? The fact is that they are victims, but of what? (The ideas and views that Satan instills in people.) That's right, they are victims of Satan. Satan instills these ideas in people, telling them that "you must hold everything under heaven in your hearts, keep the populace in your hearts, worry about the country and the people, be a knight-errant, a righteous person who robs the rich to help the poor, and contribute to the destiny of humankind, bending to the task and striving to do your utmost until your dying day, rather than leading an unremarkable life. Why fulfill family and social responsibilities? It's not worth mentioning those things, the people who do them are just like ants. You are not an ant, and neither should you be a sparrow. Rather, you should be an eagle, and must spread your wings and soar, and have great aspirations." Such incitement and instigation confuses people into thinking, "That's exactly right! I can't be a sparrow, I must be an eagle soaring high." However, they cannot fly high, no matter how hard they try, and finally they drop down dead from exhaustion, having ruined themselves of their own making. The fact is that you are nothing. You are not a sparrow, nor are you an eagle. So what are you? (A created being.) That's right, you are an ordinary person, an ordinary created being. It's okay to skip one of your three meals a day, but it's not okay to go without eating for days on end. You will get old, you will get sick, you will die, you are just an ordinary person. People with a bit of talent and ability can become overwhelmingly arrogant, and after being encouraged, enticed, egged on, and deluded in this way by Satan, they are confused into actually thinking that they are the saviors of the world. They waltz in and sit at the Savior's place, and bend to the task of serving the country and the nation and strive to do their utmost until their dying day, and they think nothing of humankind's mission, responsibilities, obligations, or life, which is the most precious thing that God bestows on people. Consequently, they feel that life is not important or precious, that the cause of their native land is the most precious thing, that they must hold everything under heaven in their heart, and worry about the country and the people, that by doing so they will have the most precious of characters and the noblest of morals, and that all people should live like this. Satan instills these thoughts in people, deluding them and encouraging them to cast off their identities as created beings and ordinary people, and to do some things that do not correspond with reality. What is the outcome of this? They drive themselves along the path to their doom, and unwittingly go to extremes. What does "go to extremes" mean? It means straying further and further from God's requirements for human beings, and from the instincts that God preordained for humankind. Eventually such people reach a dead end, which is the path to their own doom.

Regarding how people should live, what are God's requirements toward humankind? The fact is that they are very simple. They are to assume the proper place of a created being and to perform the duty that a person should perform. God didn't ask you to be superhuman or an eminent person, nor did He give you wings to fly in the sky. He only

gave you two hands and two legs that allow you to walk on the ground one step at a time, and to run when necessary. The internal organs that God created for you digest and absorb food, and provide nutrition for your whole body, so you must stick to a routine of having three meals a day. God has given you free will, the intellect of normal humanity, and the conscience and sense that a human being should possess. If you use these things well and correctly, follow the laws for survival of the physical body, properly look after your health, steadfastly do what God asks of you, and achieve what God requires you to achieve, then that is enough, and it is also very simple. Has God asked you to bend to the task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day? Has He asked you to torment yourself? (No.) God does not require such things. People should not torment themselves, but should have some common sense and properly cater to the body's various needs. Drink water when you are thirsty, supplement your diet when hungry, rest when tired, exercise after sitting down for a long time, go to the doctor when you are sick, stick to your three meals a day, and maintain the life of normal humanity. Of course, you should also keep up your normal duties. If your duties involve some specialist knowledge that you don't understand, you should go study and practice it. This is normal life. The various principles of practice that God puts forward for people are all things that the intellect of normal humanity can grasp, things that people can understand and accept, and which do not exceed the scope of normal humanity in the slightest. They are all within humans' scope of attainment, and in no way overstep the bounds of what is proper. God does not require people to be superhuman or eminent people, whereas sayings about moral conduct compel people to aspire to be superhuman or eminent people. Not only must they take on the great cause of their country and nation, but they are also required to bend to the task and strive to do their utmost until their dying day. This compels them to give up their lives, which runs completely counter to God's requirements. What is God's attitude toward people's lives? God keeps people safe in every situation, and guards them from falling into temptation and other dangerous predicaments, and protects their lives. What is God's aim in doing this? It is to make people lead good lives. What is the purpose of making people lead good lives? He does not compel you to be superhuman, nor to hold everything under heaven in your heart, nor to worry about the country and the people, and much less to take His place in ruling over all things, orchestrating all things, and ruling over humankind. Rather, He requires you to assume the proper place of a created being, to fulfill the duties of a created being, to perform the duties that people should perform, and to do what people should do. There are many things which you should do, and they do not include ruling over the destiny of humankind, holding everything under heaven in your heart, or holding humankind, your native land, the church, God's will, or His great undertaking of saving humankind in your heart. These things are not included. So what do the things that you should do include? They include the commission that God entrusts to you, the duties God gives you, and every requirement that God's house places on you in every period. Is this not simple? Is

it not easy to do? It is very simple and easy to do. But people always misunderstand God and think that He doesn't take them seriously. There are those who think, "People who come to believe in God shouldn't see themselves as being so important, they shouldn't be preoccupied with their physical body, and should suffer more, and not go to bed too early at night, because God may be unhappy if they go to bed too early. They should get up early and go to bed late, and toil through the night performing their duty. Even if they don't produce results, they must still stay up until two or three o'clock in the morning." As a result, such people drive themselves into the ground until they are so exhausted that even walking takes a supreme effort, and yet they say that performing their duties is what makes them exhausted. Is this not caused by people's foolishness and ignorance? There are others who think, "God is not happy when we wear clothes that are a bit special and nice, nor is He happy that we eat meat and nice food every day. In God's house, we can only bend to our task and strive to do our utmost until our dying day," and they feel that as believers in God, they must fulfill their duty until death, otherwise God will not spare them. Is that actually the case? (No.) God requires people to fulfill their duty with responsibility and loyalty, but He doesn't compel them to be hard on their bodies, and much less does He ask them to be careless and perfunctory, or to while away the time. I see that some leaders and workers arrange people to perform their duties in this way, not demanding efficiency but only squandering people's time and energy. The fact is that they are wasting people's lives. In the end, in the long run, some people develop health problems, and back trouble, and their knees hurt, and they feel dizzy whenever they look at a computer screen. How can this be? Who caused this? (They caused it themselves.) God's house demands that everyone rests by no later than 10 p.m., but some people don't go to bed until 11 or 12 p.m., which impacts on other people's rest. Some people even reproach those who take normal rest, for coveting life's comforts. This is wrong. How can you do a good job if your body is not well rested? What does God say about this? How does God's house regulate this? Everything should be done according to God's words and the stipulations of God's house, and only this is correct. Some people have absurd understandings, always going to extremes, and even controlling others. This is not in line with the truth principles. Some people are just absurd fools with no discernment whatsoever, and they think that to perform their duties, they must stay up late, even when they are not busy with work, not allowing themselves to sleep when they are tired, not permitting themselves to tell anyone if they are ill, and even worse, not allowing themselves to see a doctor, which they regard as a waste of time that delays the performance of their duty. Is this point of view correct? Why do believers still come up with such absurd views after hearing so many sermons? How are the work arrangements of God's house regulated? You must rest punctually by 10 p.m., and get up at 6 a.m., and you must ensure that you get eight hours' sleep. In addition, it is even repeatedly emphasized that you should look after your health by exercising after work, and stick to a healthy diet and routine, so as to avoid health issues while

performing your duty. But some people just don’t get it, they can’t adhere to principles or abide by rules, and stay up late needlessly and eat the wrong kind of things. Once they make themselves ill, they are unable to perform their duty, and by then it’s pointless having regrets. I heard recently that some people have fallen ill. Is this not caused by them doing their duty without adhering to the principles and acting recklessly? It’s true that you do your duty earnestly, but you cannot violate the natural laws of your body. If you do violate them, you will make yourself ill. You absolutely must have a general understanding of how to look after your health. You should exercise when appropriate, and eat at regular times. You can’t binge or drink too much, and you can’t be a picky eater or have an unhealthy diet. In addition, you need to regulate your mood, pay attention to living before God and practicing the truth, and act according to the principles. That way, you will have peace and joy in your heart, and won’t feel hollow or depressed. In particular, if people cast off corrupt dispositions and live out normal humanity, then their state of mind will be completely normal and their body will be healthy. I have never told you to go to bed late and get up early, or to work more than ten hours a day. It is all because people do not behave according to the rules and do not abide by the arrangements of God’s house. Ultimately, people are so ignorant that they take their health for granted. I saw that in some places, people were always performing their duties indoors, and weren’t going out to get some sun or stay active, so I made arrangements for people to find them some fitness equipment and told them to exercise once or twice a week, which corresponds to a healthy routine. People who don’t do proper exercise will naturally become ill, and this also affects their normal lives. Once I make such arrangements, do I need to check up on who is exercising and how frequently? (No.) I don’t need to, I have fulfilled My responsibility, I have made My point, and told you with all sincerity what you should do, without a word of a lie, and you just need to do as instructed. But people don’t take it in, they think they are young and healthy, so they don’t take My words seriously. If you don’t value your own health, it’s unnecessary for Me to concern Myself with it—just don’t blame others when you fall ill. People don’t pay attention to doing exercise. One aspect is because they have some wrong ideas and views. The other is that they also have a fatal problem, which is laziness. If people have a minor physical ailment, all they need do is pay attention to looking after their health and be more active. But some people would rather go and get an injection or take medication once they fall ill, than do exercise and look after their health. This is caused by laziness. People are lazy and unwilling to exercise, so there is no point saying anything to them. In the end, they can’t blame others when they fall ill; they know deep down what the real reason is. Everyone should do a normal amount of exercise every day. Every day I have to do at least one or two hours’ walking and some necessary exercises. This helps not only to strengthen My constitution, but also to prevent illness and make Me feel better physically. Exercise is not just only about preventing illness, it is also a normal physical need. In this matter, God’s requirement for human beings is

that they have a modicum of insight. Don't be ignorant, and don't be hard on your body, but follow its natural laws. Don't abuse your flesh, but don't be overly preoccupied by it either. Is this principle easy to grasp? (Yes.) It's actually very easy to grasp, the crux is whether people put it into practice. What is another of people's fatal weaknesses? It is that they are always letting their imagination run away with them, thinking, "If I believe in God, I won't get sick, I won't grow old, and of course, I certainly won't die." This is utter nonsense. God does not do these supernatural things. He saves people, makes promises to them, and asks them to pursue and understand the truth, cast off their corrupt dispositions, attain His salvation, and enter the beautiful destination of humankind. But God has never promised people that they will not fall ill or grow old, nor has He promised people that they will not die. And of course, God has certainly not placed any requirement on people that they should "bend themselves to a task and strive to do their utmost until their dying day." When it comes to doing one's duty and the church's work, and what hardships to endure, what to forsake, what to expend, and what to let go of, people should act according to the principles. When dealing with one's own physical life and bodily needs, people should have some common sense, and should not violate the normal needs of their body, let alone the laws and rules that God has established for people. Of course, this is also the bare minimum of common sense that people should possess. If people don't even know how to deal with the needs and laws of their physical body, and don't have any common sense whatsoever, but only rely on imaginings and notions, and even have some extreme ideas and adopt some extreme methods for treating their physical body, then such people have an absurd understanding. What kind of truth can people with this kind of caliber comprehend? There is a question mark here. How does God require people to treat their physical body? When God created people, He established rules for them, so He requires you to treat your physical body according to such rules. This is the requirement and standard that God sets for people. Don't rely on notions, and don't rely on imaginings. Do you understand?

Under the inculcation and influence of this saying on moral conduct, "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day," people don't know how to treat their physical body or how to lead a normal life. This is one aspect. The other aspect is that people don't know how to deal with their death, nor how to live in a way that is meaningful. Let us look, then, at God's attitude toward dealing with the death of people. No matter what the aspect of the duty being performed, God's aim is for people, in the process of doing their duty, to understand the truth, to put it into practice, to cast aside their corrupt dispositions, to live out the likeness of a normal person, and to reach the standard for attaining salvation, rather than rushing headlong toward death. Some people get a serious illness or cancer and think, "This is God asking me to die and give up my life, so I will obey!" In fact, God did not say that, nor did such an idea occur to Him. This is nothing more than people's misunderstanding. So what does God mean?

Everyone lives a certain number of years, but their lifespans are different. Everyone dies when God determines it, at the right time and place. This is all ordained by God. He makes it happen according to the time He ordained for that person's lifespan and the place and manner of their death, rather than letting anyone die due to some arbitrary matter. God regards a person's life as very important, and He also regards a person's death and the ending of their physical life as very important. All of this is ordained by God. Looking at it from this point of view, whether God requires people to perform their duties or to follow Him, He doesn't ask people to rush headlong toward death. What does this mean? It means that God doesn't require you to be prepared to give up your life at any time for the sake of performing your duty or expending for God, or for the sake of His commission. You don't need to make such preparations, you don't need to have such a mindset, and you certainly don't need to plan or think that way, because God doesn't need your life. Why do I say that? It goes without saying that your life belongs to God, it was He who bestowed it, so what would He want it back for? Is your life valuable? From God's perspective, it is not a question of whether or not it is valuable, but only what role you play in God's management plan. As far as your life is concerned, if God wanted to take it away, He could do it at any time, at any place and at any minute. Therefore, any person's life is important to themselves, and is important to their duties, obligations and responsibilities, and also to God's commission. Of course, it is also important to their role in God's overall management plan. Although it is important, God doesn't need to take your life away. Why? When your life is taken away, you become a dead person, and have no further use. Only when you are alive, living among the human race that God rules over, can you play the role that you are meant to play in this life, and fulfill the responsibilities and obligations that you are meant to fulfill, and the duties that God requires you to perform in this life. Only when you exist in this form can your life have value and realize its value. So, do not casually utter such phrases as "dying for God" or "giving up my life for God's work," and don't repeat them, or keep them in your mind or deep in your heart; it is unnecessary. When a person constantly wants to die for God, and to offer themselves and give up their life for their duty, this is the most contemptible, unworthy, and despicable thing. Why? If your life is over, and you no longer live in this fleshly form, how can you fulfill your duty as a created being? If everyone is dead, who will be left for God to save through His work? If there are no human beings who need saving, how will God's management plan be carried out? Would God's work of saving humankind still exist? Could it still continue? Looking at it from these aspects, is it not an important matter for people to take good care of their bodies and lead healthy lives? Is this not worth it? It most certainly is worth it, and people should do this. As for those stupid people who casually say, "If the worst came to the worst, I'd die for God," and who can carelessly make light of dying, and give up their lives, and abuse their bodies, what kind of people are these? Are they disobedient people? (Yes.) These are the most disobedient people, and should be despised and scorned. When someone is able to

casually say that they would die for God, it could be said that they casually think about ending their own life, giving up their duty, giving up the commission that God has entrusted to them, and preventing God's words from being fulfilled in them. Is this not a foolish way of doing things? You may casually and readily give up your life and say that you want to offer it to God, but does God need you to offer it? Your life itself belongs to God, and God can take it away at any time, so what use is there in offering it to Him? If you don't offer it but God needs it, will He ask you nicely for it? Will He need to talk it over with you? No, He won't. But what would God want your life for? Once God takes your life back, you will no longer be able to perform your duty, and a person will be missing from God's management plan. Would He be happy and satisfied about that? Who truly would be happy and satisfied? (Satan.) If you give up your life, what can you gain from doing that? And what can God gain by taking your life away? If you miss the opportunity to be saved, is it a gain or a loss for God? (A loss.) For God it is not a gain, but a loss. God allows you, as a created being, to have the life and assume the place of a created being in order to perform the duty of a created being and, by so doing, to be able to enter into the truth reality, obey God, understand His will and know Him, do His will, cooperate with Him in accomplishing His work of saving humankind, and follow Him to the very end. This is righteousness, and this is the value and meaning of your life's existence. If your life exists for this, and you live healthily for this, then this is the most meaningful thing, and as far as God is concerned, this is true dedication and cooperation—for Him this is the most satisfying thing. What God wants to see is a creature living in the flesh cast off their corrupt disposition amidst His chastisement and judgment, reject the myriad of fallacious ideas instilled in them by Satan, and be able to accept the truths and requirements from God, fully submit to the Creator's dominion, fulfill the duty that a created being should perform, and be able to become a true created being. This is what God wants to see, and this is the value and meaning of human life's existence. Therefore, for any created being, death is not the ultimate destination. The value and meaning of human life's existence are not to die, but to live for God, to exist for God and for one's own duty, to exist in order to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of a created being, to obey God's will, and to humiliate Satan. This is the value of a created being's existence, and also the meaning of its life.

As regards God's requirements toward people, the way God treats people's life and death is completely different from that described in the saying "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" in traditional culture. Satan constantly wants people to die. It feels uncomfortable seeing people alive, and is constantly figuring out how to claim their lives. Once people accept the fallacious ideas of traditional culture from Satan, all they want is to sacrifice their lives for their country and nation, or for their career, for love, or for their family. They constantly hold their own lives in contempt, are ready to die and lay down their lives anywhere and at any time, and do not regard the life given to them by God as the most precious thing and as something that should be

cherished. Unable to fulfill their duties and obligations during their lifetime, while they still possess the life that God has given them, they instead accept Satan's fallacies and nonsense, ever intent on bending to their task and striving to do their utmost until their dying day, and readying themselves to die for God at any time. The fact is that if you really do die, then you do it not for God, but for Satan, and you will not be remembered by God. Because only the living can glorify God and bear witness to Him, and only the living can assume the proper place of created beings and fulfill their duties, and thereby leave behind no regrets, and be able to humiliate Satan, and bear witness to the wondrous deeds and sovereignty of the Creator—only the living can do these things. If you don't even have life, all of this ceases to exist. Is this not so? (Yes.) Therefore, by putting forward the saying on moral conduct, "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day," Satan is unquestionably toying with and trampling on human life. Satan does not respect human life, but instead plays games with it, making people accept ideas such as "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day." They live by such ideas, and don't cherish life or regard their own life as precious, so that they casually give up their life, that most precious of things which God gives to people. This is a treacherous and immoral thing. As long as the deadline God ordained for you has not been reached, you should not speak lightly of giving up your life, no matter when. As long as you still have breath in you, don't give up, don't abandon your duty, and don't abandon God's entrustment and commission to you. Because the life of any created being exists only for the Creator, and only for His sovereignty, orchestration, and arrangements, and also only exists and realizes its value for the Creator's testimony and His work of saving humankind. You can see that God's view of human life is completely different from that of Satan. So, who truly cherishes human life? (God.) Only God, whereas people themselves do not know to cherish their own lives. Only God cherishes human life. Although human beings are not lovable or worthy of love, and are full of filth, rebelliousness, and the many kinds of absurd ideas and views instilled by Satan, and although they idolize and follow Satan, even to the point of opposing God, nevertheless, because human beings are created by God, and He bestows them with breath and life, only He cherishes human life, only He loves people, and only He continuously cares for and cherishes humankind. God cherishes human beings—not their physical bodies, but their lives, because only human beings who have been given life by God can ultimately become created beings that truly worship Him and bear witness to Him. God has work, commissions, and expectations for people, these created beings. Therefore, God cherishes and treasures their lives. This is the truth. Do you understand? (Yes.) So, once people come to understand the will of God the Creator, shouldn't there be principles for how they should treat the life of their physical body, and deal with the laws and needs by which it survives? What are these principles based on? They are based on God's words. What are the principles for practicing them? On the passive side, people must abandon the many kinds of fallacious views instilled in them

by Satan, expose and recognize the fallacies of Satan's views—such as the saying "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day"—which benumb, harm, and confine people, and abandon these views; in addition, on the active side, they must understand precisely what God the Creator's requirements are for humankind, and make God's words the foundation of everything they do. In this way, people will be able to practice correctly without deviations, and truly pursue the truth. What is pursuing the truth? (To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as the criterion.) To sum it up in these words is correct.

Today we have mainly fellowshiped about how to deal with death, as well as how to deal with life. Satan tramples on, ravages, and takes away people's lives. It confuses and benumbs people by instilling in them the wrong kinds of ideas and views, and makes people treat the most precious thing they have—their life—with contempt, thereby disrupting and destroying God's work. Tell Me, if all the people in the entire world wanted to die, and could do so casually, wouldn't society fall into chaos? Would it then be difficult for human beings to survive and exist? (Yes.) So, what is God's attitude toward human life? He cherishes it. God cherishes and treasures human life. What path of practice should people gain from these words of God? During their lifetime, while they still have life and breath, which are the most precious things given by God, people should properly pursue and understand the truth, and fulfill their duties as created beings according to God's requirements and principles, without leaving behind any regrets, so that one day they may assume the place of created beings and bear witness to and worship the Creator. In so doing, they will give value and meaning to their life, by living not for Satan, but rather for God's sovereignty, His work, and His testimony. People's lives have value and meaning when they can testify about God's deeds and work. But it cannot be said that human life has then reached its most glorious time. It is not quite right to say this, because that time has not yet been reached. Once you have truly understood the truth, gained the truth, gained knowledge of God, and can assume the place of a created being to worship God, and testify about God, about the sovereignty of the Creator, His deeds, and about His essence and identity, then the value of your life will have reached its peak and its fullest extent. The purpose and significance of saying all of this is to make you understand the value and meaning of life's existence, and how you should treat your own life, so that you choose the path you should walk based on this. This is the only way to be in accordance with God's will.

June 4, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (13)

In the last gathering we mainly fellowshiped on and dissected the saying “Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day” in traditional culture. The traditional cultural sayings and theories which Satan uses to indoctrinate people are not correct, and neither are the high-sounding words that it makes people abide by. On the contrary, they have the effect of confusing and misleading people, and confining their thinking. By educating, indoctrinating, and influencing the masses with these erroneous ideas and views in traditional culture, the ultimate aim is to reassure them into submitting to the dominion of the ruling class, and even serving the rulers with the loyalty of those who love their country and party, and who are determined to protect their home and safeguard the state. This suffices to show that the national government popularizes traditional cultural education in order to facilitate the rulers’ control over humankind and over all the various ethnic groups, and to further increase the stability of the rulers’ regime and the harmony and stability of society under their control. No matter how the ruling class propagates, promotes, and popularizes traditional cultural education, in general, these sayings on moral conduct have deluded and misled people, and severely disrupted their ability to differentiate truth from lies, good from evil, right from wrong, and positive things from negative things. It can also be said that these sayings on moral conduct completely invert black and white, mix the truth with lies, and delude the general public, causing people to be deceived by these opinions from traditional culture, within a context in which they do not know what is right and what is wrong, what is truth and what are lies, what things are positive and what things are negative, what comes from God, and what comes from Satan. The way in which traditional culture defines all sorts of things and categorizes all kinds of people as good or bad, kind or evil has disturbed, confused and misled human beings, even confining people’s thoughts within the various sayings on moral conduct that traditional culture advocates, so that they are unable to extricate themselves. As a result, many people willingly pledge allegiance to devil kings, showing blind devotion to the very end and honoring that pledge until death. This situation has continued until the present, and yet few people have come to their senses. Although nowadays many people who believe in God can recognize the truth, there are many stumbling blocks to their accepting it and putting it into practice. It can be said that these stumbling blocks mainly come from the ideas and views of traditional culture, which have long since taken root in their hearts. People learned them first and they remain dominant, already controlling people’s thoughts, which creates so many stumbling blocks and so much resistance to people accepting the truth and submitting to God’s work. This is one aspect. Another aspect is because people have corrupt dispositions, which are partly caused by the way that traditional culture deludes and corrupts people. Traditional culture has severely impacted and interfered with people’s views on how to measure good and evil, truth and lies, and caused people to have many mistaken notions, ideas,

and views. This has led to people being unable to positively accept things that are positive, beautiful and good, the laws of all things created by God, and the fact that God rules over all things. Instead, people are full of notions and all kinds of vague and unrealistic ideas. These are the consequences of the various ideas that Satan instills in people. From another perspective, all the various sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture are false sayings that corrupt people's thinking, disturb their minds, and damage their normal thought processes, severely impacting people's acceptance of positive things and the truth, and also seriously affecting people's pure comprehension and understanding of the laws and rules of all things created by God.

In one respect, the various sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture have disturbed the correct ways of thinking with which people distinguish right from wrong, as well as disrupting their free will. Moreover, having accepted these various sayings about moral conduct, humans have become hypocritical and fake. They are good at pretending—even to the extent of calling a deer a horse, inverting black and white, and treating negative, ugly, and evil things as positive, beautiful, and good things, and vice versa—and they have already reached the stage of venerating evil. Throughout human society, regardless of which period or dynasty, the things that humans advocate and revere are basically these sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture. Under the severe impact of these sayings on moral conduct, that is to say, under the progressively more profound and thorough indoctrination of these sayings on moral conduct from traditional culture, people unconsciously adopt these sayings as the capital of existence and laws of existence. People just wholly accept them without discernment, treating them as positive things, and as a guiding ideology and criteria for how they should deal with others, view people and things, and comport themselves and act. People treat them as supreme laws for making their way in society, or achieving fame and prestige, or becoming esteemed and revered. Take any group within any society or nation, in any period—the people they esteem, revere, and proclaim as the very best of the human race are nothing more than what humans call moral exemplars. No matter what kind of life such people lead behind the scenes, no matter what the intentions and motives of their actions and what their humanity essence is like, no matter how they really conduct themselves and deal with others, and no matter what the essence of the person wrapped under their cloak of beautiful and good moral conduct is like, no one cares about these things, nor tries to investigate further. As long as they are loyal, patriotic, and show allegiance to the rulers, the people idolize them and sing their praises, and even emulate them as heroes, because everyone takes a person's outward moral conduct as the basis for gaging whether they are kind or evil, good or bad, and for measuring their reputation. Although the Bible clearly documents the stories of a number of ancient saints and sages such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Job, and Peter, and the stories of many prophets and so on, and although many people are familiar with such stories, there is still no country, nation, or group that widely promotes the humanity and moral character of these ancient

saints and sages—or the examples of them worshiping God, or even their God-fearing hearts that they revealed—whether in society, throughout the nation, or among people. Not one country, nation, or group does this. Even countries where Christianity is the state religion, or countries with predominantly religious populations, still do not call attention to and revere the human character of these ancient saints and sages, or their stories of fearing and obeying God, as documented in the Bible. What issue does this indicate? Corrupt humankind has fallen to the point where people are sick of the truth, sick of positive things, and venerate evil. If God did not personally speak and work among people, clearly telling people what is positive and what is negative, what is right and what is wrong, what is beautiful and good, and what is ugly, and so on, then humankind would never be able to distinguish between good and evil, and would not be able to distinguish positive things from negative things. Ever since the beginning of the human race, and even in the course of human development, these deeds and historical records of God's appearances and work have been passed down to this day in some countries and ethnic groups in Europe and the Americas. However, humans are still unable to distinguish between positive and negative things, or between beautiful, good things and ugly, evil things. Not only are humans incapable of distinguishing, but they also actively and willingly accept all kinds of claims from Satan, such as sayings about moral conduct, as well as Satan's wrong definitions and concepts of various people, matters, and things. What does this show? Could it show that humankind simply does not have the instinct to autonomously accept positive things, nor the instinct to distinguish between positive and negative things, good and evil, right and wrong, truth and lies? (Yes.) Among humankind, two kinds of things prevail at the same time, one of which comes from Satan, while the other comes from God. But in the end, throughout human society and the entire history of humankind's development, the words spoken by God, and all the positive things that He teaches and elucidates to humankind cannot be revered by the entire human race, and cannot even become the mainstream among humankind, nor bring about correct thoughts in people, nor guide them to live normally among all the things created by God. People unconsciously exist under the guidance of Satan's various remarks, ideas, and concepts, and live under the guidance of these erroneous views. In living this way, they do so not passively, but actively. Despite what God has done, His accomplishments in creating and ruling over all things, and the many words left behind by God's work in some countries, as well as the definitions of various people, matters, and things that have been passed down to the present day, human beings still unconsciously live under the various ideas and views that Satan instills in people. These various ideas and views instilled and advocated by Satan are the mainstream ideas and views throughout human society, even in countries where Christianity is widespread. Whereas, no matter how many positive statements, positive ideas and views, and positive definitions of people, matters, and things God leaves to humankind by doing His work, they only exist in certain corners, or worse still, are just retained by a very small

number of people in minority ethnic groups, and only linger on the lips of some people, but cannot be actively accepted by humans as positive things to guide and lead them through life. Judging from the comparison of these two kinds of things, and from the different attitudes of humankind toward the negative things from Satan and toward the various positive things from God, the entire human race lies under the hands of the evil one. This is a fact, and can be affirmed with certainty. This fact primarily means that people's thoughts, ways of thinking, and ways of dealing with people, matters, and things are all controlled, swayed, and manipulated by the various ideas and views of Satan, and even confined by them. Throughout the history of human development, no matter in what stage or period—whether it be a relatively backward era, or the economically developed era of the present day—and whatever the region, nationality, or group of people, humankind's modes of existence, foundations of existence, and views for how to deal with people, matters, and things are all based on the various ideas instilled in people by Satan, rather than on the words of God. This is a very lamentable thing. God comes to do His work and save humankind in a situation in which humans have been so profoundly corrupted by Satan, and in which their thoughts and viewpoints, as well as their ways of looking at all kinds of people, matters, and things, and their ways of living and dealing with the world, have been completely confined by the ideas of Satan. One can imagine how tough and difficult God's work of saving humankind is within such a context. What kind of context is this? The context in which He comes to do His work is one in which people's hearts and minds have long since been completely imbued with and confined by satanic philosophies and poison. He does not come to do His work within a context in which people do not have any ideologies, or any views on people, matters, and things, but within a context in which people have ways of looking at various people, matters, and things, and in which these ways of looking, thinking, and living have been seriously confused and misguided by Satan. That is to say, God comes to do work and save humankind within a context in which humans have wholly accepted Satan's ideas and views, and are filled, imbued, bound, and controlled by satanic ideas. This is the kind of people God is saving, which shows just how difficult His work is. God wants such people who have been imbued with and confined by satanic ideas to come to recognize anew and distinguish between positive and negative things, beauty and ugliness, right and wrong, truth and evil fallacy, and finally reach the point where they can detest and reject all the various ideas and fallacies instilled by Satan from the bottom of their hearts, and thereby accept all the correct views and correct ways of living that come from God. This is the specific meaning of God's salvation of humankind.

No matter in what period of humanity, or what stage of development society has reached, or what the rulers' method of governance is—be it a feudal dictatorship or a democratic social system—none of these things change the fact that the various ideological theories and sayings about moral conduct advocated by Satan are rife in human society. From feudal society right through to modern society, although the scope,

guiding principles and modes of governance of rulers change time and again, and the numbers of the various ethnic groups, races, and different faith communities are also constantly changing, the poison of the various sayings in traditional culture that Satan instills in people is still rife and spreading, deeply taking root in people's thoughts and the innermost depths of their soul, controlling their modes of existence, and swaying their thoughts and views on people, matters, and things. Of course, this poison also severely affects people's attitudes toward God, and seriously corrodes humankind's willingness and yearning to accept the truth and the Creator's salvation. Therefore, the representative sayings about moral conduct that derive from traditional culture have always controlled people's thinking throughout the human race, and their dominant position and role among humankind have never changed in any period or social context. No matter in which period a ruler reigns, or whether they are diligent or backward-looking, or whether their method of governance is democratic or dictatorial, none of this can stem or eradicate the confusion and control exerted over human beings by the ideas and views of traditional culture. Whatever the historical period, or in whichever ethnic group, or however much human faith has progressed or undergone changes, and no matter how much humans have progressed and changed in terms of their thinking about life and social trends, the influence that sayings about moral conduct in traditional culture have on human thinking has never changed, and their effect on people has never lost its potency. From this point of view, sayings about moral conduct have confined people's thinking too deeply, severely impacting not only the relationship between human beings, but also people's attitudes toward the truth, and seriously affecting and damaging the relationship between created human beings and the Creator. Of course, it can also be said that Satan uses the ideas of traditional culture to tempt, delude, benumb, and confine the human race that God created, and uses these methods to snatch human beings away from God. The more widely that ideas on moral conduct in traditional culture are disseminated among humankind, and the deeper they take root in people's hearts, the farther humans will be from God, and the more remote the hope of their salvation. Think about it, before Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent into eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they believed that Jehovah God was their Lord and their Father. But when the serpent tempted Eve by saying, "Has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1), and "You shall not surely die: For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4–5), Adam and Eve yielded to the serpent's temptation, and their relationship with God quickly changed. What kind of change occurred? They no longer came before God naked, but looked for objects to cover and conceal themselves with, and avoided the light of God's presence; when God sought them out, they hid from Him and no longer talked to Him face to face as before. This change that occurred in Adam and Eve's relationship with God was not because they ate the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but because the words

spoken by the serpent—Satan—instilled a wrong kind of thinking in people, tempting and misleading them to doubt God, to stray from Him, and to hide from Him. Thus, people no longer wanted to behold the light of God's presence head-on, and didn't want to come before Him completely uncovered, and an estrangement was created between people and God. How did this estrangement come about? Not because of changes in the environment, or because of the passage of time, but because people's hearts changed. How did people's hearts change? People themselves didn't take the initiative to change. Rather, it was because of the words spoken by the serpent, which sowed discord in people's relationship with God, alienating them from God and making them avoid the light of God's presence, shun His care, and doubt His words. What were the consequences of such a change? People were no longer what they used to be, their hearts and thoughts were no longer so pure, and they no longer regarded God as God and as the One who was closest to them, but instead doubted and feared Him, and thus strayed from Him and developed a mentality of wanting to hide from God and stay away from Him, and this was the beginning of the fall of humankind. The beginning of the fall of humankind stemmed from the words Satan uttered, words that were poisonous, tempting, and misleading. The thoughts instilled in people by these words caused them to doubt, misunderstand, and be suspicious of God, estranging them from Him so that not only were they no longer willing to face God, but they also wanted to hide from God, and even no longer believed what He said. What did God say about this? God said: "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:16–17). Whereas, Satan said that people who ate fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil would not necessarily die. Because of the deceptive words spoken by Satan, people began to doubt and deny God's words, that is, people hatched opinions about God in their hearts, and they were no longer as pure as before. Because of these opinions and doubts that people had, they no longer believed in God's words, and stopped believing that God is the Creator and that there is an inevitable relationship between people and God, and even ceased to believe that God can protect and care for people. From the moment they stopped believing these things, people were no longer willing to accept God's care and protection, and of course were no longer willing to accept any word from God's mouth. The fall of humankind began as a result of the tempting words of Satan, and started from an idea and view that Satan instilled in people. Of course, it also started as a result of Satan tempting, misleading, and deceiving people. This idea and view that Satan instilled in people made them stop believing in God or His words, and also made them doubt God, misunderstand Him, suspect Him, hide from Him, stray from Him, deny what He said, deny His very identity, and even deny that people come from God. This is how Satan tempts and corrupts people step by step, disrupting and damaging their relationship with God, and also hindering humans from coming before God and accepting any words from His mouth. Satan is constantly

disrupting people's willingness to seek the truth and accept God's words. Powerless to resist Satan's various remarks, people are unconsciously eroded by them and imbued with them, and finally degenerate to the point of becoming enemies and antagonists of God. This is fundamentally the impact and harm that sayings on moral conduct have on humankind. Of course, by fellowshiping on these things we are also analyzing them from the root, so that people can gain a fundamental understanding of how Satan corrupts humankind and what methods it uses. Satan's primary tactics for corrupting humankind are to target people's thoughts and views, destroy the relationship between people and God, and gradually wrest them away from God step by step. Initially, upon hearing God's words, people believed them to be correct, and wanted to act and practice in accordance with them. It is in this situation that Satan used all kinds of ideas and words to corrode and disintegrate, little by little, the only bit of faith, resolve, and aspiration that people had, along with the few faintly positive things and positive wishes they held onto, replacing them with its own sayings, and its definitions, opinions, and notions of various things. In this way, people are unwittingly controlled by Satan's ideas, and become its captives and slaves. Is this not the case? (It is.) In the history of humankind, the more deeply and concretely humans accept Satan's ideas, so the relationship between humankind and God becomes increasingly distant, and so the message that "human beings are created beings and God is the Creator" becomes increasingly remote from people, and is no longer believed and acknowledged by as many people. Instead, this message is regarded as a myth and a legend, a non-existent fact, and an evil fallacy, and is even condemned as heresy by some people in today's society. It must be said that this is all the result and impact of the various evil fallacies of Satan that are widely disseminated among humankind. It must also be said that throughout the history of human development, under the guise of doing such positive things as teaching people, regulating their words and actions, and so on, Satan has dragged humankind step by step into the abyss of sin and death, taking humankind far from the light of God's presence, far from His care and protection, and far from His salvation. The Old Testament of the Bible records accounts of God's messengers coming to talk to people and live among them, but such things have ceased to exist in the past 2,000 years. The reason for this is that, among the entire human race, there is no longer anyone like the ancient saints and sages recorded in the Bible—such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Job, or Peter—and the entire human race has been imbued with and bound by Satan's ideas and remarks. This is the truth of the matter.

What we have just fellowshiped on is one aspect of the essence of sayings on moral conduct in traditional culture, and it also marks, proves, and symbolizes Satan's corruption of humankind. Looking at it from the essence of these issues, all human beings without exception—whether they be young children or elderly seniors, or whatever social class they live in, or whatever social background they come from—are confined by the various remarks of Satan, even without distinction of depth, and live

entirely within a mode of existence that is imbued with satanic ideas. Of course, what is the undeniable fact? That Satan is corrupting people. What it corrupts is not the various organs of humans, but rather their thoughts. Corrupting the thoughts of humans turns all of humankind against God, so that the human beings He created cannot worship Him, and instead use all kinds of ideas and views from Satan to rebel against God, and to resist, betray, and reject Him. This is Satan's ambition and cunning scheme, and of course it is Satan's true face, and this is how Satan corrupts humankind. However, no matter how many thousands of years Satan has corrupted humankind for, or how many facts point to Satan's corruption of humankind, or how erroneous and absurd the various ideas and views with which it corrupts humankind, and how deeply human thoughts are confined by them—in short, regardless of all this, when God comes to do His work of saving people, and when He expresses the truth, even if people live within such a context, God can still wrest them back from Satan's power, and can still conquer them. And of course, God can still make people understand the truth in His chastisement and judgment, know the essence and truth of their corruption, cast off their satanic dispositions, obey Him, fear Him and shun evil. This is the final result that will inevitably be achieved, and also a trend in which God's 6,000-year management plan certainly comes to fruition, and in which God appears to all countries and peoples with His glorification. Just as God's words say, "God is as good as His word, and His word will be accomplished, and that which He accomplishes lasts forever." This sentence is true. Do you believe that? (Yes.) This is a fact that will certainly come to pass. Because the last stage of God's work is the work of providing the truth and life to humankind. In the short space of just over thirty years, a considerable number of people have come before God, been conquered by Him, and now follow Him with unshakable resolve. They don't want any benefits from Satan, they are willing to accept God's chastisement and judgment, and His salvation, and are all willing to reassume their places as created beings and accept the sovereignty and arrangements of the Creator. Isn't this a sign of God's plan coming to fruition? (Yes.) This is an established fact and also a fact that has already come to pass, and of course it is something that is happening now and which has already happened. No matter how Satan corrupts humankind, or whatever methods it uses, God will always have ways of wresting humans back from Satan's power, saving them, bringing them back before Him, and restoring the relationship between humankind and the Creator. This is God's omnipotence and authority, and whether you believe it or not, that day will come sooner or later.

At the last gathering we fellowshiped on the saying about moral conduct "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day," and spent some time dissecting and exposing the requirements, expressions, and the ideas and views inherent in this saying, and people have gained a certain understanding of its essence. Of course, in terms of topics to do with this aspect, we also fellowshiped on what exactly God's intention is, what His attitude is, what truths this entails, and how people should view

death. After understanding the truth and God's intention, whenever people then encounter such things, they should look at such issues according to God's words and handle them according to the truth, so that they can meet God's requirements. Furthermore, the saying on moral conduct which we mentioned last time—"The silkworms of spring weave till they die, and candles burn out till their tears run dry"—is too superficial, and its realm of thought is too vulgar, so it is not worth dissecting further. The next saying on moral conduct that we will fellowship on, "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," is worth dissecting. Things that are worth dissecting occupy a certain place in people's thoughts and notions. During a particular period, they will sway people's thinking, their mode of existence, their path, and of course their choices. This is the consequence that Satan achieves by exploiting traditional culture to corrupt mankind. The saying "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" occupies a certain place in people's hearts and minds, that is to say, the kind of issue which this saying refers to is particularly representative. At critical junctures in the fate of their country, people will make choices based on this saying, and it will bind and restrict their thinking and normal thought processes. Therefore, such ideas and views are worth dissecting. Compared with the sayings we mentioned previously, namely "Don't pocket the money you pick up," "I'd take a bullet for a friend," "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid," "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring," "Bend to a task and strive to do your utmost until your dying day" and so on, the standard of moral conduct "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" occupies a higher realm in Satan's world. The sayings on moral conduct that we dissected previously refer to one type of person or one type of minor matter in life, all of which are limited, whereas this saying covers a wider scope. It does not concern things within the scope of the "lesser self," but rather touches on a number of issues and things to do with the "greater self." Therefore, it occupies a pivotal position in people's hearts, and must be dissected to see if it should occupy a certain position in people's hearts, and to ascertain how people should view this saying on moral conduct in a way that accords with the truth.

The saying "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" compels people to be mindful of their responsibility for their country's fate, by suggesting that everyone should be accountable for it. If you fulfill your responsibility for the fate of your country, the government will reward you with high honors and you will be viewed as a person of noble character; whereas, if you don't concern yourself with the fate of the country, and stand idly by while it flounders, and don't treat this as a matter of great importance, or you laugh about it, then this is viewed as completely failing to fulfill your responsibility. If you don't fulfill your duties and responsibilities when your country needs you, then you are not up to much, and you really are an insignificant person. Such people are cast aside and scorned in society, and are held in contempt and looked down upon by their peers. For any citizen of any sovereign state, the saying "Every person shares

responsibility for the fate of their country" is a saying that meets with people's approval, a saying that people can accept, and even a saying that is respected by humankind. It is also an idea that is regarded as noble by humankind. A person who is able to worry and be concerned about the fate of their native land, and have a deep sense of responsibility toward it, is a person with greater righteousness. People who worry and are concerned about their families have lesser righteousness, whereas those who care about their country's fate are people with a spirit of greater righteousness, and they of all people should be praised by the rulers and the people. In short, ideas like this are indisputably recognized as having positive significance for humans and serving to positively guide humankind, and of course they are also recognized as positive things. Do you think the same way too? (Yes.) It is normal for you to think this way. It means that your thinking is no different from normal people, and that you are ordinary people. Ordinary people can accept popularly held ideas, and all the various so-called positive, proactive, upward-looking, and noble ideas and remarks that come from the rest of humankind. These are normal people. Are ideas that are accepted and revered by ordinary people necessarily positive? (No.) Theoretically speaking, they are not positive, because they do not accord with the truth, they do not come from God, and they are not taught by God or spoken by Him to mankind. So what exactly are the facts? How should this matter be explained? I will explain it now in detail, and when I have finished speaking, you will know why the saying "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" is not a positive thing. Before I reveal the answer, first have a think about the saying "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country": Is it really a positive thing? Is it wrong to make people love their country? Some people say: "The fate of our native land has a bearing on our survival, our happiness, and our future. Doesn't God tell people to be dutiful to their parents, to raise their children well, and to fulfill their social responsibilities? What's wrong with us fulfilling a few responsibilities in our country? Isn't this a positive thing? Although it doesn't rise to the level of a truth, it ought to be a correct idea, right?" As far as people are concerned, these reasons are valid, are they not? People use these claims, these reasons, and even these justifications to argue the correctness of the saying "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country." So is this saying actually right or not? If it's right, what's right about it? If it's not right, what's wrong with it? If you can answer these two questions clearly, then you will really understand this aspect of the truth. There are others who say: "The saying 'Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country' is not true. Countries are ruled by rulers, and governed by political systems. Whenever politics are concerned, we have no responsibility, because God doesn't get involved in human politics. Therefore, we don't get involved in politics either, so this saying is of no concern to us; whatever relates to politics has nothing to do with us. Whoever gets involved in politics, and likes politics, is responsible for the fate of the country. We don't accept this saying, it is not a positive thing from our point of view." Is this explanation right or wrong?

(Wrong.) Why is it wrong? You know theoretically that this explanation doesn't add up, it doesn't address the root of the problem, and it is insufficient to explain the essence of the problem. It is only a theoretical explanation, but doesn't clarify the essence of this matter. No matter what kind of explanation it is, as long as it fails to touch on the specific essence of this issue, it is not a real explanation, it is not an accurate answer, and it is not the truth. So, what is wrong with the saying on moral conduct "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country"? What truth does this issue relate to? The truth in this regard cannot be explained clearly in one or two sentences. It would take a lot of explaining to make you understand the truth contained within. So let's fellowship on it in simple terms.

How should the saying "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" be viewed and discerned? Is it a positive thing? In order to explain this saying, let's first look at what a country is. What is the concept of a country in people's minds? Is the concept of a country that it is very big? Theoretically speaking, a country is the expanse of territory comprising all homes that are ruled by the same ruler and governed by the same social system. That is to say, a multitude of homes forms a country. Is that how society defines it? (Yes.) Only when there are small homes can there be a big home, and a big home denotes a country—this is the definition of a country. So is this definition acceptable? Do you inwardly identify with it? Whose tastes and interests is this definition best suited to? (The rulers.) That's right, it should be the rulers first and foremost. Because by having all households under their dominion, they have the power in their hands. So, as far as the rulers are concerned, this definition is a valid one, and they identify with it. No matter what the rulers' definition of a country is, for any common person, there is a distance between the country and every person in it. For common people, that is, the individual people in each country, their definition of a country is completely different to the definition espoused by the rulers or the ruling class. The way that the ruling class defines a country is based on their dominion and their vested interests. They stand on high and use their lofty vantage point and broad perspective laced with ambition and desire to define what a country is. For example, the rulers regard the country as their own home, their own land, and think that it is provided for their own enjoyment, and that every inch of the country, and every resource and even every person in it should belong to them and be under their control, and that they should be able to enjoy all this and lord it over people as they please. But common people do not have such desires, nor do they have such conditions, and of course they certainly don't have such a broad perspective for defining what a country is. So for common people, for any independent person, what is their definition of a country? If they are well educated and can read maps, they only know the size of their country's territory, and which neighboring countries surround it, and how many rivers and lakes it has, and how many mountains, how many forests, how much land, and how many people there are in their country…. Their concept of a country is nothing more than map-based and literal, just a theoretical

concept in writing, and is totally inconsistent with the country that exists in reality. For a person who is fairly well educated and has a certain social status, their concept of a country is something like that. So, how about the common people at the bottom of society? What is their definition of a country? In My view, these people's definition of a country is nothing more than their family's modest patch of land, the big willow tree at the eastern end of the village, the mountain at the western end, the road at the entrance to the village and the cars that often pass along the road, as well as some relatively sensational incidents that have happened in the village, and even some trivial tittle-tattle. For common people, the concept of a country is something like that. Although the boundaries of this definition are very small and its scope very narrow, as far as common people living in such a social context are concerned, it is very realistic and practical—to them, a country is no more than this. No matter what happens in the outside world, no matter what happens in the country, to them it is just some moderately important item of news that they can choose to listen to or not. So, what relates to their immediate interests? It is whether the cereal crop they planted this year will produce a bumper harvest, whether it will be enough to feed their family, what to plant next year, whether their land will be flooded, whether it will be invaded and occupied by bullies, and other such matters and things that relate closely to life, right down to things such as a building in the village, a stream, a trail, and so on. What they care about and talk about, as well as that which leaves a deep impression on their minds, is nothing but the people, matters, and things around them that are closely related to their lives. They have no concept of how big the scope of a country is, nor do they have any concept of a country's prosperity or decline. The more newfangled things are, and the more important the country's affairs, the further removed they are from such people. For these common people, the concept of a country is only the people, matters, and things that they can fit in their minds, and the people, matters, and things that they come into contact with in their lives. Even if they get information about the fate of the country, it is so far removed from them. Being far removed from them means that it does not occupy any place in their hearts, and will not affect their lives, so the prosperity and decline of the country has nothing to do with them. In their hearts, what is the fate of their country? It is whether the crops they planted this year are blessed by Heaven, whether the harvest is plentiful, how their family is getting by, and other minutiae of everyday life, whereas national affairs are of no relation to them. Matters of national importance, politics, the economy, education, science and technology, whether the country's territory has expanded or shrunk, places the rulers have visited, and what things have happened within the ruling class—these things are simply beyond the grasp of common people. Even if they could grasp them, what purpose would it serve? Even if, after dinner, they talked about what is happening to the ruling class, what could they do about it? After putting down their bowl and chopsticks, they still have to eke out an existence and go to work in the fields. Nothing seems as real as the crops in their fields that can yield a good harvest. What a

person cares about is what they hold in their heart. A person's horizons are only as broad as the things they fit into their heart. The horizons of ordinary people only stretch as far as the places they can see around them and the places they can go. As for the fate of their country and matters of national importance, they are so remote and out of reach. Therefore, when the fate of the country is at stake, or the country is facing invasion by a powerful enemy, they immediately think, "Will my crops end up getting seized by the invaders? This year, we are counting on selling those cereals to pay for our children to go to college!" These are the things that are of most practical relevance to common people, the things that they can grasp, and the things that their mind and spirit can bear. For ordinary people, the saying "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" is too onerous. They don't know how to go about doing it, and they don't want to bear this heavy burden and onerous responsibility. Common people's concept of a country is something like that. Therefore, the ambit of their lives, and the things that their thoughts and spirits dwell on, are nothing more than the soil and water of their hometown that provide them with three meals a day and give them all they need to grow, as well as the air and environment of their hometown. What else can there be besides these things? Even if some people go beyond the familiar surrounds of their hometown where they were born and raised, whenever the country is floundering and needs them to fulfill their responsibilities to the nation, no one thinks about protecting the whole country. What do people think about instead? All they can think about is fulfilling their responsibilities to protect their hometown and safeguard that plot of land they hold in their hearts, and even sacrificing their own lives to this end. No matter where people go, to them the word "country" is just a pronoun, a marker and a symbol. What really takes up considerable room in their hearts is not the country's territory, and much less the rulers' reign, but rather the mountain, the plot of land, the river, and the well that provide them with three meals a day, give them life, and help to sustain their life; that is all. This is the concept of a country in people's minds—it is so real, so concrete, and of course so precise.

Why is the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" always advocated in traditional culture, especially in thinking about moral conduct? This concerns both the reign of the ruler, and the intentions and aims of the people who champion this idea. If the definition of a country in every individual's mind was so insignificant, so concrete, and so real, who would protect the country? Who would uphold the reign of the ruler? Are there not problems here? There are indeed problems arising here. If everyone's concept of a country was like this, wouldn't the ruler be turned into a mere figurehead? If a ruler's country faced invasion by a powerful enemy and its defense just relied on the ruler alone, or on the ruling clique, would they not appear to be struggling, helpless, isolated, and weak? Thinkers responded to these problems by using their brains. They believed that in order to protect the country and uphold the reign of the ruler, it wasn't possible to rely solely on a small number of people to make contributions, but rather, it was necessary to stir up the entire population into serving the country's

ruler. If these thinkers directly told people to serve the ruler and protect the country, would the people be willing to do it? (No, they wouldn't.) People definitely wouldn't be willing, because the aim behind the request would be too blatant, and they wouldn't agree to it. Those thinkers knew that they must instill in people a pleasant-sounding, noble, and superficially grandiose expression, and tell them that whoever thinks this way is of noble moral conduct. That way, people would easily accept this idea, and even make sacrifices and contributions for the sake of this idea. Their aim would then be achieved, would it not? It was within this social context, and in response to the needs of rulers, that this saying and idea "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" came about. Human nature is such that no matter what idea emerges, there will always be some people who regard it as fashionable and avant-garde, and accept it on that basis. Does it not benefit the ruler that some people accept the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country"? It means that there will be people making sacrifices and contributions for the ruler's regime. Thus, the ruler has hope of reigning for a long time, do they not? And won't their reign then be more stable, relatively speaking? (Yes.) Therefore, when the ruler's reign comes under challenge or faces destruction, or their country is confronted with invasion by a powerful enemy, those who accept the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" will bravely and dauntlessly step forward to make a contribution or sacrifice their lives for the sake of protecting the country. Who is the ultimate beneficiary of this? (The ruler.) The ultimate beneficiary is the ruler. What becomes of those people who accept the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" and who are willing to give up their precious lives for it? They become stepping stones and expendable pawns of the ruler, they become victims of this idea. The common people living at the bottom of society do not have a definite, clear concept or a clear definition of what a country is. They don't know what a country is, nor how big a country is, and they know even less about the important matters about a country's fate. Because people's definition and concept of a country are vague, the ruling class uses the saying "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" to delude them and instill this idea into their minds, so that everyone will stand up to defend the country and put their lives on the line for the ruling class, and thus their aim will be achieved. In fact, as far as common people are concerned, no matter who rules the country, or whether the intruders are better or worse than the current rulers, in the end, their family's meager plot of land still has to be planted every year, and the tree at the eastern end of their village hasn't changed, the mountain at the western end of the village hasn't changed, the well in the center of the village hasn't changed either, and that's all that matters. As for what happens outside the village, how many rulers come and go, or how they rule the country, all this has no relation whatsoever to them. Such is the life of common people. Their life is so real and simple, and their concept of the country is as concrete as their concept of the family, only that it's bigger in scope than the family. Whereas, when the country is

invaded by a powerful enemy and its existence and survival are in the balance, and the ruler's reign is disturbed and destabilized, those people who accept that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" are dominated by this idea, and all they want to do is utilize their personal strengths to change these things that are affecting the country's fate and interfering with the ruler's reign. And what happens in the end? What do they actually change? Even if they manage to keep the ruler in power, does this mean that they did a righteous thing? Does it mean that their sacrifice was positive? Is it worthy of being remembered? Those people in a certain period of history, who set great store by the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," also vigorously upheld the spirit of this idea in defending the country and keeping the rulers in power, but the reign of the rulers they kept in power was backward-looking, bloody, and had no meaning or value for humankind. From this point of view, was the so-called responsibility fulfilled by these people positive or negative? (Negative.) One could say that it was negative, not worthy of being remembered, and was despised by people. On the contrary, common people do not identify deeply with the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," which is advocated by those scheming thinkers, nor do they actually accept and implement it. Therefore, their lives are relatively stable. Although their lifelong achievements aren't as impressive as those of people who give up their lives for the fate of their country, they have done a meaningful thing. What is this meaningful thing? Namely, that they don't artificially interfere with the fate of a country, nor with the process of determining who the country's rulers are. Instead, all they ask is to live a good life, work the land, defend their hometown, have food to eat all year round, and live a plentiful, comfortable, peaceful, and healthy life, without causing any trouble to their country, without asking their country for food or money, and paying the normal taxes when they fall due—this is fulfilling the responsibility that a citizen should fulfill. If you can be free from any interference from the ideas of thinkers, and live your own life as a common person in a down-to-earth manner according to your station, and be self-sufficient, then that is enough, and you have fulfilled your responsibility. This is the most important thing and the greatest responsibility that a person living on this earth should fulfill. Looking after one's own survival and one's own basic needs are the issues that should be resolved by oneself, whereas for important matters to do with the country's fate, and to do with how the rulers govern the country, common people have no ability to interfere or do anything about them. They can only leave all these matters to destiny, and let nature take its course. Whatever Heaven wills, so will it come to pass. Common people know very little, and besides, Heaven has not entrusted people with this kind of responsibility toward their country. Common people only have their own home in their hearts, and as long as they maintain their own home, that is enough, and they have fulfilled their responsibility.

Just like other sayings on moral conduct, "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" is an idea and view put forward by thinkers in order to keep rulers

in power, and of course it is also an idea and view advocated so that more people support the rulers. In fact, no matter what social class people live in, if they don't have any ambitions, desires, and don't want to get into politics or have anything to do with the ruling class, people's definition of a country from the perspective of humanity is nothing more than the places they can see in their line of sight, or the land that they can measure on foot, or a sphere within which they can live happily, freely, and lawfully. For anyone who has such a concept of a country, the land where they live and their sphere of life can give them a stable, happy, and free life, which is a basic need in their life. This basic need is also a direction and a goal that people strive to defend. As soon as this basic need is challenged, disturbed, or infringed on, people will definitely stand up and defend it spontaneously. This defense is justified, and it stems from the needs of humanity, and also the needs of survival. No one needs to tell people, "When your hometown and your habitat face invasion by a foreign enemy, you must stand up and defend them, stand up and fight the invaders." They will stand up and defend them automatically. This is human instinct, but also the need of human survival. So when it comes to a normal person, you don't need to use ideas such as "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" to encourage them to protect their homeland and their habitat. If someone really wants to instill such ideas in people, then their aim is not so simple. Their aim is not for people to defend their habitat, ensure their basic living needs, or so that people lead better lives. They have another aim, which is none other than to keep the rulers in power. People will instinctively make any sacrifice to protect their own habitat, and will consciously protect their own habitat and living environment to ensure that their basic survival needs are met, without need for others to use any bombastic expressions to tell them what to do, or how to stand up and protect their own homes. This instinct, this basic consciousness, is possessed even by animals, and is absolutely possessed by humans, who are created beings higher than any animal. Even animals will protect their habitat and range, their home, and their community from invasion by foreign enemies. And if animals have this kind of consciousness, then humans certainly do! Therefore, the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," which those thinkers proposed, is redundant to all members of the human race. And when it comes to the definition of a country deep within people's hearts, this idea is basically also redundant. But why did those thinkers still propose it? Because they wanted to achieve another aim. Their real aim was not to enable people to live better in their current habitat, nor to enable them to have a more stable, joyful, and happier living environment. They didn't set out from the perspective of protecting people, nor from the perspective of defending people's habitats, but from the perspective and standpoint of rulers, to instill people with the idea "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" and instigate them to possess this idea. If you don't possess such an idea, then your realm of thinking is regarded as inferior, and you will be ridiculed by everyone and looked down upon by any ethnic group; if you don't possess such an idea, if you don't have this greater

righteousness and this mindset, then you will be regarded as a person of inferior moral character, a selfish and contemptible lowlife. These so-called lowlifes are people despised in society, and who are discriminated against and despised by society.

In this world, in society, anyone born in a poor or backward country, or who comes from a low-status nation, no matter where they go, as soon as they declare their nationality, their status will immediately be determined and they will be regarded as inferior to others, looked down upon and discriminated against. If your nationality is that of a powerful country, you will have a very high status among any ethnic group, and will be regarded as superior to others. So, this idea that “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country” has an important place in people’s hearts. People have a very finite and concrete concept of a country, but because the way that the entire human race treats any ethnic group and anyone from a different country, and also the method and criteria by which it determines their status have much to do with their country’s fate, everyone is inwardly influenced to varying degrees by the idea that “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country.” So how should people shake off the influence of this idea? Let’s first look at how this idea influences people. Although people’s definition of a country extends no further than the specific environment in which they live, and people only want to maintain their basic right to live and their survival needs so that they can lead a better existence, nowadays the whole human race is constantly moving and circulating, and human beings are unconsciously accepting the idea that “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country.” That is to say, from the perspective of humanity, people do not want to accept those hollow and grand definitions of a country, such as “a great nation,” “a prosperous dynasty,” “a superpower,” “a tech power,” “a military power,” and so on. There are no such concepts in normal humanity, and people don’t want to be preoccupied by these things in their daily lives. But at the same time, when mixing with the rest of humankind, people nevertheless hope to have the nationality of a powerful country. In particular, when you travel overseas and are among people of other ethnicities, you will feel strongly that your country’s fate has a bearing on your vital interests. If your country is powerful, wealthy, and has a high status in the world, then your status among people will be elevated in keeping with your country’s status, and you will be highly regarded. If you come from a poor country, a small nation, or some obscure ethnic group, then your status will be lower, in keeping with your nationality and ethnicity. No matter what kind of person you are, or what your nationality is, or which race you belong to, if you only live within a small sphere, the idea “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country” will not have any influence on you. But when people from different countries throughout all humankind come together, the idea that “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country” is accepted by more people. This acceptance is not passive, but rather, it is a deeper realization from your subjective will that the saying “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country” is correct, because your country’s fate is

inextricably related to your status, reputation, and worth among people. At which point, you no longer feel that the concept and definition of your country is just the small place where you were born and raised. Instead, you hope that your country will become bigger and stronger. However, when you return to your own country, in your mind it once again becomes so specific to you. This specific place is not a shapeless nation, but rather the path, the stream, and the well in your hometown, and the fields of your home where you grow crops. Therefore, returning to your own country, as far as you are concerned, is more specifically returning to your hometown, returning home. And when you return home, it doesn't matter if the country exists or not, nor who the ruler is, nor how big the country's territory is, nor what the country's economic situation is, nor whether it is poor or rich—none of that matters to you. As long as your home is still there, then when you shoulder your travel bag with the intention of going back, you will have a direction and a goal. As long as you still have a place to hang your hat, and the place where you were born and raised is still there, you will have a sense of belonging and a destination. Even if the country it is located in no longer exists and the ruler has changed, as long as your home is still there, you have a home to go back to all the same. This is a very contradictory and vague concept of country in people's minds, but also a very concrete concept of home. People are actually not so sure whether the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" is correct or not. But because this idea has a certain impact on their specific social status, people unconsciously develop a strong sense of country, nationality, and race. When people only inhabit the small sphere of their hometown, they have a certain degree of immunity or resistance to the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country." But whenever they leave their hometown and their homeland, and go beyond their country's rule, they unconsciously have a certain awareness and acceptance of the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country." For example, when you go abroad, if someone asks you which country you are from, you will wonder, "If I say I am Singaporean, people will think highly of me; whereas, if I say I am Chinese, people will look down on me." And so you don't dare tell them the truth. But one day your nationality is exposed. People find out that you are Chinese, and from then onward, they see you in a different light. You are discriminated against, looked down upon, and even regarded as a second-class citizen. At which point, you unconsciously think: "That saying 'Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country' is exactly right! I used to think that I wasn't responsible for the fate of my country, but now it seems that the fate of one's country affects everyone. When the country prospers, everyone prospers, but when the country falls, everyone suffers for it. Is our country not poor? Is it not a dictatorship? And do the rulers not have a bad reputation? That is why people look down on me. Look at how well-off and happy people in Western countries are. They have the freedom to go anywhere and believe anything. Whereas under the Communist regime, we are persecuted for believing in God and must flee far and wide, unable to return home. How

wonderful it would be if we had been born in a Western country!" At which point, you feel that nationality is extremely important, and the fate of your country becomes important to you. In any case, when people live in such an environment and context, they are unconsciously influenced by the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" and swayed by it to varying degrees. At this point, people's behaviors and their views, perspectives, and standpoints on people, matters and things will change to varying degrees, and of course this gives rise to consequences and effects of varying magnitude. Therefore, there is a certain amount of concrete evidence regarding the influence of the saying "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" on people's thinking. Even though people's concept of a country is not so clear-cut when viewed from the perspective of humanity, nevertheless within certain social contexts, the nationality that comes with belonging to a country still has an influence on people. If people do not understand the truth and do not perceive these issues clearly, they will not be able to rid themselves of the fetters and erosive effects of this idea, which will also affect their mood and attitude toward dealing with things. Whether viewed from the perspective of humanity or in terms of the changes and breakthroughs in people's thinking when the general environment changes, the idea put forward by Satan that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" does have a certain influence on people, and does have a certain erosive effect on human thinking. Because people don't understand how to correctly explain such matters as the fate of a country, and don't understand the truth involved in this matter, within different environments they are often swayed or corrupted by this idea, or it affects their mood—it's just not worth it.

As for the matter of a country's fate, should people understand how God views it, and how people should view it correctly? (Yes.) People should understand precisely what standpoint they should adopt when regarding this matter, so as to rid themselves of the erosive effects and influence that the idea "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" has on them. Let's look first at whether the fate of a country can be swayed by any one person, any force, or any ethnic group. Who decides the fate of a country? (It is determined by God.) That's right, this root cause must be understood. The fate of a country is closely related to God's sovereignty, and has no relation to anyone else. No force, idea, or person can change the destiny of a country. What does the destiny of a country include? The prosperity and decline of the country. Whether the country is developed or backward, and regardless of its geographical location, how much territory it spans, its size, and all of its resources—how many resources are on the ground, underground and in the air—who the ruler of the country is, what kind of people make up the ruling hierarchy, what the ruler's guiding political principles and method of governance are, whether they recognize God, obey Him, and their attitude toward God, and so on—all these things have a bearing on the country's fate. These things are not determined by any one person, let alone by any force. No one person or power has the final say, and neither does Satan. So who does have the final say? Only God has the

final say. Humans don't understand these things, and neither does Satan, but it is defiant. It constantly wants to take charge of humans and dominate them, so it constantly uses some stirring and deceptive ideas and opinions to promote things like moral conduct and social mores, and make people accept these ideas, thereby exploiting people to serve the rulers, and keep the rulers in power. But in fact, no matter what Satan does, the fate of a country has no relation to Satan, nor any relation to how vigorously, profoundly, and broadly these ideas of traditional culture are disseminated. The living conditions and form of existence of any country in any period—whether it is wealthy or poor, backward or developed, as well as its ranking among the many countries in the world—all this has no relation whatsoever to the strength of the rulers' governance, nor to the substance of these thinkers' ideas, or the vigor with which they disseminate them. A country's fate is only related to God's sovereignty and the period when God manages all of humankind. In whichever period God needs to do whatever work, and rule over and orchestrate whichever things, and lead all of society in whichever direction, and bring about whatever form of society—during that period, some special protagonists will appear, and some great and special things will happen. For example, war, or the annexation of some countries' land by other countries, or the appearance of some special, emerging technologies, or even the movement of all the earth's oceans and continental plates, and so on—these things are all subject to the sovereignty and arrangements of God's hand. It is also possible that the appearance of an unremarkable person will lead the entire human race into taking a huge step forward. It is equally possible that the occurrence of a very unremarkable, insignificant event may trigger a mass migration of humankind, or it may be that under the effects of an insignificant event, all of humankind will undergo a major transformation, or there will be varying degrees of changes in terms of the economy, military affairs, business, or medical treatment, and so on. These changes influence the fate of any country on earth, and also the prosperity and decline of any country. That is why the destiny, rise, and fall of any country, whether it be powerful or weak, are all related to God's management among humankind and to His sovereignty. Why, then, does God want to do things this way? His intentions are at the root of everything. In short, the survival, rise, and fall of any country or nation has no relation whatsoever to any race, any power, any ruling class, any mode or method of governance, or any individual person. They are only related to the sovereignty of the Creator, and they are also related to the period during which the Creator manages mankind, and to the next step that the Creator will take in managing and leading humankind. Therefore, whatever God does influences the destiny of any country, nation, race, group, or individual person. From this point of view, it can be said that the destinies of any individual person, race, nation, and country are actually linked and closely bound up with each other, and there is an inseparable relationship between them. However, the relationship between these things is not brought about due to the idea and view that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," but rather, it is brought

about due to the sovereignty of the Creator. It is precisely because the destinies of these things are under the sovereignty of the only true God, the Creator, that there is an inseparable relationship between them. This is the root cause and essence of a country's fate.

So, looking at it from the perspective of the majority of the population, what viewpoint should one hold as regards the fate of one's country? First of all, one should look at how much the country does to safeguard the majority of the population and keep them satisfied. If the majority of the population live well, have freedom and the right to speak freely, if all the policies promulgated by the state government are very rational and people regard them as fair and reasonable, if the human rights of ordinary people can be safeguarded, and if people are not stripped of their right to life, then people will naturally come to depend on this country, feel happy living there, and love it from the bottom of their hearts. Then, everyone will be responsible toward the fate of this country, and people will be genuinely willing to fulfill their responsibility to this country, and they will want it to exist forever because it benefits their lives and everything about them. If this country cannot safeguard the lives of ordinary people, and does not give them the human rights they deserve, and they don't even have freedom of speech, and if those who speak their mind are subject to restrictions and crackdowns, and people are even forbidden to speak or discuss what they want, and if, when people are subject to bullying, humiliation, and persecution, the country doesn't care, and if there is no freedom whatsoever, and people are deprived of their basic human rights and right to life, and if those who believe in and follow God are even suppressed and persecuted so that they are unable to return home, and if believers are killed with impunity, then this country is a country of devils, a country of Satan, and it is not a real country. In that case, should everyone still be responsible for its fate? If people already loathe and hate this country in their hearts, then even if they admit responsibility for it in theory, they will be unwilling to fulfill this responsibility. If a powerful enemy comes to invade this country, most people will even harbor hopes of the country's imminent collapse, so that they can lead happy lives. Therefore, whether everyone is responsible for a country's fate depends on how its government treats the people. The crux is whether it has the public's support—it is mainly determined based on this aspect. The other aspect, fundamentally speaking, is that behind anything that happens to any country, there are a number of reasons and factors that cause this thing to happen, and it is not something that can be influenced by an ordinary or insignificant person. Therefore, when it comes to a country's fate, no individual person or any ethnic group has the final say, or the power to interfere. Is this not a fact? (Yes.) Let us say, for example, that the ruling class of your country wants to expand its territory and seize prime land, infrastructure, and resources of a neighboring country. After making the decision, the ruling class begins to prepare military forces, raise funds, stockpile all sorts of supplies, and discuss when to launch the land expansion. Do common folk have the right to know about all this? You don't even have

the right to know. All you know is that in recent years state taxation has increased, levies and fees imposed under various pretexts have increased, and the national debt has increased. Your only obligation is to pay taxes. As for what will happen to the country and what the rulers will do, does that have anything at all to do with you? Until the moment when the country decides to go to war, which country and which lands it will invade, and how it will invade them, are things that only the ruling class knows, and not even the soldiers who will be sent into battle know. They don't even have the right to know. They have to fight wherever the ruler points. As for why they are fighting, how long to fight for, whether they can win or not, and when they can go home, they just don't know, they don't know anything at all. Some people's own children are sent to war, but they as parents don't even get to know that. Worse still, when their children are killed they don't even get to find out. Not until the ashes are brought back do they find out that their children are dead. So tell Me, does your country's fate, and the things that your country will do, and what decisions it will make, have any relation to you as an ordinary person? Does the country tell you, an ordinary person, about these things? Do you have the right to participate in the decision-making? You don't even have the right to know, let alone the right to participate in the decision-making. No matter what your country is to you, does how it develops, what direction it is headed in, and how it is governed have any relation to you? It has no relation to you. Why is that? Because you are an ordinary person, and all these things are only related to the rulers. The final say belongs to the rulers and the ruling class, and those with vested interests, but it has no relation whatsoever to you as an ordinary person. So, you should have a little self-awareness. Don't do irrational things; there is no need to give up your life or put yourself in harm's way for a ruler. Let us suppose that the country's rulers are dictators, and that the power is in the hands of devils who don't attend to their proper duties, and who spend all day indulging in drinking and debauchery, living extravagantly, and doing nothing for the people. The country falls into debt and chaos, and the rulers are corrupt and incompetent, resulting in it being invaded by a foreign enemy. Only then do the rulers think of the common people, calling on them and saying: "'Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country.' If the country perishes, a life of hardship awaits you all. Presently the country is in trouble, and invaders have entered our borders. In order to protect the country, hurry to the battlefield, the time has come when the country needs you!" You mull it over, thinking, "That's right, 'Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country.' The country finally needs me for once, so as I have this responsibility, I should give up my life to protect the country. Our country cannot change hands, without this ruler in power we are done for!" Is it foolish to think this way? The rulers of these dictatorships deny and oppose God, eat, drink and enjoy themselves all day long, behave recklessly, ride roughshod over common people, and harm and brutalize the masses. If you rush bravely and dauntlessly to protect rulers like these, serving as cannon fodder for them on the battlefield and throwing your life away for them,

then you are decidedly foolish, and pledging blind allegiance! Why do I say you are decidedly foolish? Who exactly are the soldiers on the battlefield fighting for? For whom are they throwing their lives away? For whom are they serving as cannon fodder? And if you of all people, a weak and feeble commoner, go into battle, then it is just a show of foolhardiness and a waste of a life. If war comes, you should pray to God and ask Him to protect you so that you can flee to a place of safety, rather than making a pointless sacrifice and resisting. What is pointless sacrifice defined as? Foolhardiness. The country will naturally have those people who are willing to uphold the spirit of "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," to protect the rulers and put their lives on the line for them. The country's fate has a great impact on the interests and survival of such people, so let them look after the country's affairs. You are an ordinary person, you have no power to protect the country, and these things have no relation to you. Exactly what kind of country is worth defending? If it is a country with free and democratic systems, and the ruler actually does things for the people and can guarantee them a normal life, then such a country is worth defending and protecting. The common people feel that protecting such a country is tantamount to protecting their own home, which is an unshirkable responsibility, so they are willing to work for the country and fulfill their responsibility. But if devils or Satan rule over this country, and the rulers are wicked and incompetent to such an extent that the reign of these demon kings runs out of steam and they should step down, God will raise up a powerful country to invade. This is a signal from Heaven to human beings, telling them that this regime's rulers should step down, and that they are not worthy of having such power, or dominating this land, or making the people of this country provide for them, because they have done nothing whatsoever to provide for the well-being of the country's population, and neither has their reign benefited the common people in any way or brought any happiness to their lives. They have only tormented the common people, harmed them, and tortured and abused them. Therefore, such rulers should step down and give up their positions. If this regime is replaced by a democratic system with virtuous people in power, this will fulfill the hopes and expectations of the population, and it will also be in accordance with the will of Heaven. Those who comply with the ways of Heaven will prosper, while those who resist Heaven will perish. As an ordinary citizen, if you are constantly misled by the idea that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country" and always idolize and follow the ruling class, then you will surely die an early death and are likely to become a sacrificial victim and funerary object of the ruling class. If you pursue the truth, avoid being deceived by Satan and can escape its influence and keep your life, you have the hope of seeing a positive country emerge, and seeing sage masters and wise rulers assume power, and seeing the establishment of a good social system, and you will have the good fortune to live a happy life. Is this not the choice of a smart person? Do not think that whoever invades are enemies or devils; that is wrong. If you always regard the rulers as supreme and above all others, and treat them as the eternal masters of this

land no matter how many bad things they do, or how much they resist God and brutalize believers, that is a grave mistake. Think about it, once those feudal ruling dynasties of the past were eradicated, and human beings lived under a variety of relatively democratic social systems, they became somewhat freer and happier, their lives were materially better off than before, and humankind's breadth of vision, insight, and views on various things became more advanced than before. If people were all backward in their thinking, and constantly believed that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country," and kept wanting to revive old traditions, restore the rule of emperors, and return to a feudal system, could humankind have developed as far as it has? Would their habitat be like it is now? It certainly wouldn't. Therefore, when the country is in trouble, if the country's laws stipulate that you must fulfill your civic duties and perform military service, then you should perform military service in accordance with the law. If you need to go into battle during your military service, then you should likewise fulfill your responsibility, because this is what you must do by law. You can't break the law, and you must abide by it. If the law does not require it, then you are free to choose. If the country you reside in recognizes God, follows Him, worships Him, and has His blessings, then it should be defended. If the country you reside in resists and persecutes God, and arrests and oppresses Christians, then such a country is a satanic country ruled by devils. By constantly resisting God with deranged fury, it has already offended God's disposition, and been cursed by Him. When such a country faces invasion by a foreign enemy, and is beset by troubles inside and outside its borders, it is a time of widespread indignation, discontent, and resentment among God and humankind. Is this not the time when God wants to raise up an environment to destroy this country? This is when God starts to act. God has heard people's prayers, and the time has come for Him to redress the wrongs done to God's chosen people. This is a good thing, and it is also good news. The time when God is about to obliterate the devils and Satan is also the time for God's chosen people to get extremely excited and go around spreading the news. At this time, you must not risk your life for the ruling class. You should use your wisdom to cast off the constraints imposed by the ruling class, hurriedly flee for your life and save yourself as a matter of urgency. Some people say: "If I run away will I be a deserter? Is that not selfish?" You could also not be a deserter, and just guard your home and wait for the invaders to bomb and occupy it, and see what the outcome is then. The fact is that when any major event of national importance occurs, ordinary people do not have the right to choose for themselves. Everyone can only passively wait, watch, and put up with the inevitable results of this event. Is this not a fact? (Yes.) This is indeed a fact. In any case, fleeing is the wisest course of action. It is your responsibility to protect your own life and the safety of your family. If everyone was required to be responsible for their country's fate, and that got them all killed, and all that remained of the country was an expanse of land, would the essence of the country still exist? "Country" would just be an empty word, would it not? In the eyes of dictators, human lives are the least

valuable thing compared with their ambitions and desires, their acts of aggression, and any of their decisions and actions, but in the eyes of God, human lives are the most important thing. Let those who are willing to be cannon fodder for dictators and uphold the spirit of the saying “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country” make contributions and sacrifices for the rulers. Those who follow God have no obligation to make any sacrifices for a country of Satan. You could also put it like this—let the dutiful offspring of Satan and those who follow it make sacrifices for Satan’s rule and for its ambitions and desires. It is right to let them be cannon fodder. No one forced them to have such great ambitions and desires. They just like following rulers, and are intent on pledging loyalty to devils, even if it kills them. In the end, they become sacrificial victims and funerary ornaments of Satan, which is what they deserve.

When any country invades another country, or when some unequal transaction with another country leads to war, ultimately the victims are the common people, everyone who lives in this land. It is a fact that some wars could be avoided if one of the parties was able to compromise, let go of their ambitions, desires, and power, and think about the survival of the common people. Many wars are actually caused by rulers clinging onto their own reign, not wanting to let go of or lose the power in their hands, but rather doggedly adhering to their beliefs, clinging onto power, and sticking to their own interests. Once war breaks out it is the common folk, the ordinary people, who are the victims. They are scattered far and wide in times of war, and are the least capable of resisting all this. Do these rulers consider the common people? Imagine if there was a ruler who said, “If I hold fast to my own beliefs and my own theories, I may end up starting a war, and the victims will be the ordinary people. Even if I win, this land will be destroyed by weapons and ammunition, and the homes people live in will be destroyed, so the people who reside in this land will not have happy lives in future. In order to protect the common people, I will step down, disarm, surrender, and compromise,” and thereafter, war was avoided. Is there such a ruler? (No.) In fact, common people don’t want to fight, nor do they want to participate in rivalry or contests between political forces. They are all passively sent to the battlefield and to the chopping block by the ruler. All these people who are sent to the battlefield, whether they die or survive, ultimately serve to keep the ruler in power. So is the ruler the ultimate beneficiary? (Yes.) What can common people gain from war? Common people can only be devastated by it, and suffer the destruction of their homes and that of the habitat they depend on. Some lose their families, and even more are displaced and made homeless, with no prospect of returning. And yet, the ruler grandly claims that the war was launched to protect people’s homes and their survival. Does this claim hold water? Is it not disingenuous claptrap? In the end, it is the common folk, the people, who bear all the evil consequences of this, and the biggest beneficiary is the ruler. They can continue ruling over the people, ruling over the land, keep hold of the power in their hands, and continue standing in the ruler’s place giving orders, while ordinary people live in dire straits with no future and no hope. Some people think this

idea that “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country” is absolutely correct. Looking at it now, is it correct? (No, it’s not correct.) There is not a bit of correctness in this saying. Whether looking at it from the perspective of Satan’s motives in instilling this idea in people, or the schemes, desires, and ambitions of rulers at various stages throughout the history of human development, or any fact concerning a country’s fate, the occurrence of these events cannot be controlled by any ordinary person, individual, or ethnic group. In the end, the victims are the unsuspecting masses and common folk, whereas those who benefit most are the country’s ruling class, the rulers at the very top. When the country is in trouble, they send the common people to the frontline to be used as cannon fodder. When the country is not in trouble, the common people are the hand that feeds them. They exploit the common people, bleeding them dry and living off them, compelling the people to provide for them, and ultimately even instilling in people the idea that “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country,” and forcing them to accept it. Whoever doesn’t accept it is labeled as unpatriotic. The message these rulers are conveying is: “The purpose of my rule is for you to lead happy lives. Without my rule, you would not be able to survive, so you must do as I say, be obedient citizens, and always be ready to dedicate yourselves and sacrifice yourselves for your country’s fate.” Who is the country? Who is synonymous with the country? The rulers are synonymous with the country. By instilling in people this idea that “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country,” in one sense, they are compelling people to fulfill their responsibilities without choice, hesitation, or any objection. In another sense, they are telling people that the fate of the country and the question of whether its rulers stay in power or are deposed are of great importance to the population, so they must take great care to defend both the country and its rulers, in order to guarantee their normal existence. Is this actually the case? (No.) Quite obviously this is not the case. Rulers who cannot obey God, do His will, or work for the sake of common people will not win popular support, and will not be good rulers. If, rather than acting for the sake of common people, the rulers only pursue their own interests, ride roughshod over people, and squeeze sweat and blood out of them like parasites, then such rulers are Satan and devils, and do not deserve the people’s support, no matter how powerful they are. If the country didn’t have such rulers, would it exist? Would the people’s lives exist? They would exist all the same, and the people might even lead better lives. If people clearly see the essence of the question of what their obligations and responsibilities to their country should be, then no matter which country they live in, they should have correct views on the major issues in that country, and on issues concerning politics and that country’s fate. When these correct views come about, you will be able to make the right choice in matters involving the country’s fate. On the matter of a country’s fate, do you basically understand the truth that people should understand? (Yes.)

I have fellowshiped a great deal about the saying on moral conduct “Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country.” As regards the concept of country, the

influence of the term “country” on people in society, what responsibilities people should have toward their country and nation when it comes to that country’s fate, what choices they should make, and what God requires of humankind in this matter, did I fellowship clearly on all of this? (Yes.) Then here ends our fellowship for today.

June 11, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (14)

We have spent some time fellowshiping and dissecting the issue of claims about moral conduct in traditional culture—do you have any real experience of this? (Previously, I only recognized that these statements about moral conduct were not the truth, but I didn't realize how deeply they have corrupted mankind. Only through Your fellowship and dissection have I realized that the various statements about moral conduct that are instilled in people by Satan appear to be right and good in people's eyes, but they have corrupted, paralyzed, and imprisoned people's thoughts, causing people to deny and resist God, and leading them further and further away from Him. This is how Satan has corrupted mankind step-by-step to this day.) If I did not fellowship on these things in detail, would people be able to recognize this themselves? Could they dissect the essence of these statements on moral conduct? (People could not dissect or see through to the essence of these statements on moral conduct.) What about after prolonged experience? (People would be able to recognize the issues with some statements on moral conduct, but they would not be able to clearly dissect their essence.) People often like to treat famous sayings from traditional culture and the truth as equals and mix them together, especially when it comes to things that outwardly resemble the truth, or that appear to conform with human morality, the standards of their consciences, and human feelings. Everyone believes these things to be positive and aligned with the truth, but no one can see that they originate in Satan and that they are actually negative things. Now, is anything that Satan instills in man positive? (No.) There is nothing positive in those things at all. On the contrary, they are all negative things and satanic poisons. This is beyond doubt. So, have you come to know and dig out these negative things and satanic poisons? Is there anything left in your mind that is similar to these things from traditional culture which you consider to be correct? If there is, it is a scourge, a cancer! You should ponder on this more now, and you should carefully observe and pay attention to this in your daily life. See whether there is anything in what others say and what you hear, or in the things that make an impression on you or that you remember, or in those things that you accept into your heart and regard as valuable, that resembles what traditional culture advocates for. If there is, you must discern and dissect it, and then completely abandon it. This will be of benefit to your pursuit of the truth.

Some people bring up the phrase, "The success and failure of things is dependent on people," while writing experiential testimony articles—you should discern whether this statement is right or wrong, whether it is a positive or negative thing, and whether it is related to the truth, to God's requirements, and to the principles that people should possess while handling matters. Does the statement "The success and failure of things is dependent on people" hold true? Does it align with the truth? Is it something produced by the laws and regulations established by God? Does it have anything to do with the fact that God is sovereign over all things? Go ahead and share your knowledge and

understanding of this statement. (I have also said this before, especially when organizing church work. If personnel are not assigned appropriately according to the principles, sometimes this makes a mess of the work. If personnel are assigned in accordance with the principles, the work can be done well. At the time, I saw people's roles as very important and significant, which is why I quoted the phrase: "The success and failure of things is dependent on people." Now I realize that I lacked an understanding of God's sovereignty and omnipotence. I always focused on the role of people, and there was no place for God in my heart at all.) Who else would like to share their thoughts? (The statement "The success and failure of things is dependent on people" is not a testimony to God but a testimony to humans, as if success depends on human effort. It is a denial of God's sovereignty and it is equivalent to testifying for Satan. If this statement is planted in people's hearts, then over time, when they are faced with problems they will think that they just need to find the right people in order to be successful, and they will not have faith in God or rely on Him. Therefore, this is a particularly warped statement.) Your understanding of this statement is essentially that it is not correct or a positive thing, and that it is certainly not the truth. So why do you use it? If you use it, what problem does that reveal? (That we lack discernment of this statement.) What is the reason for your lack of discernment? Is it because you still believe that this statement has a correct and valid aspect to it? (Yes.) So, what is wrong with this statement? Why do you say that it is not correct or a positive thing? First, let us see if it conforms to the objective laws of things. On the surface, it appears that it is people who perform any given task. They arrange the work, they perform the work, and they follow up on it. They play a crucial role in each step, and they ultimately determine the outcomes and progress of that item of work. Outwardly, it seems that the causes, the process of things developing, and the results of it all are determined by people. But in reality, who is the one governing, orchestrating, and arranging all of this? Does it have anything to do with people? Are people passively accepting the orchestrations of fate and of their sovereign Ruler, or are they actively taking control of everything themselves? (They are passively accepting.) People are all passively accepting God's sovereignty, orchestration, and arrangements. What role do people play here? Are they not puppets in the hands of God? (Yes.) People are like puppets being pulled by strings. The string that gets pulled determines what action they take and which expression they make. Where people go, what they say, and what they do every day—in whose hands is all of this? (In God's hands.) It is all in God's hands. People passively accept God's sovereignty. Throughout this whole process, God determines what He will do, whether He will expose someone, what changes and progress He will bring about in this matter and when, what the ultimate outcome will be, and whom He will expose or cast out; He determines what lessons people will learn through this matter, what truths they will understand and what kind of knowledge they will gain of God in it, which views He will get people to reverse, and which notions He will make them let go of. Can people accomplish all these things that God does? Can

they? (No, they cannot.) People cannot. They cannot accomplish these things. During the entire development of any matter, people are just passively and consciously or unconsciously doing things, but no person can foresee the causes, process, final results, and achieved outcomes of the whole matter, nor can any person control any of these things. Who foresees and controls all of this? Only God! Whether it is a significant event occurring in the universe or a small incident occurring in any corner of any planet, it is not up to people. No person can control the laws that govern everything, or the process of the progression of all things and their ultimate results. No person can foresee the future of everything or predict what is going to happen, let alone control the ultimate result of all things. Only God, who is sovereign over all things, controls and rules all of this. The only effect that people can have is playing different roles that can be positive or negative, within environments, both big and small, and alongside various types of people, events, and things that are ruled, orchestrated, and arranged by God. This is the effect that people have and the role they play. When something is not successful, or when the results do not appear to be as good as expected, and the outcome is not one that people desire to see, when the outcome even brings them great sadness and sorrow, these are also things that people have no sovereignty over, they cannot be foreseen by people, and they certainly cannot be controlled by them. If the final outcome of something is very good, if it has a very positive and active impact, if it is greatly edifying for people, and it has a profound influence on them, then it is from God. If something does not achieve its desired outcome, if the outcome is not very good or optimistic, and if it appears to have some negative effects on people instead of positive and active ones, the entire process of that matter is also orchestrated and arranged by God. It is not controlled by any person. Let us not talk about distant things; let us talk about what can be observed in the church, such as the appearance of antichrists. From the moment an antichrist comes forward and starts to act, and is promoted to the position of a leader or a worker, and takes on important work in the church, until the point where they are revealed as an antichrist, discerned and exposed by the brothers and sisters, and ultimately cast out and rejected—throughout this whole process, many people are deceived, some even follow the antichrist, and some experience losses to their life entry due to the antichrist's influence, and so on. Although all of this originates from Satan's disturbances and it is the work of Satan's servants, does that mean that God does not see the occurrence and development of all these things? Does God not know what the consequences of the appearance of an antichrist will be? Does God not know the impact that an antichrist will have on the church and on the brothers and sisters? Is all of this simply the result of a failure caused by people? When faced with the emergence of negative things like these, people often think, "Oh no, Satan took advantage of a blind spot there, this was Satan disturbing things." The implication is, "Why wasn't God keeping an eye on things? Doesn't God scrutinize all things? Isn't God omnipresent? Isn't God omnipotent? Where was God's authority and power?" Doubts arise in people's

hearts. What is the source of these doubts? Because the outcome of the event is negative, undesirable, and not what people want to see, and even less does it align with their notions and imaginings, this deals a blow to their sacred faith in God. People cannot understand it, and they think: “If God is sovereign over all things and controls everything, then why would something like an antichrist deceiving people happen right before our eyes? Why would such an undesirable thing happen in the church, and among brothers and sisters?” Doubts arise in people’s hearts, and their faith that “God is all-powerful and omnipresent” is challenged. When people’s faith in God is challenged, if you ask them, “Who is to blame for you developing notions about God?” they will say, “Satan is to blame.” But since Satan cannot be seen by man, to whom should this responsibility ultimately fall? It should fall on the antichrist or on the antichrist’s group. People will say that those who were deceived by the antichrist and whose lives suffered losses deserved to be misled by the antichrist. In the end, what statement does people’s understanding of the whole matter come down to? “The success and failure of things is dependent on people.” That is the conclusion they reach. Where do they place God in this? They do not understand that God is sovereign over everything, so they attribute everything that happens instead to the hollow theory that “The success and failure of things is dependent on people.”

When people see some relatively good and positive things happen around them, such as when the Holy Spirit does powerful work, and everyone has a great deal of faith, when people stand firm even in the midst of persecution and adversity, without anyone becoming a Judas, and when the possessions of God’s house and the lives of the brothers and sisters do not suffer any losses, people say, “This is God’s protection. This success was not caused by people; it is undoubtedly the work of God.” Suppose that the things that people see happening around them are undesirable, for example, the church faces suppression and arrest by the great red dragon, and the church possessions are seized by Satan. Say that the lives of the brothers and sisters suffer losses, and God’s chosen people are scattered everywhere, displaced and unable to return home. Suppose that the church life is destroyed, and the church members can no longer live the same church life as before. Imagine that they can no longer live joyful, happy lives of peaceful coexistence with their brothers and sisters, gathering together to eat and drink God’s words, and fulfilling their duties, and some evil people and nonbelievers begin to spread notions to deceive others, causing them to lose faith in God and fall into negativity and weakness. At such a time, people can’t help but complain. They dare not complain against God, so they complain like this: “So-and-so is an evil person, so-and-so is Satan, so-and-so is a devil. If it weren’t for them being careless at gatherings and getting arrested, we wouldn’t have ended up in this situation of being unable to return home. If it weren’t for them, we would still be living the church life happily, eating and drinking God’s words and fulfilling our duties normally. All of this is due to a certain person, a certain devil, a certain Satan, or a certain satanic regime.” Although people

dare not harbor any grievances against God or attribute the responsibility of the entire situation to God, at that moment, they have developed a neither great nor insignificant, inexplicable distrust toward God. What things will emerge from these distrustful thoughts? People will say, “I have learned a lesson from this experience. From now on, I will carefully consider everything that I encounter and think twice before acting. I won’t be reckless, and I won’t easily trust anyone. I will be extra careful in all situations and I will learn to protect myself.” Do they still have God in their hearts? Do they still rely on God and have faith in Him? Some people say, “How could I not? In my heart, I still believe in God, and I still have genuine reliance on Him.” But secretly they tell themselves, “Don’t trust God’s words so easily. God always tests and refines people. God can’t be relied upon! Just look at what happened right before our eyes. Members of our church were arrested by the great red dragon. Why didn’t God protect us? Does God want to see the interests of His house harmed? Does God feel apathetic when He sees nonbelievers deceiving people? If God really sees this, why doesn’t He care? Why doesn’t He prevent or block it? Why doesn’t He enlighten us so that we can discern that the person deceiving us is an evil person and a nonbeliever, distance ourselves from them as early as possible, and avoid all of these consequences? When the nonbeliever is deceiving people, why doesn’t God protect us? Even a quick warning would suffice!” They don’t get answers to all these “whys,” and they can’t get them either. In the end, after experiencing this, the conclusion they come to is: “I’ll rely on God in matters where I should rely on Him, and I’ll rely on myself in matters where I shouldn’t rely on God. I can’t be foolish. We brothers and sisters must learn to band together for warmth and help each other. As for everything else, let God do as He pleases. We can’t control it.” If the great red dragon arrests God’s chosen people, the work of the church and the church life will be greatly obstructed and the brothers’ and sisters’ fulfillment of their duties will be greatly affected. At these times nonbelievers and antichrists will appear to disrupt and deceive, spreading heresies and fallacies, claiming that the arrests happened because the leaders and workers went against God’s will, and people will be deceived by these antichrists and evil people. When these events occur that do not conform to people’s notions and imaginings nor to human feelings, people never learn lessons from them. People never come to understand God’s sovereignty, orchestration, and disposition from these events. People never grasp God’s will or understand what lessons God wants them to learn, what edification He wants them to obtain, and what discernment He wants them to gain from these events. People don’t know any of these things, and they do not know how to experience them. Therefore, when it comes to all the things that people see occurring around them, people truly believe that the phrase “The success and failure of things is dependent on people” is accurate, and that it is more reliable and real than the fact that “God is sovereign over all things, God is omnipresent, and God scrutinizes everything.” In fact, deep down, you still believe that the phrase “The success and failure of things is dependent on people” is more real, that humans determine everything, and

to say that God decides everything seems a bit vague. Why do people think it is vague? Why do people think the statement “God decides everything” is unreliable? In theory, it’s because people don’t understand the truth and don’t know God, but in reality, what is the reason? (In reality, people don’t acknowledge or believe that God is sovereign over everything.) Saying that people do not believe in or acknowledge that God is sovereign over everything is right, but there is a more specific reason, which is that the phrase “The success and failure of things is dependent on people” reveals the flawed perspective that people have when it comes to how they view good and bad things. People believe that things which bring them peace, joy, comfort, and happiness are good and that they come from God. There are some things that make people uneasy or frightened, that make people weep, suffer, or fill them with so much grief that they wish they were dead—some things even make it impossible for people to secure a normal church life and a normal environment for fulfilling their duties. These types of things are regarded as “bad things” by people. The term “bad things” has to be put in quotation marks. Can “bad things” have a good effect on people? People cannot see or feel these good effects, so, in their minds, the “everything” that God is sovereign over only includes things that bring them peace, joy, satiation, benefits, edification, and gains, and things that strengthen their faith in God. These are the things that people believe belong to God’s sovereignty over everything. By contrast, if, on the surface, some things appear to cause people’s lives to suffer, cause harm to the interests of the church, and if a few people are deceived, and some are even cast out, and if a few meet with some unfortunate events and endure some pain, people believe that these things have nothing to do with God’s sovereignty, and that they are the work of Satan. People believe that if it were the work of God, these negative things would not appear or exist, this is what people have determined. Therefore, people’s understanding of the phrase “God is sovereign over everything” is very one-sided and shallow. It is limited to human notions, it is laden with human emotions, and it doesn’t match up with the facts. Let Me give you an example. God created all kinds of insects and birds. Some people say, “I believe that all the things God created are significant, that they are all beneficial insects, and that they are all good. Bees were created by God, and all kinds of good birds were created by God. Mosquitoes always bite people and spread diseases, so mosquitoes are not good. Maybe mosquitoes were not created by God.” Isn’t this a warped understanding? In reality, all things were created by God. There is only one God, the Creator, and everything that is living and that is not living comes from God. In their notions, people only believe that various beneficial insects, birds, and other beneficial creatures come from God—as for flies, mosquitoes, bedbugs, and some carnivorous animals that are regarded by man as particularly violent, those creatures don’t seem to come from God, and even if they do, they are not good things. Is this not a human notion? In people’s ideas and notions, these things have gradually been categorized systematically: Anything that humans like or that benefits them is considered positive and created by God, while anything that

humans dislike or that harms them is considered negative and not created by God, and might have been created by Satan or produced by nature. In people's minds, they often unconsciously believe that: "Flies, mosquitoes, and bedbugs are not good things, they were not created by God. God definitely would not create things like that." Or they think, "Lions and tigers always eat sheep and zebras, they are too cruel. They are not good things. Wolves are sinister, cunning, ferocious, violent, and cruel. Wolves are bad, but cows and sheep are good, and dogs are even better." Whether something created by God is good or not is not measured based on human emotional needs or tastes—that is not how these things are measured. God created all kinds of animals, including zebras, deer, and various kinds of herbivores, as well as ferocious carnivores like lions, tigers, leopards, and crocodiles, which are particularly violent, including some predators that can kill their prey with a single bite. Regardless of whether these animals are good or bad in the eyes of humans, they were all created by God. Some people see lions eating zebras and think, "Oh no, that poor zebra. Lions are so ferocious for eating zebras." When they see a wolf devouring a sheep, they ponder, "Wolves are so cruel and sly. Why did God create wolves? Sheep are so cute, kind, and gentle. Why did God not create only gentle animals? Wolves are the natural enemy of sheep, so why did God create both wolves and sheep?" They don't understand the mystery behind this and they always harbor human notions and imaginings. When there are incidents of antichrists deceiving people in the church, some people say, "If God takes pity on this mankind, why did He create Satan? Why does He allow Satan to corrupt mankind? Since God has chosen us, why does He allow antichrists to appear in the church?" You do not understand, do you? This is God's sovereignty. This is how God rules over all things, and only when He rules over them in this way can all things exist normally within the rules and laws that He has ordained. If God were to protect you and prevent antichrists from appearing in the church, would you know what antichrists were? Would you know what the disposition of an antichrist is like? If you were only told some words and doctrines about discerning antichrists, without actually ever meeting one, would you be able to discern antichrists? (No.) Definitely not. If antichrists and evil people were not allowed to appear, you would always be like a flower in a greenhouse: As soon as there's an abrupt change in temperature, you would wither under the sudden cold snap, unable to withstand it. Therefore, if people want to understand the truth, they must accept and submit to all of the environments, and all of the people, events, and things that God rules over and orchestrates. "All of the people, events, and things" includes the positive and the negative, it includes things that align with your notions and imaginings, and things that do not. It includes things that you regard as positive and the negative things that you dislike, it includes things that accord with your feelings, and it includes things that do not accord with your feelings or with your tastes. You must accept all of these things. What is the purpose of accepting all of these things? It is not just to build your knowledge and increase your experience, it is to enable you to come to know God's words more

practically and concretely, to understand the truth, and to experience the veracity and accuracy of God's words through these facts. Ultimately, you will confirm that God's words are the truth, you will learn lessons from different people, events, and things, enabling yourself to understand more truths, to see through to many things, and to enrich yourself further. The ultimate result achieved by this is that you will be able to gain knowledge of the Creator through the emergence and development of different people, events, and things, you will come to understand His disposition and essence, and learn that He governs and orchestrates all things.

Regardless of whether the events that you see happening around you are perceived by man as good or bad, whether they are what you want or not, whether they bring you joy and happiness or sorrow and pain, you should regard them as people, events, and things that contain lessons to be learned and truths to be sought, and you should regard them as things that come from God. They do not happen by chance, they are not due to humans, they are not caused by any person, and they are not something that any person can control. Rather, it is God who rules over all these things; God orchestrates and arranges all of these things. The emergence of any event is not dependent on human will, it is not as if any person can control an event just because they wish to. God rules over and orchestrates the whole process of the appearance, development, and transformation of all people, events, and things until they reach their final outcomes. If you do not believe this, then try to experience and observe things according to the words and principles that I have spoken of. See if what I say is true. See if the statement, "The success and failure of things is dependent on people," that you believe is correct, or if the statement, "God rules over and orchestrates the appearance and development of all people, events, and things, until they reach their final outcomes," is correct. See which of these two statements is correct, which one is in line with the facts, which one allows people to gain edification and benefits them, and which one enables people to know God and have genuine faith in Him. When you experience everything that happens around you with the viewpoint and attitude that God rules over and orchestrates everything, your view and perspective on things will be completely different. If you stick to viewing all things and matters from the perspective of the saying, "The success and failure of things is dependent on people," then, to put it mildly, when something befalls you, you will naturally and involuntarily get entangled by the idea of right and wrong, you will try to hold people accountable, and you will analyze the causes of various incidents, the factors that led to adverse consequences in different matters, and so on, instead of seeking the truth principles and God's will based on His words. The more you believe in the saying, "The success and failure of things is dependent on people," the more the views of nonbelievers will dominate you. Then the final outcomes of everything that you experience will increasingly contradict the truth, and your faith in God will become merely a doctrine or a slogan. At that point, you will have turned into a complete nonbeliever. In other words, the more you believe in the statement, "The success and failure of things

is dependent on people," the more you will prove to be a nonbeliever. If you don't have God or God's words in your heart, if you absolutely don't acknowledge or accept any of God's words, truths, or positive things, if they have no place at all in your heart, then the depths of your soul have been completely occupied by Satan, they have been filled with the thoughts and ideas of evolution and materialism, all of which are the lies of the devil, Satan. You believe in all of the facts that you see with your eyes, but you don't believe that the One who rules over everything in the universe, the One who cannot be seen by any person, truly exists. If you view everything from the perspective of "The success and failure of things is dependent on people," then you are no different from Satan and materialists. But if you view everything from the perspective of "Everything in the world is ruled over and arranged by God," then even though you will not be able to see some things clearly, you will be able to look for answers about specific events that you see happening around you, seek out the root of the matter, and look for the essence and truth of the problem within God's words. You will not be investigating who was right and who was wrong, you will not be merely trying to hold someone responsible; instead, you will be able to hold the matter up to God's words for comparison, seek the root of the problem, identify the crux of the issue, and you will explore where people failed, what they lacked, what corrupt disposition they revealed, how they were rebellious, and which aspects of them were incompatible with God throughout the course of the whole matter. You will be able to seek out what God's intentions and goals were in doing those things, what He wanted to achieve in people, what kind of results He wanted to attain, what benefits He wanted people to gain, and the principles that people should adhere to. When you discern and view a specific event from these perspectives, your inner state will change. Your viewpoint on things will unconsciously be guided and directed by God's words. You will unconsciously gain enlightenment and direction in God's words, as well as the truth principles that you should abide by and practice when such matters befall you. When you truly enter into these truth principles, you will have genuine faith and reliance on God, you will pray and supplicate sincerely, you will have genuine obedience, and you will be able to practice according to the truth principles—what will the ultimate result of this be? Throughout the entire event, you will clearly see the truth of the matter, you will learn lessons, you will be able to correctly understand everything that befalls you, and you will be able to see that it comes from God's arrangements, and that it contains God's goodwill. And in this way, just like people often say, you will "make a good thing out of a bad thing," you will naturally be able to treat every event that people condemn, loathe, and hate as a positive thing, and you will be able to acknowledge that it is ruled over and arranged by God, and that it should be accepted from God. You will see it as something that contains God's painstaking efforts, His will, and His expectations. In the process of experiencing this, you will unconsciously come to understand what God's intentions were in orchestrating the whole matter. Without being aware of it, you will come to understand and grasp His will, and once that happens, you will unwittingly

understand the truths within this, and you will be able to discern all of the people and matters involved in the entire event. If, throughout the whole event, you view the problem from the perspective of “Everything in the world is ruled over and arranged by God,” you will gain a great deal from it. You will gain the truth, genuine belief in God, and an understanding of God’s sovereignty over all things. You will understand God’s will and His good intentions in this matter. Of course, you will also gain an understanding and experience of the phrase, “God is omnipresent,” which previously only existed in your consciousness. If throughout the entire event, you look at the problem from the perspective of “The success and failure of things is dependent on people,” you will complain, you will disregard God, and you will feel that God is very distant and vague. The word “God,” the identity of God, the essence of God, and everything about God will seem so distant and hollow. You will believe that the occurrence, development, and outcome of the entire event was all dependent on human manipulations, and that human factors permeate the whole matter. Therefore, you will continually ponder on these matters, thinking, “Who made the mistake in this stage? Who carelessly caused a loss to occur in that stage? Who disrupted, disturbed, and ruined this stage? I will make sure that they pay for it.” You will fixate on individuals and matters, constantly living in the realm of right and wrong, while completely disregarding God’s words, the truth, the responsibilities, duties, and obligations that created beings should fulfill, and the viewpoints and positions that you should uphold. God will no longer have any place at all in your heart. Throughout the entire process of the event, there will be no relationship between you and God, nor between you and God’s words. That is to say, when faced with a situation, you will only fixate on people and things. You will not be able to come up with a single word that aligns with the truth, or a statement of the truth that comes from God to hold up against the matter for comparison, you will not be able to use it as a basis for dissecting the situation, you will not learn lessons from the situation or gain discernment, you will not strengthen your faith, or come to know God. You will do none of this. Throughout the entire event, you will cling to the popular saying, “The success and failure of things is dependent on people,” which, to put it more precisely, is an argument and a viewpoint of nonbelievers. Conversely, say that from the beginning of the event, you can accept it from the perspective of a created being, without examining whether any individual is right or wrong, without over-analyzing any person or thing, and without fixating on people or things. Say that you instead actively seek answers in God’s words, proactively come before God to pray and rely on Him, and seek God’s enlightenment and guidance, allowing God to work and orchestrate. Suppose that your attitude is that of fear and obedience to God, of thirsting for the truth, and of active cooperation with God—that it is not the viewpoint and attitude of a nonbeliever but rather the viewpoint and stance that a true follower of God should have. With such a viewpoint and stance, you will unknowingly gain what you have never experienced before, which is the truth realities that you did not possess before. These truth realities are actually the

effects that God wants to achieve and attain in you through His sovereignty over the entire event. If God accomplishes what He intends to achieve, then He will not have acted in vain because He will have achieved His desired effects in you. What are these effects? God wants you to see what's really going on, that nothing happens by chance, nor is it caused by people, but that God is in control. God wants you to experience His real existence and understand the fact of His sovereignty and His orchestration of the fates of all things, and that this is a fact, and not an empty statement.

If, through your experiences, you truly come to realize the fact that God rules over everything and that He orchestrates the fates of all things, you will be able to say a statement like Job did: "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now my eye sees You. Why I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5–6). Is this a good statement? (Yes.) It feels so good to hear this statement, and it is moving. Do you want to experience the veracity of this statement? Do you want to understand how Job felt when he said these words? (Yes.) Is it just a normal desire, or a strong one? (A strong one.) In short, you do have this kind of a resolve and desire. So how can this desire be fulfilled? It is as I said before. You need to stand from the perspective of a created being, and approach all of the people, events, and things that befall you from the perspective of recognizing that God is the Ruler of all things and that everything is controlled and orchestrated by Him. You must learn lessons from it, understand God's will in everything that He does, and recognize what God wants to achieve and accomplish in you. By doing so, one day soon, and in the not too distant future, you will feel the same way that Job did when he uttered those words. When I hear you say that you really want to experience how Job felt when he spoke those words, I know that over 99 percent of people have never experienced such feelings before. Why is that? It is because you have never stood from the perspective of a created being and experienced the fact that the Creator rules over all things and governs everything, like Job did. All of this is due to human ignorance, foolishness, and rebelliousness, as well as the deception and corruption caused by Satan, which leads people to involuntarily measure and approach everything that happens to them from the viewpoint of a nonbeliever, and to even identify and approach everything that happens around them using some of the methods and theoretical bases commonly used by unbelievers. The conclusions that they ultimately reach have nothing to do with the truth, some are even contrary to the truth. This prevents people in the long-term from experiencing the fact that the Creator rules over and controls all things, and the feeling that Job had when he uttered those words. If you have gone through trials similar to those of Job, big or small, and you have already felt God's hand at work and the fact of God's sovereignty through them, if you have also recognized God's specific intentions in ruling over and orchestrating these matters, as well as the way that people should follow, then in the end, you will be able to experience the positive effects that God wanted to achieve in you throughout the entire events, God's good intentions and expectations for you, among other things. You will experience all of this. When you

experience all of this, you will no longer just believe that God can speak the truth and supply you with life, you will realize in a tangible way that the Creator does indeed exist, and you will also realize the fact that the Creator has created and rules over all things. While you are experiencing all of these things, your faith in God and your faith in the Creator will increase. At the same time, this will make you realize the fact that you have interacted with the Creator in a real way, and it will tangibly and fully confirm your belief in God, your trust in God, how you follow God, as well as the fact that God rules over everything and is omnipresent. When you receive this confirmation and realization, do you think your heart will be filled with joy and happiness or with pain and sorrow? (Joy and happiness.) It will definitely be joy and happiness! No matter how much pain and sorrow you have experienced before, it will dissipate like a puff of smoke, and your heart will be wild with joy, you will be rejoicing and leaping with happiness. When you see that the fact of God's sovereignty over all things has been truly confirmed and experienced in you, this is equivalent to you really meeting, encountering, and interacting with God face to face. At that time, you will feel the same way that Job did. What did Job say at that time? ("I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now my eye sees You. Why I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.") Job outwardly used the behavior and actions of abhorring himself and repenting to express his hatred for the past, but actually, deep in his heart, he was joyful and happy. Why? Because he had unexpectedly seen the face of the Creator, he had come face-to-face with Him, and he had encountered God in an event, in an unremarkable and inadvertent event. Tell Me, which created being, which follower of God doesn't long to see God? When such a situation occurs, when such a thing happens, who wouldn't be happy, who wouldn't be excited? Anyone would be excited; they would feel excited and joyful. It would be something that they'd never forget, as long as they lived, and it is a thing worth remembering. Think about it, aren't there many benefits to this? I hope that in the future, you will truly experience this feeling, possess this kind of experience, and have such encounters. When a person truly sees the face of God and is genuinely able to experience the same feelings that Job felt when he encountered Jehovah God, it becomes a milestone in their faith in God. It is such a marvelous thing! Every person looks forward to such a result and such a situation, and everyone hopes to experience it and to have that kind of encounter. Since you have such hopes, you should have the correct viewpoint and stance while experiencing everything that happens around you, experiencing and comprehending everything in the way that God teaches and instructs, learning to accept everything from God, and to view everything according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. In this way, your faith will grow greater and greater without you realizing it, and the fact that God is sovereign over all things and rules over everything will gradually be confirmed and verified in your heart. When all of this is confirmed in you, will you still worry about your stature not growing? (No.) But it's normal for you to feel a little bit worried now, because you are so small in stature, and there are many things that

you cannot see through to—it would be impossible for you not to worry, it is something that you cannot avoid. This is because there are many things within people that come from knowledge, from man, from Satan, from society, and so on. All of these things deeply influence the viewpoints from which people approach God and the perspective and stance that they should take when experiencing various things. Therefore, to be able to take the correct stance and perspective when things befall you is not an easy task. It requires you to not only experience positive things but also negative things. By discerning and understanding the essence of these negative things, you will learn more lessons and come to understand God's actions and His omnipotence and wisdom in ruling over all things.

Now, do you fully understand that the statement "The success and failure of things is dependent on people" is incorrect? (Yes, we do.) Are there any correct aspects to this statement? Are there any valid elements? (No, there aren't.) None at all? (None.) It is right to understand that there are none at all. This is a theoretical understanding. Then, in real life, through observation and experience, you will find that the statement "The success and failure of things is dependent on people" is erroneous, absurd, and is the viewpoint of the nonbeliever. When you discover this fact, and can use facts to demonstrate the error in this statement, then you will completely abandon and dismiss it, and you will no longer use it. You have not reached this point yet. Although you have accepted what I said, later, when faced with situations, you will ponder, "At that time I thought there was nothing correct about the statement 'The success and failure of things is dependent on people,' so now why do I think it's a little bit right?" You start to struggle internally and experience contradictions again. So then what should you do? First, you need to change your viewpoint. Let go of all the thoughts and viewpoints that stem from holding onto this statement. Let go of all the actions that arise from this statement. Don't fixate on people or matters. First come before God in prayer, then search for the basis and principles within God's words. In the process of searching, you will unknowingly gain enlightenment and come to understand the truth. It may be challenging for you to search for principles on your own, so call together everyone involved in the matter and search together for the basis and the truth principles within God's words. Then pray-read, fellowship the corresponding words of God, and check them for comparison. After comparing against God's words, accept the correct viewpoints and the wrong ones will be naturally let go. From then on, resolve and handle issues according to these principles. How does this method sound? (Good.) In the process of seeking the truth, what you should let go of are the actions that arise from the viewpoint of "The success and failure of things is dependent on people." Find the corresponding words of God and resolve and handle problems based on God's words. By searching for the truth and resolving problems in this way, your erroneous viewpoints will be resolved. If you handle things based on God's words and the truth principles, then your direction and approach to handling matters will change accordingly. As a result, the outcome of the matter will

develop in a benign direction. However, using the perspective and viewpoint of “The success and failure of things is dependent on people” to solve problems and handle matters will cause them to develop in a malignant direction. For example, when antichrists deceive people in the church, if people do not seek the truth but just fixate on people and matters, discussing right and wrong, and holding people accountable, the final result will be dealing with a few individuals and considering the matter resolved. Some may say, “You said that it was developing in a malignant direction, but I haven’t seen any malignant results. The antichrists have been expelled, so isn’t the problem solved? Where is this malignant outcome?” Did everyone learn a lesson from this experience? Did they understand the truth from it? Can they discern antichrists? Do they understand God’s will? Have they realized God’s sovereignty? None of these positive effects happened. On the contrary, people continue to live by satanic philosophies, distrusting and guarding against one another, and passing off responsibility onto each other. When faced with a situation, they quickly protect themselves, seeking only self-preservation. They fear taking responsibility and being dealt with. They don’t learn any lessons and they don’t accept anything from God, much less seek God’s will. Can people grow in life in this way? Ultimately, people only know what they can or cannot do in front of their leaders, what to say and do to make their leaders happy and what to say and do to make their leaders resent and dislike them. As a result, people become guarded against one another, resorting to self-enclosure, wrapping themselves up in disguise, and no one opens up. Being wrapped up, guarded, and disguised in this way, have people come before God? No, they haven’t. After experiencing many things, people learn to avoid situations, and they fear interacting with others and encountering issues. In the end, they completely close themselves off, not opening up to anyone, and their hearts are devoid of God. Believing in God in this way is entirely based on satanic philosophy. No matter how many experiences they go through, they cannot learn any lessons, know themselves, much less shed their corrupt disposition. Can they come to understand the truth and know God in this way? Can they feel true repentance? No, they cannot. Instead, they learn to guard against others, protect themselves, carefully observe others’ words and expressions, and steer according to the wind. They learn to use tricks and become more tactful, and to be more able to handle fights and quarrels. When faced with issues, they avoid taking responsibility and instead shift it onto others. They no longer have any relationship with God, His words, or the truth. Their hearts only drift farther and farther away from God. Isn’t this a malignant development? (Yes.) How did this direction of malignant development come about? If people view others and things, and comport themselves and act according to God’s words, and take the truth as their principle; if they seek God’s words as a foundation when encountering a problem, searching for answers within His words, identifying the root of the problem from God’s words and checking against them for comparison, and using His words to resolve all issues and difficulties, then God’s words would provide a forward path so that people

are not hindered, tripped up, or trapped in these matters. In the end they would understand the principles of practice that God requires in such matters and have a path to follow. If everyone were to come before God when faced with challenges, accepting everything from God, learning to rely on God, and find the truth principles as the basis in the process of seeking, would people still guard against each other? Would anyone still pursue right and wrong without addressing the root of the issue? (No, they wouldn't.) Even if there is someone who doesn't practice the truth and still pursues such matters, they are outliers, rejected by everyone. If people can accept things from God when they encounter them, the situation will develop in a benign direction. People will eventually come to understand and know God's words and gain the truth. What people practice is the truth, and what they achieve is the correct goal of gaining the truth and being able to bear witness to God. Their faith will increase, their understanding of God will grow, and they will develop a God-fearing heart. Isn't this a benign direction of development? (Yes.) What brings about such results? Is it because the perspective and position people take in every matter is correct and align with the truth? (Yes.) In simple and straightforward terms, this perspective and position means accepting things from God, which naturally leads to a benign direction of development and benign steps of development, and naturally achieves the result of understanding the truth and knowing God. However, if people do not accept things from God but instead approach things from human perspective and satanic philosophies, still relying on satanic philosophy to view matters and fixating on people and things, everything that is produced will be malignant. The ultimate consequence is that no one will come to understand the truth and gain benefits. This is the result of not knowing how to experience the work of God. Therefore, in some churches there is a disharmonious atmosphere among some people who perform duties. They are always suspicious of each other, guarding against each other, blaming each other, competing with each other, and arguing with each other. They are secretly fighting in the depths of their hearts. This confirms one thing: There is no one in this group who seeks the truth, no one who accepts matters from God when faced with them. They are all nonbelievers and do not pursue the truth. Conversely, in some churches, there are some people that, despite being small in stature and not understanding much truth, are able to genuinely accept matters from God in every situation, big or small, and then practice and experience according to God's words, and enter into the reality of God's words. Although these people that perform their duties together sometimes bicker, argue, and quarrel, there is an atmosphere among them, one that is not found among unbelievers. When they come together to do anything it is especially harmonious, like family or kin, with no gulf between their hearts, and they are united together in their work. The presence of such a harmonious atmosphere shows that at least the supervisors or a few key individuals seek the truth and handle matters in the right way when encountering problems, and have truly achieved results in implementing the principle of "accepting everything from God." There are many people who believe in God, but

because they do not pursue the truth or take God's words seriously, they have believed in God for many years without life entry. No matter what happens to them, they do not accept it from God and instead always rely on human notions and imaginings to perceive things. They cannot experience God's work. In a church, if there are a few individuals who understand spiritual matters and can see that many things are arranged and ordained by God, they can rely on God, actively seek the truth, practice the truth, and handle things according to the truth principles. In such a church, an atmosphere of the work of the Holy Spirit arises. Certainly, people can feel this especially enjoyable harmonious atmosphere, and their mindset is naturally in the best state. More specifically, there is a mutual understanding among people, a shared aspiration, goal, and motivation for pursuit deep in their hearts. Because of this, they can be united together. In such a church, you can experience a particularly harmonious atmosphere. This atmosphere fills people with confidence and motivates them to pursue progress. They feel empowered in their hearts and as if they have inexhaustible strength to expend for God. This feeling is incredibly enjoyable. Anyone who attends gatherings in this church can enjoy this atmosphere and enjoy the sense of confidence. At such a time they feel as if they are living in God's embrace, as if they are in His presence every day. It is a truly different experience. In those churches where the Holy Spirit is not at work, most of the people are not pursuers of the truth. They cannot accept things from God when facing situations, and they rely on human ways and means to control everything. In such a congregation, the feelings between people are different and the relationships between people and the atmosphere produced are also different. You don't feel the atmosphere of the work of the Holy Spirit or the atmosphere of loving each other at all. Instead, you can only feel a coldness. That is to say, people are cold toward each other. They are all guarded against each other, arguing with each other, secretly competing with each other, and striving to surpass each other. No one submits to another, and they even suppress, exclude, and punish each other. They are like unbelievers in the workplace, business world, and politics, and make you feel disgust, hatred and fear, leaving you with no sense of security. If you experience such feelings in any group of people, you will see the accuracy of the statement, "Mankind has been profoundly corrupted by Satan," and it will make you love the work of the Holy Spirit even more. Without the work of the Holy Spirit, that is, when human beings, Satan, knowledge, or nonbelievers reign, the atmosphere is completely different. It will make you feel uncomfortable and joyless, and you will soon feel constrained and depressed. This feeling comes from Satan and from corrupt mankind, that is accurate. This concludes the fellowship on this topic.

Regarding the statements about moral conduct in traditional culture, last time I fellowshiped that "Every person shares responsibility for the fate of their country." Today, I will subsequently fellowship on "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you." Just like the previous phrase "The success and failure of things

is dependent on people" that I fellowshiped on, this phrase is also obviously the viewpoint of nonbelievers. The viewpoint of nonbelievers is prevalent among people and can be heard everywhere. From the moment people begin to speak, they learn all kinds of sayings from people, from nonbelievers, from Satan, and from the world. It starts with the initial education in which people are taught by their parents and families about how to comport themselves, what to say, what morals to possess, what kind of thoughts and character to have, and so on. Even after entering society, individuals still unconsciously accept indoctrination of various doctrines and theories from Satan. "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" is instilled in every person by family or society as one of the moral conducts that people must possess. If you possess this moral conduct, people say you are noble, honorable, have integrity, and that you are esteemed and highly regarded by society. Since the phrase "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" comes from people and from Satan, it becomes the object we dissect and discern, and further still the object we forsake. Why do we discern and forsake this phrase? Let's first examine whether this phrase is correct and whether a person who follows it is right. Is it truly noble to be a person who possesses the moral character to "do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you"? Does such a person possess the truth reality? Do they have the humanity and principles of conduct that God said created beings should have? Do you all understand the phrase "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you"? First explain in your own words what this phrase means. (It means that when someone entrusts you with a task, you should spare no effort in getting it done.) Shouldn't this be the case? If someone entrusts you with a task, don't they think highly of you? They think highly of you, believe in you, and think you are trustworthy. So, no matter what other people ask you to do, you should agree and do it well and completely according to their requirements, so they are happy and satisfied. In doing so, you are a good person. The implication is that whether the person who entrusted you with a task is satisfied determines whether you are considered a good person. Can it be explained in this way? (Yes.) So isn't it easy to be seen as a good person in the eyes of others and recognized by society? (Yes.) What does it mean that it is "easy"? It means that the standard is very low and not at all noble. If you meet the moral standard of "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you," you are considered a person with moral character in such matters. Implicitly, it means that you are deserving of people's confidence, their entrustment of handling tasks, that you are a reputable person, and that you are a good person. That's the meaning of this statement. Don't you think so? Do you have any objections to the standards of judgment and evaluation of the phrase "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you"? If you can provide an example that refutes this statement and exposes its fallacy, that is, you can use an actual instance to prove its incorrectness, then this statement will not stand. Now, in theory, you may

already believe that this statement is definitely incorrect because it is not the truth and it does not come from God. How can you use facts to overturn this statement? For example, if you are too busy to go grocery shopping today you can entrust your neighbor to do it for you. You can tell them exactly what food to buy, how much to buy, and when to buy it. Afterward, the neighbor buys the groceries according to your request and delivers them on time. Is this considered to be “doing their best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to them”? Is this considered as being reputable? This is barely even lifting a finger. Is being able to help someone buy something considered as having high moral character? (It is not.) As for whether they do bad things or not, and what their character is, do these have anything in the slightest to do with their ability to “do their best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to them”? If a person can do their best to accomplish a small thing that other people have entrusted to them, do they possess a standard of moral character? Does being able to accomplish such a small task prove that they are truly a person of high moral character? Some people say, “This person is very trustworthy. Whenever they are asked to deliver something, no matter what it is or how much, they always return with it. They are reliable and have good moral character.” This is how they are perceived and evaluated by others. Is such an evaluation appropriate? (No, it’s not.) You two are neighbors. Neighbors generally do not turn against each other or harm each other because they cross paths regularly. If there are conflicts, it becomes difficult to interact later. Maybe the neighbor helped you out of this consideration. It could also be that doing this small favor was convenient for them, it was not a difficult task, and they didn’t suffer any loss. Moreover, it helped them leave a good impression and gain a good reputation, which benefits them. Additionally, by helping you with small favors, isn’t it convenient for them to ask you for favors in the future? Perhaps they will ask you for a big favor in the future, and you will be obligated to do it. Is this person keeping their options open? When people help each other, interact, and deal with one another, there is a purpose. If they see you as having no use, and they won’t ask for your help later, they might not help you with this favor. It’s possible that you have doctors, lawyers, government officials, or individuals with social status in your family, which is useful to this person in some way. They might help you in order to keep their options open. Perhaps they will use you somewhere in the future, or at the very least, find it convenient to borrow tools from your home. Sometimes you entrust them with small favors and after a few days they come to your house to borrow things. People won’t lift a finger unless there’s something in it for themselves! Look at how when you asked them for a favor, they agreed quite readily, with a smile on their face, and seemingly without a thought; but in fact they had careful calculations in their mind, as no one’s thoughts are simple. Once, I went to a place to have My clothes mended. The elderly lady who mended clothes had a daughter who was returning to her home country. Her neighbor had a car, so the elderly lady entrusted this neighbor to take her daughter to the airport so she wouldn’t have to pay for a taxi. The neighbor agreed,

and the elderly lady was delighted. However, this neighbor was not that simple. He didn't want to do it for free. Once he agreed, he stayed there, slowly taking out a piece of clothing and saying, "Do you think my clothes can be mended?" The elderly lady was taken aback, and her expression seemed to say, "Why is this person taking advantage of such a small thing? He agreed so readily, but it turns out he doesn't want to do it for free." The elderly lady reacted quickly, saying after a second or two, "Ok, put it there, and I'll mend it for you." No mention of money at all. See how sending someone out on a simple errand is balanced out by mending a piece of clothing. Doesn't this mean no one loses out? Is interpersonal interaction simple? (No, it's not.) Nothing is simple. In this human society, every individual has a transactional mindset, and everyone engages in transactions. Everyone makes demands of others and they all want to profit at other people's expense without suffering any losses themselves. Some people say, "Among those who 'do their best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to them,' there are also many who do not seek to profit at other people's expense. They simply aim to do their best to handle things well, these people truly possess this virtue." This statement is incorrect. Even if they don't seek wealth, material possessions, or any kind of benefit, they do seek renown. What is this "renown"? It means, "I have accepted people's trust to handle their tasks. Regardless of whether the person who entrusted me is present or not, as long as I do my best to handle it well, I will have a good reputation. At least some people will know that I am a good person, a person of high moral character, and someone worth emulating. I can occupy a place among people and leave behind a good reputation in a group of people. It's worth it too!" Other people say, "'Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you,' and since people have entrusted us, whether they are present or not, we should handle their tasks well and stick with it to the end. Even if we cannot leave a lasting legacy, at least they can't criticize us behind our backs by saying that we have no credibility. We can't let future generations be discriminated against and suffer this kind of gross injustice." What are they seeking? They're still seeking renown. Some people attach great importance to wealth and possessions, while others value renown. What does "renown" mean? What are specific expressions for "renown" among people? It's being called a good person and someone of high moral character, a paragon, a virtuous person, or a saint. There are even some people who, because for one matter they succeeded in "doing their best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to them" and have this kind of moral character, are perpetually praised, and their descendants benefit from their renown. You see, this is much more valuable than the little benefits they can currently get. Therefore, the starting point for anyone who abides by the so-called moral standard to "do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" is not that simple. They are not just seeking to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities as individuals, but rather they abide by it either for personal gain or reputation, either for this life or the afterlife. Of course, there are also those who wish to avoid being criticized behind their back and

to avoid infamy. In short, the starting point for people to do this kind of thing is not simple, it is not really a starting point from the perspective of humanity, nor is it a starting point from the social responsibility of mankind. Looking at it from the intention and starting point of people doing such things, people who hold on to the phrase “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you” do not have an uncomplicated purpose at all.

Just now, we dissected the statement about moral conduct, “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you” from people’s intentions and purpose in doing things and from people’s ambitions and desires. This is one aspect. From another aspect, “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you” has another error. What is it? People regard the behavior “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you” as infinitely noble, but they don’t know that they can’t discern whether the things entrusted by others are just or unjust. If the task that someone entrusts you with is a very common one, something that is easily accomplished, something not worth mentioning, then faithfulness doesn’t come into it, because when people deal with each other and get along with each other, it’s normal to entrust each other with tasks. It’s as easy as lifting a finger. It’s out of the question whether someone’s moral character is noble or if it is lower. It does not reach this level. However, if the task someone entrusts you with is of great importance, a big task such as one that involves life and death, fate, or the future, and you still treat it the same as a common matter, doing your best to handle it well without discernment, this is where problems can arise. What kind of problems? If the task entrusted to you is proper, reasonable, just, positive, and it won’t cause any harm or loss to others or have any negative impact on mankind, then accepting the task and doing your best to faithfully handle it is fine. This is a responsibility you should fulfill and a principle you should abide by. However, if the task you accept is unjust and will cause harm, disturbance, destruction, or even loss of life to others or to mankind, and you still do your best to faithfully handle it, then what on earth does it say about your moral character? Is it good or bad? (It’s bad.) In what way is it bad? Some people follow an unjust person or become friends with them, and both consider each other close friends. They don’t care whether this friend is good or bad; as long as it’s a task entrusted to them by their friend, they will do their best to handle it well. If the friend asks them to kill someone they will kill them, if they ask them to harm anyone they will harm them, and if they ask them to destroy something they will. As long as it’s a task entrusted to them by their friend, they will do it without discerning and without deliberation. They believe that they are carrying out the claim “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you.” What does this say about their humanity and moral character? Is it good or bad? (It’s bad.) Even bad people can “do their best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to them,” but the kinds of tasks that other people have entrusted to them and that they do their best to handle well are all evil and negative things. If what other people

have entrusted to you is to harm people, kill people, steal other people's property, take revenge, or break the law, is it right? (No, it is not right.) These are all things that harm people, they are evil deeds and crimes. If someone entrusts you with an evil task, and you still adhere to the traditional cultural principle of "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you," saying, "Since you have entrusted me, it means you trust me, think highly of me, and treat me as one of your own, as a friend, and not as an outsider. Therefore, I will do my best to faithfully handle whatever you have entrusted to me. I swear on my life to handle well what you entrust to me, and I will never go back on my word," then what kind of person is this? Isn't this a real scoundrel? (Yes.) It's a big scoundrel. So how should you treat the "do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" kind of things? If someone entrusts you with a simple task, something very common in dealing with people, then even if you do it, it can't be said whether your moral character is noble or not. If someone entrusts you with a very important and large task, then you must discern whether it is positive or negative, and whether it is something your inner quality can achieve. If it is not something you can achieve, you do what you can. If it is a negative task, a task that breaks the law, harms the interests or lives of others, or even destroys the prospects and future of others, and you still adhere to the moral standard of "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you," then you are a scoundrel. Based on these perspectives, the principle that people should follow when accepting tasks entrusted to them should not be "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you." This statement is not accurate, it has significant loopholes and problems and it greatly deceives people. After accepting this statement, many people will use it without question to evaluate the moral conduct of others and, of course, to measure themselves and constrain their own morality. Yet they don't know who in the world is worthy of entrusting tasks to others, and very few people entrust others with tasks that are just, positive, beneficial to others, valuable, and bring prosperity to humanity. There are none. Therefore, if you use the standard of "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" to measure the quality of a person's morality, not only are there too many doubts and problems to stand up to scrutiny, but it also instills wrong concepts in people, and wrong principles and the wrong direction for dealing with such matters, confusing, paralyzing, and misleading people's thinking. Therefore, no matter how you analyze or dissect this statement, there's no value in its existence, it is not something that people should practice, and it does not benefit people in any way.

The phrase "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" also has another error. From another point of view, for those evil individuals who want to use, manipulate, and control others, for those with vested interests, and for those with status and power in society, this statement gives them an opportunity to exploit, and an excuse to use, manipulate, and control others. It enables them to strategically use

people to handle tasks for them. Those who do not handle tasks for them or do their best for them are determined to be people who cannot be entrusted by others and cannot do their best to faithfully handle tasks. They are labeled as individuals with an inferior moral character who are unworthy of trust, do not deserve to be valued highly or respected, and are lowly in society. Such people are cast aside. For example, if your boss entrusts you with a task and you consider, “Since my boss has brought it up, I have to agree to it no matter what it is. No matter how difficult it is, even if it means going through fire and water, I have to do it,” so you agree. For one thing, he is your boss, and you dare not refuse. For another, he often pressures you, saying, “Only those who do their best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to them are good colleagues.” He has instilled this concept in you early on, inoculating you in advance to make you mentally prepared. Once he makes any request, you are honor-bound to comply and cannot refuse; otherwise, you will not end up well. Therefore, you have to exert all your energy into doing things for him. Even if it’s not easily handled, you have to find a way to get it done. You have to use connections, go through the backdoor, and spend money on gifts. In the end, when the task is completed, you can’t mention the money spent or make any demands. And you have to say, “‘People should do their best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to them.’ You think highly of me and value me highly, so I must do all I can to handle this task well.” In reality, only you know how much hardship and trouble you have endured. If you succeed in doing this, people will say you have high moral character. But if you fail, people will look down on you, despise you, and you will suffer their scorn. No matter which social class or ethnic group you belong to, as long as someone entrusts you with a task, you must do your best and spare no effort, and you cannot refuse. Why is that? As the saying goes, “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you.” Since you have accepted someone’s entrustment, you must handle it faithfully to the end and ensure the task is completed successfully, well, in its entirety, and to the other person’s approval, and then report back to them. Even if they don’t inquire about it, you must spare no effort in handling it. Some people basically have no real relationship with you, such as distant relatives in your extended family. They see that you have a good job in society or status and prestige, or some talent, so they entrust you with this or that. Is it ok to refuse? In fact, it’s completely ok, but due to the complex social relationships among humans and the pressure of public opinion influenced by the idea of “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you,” when this kind of person with whom you basically have no relationship asks you to do things for them, you have to do it all. Of course, you can choose not to do it. In this way you only offend one person or you lose a relationship with a couple of relatives, or you might be ostracized by a couple of relatives. But again, what does it matter? In fact, it doesn’t matter. You don’t live with them, and your destiny is not in their hands. So why can’t you just refuse to do it? One of the unavoidable reasons is that the public opinion to “do your best to faithfully handle

whatever other people have entrusted to you" is binding and oppressing you. That is, in any societal community, you are often held captive by the moral standard and the public opinion to "do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you." You doing your best to faithfully handle tasks is not about fulfilling social responsibility or fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of a created being. Instead, you are held captive by the statements of moral standards and the invisible chains of social opinion. Why are you susceptible to being held captive by it? One aspect is because you can't distinguish whether these moral statements passed down from your ancestors are right, nor whether people should abide by them. Another aspect is that you lack the strength and courage to break free from the social pressure and public opinion brought about by this traditional culture. As a result, you cannot break free from its chains and its influence on you. Another reason is that in any community or group in society, people want others to consider them as being of high moral character, a good person, a reliable person, trustworthy, and someone worthy of being entrusted with tasks. They all want to establish such an image that earns respect and makes others believe that they are dignified individuals of flesh and blood with feelings and loyalty, and not cold-blooded or alien. If you want to integrate into society and be accepted and approved by them, you must first make them recognize you as a person of high moral character, someone with integrity and credibility. So, no matter what kind of requests they make of you, you try your best to satisfy them, make them happy, and then receive praise from them saying that you are a trustworthy person of high moral character, and that people are willing to associate with you. In this way you feel a sense of presence in your life. If you can be approved by society, by the masses, and by your colleagues and friends, you will live a particularly nourishing and satisfying life. However, if you live differently from them, if your thoughts and viewpoints differ from theirs, if your path in life is different from theirs, if no one says you have a high moral character, are trustworthy, are worthy of being entrusted with matters, or have dignity, and if they all forsake and isolate you, then you will live a depressed and sad life. Why do you feel depressed and sad? It's because your self-esteem takes a hit. Where does your self-esteem come from? It comes from the approval and acceptance of society and the masses. If they have zero acceptance of you, if they don't approve of you, if they don't praise or appreciate you, and if they don't cast any admiring, fond, or esteemed looks at you, then you feel that you have no dignity in life. You feel very worthless, with no sense of presence. You don't know where your value lies, and in the end, you don't know how to live. Your life becomes depressed and tormented. You're always trying to make people accept you, trying to integrate yourself into the masses and into society. Therefore, adhering to the moral standard of "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" is a very important matter for anyone living in such a social environment. It is also an important indicator for measuring a person's moral character and whether they are accepted by others. But is this standard of measurement correct? Definitely not. In fact, it can even be called absurd.

There is another aspect to the moral statement of “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you” that needs to be discerned. If the task entrusted to you doesn’t consume too much of your time and energy, and is within the range of your caliber, or if you have the right environment and conditions, then out of human conscience and reason, you can do some things for others to the best of your ability and meet their reasonable and appropriate demands. However, if the task entrusted to you takes up a significant amount of your time and energy, and takes away much of your time, to the extent that it makes you sacrifice your life, and your responsibilities and obligations in this life and your duties as a created being will be reduced to nothing and will be replaced, then what will you do? You should refuse because it is not your responsibility or obligation. As for the responsibilities and obligations of a person’s life, other than taking care of parents and raising children, and fulfilling social responsibilities in society and under the framework of the law, the most important thing is that a person’s energy and time, and life should be spent on fulfilling the duty of a created being, rather than being entrusted with a task by anyone else, taking up their time and energy. This is because God creates a person, grants them life, and brings them into this world, and it is not for them to do things and fulfill responsibilities for others. What people should accept most is God’s entrustment. Only God’s entrustment is a genuine entrustment, and accepting man’s entrustment is to not attend to their proper duties. No one is qualified to ask you to devote your loyalty, energy, time, or even your youth and entire life to the tasks they entrust to you. Only God is qualified to ask people to fulfill their duty as created beings. Why is that? If any task entrusted to you requires a significant amount of your time and energy, it will hinder you from fulfilling your duty as a created being and even from following the right path in life. It will alter the direction and goals of your life. This is not a good thing, it’s a curse. If it consumes a significant amount of your time and energy, and even robs you of your youth, depriving you of opportunities to gain the truth and life, then any entrustment of this nature comes from Satan and not simply from any individual. This is another way to understand the matter. If someone entrusts you with a task that consumes and wastes a lot of your time and energy, and even causes you to sacrifice your youth and the entirety of your life, taking away the time you should spend fulfilling your duty as a created being, then that person is not only not your friend, they can even be considered your enemy and your foe. In your life, in addition to fulfilling your responsibilities and obligations toward your parents, children, and family that God has bestowed on you, all your time and energy should be dedicated and expended in fulfilling your duty as a created being. No one is qualified to occupy or take away your time and energy under the pretext of entrusting you to do anything. If you do not heed the advice and accept someone’s entrustment, occupying a significant amount of your time and energy, then the time you have to fulfill your duty as a created being will be comparatively reduced, and even deprived and occupied. What does it mean if you are deprived of the time and energy to fulfill your

duty? It means that your opportunity to pursue the truth is reduced. When the opportunity to pursue the truth is reduced, doesn't it also mean that your chances of being saved are smaller? (Yes.) Is this a blessing or a curse for you? (A curse.) It is undoubtedly a curse. It's like a girl who has a boyfriend, and the boyfriend tells her, "You can believe in God, but you must wait for me until I become successful, rich, and influential, and until I can buy you a car, a house, and a big diamond ring, then I will marry you." The girl says, "Then for these few years, I won't believe in God or perform my duties. First I'll work hard with you and wait for you to get rich, become an executive, have your wishes fulfilled, and then I'll perform my duties." Is this girl smart or foolish? (Foolish.) She's so foolish! You helped him achieve success, become rich and powerful, and have fame and fortune, but who will make up for the time you lost? You haven't fulfilled your duty as a created being, so who will make up for this loss; who will repay it? For these few years of believing in God, you haven't gained the truth you should have, and you haven't gained the life you should have. Who will make up for this truth and this life? Some people believe in God but don't pursue the truth. Instead, they spend several years of their time to fulfill an entrusted task, wish, or demand from other people. In the end, they not only gain nothing but also miss the opportunity to fulfill their duty to obtain the truth. They do not receive God's approval; the loss is too great, and the cost is too high! Isn't it so foolish to give up believing in God and fulfilling the duty of a created being just to avoid breaking the trust of others, to let people say good things about them, to be regarded as a person of high moral character, as reputable and trustworthy, and to successfully "do their best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to them"? There are also those who try to have it both ways, satisfying people on one side while allocating some energy to perform some duty, and pleasing others but at the same time wanting to please God. What happens in the end? You may please people, but your duty as a created being is not fulfilled, you don't understand the truth at all, and you lose so much! Although you have done your best to faithfully handle things for people, received praise from them saying that you keep your word and are a person of high moral character, you have not gained the truth from God, nor have you received God's approval or acceptance. This is because doing your best to faithfully handle things for people is not what God requires for humanity, nor is it a task entrusted to you by God. Doing your best to faithfully handle things for people is off track, it is not attending to your proper duties, and it holds no value or significance whatsoever. It is not at all a good deed worth commemorating. You have invested a great deal of your energy and time to others, and by doing this not only are you not remembered by God, you have lost the best opportunity to pursue the truth and the precious time to fulfill your duty as a created being. When you turn around and want to pursue the truth and perform your duties well, you are already old, lacking in energy, physical strength, and plagued by illnesses. Is it worth it? How can you expend yourself for God? Using the remaining time to pursue the truth and fulfill your duty as a created being is exhausting. Your physical strength can't keep up, your memory deteriorates,

and your energy isn't good. You often doze off during gatherings, and your body always has difficulties and ailments when you try to fulfill your duties. By then, you will regret it. By "doing your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you," what have you gained? At most, you can bribe others and receive their compliments. But what is the use of people's praise? Can it represent God's approval? It doesn't represent it in the slightest. In that case, that sentence of praise from a person is worthless. Is it worth it to endure such great pain for the sake of receiving praise while losing the opportunity to be saved? So, what do people need to understand now? If anyone entrusts you with a task, no matter what it is, as long as it doesn't involve fulfilling your duty as a created being or something entrusted to you by God, you have the right to refuse because it is not your obligation, let alone your responsibility. Some people might say, "If I refuse, others will say I have poor morals, or they will say I'm not a good enough friend or loyal enough." If you are concerned about this, then go ahead and do it, and afterward, see what the consequences are. There are also people who haven't finished doing things for others and can't continue to do things for others because they are performing their duties. They ponder, "It's not good that I leave this task half finished. As a person, I should have credibility. One must do things from start to finish and not start strong but end weakly. If the tasks I promise to do for others are halfway done and I don't do the rest, then I can't justify this to others, it lacks integrity!" If you have such thoughts in your mind and cannot let go of your pride, you can go ahead and do tasks for others, and when you're done see what you have gained and whether keeping your word and having this kind of integrity really holds any value. Isn't it delaying an important thing? If it can delay you from performing your duties and affect you in gaining the truth, then it is equivalent to risking your life, isn't it? If you consider these statements and requirements on moral conduct to be more important than fulfilling your duty as a created being and pursuing the truth, then you cannot free yourself from being held captive and bound by these statements. If you can discern them and see their true essence clearly, decide to forsake them, and not live by these things, then you have hope of breaking free from being held captive and bound by these statements of moral conduct. You also have hope of fulfilling your duty as a created being and gaining the truth.

After fellowshiping so much, do you now have a little discernment regarding the statement and standard of judging a person's morality, "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you"? (Yes.) So to sum up, from how many aspects should we discern whether this sentence is right or wrong? Firstly, it is clear that this statement does not conform to the truth or to the words of God, and it is not a truth principle that people should abide by. How should you deal with this matter then? No matter who entrusts you with a task, you have the right to refuse and say, "I don't want to help you; I am not obligated to be faithful to you." If you accepted their entrustment at the time, but now that you understand the matter you don't want to help and feel that there is no need or obligation, then the matter ends there. Is this a principle of practice?

(Yes.) You can say “no” and refuse. Secondly, what is wrong in the statement “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you”? If someone entrusts you with a simple task that is conveniently done, it is just a normal thing in interacting and dealing between people. It can’t be said whether you’re faithful or whether you have high moral character, it cannot be used as a standard to measure a person’s morality. Does helping someone with a task that requires very slight effort indicate that a person is moral and has credibility? Not necessarily, as that person may have done many bad things behind the scenes. If they have done many bad things, but they have done something to help others with very slight effort, is this considered high moral character? (No, it’s not.) Therefore, this example overturns the statement “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you.” It is not correct and cannot be used as a standard to measure a person’s moral character. This is the way to deal with some ordinary things. So how should you deal with some special matters? If someone entrusts you with a special important task that exceeds your capabilities, and you find it exhausting and strenuous and that you’re unable to do it, you can refuse without feeling bad. Additionally, if someone entrusts you to do something that is unreasonable, illegal, or harmful to the interests of others, you especially should not do it for them. So, when someone entrusts you with a task, what is the main thing you need to discern? For one thing, you need to discern whether the entrusted task is your responsibility or obligation and whether you should accept it. For another, after accepting it, whether you do it or not, and whether you handle it well or poorly, does it involve faithfulness and a person’s morality? This is the focus of discernment. Another aspect to discern is the nature of the entrusted task, whether it is reasonable, legal, positive, or negative. It is through these three aspects that you discern it. Now, consider and summarize what was just fellowshiped and discuss your opinions and views. (Regarding the moral statement “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you,” firstly, people are not obligated to do things for others, they can refuse, this is everyone’s right. Secondly, even if they accept a task entrusted by others, whether they do it or not and whether they do it well or badly does not involve their morality, and this cannot be used as a standard for measuring a person’s moral character. Furthermore, if the task entrusted to someone is illegal and a crime, they really should not carry it out. If they do, it is a crime and they will face punishment. Through these points, we can indeed overturn the viewpoint of “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you.”) The most crucial point is that this statement is wrong. Where is it wrong? First, the principle it imposes for treating and handling such matters is wrong. Additionally, using this statement to judge a person’s moral character is also wrong. Moreover, using this statement to measure a person’s moral character, to bind and control them, to use them to do things, and to make them pay their time, energy, and price in performing responsibilities that they should not have to bear or are unwilling to bear is a kind of hijacking and it’s also wrong. These few

wrongs are enough to overturn the value and correctness of the statement “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you.” Let’s summarize briefly. First of all, the statement “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you” tells people how to handle tasks entrusted to them. It implies that when someone entrusts you with a task, no matter if it’s reasonable or not, good or bad, or positive or negative, as long as the task is entrusted to you, you must keep your word. You are obligated to carry out the task well and completely in order to satisfy them. Only this kind of person can have credibility. It makes people carry out the task without discernment, which is above all a wrong, a wrong that goes against principles. Secondly, the standard of whether people can “do their best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to them” is used as a basis to measure their moral character. Isn’t this standard of measurement committing another wrong? If everyone does their best to faithfully handle bad or evil tasks entrusted to them, wouldn’t this society be turned upside down? Additionally, if this statement is always used as a standard to measure people’s moral character, it will naturally create a social atmosphere, public opinion, and social pressure to bind and restrict people’s thoughts. What consequences will this bring? Because of the existence of the statement “Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you” and the presence of such public opinion in society, you are under social pressure and you are compelled to act in this way in such situations. The way you act is not voluntary, it is not within the range of your own capabilities, and it is not fulfilling your obligations. You are forced to do it, and it is not a demand from deep in your heart, nor a demand from normal humanity, and it isn’t a demand to maintain your emotional relationships. It is caused by social pressure, which amounts to moral hijacking. If you fail to do the tasks you agreed to do for others, your parents, family, colleagues, and friends will criticize you, saying, “What do you think you are doing? As the saying goes, ‘Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you.’ Since you agreed, why didn’t you follow through? If you agreed, you should have done it well!” After hearing this, you feel that you are in the wrong, so you obediently carry out the task. While doing it you still don’t want to; you don’t have the ability, and you can’t manage it, but you still have to grit your teeth and do it. In the end, your whole family helps you do it, and it takes a lot of money, energy, and suffering and just barely gets done. The person who entrusted you is happy, but you have suffered a lot in your heart and you are exhausted. Even though you do this with an unreconciled heart and an unwilling feeling, you won’t give up, and the next time you encounter this kind of situation, you will do the same thing again. Why is it like this? Because you want self-respect, you love vanity, and at the same time, you can’t bear the pressure of public opinion. Even if no one finds fault with you, you will criticize yourself, saying, “I didn’t do what I agreed to do for others. What am I doing? I even despise myself. Isn’t this immoral?” Even you are hijacking yourself; has your mind already been imprisoned? (Yes.) In fact, that task hasn’t the slightest thing to do with you. You gain no benefits or

edification by doing it. It's completely fine if you don't do it, and only a few individuals will criticize you. But what difference does that make? It won't alter your destiny in the slightest. No matter what people ask of you, as long as it doesn't conform to the requirements of God, you can refuse. By dissecting the statement "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" based on these three points, do you understand the essence of this statement? (Yes.)

When someone entrusts you with a task, what principles should you follow? Shouldn't there be principles for carrying it out? What is the basis for this in terms of the truth? Just now, I mentioned the most important point, which is that in one's lifetime, apart from supporting parents, raising children, and fulfilling one's social responsibilities within the framework of the law, there is no obligation to accept anyone's entrustment or work for anyone and no need to live for anyone's affairs or entrustment. The value and meaning of human life can only be found in performing the duty of a created being. Besides that, doing things for anyone hasn't the slightest bit of meaning; it is all useless work. Therefore, the statement "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" is something imposed by people on people and has no connection to God. This statement is absolutely not a requirement from God to humans. It stems from others exploiting you, morally hijacking you, and controlling and binding you. It doesn't have the slightest connection to God's entrustment or performing your duty as a created being. Do you understand? (Yes.) In this world, in the entire universe, as a created being, apart from being faithful to God and God's entrustment, and being faithful to one's duty as a human being, there is nothing and no one worthy of your faithfulness. It is clear that "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" is not a principle for conduct. It is something erroneous and that violates principles. If someone entrusts you with a task, what should you do? If the task entrusted to you is something that only requires very slight effort, where you only need to simply speak or perform a small action, and you are qualified enough, you can help out of your humanity and compassion; this is not considered wrong. This is a principle. However, if the task entrusted to you will consume a significant amount of your time and energy, or even waste a considerable portion of your time, you have the right to refuse. Even if it is your parents, you have the right to decline. There is no need to be faithful to them or accept their entrustment, this is your right. Where does this right come from? It is bestowed upon you by God. This is the second principle. The third principle is that if someone entrusts you with some task, even if it doesn't consume a significant amount of time and energy, but it can disturb or affect your performance of duty, or destroy your will to perform your duty as well as your faithfulness to God, you should also refuse it. If someone entrusts you with something that can affect your pursuit of the truth, disrupt and disturb your will to pursue the truth and your pace in the pursuit of the truth, and make you give up halfway, then you should refuse it even more. You should refuse anything that affects your performance of duty or your pursuit of truth. This is your right;

you have the right to say “no.” There is no need for you to invest your time and energy. You can refuse all things that hold no meaning, value, edification, help, or benefit to your performance of duty, pursuit of the truth, or your salvation. Can this be considered a principle? Yes, this is a principle. So if you measure according to these principles, where can the entrusted tasks people should accept in their life come from? (From God.) That’s right, they can only come from God. The words “from God” are relatively hollow and distant, so what should this entrustment actually be? (Performing our duty.) That’s right, it means performing your duty in the church. It’s impossible for God to personally say to you, “You go spread the gospel” “You go lead the church,” or “You go perform text-based work.” It’s impossible for God to tell you personally, but God has entrusted you with your duty through the arrangement of God’s house. All of the arrangements of God’s house stem from God and come from God, so do you need God to personally tell you? You have already experienced all the people, events, and things of God’s sovereignty and orchestration and you have real feelings. What you have experienced is related to God’s work, the truth, and His management plan. Isn’t this performing the duty of a created being? This is from the aspect of accepting entrustment. For another thing, besides what is entrusted from God, there is no other thing that people should be faithful to. Only God deserves unwavering faithfulness; people are not worthy. No one, including your ancestors, parents, or superiors, is worthy. Why? The highest truth is that it is perfectly natural and justified that created beings be faithful to the Creator. Do you need to analyze this truth? No, because everything about people comes from God, it is perfectly natural and justified that created beings be faithful to the Creator. This is a supreme truth that people should always bear in mind! The second truth that people should understand is that by being faithful to God, everything people gain from God is the truth, the life, and the way. Their gains are rich and abundant, especially plentiful, and overflowing. When humans gain the truth, the life, and the way, their lives become valuable. Therefore, when you are faithful to God, your time, energy, and costs that are sacrificed will be positively rewarded, and you will never have regrets. Up to now, some people have followed God for twenty or thirty years, and some have followed God for three to five years or for ten years. I believe that most of them have no regrets and have made gains to some extent. For those who love the truth, the more they follow God the more they feel that they lack too much and that the truth is precious. Their desire to pursue the truth grows, and they feel that they accepted God too late and that if they had accepted Him three to five years or ten years earlier, how much truth they would have understood! Now some people regret accepting God too late, regretting that they believed in God for several years without pursuing the truth and wasted their time, and regretting that they believed in God for several years without performing their duty well. In short, regardless of the length of time a person believes in God, they all gain something and feel that pursuing the truth is incredibly important. This is the second truth: that by being faithful to God, everything people gain from God is the truth, the way, and the life, and they can

be saved, no longer living under the power of Satan. The third truth is that if people can achieve eternal faithfulness to God, what will be their ultimate destination? (To be saved and remain to enter God's kingdom.) When people follow God and are ultimately saved, the destination they get is not to be cast into perdition and destroyed, but to remain as a new human being, to be able to continue living. If people continue to live, then they have the hope of seeing God. What a blessing it is! In the matter of being faithful to God, is it enough for people to understand these three truths? (Yes.) What benefits are there if people follow others and are faithful to them? If you are faithful to others, people say that you have good morals. You have a good reputation, and you only gain this small benefit. Have you gained the truth and life? You don't gain it at all. What can any person give you when you are faithful to them? At most, you can benefit from associating with them during the rapid success in their career, that's all. What is the value of that? Isn't that hollow? Things that are unrelated to truth are useless no matter how much you acquire. Furthermore, if you follow people and are faithful to them, there may be a consequence. You may become a victim, an offering. If the person you are faithful to does not walk the right path, what will happen if you follow them? Will you walk the right path? (No.) If you follow them, you won't walk the right path either; you will even comply with them to do evil and will go to hell to be punished, and then you are finished. If you are faithful to a person, even if you do many good deeds, you will not gain God's approval. If you are faithful to the devil kings, Satan, or antichrists, you become an accomplice and a henchman of Satan. The outcome can only be being buried alongside Satan, being an offering for Satan. Unbelievers say, "Being close to a king is as dangerous as lying with a tiger." No matter how faithful you are to the devil kings, in the end, once they have used you up, they will devour you and make you a victim. Your life will always be in danger. That is the fate of being faithful to the devil kings and to Satan. Devil kings and Satan will never point you to the correct direction and purpose for your life, and will not guide you on the correct path of life. You will never gain the truth or life from them. The end of your faithfulness to them is to either perish with them and be their offering, or to be entrapped, mutilated, and devoured by them; all of this is the final result of going to hell. This is an undeniable fact. Therefore, any person, no matter what a famous and eminent person or big shot they are, is not worthy of your faithfulness and sacrificing your entire life for them. They are not worthy, and they do not have the power to arrange or manipulate your destiny. Is understanding this truth principle enough to solve problems such as following people and being faithful to people? (Yes.) There are three principles that should be followed when dealing with the tasks entrusted to you by others, and three principles were fellowshiped on the value and significance of people's faithfulness to God—do you understand all of these principles clearly? (Yes.) In short, the purpose of dissecting the statement "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" is to help you see its absurdity and falsehood clearly so that you can let go of it. However, letting go is not enough; you must also understand

and grasp the principles of practice people should have, as well as God's will in such matters. Regarding the moral statement of "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you," the main content is basically this. I just dissected from different aspects and viewpoints, and then specifically fellowshiped on the principles of practice that God has revealed to people, what God's will is, and what truths people should understand. After understanding these points, people should fundamentally grasp how to discern the moral statement of "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you."

Analyzing this topic of "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" is actually quite simple, and people can easily discern and understand it. This phrase is also a statement put forward by moralists to paralyze people, confuse people's thoughts, and disrupt normal thinking, and is not based on a normal human conscience, reason, or normal human needs. Such ideas are concocted by so-called thinkers and moralists, passed off as virtuous. Not only are they baseless and nonsensical, but they are also immoral. Why is it considered immoral? Because it does not stem from the needs of normal humanity, it cannot be achieved in the scope of human capabilities, and it is not an obligation or duty that humans should perform. Those so-called moralists take this phrase "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you" as the standard for comportment that they strictly demand of people, thereby forming a kind of social atmosphere and public opinion. People are then oppressed by this public opinion, and they are forced to live this way. In this way, people's thoughts imperceptibly become bound by this kind of satanic thinking. Once a person's thoughts are bound, their actions are obviously also bound by this statement and by public opinion. What does it mean to be bound? It means that people cannot choose what they do, they cannot freely follow the desires and demands of human nature, and cannot follow the demands of their conscience and reason to do what they want to do. Instead, they are constrained and bound by a distorted thought, by a kind of ideological theory and social opinion that people cannot distinguish or break free from. People unconsciously live in this kind of social environment and atmosphere and cannot break free. If people do not understand the truth, if they can't clearly understand the fallacies and errors in these statements, and if they can't realize the harm and consequences caused by these statements binding their thoughts, they will never be able to break free from the constraints, bindings, and pressures imposed by traditional culture and social opinion. They will only be able to live by relying on these things. The reason why people live by relying on these things is that they do not know what the right path is, what the direction and purpose of their comportment are, nor the principles of how to comport themselves. They are naturally and passively confused by the various moral statements in traditional culture, misled and controlled by these erroneous theories. When people understand the truth, it becomes easy for them to discern and reject these heresies and fallacies. They are no longer bound, hijacked, or exploited by

the public opinion, atmosphere, and environment in society that was created by Satan. In this way, the direction and purpose of their lives are completely transformed, and they can live and exist according to God's requirements and God's words. They are no longer confused or bound by the various satanic theories and the various fallacies of traditional culture. When people completely abandon various statements in traditional culture about moral conduct, that is the moment they completely free themselves from Satan's corruption, deception, and bondage. On this basis, when you understand the truth and when you understand the principles of practice that God requires and gives to humans, your purpose in life is thoroughly transformed and you have a new life. When you have a new life, you are a newborn human being and you are a new person. Because the thoughts stored in your mind are no longer filled with the various heresies and fallacies instilled in you by Satan, and instead the truth has replaced these satanic things, following that, under the guidance of God's words, the truth becomes life within people, guiding and governing how they view people and things, and comport themselves and act. They walk the right path of human life and can live in the light. Isn't this just like being reborn through God's words? Alright, let's conclude today's fellowship here.

July 2, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (15)

At present, disasters are getting worse and worse. Not only is plague continuing to spread, but famine is also upon people. War has broken out in some areas and there is chaos in many countries around the world. There is already widespread disunity. It has been said in the past that, “The flames of war swirl, cannon smoke fills the air, the weather turns warm, the climate shifts, a plague will spread,” and this prediction is already coming true. A plague is spreading and not abating, and unbelievers are living in dire straits. Each day and year is worse than the last, and they have already fallen into disaster. They all want to break free from this suffering and escape the days of disaster. They all hope that the government will rescue them and deliver them from disaster, but the government is like a sandcastle buffeted by waves—powerless and unable to save itself, let alone anyone else. Any day now, the government may collapse and be destroyed; it is inevitable. You have all seen what the unbelievers are going through—they are indeed suffering! How is your life at the moment? Aren’t you much better off than them? (Yes.) How are you better off? (We are still able to read the word of God together and fellowship on the truth. We are still able to do our duty in the house of God and seek life entry. Our hearts are at peace and free from anxiety. We are much better off than the unbelievers.) At the very least, people who believe in God are better off than the unbelievers because they have something to rely on. They believe in the sovereignty of God; they believe that everything is in God’s hands, and they believe in God’s orchestrations and arrangements. Because they have faith and real belief in God, they have something real to rely on, and have a sense of security. People who sincerely believe in God have a feeling of real support in their heart, as well as a sense of security, peace and joy, no matter how dangerous or chaotic the wider environment outside is. Therefore, no matter what situation they experience, no matter how the environment outside changes, no matter what happens, whether there is disaster, war or plague, and regardless of whether it is a major event or a minor issue, a person who sincerely believes in God can devote themselves to performing their duty in the house of God, eating and drinking the word of God, experiencing the work of God, and seeking to obtain the truth because they follow God and shun secular trends. This point remains unchanged. The most important thing and the most important goal that you must seek in your belief in God cannot change, and that is the pursuit of truth, performing one’s duty well and bearing beautiful witness to God. This absolutely cannot change.

No matter how the world changes, no matter how Satan’s forces fight and brawl, and no matter how chaotic this society and world become, essential problems such as Satan’s deception, corruption, bondage, and control of humankind remain unchanged. That is to say, the various heresies and fallacies that Satan instills in people, and all the thoughts and statements that resist God and contradict the laws and regulations of God’s creation of humans and all things, remain unchanged. For one thing, these satanic things

have not changed. For another thing, no matter how the state and structure of this world change, the heresies and fallacies that Satan has planted deep in the hearts of people have not been removed. It is not because the world is in a state of chaos, or because Satan is now in bad shape and powerless to control the world that the heresies and fallacies with which Satan deceives and corrupts people have faded from people's hearts. That is not the case. Satan's heresies and fallacies still exist in people's hearts, and no one can dispel them. Right from the start of Satan's corruption of humankind, Satan's heresies and fallacies have gradually been planted deep in the hearts and minds of every created human being. These things remain completely unchanged in people's hearts and minds to this day. Even after God has done many years of work and provided people with a great deal of the truth, people are still unable to identify the various thoughts, views, and sayings that Satan has instilled in them, let alone actively try to identify these things in the absence of influence from environmental factors, or clear them out of their heart. Nor are they able to proactively reject the various thoughts and statements that Satan has instilled in them, even with the provision and guidance of the word of God. Although at first people were passively corrupted by Satan, throughout the process of Satan's corruption of humankind, people started to live in accordance with Satan's disposition, and viewed things according to Satan's thoughts and perspectives. Gradually, people began to cooperate more and more actively with Satan, and became more and more active in rebelling against God, turning away from God, and abandoning God, until in the end, Satan took complete control of them. When Satan's evil and ridiculous thoughts and views are fully instilled in people, they are completely imprisoned by Satan and become its slaves, or, to be more precise, they become an embodiment of Satan. When this happens, people are completely living out Satan's disposition. Not only are they living in accordance with Satan's philosophies and thoughts, but the various notions and views that Satan has instilled in them have been incorporated into their nature. To be more precise, people are not just living out Satan's image, but they are living as Satan, as the devil. When this happens, people are no longer being passively corrupted, influenced, deceived or controlled by Satan, but rather, they are standing wholly on Satan's side in opposition to God. When people are corrupted to this extent, you could say they have become an outlet for Satan, and an embodiment of it. In order for God to save a created being who is an outlet for, and embodiment of, Satan, besides providing the truth and revealing people's various corrupt dispositions and actions which are rebellious against God, it is more important to uncover and dissect the thoughts, views and statements that people hold deep in their hearts which are the same as Satan's. People and Satan share the same thoughts, views and statements. Satan lives according to these things, and likewise, because people have been deeply corrupted by Satan, they are also naturally living according to these things. It is precisely because people live according to these things and are influenced, swayed and controlled by these views, that even after people understand a part of the truth and know that God

is the Creator, they still cannot bow down before Him on the basis of their belief in God, or fully submit to Him, nor can they worship Him with an honest heart. The reason people cannot come to worship God with an honest heart is that, deep in their hearts and minds, they are still possessed and controlled by Satan's various thoughts and views. This is the reason why once people accept the work of God and are conquered, although they are able to accept the word of God as life, they are still unable to completely give up Satan's various heresies and fallacies; they still cannot completely break away from the influence of darkness and come to be truly obedient to God, or worship Him. Therefore, if God is to save humankind, for one thing He must express the truth to judge and cleanse people's corrupt dispositions; make people understand the truth, and come to know God and obey Him; teach people how they should conduct themselves and how they can walk the correct path; and tell people how they should practice the truth, how they can perform their duty well and how they can enter into the truth realities. For another thing, He must expose Satan's thoughts and views. He must expose and dissect the various heresies and fallacies with which Satan corrupts people, so that people can identify them. Then, people can clear these satanic things from their hearts, become cleansed and reach salvation. This way, people will understand what the truth is, and they will also be able to identify Satan's disposition, Satan's nature and its heresies and fallacies. When people acknowledge that God is the Creator and have the faith to follow God, they will be able to see the ugliness of Satan deep within their heart, and truly reject Satan. These people's hearts can then completely return to God. At the very least, when a person's heart is starting to return to God but has not yet completely returned, that is, when their heart is not yet possessed by the truth, and has not yet been obtained by God, they will, in the course of their lives, use the word of God to identify, dissect and see through all the statements that Satan instills in people and ultimately come to abandon Satan. In this way, Satan's place in people's hearts will become smaller and smaller, until it is completely eradicated. It will be replaced with the word of God, the teachings God gives people, the truth principles God provides, and so on. This life of positivity and truth will gradually take root inside people and occupy a foremost place in their heart, and as a result, God will have dominion over people's hearts. That is, when the various thoughts, views, heresies and fallacies with which Satan corrupts people are identified and seen through, so that people despise and abandon them, the truth will gradually occupy people's hearts. It will gradually become people's lives and they will actively obey and follow God. No matter how God works and leads, people will be able to actively accept the truth and the word of God and submit to the work of God. Furthermore, through this experience, they will actively strive for the truth and gain an understanding of the truth. This is how people develop true faith in God, and as the truth becomes more and more clear to them, their faith will grow and grow. When people have true faith in God, it also creates a fear of God in them. When people fear God, they have a desire to gain God deep in their hearts, and willingly submit to His dominion. They

submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements, and submit to the plans God has for their destiny. They submit to each day and all the special circumstances that God sets out for them. When people have this kind of willingness and thirst, they will also actively accept and submit to the demands God has of them. When the results of this become more and more clear in people, and more and more real, Satan's statements, thoughts and views will lose their effect in people's hearts. In other words, Satan's statements, thoughts and views will have less and less control and influence over people. After a period of struggle, and after a period of people's active cooperation and resolve to submit to God, they will be able to break free from Satan's bondage and control. When they reach this point, people will have escaped from Satan's power. They will completely abandon the statements, thoughts and views that Satan used to deceive them, and their faith in God will become greater and greater. Of course, this effect is dependent on the word and work of God and, even more importantly, on people's pursuit and cooperation. If a person listens a great deal to the truth and sermons, but still has no awareness of the thoughts and views of Satan and has not come to despise these things, and if the person does not want to actively identify, see through, and abandon these satanic things, instead taking a passive approach or ignoring them, then Satan's various thoughts and views will still be deeply ingrained in that person. In their daily life and during the path of their whole life, they will still be involuntarily influenced and controlled by Satan's various thoughts and perspectives, and their views on people and things, and their comportment and actions will still originate from Satan. If all this originates from Satan, then your belief in God is only an acknowledgment of God's existence, rather than true faith, and you will never truly acknowledge the identity and essence of God. Of course, your heart will not turn toward God of its own accord, and you will not be able to return your heart to God. It can be said that you are not capable of the slightest amount of true devotion to the duty and obligations that God has given you, and cannot truly fear God, let alone be truly obedient to Him. What will be the obvious result if you fail to accomplish these things? You will not be saved. Is this what will happen? (Yes.) This is what will happen. It is clear that the thoughts, views and notions with which Satan corrupts people and plants deep in their hearts, are things which block people from listening to the voice of God, believing the word of God, accepting positive things and certainly from accepting the truth and entering into the truth. These things are superficially different from the corrupt dispositions of human beings. However, the essence of these things is part of Satan's nature, and they are things with which Satan corrupts human beings. Looking from the outside, there is a clear distinction between Satan's evil actions which corrupt humankind and Satan's pretense of doing good, a distinction that is difficult for ordinary people to discern. However, the consequences of Satan deceiving and corrupting people are extremely apparent. It is a clear fact that this has caused all of mainstream society to deny, resist and even be in opposition to God.

The satanic disposition within people is entirely a result of Satan's deception and corruption of them. Furthermore, the various satanic heresies, fallacies, philosophies

and laws which people hold to, as well as their outlook on life and values, are all concrete manifestations of their deception and corruption by Satan. In other words, after Satan has deceived people, and made them turn away from and deny God, it fully instills in them all kinds of satanic thoughts, views, heresies and fallacies. Moreover, Satan openly spreads a great deal of propaganda, including all kinds of notions, views, and statements, which instructs and provokes people on how to deal with everything, and causes them to accept all this into their hearts. As a result, various corrupt satanic dispositions are cultivated within them. This is the method Satan uses to corrupt people. That is, when there is an emptiness deep within people's souls, when they are not thinking right and when they are an empty vessel, Satan's various statements enter into their hearts and take up residence there. For example, when statements such as "There has never been any Savior," "The heavens and earth and all things are created by nature," "I'd take a bullet for a friend," "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral," "Men should be manly," and so on, are created, people are unconsciously influenced by them. Without any awareness of these evil forces, heresies and fallacies, and without any ability to identify them or any power to resist them, people accept all kinds of thoughts and views from Satan. The process by which people accept these satanic thoughts and views is precisely the process by which people are deceived, provoked, and corrupted. For example, if you are a woman who does not know the correct way a woman should live, and what things she should be doing, then Satan will put forward its heresies and fallacies, such as, "A woman must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, stay at home and not go outside," "Virtue in a woman is to be unskilled," and so on. You think these sayings sound quite sagacious and good, so you accept them. When these heresies and fallacies are circulating in society and on earth, you will, as a woman, unconsciously take them on and strictly demand yourself to live up to these sayings. Firstly, you will compare yourself with them, believing that since you are a woman, you must be virtuous, kind, gentle, and moral, stay at home, be an unskilled woman of virtue, etc. In the course of this process, you will gradually be provoked, indoctrinated, and influenced by the statements, thoughts and views circulating in society, and eventually reach the point of being assimilated into them. To be more specific, after being deceived by the thoughts and views of Satan, you will be bound and controlled by them, and then deep in your heart, you will unconsciously make demands of yourself and view others according to them. Therefore, in your daily life, these thoughts and statements will form thoughts and views deep in your heart, and then you will adopt these as criteria and a basis for your conduct and behavior. This is how Satan's various thoughts and views gradually become common practice in society and the community. As this practice becomes more and more prevalent in society, and the population which it provokes and assimilates becomes larger and larger, it becomes a kind of force. When this force has been created, humankind is completely imprisoned and controlled by these thoughts and views, or in other words, they are possessed by

them. To be more precise, people have been taken captive by Satan. For example, in Satan's world, "men should be manly, tough and ambitious," "men should have far-reaching ambitions, dreams and an indomitable spirit," "men should cultivate themselves, put their family in order, govern the nation, and bring peace to all," "men should learn to wield power, take control of the situation, and dominate the world," "men do not shed tears easily," and so on. Every man is bound by these requirements, thoughts and views from their inception. Both men and women are restricted and bound by the various sayings of traditional culture. If men do not know how a man should act, or how to establish themselves in their community, society or country, they will unconsciously accept these thoughts and views when they hear them. They will gradually become accustomed to them until they take them as criteria and a basis to make strict demands of themselves. Furthermore, they will put these thoughts and views into practice, experience being such a person in reality, and then set an example by working toward these goals. For example, men must have far-reaching ambitions, do big things and have a big career. They should not have loving relationships nor make supporting their parents or raising children their lifelong responsibility or goal. Rather, they must broaden their horizons, follow their aspirations, learn to take control of the situation, and even seize power to control humankind and women. People have accepted these thoughts and views; they have been practicing and living according to them in their lives, and pursuing the goals they entail. Furthermore, when these thoughts and views have formed and taken root deep in people's hearts, they will view humanity, society and the whole world through them. When they take root in the heart of a man so deeply that they cannot be uprooted, he will view people and things, comport himself and act according to thoughts and views like "Men should be manly and tough," etc. This is the origin and root cause of men's world view and view on life. When men view people and things, comport themselves and act according to the thoughts and views instilled in them by Satan, these thoughts and views spread imperceptibly among people and in society, gradually penetrating deep into the heart of every person—not just men, but women too. When these things penetrate deep into the heart of every person, and have even been instilled in the hearts of young children who are just learning to speak, these thoughts and views have become a common practice in the community and in society. This practice will spread faster and faster, and become more and more widespread until it is well-known by everyone, and is recognized and accepted by them one hundred percent. When things have progressed to this stage, sociologists, politicians and heads of state, or more precisely, the devil kings who follow Satan, will go further to solidify the status these thoughts and statements hold among humankind. They will put these things into writing, and systematically spread and promote these statements widely by using all kinds of circumstantial evidence, favorable conditions, people, events and things, so that these statements proliferate among humankind and form a social climate and a fixed moral code in society. With this moral code, they will control and bind people, at which point

Satan's goal will be achieved. When Satan has achieved this goal, all of humankind, including both men and women, will have been deceived, corrupted, and possessed by these thoughts and views. Do you know what the consequences will be when humankind has been deceived, corrupted, and possessed by Satan's thoughts and views? Why do you think Satan is putting forward these thoughts, statements, heresies and fallacies? Is it merely to corrupt humankind? Is it only to snatch people away? Who is the target of all this? (God.) Correct, you have to be clear on this. In all the evil things Satan does, and specifically all the things Satan does to deceive, disturb, control, and corrupt humankind, people are just serving objects and tools. They are just vessels Satan uses to exert all its abilities and skills. All the things that Satan does are directed toward God rather than people. It wants to oppose God and people are just vessels or tools it uses to do this. So, why does Satan want to fight against God? Why does it want to corrupt humankind like this? It is because God created humankind and wants to save it. Why does Satan not corrupt animals, plants, or aliens? Because God is not trying to save animals, plants, or aliens, or any creature other than humans. God is trying to save the humans that He created on this earth. He is trying to gain this group of humans on earth. What kind of humans? A group of humans who follow God and are faithful unto death, who are of one heart and one mind with God, and who fear God and shun evil. These are the people that God wants to gain. Before God has done His work to save and gain these people, Satan tries to get in first and corrupt them. Satan says, "God, do You want to save humankind? Then I will corrupt them first. When people are corrupted to the point that they are completely demonic rather than human, You will not be able to save them. You will not be successful, and will fail in the end." This is Satan's goal. Let's go back to the question I asked earlier. When Satan corrupts the human disposition, and also puts forward various heresies and fallacies and all kinds of thoughts and views to deceive, paralyze, and control the human mind and heart, what is its purpose? You can't answer that; you don't understand it. Satan is not targeting people when it does all this, even though it is people who it corrupts and controls. Rather, all of it is directed toward God. What is the ultimate goal or result of Satan corrupting people? It is to put people in opposition to God. When people become the complete antithesis of God, and His enemy, Satan believes that its plot and self-serving calculations will have succeeded, and that it will be worshiped and followed by people on earth. Therefore, when Satan's various thoughts, statements, heresies and fallacies are deeply rooted in people's hearts, they will no longer believe God exists, or accept His orchestrations and arrangements, or His sovereignty. People will completely deny God and betray Him. Satan thinks that it is enough to corrupt people to the extent that they can deny God. Why? Because at that point, the people that God wants to save will have been completely and utterly taken captive and possessed by Satan, and will have completely and utterly become the antithesis of God. This is Satan's purpose. Is it true that you have never thought about this before? (Yes.) You do not understand. People think, "Satan corrupts people to

capture us, trap us, harm us, let us die, send us to hell and keep us from God's salvation and the correct path in life. Satan makes us suffer." This is part of it, but it is only one objective effect which is triggered by everything Satan does, and is not, in fact, the underlying goal. Do you understand now what the underlying goal is? Tell Me, why does Satan deceive, control, and imprison people's minds? (Everything Satan does is aimed at God, and the underlying goal is to turn all people against God.) What else? (Since God wants to save humankind, Satan wants to corrupt them, and turn them against God, so that they are unable to receive God's salvation. Satan wants to destroy God's management plan to save humankind.) Satan instills in people all kinds of heresies and fallacies, and when these misguided thoughts and views, heresies and fallacies are deeply rooted in people's hearts, they control and imprison their minds. This gives rise to a particular situation. What kind of situation? A situation in which the antithesis of God is fully formed, humankind has become a thoroughly hostile force against God, and Satan is happy. This is the goal that Satan is trying to achieve. What is Satan's purpose in doing all this? Sum it up in one sentence. (Satan instills in people all kinds of heresies and fallacies, and when these misguided thoughts and views, heresies and fallacies are deeply rooted in people's hearts, a situation is created where the antithesis of God is fully formed, and humans have become people who resist God. They have become God's enemies, and Satan has achieved its goal.) This is the answer—isn't it simple? (Yes, it is.) This is the goal and result that Satan wants to achieve by corrupting mankind.

Do you think that God knows about these things that Satan does to corrupt humankind? (Yes.) Then why does God allow Satan to do this? Use what you understand about the truth to explain it. Isn't there a saying about this? "God's wisdom is exercised based on Satan's trickery." This is an example of the saying coming true, isn't it? (Yes.) Also, does the phrase "Satan is the foil and service object in God's work" apply here? (Yes.) Both sayings are relevant and they can be used to explain the question above. Isn't that right? (Yes.) That's the way it is. If someone raises this question, how would you explain it to them? If you just vaguely say, "God's wisdom is exercised based on Satan's trickery," they will be confused and will not understand. Do you know how to explain it in more detail? It's easy to explain, isn't it? God allows Satan to do these things that corrupt humankind, not because God is incapable of stopping or attending to them, but for a reason. The reason is that "God's wisdom is exercised based on Satan's trickery," as I said earlier. This is not just a saying or a theory, but an indisputable truth, which can be verified by the fact that God can save man after Satan has corrupted him. What is Satan's purpose in corrupting human dispositions and instilling in people all kinds of heresies and fallacies to control and imprison their minds? Is the ultimate goal to suppress the work of God and to cause His management plan to vanish into thin air? Is this Satan's trickery? (Yes.) This is the trickery of Satan. What is God thinking when Satan is performing such tricks? What does God do? What is on His mind? How does His wisdom manifest in all this? God is using Satan's trickery. Satan

has a trick. It says, “I provoke and corrupt people until they are like me. They become little Satans who share my thoughts and views, view people and things, comport themselves, and act according to my satanic standpoint, and are opposed to God. I want to take all of the people God created and make them belong to me, Satan, so that God’s work in people will be futile and in vain. Surely this will cause God’s management plan to vanish into thin air.” Is this Satan’s trick? (Yes.) Then what does God think? And what does He do? God says, “Satan, you spread heresies and fallacies to disturb and deceive people, and do many things to disturb and destroy the work of God. This will only instill some heresies and fallacies in people, so that they live by them and oppose God. Then I will base My words and work on the corruption of humankind, expose the heresies and fallacies that you use to corrupt mankind, judge people’s various corrupt dispositions and allow people to identify the various thoughts and statements you have instilled in them. In this way, not only will people understand the truth and understand God, but they will also be able to detect Satan’s various statements, thoughts and views and also see through Satan’s disposition, essence, and various evil deeds. Using an understanding of the truth as their foundation, people will be able to identify and reject Satan more accurately and with greater strength. On the negative side, people will no longer be deluded by Satan, or be taken captive and swallowed up by it a second time. On the positive side, they will be more able to believe in and confirm the existence of God and His identity, and the fact that He rules sovereign over all creatures and things. After these two things have been achieved, a God-fearing heart will arise in them and they will truly obey God. God will win their hearts or, to be more accurate, God will gain them. When people reach this stage, they will no longer be deceived and used by Satan. Rather, they will be able to thoroughly detect Satan, see through it and reject it from the depths of their hearts. They will confess that they are God’s creations, willingly accept the sovereignty and orchestrations of the Creator, and will thus have completely returned to God.” This is God’s specific arrangement and plan. Of course, it can also be said that this is the thought and idea God has deep in His heart. This is how God thinks, how His ideas work, and how He has orchestrated it. While Satan has been deceiving and corrupting people, God has been methodically arranging all creatures and things, and moving His plan and management forward step by step in an organized fashion, continuously until now. Humankind has been completely corrupted and taken over by Satan. However, it is an indisputable fact that when this mankind who has been saturated and filled with all sorts of Satan’s poisons is called by God and hears His voice, they can still come before God, accept His call, and be willing to receive His judgment and chastisement. Even if God condemns and curses such a mankind for being the ilk of Satan and His enemy, they will never leave Him. Even though people’s thoughts and views are full of things which have been instilled in them by Satan, causing them to view people and things, comport themselves, and act in a way which is still deeply influenced and controlled by Satan’s thoughts and views, their hearts are turning toward God more

and more genuinely and urgently. Isn't this an indisputable fact? (Yes.) Furthermore, in the near future, after God has exposed all the evil deeds of Satan, this mankind who has been deeply corrupted by Satan will be able to completely renounce Satan, say "no" to it and return their hearts to God. They will all be willing to steadfastly follow God according to His sovereignty, orchestrations and arrangements. This is the direction the successful completion of God's great work takes, isn't it? (Yes.) Especially after fellowshiping about what it means to pursue the truth, more people will have the resolve to view people and things, comport themselves, and act according to God's words with the truth as their criterion. Regardless of whether people's resolve is strong or weak, or whether they have entered into this reality or not—no matter what, the fact that such a mankind who has been deeply corrupted by Satan has the desire and resolve to renounce it, and view people and things, comport themselves, and act according to God's words with the truth as their criterion, rather than the various thoughts and views that Satan has instilled in them, is, in itself, a sign that God has already won. So Satan has already been humiliated, hasn't it? (Yes.) Therefore, the saying that "God's wisdom is exercised based on Satan's trickery," is not just empty words, but a practical, objective, and indisputable fact. All the evil Satan is doing has reached the point where it is deceiving and controlling humanity. It believes that it has disturbed and destroyed God's work and that it is impossible for God to continue with His management plan. Therefore, Satan thinks that it has won. However, Satan cannot slow the pace of God's management plan to save humankind no matter how reckless it becomes, nor can it thwart the great success of God's management plan and victory over Satan. Now God's work has expanded throughout the universe, and God's word has spread to millions of homes. This is the evidence of God's great success.

If someone asks you again, "Why does Satan deceive, control, and imprison people's minds? Why does God allow Satan to do this?" Will you be able to answer these questions? Even if you can't fully explain it, you can at least share some of your understanding. Why is Satan doing all this? What is the significance of God permitting it to do all this? You should think about these things and there should be an exact answer in your heart. God has been working to save humanity for six thousand years. Some people do not understand this and say, "God has been working for six thousand years? Isn't that too long?" No matter how long God's work takes, His actions are all of the greatest significance. It's not only the duration of His work that is significant; the final results that His work achieves are even more significant. If it were not for the fact that God has been working for six thousand years to save humanity, numbness and dull-wittedness would prevent humankind from knowing God or being fully saved by Him. Would people be able to identify antichrists and recognize their nature essence if they have only experienced the deception and disturbance caused by antichrists once or twice? Would three or five times be enough? I'm afraid not. People must experience it many times until they have thoroughly seen the nature essence of antichrists. Only then

can they truly identify and completely renounce antichrists. In particular, if people are exposed to the crazy oppression and cruel persecution from the great red dragon for too short a time, they will not experience it thoroughly, and will soon forget it. As a result, they will not truly hate and reject the great red dragon. The cruel persecution of Satan must be seared into people's hearts like a brand, so that they can hate it from the depths of their hearts and clearly see its true face. If a person has only been persecuted briefly once or twice, it will be difficult for them to hate Satan and forsake it. Given the opportunity, they will still speak well of Satan and sing its praises. A person must be handed over to Satan many times so that they suffer from its torture and cruelty before they can see Satan's evil, ugliness, meanness, and brazenness clearly, and completely abandon it. These things must absolutely be experienced for a long period of time. In steelmaking, for example, good steel can't be produced from a short time in the fire; the steel must be thoroughly tempered to get the best results. That is to say, every stage of God's work requires a long time; every stage demands a long period of time. It must be done this way; if it is not, a good result cannot be achieved. There will be different degrees of changes deep in the human heart and in the corrupt disposition of humankind due to the influence of the larger circumstances of each era, and each of these changes will be related to the work that God wants to do in people during each stage. The reason why God has become incarnate again in the last days to work on such a large scale and speak so much is that in this last phase, the corrupt disposition, thoughts and views of humankind, and the wider environment and background of society, all fit the background of the work God wants to do in the last days. The trends, customs, patterns, or situations in society, the political situation, or even the political power of satanic nations are all factors of the greater environment. At a time when these factors are in the background, people's inner landscape and corrupt disposition, that is, the inner state of the whole of humankind is exactly what God needs for His work. This is the most appropriate time for God to roll out His judgment and chastisement to reveal His majesty, righteousness, mercy, and lovingkindness. When all these factors are ripe and fully ready, God begins His work. This is the work that God wants to carry out under the influence of the larger background. It is enough for you to understand this. Some people of good caliber will understand, while others who are not experienced may not understand. In particular, those who cannot understand the political situation and the essence of the trends in society, and who are not mature enough in their thinking, are only satisfied with small spiritual experiences and minor testimonies, and may not understand much about the wider political and social background involved in God's work. It doesn't matter how much you can understand these things; they will become clear as you slowly experience more of them because they involve God's management plan and God's work, which is a great vision. We will not fellowship more about this topic because you are not ready to go deeper.

Last time we finished fellowshiping on the saying about moral conduct: "Do your best to faithfully handle whatever other people have entrusted to you." Next, we will fellowship

on the saying “A gentleman’s word is his bond.” First of all, we should try to figure out how to dissect the incorrect thoughts and views in this saying about moral conduct, and what Satan’s intention is in making it. There is a Chinese idiom that says, “It is difficult to know a person’s real intentions,” so where do Satan’s real intentions lie? This is what we need to uncover and dissect. “A gentleman’s word is his bond” is another thought and statement that Satan makes among people, and on the outside it seems to be quite noble; it is stirring and powerful. So, what is so impressive about this saying? Is it worth treasuring and taking to heart? Is it worth viewing people and things, comporting oneself and acting according to this thought and view? Does it have any merit? Is it a positive saying? If it is not a positive thing or a correct thought and view, then what is its negative effect on people? What is Satan’s intention when it makes a saying like this and instills this thought and view in people? How should we discern it? If you can discern it, this phrase will be denied and rejected from the depths of your heart, and you will no longer be influenced by it. Even though this phrase will flash through your mind and disturb you deep inside from time to time, if you are able to discern it, you will not be bound or tied up by it. Do you think there is any merit in the saying “A gentleman’s word is his bond”? Is this a saying which has a positive effect on people? (No.) Would you like to be a gentleman? Is it a good thing or a bad thing to be a gentleman? Is it better to be a gentleman or a fake gentleman? Is it better to be a gentleman or a villain? Haven’t you thought about these issues? (No.) Although you have not thought about these things, one thing is certain: You often use the word “gentleman,” saying things like, “Better to be a true villain than a fake gentleman,” and “A true gentleman is so generous in spirit that if someone offends him, he doesn’t hold it against them and can forgive them. That is what you call a gentleman!” What does the fact you can say these things prove about you? Does it prove that the gentleman has a certain status in your thoughts and views, and that thoughts and sayings about the gentleman exist in your mind? Could we say this? (Yes.) You approve of and admire those people in society who behave like gentlemen or who are called gentlemen, and you work hard to become a gentleman and be seen as a gentleman, rather than a villain. If someone says, “You are a real villain,” you will be very sad. However, if someone says, “You are a true gentleman,” you will be elated. This is because you feel that if someone has complimented you by calling you a gentleman, your character has been elevated, and your ways and methods of conducting yourself and handling matters have been affirmed. Of course, after you get this kind of affirmation in society, you feel that you have a noble status and are not a low-class or inferior person. The upright gentleman, whether he is a myth or actually exists, occupies a definite place deep in people’s hearts. So, when I asked you whether a gentleman or a villain is better, none of you dared to answer. Why? Because you thought, “How can You ask that? Of course it is better to be a gentleman than a villain. Isn’t a gentleman good, upright, and of high moral character? To say that it’s not good to be a gentleman runs contrary to common sense, doesn’t it? It would go against normal humanity,

wouldn't it? If a gentleman is not good, then what kind of person is good?" So you didn't dare to answer, isn't that true? (Yes.) Does this confirm that there is a clear choice between the gentleman and the villain in your heart? Which one do you prefer? (The gentleman.) Then our objective is clear. Let's focus on identifying and analyzing a gentleman. No one likes a villain, this goes without saying. So what exactly is a gentleman? If you ask, "Is it better to be a gentleman or a villain?" For Me, the answer is clear: Both are bad, because neither the gentleman nor the villain is a positive character. It's just that people judge the behavior, actions, character and morality of the villain to be relatively poor, and therefore don't like him. When the base morality and character of the villain are openly on display, people see him as even more villainous. However, a gentleman more often displays his elegant manner of speaking and acting, his good morals and refined character, and people respect and feel enriched by him. As a result, they call him a gentleman. When a gentleman presents himself in this way, he is praised, admired and held in high regard. Therefore, people love a gentleman and dislike a villain. However, what is the basis on which people determine someone to be a gentleman or a villain? (Based on their outward behavior.) People judge a person as noble or lowly based on that person's behavior, but why do people judge others based on their behavior? The answer is that the caliber most people possess is only capable of reaching this level. They can only see whether a person's behavior is good or bad; they cannot see that person's essence clearly. As a result, they are only able to determine whether the person is a gentleman or a villain based on their behavior. So, is this method of discernment correct? (No.) It's totally incorrect. Is it accurate, then, to see a gentleman as having a refined character and good morals? (No.) That's right, it's not accurate. It is inaccurate to interpret gentlemen as being refined in character, moral, dignified and virtuous. Therefore, looking at it now, is the term "gentleman" positive? (No.) It is not positive. A gentleman is not more noble than a villain. So, if someone asks, "Is it better to be a gentleman or a villain?" What is the answer? (Both are bad.) This is accurate. If someone asks why they are both bad, the answer is simple. Both the gentleman and the villain are not positive characters; neither of them is truly a good person. They are full of Satan's corrupt disposition and poison. They are controlled and poisoned by Satan, and living according to its logic and laws. Therefore, it can be said with certainty that, while a villain is not a good person, a gentleman cannot be a positive person either. Even if a gentleman is seen to be a good person by others, he is simply pretending to be good. He is not an honest person approved by God, much less a person who fears God and shuns evil. It's just that the gentleman behaves well a little more often and poorly a little less often while the villain behaves poorly a little more often and well a little less often. The gentleman is respected a little more while the villain is despised a little more. This is the only difference between a gentleman and a villain. If people judge them according to their behavior this is the only result they will obtain.

People determine whether someone is a gentleman or a villain based on their behavior. They may say, “This person is a gentleman because he has done a lot of things for the benefit of everyone. Everyone thinks so. Therefore, he is a gentleman and a person of high moral character.” If everyone says a person is a gentleman, does that make that person a good person and a positive character? (No.) Why not? Because all people are corrupt, have corrupt dispositions and do not have the truth principles. So, no matter who says a person is a gentleman, the statement comes from Satan, and from a corrupt person. People’s standard of evaluation is not correct, and therefore the result it gives is not correct either. God never speaks in terms of gentlemen or villains. He does not require people to be a true gentleman rather than a fake gentleman, nor does He ever say, “You are all villains. I don’t want a villain, I want a gentleman.” Does God say this? (No.) He does not. God never assesses or determines whether a person is good or bad by their words and actions. Rather, He evaluates and determines that according to their essence. What does this mean? Firstly, it means that people are judged according to the quality of their humanity, and whether they have a conscience and sense. Secondly, they are judged on their attitude toward the truth and toward God. This is how God evaluates and determines whether a person is superior or inferior. Therefore, there is no such thing as a gentleman or a villain in God’s words. In the church, among people God saves, He does not require them to be gentlemen, or promote the idea of being a gentleman, and He does not ask people to criticize villains. God’s house definitely does not judge who is of high moral character according to traditional cultural sayings about moral conduct. It does not promote and foster anyone who is a gentleman, and clear out and cast out anyone who is a villain. The house of God promotes, fosters, clears out or casts out people according to its own principles. It does not view people according to standards and sayings about moral conduct, promoting anyone who is a gentleman and rejecting anyone who is a villain. Rather, it handles all people according to the word of God and the truth. What do you think of some people in the church who are always trying to be gentlemen? (They are no good.) Some new believers always judge people according to the standard of a gentleman or villain. When they see church leaders pruning and dealing with people who are causing disruptions and disturbances, they say, “This leader is no gentleman! When a brother or sister makes a small mistake, he latches on to it and will not let it go. A gentleman would not care about this. A gentleman would be tolerant, forgiving, and even appeasing—he would be much more accepting! This leader is so hard on people. He is obviously a villain!” These people say that those who defend the interests of God’s house are not gentlemen. They say that those who work seriously, meticulously and responsibly are villains. What do you think about people who view others this way? Are they viewing people according to the truth or the word of God? (No.) They do not see people according to the truth and the word of God. Moreover, they take the thoughts, views, methods and means by which Satan evaluates people, and spread and release them in the church. These things are clearly

the thoughts and views of unbelievers and nonbelievers. If you are not discerning, and think that a gentleman is a good person with high moral character, and someone who is a pillar in the church, you may be deluded by him. Because you have the same thoughts and views as he does, when someone makes statements or sayings about gentlemen, you will certainly be drawn in and misled without knowing it. However, if you are discerning about such things, you will reject such sayings and not be misled by them. Instead, you will insist on evaluating people and things, and judging right and wrong, according to the word of God and the truth principles. Then you will see people and things accurately, and act in accordance with God's will. Those nonbelievers who do not pursue the truth, and those who are not discerning and not willing to abide by the rules of God's house, often bring up thoughts and statements which come from Satan and are commonplace among unbelievers, to mislead the brothers and sisters and disturb their understanding of the truth. If people are not discerning, while they may not be misled or disturbed by those people, they will often be controlled by their statements, and shrink from acting or speaking out. They will not dare to uphold the truth principles, and will not dare to insist on acting according to the requirements of God's word, let alone dare to defend the interests of God's house. Is this caused by a lack of discernment of Satan's thoughts and statements? (Yes.) This is obviously the reason. The terms "gentleman" and "villain" are not valid in the church. The unbelievers are good at pretending and living behind masks. They advocate being a gentleman rather than a villain, and they adopt these disguises in their lives. They use these things to establish themselves among people, trick other people into giving them prestige and a good reputation, and obtain fame and fortune. In the house of God, all these things must be cast out and outlawed. They must not be allowed to spread in the house of God or among God's chosen people, nor should these things be given the opportunity to disturb and mislead God's chosen people. This is because all these things come from Satan, have no basis in the word of God, and are definitely not the truth principles that people should observe with regard to how they view people and things, comport themselves and act. Therefore, "gentleman," "fake gentleman," and "villain" are not the correct terms to define the essence of a person. Have I explained the term "gentleman" clearly? (Yes.)

Let's take another look at the saying "A gentleman's word is his bond" to see what it really means. The literal meaning of this phrase is that a gentleman must take his words seriously. As the saying goes, a person is only as good as their word; a gentleman must mean what he says and follow through on his promises. Therefore, in order to become a gentleman of high moral character, who is well liked and highly regarded, a person must act according to the saying "A gentleman's word is his bond." That is, a gentleman must be trustworthy. He must take responsibility for what he says and promises, and make sure to follow through. He cannot go back on his word or fail to make good on his promises to others. A person who often fails to make good on his promises to others is not a gentleman or a good person, but rather, a villain. This is how the phrase "A

gentleman's word is his bond" can be interpreted. It mainly emphasizes the gentleman's words and actions in terms of morality and trustworthiness. Firstly, let Me ask, what does the "word" in "a gentleman's word" mean? It means two things: a promise he makes, or a pledge to do something. As I said earlier, gentlemen are not good people, but ordinary people who are deeply corrupted by Satan. So, in terms of people's essence, what are the main ways people manifest themselves in the things that they promise? Speaking arrogantly, exaggerating, speaking highly of themselves, saying things about themselves that are not true, saying things which do not match the facts, lying, speaking harshly and venting. All of these things can be found in the things people say and promise. So, after a person says these things, you ask them to keep their promise, honor what they said, and not go back on their word, and if they follow through, you think they are a gentleman and a good person. Isn't that absurd? If the things that corrupt people say every day are carefully investigated and checked, you will find that they are one hundred percent lies, empty words, or half-truths. Not one word is accurate, true or factual. Instead, their statements distort the facts, confuse black and white, and some of them even harbor evil intentions or satanic tricks. If all these words are to be honored, it will cause a lot of chaos. Let's not talk about what would happen in a large group of people, let's just talk about if there is a so-called gentleman in a family, who is constantly making indiscriminate remarks, and spouting a lot of meaningless theories and arrogant, erroneous, sinister and vicious words. If he takes his words seriously and his word is his bond, what will be the consequences? How chaotic will this family become? This is just like the devil king of the country of the great red dragon. No matter how absurd or evil its policies are, it still puts them forward, and those under it carry out and implement the policies to a tee—no one dares to oppose or stop them, which leads to national chaos. Furthermore, various disasters are approaching, and preparation for war has begun. The whole country is plunged into utter confusion. If a devil leader reigns in a country or nation for a long time, then the people of that country will be in serious trouble. How chaotic will things get? If people carry out and implement all of the unreasonable drivel, fallacies and lies that devil kings issue, will anything good for humankind come from it? Humankind will only become more and more chaotic, dark and evil. Fortunately, "A gentleman's word is his bond" is nothing more than empty words; it is just a rhetoric, Satan is not able to actualize it, and is not able to achieve what it says. Thus, there is still a bit of order in the world and people are still relatively stable. If this were not the case, every corner of the human world, everywhere where there are "gentlemen," would be in chaos. This is one of the things which is wrong with the saying "A gentleman's word is his bond." From the perspective of people's essence, we can see that their statements, the things they say, and their promises are unreliable. Another thing that is wrong with it, is that humankind is controlled by the thought and view "A gentleman's word is his bond." They think, "We must honor our word and do what we say we are going to do because this is how to be a gentleman." This thought and view dominates people's

thinking and it becomes the standard by which they view, judge and characterize a person. Is this appropriate and accurate? (No, it's not accurate.) Why is it inaccurate? Firstly, because what people say is of little value and is just empty words, lies and exaggerations. Secondly, it is unfair to use this thought and view to control people and require them to honor their word. People often use "A gentleman's word is his bond" to measure a person's superiority or inferiority. Without realizing it, people often worry about how to honor their promises and are controlled by this. If they can't honor their promises they are subjected to discrimination and rebuke from others, and it is hard for them to establish themselves in the community if they can't follow through on something trivial. This is unfair to these people and inhumane. Due to their corrupt dispositions, people speak according to their preferences, saying whatever they want to say; they don't care how absurd or contrary to the facts their statements are. This is what corrupt people are like. It is natural for everything to act according to its own disposition: A chicken must learn how to cluck, a dog must learn how to bark and a wolf must learn how to howl. If something was not human, and yet was strictly required to say and do human things, it would find it very difficult. People have the corrupt disposition of Satan, a disposition that is arrogant and deceitful, so it is natural for them to lie, exaggerate and speak empty words. If you understand the truth and can see through people, this should all seem normal and ordinary to you. You should not use the misguided thought and perspective that "A gentleman's word is his bond" to view people and things, and to judge and characterize whether or not people are good or trustworthy. This method of assessment is not correct, and should not be adopted. What is the correct method? People have a corrupt disposition, so it is normal for them to exaggerate and say things that do not reflect their actual situation. You must handle this correctly. You should not ask a person to honor their promises according to the standards of a gentleman, and you should certainly not bind others or yourself with the thought and view that "A gentleman's word is his bond." This is not right. What's more, to judge a person's humanity and moral character by whether or not they are a gentleman is a fundamental mistake, and not the right approach. Its basis is wrong and is not in accordance with the word of God or the truth. Therefore, no matter what kind of thoughts and views the secular world uses to judge a person, and no matter whether the secular world advocates being a gentleman or a villain, in God's house, the saying "A gentleman's word is his bond," is not promoted, it is not recommended that anyone be a gentleman and you are certainly not required to act according to the saying "A gentleman's word is his bond." Even if you strictly require yourself to be a gentleman, and embody the saying "A gentleman's word is his bond," then what? You may do this very well and become a humble gentleman who keeps his promises and never fails to make good on his word. However, if you never view people and things, comport yourself and act according to God's words, or follow the truth principles, then you are a total nonbeliever. Even if many people agree with you and support you, say that you are a gentleman, that you never

fail to make good on your word and that you take your promises seriously, so what? Does this mean that you understand the truth? Does it mean that you follow the way of God? No matter how well and appropriately you follow the saying about moral conduct "A gentleman's word is his bond," if you do not understand God's word, and do not observe and act according to the truth principles, then you will not receive God's approval.

Having just identified and dissected errors with the thought and view that "A gentleman's word is his bond," let's look at what God requires of people in terms of their words and actions. What kind of person does God require people to be? (An honest person.) That's right. Be honest, don't lie, don't cheat, don't be deceitful, and don't play tricks. Seek the word of God and the truth principles when you act. It's just these few things; it's very simple. If you speak dishonestly, correct yourself. If you exaggerate, lie or speak above your station, reflect and become aware of it, and seek the truth to resolve it. You must say things which reflect your actual situation, the understanding in your heart and the facts. In addition, if you can do the things that you have promised others, then do them. If you can't, then tell them immediately. Say, "I'm sorry, I can't do it. I don't have the ability, and I won't be able to do a good job. I don't want to hold you up, so you had better ask someone else to help." You do not need to always stick to your word, you can back out of your promises. Just be an honest person. Be honest in what you say and do, rather than trying to falsify or deceive, and seek the truth principles in all situations. It is that simple; it's so easy. Is there any part of what God asks people to do that makes them pretend? Has He ever asked too much of people, for them to do more than they can bear or are capable of? (No.) If people do not have what it takes in terms of caliber, comprehension ability, physical energy or strength, God tells them it is enough that they do what they are capable of, try their best and give it their all. You say, "I've given it everything I have, but I still can't meet God's requirements. That's all I can do but I don't know if God is satisfied." Actually, by doing this you have already fulfilled God's requirements. God does not give people a load too heavy for them to bear. If you can carry one hundred pounds, God certainly will not give you a load heavier than one hundred pounds. He will not put pressure on you. This is how God is with everyone. And you will not be controlled by anything—any person or any thought and view. You are free. When something happens, you have the right to choose. You can choose to practice according to the word of God, you can choose to practice according to your personal desires, or, of course, you can choose to cling to the thoughts and views that Satan has instilled in you. You are free to choose any of these options, but you have to take responsibility for whatever choice you make. God only shows you the way; He does not force you to do, or not do, something. After God has shown you the way, the choice is yours. You have full human rights, including the absolute right to choose. You can choose the truth, your human desires, or, of course, Satan's thoughts and views. No matter which one you choose, the final result will be yours to bear; no one else will

shoulder it for you. When you make a choice, God will not interfere in any way, nor will He do anything to force you. You may choose as you wish, no matter what that choice is. In the end, God will not heap praise on you, give you a big advantage, put a pleasant feeling in your heart, or make you feel extremely noble just because you chose the right path and the truth. He will not do that. God will also not immediately discipline or curse you if you choose your human desires, or immediately rain disaster down upon you as punishment even if you act recklessly according to the thoughts and views that Satan has instilled in you. While you are choosing, everything proceeds naturally, and after you choose, everything continues to proceed naturally. God just observes, watches it all play out, and looks at the cause, process and result. Of course, in the end, when people are judged and their end is determined, God will categorize the path you have taken based on all of your personal choices, look at this path as a whole to see what kind of person you really are, and from this, determine what kind of end you should have. That is God's method. Do you understand? (Yes.) When God is doing His work, He never lets a statement, saying, thought or view become a trend among people which would confine and control their thoughts in order to make them involuntarily do what God wants them to do. This is not God's way of working. God gives people complete freedom and the right to choose, and they enjoy full human rights and the absolute right to choose. In every situation people encounter, they can choose to accept and use Satan's thoughts and views to discern and judge the constitution of a particular thing, or they can choose to do so according to the word of God and the truth principles. Is this a fact? (Yes.) God does not force people; what God does is fair for everyone. Those who love the truth and positive things eventually walk the path of pursuing the truth, gain the truth, have a God-fearing heart, can truly submit to God and will be saved because they love the truth and positive things. As for those who do not love the truth, and who always act recklessly according to their own will, they are fed up with the truth and do not accept it in any way. They are just afraid of God's chastisement and judgment, and are afraid they will be punished, so they reluctantly do a bit of work in God's house for show, perform a little service and exhibit some good behavior. However, they never accept the truth or follow God's way, and are not on the path of pursuing and practicing the truth. As a result, they will never understand the truth or enter into the truth reality, and will therefore miss the opportunity to be saved. The majority of these people are service-doers. Even if they do no evil, don't cause disruptions or disturbances, and are not cast out or cleared out from God's house like antichrists and the wicked, ultimately, they will just barely manage to get the title of "service-doer," and it is unclear whether they will be spared. There is another group of people who belong to Satan and stubbornly hold on to all its thoughts and views. These people would rather die than accept the truth or go along with the truth and the word of God. They are even at odds with all positive things and with God. Because they disrupt and disturb the church's work, do many evil things and play the role of Satan to the full extent, some of these people are ultimately cleared out from the

church, and some are expelled or have their names struck off the register. Even if there are some who avoid having their names struck off or being expelled, God ultimately must cast them out. They lose the opportunity to be saved because they simply do not accept the truth and God's salvation, and they will eventually be destroyed with Satan when the world is destroyed. You see, God works in such a free and liberating way that everything takes its course naturally. God works in people to guide, enlighten and help them, and sometimes to remind, comfort and exhort them. This is the side of God's disposition that shows abundant mercy. As God shows His mercy, people enjoy the abundance of God's grace and blessings, and enjoy full freedom and liberation without any feeling of being controlled or bound, and certainly without any feeling of being confined by any statement, thought or view. At the same time that God does this work, He also restrains people with the administrative regulations and various systems of the church, and prunes, deals with, judges and chastises their corruption and disobedience. He even disciplines and chastens some of them, or exposes and rebukes them with His words, as well as doing other work. However, while people enjoy all this, they also enjoy God's abundant mercy and deep anger. When the other side of God's righteous disposition—deep anger—is revealed to people, they still feel free and liberated, not controlled, bound, or confined. When people experience any aspect of God's righteous disposition and it works in them, they will in fact feel the love of God. The results achieved in them will be positive, they will gain from it, and will of course be the greatest beneficiaries. God works in this way, never forcing, coercing, suppressing or binding people, but making them feel liberated, free, relaxed and happy. No matter whether people enjoy God's mercy and lovingkindness or His righteousness and majesty, ultimately, they gain the truth from God, understand the meaning and value of life, the path they should tread and the direction and goal of being human. They gain so much! People live under the power of Satan, and are bound, confined, and crippled by the various false thoughts and views which it instills in them. This is unbearable, but they are powerless to break free. When people come to God, God's attitude toward them will always remain the same, no matter what kind of attitude they have toward Him. This is because God's disposition and essence do not change. He always expresses the truth, and in so doing, reveals His disposition and essence. This is how He works in people. They fully enjoy God's lovingkindness and mercy, as well as His righteousness and majesty, and people who live in this environment are blessed. If, in an environment such as this, people are unable to pursue, love and ultimately gain the truth, miss the opportunity to be saved, and some are even punished and destroyed like Satan, there is only one reason for it, and it is a fact. What do you think it is? People will walk a certain path and have a certain end according to their nature. The time when each person's end is ultimately determined, will be the time when they are grouped according to their type. If a person loves the truth and positive things, when God ultimately speaks and works, they will return to God and follow the path of pursuing the truth no matter how many negative things Satan has instilled in them.

However, if a person does not love the truth and is sick of it, this disposition of theirs will remain unchanged and will direct them, no matter how much God speaks, how sincere His words are, how much work He does, and how amazing His signs and wonders are. Wicked people are even more extreme. They are not just sick of the truth, but have an essence which is evil and hates the truth. They are opposed to God and belong in the camp of Satan. Even if they believe in God, they will eventually return to Satan. These three types of people have all experienced Satan's corruption, and have been deceived and imprisoned by Satan's various statements, thoughts and views. So, why can some people ultimately be saved and others not? It mainly comes down to the path that people follow and whether or not they love the truth. It is related to these two things. Why, then, are some people capable of loving the truth and others not? Why can some people follow the path of pursuing the truth, while others cannot, and some even openly quarrel with God and publicly denigrate the truth? What is going on here? Is this determined by their nature essence? (Yes.) They have all experienced Satan's corruption, but every person's essence is different. Tell Me, does God do His work with wisdom? Is God able to see through mankind? (Yes.) Then why does God give people the right to choose freely? Why doesn't God forcibly indoctrinate everyone? It is because God wants to classify each person according to their type and He wants to expose all of them. God does not do useless work; there are principles behind all the work God does, and the work He does in a person is based on what type of person they are. How is a person's category revealed? On what basis are they divided into different categories? This is based on the things people like and the path they follow. Isn't that right? (Yes.) God classifies people according to what they like and the path they take, determines whether or not they can be saved based on their category, and works in them according to whether or not they can be saved. It is like how some people like to eat sweet food, some spicy, some salty and some sour. If these different types of food are laid out on the table, there is no need to tell people what to eat and what not to eat. Those who like to eat spicy foods will eat something spicy, those who like to eat sweets will eat something sweet and those who like to eat salty foods will eat something salty. They can be allowed to choose freely. People who believe in God have the right to choose whether or not they love the truth and what path they will take, but it is not up to them to decide whether they will be saved or not and what their end will ultimately be. Do you see that there are principles behind God's work? (Yes.) There are principles behind His work, and one of the greatest principles is to let people be categorized according to their pursuits and path, and to let everything play out naturally. People always fail to understand this, and ask, "It's always said that God has authority, but where is it? Why doesn't God do a little forcible indoctrination to show His authority?" That's not how God's authority is manifested; that's not how God makes His authority visible to people.

Are you now able to discern the saying about moral conduct "A gentleman's word is his bond"? Do you also understand what God requires of people? (Yes.) What is your

understanding? (God requires that people are honest.) God's requirements of people are very simple. He requires that people are honest, handle matters that come up according to the truth principles, do not pretend, do not just focus on superficial behavior, but rather focus on doing things according to the principles. If the path you take is correct, and the principles by which you pursue how to comport yourself are correct and conform to the truth of God's words, that is enough. Isn't that simple? (It is.) Satan does not possess or accept the truth, so it deceives people with sayings that people think are good and right, and makes them try to be gentlemen who behave well, rather than villains who do bad things. People are quickly misled by Satan because these things are in line with people's notions and preferences, and they can easily accept them. Satan makes people do things which only appear to be good. It does not matter how bad a thing you have done behind the scenes, how corrupt your disposition is, or whether you are evil or not; as long as you have disguised your outward appearance according to the sayings and requirements set by Satan, and others call you a good person, then you are a good person. These requirements and standards clearly encourage people to be deceitful and bad, to wear a mask and prevent them from walking the right path. Therefore, can we say that every thought and view Satan instills in people is leading them down one wrong path after another? (Yes.) The work that God wants to do today is to allow people to discern Satan's various heresies and fallacies, see through and reject it, and then to pull people back from their various wayward paths onto the right path, so that they might view people and things, comport themselves and act according to the principles. None of these principles come from people, but are the truth principles. When people understand these truth principles, and are able to practice them and enter into their reality, the words and life of God will gradually be wrought into these people. If people take God's words as their life, they will no longer be misled by Satan and walk the wrong path, Satan's path, and the path of no return. These people will not betray God no matter how Satan deceives and corrupts them. No matter how the world changes, and no matter what time comes, their life will not decay or perish because these people have God's words as their life, and because their life will not decay or perish, they will coexist with this kind of life and live on forever. Is this a good thing? (Yes.) When people are saved they are richly blessed!

What is the single most important thing for you right now? It is to be equipped with more of the truth. Only when you are better equipped with the truth, and have heard, experienced and understood more, will you be able to view people and things, comport yourself and act according to God's words, and know exactly what the truth principles are. Only then will you not go astray, and not replace the words of God and the truth principles with human will and the thoughts and views that Satan has instilled in you. Is that not the case? (It is.) Therefore, one of the most important and urgent things you should do now, is to be equipped with the truth and understand more of God's words. You must apply yourself to God's words. God's words include many things, and there

are many items of truth. You must equip yourself with all of these truths without delay. If you don't equip yourself, you won't be able to use God's words as a foundation when something happens, and will just deal with the matter according to your own will. As a result, you will violate the principles, and your transgressions will remain with you as a stain. If you do not know how to seek the truth when something happens, and only handle it according to your own will and to achieve your own goals, and if you rely on your own will and have impurities but do not know how to reflect on yourself and become self-aware, nor know how to compare yourself to God's words, then you will not know yourself, and will not be able to truly repent. If you do not truly repent, how will God see you? This means you have an intransigent disposition and are sick of the truth, which will leave another stain, and is another serious transgression. Is it beneficial to you to accumulate many stains and transgressions? (No.) No, it's not. So how can transgressions be resolved? Previously, I expressed a chapter called "Transgressions Will Lead Man to Hell." This means that transgressions are directly related to a person's end. What is going on with people who always commit transgressions? Some of them say, "It wasn't intentional. I didn't mean to do anything evil at the time." Is this a good excuse? If you didn't mean it, was it not a transgression? Do you not need to reflect and repent? It wasn't intentional, but wasn't it still a transgression? You didn't do it on purpose, but you offended God's disposition and administrative decrees, isn't that true? (Yes.) This is a fact, and so it was a transgression. It's no use giving excuses. You say, "I'm young. I don't have much education, and I don't have much experience in society. I didn't know that it was wrong—no one told me." Or you say, "The situation was too dangerous. I did it in the heat of the moment." Are these good reasons? None of these are good reasons. If you have the opportunity to act according to your own will, you also have the opportunity to seek the truth, and should use the truth as a principle for your actions. So why did you choose to act according to your will when you had the opportunity to seek the truth? One reason is that your understanding of the truth is too shallow, and you usually do not put importance on pursuing the truth and equipping yourself with God's words. There is another reason and situation which is also true: You usually do things without God or God's words in your heart. God's words have never reigned over your heart. You are used to being willful, and you habitually think you are in the right, habitually reign over every matter, and habitually do things according to your own preferences. You only go through the process and formalities of praying to God. God's words have no place in your heart and cannot rule over it, and God has no place in your heart and cannot rule over it. It is natural for you to be in charge in everything you do, and as a result, you violate the truth principles. Is this a transgression? It is certain—this is a transgression. Then why are you making excuses? There is no valid excuse. A transgression is a transgression. If you commit many transgressions, harm the interests of the house of God and the work of the church, and eventually enrage God's disposition, then your chance of salvation will be cut off. This is an accurate

interpretation of “Transgressions Will Lead Man to Hell”; it is a fact. It is caused by people’s corrupt dispositions, which produce all kinds of behavior, which in turn constitute the path that people take. This incorrect path causes people to commit all kinds of transgressions at important and critical moments while they are doing their duty. If you have committed too many transgressions and they accumulate, then your chance of salvation is gone. Why do people always commit transgressions? The fundamental reason is that they are never, or rarely, equipped with God’s words, and they seldom do anything based on God’s words or the truth principles—in the end they always commit a transgression. When people transgress, they always forgive themselves and give reasons and excuses, like, “I didn’t mean to do it. I had good intentions. It was because the situation was urgent. It was because of this person. It was because of all kinds of objective reasons. …” No matter what the reason, if you don’t pursue the truth, and don’t act according to God’s words with the truth as your criterion, you will be liable to transgress and resist God. This is an undeniable fact. According to this fact, your end will turn out as I mentioned before: “Transgressions Will Lead Man to Hell.” This will be your ending. Do you understand? (Yes, I understand.)

The disposition of some people is so intransigent, and they are so unscrupulous, that they always think wishfully, “A little transgression is nothing. God does not punish people. He is merciful and loving, and is forgiving and patient with people. The day of God is still far away. I will pursue these truths He has issued later when I have the opportunity. Although God spoke these words in a sincere and urgent tone, there will still be plenty of opportunities for us to believe in God and be saved.” They are always dismissive, never have a sense of urgency, do not have a tremendous desire for God, or a thirst for the truth. They always have an intransigent heart, and always completely ignore the truth and the demands of God’s words. If they do their duty with this kind of attitude and in this state, what will ultimately happen? They will constantly commit transgressions and acquire stains! It is dangerous for a person to constantly acquire stains and commit transgressions, yet not treat it seriously, and be so unconcerned about it. Just because God does not condemn you now does not mean that He will not condemn you in the future. In short, a person who lives in such a state is in danger. They do not treasure God’s words, the opportunity to be saved, or the opportunity to do their duty, and much less every circumstance that God has orchestrated for them. They are always slack and unconcerned, and do everything in a careless, lax and absent-minded manner. This kind of person is in danger. Some people still feel good about themselves, thinking, “When I do things, God is with me, I have God’s enlightenment and guidance, sometimes I have God’s discipline, and He is with me in my prayers!” God’s grace is abundant—certainly enough for you to enjoy—you can take all you want and never use it up, but so what? God’s grace does not represent the truth, and your enjoyment of God’s grace does not mean that you have the truth. God has compassion for every person, but God’s compassion is not over-lenient. God has compassion for human life

and for every created being. However, this does not mean that He has no principles in His work, that He does not have a righteous disposition, and that the standards He requires of people and with which He evaluates them will change. Do you understand? (Yes.) You feel that God has never been angry with you, that God is always gentle and considerate to you, and that He cares, loves, and cherishes you immensely. You feel God's warmth, God's provision, God's help, and even God's favoritism and graciousness. You feel that God loves you the most, and that even if He abandons others He will never abandon you. So you are filled with self-confidence, and feel as though you are justified in not pursuing the truth, not suffering and paying a price while doing your duty, and not seeking a change in disposition. God will certainly not abandon you. Is this strong confidence of yours based on God's words? If one day you really can't feel God's presence, you will have panic in your heart and think, "Could it be that God has forsaken me?" It should be clear to you what your end will be. People who do not pursue the truth and are too self-righteous will absolutely not end up well. God's goal in loving and cherishing people, having compassion on people, bestowing grace on people, or even treating a certain proportion of people favorably or graciously, as well as the substance of these actions, is definitely not to coddle or indulge you, or to lead you down the wrong path or lead you astray, or to make you turn your back on the truth or the true way. God's purpose in doing all this is to support you in walking the right path, to make you have a heart which has a tremendous desire for Him, to increase your faith in Him, and then to develop a genuine God-fearing heart. If you always want to enjoy God's coddling and be His pet, then I say you are wrong. You are not God's pet, and His graciousness or favoritism for you is definitely not coddling or indulgence. God's purpose in doing all this is to enable you to treasure God's words, to accept the truth, and to be strengthened by His graciousness and blessings, so that you will have the will and perseverance to walk the path of pursuing the truth, and to walk the right path in life. Of course, it can be said with certainty that when God issues these truths, you have been provided for, you have gained life, and you have enjoyed His love. If you can thank God for His graciousness, stand firmly in your proper place, be more equipped with God's words, treasure His words more, seek the truth principles when doing your duty, and strive to view people and things, comport yourself and act according to God's words, then you have not failed Him. However, if you take advantage of God's graciousness and favoritism toward you, disregard His compassion toward you, insist on doing things your own way, and act willfully and recklessly, never equip yourself with God's words, don't have the will to strive for the truth, or don't view people and things, comport yourself and act according to God's words with the truth as your criterion, except to enjoy God's grace and feel good about yourself, then, when you fall short of God's expectations—that is, when you repeatedly disappoint God, sooner or later, God's grace, compassion and lovingkindness toward you will be exhausted. The day those things are exhausted, is the day God takes away all of His grace. When you don't even feel the presence of God, you will know what

you really feel inside. There will be darkness inside you. You will feel downcast and uneasy, worried and empty. You will feel that the future is uncertain. You will be frightened and in a constant state of anxiety. This is a very terrible thing. Therefore, people must learn to cherish all that God has given them, to cherish the duty they should perform, and at the same time, know how to reciprocate. In fact, God's request that you reciprocate is not about how much of a contribution you make on behalf of Him, or how resounding your testimony is unto Him. What God wants is for you to walk the right path, the path that He requires you to walk. God's grace is sufficient for people to enjoy. He is not miserly about bestowing this grace upon people, nor will He regret bestowing this grace upon people. If God blesses and is gracious toward a person, it is always done willingly. It is part of His essence, disposition and identity that He does this. He never regrets or is remorseful about giving these things to people. However, let's say people do not know good from bad or how to appreciate favors. They always let God down and disappoint Him again and again. No matter how high a price God has paid or how long He has waited, people still ignore Him and do not understand His good intentions. People only seek to enjoy God's grace—the more the better. No matter how much of God's grace and blessings they enjoy, they do not know to return God's love, or return their heart to God and follow Him. Do you think God will be satisfied if people treat Him in this way? (No.) What kind of true attitude should a person have in order to make God satisfied? People must repent, have practical manifestations, and perform their duty well. They must not hold on to various justifications and excuses. God's grace, forgiveness, and compassion for humankind are not capital with which to indulge yourself, or excuses to indulge yourself. No matter what God does, or what kind of effort, price or thought He invests in people, He only has one ultimate purpose. That is, He hopes people will turn to, and walk, the right path. What is the right path? It is to pursue and become more equipped with the truth. If the path people walk is in accordance with God's words, with the truth as its criterion, then the price God invests in people and all the expectations He has for them will be reciprocated. Do you think God places high demands on people? (No.) God does not place high demands on people, and He has enough patience and love to wait for people to return. When you turn to God, He will not simply bestow some grace and blessings on you, but will provide for you, support and guide you in the truth, in life, and on the path you are walking. God will do even greater work in you. That is what He is looking forward to. Before doing this work, God tirelessly guides people, supports them, and bestows grace and blessings upon them. All of this was not God's original intention, nor is it something He particularly wants to do. However, He has no choice but to oblige Himself to pay any price for people, and to do this work at all costs. What God ultimately wants after doing all this work is to see that people can turn back. If people understand His intentions and thinking, and why He really wants to do this, then people will recognize His loveliness, have some stature and have grown up. When people begin to be meticulous and work hard at each truth that God has provided for

them, and begin to enter into the reality of each truth, God is pleased. Then, He no longer has to do the simple work of being with people, and comforting, prompting, and exhorting them. Rather, He can provide more for them in terms of the truth, in life, and on the path that they are walking. He can do greater and more concrete work on people. Why does God prefer to do this kind of work? It is because while doing such work, He sees hope in people, sees their future and sees that people are united with Him in heart and mind. This is an immeasurably great thing for both people and God, and something that He has been looking forward to for a long time. When a person takes the path of pursuing the truth, they will gradually have more strength and real stature with which to fight Satan, and stand firm in their witness to God, and God will have more hope of seeing one more created human being stand up and fight for Him against Satan. This is the glory of God. As people grow in stature, become stronger and stronger, bear witness more and more and become increasingly fearful of, and obedient to, God, it means that there is hope that God will gain a group of overcomers and be glorified through and among the people. Is this a good thing? (Yes.) This is what God is looking forward to, and His hope and expectation for you. He has been waiting for this for a long time. If people understand and are able to be considerate of God's heart, they will work at what He asks of them, and pay the price for what He asks of them. They will make every effort to cooperate with what God wants to do, fulfill His wishes, and comfort His heart. However, if you do not want to do this, then God will not force you. You say, "Why don't I want this? Why don't I want to do what God requires? Why do I feel uneasy, uncomfortable, and unwilling to obey when I think about meeting God's requirements?" You don't have to meet God's requirements; it is voluntary. You have the right to choose, and you are free. God does not force people. I am just telling you this so that you may fully understand the reality of what God wants to accomplish, the responsibility you bear and what God expects of you. Is this clear? (Yes.) It's good that it's clear. If it's clear, then people's hearts will be aware. They will know inside what to work on next, what to do and what price they must pay; they will have direction.

Today, I fellowshiped the saying about moral conduct, "A gentleman's word is his bond." Having fellowshiped previously several other sayings about moral conduct that are promoted by Satan, it makes this saying a bit easier to discern. No matter which saying about moral conduct it is, Satan basically wants to use a kind of statement to bind and restrict human behavior, and then form a trend in society. By creating this trend, it wants to deceive, control and imprison the minds of all humanity, and thereby turn all humanity against God. After people are against God, Satan wants to see that God has no way to act on people or do work. This is the goal Satan wants to achieve, and this is the essence of all these things that Satan does. Regardless of which aspect of behavior they represent, or which thoughts and views, these sayings about moral conduct that Satan promotes are, in any case, irrelevant to the truth, and they are also contrary to the truth. How should people deal with these sayings about moral conduct which Satan

promotes? A very simple and basic principle is that any statement that comes from Satan is something that we should expose, dissect, see through, and reject. Since they come from Satan, if our hearts see through them, we can condemn and reject them. We cannot allow Satan's things to exist in the church and deceive, corrupt, and disturb God's chosen people. The goal must be achieved whereby God's chosen people reject Satan, and not even a hint of Satan's heresies and fallacies can be seen in them. Instead of these heresies and fallacies, God's words and the truth should reign over the hearts of God's chosen people, and become their lives. This sort of humankind is the sort God wants to gain. Let us end today's fellowship here.

July 9, 2022

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (16)

We have been primarily fellowshiping on and dissecting the essence of the various sayings concerning moral conduct, and dissecting the impact various sayings have on people. These various sayings concerning moral conduct mainly represent the differing degrees of effects traditional Chinese culture has on people, effects that persist to this day. Which saying concerning moral conduct did we fellowship on and expose at our last gathering? (Last time, God fellowshiped on and exposed the saying “A gentleman’s word is his bond.”) When we fellowship on sayings concerning moral conduct, we hit upon the issue of the general environment: No matter how the times change, or how our social environment changes, or how the political situation in any country changes, the corruption Satan engenders in mankind, in people’s thoughts and moral conduct, and in their innermost hearts through the various heresies and fallacies concerning moral conduct found in traditional culture becomes increasingly obvious. The impact on mankind caused by the perniciousness of traditional culture has not diminished due to the changing times and changes in living environment, and many people still cite and promote various sayings derived from traditional culture, revering it as Chinese traditional studies and as scripture. It is evident that Satan has planted the various sayings regarding moral conduct deep inside people’s hearts and corrupted people to the extreme. Why does Satan corrupt people? What is its ultimate goal in corrupting people? Is it aimed at mankind or at God? (God.) This is something you must understand in order to know Satan’s essence, and to know the root cause and process of Satan’s corruption of mankind. How are people’s thoughts corrupted by Satan? Why do people harbor such God-opposing things within their innermost hearts? Why do people harbor these things that run contrary to the truth? How did people get like this? Mankind was created by God, so why do people resist and rebel against God at every turn just as Satan does? What is the root cause? Can these questions be answered by what we discussed before? (Yes.) Think back and think about what we fellowshiped on last time. (God first fellowshiped on our current conditions. Even though we eat and drink God’s words, we basically have no discernment when it comes to the heresies and fallacies and the thoughts and views Satan instills in us, and we can become the mouthpieces and lackeys of Satan at any time and in any place. God also fellowshiped on why Satan uses these heresies and fallacies to delude and corrupt people. Although it corrupts and harms people, Satan’s true objective is aimed at God. It wants to pull down and destroy God’s management plan. Because God’s management plan ultimately aims to save and perfect a group of people so they can be of one heart and mind with God, Satan tries to disrupt and obstruct these people from following God, from being made complete by God, and from being gained by God. God sees through Satan’s cunning schemes but does not stop Satan. Rather God uses Satan as a service object and a foil, for the wisdom of God is built upon the cunning schemes of Satan, and He does the work of

cleansing and salvation on these people who have been corrupted by Satan. God reveals and dissects the various sayings of traditional culture to enable us to see clearly that Satan uses these heresies and fallacies to delude and corrupt people. He does this so that we can learn discernment and not just understand doctrinally that these heresies and fallacies are negative, but rather we can understand clearly what Satan's cunning schemes are within these sayings. Once we have understood them clearly, we can then compare ourselves with them, reflect on ourselves in the light of God's words, examine what satanic thoughts and ideas we have, what cunning schemes of Satan there are in the intent of our actions, and which satanic dispositions we reveal. This is what it is to truly know ourselves, and not just remain at the level of doctrinal understanding and simple discernment.) One of the ways in which Satan corrupts people is to corrupt their thoughts and hearts; it injects all manner of satanic thoughts, ideas, heresies and fallacies into people's hearts and minds. Among them are the various sayings concerning moral conduct which represent the crème de la crème of traditional Chinese culture—they are classic representations of traditional Chinese culture. These thoughts and views of traditional culture basically represent the thoughts of Satan, the essence of Satan, and they represent the things of Satan's nature which defy God. What is the final consequence of Satan using these things to corrupt people? (It sets people against God.) The consequence is that people are set against God. And what do people become? (They become the mouthpieces and lackeys of Satan. They become living Satans.) People become the mouthpieces of Satan, the embodiment of Satan, and corrupted mankind comes to represent Satan. The intents, purposes, thoughts, and ideas carried in the words corrupted mankind speaks and the corrupt dispositions they reveal are those which are expressed and revealed by Satan. This entirely verifies that mankind's rules for living and their various thoughts and views by which they conduct themselves and interact with others all hail from Satan and all represent Satan's nature essence; it entirely verifies that corrupted mankind alive is the embodiment of Satan, the progeny of Satan, and of a kind with Satan; it entirely verifies that corrupted mankind alive is a living Satan, a living devil, and that mankind, which has become the embodiment of Satan, is the representative of Satan. Whether mankind is Satan's progeny or the embodiment of Satan, in any case it is of a kind with Satan, and to God, a mankind like this is a mankind which denies and betrays God, it is the enemy of God, and the opposing force to God. A mankind like this is no longer the blank-slate-minded, ignorant created mankind it was in the beginning. Mankind lives under Satan's influence and is full of satanic corrupt dispositions, and what is it that mankind, which lives in this kind of state and condition, needs? It needs the salvation of God. Now it is the time when God uses words to save people. What is the context within which God saves people? It is that Satan's corruption of mankind has reached the most profound and severe level; it has completely turned people into the embodiment and mouthpieces of Satan, and people have become the enemies of God and have come to be in opposition to God.

Within this context, God has begun His work to save mankind. This is the real situation regarding Satan's corruption of people, and it is the actual context to God expressing the truth and performing the work of judgment to save man in the last days. What are the benefits of knowing these actualities? It enables people to know their own essence, to know Satan's essence, to know the means by which Satan corrupts people, and to know Satan's wickedness; it also enables people to know the purpose of God's management plan, as well as to know the almightiness, the authority, the wisdom, and the power of God He reveals in His work to save mankind. Besides having to recognize what Satan's essence and wickedness and corrupted mankind's nature essence are like, what is important is that people must know God's work, God's disposition, and God's essence. Knowing God's essence primarily involves knowing God's almightiness, authority, wisdom, and power—it mainly involves knowing these aspects of His essence.

From the perspective of the context of God working to save mankind, this mankind which God wishes to save is not a mankind He has only just created, but rather it is a mankind which Satan has been corrupting for several thousand years. Man's innermost hearts are not blank slates, nor are man's thoughts or dispositions, but rather they have long been deeply corrupted by Satan. Those which God saves are created beings which have been deeply corrupted, seduced, controlled, manipulated, and trampled upon by Satan. As far as people are concerned, to remove or change the things of Satan and the satanic dispositions within this created mankind is incredibly difficult, or even impossible. That is to say, as far as people are concerned, to change their thoughts and views, to cleanse the things of Satan deep within their hearts, and to change their corrupt dispositions are all impossible tasks; it is just like that saying, "A leopard can't change its spots." Yet it is precisely in this context and with this created mankind that God wants to perform the work of saving mankind. In His work, God does not display any signs and wonders, nor does He openly show His real person, much less perform any work that may appear authoritative and powerful to people. Which is to say that in the last days, during the time in which God incarnate saves man, God does not display any signs and wonders, He does not perform any work that goes beyond the boundaries of practicality or reality, and He does not perform any deeds which surpass fleshly humanity. God does not perform such supernatural works, but rather He uses words to provide for people's lives and to expose people and cleanse them of their corruption. Because He is only using words to perform this work, to man it looks even more so like an impossible task, and in most people's eyes it even looks like a playful matter. People believe that by drawing upon utterances, utterances spoken in various ways, from various standpoints, and about various things, to provide for them and enable them to attain salvation, God is engaged in an impossible task. Satan in particular is even less convinced that this is something God is entirely capable of, that God has the power, the authority, and the wisdom to accomplish this work. It is evident that, in the eyes of created humans, God speaking His utterances and performing His work to save man is an impossible task.

However, regardless of how things will go in the future, right now, that which is spoken of in God's words, "God is as good as His word, and His word will be accomplished, and that which He accomplishes lasts forever," has already been accomplished in those who follow Him, that is, most people have already had a foretaste of this. Judging from the way God works, from God performing the work of saving mankind only through the provision of words, the nutriment of words, the revelation of words, the chastisement and judgment of words, the chastening of words, the warning and prompting of words, and other ways, it is evident that God's words do not just carry the simple meaning of words that can be understood by human notions. Apart from the fundamental saying that God's words are the truth, what people are even more able to see, and which is factually evident, is that God's words carry life and God's words are life, that God can provide for the living of corrupted mankind and provide everything corrupted mankind needs for life. In terms of power and authority, God's words can change mankind's living conditions, change mankind's thoughts and views, change man's heart that has been deeply corrupted by Satan and, even more so, they can change the path and life direction mankind has chosen, and even change mankind's outlook on life and values. As long as you accept and obey God's words and, we can even say, as long as you love and pursue God's words, then no matter what your caliber is like, or what the goal of your pursuit is, or how great your determination to pursue is, or how great your faith is, God's words can definitely change you, enable your outlook on life and your values to change, enable your thoughts and your views on people and things to change, and ultimately enable your life disposition to change. Even though most people are of poor caliber and have no determination to pursue the truth, and they are even unwilling to pursue the truth, regardless of their circumstances, so long as they have heard God's words, they come to have in their subconscious to a greater or lesser extent some correct views and perceptions from God's teachings concerning Satan, the world, and mankind. They come to have in their subconscious a yearning and a thirst to differing degrees concerning positive things, concerning the truth principles and the correct direction and goals in life which God requires people to have. These phenomena which occur in and amongst people—whether they are what people want or not, whether they accord with people's notions or not, whether they meet God's requirements and standards or not, and so on—all these effects on people and all these phenomena show that not only can God's words provide for people's lives and provide them with what they need but, more importantly, God's words cannot be changed by any force. Why do I say this? Because God's words carry authority, and the authority of God's words cannot be transcended by any worldly theory, philosophy, or knowledge, or any argument, thought, or view—this is the real meaning of God's words carrying authority, and this is clearly exhibited in all those who follow God. God's words carry authority and can change mankind's hearts and thoughts. More importantly, they can cleanse and dispel the corrupt dispositions Satan has planted deep inside people's innermost hearts—this is the power of God's

words. There is, of course, something else, which is that people ought to know God's wisdom. God's wisdom pours out in every bit of His work. Not only within and between the lines of the words God utters, but also in the way God speaks, the things He says, the standpoints He takes in His utterances, and even in the tone of His speech, God's wisdom can be seen in all. In what aspects is God's wisdom manifested? One aspect is that God's wisdom can be seen in every word He speaks, and in the manifold ways He speaks is His wisdom displayed; another aspect is that God's wisdom can be seen in all the various ways He works in people, and it can be seen also in those who follow God whom He leads. So of course, we can say that God's wisdom pours out in His words, and also that it pours out in His work. Besides God's wisdom being visible to people in His words, people can also come to have a deep appreciation for it in the different environments and situations of the various issues they encounter. God's words allow people to receive the corresponding provision at any time and place. God can help you at any time and place, support you and provide for you at any time and place, enable you to leave behind your negative state at any time and place, and make you strong and no longer weak. At any time and place, God can change your ideas and the way you think, enable you to let go of things you believe to be right and the things of Satan, cast off your corrupt dispositions, repent to God, act and practice in accordance with God's requirements and God's words. This is one aspect. Furthermore, God works in many different ways in all those who follow Him, who love God's words and love the truth. Sometimes He bestows grace, and sometimes He bestows light and revelation. Of course, sometimes God will chasten and discipline people to get them to mend their ways, to get them to feel self-reproach in their innermost hearts, to feel truly indebted to God, to feel remorse, to repent, and thereby to relinquish the evil they do and no longer rebel against God, no longer act as they wish or follow Satan, but rather practice in accordance with the path God has shown them. God's work is accomplished in man. To be precise, the work of the Holy Spirit is accomplished in man, and the Holy Spirit works in the majority of people in different ways. Of course, regardless of the way in which the Holy Spirit works, everyone can experience the different ways the Holy Spirit works to a greater or lesser extent. From this we can see that the Holy Spirit's work and God's work, whether they are performed in many ways or in one, can both enable people to appreciate that God's work is a help to man and what man needs at all times and in all places. The Holy Spirit can work and provide for people at all times and in all places. He is not restricted by space, geographic location, or time, nor does He throw people's normal life routines into disorder or disturb people's thoughts, much less does He destroy any rule God has prescribed for mankind. The Holy Spirit just quietly works on every single person, using words to clearly notify, teach, enlighten, and guide them, while also using different methods to work on them, enabling them to naturally and unknowingly come to live under the provision of God's words. Of course, in the wake of God's work and the work of the Holy Spirit, people's dispositions are changed and their thoughts are

transformed without them being aware of it, and their faith in God gradually increases. In all these effects that are achieved in people, it must be said that these are done by the power of God's words and the wisdom of God's work. As far as those who now follow God are concerned, God uses His words to work and to lead and provide for them, and everyone has the right and the opportunity to enjoy these things. If those who followed God grew to be ten times, twenty times, or even a hundred times greater than the number who follow Him now, God would still be able to take care of them just the same, and He would still be able to complete this work. The effects that are achieved can never be altered, and this is the wisdom of God.

God's words express all aspects of the truth and provide what is needed by all mankind. God uses all kinds of different working methods from different standpoints on people at different times and in different environments, to guide them without them being aware of it and to achieve different results on each person. Even if you now think, "I don't understand much about God's work and I'm still very weak now. I still have such little faith in God and my knowledge of God has not increased, either. My current attitude toward performing my duty seems to be lukewarm like it was before, and I feel like I haven't progressed very far," one thing is for certain: No matter how weak you are, or how far you feel you are from meeting God's requirements, God's words and work have already taken hold of your heart. Even if you're not too interested in pursuing the truth, even if you still don't regard the significance of attaining salvation as very important, the truth of God's words and the content of the words God utters give you hope, and in your innermost heart you come to have expectations regarding God's work and the facts God wants to accomplish. Regardless of how great your faith is now, or how your stature is, you surely have hope. What does this show? God's words are what mankind needs, they provide what mankind needs, they have already taken hold of your heart, and you have unknowingly come to have a certain acceptance of God's words in your innermost heart. Of course, these facts are directed toward those who are not very interested in the truth, and who have a relatively vague and unclear understanding of God's work and salvation. For those who truly believe in God and can pursue the truth, this is not the only result that is achieved, but rather they can also come to know God and bear testimony for God. From these facts and indications, we can see that God's utterances and work are imbued with the power, authority, and wisdom of God. This also verifies something else: Mankind was created by God, and although they can do without sunlight, without water, and without air, they cannot do without God, they cannot do without God's words, and they cannot do without God's provision. Only the guidance, provision, and shepherding of God and all the truths God expresses can give mankind hope and light, as well as goals and direction for its survival—these are things people have seen. By exposing and dissecting the true situation of Satan corrupting mankind in terms of moral conduct, people should be able to see what kind of context God works within to save people. Besides recognizing what the true situation of the context within which God works are

like, people should even more so understand how difficult God's work of saving mankind is, and through understanding how difficult this is, they should come to know the power, the authority, and the wisdom of God. In His work of saving mankind, God did not rush to save mankind when Satan first began to corrupt it. He did not rush to save mankind four thousand years ago, or six thousand years ago. Rather, He did things as they were meant to be done: Through mankind being seduced by the serpent and corrupted by Satan, it became steeped in sin, and the earth was destroyed by flood. God then used the law to gradually lead mankind and, as Satan's corruption of man grew gradually deeper, God performed the work of redeeming mankind by taking upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh and being crucified. Now, in the last days, when mankind has been corrupted by Satan so much that people have been terribly ravaged by it and have become entirely the representation of Satan, God formally and openly expresses His words to mankind, and He expresses what is in His heart, His views and attitudes regarding all manner of people, events, and things, and all the truths mankind needs. Against this kind of background, God begins formally to provide that which mankind needs—He does not provide mankind with all the truths in a situation where mankind is totally ignorant. It is precisely when mankind has been deeply corrupted by Satan and when people believe there is no way they can be saved that God comes, speaks His words, performs His work, walks among man and expresses the words He wishes to express, while using only the provision of words to accomplish the facts He wishes to accomplish. No relatively capable person among created mankind dares take up the challenge to do this work, as people believe it to be a considerably difficult work, a work that is impossible to accomplish. Yet it is in precisely this context that God launches this work of His six-thousand-year management plan, a work which uses words to accomplish all things. This is a huge undertaking, an unprecedented work, more so it is an epoch-making work, and a long-protracted work. No matter how much someone says or what they say or what the essence of their words is, no one is capable of accomplishing the deeds their words aim to achieve. Only the words of God can be fulfilled, and only the words of God can be accomplished in accordance with what God requires and the plans of His thought—this is also God's authority. Shouldn't people understand these things? (Yes, they should.) So, what is the significance of understanding these things? Who will speak? (One aspect is that people can come to have some understanding of the wisdom of God's work and understand that God's work is not performed on those ignorant people who haven't been corrupted by Satan. Instead, God uses Satan in His service and performs the work of salvation on those who have been deeply corrupted by Satan. People believe this work to be very difficult, yet God's words really do have an effect on people. Moreover, normally in the course of our experiences, we are often constrained by our corrupt dispositions and cannot help but reveal corruption, we become unable to practice the truth, and sometimes we can become so negative that we lose our faith. However, after we hear God's fellowship, we

come to have faith in God's words and understand that our corrupt dispositions can change so long as we love and accept the truth and that our corrupt dispositions are not immutable. If someone does not love or accept the truth in their essence, then they will be unable to change their corrupt dispositions.) What you say is entirely appropriate and accurate.

God's words can accomplish all things and change all things. At the same time, people should be able to see that God's words have another effect on them—all things must pass away, only God's words will never pass away, and just like God Himself, God's words will live forever. What do we see from this? (We see God's authority.) We see God's authority, God's wisdom, and we see the power displayed in His words. Because God's words represent His life, essence, and disposition, they will live forever just as God will. What does this tell you? It tells you that God's words are so important to mankind. No matter what you obtain, it's not a real treasure. Whether you receive a gold ingot or a rare and precious jewel of the world, they're not real treasures. Even if you get the elixir of life, it's not worth a dime. Even if you succeed in practicing self-cultivation and fly up to heaven, you will not necessarily live forever, and that is because you are a created being, everything is predestined by God, and no one can escape God's sovereignty. All things must pass away, only God's words will never pass away, and just like God Himself, God's words will live forever. What's the use of knowing these words? If you don't pursue the truth and have no love for the truth or for God's fairness and righteousness, you may not be interested in these words or this fact. If, however, you love God's fairness and righteousness, you love the truth, and you love positive things, then you will develop a deep interest in these words and thereby will etch this fact and these words deep within your heart. What are these words? All things must pass away, only God's words will never pass away, and just like God Himself, God's words will live forever. You must keep these words in your hearts and contemplate them in your spare time. These words are so very important. Tell Me, what do you gain from them? (God, I understand something. God's words say, "All things must pass away, only God's words will never pass away." Sometimes things change in the outside world, and when we encounter such circumstances, our state will change and our determination to follow God will change as well. It becomes difficult for us to avoid feeling negative and weak, but when we think of these words of God and of the promises God made to us in the beginning, and that God said He wants to gain a group of people who are of one heart and mind with Him, strength and faith flood our hearts. We are no longer affected by circumstances in the outside world, and we have faith to follow God and perform our duties.) These words give you a path of practice—what kind of path of practice? It is not to pursue or cherish anything in the material world; these things are empty. All such things as fame, gain, position, material enjoyments before your eyes, the beauty of women, and the identity and status of men are transitory, gone in the blink of an eye, and it is pointless to cherish these things. What do I mean by saying it is pointless? I

mean that these things can only satisfy the momentary needs, predilections and desires of your flesh, or your moods and affections, and so on, yet they cannot satisfy your spiritual needs. When your spirit feels hungry, thirsty, and empty, nothing in the material world can satisfy your spiritual needs or fill the emptiness in your innermost heart, and that is why pursuing these things is pointless. So, what can satisfy you and fill the emptiness in your innermost heart? When you read God's words and understand the truth, then your innermost heart is replenished and enjoys peace and joy, and your heart feels satisfied and at ease. If you continue to pursue in this way, then when God's words become your life, no one can take your life from you and no one can destroy it. When no one can take your life from you or destroy it, what will you then feel? You will no longer feel empty, you will no longer feel lost, fearful, or uneasy living in this world, for you will have God's words within you, guiding you, providing for you, enabling you to live with purpose and direction. You will live every day with a sense of meaning and value. This is what people really feel. So how is this positive result which people really feel achieved? (It's achieved in people by God's words when they put His words into practice.) That's right, once people accept God's words as their life, this result is achieved in them; their life is changed, the way they live is changed, their views on people and things are different, the way they see people and things is different, and so their pursuit is different. They no longer pursue those fleshly enjoyments, material rewards, or fame, gain, and position. Pursuing the things of one's fleshly predilections can only make one feel increasingly dull, empty, uneasy and in pain. Once God's words have occupied one's heart, however, the truth becomes their life within them, their inner essence and life are changed, and so they feel differently. Their feelings and predilections, their various emotions, their goals in life, the direction of their pursuit, and their rules for living are all completely different. Their pursuit is changed, they can pursue the truth and seek to know God, and they become able to live in accordance with the way God requires them to live. People who achieve this do not face decay, death, and destruction, but rather they come to have genuine life, a life that is not subject to decay. What do I mean when I say it is not subject to decay? I mean that this life within these people will not disappear, it will not fall away, it will not fade, and it will not deteriorate, and they will not face destruction as they did before. In this way, do their current state of existence and the prospects for their survival not change? It's clear that their prospects for survival undergo a change. What is the reason why human life fades, withers, decays, has an end, and gets destroyed? It happens because people don't have the words of God as their life, and whether someone lives a hundred years, or two hundred years, or three hundred years, or a thousand years, their rules for living, their outlook on life, and the meaning of their life will not change. So, what do people who live like this actually live for? They live entirely for the purpose of satisfying their flesh. What is pursued by the flesh of man? Such things as wealth, fame, gain, and material enjoyments, and it is precisely these things which, in God's eyes, run contrary to the truth, and which God detests. There is

therefore a time limit on God permitting people to pursue and enjoy these things. One life of man can last sixty- or seventy-odd, eighty- or ninety-odd years and then it ends, and for every end there is a new round of rebirth, and this is how the lifespan of man comes about. If God didn't predetermine this time limit, wouldn't people get sick of living after being alive for a long time? When people are in their twenties, every day they feel that things are fresh, beautiful, and happy; when they get to their forties, they feel that eating three meals a day and going to sleep at night is a boring way to live; by the time they get to their sixties, they feel as though they understand everything, and they have enjoyed some blessings, suffered some hardships, and they feel that nothing is interesting anymore. They set about their work every day when the sun comes up and rest when the sun goes down, and the day is gone in the blink of an eye. Their every bodily function begins to decline, completely different from when they were in their twenties—this is when their end is near. When someone's end is near, that doesn't mean that their soul will end. It means that their flesh will soon come to an end. Ordinarily, people die when they get into their sixties, seventies or eighties, and those with a long lifespan can live to be over a hundred at most. There is a saying which goes "A person who's lived too long grows tired of living—they've had enough of life." When someone lives too long, they get sick of life, they don't want to live anymore, and life becomes meaningless to them. Why do they feel that life is meaningless? There is a true situation here, and that is that people live in their flesh eating three meals a day and doing their daily chores, every day exactly the same as the day before, doing the same things, living the same life, and when they reach a certain point, people know these things through and through. They feel they've seen everything they should see, tasted everything they should taste, and experienced everything they should experience. They feel that this is just how life is, and they have nothing to hope for, nothing to look forward to, and that their life is empty and they will soon meet their end. Is this not the case? (It is.) This is how things are.

We just talked about the words "All things must pass away, only God's words will never pass away, and just like God Himself, God's words will live forever." These words tell people the fact that God's words are so very important to mankind, and they also tell people their goals and direction of practice, and that no pursuit of anything can be a substitute for man gaining even one line of God's words. This is because all things must pass away, and all things must fade, wither, and weaken over time, and only God's words alone will never pass away. Therefore, if you gain God's words and enter the reality of God's words, meaning that you understand the truth and enter the truth reality, then you come to have value because of God's words and the truth, and your essence becomes different to how it was before. Some people say, "So what if my essence is different?" I do not mean different in the ordinary sense, but rather it becomes tremendously different, for you come to have God's words as your life, and just like God's words you will not pass away, just like God you will have eternal life, and you will have an eternal after,

future, and destination. So now, by looking at what will happen in the future, are God's words not important to man? (Yes, they are.) They are crucial! How should you pursue once you have understood that God's words are important? What should you pursue that has value and meaning? Should you pursue exerting more effort, suffering more, paying a greater price, and running around more in the performance of your duty? Or should you study professional skills more, equip yourself with more doctrine and preach more? (None of those things.) Then what is most useful for you to pursue? You all know the answer, it's as clear as crystal to you: The attainment of God's words is the most valuable and meaningful pursuit. "All things must pass away, only God's words will never pass away, and just like God Himself, God's words will live forever." Remember these words in your heart and you should not forget or discard them at any time. When you feel negative and weak, when you feel you have no hope, when tribulations come your way, when you are replaced in your duty, when you are pruned and dealt with, when you suffer setbacks and failures, and when you are reprimanded and condemned; or else when you are riding on the crest of your success, when people hold you in high esteem and praise you wherever you go, and so on; at any time and in any situation, you must always think of these words and allow them to bring you before God and seek the provision of God's words for you in this very moment, allow God's words to help free you from your tribulations, resolve your difficulties, resolve the confusion in your innermost heart, turn you back from the wrong path you follow, and resolve your transgressions, your intransigence, your rebelliousness, and so on, and allow God's words to solve every problem you face. These words are so useful to you! When you forget what your own responsibilities and duties are, when you forget what principles you should be keeping, when you forget what standpoint and perspective you should be taking and your own identity and status, think of these words. These words will bring you before God, they will bring you into God's words, they will bring you to understand what God's will is in this very moment, and they will bring you to take the correct standpoint, view, and perspective to regard yourself, to regard others, and to regard the events and environments you encounter. In this way, under the guidance of God and under the provision, enlightenment, and help of God's words, no problem can stump you, and no problem can obstruct you from pursuing the truth and stop your onward steps. Isn't this the path of practice? (It is.) The lesson you should learn now is not to grumble, complain, and adhere to rules, or to go looking for man's approaches when you encounter issues, but rather to come before God and seek the truth, seek God's help, allow God's words to provide for you and resolve your every difficulty—this is the lesson you should learn. We will end our fellowship here on the topic of understanding God's launching the most important work of His management plan against the backdrop of Satan's profound corruption of mankind; in the end, it all comes down to God's words. However we fellowship, I hope in the end that people can enter the truth reality of God's words and not just settle for knowing how to preach words and doctrines, or study theological theory

or engage in religious ceremonies every day. Entering the reality of God's words is the most pressing lesson of life entry that people must learn.

We will now fellowship on another practical problem concerning the various sayings on moral conduct. The various sayings on moral conduct we fellowshiped on before were basically exposed by using traditional Chinese culture as a demonstration, exposing these manifold satanic sayings in the innermost hearts of corrupted mankind. Some people say, "Seeing as traditional Chinese culture is used to demonstrate these sayings on moral conduct, we're not Chinese, so can't we just not accept these words You're fellowshiping? Do we really need to know these various sayings on moral conduct from Satan's corruption of mankind?" Is this a right thing to say? (No.) Very clearly, this is wrong. Satan's corruption of mankind does not distinguish between race or time, but rather it corrupts mankind without making any distinction of race or time or religious background. Therefore, if you are a member of the Chinese race, whether you are Han Chinese or a member of a minority ethnic group such as Mongolian, Hui, Miao, Yi, and so on, you have, without exception, been subjected to the indoctrination and inculcation of all manner of sayings on moral conduct that have come from Satan. That is to say, you have likewise, without exception, been subjected to Satan's corruption of mankind in terms of your thinking. To say it precisely, your thinking, your innermost soul and innermost heart have likewise been deeply corrupted and processed by Satan. Even if you're not Chinese—if you're Japanese, Korean, German, or any nationality—whether you're Asian, European, African, or American, whether your skin is yellow, black, brown, or white, whatever your ethnicity and whatever race you belong to, as long as you are a created being, then you have been deeply corrupted by Satan without exception. Besides possessing satanic corrupt dispositions, you have, without exception, been injected with satanic thoughts and views by Satan, and your heart has of course also been deeply corrupted by Satan. It is only that, for people in different countries and of different races, Satan uses different methods to instill the same things in them. These things may differ in the saying of them, there may be some difference there, but the final result of corrupting people is always the same and largely identical with only minor differences. They all cause people to disguise their appearance through their behavior and, through a number of specious, unrealistic, or even unethical sayings that run contrary to humanity, they demand that people act in a certain way and behave in a certain way in terms of their moral character, and demand how people should conduct themselves and do certain things. Even though there are differences between these sayings, and even though they arise at different times and hail from different corners, different regions, and different areas, and they are originated from different people, yet the final consequence is always that they control people's thoughts and hearts, they confine people's thoughts and hearts, and they pump people's thinking full of views and notions that carry the poisons and the nature essence of Satan. They cause people's innermost hearts to be filled with Satan's views, its evil essence, and its evil notions.

Ultimately, regardless of ethnicity or race, and regardless of tribe or time period, man has all been deluded and trampled on by Satan and corrupted by Satan in their thoughts and innermost hearts to varying degrees. In the end, regardless of what corner of the world the people upon whom Satan performs this work of corruption are in, or what race they are, or what time period they have lived in, the consequence is always to make mankind the unmitigated progeny, mouthpiece, and embodiment of Satan, and to make man the unmitigated living Satans both great and small, both visible and tangible. Of course, such a mankind as this also becomes the unmitigated enemy of God and opposition to God. Therefore, no matter what kind of people are now listening to sermons or how many people there are, there is one undeniable fact: All of mankind lies within the clutches of the evil one—this is a fact. If we say this another way, it means that while all of mankind is being deeply corrupted by Satan, the thoughts and hearts of all of mankind are also entirely held under the control and confinement of Satan—this is undeniable. So, any noble race and any people with a nationality belonging to a powerful country have all, without exception, been deeply corrupted by Satan, and are profoundly manipulated, controlled, and confined by Satan. As long as you are a member of the human race, as long as you live beneath the sun, as long as you are a human who breathes air, drinks water, and eats grains, then being corrupted by Satan has been unavoidable and, without exception, you have been corrupted by Satan in your thoughts, in your heart, in your dispositions, and in your essence. To say it more accurately, as long as you are a created human being and as long as you have been corrupted by Satan, then you are the enemy of God. As long as you have been corrupted by Satan, as long as you were in the past or are now controlled and confined by Satan, then you are an object for God to save, and this is beyond question. As long as you are a human being who has been corrupted by Satan, then without exception you possess Satan’s disposition and thinking and possess a heart that has been filled and occupied by the poisons of Satan. Therefore, recognizing and discerning the various different thoughts, views, and the manifold sayings on moral conduct that come from Satan is not a task only for Chinese people, or something that Chinese people hold the monopoly for. On the contrary, it is a lesson which every single one of God’s chosen people whom He has selected ought to learn and a reality they should enter into. Every single one of God’s chosen people, without exception, should recognize and discern all the myriad fallacious and evil thoughts and views that come from Satan. Don’t think that just because you were born into a wealthy family, a family with a prominent position, that you can have a sense of superiority, believing yourself uncorrupted by Satan, and that just because you have an honorable identity, that your soul must be noble too—this is a wrong understanding. Or perhaps you believe that you have a noble lineage, and that the color of your skin demonstrates that you have an honorable identity, position, and worth, and so you mistakenly believe that your essence, your thinking, and your heart are more noble and elevated than others. If so, then I say that this understanding you have is

foolish and unrealistic, because the mankind God is talking about is not divided by nationality, race, or religion. Regardless of what kind of social circumstances or religious situation you live in, and regardless of what race you were born into, or whether your position in society is lowly or noble, or whether you enjoy high prestige among other people or not, and so on, you cannot use any of these things as excuses to not accept these words of God or to not accept the fact that Satan corrupts mankind. As long as you are a human being, then the words “human being” should have the attributive word “corrupted” before them. To say it precisely, as long as you are a human being, then you must necessarily be a corrupted human being, and this is beyond all doubt. Furthermore, we can say that as long as you are a corrupt human being, then the things within your natural thinking and which are held within your innermost heart come from Satan and have all been profoundly processed and corrupted by Satan—you should accept this fact. You inherently have nothing whatsoever related to the truth, nothing that has anything whatsoever to do with God’s words or God’s life, but on the contrary you are deluded, corrupted, and controlled by Satan. Your mind is filled with the thoughts, philosophies, logic, and rules for living of Satan, and everything within your mind comes from Satan. What does this fact tell people? No one should use any excuse to reject God’s salvation, or selectively accept God’s words. As a corrupted human being, you should accept God’s words without any choice. This is your responsibility, and it is also what you need. If someone has been born in a wealthy and powerful nation and they live in superior social circumstances, or they’re born into a prestigious family and have received higher education, and so they believe themselves to be different from everyone else and nobler than others of God’s chosen people, and so wish to place themselves above all others of God’s chosen people, then this is absurd thinking, it is foolish thinking, and it can even be said to be foolish in the extreme. No matter how special your identity, position, or worth is, or how much loftier your identity, position, or social circumstances are than those of ordinary people, you will always be a created being before God. God doesn’t look at where you came from or your circumstances at birth, He doesn’t look at your nationality or race, and He doesn’t look at your worth, prestige, or achievements in society or in the world. God looks only at whether you accept His words, whether you take His words as the truth, and whether you can view people and things and comport yourself and act according to His words. If you truly regard yourself as just one among ordinary created beings under the dominion of God, then you should let go of your social circumstances, your racial background, your national background, and religious background and come before God as an ordinary created being, accept His words without any labels or background, and by so doing your identity and status will be set aright. If you wish to accept God’s words with this correct identity and status, then the first thing you should understand is what man’s essence is, and the first thing you should accept is that the essence of man has been deeply corrupted by Satan, and that the things which fill and occupy man’s thoughts and their innermost hearts all come from

Satan. Since people wish to accept God's words and accept the truth as life, they should first unearth, reflect on, and come to know all the things in their thinking and innermost hearts which do not accord with the truth and which are hostile to it. Only when these things are clearly recognized, thoroughly understood, and thoroughly dissected can people relinquish them at the right time and in the right environment, thereby enabling their innermost hearts to undergo a total change. When they have expelled all the things of Satan and accepted God's words and the truth, they will become new people. Only when the perspective, views, and standpoint by which people view other people and things undergo a complete change can they truly and accurately view people and things according to God's words. They then become relatively pure people, unsullied. People now cannot yet achieve this. Though they may understand a little of the truth in their hearts, they are still sullied by all manner of absurd views and wrong and preposterous things. They accept half of God's words and the truth and repudiate the other half; they selectively accept a little, accept a little to varying degrees, yet their hearts always leave room for the thoughts and logic of Satan and the specious things Satan instills in them, always keeping these things within their hearts. These things within people affect their minds, their judgment, and the perspective and views by which they view people and things, and this has a tremendous impact on the extent to which they accept the truth.

The corruption and delusion of mankind caused by the various sayings on moral conduct Satan instills in people using traditional culture are extensive. This is not something limited only to Chinese people, but rather it reaches throughout all of mankind, into every corner and every time period. It affects and controls generation after generation of people, and affects and controls people of different races, nationalities and religions. Once people have understood this, the attributive word that goes with "traditional culture" is not only "Chinese"; it can be said that the traditional culture of any nation or race comes from Satan and arises from the corruption of Satan. For example, there is traditional Japanese culture, traditional Korean culture, traditional Indian culture, traditional Filipino culture, traditional Vietnamese culture, traditional African culture, the traditional culture of white people, as well as the traditional cultures of Judaism, Christianity, Catholicism, and other traditional cultures that have arisen out of religions. All these traditional cultures run contrary to the truth and have a profound effect on people's views, standpoints, and perspectives concerning how they view people and things and comport themselves and act. They are just like hot brands that leave deep imprints on people's innermost thoughts and hearts. They hold sway over people's lives, people's rules for living, the paths they follow in life and the direction and goals of their conduct; they even hold sway over the goals people pursue. These things severely disturb and impact the attitude with which people regard positive things, God's words, the truth, and God. Of course, they also severely impact and disturb people's standpoints and views concerning how they view people and things and how they comport themselves and act, meaning that they have a severe impact on people accepting and

practicing the truth. And what is the consequence in the end? (People lose their chance to attain salvation.) That's right, what is impacted finally is the crucial matter of people attaining salvation. Is this not a serious consequence? (Yes.) This is such a serious consequence! How someone sees things, what kind of perspective they take to see things, what views they take and what notions they harbor to see things are all decided based on their corrupt dispositions and on the things present in their thinking. If the things present in their thinking are positive, then they will view people and things from the correct perspective; if the things present in their thinking are negative and passive and have come from Satan, then they will necessarily view people and things from incorrect and absurd perspectives, standpoints, and views, and ultimately this will have an impact on the path they follow. If the standpoints, views, and perspectives by which you view people and things are wrong, then the goals and direction of your pursuit are also wrong, as is the path you follow in your conduct. If you continue with these wrong things, then you will have absolutely no chance of attaining salvation, as the path you follow is wrong. If the perspectives, standpoints, thoughts and views by which you view people and things are correct, then the results that arise will also be correct, they will pertain to positive things, and will not run contrary to the truth. When man views people and things from perspectives that are in accordance with the truth, then the path they choose will also be right, as will their goals and direction, and they will have hope of attaining salvation in the end. However, because people now are occupied and controlled by Satan, the perspectives, standpoints, and views by which they view people and things are wrong, which causes their pursuit and the path they follow to also be wrong. For example, when people work and pay the price for the sake of fame and gain, for face, and for status, is this path wrong? (Yes.) How does it come about that people embark upon such a wrong path? Is it not because the perspectives, views, and starting point from which they regard this kind of thing are wrong? (It is.) This causes people to embark upon the wrong path. And if people keep following such a wrong path, will they be able to attain salvation in the end? No, they won't. If you view people and things and comport yourself and act in accordance with some thought or view instilled in you by Satan, then the path you walk will necessarily be the path of ruin. It will absolutely not be the path to salvation, because it is precisely opposite and contrary to the path to salvation. If people follow along this wrong path, they destroy their own chance to attain salvation, it is completely gone, and they can never walk the path to salvation. However, if you pursue with the correct view, and you view people and things and comport yourself and act according to God's words, then the principles of practice which arise will be positive, your path will be positive, and because you are starting from the right place, the path you ultimately follow will also be right. If you follow along such a path as this, then you will certainly be able to attain salvation. This aspect of the truth is somewhat profound and most of you probably don't understand it. You have no appreciation of it, and you, as yet, don't possess this aspect of the truth reality. You don't know whether you view people and things and comport

yourselves and act based on wrong views or right views—you don't yet have this experience. Right now, you know only to act, to exert your strength, to make an effort, and to pay a price, whereas you haven't even begun to examine what affects and controls the views and thoughts in your innermost hearts. This topic is therefore somewhat far from you, and we will stop talking about it here.

We just talked about the essence of sayings on moral conduct, and the extent to which it relates is not limited only to the Chinese mainland, but rather to all of mankind. This is because all of mankind lies within the clutches of the evil one, and every human being has been deeply corrupted by Satan and is under Satan's control. There is a factual basis for saying this. It is not only the people of the Chinese mainland who have been corrupted by Satan, but all of mankind has been corrupted by Satan, and all human beings lie within the clutches of the evil one. That mankind has been deeply corrupted by Satan can be seen to some extent by all. We have been fellowshiping for some time now on Satan's instilling the various sayings on moral conduct into people's thoughts, using this method to delude, control, and confine people, and thereby achieving its purpose of corrupting people. This fact is not limited to Chinese people, but is present in all people of different races, different nationalities, and different ethnicities. All human beings have been deeply corrupted by Satan, including all races and ethnicities; the manifold specious things which are difficult to discern that Satan instills in people using traditional culture, and even sayings which seem to people to be relatively positive and in accord with their morals, thinking and tastes, are actually all part of Satan's corruption of mankind. That is to say, all human beings have been corrupted by Satan in this way, and all human beings of any ethnicity, race, or nationality, born in any place, or in any region or land of planet earth, have been deeply deluded, controlled, and corrupted by Satan in both mind and heart. No matter where or when you were born, or which ethnicity or nation you were born into, you have without exception been deluded and corrupted by the sayings of traditional culture Satan has instilled in you. Therefore, you should not think that just because we are only dissecting traditional Chinese culture that your own nation or ethnicity is without a satanic cultural background, that you are better than Chinese people, nor should you have a feeling of superiority whereby you feel more honorable and noble than Chinese people. This feeling of superiority is a misconception, it is wrong, it is absurd, and we can even go so far as to say it is foolish. As long as corrupted mankind is mentioned, you must not exclude yourself from it; as long as corrupted mankind is mentioned, you are a part of it. Of course, as long as it's said that you are a corrupted human being, then your innermost heart is filled with thoughts dominated by traditional culture which Satan instills in you, and this is an indisputable fact, a fact that is forever immutable. You must understand this fact clearly—it is beyond question and must not be doubted. We will finish our fellowship on this topic here.

Last time, we fellowshiped on the topic "A gentleman's word is his bond." This is a saying Satan uses to corrupt people in terms of moral conduct. The advocacy of this

saying has a significant impact on people's thinking and it, like other sayings on moral conduct, is absurd and does not conform to the facts. No matter what someone says, as long as they do it, then other people think them to have a noble morality and honorable character, and this is both preposterous and laughable. This saying is just the same as other sayings on moral conduct in that they are all preposterous and laughable heresies and fallacies. They can all be referred to like this and can also be defined as being absurd in the extreme and unable to withstand scrutiny. Let's look today at the saying on moral conduct of "Grow like a lily from the mud unsullied." Before formally fellowshiping on it, have you ever contemplated how to explain this saying? How can its essence be dissected? What poisons does it hold within it? What are the thoughts Satan wishes to instill in people through this saying? What is Satan's malicious intent? What aspect of human beings does Satan corrupt using this saying? Have you ever contemplated these things? The saying "Grow like a lily from the mud unsullied" can be simply explained as not going along with bad people and being able to protect oneself from bad influences. Whether someone else assesses someone as having grown like a lily from the mud unsullied, or whether that someone wants to grow like a lily from the mud unsullied, what kind of person are they, generally speaking? They claim to be very incorruptible, upright, open and aboveboard, that they are gentlemen with noble moral character, but they see this age, this world, this mankind, and even this country, this imperial court, and this officialdom as not like this. Do these people not usually look at things cynically and feel dissatisfied with reality? They often feel that they have high aspirations but were born at the wrong time, that they have talent but cannot use it. They believe that, whether in officialdom or in society, there are always base people blocking their way, that they have grand, strategic minds, they are stellar individuals, yet no one recognizes their talent or ever lets them handle important tasks. They're dissatisfied with reality and become cynical, and they say they will "grow like a lily from the mud unsullied," that they will protect themselves from bad influences and be spotless. To put it bluntly, people like this see themselves as pure and lofty and they are dissatisfied with reality. They don't necessarily have any true talent or real ability, and the perspectives with which they view people and things and comport themselves and act are not necessarily correct or practical and, of course, they cannot necessarily achieve anything, either. And yet they believe themselves to be set apart from ordinary people, and are always sighing, "All the world is turbid, I alone am pure; all the people are drunk, I alone am sober," as though disillusioned with the mortal world and often seeing the wickedness and darkness of the world. To be precise, people like this are cynical. They detest the political and commercial sectors, and they detest literary, artistic, and educational circles. They detest intellectuals' perspectives on their pursuits, and they look down on farmers and on those with religious beliefs. What kind of people are these? Are they not a kind apart? Are they not abnormal in some way? These people have no real ability or learning. If you ask them to do some practical work, they won't necessarily be equal to the task. They enjoy

grumbling, and in their spare time they publish articles and poetry collections to disclose matters of politics, government, society, and individuals of a certain group during a certain period of time. They criticize this today and that tomorrow, they speak eloquently, but get into a mess when they do anything. In the end, they don't fit in with anyone, they can't accomplish anything anywhere, and they're not equal to their job. They mistakenly believe, "I'm so talented! Ordinary people can't attain to the realm of my thought!" They feel dejected, troubled, and depressed in their hearts. In their free time, they wander around, and whenever they go to some place of historical interest, they holler, "I'm a thwarted genius! I'm a stellar individual, but few there are who can recognize true talent! I have high aspirations, it's just a shame I was born at the wrong time and am down on my luck!" They always believe themselves to be ambitious and full of learning but can never stand out from the crowd or be placed in a high position by anyone in power, and so they become cynical and dissatisfied, they look down on everyone, until ultimately they wind up all alone. Isn't that pitiful? To put it bluntly, people like this are a mad bunch of people who are pompous, extremely aloof, and dissatisfied with reality, and they always feel unsuccessful. Actually, these people are nothing, they cannot accomplish anything, they do everything badly, and when they learn a little knowledge, they show off by talking endlessly about it. In ancient times, such people recited poetry, wrote odes, and showed off their literary skills, with a pedantic look about them. Nowadays, people like this have many more opportunities to show off. They can make their own media, post comments on blogs, and so on. In some countries with relatively free social systems, they frequently expose the dark side of various industries, such as the dark and evil aspects of the literary, artistic, commercial, political, and cultural sectors. All day, they criticize this and belittle that, believing themselves so very talented. The origin of their doing all these things is their belief that everything about them is good and right, and that they have reached greatness, glory, and correctness. To be precise, they protect themselves from bad influences and "grow like a lily from the mud unsullied." They believe they see everything clearly, that they can understand everything. They use veiled criticism against anyone who does anything, and they look upon them with scorn and disdain. They always have something to say about whatever anyone does, and they criticize and belittle them. In reality, they have no idea what they themselves are, they've never known what perspective and standpoint to take that are correct and proper when they say things. They just know how to be loose-tongued and clever-tongued. Are there many people like this in society? (Yes.) What are these people? To say it precisely, they are a mad bunch of people who are pompous and who see themselves as pure and lofty. There've been many people like this throughout history, right? (Yes.) How should you describe and define these people? Are they not idealists? To be precise, these people are idealists. They are unwilling to live in the current real living environment, and their heads are constantly in the clouds, filled with ethereal, empty, invisible and intangible things. They live in a non-existent and ethereal world—these people are called idealists.

So, what perspective do they take to rate other people? They take the moral high ground, and their starting point for rating other people is, “I can see your evil and dark side clearly and expose it. Being able to expose the bad and wicked things you do proves that I am not like you.” The underlying meaning here is, “I ‘grow like a lily from the mud unsullied.’ You have all been contaminated by this evil trend; you are not good people.” Is this not them seeing themselves as pure and lofty? Is this not them overrating themselves and being pompous? Is this not a disguised attempt to elevate themselves under the guise of criticizing reality, exposing the dark side of society, and being dissatisfied with reality? (It is.) So, how do we define such people? There is a folk saying that goes, “I’ve met shameless people before, but I’ve never met anyone as shameless as you.” Doesn’t this describe these people? (It does.) They are shameless. They have mouths that talk only about right and wrong, and eyes that see only the shortcomings and flaws of others. With their clever mouths, they publicly expose others’ shortcomings and flaws, and through doing so they express their own views and show other people how they protect themselves from bad influences, and how unique, and noble they are. Are they really noble? Are they really unique? They’re just the same as everyone else. No matter what methods other people use to pursue fame and gain, their methods are obvious. These people, however, assume dignified airs, and their exposure and criticism of others serve as topics and springboards by which they elevate and promote themselves, and they use these means to become famous and influential. Are they not also pursuing fame and gain? Aren’t their goals just the same? Are the results not just the same? They just use different means and methods, that’s all. It’s just like insulting someone using polite language and insulting them using coarse language, the insulting nature is still just the same. Other people become famous in one way, and these people become famous in another way—the final result is the same, as is the intent, the purpose, and the motivation, so there is no difference at all.

As for those people in society who proclaim themselves to “grow like a lily from the mud unsullied,” we have defined them as idealists. The characteristics of such people are that they are exceptionally aloof, they think they’re better than anyone else, they regard everyone else as unsatisfactory, and ultimately they conclude that, “You are all mired in the mud and mired in evil trends. I have surpassed you, and I ‘grow like a lily from the mud unsullied.’” This is their pomposity, and this is how dissatisfied with reality they are, as though they themselves are so very holy and clean. In fact, because they are not as capable as others and don’t have the means other people have, because they are always seeking to stand out from the crowd but never get their wish, because they are always pursuing ideal, ethereal, and empty things but are never satisfied and can never bring these things into reality, and because they have no desire to face reality, or to let go of their ideals, and so, in terms of form, they have no alternative but to stay away from official, political, artistic and literary, and cultural circles. Because they’re not welcome in such circles, cannot be accepted, cannot achieve their ambitions, and their

ideals and aspirations cannot be realized, in the end they proclaim themselves to “grow like a lily from the mud unsullied,” and say that they swim against the current, that they have a noble moral character, and they use such sayings to console themselves. Do you now know how to discern such people by us fellowshiping on them in this way? What exactly are these people in essence? They’re nothing, yet they’re still pompous. Is this an accurate assessment? (Yes.) People like this have so many ideals, but not one of them can be realized, nor do any of them conform to reality. These things they think of are all vacuous and unrealistic. All day long, these people do no proper work, knowing only to recite poetry and compose odes, criticizing this, belittling that—this is them not doing any proper work, right? Their essence can be seen from their behavior: They have no real talent or learning, their thoughts and views on reality and life are all vacuous, vague, and unrealistic, and that’s why they can follow the fallacy of “Grow like a lily from the mud unsullied.” They strive to be like this, hoping that more people will be like this, too—this is wrong. If people are like this, then what can they achieve? To be precise, people like this are without a genuine goal or direction in life, without true belief, without true choice in life, and without the correct path of practice. All day long, their thoughts are wild and unrestrained, they entertain all sorts of outlandish ideas, their minds are filled with chaotic, empty, and unrealistic things, none of which are realistic, and these people are in fact a kind apart from mankind. Their thinking is both vacuous and incredibly absurd and extreme. Regardless of what group of people they are in, or whether they are upper class, middle class, or lower class in society, they never get along with others and can never be accepted by people. Why is this? It’s because their thinking, their pursuits, and the perspectives by which they view people and things are extreme and of a different kind. To be polite, these people are idealists, but to be precise, they are mentally ill and mentally abnormal. Tell Me, can mentally ill people get along well with normal people? Not only can they not get along well with their friends and work colleagues, but they can’t even get along well with their own families. When these people put forward their views and statements, other people feel awkward and fed up, and they don’t want to hear them at all. These statements hold no water and don’t work in real life. In real life, the difficulties people face can arise within themselves, they can arise out of people’s objective environments, or they can involve the main daily necessities of life—how should these things be faced, handled, and resolved? In terms of minor difficulties, there are those which involve the main daily necessities of life, while in terms of major difficulties, there are those which relate to people’s outlook on life, their rules for living, the path they follow, and their beliefs, and it is these problems which are the most real. Yet these idealists always want to detach themselves from these problems and never want to live in real-life situations. Their views, perspectives, and starting point from which they view people and things are not based on these real problems, but are rather wild and unconstrained. You never know what they’re thinking, as though they think the thoughts of aliens, things people here on earth have never heard before, things

which sound abnormal to them. Who wants to hear someone saying abnormal things? When people first meet this person and hear them speak, they may feel that what they're saying is really fresh and new, more insightful and cleverer than what ordinary people say. But after a while, they realize that it's all just nonsense, so no one pays attention to that person anymore, they pay no heed to them, and nothing they say enters either their ears or their hearts. Is that person able to perceive it when other people adopt such an attitude toward them? They become aware of it as time passes, and in their heart they think, "No one likes me, what's up with that? Why don't they like me? Ah, it's because I'm a stellar individual, but few there are who can recognize true talent!" You see, they are always pompous, always believing themselves to be talented, clever, and capable, when in fact they're nothing. No matter what group of people they find themselves in, the final result and end for them is always rejection. This is caused by them following the saying "Grow like a lily from the mud unsullied." If you have ever wanted to be like this, then I tell you to stop right there, as these people are not normal. If your thinking and the reason of your humanity are normal, then you should do what you ought to do and what you can do, and not seek to be one of those who "grow like a lily from the mud unsullied." These people are a degenerate and different kind of human being, and they are not normal.

Once we've finished dissecting the essence of people who "grow like a lily from the mud unsullied," let's talk about the problems of dissatisfaction with reality and cynicism which we mentioned when we exposed these people. Some people believe, "We believe in God so we should understand the dark side of society and the evil trends in society, and not follow them. We also have to understand politics, the wickedness of mankind, the various common practices of mankind, and all the dark and evil things of mankind that are present at different times, in different corners of the world, and among different races and groups. By doing this, we will develop discernment." Is this what God requires of man? Before we fellowship on this topic, some of you may have made this your pursuit, but now I tell you clearly, this is not something you must do, and it is not what God requires of you. You are not required to understand this world, this society, and humankind, or this political, commercial, literary, or religious sector, or any common practice that hails from society, or the operating method of any group or force in society, and so on—this is not a lesson you need to learn. You don't need to be dissatisfied with reality, and you don't need to protect yourself from bad influences. This is not the standpoint or perspective you should take, and it is not the view you should adopt. God has chosen you and allowed you to believe in and follow Him; He does not ask you to be anti-mankind, anti-society, anti-politics, or anti-state, nor does He ask you to oppose any group, race, or religion. He just simply asks you to follow Him and reject Satan, to come before Him and accept and obey His words, to follow His way, and to fear Him and shun evil. God has never asked that you be anti-mankind, anti-society, or anti-state. To be more precise, God has never asked you to oppose a certain government, a certain social or political system, or a certain political policy—God has never asked you to do

any such thing. Some people say, “All of mankind rejects us, opposes us, and persecutes us. Is it wrong for us to rise up and oppose them and fight against them? They are all against us, so why can’t we be against them?” No matter how you think or act personally, or what kind of views you hold personally concerning society, the world, and national political systems, that is your own business and it has nothing to do with the way God asks you to follow, nor anything to do with God’s teachings or requirements. Some people say, “Since You say these things have nothing to do with God’s teachings, that they are not what God requires of us and not what God asks us to do, why then does God expose Satan, social trends, the dark side of society, and even religion?” God exposes these things only so that you can understand them, as these things God exposes are related to people’s corrupt dispositions and to the God-defying views and notions people have. Therefore, in this kind of situation, we must necessarily fellowship on such topics and use such examples, the purpose being to allow people to be able to more accurately and practically know the satanic dispositions revealed by corrupt mankind, and to discern all the different fallacious thoughts and views and God-defying notions which Satan instills in them, and that’s all. This is not done so that people can personally oppose politics, oppose society, and oppose mankind. God never asked people to be dissatisfied with reality, to be cynical, or to protect themselves from bad influences. Some people say, “Even though God never asked me to be like this, I only believe in God because I’m cynical and dissatisfied with reality, because I feel that there is fairness and righteousness in God’s house and that the truth holds sway here, and because I am treated fairly here.” That’s your business and it has nothing to do with what God requires. Of course, everyone comes to believe in God for different reasons: Some people believe in God to gain blessings, some to escape the disasters, some to have their sickness cured, some to have a good destination in the future; and then there are some who are dissatisfied with reality, dissatisfied with the world, dissatisfied with society, or have been treated unfairly in society, and so come to God’s house seeking comfort and shelter. Everyone’s views on belief in God and their original intent or motivation for their belief in God are different. There are also those who are without these things in their hearts, who just want to believe in God and feel that believing in God is a good thing. In any case, when those people who are cynical and dissatisfied with reality come to believe in God, God doesn’t commend them or treat them kindly just because they are gifted or talented in some small way. This is because they do not accept the truth, they are exceedingly arrogant, self-righteous, and contemptuous of others, and people like this find it incredibly difficult to accept the truth. You should harbor no hope for such people, nor should you be such people yourselves. I tell you only to be honest, to pursue the truth, to obey God’s words, and to fear God and shun evil. Therefore, never believe that just because you are dissatisfied with society and understand it clearly, or that because you previously engaged in some special industry and have a deeper understanding of that industry’s dark side, that you have capital and stature in your belief

in God, that God loves you, that you meet God's required standards, or that you are a qualified created being. If you do believe such a thing, then I say you are wrong, the views by which you are measuring the situation are wrong, the perspective from which you are seeing things is wrong, and the standpoint you are taking is wrong. Why do I say this? I say it because the standpoint you are taking and the perspective and views by which you view people and things are not based on God's words and do not have the truth as their criterion. If you always take the perspective of worldly people and feel dissatisfied with reality and cynical, then you will detest them, you will want to fight and struggle against them, to reason with them and debate with them about what is right and what is wrong; you will want to change mankind, change society, and even change the political system of a country. There are even some people who will want to expose the dark side of their nation's political elite, believing that by doing so they are rejecting Satan and practicing the truth. This is all wrong. No matter how many things go on within the spheres of the political elite, within business circles, or within artistic and literary circles, none of it has anything whatsoever to do with your pursuit of the truth. No matter how much you know about such things, it's all useless, and it doesn't demonstrate that you know Satan's essence or that you can reject Satan in your innermost heart. No matter how much you know or understand such things, and no matter how specific, how true, or how accurate your understanding is, this does not demonstrate that you are practicing the truth, that you are knowing yourself, or that you are dissecting the satanic thoughts and views within yourself, nor does this demonstrate that you love God's words and the truth, much less does it demonstrate that you fear God. Don't think that just because you understand a little about society, or you know the insider rules of an industry or some hearsay most people don't know about, that because you are cynical and dissatisfied with society and you have the courage to expose society's dark side, that you are a noble and honorable person, a cut above the rest, and that you "grow like a lily from the mud unsullied." God doesn't want people like that.

Before they came to believe in God, some people were timid and hesitant, not daring to expose society's dark side, not having the courage to do it. Now that they believe in God, they feel that they have God emboldening them and backing them up, and so they're not afraid anymore to expose such things. There are even some who go abroad to democratic countries and dare to expose some of the evil doings of the demon that is the CCP. These people then feel they understand the truth, that they have stature and have faith in God. These are all wrong thoughts and views, and it is pointless for them to pursue these things. Whether you're dissatisfied with reality and cynical, whether you're a cut above the rest of society, and whether you're someone who "grows like a lily from the mud unsullied," none of it matters to God; He does not look at such things. What does God look at? God first looks at whether or not you recognize the thoughts and views that come from Satan in your innermost heart and, once you've recognized them, whether you expose them and are open about them to others, and whether you

reject them once you understand them clearly. Moreover, God looks at whether or not you consciously pursue the truth in real life, whether you consciously seek the truth principles in how you view people and things and conduct yourself and act, and what exactly your attitude toward the truth is. This is something you must be clear about in your heart. Some people enjoy discussing the past and present, speaking profusely and forcefully about historical court intrigues, outlining in great detail what great events happened in which period within political spheres, what the substantive issues were, and who played a part at key moments, and so on and so forth. They then think they have stature, that they're upright and have a strong sense of justice, saying, "You see, I'm so dissatisfied with society. My gaze penetrates the darkness of officialdom, and I understand it so profoundly and thoroughly!" What's the use in saying such things? Who are you trying to butter up? God? Are you showing off how intellectual you are and that you know about so many things? Saying these things is useless. I've never looked at any worthless trash online, nor have I ever been interested in any kind of news or tidings. Why don't I look at these things? Because it's aggravating and disgusting. Some people believe that once they come to believe in God, they must have a sense of justice, and they often pass comment on and are full of hot air about famous people, celebrities, and politicians, and they bring these people's private lives to light, hoping to open up everyone's eyes. They feel like they're jacks of all trades, wise guys, that they know all secrets, and that they're so very clever, knowledgeable, and upright. What's the use in knowing such things? Does it show that you're practicing the truth? Does it show that you've understood the truth? Does it show that you have stature? (No.) You can't stop talking about those things in society, but can you say anything about how to do the things right before your eyes and the duty you're supposed to do in conformity with truth principles? You cannot; you have nothing to say. No matter how much you know about those things in society, it doesn't demonstrate that you understand the truth or that you have real stature. Don't think that just because you can see through fake news and fallacies that you have stature, that you have renounced the world and rejected Satan, that you no longer fall in with Satan, and that you have faith in God and are loyal to Him—these are all fallacious views, and none of them represent life at all. If you think, "Is it not the case that the more dissatisfied with reality I am, the more I expose the great red dragon, the more I hate the great red dragon, the more I hate the world and the more cynical I am, the happier God is and the more He likes me?" then you're wrong. The more you pursue those things and the more you follow that path, the less God likes you and the more He grows tired of you. Why is it that the more you pursue those worldly things the less God likes you? It's because you are not following the right path and not doing proper work. So, when you have some time, you can read God's words more, listen to hymns, listen to life experiential testimonies of your brothers and sisters, and everyone can contemplate and fellowship on God's words together. Don't ask about tittle-tattle that has nothing to do with your life entry or your pursuit of salvation. That is

done by people with nothing better to do. The way society develops, what course the world will take, how filthy and evil humankind is and how dark politics is—have these things anything to do with you? Would you attain salvation if society and the world weren't dark, evil, and filthy? (No.) Those things have nothing to do with you whatsoever. Whether or not you can attain salvation is related only to how much of the truth you accept and understand, how much of the truth reality you enter into, and it's related to how well you perform your duty—it's related only to these few things. Don't frequently pass comment on famous people and celebrities, exposing celebrities' disgraceful and dirty behavior to pass the time, showing off how clever you are and how you are a cut above the rest. Those are stupid things to do; don't be someone like that. That is someone who doesn't do any proper work and doesn't walk the right path.

As for the essence of the saying on moral conduct, "Grow like a lily from the mud unsullied," we've pretty much now fellowshiped about it and dissected it. Moreover, haven't we now fellowshiped clearly on the attitude and views for how one conducts oneself posited by this saying, as well as what God's requirements and attitude are? (We have.) Do you also now understand the path people should follow? (We do.) Is the cynicism we're talking about here a positive thing? Is dissatisfaction with reality a positive thing? Is protecting yourself from bad influences a positive thing? (No.) None of these are positive things. We can say with certainty that these are not foundations for you to comport yourself and act upon, they should not become foundations for you to comport yourself and act upon, much less should they become principles for you to comport yourself and act upon. Therefore, these are things you should let go of and reject. You should clearly discern and entirely relinquish these sayings and theories which come from traditional culture, and you should not take these specious things as the truth or confuse them with the truth. This is because, no matter how many years these things have been circulating among humankind, or how deep their roots go among humankind, they cannot stand for a moment before the truth. They are simply not positive things and simply do not deserve to be mentioned in the same breath as the truth. These things have no positive effect on people at all; not only can they not lead people and bring them to the correct path but, on the contrary, they lead people onto one wrong path after another, making people more aloof and shameless, less self-aware and reasonable, and making God detest them and feel disgusted by them. If you let go of these things, let go of these notions, let go of these thoughts and views, these methods and foundations on how to view people and things and comport yourself and act which come from Satan, and come before God and view people and things and comport yourself and act wholly according to God's words, then these things will have no effect on you. As for the issue of being dissatisfied with reality and feeling cynical, God doesn't need you to put in effort trying to understand or learn about what darkness lurks in society. You only need to know wholly and in essence that the world and humankind have been corrupted by Satan and that they lie in the clutches of the evil one. Whether it is social trends, customs,

traditional culture, knowledge, education—on any level, regarding any aspect, or in any industry—it is all filled with Satan's thoughts and views and its heresies and fallacies. No matter which country, ethnicity, or which group of people or organization in society, neither the truth nor God's words hold sway over them; of course, it's even less likely that fairness or righteousness can be seen among them. This is certain, and as long as you simply know this, then that's enough. Apart from this, the most important thing is to quiet your heart and further equip yourself with God's words, and to recognize within yourself the heresies and fallacies, thoughts and views that come from Satan. Only with genuine understanding of these things can you truly see through them; only when you truly see through them can you genuinely reject them and let them go; and only when you have genuinely let them go can you have unmitigated acceptance of and submission to the truth. In this way, the path you follow will be the right one, and it will be illuminated. Your goal will also be the right one, and your attainment of salvation in the end will be an indisputable fact. That's why you absolutely must not allow the heresies, fallacies, thoughts, and views which Satan instills in you to muddle your thoughts and cloud your eyes; you must not be cynical and dissatisfied with reality and in this way become numb and deceive both yourself and others. Instead, you must pursue the truth, gain the truth as your life, live out the likeness of a true human being, and perform your duty well. This is your proper job, and it is the path you should now follow. As for the state of society, the country, or any industry, those things have nothing to do with you. Why is that? Because they have no effect on your pursuit of the truth, they bear no relation to your pursuit of the truth, no relation to your end, and no relation to your attainment of salvation. Understand? (Yes.) Once you've understood this, you should be clear on how to pursue the truth and gain life.

July 14, 2022

Why Man Must Pursue the Truth

Recently, we have principally been fellowshiping about some statements relating to moral conduct. One by one, we have analyzed, dissected, and exposed statements on every aspect of moral conduct that have been put forward in traditional culture. This has made people discerning of various statements on moral conduct that are regarded as positive things in traditional culture, and see through to their essence. When a person has a clear understanding of these statements, they will begin to feel sick of them, and be able to reject them. After that, they can gradually let go of these things in real life. By setting aside their approval of, blind faith in, and adherence to traditional culture, they will be able to accept God's words, and accept into their heart His demands and the truth principles that a person should possess, so that they may supplant traditional culture there. In this way, that person will be able to live out a human likeness, and gain God's approval. In sum, the goal of dissecting the various statements on moral conduct espoused by mankind's traditional culture is to give people clear discernment and knowledge of the essence that lies behind these statements on moral conduct, and how Satan uses them to corrupt, beguile, and control mankind. People will thus be able to discern exactly what the truth is and what positive things are. To be precise, after clearly seeing past these statements about moral conduct to their essence, their true nature, and Satan's trickery, people should be capable of knowing exactly what the truth is. Do not conflate traditional culture and the statements about moral conduct that it instills in people with the truth. These things are not the truth, they cannot replace the truth, and they certainly have nothing to do with the truth. Traditional culture, whatever it may address, and whatever specific statements or requirements it has, only represents Satan's instruction, indoctrination, deception, and brainwashing of mankind. It represents Satan's trickery, and Satan's nature essence. It is completely unrelated to the truth and God's demands. So, regardless of how good your practice is, in terms of moral conduct, or your implementation of it, or your grasp on it, it does not mean that you are practicing the truth, or that you are a person with humanity and sense, and it certainly does not mean that you are able to satisfy God's will. No statement or requirement about moral conduct—no matter what kind of person or behavior it targets—has anything to do with God's demands of man. They have nothing to do with the truth that God requires man to practice, or the principles that man should adhere to. Have you been pondering on this question? Do you see it clearly now? (Yes.)

Without detailed fellowship about and itemized dissection of these various statements of traditional culture, people cannot see that the statements it puts forward are false, deceptive, and invalid. Consequently, in the depths of their hearts, people still view the various statements of traditional culture as part of the creed or rules they should adhere to in how they act and comport themselves. They still treat the behaviors and moral conduct that are regarded as good in traditional culture as the truth and abide by

them as such, even conflating them with the truth. Worse still, people preach and promote them as if they were right, as if they were positive things, and even as if they were the truth; they mislead people, disturb people, and they stop them from coming before God to accept the truth. This is a most real problem that can be seen by all. People often take statements on moral conduct that are perceived as good and positive by man as the truth. They will even quote statements and words from traditional culture to fellowship and preach when they are at gatherings and communing about God's words. This is a very serious problem. This kind of issue or event should not occur in God's house, but it often does—it is a very common problem. This demonstrates another issue: When people do not understand the real essence of traditional culture and statements on moral conduct, they often treat traditional culture's statements about moral conduct as positive things with which to replace or supersede the truth. Is this a common occurrence? (Yes.) For example, statements in traditional culture like, "Be kind to others," "Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance," "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings," "Execution does nothing but make heads roll; be lenient wherever possible," "The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring," and even more popular statements like, "I'd take a bullet for a friend," and "A loyal subject cannot serve two kings, a good woman cannot marry two husbands," have already become creeds by which people comport themselves, and the criteria and standards by which a person's nobility is judged. So, even after hearing much of God's word and the truth, people still use the statements and theories of traditional culture as standards by which to measure others and view things. What is the issue here? This demonstrates a very serious problem, which is that traditional culture occupies a very important place deep in the heart of man. Does it not demonstrate this? (It does.) All the various ideas that Satan has instilled in people have taken deep root in their hearts. They have prevailed and become mainstream in the lives, environments, and societies of all mankind. So, traditional culture not only occupies an important position in the depths of people's hearts, but also profoundly influences and controls the principles and attitudes, and the outlooks and methods, with which they view people and things, comport themselves and act. Even after people accept the conquest of God's words, as well as their exposure, judgment, and chastisement, these ideas of traditional culture still occupy an important place in their spiritual worlds and in the depths of their hearts. This means that they control the direction, goals, principles, attitudes, and perspectives that underlie how they view people and things, how they comport themselves and act. Does this not mean that people have been completely taken captive by Satan? Is this not a fact? (It is.) It is a fact. The way that people live and their goals in life, the views and attitudes with which they approach all things are entirely based on traditional culture, which is encouraged and instilled in them by Satan. Traditional culture occupies the dominant position in people's lives. It may be said that after coming before God and hearing His words, and

even after accepting some correct statements and views from Him, various thoughts from traditional culture still occupy a dominant, important place in their spiritual worlds and in the depths of their hearts. Because of these thoughts, people cannot help but view God and His words and work using the methods, views, and attitudes of traditional culture. They will even judge, analyze, and study God's words, work, identity, and essence based on them. Is that not the case? (It is.) It is an uncontestable fact. Even when people have been conquered by God's words and work, by His actions, essence, power and wisdom, traditional culture still occupies an important position in the depths of their hearts, so much so that nothing can supplant it. Naturally, that is also true of God's words and the truth. Even when people have been conquered by God, His words and the truth cannot displace traditional culture in their hearts. This is very sad and frightening. People cling to traditional culture while following God, while listening to His words, while accepting the truth and various ideas from Him. On the surface, these people appear to be following God, but the various ideas, views, and perspectives that traditional culture and Satan have instilled in them hold an unshakable and irreplaceable position in their hearts. Although people may eat and drink of God's words every day and pray-read and contemplate them often, the basic views, principles, and methods underlying how they view people and things, as well as how they comport themselves and act, are still based on traditional culture. Therefore, traditional culture affects people by subjecting them to its manipulation, orchestrations, and control in their day-to-day lives. It is as unshakable and inescapable as their own shadows. Why is this? Because people cannot uncover, dissect, or expose, from the depths of their hearts, the various ideas and views that traditional culture and Satan have instilled in them; they cannot recognize, see through, rebel against, or abandon these things; they cannot view people and things, comport themselves, or act in the way God tells them to, or in the way He teaches and instructs. What sort of predicament do most people still live in because of this? One in which they have a desire deep in their hearts to view people and things, to comport themselves and act based on God's words, to not violate God's will or go against the truth, yet, defenselessly and involuntarily, they continue to interact with people, conduct themselves, and handle matters according to the methods Satan teaches. At heart, people long for the truth and wish to possess a tremendous desire for God, to view people and things, to comport themselves and act according to God's words, and to not violate the truth principles, yet things always end up contrary to their wishes. Even after doubling down on their efforts, the result they get is still not what they desire. No matter how people struggle, no matter how much effort they put in, no matter how much they resolve and desire to attain a love for positive things, in the end, the truth they are able to practice and the criteria of the truth they are able to hold to in real life are few and far between. This is what distresses people most, deep in their hearts. What is the reason for this? One reason is none other than that the various ideas and views that traditional culture teaches people still dominate their hearts, and control their words,

deeds, ideas, as well as the methods and ways in which they comport themselves and act. Thus, people must undergo a process in order to recognize traditional culture, to dissect and expose it, to discern and see through it, and ultimately, to abandon it forever. It is very important to do this, not something optional. This is because traditional culture already dominates the depths of people's hearts—it even dominates their whole selves. This means that in their lives, people cannot stop themselves from violating the truth in how they conduct themselves, and how they handle matters, and they cannot help but be controlled and influenced by traditional culture, as they have been until today.

If one wishes to completely accept the truth in their belief in God, and to thoroughly practice and gain it, they must begin by deeply and specifically excavating, uncovering, and knowing the various ideas and views of traditional culture. Obviously, these ideas of traditional culture occupy an important place in the heart of every person, yet different people cling to different aspects of its indoctrination; each person focuses on a different part of it. Some people especially advocate the statement: "I'd take a bullet for a friend." They are very loyal to their friends, and loyalty is more important to them than anything else. Loyalty is their life. From the day they are born, they live for loyalty. Some people really value kindness. If they receive a kindness from someone, no matter if it is great or small, they take it to heart, and repaying it becomes the most important thing in their lives—it becomes their mission in life. Some people value making a good impression on others; they focus on becoming an honorable, noble, decent kind of person, and making others respect and think highly of them. They want others to speak well of them, they want to have a good reputation, they want to be praised, they want to receive a big thumbs-up from everyone. Each person has a different focus in their pursuit of the various statements of traditional culture and moral conduct. Some value fame and wealth, others value integrity, some value purity, others value repaying kindnesses. Some people value loyalty, others benevolence, and some value propriety—they are respectful and well-mannered to everyone, they always give way and precedence to others—and so on. Everybody has a different focus. So, if you wish to understand how traditional culture has affected you and controls you, if you wish to know how much weight it carries in the depths of your heart, you must analyze what kind of person you are, and what you value. Do you care about "propriety" or "benevolence"? Do you value "trustworthiness" or "forbearance"? Look from different perspectives and at your actual behavior in order to dissect which aspect of traditional culture has had the most profound influence on you, and why you are pursuing traditional culture. Whatever essence of traditional culture you pursue, that is the kind of person you are. Whatever kind of person you are, that is what dominates your life—and whatever dominates your life, that is the thing that you need to recognize, dissect, see through, rebel against, and abandon. After you have uncovered and gained an understanding of it, you can gradually cut yourself off from traditional culture, truly abandon it, and finally, completely break away from it and uproot it from the depths of your heart. Then you will be able to forsake it thoroughly

and eradicate it. Once you have done this, traditional culture will no longer play the most important role in your life; instead, God's words and the truth will slowly take on a leading role in the depths of your heart and become your life. God's words and the truth will slowly occupy an important place there, and God's words and God will sit on the throne in your heart and reign as your King. They will occupy every part of you. Will the distress of living not then feel smaller? Will your life not become less and less distressing? (It will.) Will it not be easier for you to view people and things, to comport yourselves and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion? (Yes.) It will be much easier. I can see that you're all very busy with your duties every day. Besides reading God's words, you must also fellowship the truth every day, read, listen, memorize, and write. You spend a lot of time and energy, you pay a great price, you suffer greatly, and perhaps you understand a lot of doctrine. However, when it comes to performing your duty, it's too bad that you cannot practice the truth and cannot grasp the principles. You have listened to and fellowshiped on various aspects of the truth so many times, but when something befalls you, you do not know how to experience, practice, or utilize God's words. You do not know how to practice the truth; you still have to seek and discuss it with others. Why does it take so long for God's words to take root in a person's heart? Why is it so difficult to understand the truth and act according to the principles through His words? One cannot rule out as a principal cause of this the huge influence that traditional culture exerts on people. It has occupied an important position in people's hearts for a very long time, and it controls people's thoughts and minds. Traditional culture gives free rein to man's corrupt dispositions; they feel at ease revealing them, like a butcher to a knife, like a fish to water. Is this not the case? (It is.) Traditional culture is closely linked to man's corrupt dispositions. They work together and reinforce one another. When corrupt dispositions meet traditional culture, like fish to water, they are able to show off their full capabilities. Corrupt dispositions love and need traditional culture. So, under the millennia of conditioning of traditional culture, man has been corrupted ever more deeply by Satan, and man's corrupt dispositions have become more and more severe and inflated. Under its guise and within its packaging, these dispositions not only become ever more severe, but also more and more disguised. Dispositions such as arrogance, deceitfulness, wickedness, intransigence, and being fed up with the truth grow more and more deeply concealed and masked—they are revealed in increasingly cunning ways, making it hard for people to spot them. So, under the conditioning, instruction, beguilement, and control of traditional culture, what has the world of mankind gradually become? It has become a world of demons. People do not live like humans; they have no human likeness or humanity. And yet, people who cling to traditional culture, who have long been indoctrinated, permeated, and possessed by it, have become increasingly convinced of their own greatness, nobility, transcendence. They are incredibly egotistical; none of them thinks that they are insignificant, that they are worthless, that they are just a tiny created being. None of them is willing to be a

normal person; they all want to be famous, to be great, to be sages. Under the conditioning of traditional culture, not only do people want to surpass themselves—they want to surpass the whole world and all of humanity. You've heard that song that unbelievers sing, "I want to fly higher, fly higher," and the one that goes, "I am just a little bird, I want to fly, but I can't fly high." Are these words not devoid of reason, and bereft of all humanity and sense? Are they not the savage howling of Satan? (They are.) They are the sound of Satan's mad howling. So, no matter how one looks at it, the poison of traditional culture has long since seeped into the heart of man, and it is not something that can be eliminated overnight. It is not as easy as overcoming a personal defect or bad habit—you must uncover your thoughts, views, and corrupt disposition, and eradicate traditional culture's poisonous root from your life in accordance with the truth. Then, you need to view people and things, to comport yourself and act according to God's words and requirements, and to make the truth of His words your life. Only by doing this will you truly be walking the right path in following God and believing in Him.

We have already done much to dissect and expose the topic of traditional culture, and we have fellowshiped about it at length. Regardless of how much we fellowshiped on it, or how long we fellowshiped, the goal remains to resolve the various difficulties that arise while people pursue the truth, or the various difficulties and problems that exist in their life entry. The aim is to remove all the barriers, obstructions and difficulties—among which the various statements, ideas and views of traditional culture are the predominant ones—that stand in the way of people pursuing the truth. As of today, we have essentially completed our fellowship on the topic of traditional culture. Have we finished fellowshiping on topics that relate to the pursuit of the truth, then? (No.) Was our fellowship and dissection of traditional culture related to the pursuit of the truth? (It was.) It was related to the pursuit of the truth. Traditional culture is the biggest difficulty people face on the path to pursuing the truth. Now that we are done fellowshiping about traditional culture—the biggest obstacle to man's pursuit of the truth—today we will fellowship on the question, "Why must man pursue the truth?" Why must man pursue the truth? Have we fellowshiped on this question before? Why must we fellowship on it? Is it an important question? (It is.) Why is it important? Share your thoughts. (My understanding is that the pursuit of the truth relates directly to man's salvation. Because we all have severely corrupt dispositions, and have been indoctrinated and deeply poisoned by traditional culture from a young age, we need to pursue the truth, or we won't be able to discern negative things that come from Satan. We also won't be able to practice the truth, and we won't know how to act positively and in line with God's will. We will have no choice but to act and comport ourselves according to our corrupt dispositions. If this is how one believes in God, in the end, they will still be a living Satan, not someone whom God would save. Therefore, pursuing the truth is very important. Furthermore, our corrupt dispositions can only be cleansed through the pursuit of the truth; it is also the only way to correct our mistaken ideas about how we should view

people and things, and comport ourselves and act. It's only after a person has understood and gained the truth that they can do their duty competently and become a person who submits to God. Otherwise, they will involuntarily follow their corrupt dispositions to do things in their duties that disrupt and disturb the church's work.) You made two points. What was My question? (Why must man pursue the truth?) Is that a simple question? It sounds like a simple, cause-and-effect question. Do you all share the view that pursuing the truth relates in one way to a person's salvation, and in another to not creating disruptions or disturbances? (Yes.) When you put it like that, the question does sound quite simple. Is it really that simple? Share your thoughts. (I think that the question of "Why must man pursue the truth?" is simpler to answer from a theoretical perspective, but when it involves actually practicing and entering into reality, it is not simple.) "Why must man pursue the truth?"—how many questions does this encompass? It encompasses questions like what the significance is of pursuing the truth, what the reasons for it are—what else? (The importance of pursuing the truth.) That is correct: It also encompasses the importance of pursuing the truth; it includes these questions. Taking these things into account, is the question, "Why must man pursue the truth?" simple? (It is not.) Ponder the question "Why must man pursue the truth?" again, in light of those things. First look back—what does it mean to pursue the truth? How is it to be defined? (To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion.) Is that right? You are missing the word "wholly." Read it again. ("To view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion.") The question "Why must man pursue the truth?" relates to people's views on people and things, and to their comportment and actions. It is about how people should view things and people, how they should comport themselves and act; and why they should view things and people, as well as comport themselves and act, wholly according to God's words and with the truth as their criterion. Why they should pursue this way of doing things—is this not the root of this question? Is this not the fundamental question? (It is.) You have now understood the fundamental thrust of the question. Let us go back to the question itself, "Why must man pursue the truth?" This question is not simple. It encompasses the significance and value of pursuing the truth, and there's something else to it that is of the greatest importance: Based on mankind's essence and instincts, they need the truth as their life, and so, they must pursue it. Naturally, this also relates to the future and survival of mankind. Simply put, the pursuit of the truth relates to people's salvation and to changing their corrupt dispositions. Naturally, it also relates to the different things people live out, their outpourings, and their behaviors in their day-to-day lives. If people do not pursue the truth, it can accurately be said that their chances of being saved are zero. If people do not pursue the truth, there is a one hundred percent chance that they are resisting, betraying, and rejecting God. They may resist and betray God at any time and any place, and naturally they may disturb the work of the church and God's house, or do

something that makes a disturbance or disruption at any time and any place, too. These are some of the simplest, most basic reasons people must pursue the truth that can be seen and understood in their daily lives. But today, we are only going to fellowship on some crucial parts of the question, “Why must man pursue the truth?” We have already fellowshiped on the most fundamental aspects of this question, which people have understood and recognized as a matter of doctrine, so today we are not going to fellowship about those basic, simple questions. It will suffice for us to fellowship on several main elements. Why are we fellowshiping on the topic of pursuing the truth? Obviously, there are some more important questions contained within it, questions that people cannot see through to, and do not know of, and do not comprehend, but which require their comprehension and understanding.

Why must man pursue the truth? We will not start with the basic aspects of this that people already grasp and understand, nor from the doctrine that people already know. So, where will we start? We must start at the root of this question, with God’s management plan and God’s will. What does starting at the root of the question mean? It means that we will start with God’s management plan, and God’s creation of mankind. Ever since there were people, ever since a living being—created mankind—received the breath of God, God has planned to gain a group from among their ranks. This group will be able to comprehend, understand, and abide by His words. They will be able to act as stewards for all things, for the myriad of God’s creation, its plants, animals, forests, oceans, rivers, lakes, mountains, creeks, plains, and so forth, in accordance with His words. After God made this plan, He began placing His hopes upon mankind accordingly. He hopes that one day people will be able to act as stewards for this mankind, for all of the things that exist in the world, and the different creatures that live among them, and that they can do so in an orderly way, according to the methods, rules, and laws He has laid out. Though God has already formed this plan and these expectations, His final goal will take a very long time to achieve. It is not something that can be accomplished in ten or twenty years, or in a hundred or two hundred years, and certainly not in one or two thousand years. It will take six thousand years. During this process, mankind needs to experience different periods, ages, eras, and different stages of God’s work. They must experience the stars moving in the skies, the seas running dry and the rocks crumbling, they need to experience dramatic change. From the first and fewest humans, mankind has experienced great highs and lows, and the vicissitudes and shifts of this world, after which people have gradually grown in number and gradually gained experience, and mankind’s agriculture, economy, and ways of living and surviving have gradually changed and given rise to new methods. Only when a certain period and a certain age have been reached can people achieve the level at which God will judge them and chastise them and conquer them, and at which God will express to them the truth, His words, and His will. To reach this level, mankind has experienced great upheaval, as have all of the things in this world. Naturally, dramatic change has

also taken place in the skies and the cosmos. This series of changes has occurred and appeared gradually alongside God's management. It has taken a long time for people to reach the point where they come before God and accept His conquest, judgment, and chastisement, and the provision of His words. But that is fine; God can wait, because that is God's plan, and that is His wish. God must wait a long time on account of His plan and His wish. He has so far been waiting for what has truly been a very, very long time.

After mankind went through their initial stage of ignorance, delusion, and confusion, God led them into the Age of Law. Though mankind had entered a new age, an age in God's management plan, though people no longer lived unrestrained, undisciplined lives like flocks of sheep, though they had entered an environment for their lives that had the guidance, instruction, and prescription of the law, people only knew a few simple things that they had been taught, told, or informed of by the law, or that were already known within the ambit of human life: What theft is, for example, or what adultery is, what murder is, how people will be held accountable for murder, how to interact with one's neighbors, how people will be held accountable for doing this or that. Mankind had come from their initial circumstances, in which they had known nothing and understood nothing, to learning some simple, essential laws of human conduct that God informed them of. After God had proclaimed these laws, the people living under the law knew to follow the rules and abide by the law, and in their minds and inner worlds, the law acted as a restraint and a guide for their conduct, and mankind had an initial likeness of man. These people understood that they should follow some rules and abide by some laws. Regardless of how well they followed them and how strictly they abided by them, in any case, these people had more human likeness than those who came before the law. In terms of their behavior and their lives, they acted and lived to certain standards, and with certain restraints. They were no longer as lost and ignorant as they once were, and no longer so bereft of goals in life. God's laws, and all the statements that God had declared to them, put down roots in their hearts and occupied a certain position there. Mankind was no longer at a loss for what to do; they no longer lived without goals, direction, or restraint. Despite this, they were still far short of the people of God's plans and God's wishes. They were still far from being capable of acting as masters of all things. God still needed to wait and be patient. Though people living under the law knew to worship God, they did so as a mere matter of form. The position and image of God in the depths of their hearts differed completely from God's true identity and essence. So, they were still not the created humans whom God wanted, and they were still not the people whom God envisioned, who were capable of acting as stewards for all things. In the depths of their hearts, God's essence, identity, and status were merely those of mankind's Ruler, and people were just the subjects or beneficiaries of that Ruler, nothing more. So, God still needed to lead these people, who lived under the law and only knew the law, to keep moving forward. These people did not understand anything except the law; they did not know how to act as stewards for all things; they did not know who God was; and they

did not know the right way to live. They did not know how to comport themselves and live according to God's demands, nor did they know how to live more significantly than they did, or what people should pursue in their lives, and so on. People living under the law were completely ignorant of these things. Aside from the law, these people knew nothing about God's requirements, about the truth, or about God's words. Because this was so, God had to keep tolerating mankind as they existed under the law. These people were a big step beyond those who had come before them—they at least understood what sin was, and that they should abide by and follow the law, and live under the framework of the law—but they still fell far short of God's requirements. Nevertheless, God was still eagerly hoping and waiting.

With the development of the ages, with the development of mankind, with the operations of all things, and with the arrangements of God's hands and His sovereignty, guidance, and leadership, mankind, all things, and the very universe are marching ever forward. Mankind under the law, after being restrained by the law for thousands of years, was no longer able to uphold the law, and followed God's work into the next age, which God initiated—the Age of Grace. At the arrival of the Age of Grace, God commenced His work premised on the fact that He had sent prophets to foretell it. This phase of work was not as tender or desired as man imagined it to be in their notions, nor did it feel as good as they'd thought; instead, from the outside, everything seemed to be going contrary to prophecy. Out of these conditions emerged a fact that man never would have guessed at: the fact of the flesh into which God had incarnated—the Lord Jesus—being nailed to the cross. All this was beyond what man foresaw. From the outside, all this seemed to be a cruel, bloody occurrence, horrible to behold, yet it was the inception of God's putting an end to the Age of Law and initiating a new age. This new age is the Age of Grace that all of you now know. The Age of Grace seemed to have come in defiance of God's prophecies in the Age of Law. Certainly, it also came in the form of God's incarnate flesh being nailed to the cross. All these events happened so suddenly and so naturally, in conditions that were ripe for them. Such were the means God used to end the old age and usher in a new one—to bring about a new one. Though all that happened at the very beginning of this age was so cruel and bloody, and unimaginable, and even sudden in its arrival, and nothing was as wonderful or tender as man had imagined—though the opening scene of the Age of Grace was horrible to behold and heart-wrenching, what was the one thing in it worth celebrating? The end of the Age of Law meant that God no longer had to abide mankind's various behaviors under the law; it meant that mankind had taken a great stride forward, in line with God's work and His plan, into a new age. Of course, it also meant that the days of God's waiting had been shortened. Mankind entered a new age, a new era, which meant that God's work had taken a great step forward, and that His desire would gradually come to be realized as His work moved forward. The arrival of the Age of Grace wasn't so lovely at its beginning, but as God saw it, the mankind that was soon to arise, which was the mankind He

wanted, was coming ever closer to His requirements and goals. This was a delightful and laudable thing, something worth celebrating. Though mankind nailed God to the cross, which was to man a sorrowful thing to see, the very moment at which Christ was nailed to the cross meant that God's next age—the Age of Grace—had come, and, of course, that God's work in that age was on the verge of its commencement. More than that, it meant that the great work of that instance of God's incarnation had been accomplished. God would face the people of the world as a victor, with a new name and image, and the contents of His new work would be opened and disclosed to mankind. And meanwhile, for mankind's part, they would no longer be continuously vexed by frequent violations of the law, nor would they be punished any longer by the law for having violated it. The arrival of the Age of Grace allowed mankind to emerge from God's previous work and enter a brand-new work environment, with new steps for the work and a new method of work. It allowed mankind a new entry and a new life, and of course, it allowed a relationship to arise between God and man that was one step closer. Because of God's incarnation, man could come face to face with God. Man heard God's actual, real voice and words; man saw the manner of His work, as well as His disposition and so on. Man heard this with their own ears and saw it with their own eyes, in every regard; they vividly experienced that God had truly and indeed come among men, that God truly and indeed was face to face with man, that God truly and indeed had come to live among mankind. Though the duration of God's work in that incarnation wasn't long, it gave mankind of the time a firm and solid experience of what it truly feels like for man to live together with God. And though those who experienced such things didn't do so for a long time, God spoke many words in that instance of His incarnation, and those words were quite specific. He did much work, too, and had many people who followed Him. Mankind definitively ended their life under the law of the old age and came to a wholly new age: the Age of Grace.

Having entered the new age, mankind no longer lived under the restraints of the law, but under new requirements and new words of God. Because of God's new words and new requirements, mankind developed a new life whose form was different, a life of belief in God whose form and content were different. This life came one step closer than the previous life under the law to meeting the standards of God's requirements of man. God laid out new commandments for mankind, and He laid out new behavioral standards for mankind that were more accurate and more tuned toward mankind as they were then, as well as criteria and principles for man's views on people and things, and for their comportment and actions. The words He spoke then weren't as specific as the ones now, nor was there such a great volume of them as there is now, yet to man then, who had just come out from beneath the law, those words and requirements were enough. Given the stature of people of the time and what they were equipped with, these were the only things they could achieve and attain. For example, God told people to be humble, to be patient, to be tolerant, to take up the cross, and so on; these were all more

specific requirements God made of man in the wake of the law, ones that touched on how humanity is to be lived out. Beyond that, man, who had lived beneath the law, enjoyed a plentiful and steady-flowing stream of grace, blessings, and other such things from God because of the arrival of the Age of Grace. Mankind in that age was living in a veritable bed of roses. Everyone was happy, and everyone was an apple of God's eye, a babe in His palm. They had to keep the commandments, and to have a few good behaviors besides, ones that lined up with man's notions and imaginings, but for mankind, the enjoyment of God's grace was there in greater measure. People were healed of diseases caused by demon-possession, for instance, and the foul demons and evil spirits in them were driven out. When people were in trouble or need, God would make exceptions for them and display signs and wonders, so that they would be healed of their various maladies, and their flesh would be sated, and they would be fed and clothed. There was so much grace and so many blessings for man to enjoy in that age. Apart from simply adhering to the commandments, mankind was, at the very most, to be patient, tolerant, loving, and so on. Man had no inkling of anything more that involved the truth or God's requirements of man. Because man was wholly intent on enjoying grace and God's blessings, and because of the Lord Jesus' promise of the time to man, man began habitually to enjoy God's grace, with no end in sight. Mankind thought that if they believed in God, they should enjoy God's grace, that that was their rightful share. They didn't know, though, to worship the Lord of creation, or to assume the status of a created being, and to perform the duty of a created being, and to be a good created being. Nor did they know how to submit to God, or how to be loyal to Him, or how to accept His words and use them as the basis for their views on people and things, and their comportment and actions. Man was quite ignorant of any such things. And in addition to enjoying God's grace as a matter of course, man wanted to enter heaven after death, as a matter of course, and there enjoy good blessings together with the Lord. What's more, the mankind that lived in the Age of Grace, which lived amid grace and blessings, mistakenly believed that God is just a merciful, loving God, that His essence is mercy and lovingkindness, and nothing else. To them, mercy and lovingkindness were emblematic of God's identity, status, and essence; what the truth, the way, and the life meant to them was God's grace and blessings, or perhaps a way of simply taking up the cross and walking the path of the cross. This was all there was in the Age of Grace to people's knowledge of God and orientation toward Him, as well as their orientation toward and knowledge of mankind and people themselves. So, to turn to causes and get to the root: What was it, exactly, that led to these circumstances? No one is to blame. You can't blame God for not working or not speaking more concretely or more thoroughly, and you can't push the responsibility off onto man, either. Why? Man is created mankind, a created being. They emerged from the law and came to the Age of Grace. However many years of experience man may have had of God's work as it progresses, that which God bestowed on man, that which He did, was what man could

obtain and what they could know. But outside of that, with what hadn't been done by God, what He hadn't said, and what He hadn't revealed, mankind had no ability to understand or know that. But to look at the objective circumstances and the bigger picture, when mankind, which had progressed for thousands of years, had come to the Age of Grace, their understanding could only go as far as that, and God could only do such work as He was doing. This is because what mankind, which had emerged from the Age of Law, needed was not to be chastised or judged, nor to be conquered, much less to be made perfect. There was only one thing mankind needed at that time. What was it? A sin offering, the precious blood of God. The precious blood of God—that sin offering was the only thing mankind needed as they emerged from the Age of Law. So, in that era, because of mankind's needs and actual circumstances, the work God was then to do was to offer up the precious blood of His own incarnation as a sin offering. That was the only way to redeem the mankind of the Age of Law. With His precious blood as the price and as the sin offering, God expunged mankind's sin. And it was not until their sin was expunged that man had the standing to come sinless before God, and accept His grace and His continued guidance. God's precious blood was offered to mankind, and as it was offered up for mankind, mankind could be redeemed. What could mankind, which had just been redeemed, have understood? What did mankind, which had just been redeemed, need? Mankind would not have possessed the ability to accept it if they had immediately been conquered, judged, and chastised. They did not have such a capacity for acceptance, nor were their conditions such that they could have understood all this. So, in addition to God's sin offering, as well as His grace, blessings, tolerance, patience, mercy, and lovingkindness, mankind, as they were at that time, could accept no more than a few simple requirements that God made of man's behavior. Those, and no more. And as for all the truths that touch more deeply on man's salvation—which wrong ideas and views mankind has; what corrupt dispositions they have; what essences of rebelliousness against God they have; what the essence is of the traditional culture that mankind upholds, as we have recently fellowshiped about; how Satan corrupts mankind; and so on—mankind at the time couldn't have understood anything at all. In such circumstances as those, God could only admonish and make requirements of mankind in the simplest ways, in the most straightforward ways, with the most rudimentary requirements for comportment. Therefore, mankind in the Age of Grace could enjoy only grace and enjoy without limit the precious blood of God as a sin offering. In the Age of Grace, however, the greatest thing had already been accomplished. And what was that? It was that mankind, which God was to save, had had their sin forgiven by the precious blood of God. This is a thing worthy of celebration; it was the greatest thing God did in the Age of Grace. Though man's sin was forgiven, and man would no longer come before God in the likeness of sinful flesh or as a sinner, having instead been forgiven of their sins by the sin offering and now qualified to come before God, man's relationship with God had not yet reached that of a created being with

the Creator. It was not yet that of created mankind with the Creator. Mankind under grace was still far, far away from the role God requires of them, that of being the master and steward of all things. So, God had to wait; He had to be patient. What did it mean, for God to wait? It meant that mankind then was to continue living amid God's grace, amid God's various modes of work of the Age of Grace. God wants to save much more than a handful of mankind, or one race; His salvation is far from limited to a single race or those within a single denomination. So, the Age of Grace was to be undergone for thousands of years, just as the Age of Law had been. Mankind needed to keep living in the new age led by God, year after year, generation after generation. How many eras man must undergo in this way—how many shifts in the stars, how many seas going dry and rocks wasting away, how many oceans giving way to fertile land, and they must undergo the different changes of mankind in various periods, and different changes taking place in the myriad things of the earth. And as they experienced all this, God's words, His work, and the fact of the Lord Jesus' redemption of mankind in the Age of Grace spread to the ends of the earth, throughout the streets and alleys, into every corner, until they were known to every household. And that is when that age—the Age of Grace, which came after the Age of Law—was meant to come to a close. The work God did in this period was not merely to wait silently; as He waited, He did work on the mankind of the Age of Grace in different ways. He continued His grace-based work, bestowing grace and blessings on the mankind of this age, so that His actions, His work, His speech, and the facts He worked and His will in the Age of Grace would reach the ears of every person whom He would choose. He enabled every person whom He would choose to be availed of His sin offering, so that they would no longer come before Him in the likeness of sinful flesh, as sinners. And though man's relationship with God was no longer that of never having seen Him, as in the Age of Law, but a step beyond that, as a relationship between believers and the Lord, between Christians and Christ, still, such a relationship is not the relationship that God ultimately wants between mankind and God, between created beings and the Creator. Their relationship then was clearly still quite far from the relationship between created beings and the Lord of creation, but compared to the relationship between mankind and God in the Age of Law, it represents a great advancement. This was cause for joy and celebration. But be that as it may, God still needed to lead mankind; He needed to lead mankind, whose heart's deep places were full of notions about God, and imaginings, and requests, and demands, and rebelliousness and resistance, forward. Why? Because such a mankind may have known about enjoying God's grace, and they may have known that God is merciful and loving, but beyond that, they did not know the first thing about God's true identity, status, and essence. Because such a mankind has undergone Satan's corruption, though they enjoyed God's grace, their essence and the various notions and thoughts in the pit of their heart remained counter to God and in opposition to Him. Man didn't know how to submit to God or how to perform the duty of a created being, much less how to be a

satisfactory created being. Even less than that, of course, was there anyone who knows how to worship the Lord of creation. Were the myriad things of the world handed over to corrupt mankind, corrupted as they were to such a degree, it would be the same as handing them over to Satan. The consequences would have been entirely the same, with nothing to distinguish them. So, God still needed to continue His work, to continue leading mankind into the next stage of work that He would do. That stage was something God awaited for a long time, something He looked forward to for a long time, and something He paid for with His prior patience for a long time.

Now, at last, that mankind has enjoyed God's sufficient and abundant grace, this world and this mankind, as seen from any angle, have come to a level at which God will do His true work of saving mankind. They have come to the time when God will conquer and chastise and judge mankind, when He will express many truths to perfect mankind, and to gain a group from mankind who can be stewards of all things among those things. This time having come, God no longer needs to be patient, nor to continue leading mankind of the Age of Grace to live in grace. No longer does He need to keep providing for mankind of the Age of Grace, or shepherding them, or watching over them, or preserving them; no longer does He need tirelessly and unconditionally to provision mankind with grace and blessings; no longer does He need to be unconditionally patient with mankind in grace, as they greedily and shamelessly solicit His grace without worshiping Him at all. What God will do instead of this is express His will, His disposition, the true voice of His heart, and His essence. During this time, God, while providing mankind with the manifold truths and words they need, is also pouring forth and expressing His true disposition—a righteous disposition. And in expressing His righteous disposition, it is not as though He vacantly offers a few phrases of judgment and condemnation and is done with it; instead, He uses facts to expose mankind's corruption, their essence, and their satanic hideousness. He exposes mankind's rebelliousness, resistance, and rejection against Him, as well as their various notions about Him and betrayals of Him. In this period, more of what He expresses is beyond the mercy and lovingkindness He extends to mankind: It is the hatred, revulsion, aversion, and condemnation He has for mankind. This abrupt, one-hundred-and-eighty-degree turn or change in God's disposition and station catches mankind unprepared and makes them incapable of acceptance. God expresses His disposition and His words with all the sudden force of a lightning bolt. Of course, He also provides mankind with all they need with immense patience and tolerance. In different ways and from different angles, God speaks and expresses His disposition to mankind in ways that are the most fitting, proper, concrete, and direct ones with which to treat created beings, from the perspective of His stance as the Creator. Such are the ways, of speech and work alike, for which God has been longing in wait for six thousand years. Six thousand years of longing; six thousand years of waiting—these speak to God's six thousand years of patience, containing His six thousand years of anticipation. Mankind is still the mankind created

by God, but having come through six thousand years of ceaseless, star-shuffling, sea-swallowing change, they are no longer the mankind as created by God at the beginning, with that same essence. Therefore, as God begins to work on this day, the mankind He now sees, though what He expected, is also abhorred by Him, and is, of course, too tragic for God to behold. I spoke of three things here; do you remember them? Such a mankind, though they are what God expected, are also abhorred by Him. What was the other thing? (They are too tragic for God to behold.) They are also too tragic for God to behold. These three things are all there in man, at the same time. What was it that God expected? That such a mankind, after having experienced the law and then redemption, would walk at last unto today, on a foundation of understanding some fundamental laws and commandments that man should uphold, and no longer be a simple mankind with a blank at the pit of their heart, as Adam and Eve were. Instead, they would have a measure of new things in their heart. Those things are what God expected that mankind would possess. Yet at once, mankind is a mankind that God abhors, as well. So, what, then, is it that God abhors? Do you not all know? (Man's rebelliousness and resistance.) Mankind is filled with Satan's corrupt disposition, living a ghastly life, neither quite as man nor as demon. Mankind is no longer merely so simple as to be unable to withstand the serpent's enticement. Though mankind has their own thoughts and views, their own definite opinions, and their own ways of regarding the myriad of events and things, there is nothing at all of what God wants in mankind's views on people and things, or in their comportment and actions. Mankind can think and hold views, and they have their grounds, means, and attitudes for their actions, but all this of which they are possessed has its origins in Satan's corruption. It is all based on Satan's views and philosophies. When man comes before God, there is no trace of submission in their heart toward God, nor any sincerity. Man is saturated with Satan's toxins and filled with its education and thoughts, and its corrupt disposition. What does this indicate? God must speak a lot of words and do a great deal of work for man in order to change their mode of existence and attitude toward God—and more specifically, of course, in order to change their ways and criteria for their views on people and things, and their comportment and actions. Before all this has taken effect, mankind is an object of abhorrence in God's eyes. What is it that God needs when He saves an object of His abhorrence? Is there joy in His heart? Is there happiness? Is there solace? (No.) There is no solace at all, nor any happiness. His heart is filled with loathing. The only thing God will do in such circumstances, apart from speaking, speaking tirelessly, is exercise patience. This is the second element of what God feels toward such a mankind as is seen through His eyes—abhorrence. The third element is that they are too tragic to behold. In light of God's original intent in creating mankind, God's relationship with man is that of parent and child, of family. This dimension of the relationship may not be like mankind's blood relations, but to God, it exceeds mankind's fleshly blood relations. The mankind that God initially created is entirely different in likeness from the mankind He sees in the last days. In the

beginning, man was of a simple and juvenile likeness, and though they were ignorant, their heart was pure and clean. One could see in their eyes the clarity and transparency deep in their heart. They didn't have the assorted corrupt dispositions that man has now; they had no intransigence, arrogance, wickedness, or deceit, and they certainly didn't have the disposition of being sick of the truth. From man's speech and acts, from their eyes, from their face, one could see that that mankind was the one God created in the beginning and the one He favored. But in the end, as God again regards mankind, man's heart is no longer so clear in its depths, and their eyes are no longer so clear. Man's heart is filled with Satan's corrupt disposition, and when they meet with God, their face, speech, and acts are detestable to Him. However, there is a fact none can deny, and it is because of this fact that God says such a mankind is too tragic to behold in His eyes. What fact is that? It is this, which none can deny: God created this mankind, which has come once more before Him, with His own hand, but they are no longer the mankind they were at the beginning. From man's eyes to their thoughts, and down to the pit of their heart, they are filled with resistance and betrayal against God; from man's eyes to their thoughts, and down to the pit of their heart, nothing less than Satan's disposition pours forth from them. Man's satanic dispositions of intransigence, arrogance, deceit, wickedness, and being sick of the truth pour forth, undisguisedly and naturally, from their gaze and their expressions alike. Even when faced with God's words or face to face with God, man's corrupt, satanic disposition, and their essence, which is corrupted by Satan, pour forth in this way, undisguised. There's only one phrase that can capture what the emergence of this fact makes God feel, and that is "too tragic to behold." The mankind that has come unto today and unto this era has reached the level of God's requirements for the third and final stage of His work, that of the salvation of mankind, as much in terms of man's greater environment as in terms of each particular aspect of the situations and conditions in which people find themselves—yet even as God is full of anticipation for this mankind, He is full of hatred for them, too. God, of course, still feels they are too tragic to behold as He sees instance after instance of mankind's corruption. Yet what is worthy of celebration is that God no longer needs to engage in pointless patience and pointless waiting on man's behalf. What He needs to do is the work for which He has waited for six thousand years, that He has anticipated for six thousand years, and that He has looked forward to for six thousand years: that of expressing His words, His disposition, and every truth. Of course, this also means that among this mankind that God has chosen, there will arise the group of people that God has long awaited, those who will be the stewards of all things and become the masters of all things. To look at the situation as a whole, everything has strayed so far from what was expected; everything has been so painful and sad. But what most merits God's happiness is that due to the passage of time and the different age, the days of mankind's subjection to Satan's corruption are already through. Mankind has been through the baptism of the law and God's redemption; finally, they have come to the final step of the work God will

do: the stage in which mankind is saved as the end result of their acceptance of God's chastisement and judgment and of His conquest. To mankind, this is without a doubt great news, and to God, it is certainly a thing that has been a long time coming. This, as seen from any angle, is the advent of all mankind's greatest era. As seen from any angle, be it that of mankind's corruption, or the trends of the world, or social structures, or mankind's politics, or the resources of the whole world, or that of the current disasters, mankind's outcome is near—this mankind has come to the end of the line. Yet this is the most climactic time in God's work, the time that most merits man's remembrance and celebration, and of course, it is also the advent of the most important and critical time, the time in which mankind's fate is decided, in the six thousand years of God's work on His management plan. Therefore, whatever has happened to mankind, and however long God has waited and exercised patience, it has all been worth it.

Let us return to the topic we set out to discuss, "Why Man Must Pursue the Truth." God's management plan is split into three stages of work among mankind. He has already finished the prior two stages. To look at those stages up until the present, whether it be the law or the commandments, their utility for man was nothing more than having them uphold the law, the commandments, God's name, the faith in the recesses of their heart, a few good behaviors, and a few good tenets. Man fundamentally fails to live up to the standard of God's requirement, that of being the steward of all things and becoming the master of all things. Is that not so? They fundamentally fail to live up to that. If man, who has been through the law and the Age of Grace, were made to do what God requires them to do, they would only be able to engage with all things by means of the law or of the grace and blessings bestowed on them in the Age of Grace. This falls far short of God's requirement that man should be the steward of all things, and mankind falls far short of accomplishing the things God requires them to do and the responsibility and duty He requires them to fulfill. Man just cannot meet or live up to the standard of God's requirement that they should be the masters of all things and the masters of the next age. Therefore, in the final stage of His work, God expresses to man and tells them all the truths mankind needs and the principles of practice they need, in all their aspects, so that man may know what the standards of God's requirements are, how they should engage with all things, how they should regard all things, how they should be stewards of all things, what the mode of their existence should be, and in what manner they should live before God, as true created beings under the dominion of the Creator. Once man has understood these things, they also know what God's requirements for them are; once they have fulfilled these things, they will also have fulfilled the standards of God's requirements of them. Given that the law, commandments, and simple criteria for behavior are no substitute for the truth, God expresses a great many words and truths in the last days that have to do with man's practice, their comportment and actions, and their views on people and things. God tells man how to view people and things, and how to comport themselves and act. What does it mean that God tells man all of this? It

means that God requires you to view people and things, and to comport yourself and act according to all these truths, and thereby to live in the world. Whatever sort of duty you perform and whatever sort of commission you accept from God, His requirements of you don't change. Once you have understood God's requirements, you are to practice, perform your duty, and accomplish God's commission of you according to His requirements as you understand them, regardless of whether He is beside you or scrutinizing you. It is only in this way that you may truly become a master of all things in whom God is assured, and who is qualified, and who is worthy of His commission. Does this not touch on the topic of why man must pursue the truth? (It does.) Do you understand now? These are the facts that God will bring about. So, pursuing the truth isn't simply about casting off one's corrupt disposition and not resisting God. There is a greater significance and a greater value in the pursuit of the truth we are talking about. Truly, it involves man's destination and their fate. Do you understand? (Yes.) Why must man pursue the truth? In a small sense, this is addressed by those most basic doctrines that man understands. In a grand sense, the foremost reason is that, to God, pursuing the truth involves His management, His expectations of mankind, and the hopes that He entrusts to mankind. This is one part of God's management plan. It can be seen in this that whoever you are and however long you have believed in God, if you do not pursue the truth or love it, you will inevitably end up as one who is to be cast out. This is plain as day. God does three stages of work; He has had a management plan since He created mankind, and He has gone on to effect each of its stages, one by one, in mankind, and to lead mankind, step by step, to the present. How great the heartfelt care and the price He has paid forth, and how long He has endured, toward the ultimate goal of working the truths He expresses and every facet of the criteria of His requirements, which He tells mankind, on man, turning those into man's life and reality. As God sees it, this is such an important matter. God places such weight on it. God has expressed so many words, and before He did, He did a great deal of preparatory work. If in the end, you do not pursue or enter these words now that He has expressed them, how will God view you? What sort of designation will God assign you? This is plain as day. So, every person, no matter your caliber, or age, or the number of years you have believed in God, should put your efforts toward the path of pursuing the truth. You shouldn't emphasize any objective rationales; you should pursue the truth unconditionally. Don't idle your days away. If you seek and put your efforts toward the pursuit of the truth as the great matter of your life, it may be that the truth you gain and can reach in your pursuit is not what you'd have wished for. But if God says He will give you a destination depending on your attitude in your pursuit and your sincerity, then how wonderful that will be! Don't focus on what your destination or outcome will be for now. What will happen and what the future holds, whether you will be able to avoid disaster and not die—don't think of these things or ask after them. Concentrate only on pursuing the truth in God's words and His requirements, on performing your duty well, on satisfying God's will, on not proving

unworthy of God's six thousand years of waiting, His six thousand years of anticipation. Give God some comfort; let Him see some hope for you, and let His wishes be realized in you. Tell Me, would God mistreat you if you did so? Of course not! And even if the end results aren't as one would have wished, how should they treat that fact, as a created being? They should submit in all things to God's orchestrations and arrangements, without any personal agenda. Is this not the perspective created beings should take? (It is.) That's the right mindset. We'll conclude our fellowship on the main thrust of why man must pursue the truth with that.

Our fellowship just now mainly looked at why man must pursue the truth in terms of God's management plan, from God's perspective. As seen from the other side, it's somewhat simpler. In terms of man themselves, from man's perspective, why must man pursue the truth? Most simply, if man's pursuit, were they to live under the law and not understand the truth, were no more than upholding the law, what would ultimately come of it? The only thing that could ultimately come of that would be man's condemnation by the law, for their inability to uphold the law. And on from that to the Age of Grace: In that age, man did understand much, and they gained much new information from God about man—guidelines and commandments for human comportment. Man profited nicely, in terms of doctrine. However, man yet hoped they would be availed of more of God's protection, favor, blessings, and grace, without having understood the truth; man's viewpoint was still one of making requests of God, and as they made those requests, their pursuit was still aimed and directed toward the life of the flesh, and the comforts of the flesh, and better fleshly living. The aim of their pursuit was still in contradiction to the truth and ran against it. Man still fell short of being able to pursue the truth, and they couldn't enter such a real life as that in which the truth stands as the ground for one's existence. These are the realities of man's life, as lived on a foundation of having understood all the laws or the commandments and strictures of the Age of Grace, on a foundation of not yet having understood the truth. When these are the realities of man's life, they will often lose their direction without realizing it. It's just as people say: "I'm confused and at a loss." In such conditions of uninterrupted confusion, man will often sink into a void, their ends frayed, not knowing why man lives or what the future will be, much less how they should face the various people, events, and things that real life visits on them, or what the correct mode is that they should use to face them. There are even many followers of God, believers, who, even as they uphold the commandments and enjoy a great deal of God's grace and blessings, pursue status, wealth, a promising future, distinction among their peers, rosy marriages, domestic fulfillment and fortune—and in today's society, they pursue enjoyment of the flesh, and life, and ease; they pursue luxurious mansions and cars; they pursue global travel, probing the mysteries and future of mankind. Mankind, in their acceptance of the regulations and restrictions of a host of laws and behavioral criteria, remains unable to cast off their propensity to probe the future, and the mysteries of mankind, and every matter beyond mankind's ken.

And as people do so, they often feel emptied, depressed, aggrieved, annoyed, unsettled, and afraid, so much so that with many things that befall them, they are hard-pressed to control their hotheadedness and emotions. There are some people who lapse into low spirits, depression, repression, and so on, when they encounter any agitating conditions, such as rough conditions at work, or domestic rifts, domestic upsets, marital upsets, or society's discrimination. There are even some people who plunge into extremities of feeling; there are even some who choose to end their own lives by extreme means. Of course, there are others who choose withdrawal and loneliness. And what has this given rise to in society? Recluses, male and female; clinical depression; and so on. There's no lack of these phenomena in the lives of Christians, either; they happen often. When all is said and done, the cause of this, at its root, is that mankind doesn't understand what the truth is, nor where man comes from and where they are going, nor why man is alive and how they ought to live. When facing any of the manifold sorts of people, events, and things they encounter, they don't know how to handle, resolve, cast off, or see into and penetrate all these things, so that they can live happily and at ease, under the sovereignty and arrangements of the Creator. Mankind doesn't have this ability. Without God's expression of the truth, and without His having told man how they should view people and things, and comport themselves and act, humans rely on their own efforts, the knowledge they've acquired, and the life skills they've grasped, and those rules of the game they've understood, as well as rules for comportment or philosophies for living. They rely on their experience of human life and their exposure to it, and even on the things they've learned from books—but still, when faced with all the difficulties real life visits upon them, they're impotent. For those who live their lives in such conditions, reading the Bible is of no avail. Even praying to the Lord Jesus is of no avail, much less praying to Jehovah. Reading what the prophets of old foretold can't resolve any of their problems, either. So, some people travel the globe; they go exploring the moon and Mars, or they seek out prophets who can foretell the future and converse with them. But people's hearts remain unsettled, joyless, and uncomforted once they've done these things. The direction and aim of their advancement still feel so elusive to them, and so empty. On the whole, mankind's life remains so hollow. Because such is the status quo of mankind's life, they invent many ways to entertain themselves: modern video games, for example, and bungee jumping, and the surfing, mountaineering, and skydiving that Westerners enjoy, and the various dramas, songs, and dances the Chinese like, and the ladyboy shows of Southeast Asia. People even watch things that satisfy their spiritual worlds and carnal lusts. Yet whatever their amusements, whatever they watch, people's deepest hearts remain bewildered as to the future. However many times someone's been around the world, or even if they've been to the moon and Mars, once they're back and settled in a bit, they're altogether enervated, quite as they were before. If anything, they'll be even sadder and more unsettled for having gone than if they hadn't. Mankind thinks the reason that they're so hollow, so powerless, and so bewildered and shaken,

that they're desirous of exploring what's to come and isn't known, is that people don't know how to entertain themselves, that they don't know how to live. They think it's because people don't know how to enjoy life or enjoy the moment; their interests and hobbies are simplistic, they think—not expansive enough. Yet however many interests people foster, however many entertainments they've partaken in, however many places they've been around the world, mankind still feels that how they live and the direction and goal of their existence are not as they would wish. In brief, what people feel in general is hollowness and boredom. Some people wish to savor all the world's gourmet delicacies because of this hollowness and boredom; wherever they go, they're set on eating. Others are set on having fun wherever they go, and they have their fun, and eat, and amuse themselves, all to their heart's content—yet once they've eaten and drunk and made merry, they're emptier than before. What's to be done about this? Why is this feeling impossible to shake off? When people are at an impasse, some of them start using drugs, consuming opium, taking ecstasy, and stimulating themselves with all sorts of material things. And what's the result? Do any of these methods have any effect when it comes to resolving man's hollowness? Can any of them resolve problems at their roots? (No.) Why is it that they can't? It's because humans live by their feelings. They don't understand the truth or know what gives rise to mankind's problems of hollowness, unease, bewilderment, and so forth, nor do they know by what means to resolve them. They think that if fleshly enjoyment is taken care of and the world of their carnal spirit has been sated and filled, the hollow feeling in their spirit will be gone. Is that how it works? The fact is that it's not. If you come away from these sermons having accepted them as doctrine, but don't pursue or practice them at all, and if you don't take these words of God as the basis and criterion for your views on people and things, and for your comportment and actions, your mode of existence and view on life will never change. And if those things don't change, it means that your life, its style, and value of its existence will never change. And what does it mean if the style and value of your life's existence will never change? It means that one day, sooner or later, the doctrines you understand will seem to you as pillars of the spirit; sooner or later, they'll be catchphrases and theories to you, things with which you'll plug up that feeling of hollowness in your interior world, when the situation calls for it. If the direction and goal of your pursuit don't change, you'll be the same as those people who haven't heard any of God's words. The direction and goal of your pursuit will still be a search for entertainment, for fleshly solace. You'll still try to resolve your hollowness and bewilderment by traveling the world and probing into mysteries. There's no doubt that you'll then be walking the same path as those people. They feel hollow after they've tasted the world's delicacies and enjoyed its grand luxuries, and so will you. You may hold to the true way and God's words, but if you don't pursue or practice them, you'll end up as they do, often feeling hollow, shaken, resentful, and repressed, without true happiness, without true joy, without true freedom, and more, without true peace. And then, in the end, your outcome will be the same as theirs.

What does God look at, when it comes to man's outcome? He doesn't look at how many of His words you've read or how many sermons you've listened to. God doesn't look at these things. He looks at how many truths you've gained in your pursuit, at how many truths you can practice; He looks at whether you take His words as the basis and the truth as the criterion for your views on people and things, and for your comportment and actions, in your life—at whether you have such experience and testimony. If there is no such testimony in your day-to-day life and in the course of your following God, and none of these things are at all substantiated, then God will regard you the same as He does unbelievers. Is such regard from Him the end of the story? No; it's far from the case that God would regard you as such and leave it at that. Instead, He will thereby decide your outcome. God sets your outcome by reason of the path you walk; He sets your outcome based on how you perform in the array of your pursuit and goal, your attitude toward the truth, and whether you have set foot on the path of pursuing the truth. Why is that how He sets it? When someone who simply doesn't pursue the truth has read God's words and heard a great many of them, yet still can't take His words as the criterion for their views on people and things, as well as their comportment and actions, that person won't just not be able to be saved in the end. Here's the most important thing: What could become of such a person if they were to remain? Could they become a master of all things? Could they be a steward of all things in God's stead? Are they worthy of commission? Of trust? If God handed all things over to you, would you do as mankind does now, indiscriminately killing the living beings God created, indiscriminately dissipating the myriad that God created, indiscriminately defiling the myriad that God has bestowed on mankind? Of course you would! So, if God were to hand this world and all things off to you, what would all things ultimately be faced with? They would have no true steward; they would be defiled and dissipated to nothing by Satan-corrupted mankind. Ultimately, all things, the living beings among all things, and Satan-corrupted mankind would meet the same fate: They would be destroyed by God. This is something God doesn't hope to see. So, if such a person has heard many words of God and only understood a great many doctrines within His words, yet is still unable to take on the duty of a master of all things or to view people and things, and comport themselves and act, according to God's words, God will certainly not entrust any affair to them, because they're unfit. God doesn't wish to see all things, which He painstakingly created, dissipated and defiled to nothing by Satan-corrupted mankind for a second time, nor does He wish to see the mankind He has managed for six thousand years destroyed at the hands of such humans. The only thing He wants to see is the continued existence of all the things of His painstaking creation under the stewardship of the group of people that gains His salvation, under God's care, protection, and leadership, living on in accordance with the order of all things and with the laws that God commands. What sort of people are they, then, who can bear such a heavy onus? There's only one sort, and that sort is they, whom I speak of, who pursue the truth, those being the sort of people

who can view people and things, and comport themselves and act, in rigorous accordance with God's words and with the truth as their criterion. Such people are worthy of trust. Their mode of existence has emerged entirely from the modes of the mankind that Satan has corrupted; in the goal and mode of their pursuit, in their views on people and things, and in their comportment and actions, they are able to accord wholly with God's words, and wholly able to take the truth as their criterion. Such people are the ones who are truly fit to continue living on, and who are fit to have all things passed into their hands by God. It is these people who can bear so heavy an onus as God's commission. God will assuredly not hand all things off to the sort of person that doesn't pursue the truth. Assuredly, He won't hand all things off to people who just don't listen to His words, and He assuredly won't entrust any task to such people. They can't even perform their own duties well, much less God's commission. If God were to entrust all things to them, they would have no loyalty at all, nor would they act according to His words. They'd work a bit when they were happy, and when they weren't, they'd go off eating, drinking, and being merry. Often, they'd be hollow and uneasy and at loose ends at heart, without any loyalty to God's commission. Such people are assuredly not those whom God wants. So, if you understand God's will, and know the deficiencies of corrupt mankind, as well as what sort of path corrupt mankind should take, you should begin by pursuing the truth. Listen to God's words, and start off in the direction of viewing people and things, and comporting yourself and acting, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. Orient yourself toward this goal, toward this direction, and the day will come, sooner or later, on which God remembers and accepts your expenditure and payment. Then, there will be value in your being alive; God will approve of you, and you will no longer be an ordinary person. You aren't being asked to persist as long as Noah did in building the ark, but you must at least persist for this lifetime. Will you live to be one hundred and twenty years old? No one knows, but suffice it to say, that isn't the lifespan of modern mankind. Pursuing the truth now is much easier than it was to build the ark. How difficult the ark was to build, and there were no modern tools then—it was done entirely with human strength, in an unfavorable environment, no less. It took a long time, with few to help. It is much easier for you to pursue the truth now than it was to build the ark. Your large-scale environment and the small-scale conditions of your life put you at such an advantage and grant you such convenience, as far as pursuing the truth is concerned.

Today's fellowship on "Why Man Must Pursue the Truth" has mainly covered two aspects of the topic. One was simple fellowship from God's perspective, about His management plan, His wishes, and His yearning; the other was an analysis of the problems in people themselves, from their own perspective, which served to explain the necessity and importance of pursuing the truth. In terms of either of those angles, pursuing the truth is of utmost importance for man, and of critical urgency. The pursuit of the truth, as seen from any vantage, is the path and goal in life that every follower of

God, everyone who has heard His words, should choose. The pursuit of the truth should not be held as a sort of ideal or wish, nor should the statements made about it be taken as a sort of spiritual comfort; rather, one must take the words God speaks and His requirements for man and, quite pragmatically, turn them into the principles and basis for their practice in real life, so that the goal of their life and the mode of their existence may change, which, of course, also makes one's life more worthwhile. In this way, as you pursue the truth, the road you walk and your choice will be right, on the smaller scale—and on the grand scale, you will ultimately be shed of your corrupt disposition because you pursue the truth, and you will be saved. Those who will be saved are not, as God sees them, merely the apples of His eye or treasures in His hand, and less still are they merely the simple mainstays of His kingdom. The blessing to come to you, a member of the future humanity, is great indeed, of a sort never seen before and never to be seen again; good things will come to you, one after the next, in a way your mind can't conceive. In any case, what's now to be done first is to establish the goal of pursuing the truth. Establishing this goal isn't meant to resolve the hollowness of your spiritual world, nor is it meant to resolve the repression and indignation, or the uncertainty and bewilderment, in the pit of your heart. That's not what it's for. Instead, it's meant to serve as a real and genuine goal toward which one may comport themselves and act. It's as simple as that. That's simple, don't you think? You don't dare say so, but the fact is, it's quite simple—it comes down to whether a person has the resolve to pursue the truth. If you truly do have that resolve, what truth is there that has no specific path of practice? They all have paths, don't they? (They do.) To have a specific basis for the practice of the truth, in any of its realms, and to have specific principles of practice for any project in the work—this end is achievable by those who truly have resolve. Some may say, "I still don't know how to practice when I encounter issues." That's because you fail to seek. If you sought, you'd have a path. There's a saying, isn't there? It goes, "Seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). Have you sought? Have you knocked? Have you contemplated the truth as you read God's words? If you put effort into that contemplation, you'll be able to understand all. All the truth is in God's words; it just needs you to read it and contemplate it. Do not be idle; pay earnest attention. With problems you can't resolve yourself, you must pray to God, and you'll need to seek the truth for a while, and sometimes, you'll need to be patient and wait for God, in His time. If God arranges an environment for you, and in it, He reveals all, and enlightens a passage of His words for you, bringing clarity to your heart, and you have specific principles for practice, will you not thus have understood? So, the pursuit of the truth isn't such an abstract thing, nor is it so hard. Be it from your daily life, or from your duty, or from the work of the church, or from your interactions with others, as seen from any angle, you may seek the truth to point out the direction and criteria for practice. It's not hard at all. It is much easier for man to believe in God now than it was in the past, because there are just so many words of God, and you listen to so many sermons, and

there's so much fellowship on every aspect of the truth. If someone understands spiritual matters and has caliber, they'll have understood already. It's only those who lack spiritual understanding and are of terrible caliber who always say they don't understand this or that and can never see through things. They get befuddled as soon as something befalls them; fellowship on the truth clears it up, but a while later, they get befuddled again. This is all because they while their days away without a care in the world. They're just too lazy, and they do not seek. Things will be easy to understand if you are to seek and read more of the pertinent words of God, as all those words are in common language that's easily understood. Any normal person can understand them, save the mentally deficient. These words state many matters clearly and tell you everything. Unless you don't see the pursuit of the truth as a big deal, if you truly long at heart to gain the truth and take its pursuit as the most important thing in life, then nothing can impede you or keep you from understanding and practicing the truth.

The simplest precept in pursuing the truth is that you must accept all things from God and submit in all things. That's part of it. The other part is that with your duty and what's yours to do, and bigger than that, with the commission given by God and your obligation, as well as important work that's outside your duty but needs you to do it, work that's arranged for you and that you are called by name to do—you should pay the price, however difficult it may be. Even if you need to apply yourself to the fullest, even if persecution should loom, and even if it should put your life at risk, you're not to begrudge the cost, but to offer up your loyalty and obey unto death. This is how the pursuit of the truth manifests in reality, its real expenditure and its real practice. Is it hard? (No.) I like people who say it's not hard, because they have hearts that long to pursue the truth, that are determined and faithful—there's strength in their hearts, so nothing that befalls them is difficult. But if people lack confidence, if they doubt themselves, as people often say, then it's all over for them. If a person is as useless as a pile of mud, unmotivated to do anything productive, but they liven up when it comes to eating, drinking, and making merry, and if they become negative when faced with difficulties, and they lack enthusiasm, without even a modicum of motivation, when it comes to fellowshiping about the truth, what sort of person are they? They're someone who doesn't love the truth. Had man been required to pursue the truth in the Age of Grace or the Age of Law, that would have been something of a challenge for them. It wouldn't have been easy, because mankind's conditions then were different, and so were the standards of God's requirements of them. So, in ages past, there weren't many people who were capable of heeding God's words and submitting to Him, except for such prominent people as Noah, Abraham, Job, and Peter. But God didn't blame the people of those two ages, because He hadn't told people how to reach the standards of salvation. In this stage of the work in the last age, God clearly tells people every aspect of the truths they are to practice. If people still don't practice them and still can't meet God's requirements, that's not God's fault; it's an issue of man not loving the truth and being sick of it. So, to have

people pursue the truth in this, the time of pursuing the truth, isn't a challenge for them—indeed, it's something they're capable of. In one regard, this is because all is conducive to it; in another, it's that people's conditions and foundation are sufficient for them to pursue the truth. If someone fails to gain the truth in the end, it's because their issues are just too severe. Such a person deserves whatever punishment they suffer, whatever outcome they get, whatever death they die. They merit no pity. To God, there are no such terms as pity or compassion for people. He determines the outcome someone should have based on His requirements of man, His dispositions, and the order and rules He has established; and as a given performance yields a given outcome, a person's present life and life to come are thereby decided. It's as simple as that. It doesn't matter how many will survive in the end, or how many will be punished. God doesn't care about that. What have you understood in these words? What information do they convey to you? Do you know? Let Me see whether you're smart and resourceful enough to answer. If you can't, I'd evaluate you with a single word—stupid. Why do I say you're stupid? I'll tell you. I said that God doesn't care how many people will survive, or how many meet destruction and punishment in the end. What does this tell you? It tells you that God hasn't ordained a set number of people. You can struggle for it, but whoever ultimately survives or is punished, be it you, another, or any group, isn't part of a headcount that God has already set. God works and speaks as He does now. He treats every person fairly and gives every person ample opportunity. He gives you ample opportunity, and ample grace, and an ample measure of His words, and His work, and His mercy and tolerance. He is fair to every person. If you can pursue the truth, and are on the path of following God, and can accept the truth, however many hardships you endure or challenges you face, and if your corrupt disposition is cleansed, you will be saved. If you can bear witness for God and become a worthy created being, a worthy master of all things, you'll survive. If you'll survive, it won't be because you have a good lot; rather, it will be on account of your own expenditures and efforts, and your own pursuit. It will be what you deserve and are entitled to. You won't need God to give you anything extra. God doesn't give you supplemental guidance and training; He doesn't say supplemental words to you or do you special favors. He doesn't do these things. It's survival of the fittest, just as in nature. Each animal bears its offspring, in whatever number they're born and die, according to the order and rules that God has set. Those that can survive, do, and those that can't live, die, and then give birth anew. However many of them can survive after that, that's how many there are. In a bad year, not a single one survives; in a good year, more do. All things maintain a balance, in the end. So, how does God treat mankind, which He created? God's attitude is the same. He thus fairly gives every person their opportunity, and thus speaks to every person, publicly and uncompensated. He is gracious to every person, and lifts every person up; He leads, looks after, and guards every person. If in the end, you survive by pursuing the truth, and you meet the standards of God's requirements, you will have succeeded. Yet if you're always muddle-headedly

whiling your days away, thinking yourself ill-fated, prone always to overreaching, not knowing what to do, living always by your feelings, without pursuing the truth or walking the correct way, you'll gain nothing in the end. If you wish always to muddle through your days, ignoring the work God does in you, not caring in the least that He leads you, or that He gives you opportunities, and discipline, and enlightenment, and support, He'll see that you're a benumbed fool, and He'll ignore you. God will work on you on the day when you pursue the truth. He doesn't remember your transgressions. If you don't pursue the truth, God won't force you or drag you along. If you pursue, you will gain; if you don't, you won't. People can pursue the truth or not as they please. It's theirs to decide. When God's work comes to its end, He will ask for your answer sheet, and measure you with the standards of the truth. If you have no testimony at all, you must be cast out; you won't be able to survive. You'll say, "I've performed so many duties and done so much service. I've expended a lot, and paid a lot!" And God will say, "But did you pursue the truth?" You'll think it over, and it will seem that in your twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years of believing in God, you hadn't pursued the truth. God will say, "You yourself say that you haven't pursued the truth. Off with you, then. Go where you please." You'll say, "Doesn't God think it's a pity to have saved one fewer person than He should have, to be short of one master of all things?" At this point, would God still take pity? God has been patient long enough; He has waited long enough. His expectations for you will have run their course; He'll have lost His hope in you, and will no longer pay you mind. He won't shed a single tear for you, or have any more pain and suffering on your account. Why is that? Because the outcome of all things will have run its course, and God's work will reach its end, and His management plan will come to its close, and He will rest. God will not be happy for any person, nor will He be pained, or weep, or cry for any person. Of course, neither will He rejoice and be glad that any person survives, or that any person is able to become a master of all things. Why is this? God has spent too much, for too long, on this humanity, and He needs to rest. He needs to close the book on the six thousand years of His management plan and will no longer pay it any mind, or plan anything, or say any words or do any work on man. He'll hand over the future work and the days to come to the masters of the next age. What is it I'm telling you, then? It's this: As you now know how many people will remain in the end and who will be able to, every one of you can strive toward that—and the only path for doing so is the pursuit of the truth. Don't while your days away; it won't do to be muddle-headed. If there comes a day when God no longer remembers anything you paid and no longer cares what path you walk, nor what your outcome will be, then on that day, your outcome will truly be set. What is it you must do now? You must take advantage of the present, while God's heart still toils for mankind, while He's still making plans for mankind, while He still sorrows and frets over every human movement and gesture. People must make their choice, as soon as possible. Establish the goal and direction of your pursuit; don't wait until the days of God's rest have come to make your plans. If you don't feel true ruefulness, regret,

grief, and lamentation until then, it will all have come too late. No one will be able to save you, nor will God. This is because when the time comes, the moment in which God's plan truly ends, and He has made the last mark and is closing the book on His plan, He will work no longer. God needs rest; He needs to savor the fruits born of His six-thousand-year management plan and enjoy the stewardship of all things, for Him, of the humans who remain. What God wants to enjoy is the sight of the humans who remain managing all things according to the rules and regulations He has established, in meticulous accordance with the order He created for the seasons, and all things, and mankind, without violating anything He wills or anything He desires. God wants to enjoy His rest; He wants to enjoy His comfort, without further worry about mankind or work for their sake. Do you understand this? (Yes.) That day will soon be here. If we were talking about human longevity in the time of Adam and Eve, people might still have centuries left to them, and the remaining time would be quite long. Look at how long it took Noah to build the ark. I think there are just a scant few people today who will live to more than one hundred, and even if you do live to ninety or one hundred, how many decades are left to you? There aren't many. Even if you're twenty today and may live to be ninety, so you'll live seventy more years, that's still less time than it took Noah to build the ark. To God, six thousand years is a blink of an eye, and what to man is sixty years, eighty years, or a hundred years is, to God, a few seconds—a few minutes, at most; a blink of the eye. Even people who don't walk the correct path or pursue the truth often say, "Life is short: In a blink of the eye, we're old; in the blink of an eye, the house is filled with children and grandchildren; in the blink of an eye, our lives have run their course." So what if you do pursue the truth? For you, time is even more pressing. People who don't pursue the truth and live in a world of hollowness while their days away, and they all feel time goes by quite fast. What if you do pursue the truth? Any environment, any person, event, or thing of God's arrangement is an adequate thing for you to experience for a while—and only after a long time will you gain just that little bit of knowledge, insight, and experience. It isn't easy. When you truly do have that knowledge and experience, it will come to you: "Goodness! Man doesn't gain much from a lifetime of pursuing the truth!" There are many people now writing essays of their experiential testimony, and I see that some who have believed in God for twenty or thirty years just write about their failures and falls from ten or twenty years ago. They wish to write about something recent and their present life entry, but have none. Their experience is pitifully scant. In writing essays of experiential testimony, some people must look back at their past failures and falls, and those with poor memories need others' help to recall them. That little bit is all they've gained in their ten, twenty, even thirty years of belief in God, and it's hard work to write it down. Some essays are even disjointed, their disjointed parts forced fancifully together. These don't even count as life experience, in fact; they have nothing to do with life. That's how pitiful man is, when he doesn't pursue the truth. Isn't that so? (It is.) That's how it is. I hope that none of you get to that day when God's work has ended, and you, penitent with Him,

fall to your knees and say, “I know myself now! I know how to pursue the truth now!” Too late! God will pay you no mind; He won’t care any longer whether you’re someone who pursues the truth, or what sort of corrupt disposition you have, or what sort of attitude you have toward Him, nor will He care how deeply you’ve been corrupted by Satan or what sort of person you are. When that happens, won’t you be frozen to the core? (Yes.) Imagine it now: If that moment truly came, would you be sad? (Yes.) Why would you be sad? The implication is that you’d never get another chance. You’d never hear God’s words again, and God would never again fret over you; you’d never again be someone of concern to Him, or a being of His creation. You’d have no relationship at all with Him. How fearful to think of it. If you can picture that now, yet the day truly does come when you reach such a point, will you not be dumbstruck? It will be just as the Bible tells: When that time comes, people will pound their chests and backs, wailing, gnashing their teeth, with such crying as might be their death. And crying to death will be useless—it will all be too late! God will be your God no longer, and you will no longer be a being of God’s creation. You will have no relationship with Him; He will not want you. How you are will have nothing more to do with God. You will no longer be in His heart, and He won’t worry for you anymore. Will you not then have reached the end of your path of belief in God? (Yes.) That’s why, if you’re able to picture that there may be a time when God detests and rejects you, you should cherish the present. God may chastise you, or judge you, or deal with and prune you; He may even curse you and scold you roundly. All of this is worth cherishing: God at least still acknowledges you as a being of His creation, and at least still has expectations for you, and you’re at least still in His heart, and He is still willing to scold you and curse you, it means that in His heart, He still worries for you. This worry is not something someone can trade their life for. Now, don’t be stupid! Do you understand? (Yes.) If you do, you’re not truly stupid; you’re faking it, no? I do hope you’re not truly stupid. If you’ve understood these things, don’t while your days away. The pursuit of the truth is a great matter of human life. No other matter is as important as pursuing the truth, and no other matter surpasses gaining the truth in value. Has it been easy, to follow God up until today? Hurry, and make your pursuit of the truth a matter of import! This stage of work in the last days is the most important stage of work God does on people in His six-thousand-year management plan. The pursuit of the truth is the highest expectation God places on His chosen people. He hopes that people walk the correct path, which is the pursuit of the truth. Don’t let God down, don’t disappoint Him, and don’t make Him remove you from His heart when the final moment comes, and no longer worry for you. He wouldn’t even have hate for you. Don’t let it come to that. Do you understand? (Yes.)

What has been the topic of our fellowship today? (Why man must pursue the truth.) Why man must pursue the truth—it’s a bit of a heavy topic, isn’t it? Why is it heavy? Because it’s important. For every person’s future, for every person’s life, and for the way in which every person will exist in the next age, it’s of the utmost importance. So, I hope

you'll listen to today's talk on the topic a couple times more, to deepen its impression on you a bit. Regardless of whether you pursued the truth in the past, and regardless of whether you're willing to pursue the truth, strive, from today's fellowship on the subject of "Why Man Must Pursue the Truth" and onward, to set your resolve and steel your will toward choosing to pursue the truth. It's the best choice. Can you do that? (Yes.) Great. We fellowshiped today about why man must pursue the truth. Our next topic for fellowship is how to pursue the truth. Now that I've told you what it is, give it some contemplation and see what knowledge you have about the topic in your heart. Preview it a bit first. This concludes today's fellowship.

September 3, 2022

How to Pursue the Truth (1)

What topic did we fellowship on at our last gathering? (Why man must pursue the truth.) After we finished fellowshiping, I gave you a homework topic—what was it? (How to pursue the truth.) Have you contemplated on this topic? (God, I have contemplated on it a little. When it comes to how to pursue the truth, it is about examining our outpourings of corruption and corrupt dispositions in all the people, events, and things that we encounter each day, and then seeking the truth to resolve these issues. At the same time, the performance of a duty touches on certain principles, so we must seek relevant truths to understand how to act according to these principles when we are approaching different duties—that is another way that pursuing the truth is practiced.) So for one thing, seeking the truth in one's daily life, and for another, by seeking the truth principles while fulfilling one's duty. Are there any other aspects of this pursuit? This should not be a difficult topic, should it? Did you contemplate on "How to Pursue the Truth"? How did you contemplate on it? Contemplating on this topic should entail spending a certain amount of time thinking about it, and then making notes on the knowledge gained through that contemplation. If you only take a quick look at it and think about it a little, but do not spend time or energy on it, or think about it carefully, that is not contemplation. Contemplating means that you think about the matter seriously, you put real effort into pondering it, you gain some concrete knowledge, and you receive enlightenment and illumination, and you reap some rewards—these are results that are achieved through contemplation. Now, did you really contemplate on this topic? None of you really contemplated on it, did you? Last time, I gave you homework, a topic so that you could prepare, but none of you contemplated on the topic and you did not take it seriously. Were you hoping that I would just spoon-feed you? Or did you think, "This topic is very simple, there's no depth to it. We've already figured it out, so we don't need to contemplate—we already understand it"? Or is it that you are not interested in questions and matters related to the pursuit of the truth? What is the problem? It cannot be that you are too busy with work, can it? Really, what is the reason? (After listening to God's questions and reflecting on myself, I think that the main reason is that I do not love the truth. I did not take God's words seriously, and I did not earnestly contemplate on the truth. I was also hoping to be spoon-fed an answer. I was hoping that once God had finished fellowshiping on the topic, I would be able to understand it. That was the attitude that I had.) Are most people like this? It seems that you are used to being spoon-fed. When it comes to the truth, you are not very meticulous and you do not make much of an effort. You especially love doing things and running around blindly. All you do is idle your time away; you are muddle-headed when dealing with the truth, and you do not take it seriously. That is your true state.

How to pursue the truth is one of the topics most commonly fellowshiped on in God's house. Most people understand some doctrine about how to pursue the truth, and they know some approaches and ways to practice it. There are some people who have

believed in God for a long time who more or less have some real experiences, and they have also experienced failures and falls, and have had negativity and weakness. In the process of pursuing the truth, they have also experienced many ups and downs, and in pursuing the truth, they have learned from their experiences and have some rewards. Naturally, they have also encountered many difficulties and obstructions, as well as various actual problems in their lives or environments. In short, most people have some level of understanding about the pursuit of the truth, whether in form only or through some practical problems, and they also have some doctrinal knowledge of it. Once people have started believing in God or walking the path of the pursuit of the truth, regardless of whether they have really paid a price on that path or if they have only made a little effort in their approach to pursuing the truth, more or less all of them will have some understanding of it. For those who love the truth, this understanding represents genuine and precious rewards, but those who do not pursue the truth have no experience, no learning from their experience, or reward. In sum, the majority of people are moving forward hesitantly and harboring a “wait-and-see” attitude while pursuing the truth, while at the same time experiencing a bit of what it feels like to pursue it. In most people’s thoughts, views, or consciousness, pursuing the truth is a positive thing and of the greatest significance. They think of it as a life goal that people should pursue, and even more than that, as the correct road that they should follow in life. Whether on a theoretical level or based on their real experiences and knowledge, people all regard pursuing the truth as a good thing and the most positive thing. There is no pursuit or path that mankind engages in that can compare to the pursuit of the truth or the path of pursuing it. Pursuing the truth is the only correct road that humans should follow. As a member of the human race, the pursuit of the truth should be the life goal of every person, and they should view it as the correct path for people to follow. Now, how should one pursue the truth? Just now, you brought up some simple, theoretical ideas, which most people would probably agree with. Everyone thinks that these kinds of pursuits and practices relate to pursuing the truth. They believe that the things which specifically relate to pursuing the truth are merely: gaining knowledge of oneself, confessing and repenting, and then finding the truth principles to practice from God’s words, and ultimately, living out His words in one’s everyday life and entering into the truth reality. This is the common understanding and comprehension that most people have of how to pursue the truth. Aside from the methods you can recognize and comprehend, I have summarized some more specific paths and methods of practice for pursuing the truth. Today, we will fellowship in more detail on how to pursue the truth.

Aside from the few methods you have listed, I have gone into more detail and summarized two methods for how to pursue the truth. One method is “letting go.” Is this simple? (It is simple.) This is neither abstract nor complicated. It is also easy to remember and easy to understand. Of course, practicing it may involve a certain level of difficulty. You see, this method is much simpler than the ones you brought up. What you

said was just a stack of theories. They seem lofty and deep and, of course, there is a concrete side to them, but they are much more complicated than what I just told you. The first method is “letting go,” and the second is “dedicating.” Just these two methods, three words in total. People can understand them just by looking at them, and people know how to practice them without fellowshiping about them—they are also easy to remember. What is the first method? (Letting go.) The second? (Dedicating.) You see? Are they not simple? (They are simple.) They are much more succinct than what you said. What is this called? This is called being incisive. Does using fewer words necessarily mean that something is incisive? (It doesn’t.) Whether or not something is incisive is unimportant. What is crucial is whether the key point is being made and whether it is functional when people put it into practice. Additionally, it is important to look at what results are achieved by practicing it; whether it can resolve people’s practical difficulties; whether it helps people to follow the path of pursuing the truth; whether it allows people to resolve their corrupt dispositions at the source; and whether practicing it helps people to come before God, and accept His words and the truth, thereby achieving the results and goals that the pursuit of the truth is supposed to attain. Is this correct? (It is.) You have now heard these two methods of “letting go” and “dedicating,” and you know them. What is the relationship between these two methods and pursuing the truth? Are they linked to those methods you have mentioned, or do they conflict with them? This is still not very clear, is it? (It is still not very clear.) Generally speaking, the specific methods of practicing the pursuit of the truth are the two that I just discussed. Of these two methods, what is the specific content of the first one: letting go? What is the most simple and direct thing you can think of when you hear the words “letting go”? How does one put this method into practice? What are its specific parts and content? (Letting go of one’s corrupt disposition.) What else, aside from one’s corrupt disposition? (Notions and imaginings.) Notions and imaginings, emotions, one’s will, and one’s preferences. What else? (Satanic philosophies for living, mistaken values and outlooks on life.) (One’s intents and desires.) In short, when people try to think of things they should let go of, aside from various behaviors related to corrupt dispositions, they also think of things that make up people’s thoughts and views. So, there are two major parts: One involves corrupt dispositions and the other involves people’s thoughts and views. Aside from these two, what else can you think of? You are perplexed, are you not? What is the reason for this? The reason is that the things that come to your mind immediately are the topics which, in your everyday life since you began believing in God, you frequently encounter and which people often speak about. But as to the problems that no one mentions, which nevertheless exist in people—you do not know them, you are not aware of them, you could not come up with them, and you have also never seen them as problems to contemplate. This is the reason that you are perplexed. I am discussing this with you because I want you to think over and carefully consider the issue we will be fellowshiping on next, and for it to make a deep impression on you.

Now we will fellowship on the two major things related to how one is to pursue the truth: number one, letting go, and number two, dedicating. Let us start by fellowshiping on the first thing—letting go. This is not simply the letting go of sentiment, worldly philosophies, self-will, desire for blessings, and other such general interpretations. The practice of “letting go” on which I will fellowship today has a more specific designation and requires that people examine and practice it in their daily lives. What is to be mentioned first regarding letting go? The first thing that people must let go of in their pursuit of the truth are the various human emotions. What do you think of when I mention these various emotions? What do these emotions include? (Hotheadedness, willfulness, and passivity.) Is hotheadedness an emotion? (I understand emotions to mean when people do things while performing their duties according to how they feel. They adopt different attitudes toward things depending on whether they feel good or not.) Are these the emotions I have been talking about? Is this how emotions are to be explained? (God, my understanding of emotions is that they mostly include irritability, annoyance, along with the pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy.) This is an appropriate generalization. So what was mentioned just now about people doing things according to how they feel, is that an emotion? (That is just a manifestation.) It is a kind of manifestation of emotion. Feeling bad, irritable, and downcast—these are all manifestations of emotion, but they are not the definition of emotion at all. So, how should people understand the first thing they need to let go of in the pursuit of the truth—the various emotions? What are people letting go of when they let go of the various emotions? It is to let go of the feelings, thoughts and emotions that arise in various situations and contexts, as well as with various people, events, and things. Some of these emotions become a person’s self-will. And, although some do not become a person’s self-will, they can still often affect that person’s attitude in their actions. So, what do these emotions include? They include, for example, despondency, hatred, anger, irritability, unease, as well as repression, inferiority, and weeping tears of joy—all these can be considered emotions. Are these the concrete manifestations of emotion? (Yes.) Having said this, do you know what an emotion is? Do they have anything to do with the passivity and hotheadedness you mentioned? (No.) They bear no relation. So, what are those things you mentioned? (Corrupt dispositions.) They are a kind of manifestation of corrupt dispositions. Do the emotions I listed just now, the repression, despondency, inferiority, and so on, have anything to do with corrupt dispositions? (The emotions God spoke about just now are unrelated to corrupt dispositions, they do not constitute corrupt dispositions, or else they have not yet reached the level of a corrupt disposition.) So, what are they? They are the pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy of normal humanity, and they are the emotions that arise and the manifestations that are revealed when people encounter certain situations. Some are perhaps brought about by a corrupt disposition, while others have not reached that level and are not that related to corrupt dispositions, yet these things do indeed exist in the thoughts of people. In such circumstances, regardless of what situation people

encounter or what the context is, these emotions will naturally often influence their judgment and views to some degree, and they will influence the position that people ought to take and the path they ought to walk. The various emotions we just spoke about are mostly rather negative. Are there any that are rather neutral, that are not so negative or positive? No, there are none that are relatively positive. Depression, despondency, hatred, anger, inferiority, irritability, unease, and repression—these are all quite negative emotions. Can any of these emotions enable people to positively face life, human existence, and the situations they encounter in life? Are there none that are positive? (No.) They are all relatively negative emotions. So which emotions are somewhat better? How about yearning and missing? (They are rather neutral.) Yes, they can be neutral. What else? Nostalgia, longing and cherishing. What do these emotions we are talking about refer to? They are things which often hide in the depths of the human heart and soul; they can often occupy people's hearts and thoughts and can often affect people's feelings and their views and attitudes toward doing things. Therefore, whether these emotions are found in people's real lives, or in their belief in God and pursuit of the truth, they will, to a greater or lesser extent, interfere with or influence people's everyday lives and affect their attitudes toward their duties. They will also, of course, affect people's judgment and the position they take when pursuing the truth, and in particular, these rather passive and negative feelings will have a tremendous impact on people. When people develop memories and begin to sense their own diverse emotions, or start to form an awareness that recognizes events and things, the environment, and other people, their various emotions begin to gradually arise and take shape. Once these have taken shape, then as people get older and experience more worldly matters, these emotions gradually become more and more entrenched inside them, within the depths of their heart, becoming the dominant feature of their individual humanity. They gradually direct their individual personality, their pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy, their predilections, as well as their pursuit of goals and direction in life, and so on. That is why these emotions are indispensable to each and every person. Why do I say this? Because once people begin to have a subjective awareness of the environment surrounding them, these emotions gradually influence their pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy, they influence their judgment and cognition of people, events, and things, and they influence their personality. Of course, they will also influence people's attitudes and views regarding how they face and handle the people, events, and things around them. Even more importantly, these negative emotions influence the ways and principles governing how people comport themselves, as well as the goals they pursue and their baseline for human comportment. You may feel that what I have said is not that easy to understand, that it may be rather abstract. I will give you an example and you may then understand things a little better. For example, there are some people who, as children, were ordinary-looking, inarticulate, and not very quick-witted, causing others in their families and social environments to give rather unfavorable appraisals of them, saying things like: "This kid

is dull-witted, slow, and a clumsy speaker. Look at other people's children, who are so well-spoken that they can wrap people around their little finger. Whereas this kid just pouts all day long. He doesn't know what to say when meeting people, doesn't know how to explain or justify himself after doing something wrong, and can't amuse people. This kid is an idiot." The parents say this, relatives and friends say this, and their teachers also say this. This environment exerts a certain, invisible pressure on such individuals. Through experiencing these environments, they unconsciously develop a certain kind of mindset. What kind of mindset? They think that they are not good-looking, not very likable, and that others are never happy to see them. They believe that they are not good at studying, are slow, and always feel embarrassed to open their mouths and speak in front of others. They are too embarrassed to say thank you when people give them something, thinking to themselves, "Why am I always so tongue-tied? Why are other people such smooth talkers? I'm just stupid!" Subconsciously, they think they are worthless, but still are unwilling to acknowledge being that worthless, being that stupid. In their hearts they always ask themselves, "Am I really that stupid? Am I really that unpleasant?" Their parents do not like them, and neither do their brothers and sisters, their teachers or their classmates. And occasionally their family members, their relatives and friends say of them, "He is short, his eyes and nose are small, and with looks like that, he will not be successful when he grows up." So, when they look in the mirror, they see that their eyes are indeed small. In this situation, the resistance, dissatisfaction, unwillingness, and unacceptance in the depths of their heart turn gradually to acceptance and acknowledgment of their own shortcomings, deficiencies, and issues. Although they can accept this reality, a persistent emotion arises in the depths of their heart. What is this emotion called? It is inferiority. People who feel inferior do not know what their strengths are. They just think that they are unlikable, always feel stupid, and do not know how to deal with things. In short, they feel they cannot do anything, are unattractive, are not clever, and have slow reactions. They are unremarkable compared to others and do not get good grades in their studies. After growing up in such an environment, this mindset of inferiority gradually takes over. It turns into a kind of lingering emotion that becomes tangled with your heart and fills your mind. Regardless of whether you are already grown, have gone out into the world, are married and established in your career, and regardless of your social status, this feeling of inferiority that was planted in your environment growing up is impossible to get rid of. Even after you start believing in God and join the church, you still think that you have average looks, have poor intellectual caliber, are inarticulate, and cannot do anything. You think, "I'll just do what I can. I don't need to aspire to be a leader, I don't need to pursue profound truths, I'll just be content with being the least significant one, and let others treat me however they like." When antichrists and false leaders appear, you feel unable to discern or expose them, that you are not cut out for doing that. You feel that as long as you yourself are not a false leader or antichrist then that is enough, that as long as you do

not cause disruptions and disturbances then that is fine, and that it is enough so long as you can stand in your own position. In the depths of your heart, you feel that you are not good enough and are not as good as other people, that others are perhaps objects for salvation, and that you, at best, are a service-doer, and so you feel you are not up to the task of pursuing the truth. Irrespective of how much truth you are able to understand, you still feel that, seeing as God has predestined you to have the kind of caliber you do and to look the way you do, then perhaps He has predestined you to be merely a service-doer, and that you have nothing to do with pursuing the truth, becoming a leader, becoming someone in a position of responsibility, or being saved; instead, you are willing to be the most insignificant person. This feeling of inferiority is perhaps not inborn in you, but on another level, because of your family environment and the environment you grew up in, you were subjected to moderate blows or improper judgments, and this caused the feeling of inferiority to arise in you. This emotion affects the correct direction of your pursuits, influences the proper aspiration for your pursuits, and it also inhibits your proper pursuits. Once your proper pursuit and the proper determination you should have in your humanity are inhibited, then your motivation to pursue positive things and to pursue the truth is stifled. This stifling is not brought about by your surrounding environment or by any person, and of course God has not determined that you should suffer it, rather it is brought about by a strongly negative emotion deep in your heart. Is this not the case? (It is.)

On the surface, inferiority is an emotion that manifests in people; but in fact, the root cause of it is this society, mankind, and the environment people live in. It is also brought about by people's own objective reasons. It goes without saying that society and mankind come from Satan, because all of mankind lies under the power of the evil one, deeply corrupted by Satan, and no one can possibly teach the next generation in accordance with the truth or with the teachings of God, but rather does so in accordance with the things that come from Satan. Therefore, the consequence of teaching the next generation and mankind the things of Satan, besides corrupting the dispositions and essence of people, is that it causes negative emotions to arise in people. If the negative emotions that arise are temporary, then they will not have a tremendous effect on a person's life. However, if a negative emotion becomes deeply rooted within the innermost heart and soul of a person and it becomes indelibly stuck there, if they are completely unable to forget about it or get rid of it, then it will necessarily affect that person's every decision, the way they approach all manner of people, events, and things, what they choose when faced with major matters of principle, and the path they will walk in their life—this is the effect real human society has on every single person. The other aspect is people's own objective reasons. That is, the education and teachings people receive as they grow up, all the thoughts and ideas along with the ways to comport oneself that they accept, as well as the various human sayings, all come from Satan, to the point where people have no ability to handle and dispel these issues they encounter

from the correct perspective and standpoint. Therefore, unknowingly under the influence of this harsh environment, and being oppressed and controlled by it, man can do nothing but develop various negative emotions and use them to try to resist problems they have no ability to resolve, change, or dispel. Let us take the feeling of inferiority as an example. Your parents, teachers, your elders, and others around you all have an unrealistic assessment of your caliber, humanity, and personality, and ultimately what this does to you is attack you, persecute you, stifle you, restrain you, and bind you. Finally, when you do not have the strength to resist anymore, you have no choice but to choose a life of silently accepting insults and humiliation, silently accepting, against your better judgment, this kind of unfair and unjust reality. When you accept this reality, the emotions that ultimately arise in you are not happy, satisfied, positive or progressive ones; you do not live with more motivation and direction, much less do you pursue the accurate and correct goals for human life, but rather a profound feeling of inferiority arises in you. When this emotion arises in you, you feel you have nowhere to turn. When you encounter an issue that requires you to express a view, you will consider what you want to say and the view you wish to express in your innermost heart who knows how many times, yet you still cannot bring yourself to speak it out loud. When someone expresses the same view that you hold, you allow yourself to feel an affirmation in your heart, confirmation that you are not worse than other people. But when the same situation happens again, you still say to yourself, “I can’t speak casually, do anything rash, or make myself a laughingstock. I’m no good, I’m stupid, I’m foolish, I’m an idiot. I need to learn how to hide and just listen, not speak.” From this we can see that, from the point when the feeling of inferiority arises to when it becomes deeply entrenched within a person’s innermost heart, are they not then deprived of their free will and of the legitimate rights bestowed upon them by God? (Yes.) They have been deprived of these things. Who exactly has deprived them of these things? You cannot say for sure, right? None of you can say for sure. This is because, throughout this whole process, you are not only the victim but also the perpetrator—you are the victim of other people, and you are also the victim of yourself. Why is that? I said just now that one reason for the inferiority that arises in you comes from your own objective reasons. Since you began to have self-awareness, your basis for judging events and things has had its source in the corruption of Satan, and these views are instilled in you by society and mankind and are not taught to you by God. Therefore, regardless of when or in what context your feelings of inferiority arose, and regardless of the extent to which your feelings of inferiority have developed, you are helplessly bound and controlled by these feelings, and you use these ways instilled in you by Satan in your approach to the people, events, and things around you. When feelings of inferiority are implanted deeply in your heart, they not only have a profound effect on you, they also dominate your views on people and things, and your comportment and actions. So, how do those who are dominated by feelings of inferiority perceive people and things? They regard other people as better than themselves, and

they also view antichrists as being better than themselves. Even though antichrists have evil dispositions and are of poor humanity, they still treat them as people to emulate and role models to learn from. They even say to themselves, “Look, although they have a bad disposition and evil humanity, they are gifted and are more capable in work than me. They can comfortably display their abilities in front of others and speak in front of so many people without blushing or having heart palpitations. They’ve really got guts. I can’t match up to them. I’m just not brave enough.” What brought this on? It must be said that part of the reason is that your feelings of inferiority have affected your judgment of people’s essences, as well as your perspective and standpoint when it comes to viewing other people. Is this not the case? (It is.) So how do feelings of inferiority affect how you comport yourself? You tell yourself: “I was born stupid, with no gifts or strengths, and I am slow to learn everything. Look at that person: Although they sometimes cause disruptions and disturbances, and act arbitrarily and recklessly, at least they are gifted and have strengths. Wherever you go, they’re the kind of person that people want to make use of, and I’m not.” Whenever anything happens, the first thing you do is pass a verdict on yourself and close yourself off. Whatever the issue is, you retreat and avoid taking initiative, and you fear taking on responsibility. You tell yourself, “I was born stupid. No matter where I go, no one likes me. I can’t stick my neck out, I mustn’t show off my minuscule abilities. If someone recommends me, that proves that I’m alright. But if no one recommends me, then it wouldn’t do for me to take the initiative to say that I can take on the job and do it well. If I’m not confident about it, I can’t say that I am—what if I mess it up, what would I do then? What if I got dealt with? I’d be so ashamed! Wouldn’t that be humiliating? I can’t let that happen to me.” Take a look—has it not affected your comportment? To a certain extent, your attitude toward how you comport yourself is influenced and controlled by your feelings of inferiority. To a certain extent, it can be called a consequence of your feelings of inferiority.

Under the influence of this feeling of inferiority, how does it affect how you regard the various kinds of people, whether they are people with humanity, with so-so humanity, or with no humanity or evil humanity? None of your views on people is in accord with the truth or with God’s words, much less do they meet God’s requirements. At the same time, under the influence of this feeling of inferiority, you choose to conduct yourself carefully, cautiously and timidly, and most of the time you are passive and dejected. You have no get-up-and-go determination or motivation, and when you do have some positive and active inclination and wish to take on a little work, you think, “Is this not me being arrogant? Am I not pushing myself forward? Am I not flaunting myself? Am I not showing off? Is this not my desire for status?” You cannot figure out what exactly is the nature of your own actions. The legitimate needs, aspirations, determination and desires of humanity, as well as that which you can strive to achieve, that which is proper and that which you ought to be doing, you will turn these things over many times and ponder them many times in your heart. When you are unable to sleep at night, you will

contemplate over and over again, “Should I take on that work? Oh, but I’m not good enough, I dare not do it. I’m stupid and dumb. I don’t have the gifts that person has, nor the caliber!” When you are eating, you think, “They eat three meals a day and perform their duty well, and their life has value. I eat three meals a day but do not perform my duty well, and my life has no value whatsoever. I’m indebted to God, and to my brothers and sisters! I don’t deserve and shouldn’t eat even one plate of food.” When someone is too cowardly, they are worthless, and they are not able to accomplish anything. No matter what happens to them, when cowardly people meet with some difficulty, they shrink back. Why do they do this? One reason is that this is caused by their feeling of inferiority. Because they feel inferior, they do not dare to go before people, they cannot even take on the obligations and responsibilities they ought to take on, nor can they take on what they are actually capable of achieving within the scope of their own ability and caliber, and within the scope of the experience of their own humanity. This feeling of inferiority affects every aspect of their humanity, it affects their personality and, of course, it also affects their character. When around other people, they seldom express their own views, and you hardly ever hear them clarify their own standpoint or opinion. When they encounter an issue, they dare not speak, but instead constantly shrink back and retreat. When there are few people there, they feel brave enough to sit among them, but when there are a lot of people there, they look for a corner and head for where the lighting is dim, not daring to come among other people. Whenever they feel they would like to positively and actively say something and express their own views and opinions to show that what they think is right, they do not even have the courage to do that. Whenever they have such ideas, their feeling of inferiority comes pouring out all at once, and it controls them, stifles them, telling them, “Don’t say anything, you’re no good. Don’t express your views, just keep your ideas to yourself. If there is anything in your heart you really want to say, just make a note of it on the computer and ruminate on it by yourself. You must not let anyone else know about it. What if you said something wrong? It would be so embarrassing!” This voice keeps telling you not to do this, not to do that, not to say this, not to say that, causing you to swallow back down every word you wish to say. When there is something you want to say that you have turned over in your heart for a long time, you beat a retreat and dare not say it, or else you feel embarrassed to say it, believing that you ought not to do it, and if you do it then you feel as though you have broken some rule or violated the law. And when one day you do actively express your own view, deep inside you feel incomparably perturbed and uneasy. Even though this feeling of great unease gradually fades, your feeling of inferiority slowly smothers the ideas, intentions and plans you have for wanting to speak, wanting to express your own views, wanting to be a normal person, and wanting to be just like everyone else. Those who don’t understand you believe you are a person of few words, quiet, shy of character, someone who does not like to stand out from the crowd. When you speak in front of lots of other people, you feel embarrassed and your face turns red; you are

somewhat introverted, and only you, in actuality, know that you feel inferior. Your heart is filled with this feeling of inferiority and this feeling has been around for a long time, it is not some temporary feeling. Rather, it tightly controls your thoughts from deep inside your soul, it tightly seals your lips, and so regardless of how correctly you understand things, or what views and opinions you have toward people, events and things, you dare only to think and turn things over in your own heart, never daring to speak out loud. Whether other people might approve of what you say, or correct and criticize you, you will not dare to face or see such an outcome. Why is this? It is because your feeling of inferiority is inside you, telling you, “Don’t do that, you’re just not up to it. You don’t have that kind of caliber, you don’t have that kind of reality, you shouldn’t do that, that’s just not you. Don’t do anything or think anything now. You’ll only be the real you by living in inferiority. You’re not qualified to pursue the truth or to open up your heart and say what you want and connect with others like other people do. And it’s because you’re no good, you’re not as good as they are.” This feeling of inferiority guides people’s thinking inside their minds; it inhibits them from fulfilling the obligations a normal person should perform and from living the life of normal humanity they should be living, while it also directs the ways and means, and the direction and goals of how they regard people and things, how they comport themselves and act. Even if they believe they should be an honest person and they enjoy being an honest person, yet they never dare to express their desire to be an honest person in words or deeds in order to enter into the life of being an honest person. Because of their feeling of inferiority, they do not even dare to be an honest person—they are totally devoid of courage. When they do say something honest, they hurriedly look at the people around them, and think, “Is anyone forming an opinion of me? Will they think, ‘Are you trying to be an honest person? Don’t you just want to be an honest person so you can be saved? Isn’t this just the desire to be blessed?’ Oh no, I don’t dare say anything. They can all speak honestly, it’s just me who can’t. I’m not qualified like they are, I’m on the lowest rung.” We can see from these specific manifestations and revelations that once this one negative emotion—the feeling of inferiority—begins to take effect and has laid down roots in people’s innermost hearts, then unless they pursue the truth it will be very difficult for them to uproot it and break away from its control, and they will be controlled by it in everything they do. Even though this feeling cannot be said to be a corrupt disposition, it has already caused a severely negative effect; it severely harms their humanity and has a great negative impact on the various emotions and the speech and actions of their normal humanity, with very serious consequences. Its minor influence is to affect their character, their predilections and their aspirations; its major influence is to affect their objectives and direction in life. From the causes of this feeling of inferiority, from its process and from the consequences it brings to a person, from whichever aspect you look at it, is it not something that people should let go? (Yes.) Some people say, “I don’t think I’m inferior and I’m not under any kind of control. No one has ever provoked me or belittled me, nor has anyone ever stifled me. I

live very freely, so doesn't that mean that I do not have this feeling of inferiority?" Is that correct? (No, sometimes we still have that feeling of inferiority.) You may still have it, to a greater or lesser extent. It may not dominate your innermost heart, but in some scenarios it can arise in a moment. For example, you bump into someone you idolize, someone much more talented than you, someone with more special skills and gifts than you, someone more domineering than you, someone more overbearing than you, someone more wicked than you, someone taller and more attractive than you, someone with status in society, someone rich, someone with more education and with higher status than you, someone who is older and has believed in God for longer, someone with more experience and reality in their belief in God, and then you cannot stop your feeling of inferiority from arising. When this feeling arises, your "living very freely" vanishes, you become timid and you lose your nerve, you ponder how to phrase your words, your facial expression becomes unnatural, you feel restrained in your words and movements, and you begin to package yourself. These and other manifestations happen because of the arising of your feeling of inferiority. Of course, this feeling of inferiority is momentary, and when this feeling arises, you just need to examine yourself, be discerning, and not be controlled by it.

The various emotions that need to be let go of that we are discussing today are things that are deeply embedded in people's souls. The effect these things have on you is not a temporary one, but rather their effect is far-reaching and profound. When you are finding it hard to sleep in the middle of the night, when you are all alone, those people, events and things that caused negative emotions to arise in you and that are deeply rooted in your memory float little by little to the surface of your mind. A word, a sound, even a curse, a beating, a scene, a thing, a group of people, or the sequence of an event from start to finish—all these people, events and things from deep in your memory that caused all manner of negative emotions to arise in you play before your mind like a movie. It plays over and over again, until finally and without realizing it you retreat back into those negative emotions hiding deep in your soul, and into that moment that impacted your feelings, your humanity, your personality, and your future life. When you are all alone, when you are up against difficulties, when you have a decision to make, and when you are in despair, you cannot help but curl up into a ball and avoid everyone, retreating into your innermost self to that situation, that event, and that group of people which caused you pain. Even though these people, events and things made you feel attacked and they hurt you, and they planted within you all manner of negative emotions, when you feel downcast and dejected, when you are faced with failure, even when you are being pruned and dealt with or are rejected by your brothers and sisters, you cannot help but retreat back inside that negative feeling that exerts its influence over your life, whether it be depression, hatred, anger or inferiority. Although these emotions brought you all manner of pain, or else they made you feel uneasy, or they made you cry, or they made you feel irritable, you still cannot stop yourself from always returning

to that negative emotion you felt at that moment. When you return to that moment, that negative emotion once again strengthens its influence on you. When this negative emotion affects you, reminds you, and alerts you over and over again, it invisibly disrupts your listening to God's words and your understanding of the truth principles. When once again these negative emotions rise up in your innermost heart, when they assert their dominance over your thoughts, your interest in the truth will grow weaker, even turning to aversion, or feelings of defiance may arise. Because of the hurt and unfair treatment you have received in the past, you may look upon mankind and society with greater hostility, and hate everything that has happened as well as, of course, everything that will happen in the future. These emotions are manifesting constantly within your heart, and they repeatedly influence your feelings, your state and your condition. They also repeatedly influence how you feel in the performance of your duty, as well as your attitude and views in the performance of your duty and, of course, your motivation and resolve for pursuing the truth. Sometimes you have only just set your determination to pursue the truth and to never feel dejected again, never to believe that you are not good enough and beat a retreat again; however, when a momentary negative emotion fills your heart, your motivation for pursuing the truth may disappear completely, vanishing without a trace in an instant. When your motivation to pursue the truth vanishes without a trace in this kind of situation, you then feel that pursuing the truth is uninteresting and that believing in God and being saved hold no meaning for you. The arising of this kind of feeling and state makes you unwilling to come before God again, unwilling to pray-read God's words or listen to God's words, much less, of course, do you have any determination or wish to put God's words into practice, or become one who pursues the truth. This is the tremendous obstacle and impact these various negative emotions have on people who walk the path of pursuing the truth. More accurately, they cause disruptions and damage to people, and they will from time to time take the shred of confidence you have just managed to muster and the few principles of conduct you have only just understood and turn them to naught. In an instant, they make you unable to perceive in your innermost heart God's existence, God's blessings, God's sovereignty, and His provision for you, and instantly you are filled with any one of these negative emotions. When you are filled with these negative emotions, your corrupt dispositions will instantly take control within you. When you are taken over by your corrupt dispositions, you instantly become a different person and you show a different face to the people, events and things around you. The love you had before is gone, the patience you had before is gone, the energy you had before to suffer and pay the price, to endure hardships and work hard, is gone, the motivation you used to have to skip a meal and sleep a little less in order to perform your duty well is gone, and what takes its place is hostility toward every single person. What is the primary source of this hostility you feel for everyone? It comes from your corrupt disposition, but also the situations, the people, the events and the things that you have experienced in the past that have caused

negative emotions to arise in you. You say, “I tolerate others, but who tolerates me? I show others understanding, but who shows understanding to me? Not even my parents or my brothers and sisters show me any understanding! Other people all make mistakes, so I can too! Other people vent negativity when being dealt with and pruned, so why can’t I? Other people can jockey for influence and position, so why can’t I? If you can, so can I! Other people cheat and try to shirk their responsibilities when performing their duties, so I will too. Other people don’t pursue the truth, so neither will I. Other people act without principles, so I will too. Other people don’t protect the interests of God’s house, so neither will I. I’m just going to follow what everyone else does. What’s wrong with that?” What kind of manifestation is this? Whether we look at it in terms of your thoughts or the disposition you reveal, it is nothing less than a 180-degree turn, as though you have become someone else. What is happening here? The root cause is that you have undergone a change within. You may look the same on the surface and your daily routine is unchanged, your tone of speech is unchanged, your appearance is unchanged, and no one is leading you on or inciting you behind the scenes, so why the sudden surge of emotion? One reason is that it is caused by the negative emotions planted deep inside your heart. Someone who always harbors the negative feelings of hatred and anger inside them will, when their state is good, often come before God to pray, read God’s words, and will ensure that everything proceeds normally when pursuing the truth and performing their duty. If they encounter something that is not to their liking, or they encounter some setback, failure or embarrassment in work or life, or they suffer some loss of face or harm to their interests, the hatred and anger brought about by the negative emotions inside them cause them to become frenzied with rage and go berserk. Perhaps they previously experienced some events that were out of the ordinary, such as being mistreated, or randomly beaten by evildoers, or having their property seized, or being bullied or even humiliated by wicked people; some people may have had colleagues or superiors make things difficult for them at work, and some people may have suffered discrimination and unfair treatment from classmates and teachers in school due to their poor academic performance, poor conditions at home, or because their parents were farmers and from the lower class of society, and so on. When a person suffers all kinds of unfair treatment in society, when their human rights are stripped away, or when their interests are expropriated or their property is taken away from them, the seeds of hatred naturally become sown in the depths of their heart, and as a matter of course they will carry this hatred into the way they approach society, mankind, and even their own family, and their friends and relatives. The views of those who have hatred sown in their hearts are influenced by this hatred, and their emotions also will naturally be colored by it.

Once hatred has taken root deep within a person’s heart, it naturally becomes an emotion, and when someone lives within this emotion of hatred, their perspective on mankind and on any matter is no longer proper. Their views on people and things

become skewed and contrary to how they would normally be. They become unable to correctly comprehend any normal and proper person, event, or thing, and they will also judge and condemn them. They always look for an opportunity to vent their grievances and hatred. They hope that, one day, they will have power and influence, and that they will be able to set all these grievances to rights and exact vengeance on those who have bullied and hurt them in the past. For the time being, however, they have no suitable way to achieve this, so ultimately some of them will come to believe in God. After they have begun to believe in God, they think, “Oh, I now believe in God and I can now hold my head up high. I will let God decide things for me so that those wicked people get their just deserts. This is great!” So, now that they believe in God, they bury their hatred and anger deep down inside, they give their all to expend themselves, pay the price, suffer, run around and work in God’s house, hoping that one day their efforts will bring them good luck and turn things around, and that, when the day comes that they become stronger and no longer weak, they will make sure those who have bullied them and so humiliated them are punished. Their purpose in doing all this is to witness with their own eyes the punishment and retribution exacted upon those who have caused them such endless pain and humiliation. They carry this emotion into their belief in God, paying the price, and expending themselves. On the surface it seems as though they never complain or desire or require anything, that they just wholeheartedly throw themselves into performing their duty in God’s house, and that no amount of suffering is too great. In reality, however, those emotions of hatred and anger inside their innermost heart remain unresolved and they have not let them go. The moment someone gives them their opinion and reveals their corrupt disposition, immediately they subconsciously flee back into their emotions of hatred and anger in order to face and solve this problem. They think, “Are you disparaging me? Are you trying to bully me because you think I’m guileless? So many people bully me, but just you wait and see what end is in store for them!” Someone just has to say something about them and they hurt them, even if it is unintentional. But if that person touches upon some sore point, their emotions of hatred and anger are stirred, causing them to unconsciously flee back into feeling hateful about everything. It is clear that this viewpoint, this emotion, has affected their perspective on and attitude toward people and things, and the ways and means in which they comport themselves and act. Regardless of who raises legitimate opinions and suggestions to them, they always think, “They’re looking down on me and wish to bully me. Do they think I’m easily pushed around?” They use this viewpoint and this way of doing things to deal with the situation, and all the while their emotions of hatred and anger become more entrenched in their heart. Once the emotions of hatred and anger become deeply embedded in their innermost heart, they grow continually, and the person continually uses them to face all manner of people, events and things, and they also constantly remind themselves that they have to hate everyone and that no one is nice to them. Even if they believe for a moment that someone is good to them, they will very soon tell

themselves involuntarily and subconsciously, “Don’t think like that. Apart from God who is truly good, there are no good people. Everyone gloats at your misfortunes and no one wishes you well. They think you’re guileless so they bully you, and when they see you succeed at something they just flatter you and try to ingratiate themselves to you. So don’t believe anyone and don’t look upon anyone with kindness. You must be guarded and suspicious with other people.” Whenever someone says a word to them, they analyze it, thinking, “Is he coming for me? Why did he say that? Is he trying to attack me and get even with me for something? Is he trying to push me around?” These feelings of suspicion, hatred and anger repeatedly remind them and make them subconsciously use these feelings in their approach to and in dealing with every kind of person, event, and thing, and yet they themselves are totally unaware that these are all types of negative emotion. These negative emotions exert tight control over their judgment and tightly bind their thinking, and they prevent them from viewing any person, event or thing from the correct perspective or standpoint. When one starts living under the sway of these negative emotions, it becomes very difficult to escape their control. Before someone lets go of these negative emotions, they unknowingly live within them, looking out from them at people, events and things, approaching people, events and things with the wrong views that have arisen from these negative emotions. First, this inevitably leads to extremism, suspicion, doubt and even hotheadedness, and they will also look on others with hostility and attack them. These negative emotions direct the person’s thoughts and views within their heart, and they direct their every word and deed. That is why, when this person becomes mired in these negative emotions, if they are someone who pursues the truth, these negative emotions give rise to obstacles in and have an impact on their heart and mind, and so they practice the truth a lot less. Because of the adulteration, disruption and damage caused by these negative emotions, there is a limit to the truth they are able to put into practice and, when they encounter some situation, they are always influenced by their feelings. Of course, the most important effect is that they fall under the influence of these various negative emotions, and therefore practicing the truth becomes exhausting for them. They are unable to make use of the conscience and reason of normal humanity, nor the free will and instinct created by God, nor the truth principles man should practice and adhere to in their approach to the people and things around them, and in their judgment of the people and things around them.

From these things I have spoken about up to now, whichever way you look at it, it is clear that various negative emotions occupy the minds of every single person to a greater or lesser extent. Because they occupy people’s minds, a certain amount of difficulty will arise as they practice the truth. That is why, as they go through the process of pursuing the truth, people must continually let go of the people, events and things which cause negative emotions to arise in them. For example, the negative emotion of inferiority that we discussed earlier. Regardless of what situation caused your feeling of inferiority to arise or who or what event caused it to arise, you should harbor the correct

understanding toward your own caliber, your strengths, your talents, and the quality of your own humanity. It is not right to feel inferior, nor is it right to feel superior—they are both negative emotions. Inferiority can bind your actions, bind your thoughts, and influence your views and standpoint. Similarly, superiority has this negative effect, too. Therefore, whether it is inferiority or another negative emotion, you should harbor the correct understanding toward the interpretations that lead to the arising of this emotion. Firstly, you should understand that those interpretations are incorrect, and whether it is regarding your caliber, your talent, or the quality of your humanity, the assessments and conclusions they make about you are always wrong. So, how can you accurately evaluate and know yourself, and break away from the feeling of inferiority? You should take God's words as the basis for gaining knowledge of yourself, learning what your humanity, caliber, and talent are like, and what strengths you have. For example, suppose that you used to like singing and did it well, but some people kept criticizing you and belittling you, saying that you were tone-deaf and that your singing was out of tune, so now you feel that you cannot sing well and no longer dare to do it in front of others. Because those worldly, muddle-headed, and mediocre people made inaccurate evaluations and judgments about you, the rights that your humanity deserves were curtailed, and your talent was stifled. As a result, you do not dare to even sing a song, and you are only brave enough to let go and sing out loud when no one is around or you are just by yourself. Because you ordinarily feel so horribly repressed, when you are not alone you dare not sing a song; you dare to sing only when you are alone, enjoying the time when you can sing out loud and clear, and what a wonderful, liberating time that is! Is that not so? Because of the harm that people have done to you, you do not know or cannot see clearly what it is that you can actually do, what you are good at, and what you are not good at. In this kind of situation, you must make a correct evaluation and take the correct measure of yourself according to God's words. You should establish what you have learned and where your strengths lie, and go out and do whatever it is that you can do; as for those things which you cannot do, your shortcomings and deficiencies, you should reflect on and know them, and you should also accurately evaluate and know what your caliber is like, and whether it is good or bad. If you cannot understand or gain clear knowledge of your own problems, then ask the people around you with understanding to make an appraisal of you. Regardless of whether what they say is accurate, it will at least give you something to reference and consider and will enable you to have a basic judgment or characterization of yourself. You can then solve the essential problem of negative emotions like inferiority, and gradually emerge from them. Such feelings of inferiority are easy to resolve if one can discern them, awaken to them, and seek the truth.

To those who have suffered unequal treatment, who have been mistreated and discriminated against in society, in their various professions, and in various environments, are the feelings of hatred and anger that arise in them easy to resolve? (Yes.) How are they resolved? (They must regard all people, events and things according to God's

words, let go of these negative emotions of hatred and anger, and let go of the people, events and things that have hurt them in the past.) “Letting go” are just words—how do you let go? For example, a woman dates a man and ends up being tricked into bed by him and cheated into giving him money, and whenever she thinks of this she feels a sudden uprush of anger, and when this anger arises she clenches her fists and her innermost heart is filled with hatred. She thinks of that man’s face, she thinks of everything he said, she thinks of everything he did which hurt her, and the more she thinks of these things, the angrier she gets, the more furious she gets, the more the rage burns, and the more her hatred grows. She keeps thinking of it and no longer wants to do her duty, and she feels worse and worse, telling herself not to rest but to just keep working and talking with other people, and when she cannot sleep at night, she must rely on sleeping pills to fall asleep. She dares not be alone or let her heart rest. The moment she finds herself alone, the moment she takes a rest, this hatred rushes up in her and she wants to take revenge, to make the one who hurt her die, and the more unpleasant the death the better. If one day she does actually hear the news that that man has died a tragic death, only then is she able to let go of her feelings of hatred and anger. Think about it: If he really did die, if he got his just deserts and was punished, would you be able to expunge that event that caused the hatred and anger to arise and that memory that is buried so deep in your innermost heart? Would you really be able to let go of the hatred of that event? Could it truly disappear? (No.) So, is making that person who hurt you disappear and suffer punishment, or die a most unpleasant death, or suffer retribution, or come to a bad end the way to resolve hatred and anger? Is it the way to let go of hatred and anger? (No.) And so, some people say, “When you discover that you’re harboring these emotions of hatred and anger, you should let them go.” Is this the path of practice? (No.) So what is it when someone says, “You should let them go”? (It is doctrine.) Right, it is doctrine, not the path of practice. I have just told you how to resolve the feeling of inferiority, and this is one way to let go of inferiority. Do you now have the path of practice? (Yes.) So how do you let go of hatred and anger? Is it the path of practice to not think about them? (No.) Some people say to expel them from your memory—is this the way to solve the problem? Would it mean that you have let these things go? (No, it wouldn’t.) Shaking your heads, closing your eyes and not thinking of anything, or keeping yourselves busy is not the way to solve this problem, and this is not the correct path of practice to let go of these negative emotions. So what specifically is the path of practice? How can you let these things go? How can you resolve this matter? Do you have a good method of doing this? To let go of these things, you must face them, not hide from them or flee from them. Are you not afraid of being alone? Are you not afraid of recalling this event? Are you not afraid that someone will reopen your wound? So face it, and take all those people, events and things that have wounded you and caused you to feel hatred and anger in the past, and all those people who have left a deep impression on you and whom you can remember, and write them all down, discern

their humanity one by one according to God's words, know their dispositions, dissect, reveal and know their essence, and see what exactly those people are. Your final conclusion—the only conclusion you can come to—will be that those people are all evil, they are demons, and not people! No matter what method they use to hurt you or entrap you and cause you harm, their essence is that of demons, not people, and they are absolutely not objects chosen by God. There are none among those people who are capable of coming to God's house, whereas you are God's chosen. You are now able to listen to sermons in God's house, perform your duty in God's house, and you can come before God—this is God raising you up and showing you kindness. Those people, on the other hand, have never been regarded as people in the eyes of God. That is why, once you have begun to believe in God, you should put distance between yourself and them. If you still wish to associate with them, you will certainly be unable to prevail against them, and you will be oppressed and punished by them, discriminated against and insulted by them, harmed by them, even abused by them. Everything they do demonstrates what demons do and what Satan does. If you enjoy associating with them and fighting with them, then you are not a person either. You are the same as them, and you are capable of doing the same things as them. This is because demons not only entrap people, but also do harm to each other—this is the nature of a demon. Seeing as you have been chosen by God and you belong to mankind whom God created, how could demons not pick on you? How could they not hurt you and entrap you? They harm everyone. They do harm to each other, so even more so they will not let up or leave people alone! This demonstrates that this world and mankind are demonic and are inundated through and through with the deeds of Satan. It is incredibly difficult to be a good person, and it is also incredibly difficult to just be an ordinary person who does not want to be pushed around by anyone. You try to avoid it, but you cannot. This is how the world is. From understanding enough to be able to start school, to entering into society and starting work, all the way up to death, who has never been pushed around during their lifetime, or deceived and persecuted? There is absolutely no one like this. No matter how skilled or capable you are, there will always be someone more formidable than you to push you around. The difference is, however, that everyone has different philosophies for living. Some people endure and resign themselves to adversity, but some are different. After experiencing being deceived many times, and having been bullied to the point where they cannot bear it anymore and having suffered too severely, emotions such as hatred and anger arise in them, and they hate both mankind and society. Once you have seen clearly the essence and nature of those who harm you and have seen that their essence is that of demons, the hatred and anger you feel are no longer directed toward people, but toward demons, and is your hatred not then lessened? (Yes.) Your hatred is somewhat lessened. And what is the advantage of it being somewhat lessened? It is that, when you encounter that kind of situation again, you will not get emotional again and will not regard the situation in a hotheaded way. Instead, you will regard it correctly, you will discern and approach it

using God's words and the truth, you will regard those who once again cause you harm from the standpoint of the conscience and reason of humanity, and you will use the way God has taught you, the way and principles God has told you, in your approach to them. When you approach them using the way God has told you, hatred and anger will not arise in you again, but rather you will come to know the corruption of mankind, know the face of demons, and confirm and verify that God's words are the truth in a much more profound and progressive way. When you use God's words and the way God has told you, the way He has taught you, to view such a matter as this, then this matter will not only not harm you again, and not only will it not cause your hatred and anger to deepen, but on the contrary, it will cause the hatred and anger inside your innermost heart to gradually lessen, and as you experience this kind of matter again and again, your stature will grow, and your disposition will change.

As for how exactly you are to let go of that past hatred and anger we have been discussing, one aspect is to see clearly these so-called non-humans, to see clearly that their nature essence is that of the devil Satan, their essence is harmful to people, their essence is identical to and shares the same source as that of the devil Satan and the great red dragon, they entrap you, they cause you harm, just as Satan corrupts mankind. Once you understand this point, do you not then let go somewhat of your emotions of hatred and anger? (Yes.) Some people say, "It's not enough to just understand these things. Sometimes I get sad just thinking about it!" What should you do when you feel sad? Can you be without any sadness at all? Scars always leave their marks, but having these marks is not necessarily a bad thing. It is precisely these phenomena of unfairness in society, and these people, events and things that cause hatred and anger to arise in you, that allow you to sense the unfairness in society, that allow you to sense the malevolence, maliciousness and evil of mankind, and that allow you to sense the unfairness and desolation of the world, thereby causing the desire to yearn for the light and the longing for the Savior to save you from all this suffering to arise in you. So, is there a context to this desire? (Yes.) Does this desire come easily? (No.) If you had never been harmed among mankind or in society, you would think that there are many good people around. If you go out and trip over and someone comes to help you up, or you go shopping but do not have enough money and the person next to you helps you out, or you lose your purse and someone finds it and returns it to you, you will think there are many good people around. In this frame of mind and with you having this understanding of society, how much understanding will you have toward the meaning of God's salvation of mankind or the necessity of God doing the work of salvation? How great will your desire be for the Savior to come and save you from the sea of suffering? You will not want it much, will you? It would just be a kind of wish, a kind of fantasy. The more someone undergoes hardship and suffering in the world, suffering all manner of unfair treatment, or, to put it another way, the longer someone has lived in this society and among people, someone in whom profound hatred and anger has arisen toward

mankind and society, the more they will wish for God to bring this evil age to an end as soon as possible, to destroy this evil mankind as soon as possible, to save them from the sea of suffering as soon as possible, to exact retribution on the evil and to protect the good—is that not so? (It is.) So now, at this point, you ponder, “Oh, I really must thank those demons. I must thank them for their unfair treatment and for discriminating against me, insulting me and oppressing me. It is their evil deeds and the harm they’ve caused me that have forced me to come before God, that have made me not hanker after the world or life among these people anymore, and that have made me willing to come to God’s house, to come before God, to willingly expend myself for God, to devote my whole life, to live a life of meaning, and not to associate with evil people anymore. Otherwise, I would still be just like them, following worldly trends, and pursuing fame and gain, the good life, pleasures of the flesh, and a wonderful future. Now I believe in God, so there is no need to walk that crooked path any longer. I don’t look at them with hostility anymore. I see clearly who they have always been. They are there to render service, foils to God’s work. Without them, I wouldn’t be able to see exactly what the essence of this world and this mankind is, and would still be thinking that this world and this mankind are more and more wonderful. Now that I have undergone this suffering, I will no longer place my aspirations and hopes in this world or in the hands of any great person. Instead, I hope for God’s kingdom to come, and for the fairness and righteousness of God to take power.” By contemplating in this way, are your emotions of hatred and anger not gradually eased? (They are.) They are eased. And have your perspective and views on people, events and things within your heart not undergone a change? Does this not signify that the path you will walk in the future, your choices, and your objectives are gradually undergoing a change, and that you are gradually turning toward pursuing the correct goals and direction? (Yes.) You bring to mind the things that have happened in the past that broke your heart and which have caused you to hate the world and, once you have clearly seen their meaning and essence, your heart becomes filled with gratitude to God. When you become filled with gratitude, do you not then immerse yourself in enjoyment of it? Do you not then think, “Those unbelievers who don’t believe in God are still being deceived, harmed and devoured by the king of devils itself, Satan. It’s so pitiful! If I didn’t believe in God and hadn’t come before God, I’d be just like them, pursuing the world, rushing around trying to get fame, gain, and status, going through so much suffering and it never occurring to me to change course. I’d be immersed in inescapable sin—how sad! Now that I believe in God, I understand the truth and can see through this matter. The path people should follow is that in pursuit of the truth—this is most valuable, most meaningful. Now that God has shown me such kindness so that I no longer have to undergo that suffering, I will set my determination to follow God till the end, to listen to His words, to live in accordance with His words, and no longer live like I did before, when I wasn’t living like a human being at all.” You see, this good aspiration has arisen, right? Have not the correct goals and life direction gradually taken shape

within people's thoughts and awareness? And are they not now able to embark upon the right path in life? (They are.) So, when these positive emotions and aspirations arise, is it still necessary to think about those negative emotions? After thinking them through for a while or thinking them over several times until you understand them, when these matters no longer disturb your mind or control the path you walk then, without being aware of it, you let go of these emotions of hatred and anger, they no longer occupy your heart and, over time, you resolve the issue of your corrupt disposition. Does the matter of resolving your corrupt disposition relate to pursuing the truth? (Yes.) And does that not mean that you have embarked upon the right path in life? It is not difficult to embark upon the right path; first you must let go of all your various views on the world, one's humanity, and mankind which do not accord with the facts. How can you see clearly these views which do not accord with the facts? How can you resolve them? These views which do not accord with the facts lie hidden within the emotions of your heart, and these emotions direct the judgment and thinking of your humanity, as well as your character, your speech and actions, as well as, of course, your conscience and reason. More importantly, they direct and influence your objectives in life and the path you walk. Therefore, let go of all negative emotions and let go of all emotions that have control over you—this is the first step you should practice in pursuing the truth. First resolve the issue of the various negative emotions, resolve them as you discover them, and leave no trouble behind. When these issues are resolved, you will no longer be shackled, carrying these negative emotions with you in your pursuit of the truth, and you will be able to seek the truth and resolve it when you reveal a corrupt disposition. Is this an easy thing to achieve? It is not actually that easy.

While I have been fellowshiping and dissecting these negative emotions, have you been applying what I say to yourselves? Some people say, "I'm young and I don't have much life experience. I've never undergone any setbacks or failures or experienced any trauma. Doesn't that mean that I don't have any negative emotions?" Everyone has them; everyone will encounter many difficulties and will be liable to give rise to negative emotions. For example, because of the background of society's evil trends in this age, many children are growing up in single-parent households, some without the love of a mother, some without the love of a father. If anyone is without the love of a mother or a father, they can be considered to be missing something. Irrespective of the age you are at which you lose your father's or mother's love, from the perspective of normal humanity, it will have an impact on you to a greater or lesser extent. Some people will close themselves off, some will feel inferior, some will become irritable, some will have a feeling of unease and insecurity, and some will discriminate against and avoid the opposite sex. In any case, those who grow up in this particular environment will, to a greater or lesser extent, develop some abnormalities within their normal humanity. In modern parlance, they get a bit distorted. For example, girls who grow up without a father's love will be relatively inexperienced when it comes to men. They have to learn

how to take care of their own basic needs from a young age, and even carry the heavy burden of the family's finances and the various tasks that need to be performed, just as their mothers do, unwittingly learning early to worry about and take care of things, or protect themselves, their mothers and their families. They have a strong awareness regarding self-protection and will also have very strong feelings of inferiority. Without being aware of it, once they have grown up in this particular environment, they will unconsciously feel in their innermost heart as though they have some deficiency and this is the feeling they have, regardless of whether or not this feeling has ever severely affected their judgment or decisions in the past. In short, once a person is fully grown, there will be some negative emotions that direct their thoughts which have been there for a long time, and there will always be a reason for them being there. For example, if some boys who grow up in single-parent households have no father but only a mother, they learn from an early age how to take on household chores alongside their mothers, their characters become somewhat maternal. They enjoy looking after girls and feel a sympathy with them, they feel inclusive toward girls and enjoy protecting women, and they feel relatively prejudiced against men. There are some who even feel deep inside a kind of faint dislike and aversion for men, they discriminate against them, believing that men are all feckless and irresponsible, and that they do not do what is right and proper. Of course, there are some among these people who are pretty normal. It is unavoidable, however, that there will be some who have some particular, unrealistic or inappropriate thoughts about men or women, and these all have deficiencies and faults in their humanity. If someone discovers that you have a problem like this and they point it out to you, or if you discover and come to know that you have this kind of serious negative emotion yourself through self-examination, and that it is already affecting your choices and practice in how you view people and things, and how you comport yourself and act, then you should reflect on and know yourself. You should discern and resolve this negative emotion in the light of God's words, strive to cast off the bonds, the control and the influence of this negative emotion, fight to prevent the pleasure, anger, sorrow, joy, thinking, judgment, conscience and reason of your humanity from becoming distorted, taken to extremes or taken beyond their limits. What else? Once you have striven to prevent these things from happening, you will be able to live a normal life with the conscience and reason of normal humanity and with the instincts and free will of normal humanity that God has granted to man. That is, you strive to keep your thoughts, instincts, free will, capacity for judgment, and your conscience and reason within the scope of normal humanity prescribed by God. Therefore, whatever negative emotion is controlling you, you have a problem with that aspect of your normal humanity. You understand this, right? (Yes.)

People's pursuit of the truth is achieved on the basis of the normal conscience, reason, instinct and free will of normal humanity, and the range of normal human emotions. You see, within the scope of normal humanity given to man by God, there is nothing extreme, nothing excessive, nothing distorted, and there is no split or perversion

of personality. How is being excessive manifested? Always thinking you are no good, that you are nothing—is this not excessive? Is this not unrealistic? (It is.) Blindly holding men in high regard, believing that men are good, that men are more capable than women, that women are incompetent, that women are no good, that they are not as able as men and that, taken as a whole, they are not as good as men—is this not excessive? (It is.) How is taking things to extremes manifested? It is always wanting to go beyond what you can instinctively achieve and always wanting to push your limits. Some people see others sleep five hours a night and then go on to be able to work normally for a whole day, so then they must sleep for four hours a night and see how many days they can last. Some people see others eat two meals a day and have an abundance of energy, able to keep working all day, so then they must eat one meal a day—is this not physically harmful? What's the point of always trying to appear more capable than you are? What are you competing with your own flesh for? Some people in their fifties have loose teeth and cannot even chew bones or bite sugarcane anymore. They say, "Don't worry, I can lose a couple of teeth, no problem, I'll just keep chewing! I must overcome this difficulty. If I don't try to overcome it, then I'm just weak and useless!" Is this not taking things to extremes? (Yes, it is.) You feel you have to achieve that which you cannot achieve and which your humanity cannot instinctively attain. You cannot attain them with your talent, wisdom, or stature, or with the things you have learned, or with your age and gender, but even though you cannot attain them, you still feel you must. Some women exaggerate their strengths, saying, "Us women can do what men can do. Men can construct buildings, and so can we; men can fly planes, and so can we; men can be boxers, and so can we; men can carry two hundred pounds in a sack, and so can we." But in the end, they are crushed so much by it that they spit blood. Are they still trying to appear more able than they are? Is this not extreme? Is this not excessive? These manifestations are all extreme and excessive. Absurd people often consider problems and view people, events, and things in this way, and this is also how they approach and solve issues. Therefore, if people want to resolve these excessive manifestations, they must first make an end of and let go of those extreme things. The most serious of these things are the various extreme emotions within their innermost hearts. Under certain circumstances, these emotions frequently cause them to have extreme thoughts and use extreme methods, thereby causing them to go astray. These extreme emotions not only cause people to look foolish, ignorant, and stupid, but they make them go astray and suffer loss. God wants a normal person who pursues the truth, not an absurd, excessive and extreme person to pursue the truth. Why is this? People who are absurd and extreme are not capable of understanding things correctly, much less of purely understanding the truth. People who are fallacious and extreme also use extreme ways to understand, approach and practice the truth—this is very dangerous and troublesome for them. They will suffer great loss, and it also seriously dishonors God. God does not need you to push your limits, or to use extreme and radical methods

to practice the truth. Rather, under circumstances wherein your humanity is normal in all respects, and within the scope of humanity of that which you can understand and achieve, He wants you to put God's words into practice, practice the truth, and meet His demands. The final goal is for your corrupt disposition to change, to gradually rectify and change all your thoughts and views, to increasingly deepen your understanding of the corrupt dispositions of man and your knowledge of God, and thereby make your submission to God more and more concrete and real—this is how you will attain salvation.

Is it meaningful for Me to fellowship on how to let go of the various negative emotions? (Yes.) What is My purpose in doing so? It is so that, regardless of whether these various negative emotions arose a long time ago or whether they are arising right now in the present, you are able to take the correct approach to them, to dispel and resolve them in the right way, to leave these wrong, negative emotions behind, and to gradually come to the point where you no longer become mired in these negative emotions, no matter what happens. When the various negative emotions arise again, you will have awareness and discernment, you will know the harm they do to you and, of course, you must also gradually let go of them. When these emotions arise, you will be able to practice self-restraint and apply wisdom, and you will be able to let them go or seek the truth to resolve and handle them. In any case, they should not affect you adopting the correct ways, the correct attitude, and the correct standpoint in how you view people and things, and how you comport yourself and act. In this way, the obstacles and blockages along your path in pursuit of the truth will grow ever fewer, you will be able to pursue the truth within the scope of normal humanity required by God without disturbance, or with ever fewer disturbances, and you will resolve the corrupt dispositions you reveal in all kinds of situations. Do you now have a way forward regarding how to resolve the various negative emotions? First, examine yourself regarding the corruption you reveal and see whether these negative emotions are influencing you inside and whether you are bringing these negative emotions into how you view people and things, and how you comport yourself and act. In addition, examine the matters that are deeply etched in your memory within your innermost heart and see whether these things that have happened to you have left any scars or marks, and whether they are constantly controlling you to use the correct ways and methods to view people and things, and to comport yourself and act. In this way, when the various negative emotions that arose when you felt hurt in the past are uprooted, then what you should do next is to dissect, discern and resolve them one by one according to the truth. For example, some people have been promoted to become leaders several times, but have several times been replaced or reassigned, and a very negative emotion arises in them. Throughout this process of being promoted and then replaced and reassigned over and over, they never realize why it is happening at all, and therefore never know their own deficiencies and shortcomings, their own corruption, or what the root cause is of the transgressions they commit. They never resolve these issues, and an impression

is left deep inside them, and they think, “This is how God’s house makes use of people. When you’re being made use of, you’re raised up, and when you’re not, you’re booted out.” People with this kind of feeling may have a place in society where they can vent, but in God’s house you feel that there is no place where you can vent, no way to vent, and no environment in which to vent, and so all you can do is swallow it down. This swallowing it down is not a real letting go but rather it is you burying it deep inside. There are some people who think that one day they will perform their duty well and, if their brothers and sisters see this, they will select them to be leader again; there are also some who wish to get on with their duty quietly and do not want to be a leader again, and they say, “I won’t be a leader no matter who promotes me. I can’t afford to lose face, and I can’t bear that pain. It’s nothing to do with me who becomes leader, nor who gets replaced. I won’t be leader again, and so I won’t have to endure the hurt and the feeling of being attacked that comes from being replaced. I’ll just do my work well and take on this responsibility, and as for what destination and end lie in wait for me, I give that over into God’s hands—that is up to God.” What kind of emotion is this? It is not entirely accurate to say it is inferiority; I think it is appropriate to call it depression—depression, despondency, being closed off and repressed. They think, “God’s house is a place where justice is upheld, and yet I’m frequently promoted and then replaced. I feel so wronged, but I have no way to argue against it, so I’ll just submit! This is God’s house, where else could I go to argue my case? I’m used to living like this. No one in the world thinks much of me and it’s the same in God’s house. I just won’t think about how things will be in the future.” All day long they are in low spirits, they cannot get interested in anything, they just muddle through everything they do, they do a little of what they can do and nothing else; they do not study, they make no effort, they do not think deeply about anything, and they are unwilling to pay the price. In the end, they run out of energy very quickly, the enthusiasm they had in the beginning cools off, they think nothing has anything to do with them, and who they were before is dead. Is this not despondency? (Yes, it is.) Someone asks them, “How do you feel about being replaced?” They answer, “Well, my caliber is poor. How should I feel? I don’t understand it.” And the other person asks them, “If you were to be chosen again to be leader, would you like to do it?” And they reply, “Oh, what would I want to do that for? It’s not practical! My caliber is poor and I cannot satisfy God’s will.” Saying they are in despair and have given up is not entirely realistic. They just always feel in low spirits, depressed, closed off and despondent. They do not want to say what is in their heart to anyone, they do not want to be open, and they do not want to resolve their own problems, difficulties, corrupt states and corrupt dispositions—they just keep on putting on a brave face. What emotion is this? (Depression.) They also cling to an idea: “I’ll do what God asks me to do and work hard at whatever job the church arranges for me to do. If I can’t finish the job, don’t blame me as it wasn’t me who made me of poor caliber!” Such a person does, in fact, truly believe in God, and they have aspirations. They will never leave God, they will never abandon

their duty, and they will always follow God. It is just that they pay no attention to life entry, or to self-reflection, or to resolving their corrupt disposition. What kind of issue is this? Can they gain the truth by believing in this way? Is this not troublesome for them? (Yes, it is.) It is not possible for them to say they do not believe in God, even if they were to be beaten to death. However, because of some particular circumstances, because they have experienced some particular situations and scenarios, and some particular people have said certain things to them, they have been ground down and have wilted so that they cannot stand up again and cannot muster any energy. Does this not show that they have negative emotions? (Yes.) Having negative emotions proves that there is a problem, and when there is a problem, you should resolve it. There is always a way and a path to resolve problems that ought to be resolved—they are not unresolvable. It just depends on whether you can face up to the problem and whether you want to resolve it or not. If you do, then there is no problem so difficult that it cannot be resolved. You come before God and seek the truth in His words, and you can resolve every difficulty. However, not only can your dejection, depression, despondency and repression not help you to resolve your problems but, on the contrary, they can cause your problems to become ever more serious and to get worse and worse. Do you believe this? (Yes.) Therefore, no matter what emotions you are clinging to right now or what emotions you have fallen into now, I hope that you will be able to leave these wrong feelings behind you. No matter what reasons or excuses you have, the moment you fall into an abnormal emotion, you have then fallen into an extreme emotion. When you have fallen into this extreme emotion, it will certainly control your pursuit, and your aspirations and wishes, as well as, of course, the goals you pursue in life, and the consequences of this are severe.

Finally, there is something I would like to tell you: Do not let a minor feeling or a simple, insignificant emotion tangle you up for the rest of your life so that it affects your attainment of salvation and destroys your hope for salvation, understand? (Yes.) This emotion of yours is not only negative, to be more accurate, it is actually in opposition to God and the truth. You might think that this is an emotion within normal humanity, but in God's eyes, this is not just a simple matter of emotion, but a method of opposition to God. It is a method marked by negative emotions that people use to resist God, God's words and the truth. Therefore, I hope that, assuming you want to pursue the truth, you will examine yourself thoroughly to see whether you are holding onto these negative emotions and stubbornly, foolishly resisting God and competing with Him. If you have discovered the answer through examination, if you have come to a realization and arrived at a clear awareness, then I ask you to first let go of these emotions. Do not cherish them or hold onto them, for they will destroy you, they will destroy your destination, and they will destroy the opportunity and hope you have in pursuing the truth and attaining salvation. Here is where I will end this fellowship for today.

September 24, 2022

How to Pursue the Truth (2)

In our previous gathering, we fellowshiped on a big subject: how to pursue the truth. How to pursue the truth—how did we fellowship on this issue? (God gave fellowship on two aspects: The first was “letting go,” the second, “dedicating.” In terms of letting go, God talked about the negative emotions that exist in man. In particular, God fellowshiped on the specific effects and consequences that the negative emotions of inferiority, anger, and hatred have on our duty. God’s fellowship gave us a different understanding of how to pursue the truth. We saw how we often overlook the negative emotions that we reveal every day, and usually do not discern or understand our negative emotions. We make a one-sided judgment that this is simply the kind of person we are. We bring these negative emotions into our duty, and this has a direct impact on the results of that duty. It also influences how we look at people and things and how we deal with problems in our lives. This makes it extremely difficult for us to walk the path of pursuing the truth.) In our last gathering, I fellowshiped on how to pursue the truth. When it comes to practice, there are two main paths—that of letting go, and that of dedicating. Last time, we summed up the main issues associated with the first aspect of that first path, “letting go”—that is, one must let go of various kinds of emotion. These are principally negative emotions—those that are abnormal, irrational, and that do not accord with conscience and reason. Of these, our fellowship focused on the negative emotions of inferiority, anger, and hatred, as well as some behaviors that result from living within these negative emotions, various negative emotions produced as a result of some particular circumstances or developmental background, and negative emotions reflected by an abnormal character. Why must these negative emotions be let go of? It is because these emotions, objectively speaking, bring about negative mindsets and viewpoints in people, influencing the stance they take when faced with people, events, or things. So, the first aspect of this way of practice—letting go—requires people to let go of all kinds of negative emotions. Last time we shared some fellowship on these negative emotions. But besides the inferiority, anger, and hatred that we fellowshiped on, there are, of course, a variety of emotions that can impact the views of normal humanity. They interfere with normal humanity’s conscience, reason, thinking, and judgment, and can affect the results of man’s pursuit of the truth. This means that these negative emotions are the first things humanity must let go of in its pursuit of the truth. Our fellowship today will continue with the topic at hand—how to let go of various negative emotions. First we will fellowship on the various manifestations of negative emotions and, through My fellowship on these manifestations, man can gain knowledge of negative emotions, hold them up for comparison with himself, and then begin to resolve them, one by one, in his daily life. Through seeking and understanding the truth, and through knowing and dissecting the negative thoughts and opinions, as well as the abnormal perspectives and stances, that negative emotions bring out in people, they can begin to resolve those negative emotions.

Last time, we talked about the negative emotion of “depression.” First of all, do most people have this emotion of depression? Are you able to get a sense of the kind of feeling and the kind of mood depression is, and what its manifestations are? (Yes.) This one is easy to understand. We won’t talk about “depression” too extensively, we will just describe the manifestations brought about by the emotion of depression in those who believe in and follow God. What does “depression” mean? It means feeling dejected, not feeling good, not feeling interested in anything you do, having no drive, no motivation, having quite a negative and passive attitude in the things you do, and not having any get-up-and-go determination. So, what is the root cause of these manifestations? This is the main issue that must be dissected. Once you have understood the various manifestations of depression, as well as the different mind states, thoughts and attitudes in doing things brought by this negative emotion, you should understand what the causes are for these negative emotions, that is, what the root causes that lie behind these negative emotions are, that bring them about in people. Why do people get depressed? Why do they feel no motivation to do things? Why are they always so negative, passive and without determination when they do things? There is clearly a reason for this. For instance, you see someone who is always depressed and passive when they do things, unable to muster up any energy, their emotions and attitude are not very positive or optimistic, and they always express such a negative, blaming and despairing attitude. You give them advice but they never listen to it and, although they admit that the way you’ve pointed out to them is the right way and your reasoning is great, yet when they do things they cannot muster up any energy and are still negative and passive. In serious cases, from their body movements, figure, the way they walk, their tone of speech, and the words they say, you can see that this person’s emotions are particularly depressed, that they lack energy in everything they do and they are like a squashed fruit, and whoever spends a lot of time with that person will be affected by them. What is this all about? The various behaviors, facial expressions, tones of speech, and even the thoughts and viewpoints expressed by people living in depression have negative qualities. So, what is the reason behind these negative phenomena? Where does the root lie? Of course, the root cause for the arising of the negative emotion of depression is different for everyone. One kind of person’s emotion of depression may arise from their constant belief in their own terrible fate. Is this not one cause? (It is.) When they were young, they lived in the countryside or in a poor region, their family was not prosperous and, apart from some simple furnishings, they had nothing of much value. They had perhaps one or two sets of clothing that they had to wear even though they had some holes in them, and they could never ordinarily eat good quality food, but instead had to wait for New Year or holidays to eat meat. Sometimes they went hungry and hadn’t enough to wear to stay warm and having a big bowl full of meat to eat was a pipedream, and even finding a piece of fruit to eat was difficult. Living in such an environment, they felt different from other people who lived in the big city, whose parents

were of means, who could eat anything they wanted and wear anything they wanted, who got everything they wanted right then and there, and who were knowledgeable about things. They'd think, "They have such a good fate. Why is my fate so bad?" They always want to stand out from the crowd and change their destiny. However, it is not so easy to change one's destiny. When one is born into such a situation, though they may try, how much can they change their fate, and how much better can they make it? After they become an adult, they are stopped by obstacles everywhere they go in society, they are bullied everywhere they go, and so they always feel so unfortunate. They think, "Why am I so unlucky? Why do I always meet mean people? Life was hard when I was a kid, and that's just how it was. Now that I'm grown, it's still so bad. I always want to show what I can do but I never get a chance. If I never get a chance, then so be it. I just want to work hard and earn enough money to live a good life. Why can't I even do that? How can living a good life be so difficult? I don't have to live a life superior to everyone else. I want at least to live the life of a city-dweller and not be looked down on by people, and not be a second- or third-rate citizen. At least when people would call out to me, they wouldn't shout, 'Hey you, come here!' At least they would call me by my name and address me respectfully. But I can't even enjoy being addressed respectfully. Why is my fate so cruel? When will it end?" When such a person didn't believe in God, they considered it cruel. After they have begun to believe in God and to see that this is the true way, they then think, "All that suffering before was worth it. It was all orchestrated and done by God, and God did well. If I hadn't suffered like that, I wouldn't have come to believe in God. Now that I believe in God, if I can accept the truth then my destiny should change for the better. I can now live an equal life in the church with my brothers and sisters, and people call me 'Brother' or 'Sister,' and I am addressed respectfully. I now enjoy the feeling of having the respect of others." It seems as though their destiny has changed, and it seems that they no longer suffer and they no longer have a bad fate. Once they have begun to believe in God, they set their resolve to perform their duty well in God's house, they become able to endure hardship and work hard, able to endure more than anyone else in any matter, and they strive to win the approval and esteem of most people. They think they may even be chosen to be a church leader, someone in charge, or a team leader, and won't they then be honoring their ancestors and their family? Won't they then have changed their destiny? However, reality does not quite live up to their wishes and they become dejected, and think, "I've believed in God for years and I get on very well with my brothers and sisters, but how come whenever it's time to choose a leader, someone in charge, or a team leader, it's never my turn? Is it because I look so plain, or because I haven't performed well enough, and no one has noticed me? Every time there is a vote, I may have a slight hope, and I'd be happy even to be selected as a team leader. I'm so filled with enthusiasm to repay God, but I just end up disappointed every time there is a vote and I'm left out of it all. What's up with that? Could it be that I'm truly only able to be a mediocre person, an ordinary person, someone

unremarkable my whole life? When I look back at my childhood, my youth, and my middle-aged years, this path I've trodden has always been so mediocre and I haven't done anything noteworthy. It's not that I don't have any ambition, or that my caliber is too lacking, and it's not that I don't exert enough effort or that I can't endure hardship. I have aspirations and goals, and I can even be said to have ambition. So why is it that I can never stand out from the crowd? In the final analysis, I just have a bad fate and am destined for suffering, and this is how God has arranged things for me." The more they dwell on it, the worse they think their fate is. In the ordinary course of their duties, if they make some suggestions or express some views and always receive a rebuttal, and no one listens to them or takes them seriously, they become even more depressed, and they think, "Oh, my fate is so bad! Every group I'm in there is always some mean person blocking my way forward and oppressing me. No one ever takes me seriously and I can never stand out. When all's said and done, it comes back to this: I just have a bad fate!" No matter what happens to them, they always attribute it to them having a bad fate; they constantly put effort into this idea of having a bad fate, they strive to have a deeper understanding and appreciation of it and, as they turn it over in their minds, their emotions become ever more depressed. When they make a minor mistake in the performance of their duty, they think, "Oh, how can I do my duty well when I have such a bad fate?" In gatherings, their brothers and sisters give fellowship and they think things over and over, but they don't understand, and they think, "Oh, how can I understand things when I have such a bad fate?" Whenever they see someone who speaks better than they do, who discusses their understanding in a clearer and more illuminated way than them, they feel even more depressed. When they see someone who can endure hardships and pay the price, who sees results in the performance of their duty, who receives the approval of their brothers and sisters and gets promoted, they feel unhappy in their heart. When they see someone become a leader or a worker, they feel even more depressed, and even when they see someone who sings and dances better than they do, and they feel inferior to that person, they get depressed. No matter what people, events, or things they encounter, or whatever situations they come across, they always respond to them with this emotion of depression. Even when they see someone wearing clothes that are a little nicer than theirs or whose hairstyle is a little better, they always feel sad, and jealousy and envy arise in their heart until, finally, they go back to that depressed emotion. What are the reasons they come up with? They think, "Oh, isn't this because my fate is bad? If I was a little better looking, if I was as dignified as they are, if I was tall with a nice figure, with good clothes and lots of money, with good parents, then wouldn't things be different from how they are now? Wouldn't people then regard me highly, and be envious and jealous of me? At the end of the day, my fate is bad and I can't blame anyone else for it. With such a bad fate, nothing goes right for me, and I can't walk anywhere without falling over something. It's just my bad fate, and there's nothing I can do about it." Similarly, when they are pruned and dealt with or when

brothers and sisters reproach or criticize them, or make suggestions to them, they respond to it with their emotion of depression. Anyhow, whether it is something happening to them or everything around them, they always respond with the various negative thoughts, views, attitudes and standpoints that arise from their emotion of depression.

People like this, who always think themselves to have a bad fate, constantly feel like their hearts are being crushed by a giant rock. Because they always believe that everything that happens to them does so because of their bad fate, they feel they cannot change any of it, no matter what happens. So what do they do? They just feel negative and slack off and resign themselves to their misfortunes. What do I mean when I say they resign themselves to their misfortunes? They think, “Oh, I’ll just have to muddle along like this through life!” When other people are pruned and dealt with, those people can reflect on themselves and say, “Why have I been pruned and dealt with? What have I done that has gone against the truth principles? What corrupt dispositions have I revealed? Is my understanding deep enough and concrete enough? How should I understand and resolve these issues?” They say things like this, and this is someone who pursues the truth. When the person with the so-called bad fate is pruned and dealt with, however, they feel that others are looking down on them, that their fate is bad, and so no one likes them, and whoever wants to deal with them can deal with them. When no one is dealing with them, their depression eases a little, but as soon as someone deals with them, their depression becomes even worse. When other people are dealt with, they may feel negative for several days. They read God’s words and, with the help and support of their brothers and sisters, they become able to accept the truth and slowly they turn themselves around, and they leave that negative state behind. Those who think themselves to have a bad fate, however, not only do not leave that negative emotion behind, but on the contrary, they become even more certain that they do indeed have a bad fate. Why is this? They come to God’s house feeling that their skills are never fully put to use, that they are always being dealt with and used as a scapegoat. They think, “You see? Other people do this and don’t get dealt with, so how come I get dealt with when I do this? Surely this shows that my fate is bad!” And so they get this depressed and they fall into despair. No matter how other people try to fellowship on the truth with them, it doesn’t sink in, and they say, “You only get dealt with for a moment, but it’s different for me. I can’t do anything right and was born to endure being dealt with. I can’t blame anyone, it’s just that my fate is bad.” Because they always believe themselves to have a bad fate, and that they will always be this way as long as they live, then no matter how God’s house tells people how to pursue the truth, how to perform the duty of a created being, and how to perform their duty up to standard, none of it sinks in. Because they are forever certain that their fate is bad, they feel that this wonderful thing of pursuing the truth and attaining salvation has nothing to do with them, and so they don’t perform their duty very conscientiously. They are sure in their hearts that “People with a bad fate can’t perform their duty well; only people with a good fate can perform their duty

well. When someone has a good fate, people like them everywhere they go, and everything goes smoothly for them. I have a bad fate and always come across mean people, I never feel good doing my duties—these misfortunes come one after another!" Because they believe themselves to have a bad fate, they always feel dejected and depressed. They always believe that pursuing the truth is just something to talk about and that someone like them with a bad fate can never achieve anything by pursuing the truth. They feel that, even if they may pursue the truth, they won't gain anything in the end, and they always think, "How can people with a bad fate enter the kingdom? How can people with a bad fate attain salvation?" They don't dare to believe it, and so they are constantly delimiting themselves, thinking, "Because my fate is bad and I was born to suffer, it won't be so bad to survive and become a service-doer in the end. That would mean that my ancestors' good deeds would bear fruit in me, and they'd bless me with good luck. Because my fate is bad, I'm just suited to doing some unremarkable duties, such as cooking, cleaning, or looking after the children of the brothers and sisters, or some odd jobs, and so on. As for those jobs that let you shine in God's house, I probably won't have anything to do with them for as long as I live. You see, I came to God's house filled with enthusiasm, and how have I ended up? Just cooking and doing manual labor. No one notices how exhausted I get or how hard it is, no one sees, and no one cares. If this isn't a hard lot then I don't know what is! Other people are lead actors or extras, filming movie after movie, video after video—how wonderful that is! I've never shone, not once. What a hard lot this is! My fate is so bad! Who's to blame for my bad fate? Isn't it my fault? I'll just keep on going until it's time to die." They sink deeper and deeper into this negative emotion. Not only are they unable to reflect on and know their own negative emotions, or why they came about, or whether any of this has anything to do with having a good fate or a bad fate, nor do they seek the truth to understand these things, but they also blindly cling to the idea that all their problems are because of their bad fate. The result of this is that they sink deeper and deeper into these negative emotions and are unable to extricate themselves. In the end, because they always believe themselves to have a bad fate, they fall into despair, live without any real purpose and just eat and sleep, waiting for death; thereby they become increasingly disinterested in pursuing the truth, performing their duty well, attaining salvation, and other such requirements of God, and even repel and reject these things more and more. They take their bad fate as their reason and basis for not pursuing the truth and not being able to attain salvation as a matter of course. They don't dissect their own corrupt dispositions or negative emotions in the situations they encounter and thereby come to know and resolve their corrupt dispositions, but rather they use their view on having a bad fate in how they respond to every person, event, and thing they encounter and experience, resulting in them falling even deeper into their emotion of depression. Isn't that so? (It is.) So, is this emotion of depression whereby people believe they have a bad fate correct or not? (It is not.) How is it not correct? (I think this emotion is quite radical. They bring their bad fate into how

they explain and delimit everything that happens to them. When things happen to them, they don't reflect on and come to a conclusion about why these problems arise, nor do they seek or contemplate. It is entirely a radical and delimiting way to approach things.) How does this radical and absurd way to approach things come about? What is the root cause of this emotion of depression? (I think the root cause of this emotion is that they are following the wrong path, and the starting point of their pursuit is wrong. They have some wild desires, they are always vying and comparing themselves with others, and when they cannot satisfy their wild desires, this negative emotion inside them rears its head.) You haven't clearly understood the essence of this issue—it is mainly that their view on the matter of "fate" is inaccurate. They are always pursuing a good fate or they want their fate to be such that everything goes smoothly and easily for them. They are always looking at people's fates, and when they start pursuing such a thing, what happens to them? They look at people living in all different environments, what they eat, what they wear, what they enjoy, and then they compare it to their own situation and feel that they are worse off in every regard, that everyone else is better than them, and so they believe themselves to have a bad fate. In fact, they are not necessarily the worst off, but they are always making comparisons and measuring themselves against others, always putting effort into pondering and observing this matter of "fate" and delving into the study of it. They use the perspective and view on whether fate is good or bad to take the measure of everything, always measuring, until they have boxed themselves into a corner and have no way forward, and finally they sink into negativity. They constantly use the view on whether fate is good or bad to measure the external appearance of everything that happens instead of looking at the essence of things. What mistake do they make in doing this? Their thoughts and views are wrong and absurd, and their ideas about fate are inaccurate. The fate of man is a most profound matter that no one can clearly understand. It's not just a person's date of birth or the exact time of their birth that indicates whether a person's fate will be good or bad—it is a mystery.

God's arrangement of what a person's fate shall be, whether it be good or bad, is not to be viewed or measured with the eyes of man or the eyes of a fortune teller, nor is it to be measured according to how much wealth and glory that person enjoys in their lifetime, or how much suffering they experience, or how successful they are in their pursuit of prospects, fame and fortune. Yet this is precisely the serious mistake made by those who say they have a bad fate, as well as a way of measuring one's fate used by the majority of people. How do most people measure their own fate? How do worldly people measure whether a person's fate is good or bad? Primarily, they base it on whether that person's life goes smoothly or not, whether they can enjoy wealth and glory or not, whether they can live a lifestyle superior to others, how much they suffer and how much they have to enjoy during their lifetime, how long they live for, what career they have, whether their life is full of toil or comfortable and easy—these things and more they use to measure whether a person's fate is good or bad. Don't you measure it like

this, too? (Yes.) So, when most of you encounter something not to your liking, when times are hard, or you aren't able to enjoy a superior lifestyle, you will think you have a bad fate too, and you will sink into depression. Those who say they have a bad fate don't necessarily genuinely have a bad fate, nor do those who say they have a good fate necessarily have a good fate. How exactly is fate measured as being good or bad? Your fate is good if you believe in God, and it's not good if you don't believe in God—is this right to say? (Not necessarily.) You say, "not necessarily," meaning that there are some who believe in God who genuinely have a bad fate and some who have a good fate. If this is so, then some people who don't believe in God also have a good fate and some have a bad fate—is this right to say? (No, that's wrong.) Tell Me your reasons for saying this. Why is this wrong? (I don't believe that a person's fate has anything to do with whether they believe in God.) That's right; whether a person's fate is good or bad has nothing to do with belief in God. So, what does it have to do with? Does it have anything to do with the path people walk or with their pursuit? Is it that someone has a good fate if they pursue the truth, but that they have a hard lot if they don't? Tell Me, does a widow have a good fate? To worldly people, widows have a bad fate. If they are widowed in their thirties or forties, they really have a bad fate, this is really hard for them! But if a widow suffers a lot because they lost their spouse, and they come to believe in God, is their lot hard then? (No.) Because those who haven't been widowed are living a happy life, with everything going well for them, with lots of support, food and clothing, a family full of children and grandchildren, living a comfortable life, without any hardship or feeling any spiritual want, they don't believe in God and they won't believe in Him no matter how you try to spread the gospel to them. So who has the good fate? (The widow has the good fate because she has come to believe in God.) You see, because worldly people consider the widow to have a bad fate, and she suffers so much, she then changes direction and begins to follow a different path, and she believes in God and follows God—doesn't this mean that she has a good fate now, and is living happily? (It does.) Her bad fate has changed to a good fate. If you say she has a bad fate, then her fate in life should always be bad and she cannot change it; so how then can it be changed? Did her fate change when she started believing in God? (No, it's because her views on things have changed.) Because the way she regards things has changed. Has the objective fact of her own fate changed? (No.) Before the widow came to believe in God, she envied women who had not been widowed, thinking, "Look at her, she has such a good fate. She has a husband, a home, she lives a happy and contented life. She doesn't suffer this pain of being a widow." After she believes in God, however, she thinks, "I now believe in God and God has chosen me to follow Him, and I can perform my duty and gain the truth. In the future I'll be able to attain salvation and enter the kingdom. What a good fate this is! She hasn't been widowed, but what is her fate? She's always seeking to enjoy life, pursuing fame, fortune, and status, looking to do well in her career, and enjoy prosperity and wealth, but later when she dies, she will still go to hell. She has a bad

fate. My fate is better than hers!" Her views have changed, but the objective facts have not changed. The one who doesn't believe in God still goes on thinking, "Hmph! My fate is better than yours! You're a widow, I'm not. My life is better than yours. I have a good fate!" However, in the eyes of the woman who has come to believe in God, she does not have a good fate. How has this change come about? Has the widow's objective environment changed? (No.) So how have her views changed? (Her criteria for measuring whether things are good or bad have changed.) Yes, her views on how to measure things and regard matters have changed. She has gone from thinking the woman who has not been widowed has a good fate to thinking she has a bad fate, and from thinking herself to have a bad fate to thinking that she has a good fate. These two views are totally different from how they were before, they have entirely been turned around. What is happening here? The objective facts and environment haven't changed, so how has she ended up with changed views on things? (After she has accepted the truth and accepted positive things, she now applies the correct criteria in her views on measuring things as good or bad.) Her views on things have changed, but have the actual facts changed? (No.) The widow is still widowed, and the woman who lives happily is still living happily—there has been no change in the actual facts. So, who has the good fate and who has the bad fate in the end? Can you explain? The widow used to think she had a bad fate, one reason being her objective living situation, and another reason being the thoughts and views caused by her objective environment. After she comes to believe in God, by reading God's words and coming to understand some truths, her thoughts follow suit and change, and her perspective on things is different. So, after she comes to believe in God, she no longer considers herself to have a bad fate, but rather as someone with a good fate, because she has had the chance to accept God's work, and she can understand the truth and attain salvation—this is something predestined by God, and she is most blessed. Once she believes in God, she focuses solely on pursuing the truth, which is different from the goals she pursued before. Even though her living conditions, living environment, and her quality of life are just the same as before and have not changed, yet her views on things have changed. In reality, has she truly come to have a good fate because she believes in God? Not necessarily. It's just that now she believes in God, she has hope, she feels some satisfaction in her heart, the goals she is pursuing have changed, her views are different, and so her current living environment makes her feel happy, satisfied, joyful, and peaceful. She feels her fate is so good now, much better than the fate of the woman who has not been widowed. Only now does she realize that the view she held before, believing herself to have a bad fate, was wrong. What can you see from this? Are there such things as "good fate" and "bad fate"? (No.) No, there aren't.

God long ago predestined people's fates, and they are immutable. This "good fate" and "bad fate" differ from person to person, and they depend on the environment, on how people feel and what they pursue. That is why one's fate is neither good nor bad.

You may live a very hard life, but you might think, “I’m not looking to live a high-end life. I’m just happy with having enough to eat and enough clothes to wear. Everyone suffers during their lifetime. Worldly people say, ‘You can’t see a rainbow unless it’s raining,’ so there’s value in suffering. This isn’t so bad, and my fate isn’t bad. Heaven above has given me some pain, some trials, and tribulations. That’s because He thinks highly of me. This is a good fate!” Some people think that suffering is a bad thing, that it means they have a bad fate, and only a life of no suffering, of comfort and ease, means they have a good fate. Unbelievers call this “a matter of opinion.” How do believers in God regard this matter of “fate”? Do we talk about having a “good fate” or a “bad fate”? (No.) We don’t say things like this. Say you have a good fate because you believe in God, then if you don’t follow the right path in your belief, if you are punished, exposed and cast out, then does that mean you have a good fate or a bad fate? If you don’t believe in God, you cannot possibly be exposed or cast out. Unbelievers and religious people don’t talk about exposing people or discerning people, and they don’t talk about people being cleared out or cast out. It should mean people have a good fate when they are able to believe in God, but if they are punished in the end, does that mean then that they have a bad fate? One minute their fate is good, the next their fate is bad—so which is it? Whether someone has a good fate or not is not something that can be judged, people cannot judge this matter. It is all done by God and everything God arranges is good. It is only that the trajectory of every individual’s fate, or their environment, and the people, events, and things they encounter, and the life path they experience during their lives are all different; these things differ from person to person. Every individual’s living environment and the environment in which they grow, both of which are arranged for them by God, are all different. The things every individual experiences during their lives are all different. There is no so-called good fate or bad fate—God arranges it all, and it is all done by God. If we regard the matter from the perspective that it is all done by God, everything God does is good and right; it’s just that from the perspective of people’s predilections, feelings and choices, some people choose to live a comfortable life, choosing to have fame and fortune, a good reputation, to have prosperity in the world and come into their own. They believe that this means they have a good fate, and that a lifetime of mediocrity and being unsuccessful, always living at the bottom of society, is a bad fate. This is how things look from the perspective of unbelievers and worldly people pursuing worldly things and seeking to live in the world, and this is how the idea of good fate and bad fate arise. The idea of good fate and bad fate only arises from human beings’ narrow understanding and superficial perception of fate, and from people’s judgments on how much physical suffering they endure, and how much enjoyment, and fame and fortune they gain, and so on. In fact, if we look at it from the perspective of God’s arrangement of and sovereignty over the fate of man, there are no such interpretations of good fate or bad fate. Isn’t this accurate? (It is.) If you regard the fate of man from the perspective of God’s sovereignty, then everything God does is good,

and it is what every individual needs. This is because cause and effect play a part in past and present lives, they are predestined by God, God holds sovereignty over them, and God plans and arranges them—mankind has no choice. If we look at it from this standpoint, people shouldn't judge their own fate to be good or bad, right? If people casually make judgments about this matter, aren't they then making a terrible mistake? Aren't they making the mistake of judging God's plans, arrangements, and sovereignty? (They are.) And isn't that mistake a serious one? Won't it affect the path they walk in life? (It will.) Then that mistake will lead them to destruction.

What should people do in response to God's arrangements of and sovereignty over their fates? (Submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements.) First, you should seek to understand why the Creator has arranged this kind of fate and living environment for you, why He makes you encounter and experience certain things, and why your fate is the way it is. From this, you should understand what your heart yearns for and what it needs, as well as God's sovereignty and arrangements. After you understand and know these things, you should not resist, make your own choices about, reject, contradict, or avoid your fate. Of course, you also should not try to bargain with God. Instead, you should submit. Why should you submit? Because you are a created being, you cannot orchestrate your fate and you do not have sovereignty over it. Your fate is determined by God. When it comes to your fate, you are passive and you have no choices. The only thing you should do is submit. You should not make your own choices about your fate or avoid it, you should not bargain with God, and you should not go against your fate or complain. Of course, you should especially not say things like, "The fate God has arranged for me is bad. It's miserable and it's worse than the fate of others," or "My fate is bad and I don't get to enjoy any happiness or prosperity. God has arranged things badly for me." These words are judgments and by speaking them, you are overstepping your position. They are not words that should be spoken by an object of creation and they are not perspectives or attitudes that an object of creation should have. Instead, you should let go of these various false understandings, definitions, views, and comprehensions of fate. At the same time, you should be able to adopt a correct attitude and stance so as to submit to all of the things that will happen as part of the fate God has arranged for you. You should not resist, and you should certainly not be depressed and complain that Heaven is not fair, that God has arranged things badly for you, and not provided you with the very best. Objects of creation do not have the right to choose their fate. God did not give you this kind of obligation and He did not bestow this right upon you. So, you should not try to make choices, reason with God, or make additional requests of Him. You should conform to and face God's arrangements, no matter what they are. You should face and try to experience and appreciate whatever God has arranged. You should completely submit to everything that you should experience through God's arrangements. You should comply with the fate that God has arranged for you. Even if you do not like something, or if you suffer because of it, even if it threatens

and suppresses your pride and dignity, so long as it is something that you should experience, something that God has orchestrated and arranged for you, you should submit to it and you have no choice about it. Because God arranges people's fates and has sovereignty over them, they cannot be negotiated with Him. So, if people are sensible and possess the reason of normal humanity, they should not complain that their fate is bad or that this thing or that thing is not good for them. They should not approach their duty, their life, the road that they follow in their faith, the situations that God has arranged, or His demands of them with a depressed attitude just because they feel that their fate is bad. This kind of depression is not a simple or momentary rebelliousness, nor is it the temporary outpouring of a corrupt disposition, much less the outpouring of a corrupt state. Rather, it is a silent resistance to God, and a dissatisfied silent resistance to the fate arranged for them by God. Though it may be a simple negative emotion, the consequences it brings to people are more serious than those brought by a corrupt disposition. Not only does it prevent you from adopting a positive, correct attitude to the duty you ought to perform, and to your own daily life and life journey but, more seriously, it can also cause you to perish from depression. Therefore, intelligent people should hurry to turn their erroneous views around, reflect on and come to know themselves in the light of God's words, and see what is causing them to believe they have a bad fate; they should look to see in what ways their dignity has been harmed or their hearts hurt, which have resulted in negative thoughts such as feeling they have a bad fate, which led them to fall into the negative emotion of depression from which they never recovered, not even up to the present day. This is an issue that you should reflect on and examine. Some matter may be deeply engraved in your heart, or someone may have said something vile to you that wounded your sense of self-respect, and this made you feel you had a bad fate, and thus you fall into depression; or perhaps in your life or as you were growing up, some thought or view of Satan or of the world arose and led you to have this incorrect understanding of fate and become incredibly sensitive to whether you have a good fate or a bad fate; or perhaps after experiencing something upsetting at some point, you became particularly serious about and sensitive to your fate, and then you became exceedingly passionate about and dedicated to changing your fate—these are all things you should examine. However, regardless of how you make an examination of these things, what you should ultimately come to understand is this: You shouldn't use thoughts and views on whether fate is good or bad to measure your own fate. The fate of a person's life is held in God's hands and God arranged it long ago; this is not something people can change. However, the kind of path a person walks during their lifetime and whether they can live a life of value are choices people can make for themselves. You can choose to live a life of value, live your life for things of value, live for the plans and management of the Creator, and for the just cause of mankind. Of course, you can also choose not to live for positive things, but instead live for the pursuit of fame and fortune, an official career, riches, and worldly trends. You can choose to live

a life without any value whatsoever and be like one of the walking dead. These are all choices you can make.

By fellowshiping in this way, have you understood whether the thoughts and views of those people who always say they have a bad fate are right or wrong? (They're wrong.) Clearly, these people experience the emotion of depression due to becoming mired in extremism. Because they have this extreme emotion of depression due to having extreme thoughts and views, they are unable to correctly face the things that happen in life, they cannot normally bring into play the functions people should have, nor perform the duties, responsibilities or obligations of a created being. Therefore, they are the same as those various kinds of people who sink into negative emotions whom we discussed in our last fellowship. Though these people who think they have a bad fate believe in God, and are able to relinquish things, expend themselves and follow God, yet they are likewise unable to perform their duty in God's house in a free, liberated and relaxed way. Why can't they do this? It is because within them they harbor a number of extreme and abnormal thoughts and views which cause extreme emotions to arise in them. These extreme emotions cause the way they judge things, the way they think, and their views on things to come from an extreme, incorrect and fallacious standpoint. They regard issues and people from this extreme and incorrect standpoint, thereby repeatedly living, viewing people and things, and comporting themselves and acting under the effect and influence of this negative emotion. In the end, no matter how they live, they seem so tired that they aren't able to muster up any enthusiasm for their belief in God and pursuit of the truth. Regardless of how they choose to live their life, they cannot positively or actively perform their duty, and despite having believed in God for many years, yet they never focus on performing their duty with all their heart and soul or performing their duty satisfactorily, much less do they pursue the truth, of course, or practice in accordance with the truth principles. Why is this? In the final analysis, it's because they always think they have a bad fate, and this leads them to have a profoundly depressed emotion. They become totally dispirited, powerless, like a walking corpse, without any vitality, exhibiting no positive or optimistic behavior, much less any determination or stamina to devote the loyalty they should devote to their duty, their responsibilities, and their obligations. Rather, they struggle reluctantly from day to day with a slipshod attitude, aimlessly and muddle-headedly, even unconsciously getting through the days. They have no idea how long they will muddle along for. In the end, they have no recourse but to admonish themselves, saying, "Oh, I'll just keep muddling along as long as I can! If one day I can't go on anymore, and the church wants to expel me and cast me out, then they should just cast me out. It's because I have a bad fate!" You see, even what they say is so defeated. This emotion of depression isn't just a simple mood but, more importantly, it has a devastating impact on people's thoughts, hearts, and on their pursuit. If you cannot turn your emotion of depression around in a timely and speedy manner, it will not only affect your whole life, it will also destroy your life and carry you to

your death. Even if you do believe in God, you won't be able to gain the truth and attain salvation and, in the end, you will perish. That's why those who believe their fate to be bad should wake up now; always looking into whether their fate is good or bad, always pursuing some kind of fate, always worrying about their fate—this is not a good thing. Always taking your fate very seriously, when you encounter a slight disturbance or disappointment, or when failure, setbacks, or embarrassments come along, you quickly come to believe that it is due to your own bad fate, and your own bad luck. So, you repeatedly remind yourself that you are someone with a bad fate, that you don't have a good fate like other people, and you repeatedly immerse yourself in depression, surrounded, bound, and caught up by the negative emotion of depression, unable to escape it. This is a very frightening and dangerous thing to happen. Even though this emotion of depression may not cause you to become more arrogant or deceitful, or cause you to reveal wickedness or intransigence, or other such corrupt dispositions; though it may not get to the level whereby you reveal a corrupt disposition and defy God, or you reveal a corrupt disposition and violate the truth principles, or you cause disruptions and disturbances, or do evil acts, yet, in terms of essence, this emotion of depression is a most serious manifestation of people's dissatisfaction with reality. In essence, this manifestation of dissatisfaction with reality is also a dissatisfaction with God's sovereignty and arrangements. And what are the consequences of being dissatisfied with God's sovereignty and arrangements? They are certainly very serious and will at the least cause you to rebel against and defy God, and lead you to be unable to accept God's utterances and provision, and unable to understand and unwilling to hear God's teachings, exhortations, reminders and warnings. Because you are filled with the emotion of depression, you are unable to accept God's current utterances, and have no way to accept God's realistic work nor the Holy Spirit's enlightenment, guidance, help, support, and provision for you. Even though God is working, you are unable to feel it; even though God and the Holy Spirit are working, you are unable to accept it. You cannot accept these positive things, these requirements and this provision from God, your heart is filled and occupied with nothing but this emotion of depression, and nothing God does has any effect on you. In the end, you will miss every step of God's work, you will miss every phase of His utterances, and you will even miss every phase of God's work and His provision for you. When God's utterances and the steps of His work are all complete, you will still be unable to resolve your emotion of depression, you will be unable to leave it behind, you will remain surrounded and filled with the emotion of depression, and you will then have entirely missed God's work. Once you have entirely missed God's work, you will ultimately be faced with God's open judgment and condemnation of mankind, and that is the time when God will announce the ends of mankind. Only then will you realize, "Oh, I should reflect on myself, I should leave this emotion of depression behind, read God's words more, come before God to seek His help and support, seek His provision, seek how to accept His chastisement and judgment and be cleansed, so that

I'm able to submit to His sovereignty and arrangements." Too late! That's all behind you now. It's too late to wake up now, and what is it that awaits you? You will beat your chest and wail and be filled with regret. Though depression is just a kind of emotion, because its nature and the consequences it brings about are so serious, you should examine yourself carefully and not let this emotion of depression take you over or control your thoughts and the goals you pursue. You have to resolve it and not let it become a stumbling block on your path in pursuit of the truth or a wall that blocks you from coming before God. If you can become clearly aware of it, or if you find this serious emotion of depression through self-examination, then you should change course immediately, let go of this emotion and leave the emotion of depression behind. Do not cling obstinately to your course, stubbornly thinking, "No matter what God says or does, I know my fate is bad. With a bad fate, I should feel depressed. With a bad fate, I should just accept it and give up all hope." To face everything that happens with such a negative attitude is to be single-mindedly stubborn. When you realize you have this emotion of depression, you should turn yourself around and resolve it as soon as you can. Don't wait until it has taken control of you completely, as it will be too late to wake up to it then.

Tell Me, is believing in fate an expression of pursuing the truth? (No, it isn't.) So, what is the correct attitude people should have in their approach to the matter of fate? (They should believe in the orchestrations and arrangements of God and submit to them.) That's right. If someone always focuses on whether their fate is good or bad, what problem can that resolve? Acknowledging that their fate is bad but believing that their bad fate is orchestrated and arranged by God and being willing to submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements—is this viewpoint right or not? (No, it's wrong.) How is it wrong? (Because that viewpoint still holds the interpretation of their fate being good or bad.) Is this a rule? What is the truth people should understand here? (Fate cannot be said to be good or bad. Everything God predestines is good, and people should submit to all God's orchestrations.) People should believe that fate is orchestrated and arranged by God, and since it is all orchestrated and arranged by God, they cannot talk about it being good or bad. Whether it is good or bad is judged on the basis of people's perspective, opinions, predilections and feelings, and this judgment is based on their imaginings and views and is not in accordance with the truth. Some people say, "I have a wonderful fate, I was born into a family of believers. I've never been influenced by the environment of the secular world and I've never been influenced, seduced or deceived by the unbelievers' trends. Although I have corrupt dispositions, too, I grew up in the church and have never gone astray. I have such a good fate!" Is what they say correct? (No.) Why not? (Their being born into a family of believers was predestined by God, it was God's sovereignty and arrangements. It has nothing to do with their fate being good or bad.) Correct, you've hit the nail on the head. This was God's sovereignty and arrangements. It is one manner in which God arranges and holds sovereignty over the fates of man, and it is one form which fate can take—people must not use whether their

fate is good or bad to judge this matter. Some people say their fate is good because they were born into a Christian family, so how would you refute this? You might say, “You were born into a Christian family and say you have a good fate, so anyone not born into a Christian family must have a bad fate. Are you saying the fate God has arranged for all those people is bad?” Is it right to refute them in this way? (It is.) It’s right to refute them like this. By refuting them in this way, you are showing that what they say about people who are born into Christian families having a good fate is untenable and not in accord with the truth. Now, is your opinion on good and bad fates a little more accurate? (Yes.) What view should people hold toward the matter of believing in fate that is most correct, most appropriate, and that accords with the truth? First, you cannot judge fate as being good or bad from the perspective of worldly people. Furthermore, you should believe that the fate of every member of the human race is arranged by the hand of God. Some people ask, “Does being arranged by the hand of God mean that God arranges it Himself?” No, it doesn’t. There are myriad ways, means and channels by which God arranges the fates of man and there are complicated details to this in the spiritual realm which I shall not speak of here. It’s a very complicated matter, but generally speaking, it is all arranged by the Creator. Some of these arrangements are made by God Himself for various kinds of people, while some involve categorizing the various types of people and groups of people according to the regulations, administrative decrees, principles, and systems set by God; according to their category and the trajectory of their fate set by God, people’s fates are arranged and formulated in the spiritual realm, and then they are born. This is a very detailed matter, but generally speaking, God arranges and holds sovereignty over it all. God’s sovereignty and arrangements involve the principles, laws and rules of His sovereignty and arrangements. There is no good or bad here, it is all a natural matter of course for God, involving cause and effect. With regard to how people feel about fate, they can have good feelings and bad feelings, there can be fates where everything goes smoothly, fates filled with obstacles, difficult fates, and unhappy fates—there are no good or bad fates. What attitude should people have toward fate? You should comply with the Creator’s arrangements, actively and strenuously seek the Creator’s purpose and meaning in His arrangement of all these things and achieve understanding of the truth, bring into play your greatest functions in this life God has arranged for you, perform the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of a created being, and make your life more meaningful and more of value, until finally the Creator is pleased with you and remembers you. Of course, what would be even better would be to attain salvation through your seeking and strenuous effort—this would be the best outcome. In any case, with regard to fate, the most appropriate attitude created mankind should have is not one of wanton judgment and circumscription, or using extreme methods to deal with it. Of course, much less should people try to resist, choose, or change their fate, but rather they should use their heart to appreciate it, and seek, explore, and comply with it, before facing it positively. Finally, in the living environment and on the journey set for

you in life by God, you should seek the way of conduct God teaches you, seek the path God requires you to take, and experience the fate God has arranged for you in this way, and in the end, you will be blessed. When you experience the fate the Creator has arranged for you in this way, what you come to appreciate is not only sorrow, sadness, tears, pain, frustration, and failure but, more importantly, you will experience joy, peace, and comfort, as well as the enlightenment and illumination of the truth which God bestows on you. What's more, when you become lost along your path through life, when you are faced with frustration and failure, and you have a choice to make, you will experience the Creator's guidance, and in the end you will attain the understanding, experience and appreciation of how to live the most meaningful life. Then you won't ever become lost in life again, you won't ever be in a constant state of anxiety again and, of course, you won't ever again complain about having a bad fate, much less will you sink into the emotion of depression because you feel your fate is bad. If you have this attitude and you use this method to face the fate the Creator has arranged for you, then not only will your humanity become more normal, you will come to have a normal humanity, and the thinking, views and principles on how to view the things of normal humanity, but you will, of course, also come to have the views and understanding on the meaning of life which unbelievers will never have. Unbelievers are always saying, "Where do we come from? Where do we go to? Why are we alive?" There is always someone asking these questions, and what answers do they come up with in the end? They end with question marks, not answers. Why can't they find the answers to these questions? Even though some intelligent people believe in fate, they have no idea how to approach the matter of fate or how to deal with the manifold difficulties, frustrations, failures, and unhappiness that arise in their fate; neither do they know how to deal with the things that happen in their fate that cause them to feel joyful and happy—they don't know how to handle them. One minute they say they have a good fate, the next minute they say they have a bad fate; one minute they say they have a happy life, the next minute they say they have an unlucky life—they say both these things with the same mouth. They say one thing when they're happy and another thing when they're unhappy; they say one thing when things are going smoothly for them, and another thing when things are not going smoothly; it is they who say they are unlucky, and they who say their fate is good. Clearly, they live with no clarity or understanding. They are always groping in the mist, living in confusion, with no way out. Therefore, people should have a clear understanding and a clear path forward with regard to how they should treat fate correctly, what they should do, and how they should face this major issue in life. Once this issue is resolved, people's attitudes and views toward fate should be relatively correct and in accordance with the truth principles, and then they will never go to extremes in this matter.

Do these sayings about fate that I have just fellowshiped on accord with the truth? (They do.) Do you know what the characteristics are of sayings that accord with the truth? (When people hear them, they feel clearer and more at ease.) (They are rather

practical and they contain paths of practice.) That's right, they are rather practical; this is a more accurate way to put it. There are even more accurate ways to describe this. Who will speak next? (They can resolve people's current problems.) This is the effect of their practicality. They can resolve problems because they are practical. People believe in fate, but their minds are always entangled by the idea of good fates and bad fates, so, tell Me, are they liberated and free in their innermost hearts, or are they bound? (They're bound.) If you don't understand the truth, then you will be constantly bound by this idea. Once you understand the truth, besides feeling that it is practical and that you have a way forward, what else will you feel? (Liberated.) That's right, you will feel free and liberated. When you have a path of practice and are no longer trapped, won't your spirit then be liberated and free? Those warped and absurd views will not be able to bind your thoughts or your hands and feet; you will have a path to follow, and you will no longer be controlled by those views. Once you have heard God fellowship on the fates of man, you will feel free and liberated, and you will say, "Oh, so that's how it is! Wow, my understanding about fate was so warped and extreme before! Now I understand, and I'm no longer bothered by the incorrect idea of fates being good or bad. I'm not troubled by it anymore. If I hadn't understood this, I'd always be thinking my fate was good one minute and suddenly bad the next, and wondering whether my fate was good or bad! I'd be worrying about it constantly." Once you've understood this truth, you will have a path to follow, you will have an accurate opinion on the matter, and you will have an accurate path of practice—this means that you are free and liberated. So, in order to discern whether someone's words are in accordance with the truth principles, and whether they are the truth, you must listen for whether these words are practical or not; at the same time, you should observe whether your difficulties and problems are resolved once you have heard these words—if they are, then you will feel free and liberated, like a heavy weight has been lifted from you. Therefore, every time you come to understand a truth principle, you will be able to resolve some related problems and put some truths into practice, and this will make you feel liberated and free. Won't this be the outcome? (It will.) Do you now understand what effect the truth has exactly? (Yes.) What effect can the truth have? (It can make people's spirits feel free and liberated.) Does the truth only have this one effect? Just this one feeling? (Primarily, it resolves the incorrect and radical views that people harbor toward things. Once people view things in a way that is pure and accords with the truth, they will feel liberated and free in their spirits, and they will no longer be bound or disturbed by the negative things that come from Satan.) Besides feeling free and liberated in your spirit, the crucial thing is that it can enable you to enter into a certain truth reality, so that you are no longer bound or swayed by erroneous and warped thoughts and views. Their place is taken by the principles of practicing the truth and then you can enter into that truth reality. I will end here My fellowship on the manifestations of people who feel depressed because they think they have a bad fate.

Another reason why some people become depressed is that, although they don't

think their fates are that bad, they feel that they are always unlucky and that nothing good ever happens to them, just like the unbelievers say: “The God of Luck always passes me by.” Even though they don’t feel that their circumstances are that bad, and they are tall and good looking, educated and talented, and they’re capable workers, they wonder why the God of Luck never favors them. This always makes them feel dissatisfied, and they always think themselves to be unlucky. Beginning with the year when they take their college entrance examinations, their hearts are filled with hope for getting into college, but when the day of the exams comes, they get the flu and run a fever. This affects how they perform in the exams, and they miss out on getting into college by two or three points. They think to themselves: “How could I have been so unlucky? I’m good at my studies and I usually work very hard. Why did I have to run a fever on the day of the college entrance exams, of all days? Oh dear! The first major event in my life and I’ve suffered a setback. What should I do now? I hope that my luck will be better in the future.” But later on in their lives, they meet all manner of difficulties and problems. For example, some business is hiring new staff and they are just getting ready to apply when they find out that all the job vacancies have been filled and the company doesn’t need anyone else. They wonder, “How could I have such bad luck? Whenever something good comes along, why does it just pass me by? It’s such bad luck!” And on the first day they start working somewhere, other people have just been promoted to manager, deputy manager, and department head. No matter how hard they work, it’s of no use; they have to wait for next time to get promoted. Because they perform well at work and their superiors regard them quite well, they think they’ll get promoted next time, but in the end their superiors bring in a manager from somewhere else, and they lose out again. They think to themselves, “Oh dear! It seems like I really do have bad luck. I never have any good luck—the God of Luck never favors me.” Later, they come to believe in God, and, as they enjoy writing, they hope to be able to perform a text-based duty, but in the end they don’t perform very well at the test and they fail. They think, “Usually I write very well, so why couldn’t I perform well on the test? God didn’t enlighten or lead me! I thought that by performing a text-based duty, I’d be able to eat and drink God’s words more and understand the truth more. It’s too bad that I was unlucky. Although the plan was a good one, it just didn’t pan out.” In the end they pick from many other duties, saying, “I’ll go spread the gospel in a gospel team.” Things with the gospel team are great to begin with and they feel like this time they’ve found their place, like they can put their skills to good use. They think that they’re smart, they’re capable in their work, and they’re willing to do practical work. With effort, they manage to achieve some results, and they become a supervisor. However, they do something wrong, and their leader finds out. They’re told that what they’ve done goes against the principles and that it has impacted the work of the church. After their team is dealt with and pruned, someone says to them, “We were doing great before you came along. Then you arrived and we get dealt with for the first time.” They wonder, “Isn’t this still my bad

luck?" Sometime later, people are reallocated due to changes in the gospel work and they go from being a supervisor to being just another member of the team, and they're sent to a new area to spread the gospel. They think, "Oh no, I'm going down instead of up. No one was reallocated before I got there, so how come this big reallocation is happening now that I've arrived? Now that I've been sent here, I've got no hope of ever being promoted." There are few churches and few church members in this new area. They experience difficulties getting the work started and they don't have any experience. They have to figure it out for a while, and there are language difficulties too, so what can they do? They want to throw their hands up and walk away, but they don't dare; they want to do their duties well but it's so difficult and exhausting, and they think, "Oh, it's because I'm so unlucky! How can I change my luck?" They hit a wall everywhere they turn, always feeling that they have bad luck, with something blocking their every move, and every step they take is so difficult. It took a lot of effort for them to achieve some results, and to see a little hope, and then their circumstances changed, and the hope disappeared, and they have no choice but to start all over again. They become more and more depressed, thinking, "Why is it so hard for me to achieve a few results and get people's approval? Why is it so hard to get a firm foothold in a group of people? Why is it so hard to be someone people approve of and like? Why is it so hard for everything to go well and smoothly? Why do so many things go wrong in my life? Why are there so many obstacles? Why do I always run into a wall in everything I do?" In particular, some people never perform their duties well, no matter where they go, and they always get replaced and cast out. They get so depressed and always believe themselves to be unlucky, thinking, "I'm like a swift horse that never gets noticed. As the saying goes, 'There are many swift horses, but few who can recognize them.' I'm like a swift horse who hasn't been discovered. At the end of the day, I'm just unlucky and I can't achieve anything or do well in any field no matter where I go. I can never put my strengths to use, or show them off, or get what I want. Oh, I'm so unlucky! What's going on here?" They always feel they have bad luck and spend every day in a cloud of anxiety, thinking, "Oh no! Please don't let me be reallocated to another duty," or "Oh no! Please don't let anything bad happen," or "Oh no! Please don't let anything change," or "Oh no! Please don't let there be any more major problems." Not only do they get depressed, but they also feel incredibly uneasy, restless, irritable, and anxious. They always think that their luck is bad, so they feel incredibly depressed, and this depression arises from their subjective feeling of being unlucky. They always feel unlucky, they never get promoted, they can never be a team leader or a supervisor, and they never get the chance to stand out from the crowd. These good things never happen to them, and they can't figure out why on earth this is the case. They think, "I'm not lacking in any respect, so why doesn't anyone like me wherever I go? I haven't offended anyone or wanted to give someone a hard time, so why am I so unlucky?" Because they always cling to such feelings, this emotion of depression is constantly reminding them, saying, "You're unlucky, so don't

get complacent, don't go swaggering about, and don't always be wanting to stand out. You're unlucky, so don't even think about becoming a leader. You're unlucky, so you must be more careful when performing your duty and hold back a little, just in case one day you're exposed and replaced, or just in case someone reports you behind your back and seizes upon something to ruin you, or just in case you're always taking the lead and you make a mistake and get dealt with. Even if you become a leader, you still must be careful and cautious all the time, as though you are walking along the edge of a knife. Don't be arrogant, you must be humble." This negative emotion reminds them all the time to be humble, to slink around with their tails between their legs and not to comport themselves with any dignity ever again. The idea, the thought, the perspective, or the awareness that their luck is bad reminds them all the time not to be positive or active, not to assert themselves, and not to stick their necks out. Instead, they must keep on being depressed, not daring to live before others. Even if everyone is in the same house, they have to find an inconspicuous place to sit in so that they're not so noticeable. They must not come across as too arrogant, because the moment they begin to show any arrogance, their bad luck will find them. Because the emotion of depression surrounds them constantly and is always warning them of these things in their innermost hearts, they are timid and cautious in everything they do. They always feel uneasy in their hearts, they can never find their proper place, and they can never put all their hearts, minds, and strength into fulfilling their responsibilities and obligations. It's as though they're guarding against something and waiting for something to happen. They guard against the coming of bad luck, against the bad things and embarrassments that their bad luck will bring upon them. Therefore, apart from the struggles in their innermost hearts, it is more the emotion of depression that dominates the ways and methods by which they view people and things, and comport themselves and act. They always use good luck and bad luck to measure their own behavior, and to gauge whether the ways that they view people and things, and comport themselves and act are correct, and that's why they repeatedly sink into this emotion of depression and cannot extricate themselves, and why they are unable to use the correct thinking and views to face these so-called "unlucky" things, or to handle and resolve what they call their terrible luck. In such a vicious cycle as this, they are constantly controlled and influenced by this emotion of depression. With a great deal of effort, they manage to open their hearts and fellowship about their state or their ideas with others, but then, at gatherings, the words spoken by brothers and sisters in fellowship intentionally or unintentionally touch upon their state and the crux of their issue, which makes them feel like their pride and dignity have been hurt. They still believe this is a manifestation of their own bad luck, and they think, "You see? It was so hard for me to talk about what was in my heart, and as soon as I do, someone seizes upon it and tries to ruin me. I'm so unlucky!" They believe this is their bad luck at work and that when a person is unlucky absolutely everything is against them.

What is the problem with people who always think that they are unlucky? They always use the standard of luck to measure whether their actions are right or wrong, and to weigh up which path they should take, the things that they should experience, and any problems that they face. Is that right or wrong? (Wrong.) They describe bad things as unlucky and good things as lucky or advantageous. Is this perspective right or wrong? (Wrong.) Measuring things from this kind of perspective is wrong. It is an extreme and incorrect method and standard for measuring things. This kind of method often leads people to sink into depression, and it often makes them feel uneasy, and that nothing ever goes their way, and that they never get what they want, which eventually leads them to feel constantly anxious, irritable, and uneasy. When these negative emotions go unresolved, these people constantly sink into depression and feel that God does not favor them. They think that God treats others with grace but not them, and that God takes care of others but not them. “Why do I always feel uneasy and anxious? Why do bad things always happen to me? Why do good things never come my way? Just once is all I’m asking for!” When you view things with this kind of erroneous way of thinking and perspective, you will fall into the trap of good and bad luck. When you are continually falling into this trap, you will constantly feel depressed. In the midst of this depression, you will be particularly sensitive to whether the things that befall you are lucky or unlucky. When this happens, it proves that this perspective and idea of good and bad luck has taken control of you. When you are controlled by this kind of perspective, your views and attitude toward people, events, and things are no longer within the range of the conscience and reason of normal humanity, but have fallen into a sort of extreme. When you fall into this extreme, you will not emerge from your depression. You will keep getting depressed time and time again, and even if you do not normally feel depressed, as soon as something goes wrong, as soon as you feel that something unlucky has happened, you will immediately sink into depression. This depression will affect your normal judgment and decision-making, and even your happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy. When it affects your happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy, it will disturb and destroy the performance of your duty, as well as your will and desire to follow God. When these positive things are destroyed, the few truths you have come to understand will vanish into thin air and be of no help to you at all. That is why, when you fall into this vicious cycle, it will be hard for you to put the few truth principles that you understand into practice. It is only when you feel that your luck is in, when you are not suppressed by depression that you can reluctantly pay a bit of a price, suffer a little hardship, and show a sliver of sincerity while doing the things you are willing to do. As soon as you feel that luck has deserted you and that unfortunate things are happening to you again, your depression soon takes control of you again, and your sincerity, loyalty, and will to endure hardship immediately leave you. Therefore, people who think that they are unlucky or who take luck very seriously are just like those people who think that their fates are bad. They often have very extreme emotions—in particular, they frequently slip into negative

emotions such as depression. They are particularly negative and weak, and they are even prone to mood swings. When they feel lucky, they're filled with joy, replete with energy, and they can endure hardships and pay a price; they can sleep less at night, and eat less food during the day, they're willing to suffer any hardship, and if they get momentarily excited, they're happy to offer up their lives. However, the moment they feel that they've been unlucky recently, when nothing seems to go right for them at all, the emotion of depression immediately seizes their heart. The vows and the resolutions they made before are all negated; suddenly they're like a deflated ball, unable to muster up any energy, or like a puddle of mush, unwilling to do anything or say anything at all. They think, "The truth principles, pursuing the truth, attaining salvation, obeying God—none of these has anything to do with me. I'm unlucky and it's no use no matter how many truths I practice or how much of a price I pay, I'll never attain salvation. I'm done. I'm like an unlucky charm, an unfortunate individual. Well, so be it, I'm unlucky in any case!" See, one minute they're like a ball that's so full of air that it's about to burst, and the next minute they're deflated. Isn't this troublesome? How does this trouble come about? What is the root cause? They're always watching their own fortunes, as though they're watching the stock market, to see whether it's going up or down, whether it's a bull market or a bear market. They're always neurotic, incredibly sensitive to the matter of their luck, and incredibly stubborn. This kind of extreme person will often become mired in the emotion of depression because they care too much about their own fortune and they live based on their moods. If they're in a bad mood when they get up in the morning, they think, "Oh no! I bet today isn't going to be a lucky day. My left eyelid has been twitching for several days, my tongue feels stiff, and my brain is sluggish. I bit my tongue while eating, and I didn't have a good dream when I slept last night." Or they think, "The first words I heard someone say today seem like a bad omen." They're constantly paranoid, rambling on and on about this mumbo jumbo, and making a study of such things. They are incredibly concerned about their own fortune, direction, and mood every day and in every period. They also observe the looks, attitude, and even tone of voice that all their brothers and sisters in the church use toward them. Their hearts are occupied by these things, which makes them constantly depressed. They know that they are not in a good state and yet they do not pray to God, or seek the truth to resolve it, and no matter what corrupt dispositions they reveal, they do not pay any attention to them or take them seriously. Is this not a problem? (It is.)

These people who are always concerned about whether they have good or bad luck—is the way that they view things correct? Does good luck or bad luck exist? (No.) What is the basis for saying that it does not exist? (The people we meet and the things that happen to us every day are determined by God's sovereignty and arrangements. There is no such thing as good luck or bad luck; everything happens out of necessity and has meaning behind it.) Is that correct? (It is.) This view is correct, and this is the theoretical basis for saying that luck does not exist. Whatever happens to you, whether

good or bad, it is all normal, just like the weather through the four seasons—not every day can be sunny. You cannot say that sunny days are arranged by God, whereas cloudy days, rain, wind, and storms are not. Everything is determined by God's sovereignty and arrangements, and is generated by the natural environment. This natural environment arises according to the laws and rules that God arranged and established. All of this is necessary and imperative, so no matter what the weather, it is generated and brought about by natural laws. There is nothing good or bad in it—only people's feelings about it are good or bad. People do not feel good when it is raining, windy or cloudy, or during hailstorms. People particularly do not like it when it is raining and damp; their joints ache and they feel weak. You might feel bad about rainy days, but can you say that rainy days are unlucky? This is just a feeling that the weather arouses in people—luck has nothing to do with the fact that it is raining. You might say that sunny days are good. If it is sunny for three months, without a drop of rain, people feel good. They can see the sun every day, and it is dry and warm with an occasional slight breeze, and they can go outdoors whenever they want. But the plants cannot tolerate it, and the crops die due to drought, so there is no harvest that year. So, does you feeling good mean that it is really good? Come the autumn, when you have no food to eat, you will be saying, "Oh dear, it's not good to have too many sunny days either. If it doesn't rain, the crops suffer, there's no food to harvest, and people go hungry." At this point, you realize that endless sunny days are not good either. The fact is that whether a person feels good or bad about something is based on their own selfish motives, desires, and self-interest, rather than on the essence of the thing itself. So, the basis on which people gauge whether something is good or bad is inaccurate. Because the basis is inaccurate, the final conclusions that they draw are also inaccurate. Returning to the subject of good luck and bad luck, now everyone knows that this saying of luck does not hold water, and that it is neither good nor bad. The people, events, and things that you encounter, whether good or bad, are all determined by God's sovereignty and arrangements, so you should face them properly. Accept what is good from God, and accept what is bad from God as well. Do not say that you're lucky when good things happen, and that you're unlucky when bad things happen. It can only be said that there are lessons for people to learn within all these things, and they should not reject or avoid them. Thank God for the good things, but also thank God for the bad things, because all of them are arranged by Him. Good people, events, things, and environments provide lessons that they should learn, but there is even more to be learned from bad people, events, things, and environments. These are all experiences and episodes that should be part of one's life. People should not use the idea of luck to measure them. So, what are the thoughts and perspectives of people who use luck to measure whether things are good or bad? What is the essence of such people? Why do they pay so much attention to good luck and bad luck? Do people who focus a lot on luck hope that their luck is good, or do they hope that it is bad? (They hope that it is good.) That is right. In fact, they pursue good luck and for good

things to happen to them, and they just take advantage of them and profit from them. They do not care how much others suffer, or how many hardships or difficulties others have to endure. They do not want anything that they perceive as unlucky to happen to them. In other words, they do not want any bad things to happen to them: no setbacks, no failures or embarrassments, no being dealt with or pruned, no losing things, no losing out, and no being deceived. If any of that happens, they regard it as bad luck. No matter who arranges it, if bad things happen, it is unlucky. They hope that all good things—from being promoted, standing out from the crowd, and benefiting at others' expense, to profiting from something, making lots of money, or becoming a high-ranking official—happen to them, and they think that is good luck. They always measure the people, events, and things that they encounter based on luck. They are pursuing good luck, not bad luck. As soon as the slightest thing goes wrong, they get angry, annoyed, and dissatisfied. To put it bluntly, these types of people are selfish. They pursue benefiting themselves at other people's expense, making a profit for themselves, coming out on top, and standing out from the crowd. They would be satisfied if every good thing happened to them alone. This is their nature essence; it is their true face.

Everyone has to go through many setbacks and failures in life. Who has a life filled with nothing but satisfaction? Who never experiences any failures or setbacks? When sometimes things don't go right for you, or you come across setbacks and failures, this isn't bad luck, it's what you ought to experience. It's like eating food—you have to eat the sour, the sweet, the bitter, and the spicy alike. People cannot do without salt and must eat some salty foods, but if you eat too much salt, it'll harm your kidneys. You have to eat some sour foods in some seasons, but it won't do to eat too much, as it's not good for your teeth or your stomach. Everything has to be eaten in moderation. You eat sour foods, salty foods and sweet foods, and you have to eat some bitter foods, too. Bitter foods are good for some internal organs, so you have to eat a little. A person's life is the same. Most of the people, events, and things you come across in every stage of your life won't be to your liking. Why is this? It's because people pursue different things. If you pursue fame and fortune, status, and wealth, to be superior to others and achieve great success, and so on, then 99 percent of things won't be to your liking. It's just as people say: It's all bad luck and misfortune. However, if you give up on the idea of how lucky or unlucky you are, and treat these things calmly and correctly, you will find that most things are not so unfavorable or difficult to deal with. When you let go of your ambitions and desires, when you stop rejecting or avoiding whatever misfortune befalls you, and you stop measuring such things by how lucky or unlucky you are, many of the things that you used to see as unfortunate and bad, you will now think of as good—the bad things will turn into good things. Your mentality and the way that you view things will change, which will enable you to feel differently about your life experiences, and at the same time reap different rewards. This is an extraordinary experience, one which will bring you unimagined rewards. It is a good thing, not a bad thing. For example, some individuals

always get the appreciation, they always get the promotions, they always receive praise and encouragement, they often win approval from their brothers and sisters, and everyone looks at them with envy. Is this a good thing? Most people think that these things happen because those individuals have luck on their side. They say: “Look, that guy has good caliber, he was born lucky and he’s done well in his life—he gets the good opportunities and wins the promotions. He is just really lucky!” They are incredibly envious. And yet, in the end, that individual is dismissed within a few years and becomes an ordinary believer. He cries over it and tries to hang himself, and in the space of a few days he is cleared out. Is this good luck? If you look at it that way, he is desperately unlucky. But is it actually a case of bad luck? (No.) In fact, it is not that he has bad luck, it is that he did not follow the right path. Because he did not follow the right path, when things that people perceive as “lucky” happened to him, they became a temptation, a trap, and a catalyst that accelerated his destruction. Is this a good thing? He always aspired to be promoted, to be a cut above everyone else, to be the center of attention, and for everything to go well and the way that he wanted it to, but what happened in the end? Was he not cast out? This is the result that comes when people do not follow the right path. Pursuing good luck in itself is not the right path. People who pursue luck are sure to reject and avoid all bad things, all the things that people tend to regard as undesirable, the things that do not conform to people’s moods and fleshly interests. They fear, avoid, and reject the occurrence of these things. When these things happen, they describe them as “unlucky.” Can they seek the truth when they think they are unlucky? (No.) Do you think that people who cannot seek the truth and who always think that they are unlucky can walk the right path? (No.) They certainly cannot. Therefore, people who always pursue luck, who always focus only on their luck and contemplate their luck, are people who do not follow the right path. Such people do not attend to their proper duties, and they do not follow the right path, so they keep sinking into depression. This is their own fault, and they deserve it! It’s because they follow the wrong path! They deserve to sink into depression. Is it easy to get out of this depression? In fact, it is easy. Just let go of your erroneous perspectives, do not expect everything to go well, or exactly the way you want it to, or smoothly. Do not fear, resist, or reject things that go wrong. Instead, let go of your resistance, calm down, and come before God with an attitude of obedience, and accept all that God arranges. Do not pursue so-called “good luck,” and do not reject so-called “bad luck.” Give your heart and your whole being to God, let Him do the acting and orchestrating, and submit to His orchestrations and arrangements. God will give you what you need in just measure when you need it. He will orchestrate the environments, people, events, and things that you require, according to your needs and deficiencies, so that you can learn the lessons that you ought to be learning from the people, events, and things that you come across. Of course, the prerequisite to all this is that you must have a mentality of obedience toward God’s orchestrations and arrangements. So, do not pursue perfection; do not reject or fear the occurrence of undesirable, embarrassing,

or unfavorable things; and do not use your depression to inwardly resist the occurrence of bad things. For example, if a singer has a sore throat one day and does not perform well, they think, “I’m so unlucky! Why isn’t God looking after my voice? I usually sing so well when I’m on my own, but today I’ve embarrassed myself singing in front of everyone. I couldn’t get my pitch right, and I couldn’t grasp the tempo. I’ve made a big fool of myself!” Making a fool of yourself is a good thing. It helps you to see your own deficiencies and your love of vanity. It shows you where your problems lie and it helps you to understand clearly that you are not a perfect person. There are no perfect people and making a fool of yourself is very normal. All people experience times where they make a fool of themselves or are embarrassed. All people fail, experience setbacks, and have weaknesses. Making a fool of yourself is not bad. When you make a fool of yourself but do not feel embarrassed, and do not feel depressed deep inside, that does not mean you are thick-skinned; it means that you do not care whether making a fool of yourself will affect your reputation and it means that your vanity no longer occupies your thoughts. It means that you have matured in your humanity. This is wonderful! Is this not a good thing? It is a good thing. Do not think that you have not performed well or that you have bad luck, and do not look for the objective causes behind it. It is normal. You may make a fool of yourself, others may make fools of themselves, everyone may make a fool of themselves—eventually you will discover that everyone is the same, all are ordinary people, all mortals, that no one is greater than anyone else, and no one is any better than anyone else. Everyone makes a fool of themselves sometimes, so no one should make fun of anyone else. Once you have experienced numerous failures, you gradually mature in your humanity; so whenever you encounter these things again, you will no longer be constrained, and they will not have an impact on the normal performance of your duty. Your humanity will be normal, and when your humanity is normal, your reason will be normal too.

These people who enjoy pursuing luck are people who pursue good fortune in this life, who take things to extremes. What these people pursue is wrong and they should let it go. We fellowshiped just now on how to handle and take the correct approach to these undesirable things—do you understand this now? How did we fellowship on this? (People should submit to everything God orchestrates. They mustn’t seek to become perfect people, nor must they fear anything that makes them feel embarrassed or fear anything unfavorable happening, and people mustn’t use their emotion of depression to resist these things when they happen.) Get your mind calm and face it all with the right mindset. When bad things happen to you, you must have the correct path to approach and resolve them, and even if you don’t handle them well, you should still not sink into depression. If you fail, you can try again; at worst, failure is a lesson, and even if you do fail, it’s still better than being averse, resisting, rejecting, and running away. So, no matter what happens or what you must face in the future, you should never reject it or try to escape from it, much less measure it with the view of your luck being good or bad. Since

you affirm that everything is orchestrated by the hand of God, you shouldn't measure all these things with the view and mindset of your luck being good or bad, much less reject the bad things that happen. Of course, you shouldn't approach these things with the emotion of depression, either. Rather, you should adopt a proactive attitude and positive mood to meet and approach these things, and see what lessons there are to learn and what understanding you should glean from them—this is what you ought to do. Won't your thoughts and views then be right? (They will.) And when you once again face some bad or unfortunate things happening, you can approach them according to God's words, you will have the correct thoughts and views and, in this way, your humanity and reason will become normal. When you look at it like this, isn't it very important to have the correct view? Isn't it crucially important to clearly understand the matter of fate according to God's words? (Yes.) Now that we're almost done with fellowshiping on this saying of luck being good or bad, do you understand now? (Yes.) If you can understand the essence of this kind of problem clearly, then you will have the correct view on the matter of fate.

There is also another cause for people sinking into the emotion of depression, which is that some particular things happen to people before they've come of age or after they've grown into adults, that is, they commit some transgressions or do some idiotic things, foolish things, and ignorant things. They sink into depression because of these transgressions, because of these idiotic and ignorant things they've done. This kind of depression is a condemnation of oneself, and it is also a kind of determination of the kind of person they are. This kind of transgression is certainly not just swearing at someone or badmouthing someone a little behind their back, or something petty like that, but rather it is something that involves shame, one's personality and dignity, and even the law. As they continually bring the event to mind, the emotion of depression gathers little by little deep inside their heart, all the way up to the present. What are these transgressions? As I said just now, they are ignorant, idiotic and foolish things which people have done either as children or adults. Do you know what these things include? Idiotic, foolish and ignorant—these include things that harm others but benefit yourself, things that are difficult to talk about, and things which you feel ashamed about. It may be something dirty, despicable, obscene, or indecent, which causes you to sink into this emotion of depression. This depression is not just a simple sort of self-reproach but is rather a condemnation of oneself. Can you think of what might be included within this scope I've outlined? Give an example. (Promiscuity.) Promiscuity is one, yes. For example, some people have betrayed their husband or wife in thought or deed; some people have committed adultery and engaged in promiscuity, but they still don't give it up and are always thinking about who they want to commit adultery with; some people have cheated others out of money, perhaps even large sums of money; some people have stolen things belonging to others; and some people have framed or exacted revenge on others. Some of these things come close to breaking the law, while some

are indeed in breach of the law; some may be on the very fringes of moral boundaries, while some may indeed go against the ethics of normal humanity. These things are buried deep in the memories of people's innermost hearts, and they are brought to mind from time to time. When you find yourself alone, when you're unable to sleep in the dead of night, you cannot help but think of these things. They play before your mind's eye like a movie, scene by scene, and you're unable to erase them or shake them off. Every time you think of these things, you feel depressed, your face burns, your heart quivers, you feel embarrassed, and your spirit is filled with unease. Although you believe in God, you still feel as though these things you've done happened only yesterday. You can't run from them, you can't hide from them, and you have no idea how to leave them behind. Even though only a few others know what you've done, or perhaps no one knows, you feel a faint sense of unease in your heart. From this unease comes depression, and this depression makes you feel incriminated while you follow God and perform your duty. Whether this feeling of incrimination comes from your own conscience, from the law, or from your sense of morality and ethics, you cannot say for sure. In any case, people who have done these things often feel uneasy inadvertently, when some particular thing happens, or in some certain environments and contexts. This feeling of unease makes them fall unknowingly into deep depression, and they become bound up and restricted by their depression. Whenever they listen to a sermon or a fellowship on the truth, this depression slowly creeps into their mind and into their innermost heart, and they give themselves a grilling, asking, "Can I do this? Am I able to pursue the truth? Am I able to attain salvation? What kind of person am I? I did that thing before, I used to be that kind of person. Am I beyond saving? Will God still save me?" Some people can sometimes let go of their emotion of depression and leave it behind. They take their sincerity and all the energy they can muster and apply them to performing their duty, their obligations, and their responsibilities, and can even put all their heart and mind into pursuing the truth and contemplating God's words, and they pour their effort into God's words. The moment some special situation or circumstance comes along, however, the emotion of depression takes hold of them once again and makes them feel incriminated again deep in their heart. They think to themselves, "You did that thing before, and you were that kind of person. Can you attain salvation? Is there any point in practicing the truth? What does God think of what you've done? Will God forgive you for what you've done? Can paying the price in this way now make up for that transgression?" They often reproach themselves and feel incriminated deep inside, and they are always doubting, always grilling themselves with questions. They can never leave this emotion of depression behind them or cast it off, and they feel a perpetual sense of unease about the shameful thing they've done. So, despite having believed in God for so many years, it's as if they've never listened to anything God has said nor understood it. It's as if they don't know whether attaining salvation has anything to do with them, whether they can be absolved and redeemed, or whether they are qualified to receive God's judgment and

chastisement and His salvation. They have no idea of all these things. Because they don't receive any answers, and because they don't get any accurate verdict, they feel constantly depressed deep inside. In their innermost heart, they recall what they did over and over again, they replay it in their mind over and over again, remembering how it all began and how it ended, remembering it all from start to finish. Regardless of how they remember it, they always feel sinful, and so they constantly feel depressed about this matter over the years. Even when they're doing their duty, even when they're in charge of a certain job, they still feel like they have no hope of being saved. Therefore, they never squarely face the matter of pursuing the truth and regard it as something most correct and important. They believe that the mistake they've made or the thing they've done in the past are looked poorly upon by most people, or that they may be condemned and despised by people, or even condemned by God. No matter what stage God's work is at or how many utterances He has made, they never face the matter of pursuing the truth in the correct way. Why is this? They don't have the courage to leave their depression behind. This is the final conclusion this type of person draws from having experienced this kind of thing, and because they don't draw the correct conclusion, they are incapable of leaving their depression behind them.

There are bound to be many people who have committed some transgression or other, whether big or small, but there are most likely very few who have committed serious transgressions, the kind of transgression that goes beyond moral boundaries. We won't talk about those who have committed various other transgressions here, we'll just talk about what people who have committed serious transgressions, and who have committed the kind of transgression that goes beyond moral boundaries and ethics should do. As for the people who have committed serious transgressions—and here I'm talking about transgressions which go beyond moral boundaries—this does not involve offending God's disposition and violating His administrative decrees. Do you understand? I'm not talking about transgressions which offend God's disposition, His essence, or His identity and status, and I'm not talking about transgressions which are blasphemous against God. What I'm talking about are the transgressions which go beyond moral boundaries. There is also something to be said about how those people who have committed transgressions like this can resolve their emotion of depression. Such people have two paths they can take, and it is a simple matter. First, if you feel in your heart that you can let go of that thing you did, or you have the opportunity to apologize to the other person and make it up to them, then you can go make it up to them and apologize, and feelings of peace and ease will return to your spirit; if you don't have the opportunity to do this, if this is not possible, if you truly come to know your own problem in your innermost heart, if you realize just how serious this thing is that you've done, and you feel truly remorseful, then you should come before God to confess and repent. Whenever you think of the thing you've done and feel incriminated, which is precisely the time when you should come before God to confess and repent, you must

bring your sincerity and true feelings to receive God's absolution and forgiveness. And how can you be absolved and forgiven by God? This depends on your heart. If you truly confess, truly recognize your mistake and your problem, and whether it be a transgression that you've committed or a sin, you adopt an attitude of true confession, you feel true hatred for what you've done, and you really turn yourself around, so that you will never do that wrong thing again, then, one day, you will receive God's absolution and forgiveness, that is, God will no longer determine your end based on the ignorant, foolish, and dirty things you have done before. When you reach this level, God will forget the matter entirely; you will be just the same as other normal people, without the slightest difference. However, the premise to this is that you must be sincere and have a true attitude of repentance, like David. How many tears did David weep for the transgression he'd committed? Countless tears. How many times did he weep? Countless times. The tears he wept can be described with these words: "Every night make I my bed to swim." I don't know how serious your transgression is. If it is really serious, you may need to weep until your bed floats on the water of your tears—you may have to confess and repent to that level before you can receive God's forgiveness. If you don't do this, then I'm afraid your transgression will become a sin in God's eyes, and you will not be absolved of it. Then you'd be in trouble and there would be no point in saying anything more about this. Therefore, the first step to receiving God's absolution and forgiveness is that you must be sincere and take practical action to truly confess and repent. Some people ask, "Do I need to tell everyone about it?" That's not necessary; just go and pray to God by yourself. Whenever you feel ill at ease and incriminated in your heart, you should immediately come before God to pray and receive His forgiveness. Some people ask, "How much do I have to pray before I know that God has forgiven me?" When you no longer feel incriminated by this matter, when you no longer slip into depression because of this matter, that is when you will have achieved results, and it will show that God has absolved you. When no one, no power, and no outside force can disturb you, and when you are not under the sway of any person, event, or thing, that is when you will have achieved results. This is the first step you need to take. The second step is that, while constantly beseeching God for absolution, you should actively seek the principles you should follow as you perform your duty—only by doing this will you be able to perform your duty well. Of course, this is also a practical action, a practical expression and attitude that make up for your transgression, and that proves that you are repentant and that you have turned yourself around; this is something you ought to do. How well do you perform your duty, the commission God gives to you? Do you approach it with a depressed attitude, or with the principles God requires you to follow? Do you offer up your loyalty? On what basis should God absolve you? Have you expressed any repentance? What are you showing to God? If you wish to receive God's absolution, then you must first be sincere: You must have an attitude of earnest confession on the one hand, and you must also bring your sincerity and perform your

duty well, otherwise there's nothing to talk about. If you can do these two things, if you can move God with your sincerity and good faith, and have God absolve you of your sins, then you will be just like other people. God will look upon you in the same way as He looks upon other people, He will treat you in the same way as He treats other people, and He will judge and chastise, test and refine you just as He does other people—you will be treated no differently. In this way you will not only have the determination and desire to pursue the truth, but God will also enlighten you, guide you, and provide for you in the same way in your pursuit of the truth. Of course, because you now have a sincere and genuine desire and an earnest attitude, God will treat you no differently than anyone else and, just like other people, you will have the chance to attain salvation. You understand this, right? (Yes.) Having committed a serious transgression is a special case. We cannot say that it isn't scary; it's a very serious problem. It's not the same thing as an ordinary corrupt disposition or someone having some incorrect thoughts and views. It is something that has actually happened, that has become fact, and which brings about serious consequences. That is why it should be treated in a special way. Whether it's treated in a special way or a normal way, however, there is always a way forward and a way to resolve it, and this depends on whether you can practice in accordance with the ways and methods I tell you and guide you toward. If you really practice in this way, then your hopes of attaining salvation in the end will be the same as other people's. Of course, resolving all of this is not just so that people can leave their emotion of depression behind. The ultimate goal is that, by resolving their emotion of depression, they can take the correct approach to all these things within the ambit of the conscience and reason of normal humanity when they encounter people, events, and things. They mustn't go to extremes, and they mustn't be stubborn; they should go further in seeking God's will and seeking the truth, perform the responsibilities and duties a created being is supposed to perform, until finally they can view people and things and comport themselves and act wholly according to God's words, with the truth as their criterion. Once people have entered into this reality, they will gradually be approaching the path of salvation, and in this way, they will have hope of attaining salvation. Is the path of how to resolve the emotion of depression that arise from serious transgressions now clear to you? (Yes, it is.)

Is resolving the emotion of depression a difficult problem? I think it's very difficult, as it involves important matters in life, it involves the path people walk in their belief in God, whether they can attain salvation in the future or whether their belief will all be in vain—this is a major issue. On the surface, what is revealed is an emotion, when in fact there are reasons for the arising of this emotion. I've fellowshiped clearly on these reasons today, I have provided a way forward to resolve the problem of these causes now, so can't the emotion of depression now be readily solved? (It is.) It has been resolved in theory. By having doctrinal understanding, then comparing this doctrine with what you have done in the past, using this doctrine as a basis to gradually solve your difficulties

in life, the difficulties in your thinking, and consistently following this path, you can gradually embark upon the path in pursuit of the truth. What do you think of this way to solve the problem? (It's good.) This is how people must solve the problem. If they don't, then the complicated problems inside them—the problems in their thinking, the problems in their heart, their mental issues, as well as their corrupt dispositions—these things bind them tightly. They become bound and trapped like this, they suffer and feel exhausted all the time, they don't know whether to laugh or cry, and they can never find a way out. When you have finished listening to today's fellowship, you can ponder it carefully and come to have a doctrinal understanding of it. Then, through your practical experiences and personal experiences in your daily life, you can gradually emerge from these negative emotions and the various states of your corrupt dispositions. Once you have left them behind, not only will you be truly liberated and free, and not only will you have entered into the truth reality but, most importantly, you will have understood the truth, you will have gained the truth, and you will be able to live out the truth reality. You will then be of great use, and you will be living a life of value. Do you wish to live like that? (Yes.) Most people want to understand the truth and enter into the truth reality, and they don't want to spend their lives in the negative emotions of the flesh, lustful desires of the flesh, worldly trends, and corrupt dispositions—that kind of life is too hard and exhausting. Will your life have a good outcome if you live in these corrupt dispositions and negative emotions? To live in these negative emotions is to live under the power of Satan. It's like living in a meat grinder—sooner or later you will be chewed up, and it's hard to find a way out. However, if you can accept the truth, then you have hope of leaving confusion and pain behind, and you will be able to escape the pain that comes from being entangled in and confused by negative emotions.

I'd originally planned on fellowshiping on more than one topic today, but I've ended up fellowshiping on depression for a long time. There is a lot to say about any matter; nothing can be clearly explained in just a few words. Whatever I talk about, I cannot just explain the doctrine of a matter and then call it a day. Any matter involves many aspects of the truth and reality; it involves people's thoughts and views, the ways and means in which they conduct themselves, the path they walk, and all of this relates to your attainment of salvation. I cannot be careless when fellowshiping on a truth or a topic, and that's why I try all the ways I can, like a nagging old grandma, to say these things over and over to you. Don't complain about it being troublesome, and don't complain about it being too long-winded. I may have spoken on a topic before, so why speak on it again? If I speak on it again, you can listen to it again and regard it as a review. That's okay, isn't it? (Yes.) In short, you must approach matters relating to the truth and the path people walk conscientiously, and you mustn't be careless. The more details I go into and the more specific I get, the more detailed and clear your understanding becomes of the relationship between the various truths, as well as the differences and connections in the details between them, among other aspects. If I were to speak in general terms

and just talk about some things overall, then you would find them hard to understand and enter into, and it would be exhausting for you trying to contemplate and figure out these things by yourselves, right? (Yes.) For example, our topic for today—fate, luck, and the negative emotions that arise from the particular transgressions people have committed in the past—you wouldn't be able to think of these things on your own, and even if you did, you wouldn't have a way out of them. Because you don't understand the truth within these things, you will never be able to find the correct answer to the matter of having committed particular transgressions in the past, and it will always remain a mystery to you, forever bothering you and entangling you, robbing your innermost heart of peace, joy, freedom and liberation. Or perhaps because you didn't handle the matter correctly and you didn't follow the correct path, this had an impact on your attainment of salvation. In the end some people were abandoned and cast out. Why would this be? Because they did some unspeakable things in the past and they didn't handle them well and receive absolution for them. Their heart was perpetually entangled by these things; they didn't feel like pursuing the truth, they performed their duty in a slipshod manner, they didn't enter into the truth reality, and they felt like it was hopeless for them to pursue the truth. They carried this negative view until the very end, they never talked about experiential testimony, and they didn't gain the truth. Only then did they start to feel regret, but it was too late. Therefore, do all these matters relate to the truth and to attaining salvation? (They do.) Don't think that just because these matters haven't happened to you, or they haven't happened to someone else, or they haven't happened to the people around you, that they don't exist. Let Me tell you, you may have done some disreputable things before that have not yet resulted in any frightening consequence, or you may have previously become mired in this kind of negative emotion or are mired in it now, only you didn't notice and were unaware of it, and then one day something real happens and this emotion has a severe impact on you and results in serious consequences. Only when you examine yourself deeply do you discover that you have been mired in this negative emotion for many years or even longer without being aware of it. That's why people need to continually contemplate, reflect, understand, appreciate, and experience these things in order to slowly discover them. Of course, finally discovering these things means extremely good news for you and is a great opportunity to attain salvation. When you do discover them, this will be when you have the chance or the hope to leave them behind, and what I have spoken about today will not have been spoken in vain. No truth, no topic, and no words can be understood completely and experienced in a day or two. Since it involves the truth, it involves humanity, people's corrupt dispositions, the path people walk, and people's attainment of salvation. Therefore, you cannot overlook any truth, but must take a conscientious approach to them all. Even if you don't yet understand these truths too well and don't know how to examine yourself to see what problems you have according to these truths, then perhaps after you have experienced them for a few years these truths will save you from the grip

of your corrupt dispositions, and they will become the precious truths that save you. When that happens, these truths will guide you onto the correct path through life, and perhaps in ten years or so, these words and these truths will have utterly changed your thoughts and views and utterly transformed your goals and direction in life.

That’s the end of our fellowship for today. Goodbye!

October 1, 2022

How to Pursue the Truth (3)

Where did we get to in our fellowship at our last gathering? We were fellowshiping on how to pursue the truth, which relates to two major topics which are primarily two aspects of practice. What is the first? (The first is letting go.) And the second? (The second is dedicating.) The first is letting go, and the second is dedicating. With regard to the practice of "letting go," we first fellowshiped on letting go of various negative emotions. The first aspect of "letting go" involves letting go of various negative emotions. So when we spoke about letting go of various negative emotions, which ones did we mention? (God talked about inferiority, hatred, and anger the first time, and then the second time about depression.) The first time, I talked about the need to let go of hatred, anger, and inferiority—these three negative emotions were what I spoke about primarily, and I also spoke at some length on depression. The second time, I spoke about practicing letting go of depression as one of the negative emotions. People can get depressed for all kinds of reasons, and last time I mainly spoke about several ways in which the negative emotion of depression can come about. Tell Me, what were the main causes I gave for the emotion of depression to come about? (God, there are altogether three causes. The first is people always feeling that they have a bad fate; the second is people blaming their bad luck when things happen to them; and the third is when people have committed serious transgressions in the past, or when they have done foolish or ignorant things, which caused them to sink into depression.) These are the three main ones. The first is because people believe that their fate is bad, and so they are often depressed; the second is because people believe themselves to be unlucky, and so often get depressed as well; and the third is because people have committed serious transgressions, which leads them to often feel depressed. These are the three primary causes. The emotion of depression is not a fleeting feeling of negativity or sadness. Rather it is a habitual and recurrent negative emotion in the mind brought about by certain causes. This negative emotion causes people to have many negative thoughts, views, and standpoints, and even many extreme and fallacious thoughts, views, behaviors, and methods. It is not a temporary mood or a fleeting idea; it is a recurrent and habitual negative emotion, with people all the time, accompanying people in their lives in their innermost hearts and deep in their souls, and with them in their thoughts and actions. Not only does this negative emotion affect the conscience and reason of people's normal humanity, but it can also have an impact on the various standpoints, views, and perspectives people have in the way they look at people and things, and in their conduct and actions in their daily lives. Therefore, it is necessary for us to analyze different negative feelings, dissect them, and recognize them, before then letting them go and changing them one by one, striving to gradually leave them behind so that your conscience and reason, as well as the thinking of your humanity, become normal and practical, and so that the way you look at people and things and the way you conduct

yourselves and do things in your daily lives are no longer impacted, controlled or even oppressed by these negative feelings—this is the main objective of dissecting and discerning these various negative emotions. The main objective is not for you to listen to what I say, know it, understand it, and then leave it there, but rather it is for you to know from My words exactly how harmful negative emotions are to people, to know how harmful they are and how great an impact they have on people's daily lives, the way they view people and things, and the way they conduct themselves and behave.

We also fellowshiped before on how, to a certain extent, these negative emotions do not reach the level of corrupt dispositions and a corrupt essence, but do facilitate and exacerbate people's corrupt dispositions to some degree, providing a basis for their doing things based on their corrupt dispositions, and giving people more reason to live by their corrupt dispositions while supported by these negative emotions, as well as reason to view anyone or anything based on their corrupt dispositions. These negative emotions, therefore, all impact people's daily lives to varying degrees, and, to a certain extent, they affect and control people's various thoughts, and influence the attitudes, perspectives, and standpoints they have on the truth and God. It can be said that these negative emotions do not have a good impact on people at all, nor any positive or helpful effect, but, conversely, can only harm people. That's why when people live within these negative emotions, their hearts are naturally influenced and controlled by them, and they are unable to stop themselves from living in a state of negativity, and they even adopt extreme views on people and things from absurd standpoints. When people view a person or a thing from the perspective and standpoint of negative emotions, naturally the behaviors, approaches, and effects of the comportment and actions that they produce will be adulterated with extreme, negative, and depressive emotions. These negative, depressive, and extreme emotions will cause people to be disobedient to God, dissatisfied with God, to blame God, to defy Him, and even to oppose Him, as well as, of course, to hate Him. For example, when a person believes they have a bad fate, who do they blame for it? They may not say it, but in their heart, they believe that God has acted wrongly and that He is unfair, and they think, "Why did God make him so good-looking? Why did God allow him to be born into such a great family? Why did He give him such gifts? Why did He give him such good caliber? Why is my caliber so bad? Why did God arrange for him to be a leader? Why is it never my turn, why have I never gotten to be a leader even once? Why does everything go so smoothly for him, and when I do anything, it never goes right or smoothly? Why is my fate so miserable? Why are the things that happen to me so different? Why do only bad things happen to me?" Although these thoughts that arise from depressive emotions do not cause people to blame God, or to oppose God and their fate in their subjective consciousness, they do cause people to often and involuntarily sink into emotions of being disobedient, dissatisfied, resentful, envious, and hateful in their innermost hearts. In severe cases, they can even cause people to produce more extreme thoughts and behaviors. For example, when some

people see someone else performing better than them and being commended by God, they feel envy and loathing. Consequently, a series of petty actions are set in motion: They speak ill of the other person and undermine them behind their back, they secretly do some shady and irrational things, and so on. The arising of this series of issues is directly related to their depression and negative emotions. This series of thoughts, behaviors, and approaches which arises from their depressive emotions may seem like just kinds of emotions at first, but as things progress, these negative and depressive emotions can increasingly encourage people to live by their corrupt satanic dispositions. However, if people understand the truth and live with normal humanity, when these negative and depressive emotions arise within them, their conscience and reason can promptly spring into action, and these people can perceive the presence and disturbance of these depressive emotions and see through them. They can then very quickly leave their depressive emotions behind them, and when they encounter people, events, and things in their present situation, they can make rational judgments and rationally regard the situations they encounter and the things they experience from the correct perspective. When people do all these things rationally, the most basic thing that they will be able to achieve is to accept the governance of the conscience and reason of normal humanity. Even better, if they understand the truth, they will be able to act in accordance with the truth principles in a more rational manner, upon the basis of their conscience and reason, and they will not comport themselves or act under the mastery of their corrupt dispositions. However, if negative emotions take the predominant position in their hearts, influencing their thoughts, views, and the way they handle matters and conduct themselves, then naturally these negative emotions will affect their progress in life, and lead to their thoughts, choices, behavior, and approaches being obstructed and disturbed in all manner of situations. In one respect, these negative emotions facilitate people’s corrupt dispositions, causing people to feel at ease and justified living in their corrupt dispositions; in another respect, they can also cause people to resist positive things and to live in negativity, unwilling to see the light. In this way, negative emotions become more rampant and severe in people, and they absolutely do not permit people to act rationally within the boundaries of conscience and reason. Instead, they prevent people from seeking the truth and from living before God, and, in this way, people naturally degenerate even further, not only feeling negative, but also straying far from God. And what will the consequences be of things continuing like this? Not only can negative emotions not resolve people’s corrupt dispositions, but they will facilitate them, which will cause people to handle matters and conduct themselves based on their corrupt dispositions and to go their own way. What will people do when they’re dominated by fallacious and extreme thoughts and views? Will they disturb the work of the church? Will they spread negativity, and judge God and the work arrangements of God’s house? Will they blame God and defy Him? They certainly will! These are the ultimate consequences. A series of approaches, such as disobedience, dissatisfaction,

negativity, and opposition will arise within people—these are all the consequences of negative emotions taking a predominant position in people's hearts over a long period of time. Look, just a tiny negative emotion—an emotion that people would seemingly be unable to feel, that people could not even sense the existence of or feel whatever effect it's having on them—this tiny negative emotion still follows them around as if it has been with them since birth. It causes people harm of all shapes and sizes, and it is even constantly enveloping, intimidating, suppressing, and binding you, to the point where it accompanies you all the time, just like your life does, and yet you are totally unaware of it, often living within it and taking it for granted, thinking things like, "This is how people are supposed to think, there's nothing wrong with it, it's very normal. Who doesn't have some active thoughts like these? Who doesn't have some negative emotions?" You are unable to sense the harm this negative emotion is causing you, but the harm is very real, and you will often be involuntarily incited by it to naturally pour forth your corrupt dispositions, and to act and comport yourself based on your corrupt dispositions, until finally you do everything based on your corrupt dispositions. You can imagine what the final results of this are: They are all negative, all adverse, with nothing beneficial or positive, much less anything that can help people to gain the truth and God's commendation—these are not optimistic outcomes. Therefore, as long as negative emotions exist in a person, all kinds of negative thoughts and views will severely influence and dominate their life. As long as negative thoughts and views influence and dominate their life, there will be huge obstacles stopping them from pursuing the truth, practicing the truth, and entering into the truth reality. And so, it is necessary for us to continue exposing and dissecting these negative emotions, so that all of them can be resolved.

The negative emotions we have just fellowshiped on have a serious effect and cause severe harm to people, but there are other negative emotions which likewise influence and harm people. Besides the negative emotions of hatred, anger, inferiority, and depression which we have already talked about, there are the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry. These emotions are likewise rooted deep in people's innermost hearts, and they accompany people in their everyday lives, and in their words and actions. Of course, when things happen to people, they also affect the thoughts and views that arise within them, as well as the standpoints and perspectives they take. Today, we will dissect and expose the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry, and endeavor to help people discover them within themselves. After people discover these negative emotions within themselves, the ultimate goal is for them to know these negative emotions thoroughly, to clear them out, to no longer live under their influence, and to no longer live and comport themselves with these negative emotions as their basis and foundation. First, let's look at the words "distress, anxiety, and worry." Are they not ways of expressing emotions? (They are.) Before we fellowship on this topic, let's first contemplate on it, so that you have the most basic concept of "distress, anxiety, and worry." Whether you reach a literal understanding of the words, or a deeper

understanding beyond their literal meaning, you will then have a basic knowledge of these negative emotions. First tell Me what has caused you to worry in the past, or what things you are always feeling distressed, anxious, and worried about. They can be like a great stone crushing you, or like a shadow that is always following you, binding you. (God, I'll say a few words. When I don't achieve any results in my duty, this emotion is quite prominent, and I worry whether I'll be exposed and cast out, and whether I'll have a good future and a good destination. When I achieve results in my duty, I don't feel like this, but whenever I don't achieve results in it for some time, this kind of negative emotion becomes extremely evident.) Is this not a manifestation of the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry? (It is.) That's right. This kind of negative emotion hides within people's innermost hearts at all times, constantly influencing their thoughts. Although people can't sense this kind of negative emotion when nothing bad has happened, it's like an odor, or like a kind of gas, or even more so like an electric wave. You can't see it and when you aren't aware of it, you're even not able to feel it either. However, you can always sense its presence in your innermost heart, like the so-called sixth sense, and you can always subconsciously feel the existence of this kind of thought and emotion. At the appropriate time, in the appropriate place, and in the appropriate context, this kind of negative emotion will rise up little by little, and emerge bit by bit. Isn't that so? (Yes.) So, what other things make you feel distressed, anxious, and worried? Is there nothing besides what was just mentioned? If so, then you must be living so happily and without worry, without any anxiety, and without feeling distressed about anything—then you would be a free person indeed. Is that how it is? (No.) Well then, tell Me what is in your hearts. (When I don't perform well in my duty, I'm always worrying about losing reputation and status, worrying what my brothers and sisters will think of me, and what my leader will think of me. Also, when I'm working together with my brothers and sisters to do my duty and I keep revealing my corrupt dispositions, I'm always worrying that I've believed in God for so long yet I haven't changed at all, and if this carries on, then perhaps one day I'll be cast out. These are the misgivings I have.) When you have these misgivings do the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry arise in you? (They do.) So, most of you are anxious and worried because you're not performing your duties well, is that right? (Mostly, I'm worried about my future and my fate.) Worrying about one's future and fate is the predominant one. When people are unable to see through to, understand, accept, or submit to the environments that God orchestrates and His sovereignty, and when people face various difficulties in their daily lives, or when these difficulties exceed what normal people can bear, they subconsciously feel all kinds of worry and anxiety, and even distress. They don't know what tomorrow will be like, or the day after, or how things will be in a few years' time, or what their future will be like, and so they feel distressed, anxious, and worried about all manner of things. What is the context in which people feel distressed, anxious, and worried about all manner of things? It is that they don't believe in the sovereignty of God—that is, they are unable to believe

in and see through to God's sovereignty. Even if they saw it with their own eyes, they wouldn't understand it, or believe it. They don't believe that God holds sovereignty over their fate, they don't believe that their lives are in God's hands, and so distrust arises in their hearts toward God's sovereignty and arrangements, and then blame arises, and they are unable to submit. Besides blaming and being unable to submit, they want to be the masters of their own fate and act on their own initiative. What then becomes the actual situation after they start acting on their own initiative? All they can do is live relying on their own caliber and abilities, but there are many things they cannot achieve, or reach, or accomplish with their own caliber and abilities. For example: what will happen to them in the future, whether they'll be able to get into college, whether they'll be able to get a good job when they finish college, and whether everything will go well for them once they get a job; and if they want to climb the ladder and get rich, whether they'll be able to achieve their ideals and desires within a few years; and then when they want to find a partner, and to get married and start a family, what kind of partner will be suitable for them? To man, things such as these are unknown. With such things unknown, people feel at a loss. When people feel like they're at a loss, they become distressed, anxious, and worried—they feel distressed, anxious, and worried about everything the future may hold for them. Why is this? It's because, within the ambit of normal humanity, people just cannot bear all these things. No one knows how they will be in a few years' time, no one knows what their job, or marriage, or children will be like in the future—people just don't know these things. These are things that cannot be foreknown within the range of the abilities of normal humanity, and that's why people always feel distressed, anxious, and worried about them. No matter how simple a person's mind is, so long as they are able to think, these negative emotions will arise in their innermost heart once they reach adulthood, one by one. Why do distress, anxiety, and worry arise within people? Because people are always fretting and getting agitated about things beyond the scope of their ability; they always want to know, to understand, and to achieve things beyond the scope of their ability, and even to control things outside the range of the abilities of normal humanity. They want to control all of this, and not just that—they also want the laws and outcomes of the development of these things to progress and be fulfilled according to their own will. Therefore, dominated by such irrational thoughts, people feel distress, anxiety, and worry, and the consequences of these emotions differ from person to person. Regardless of what things people feel intensely distressed, anxious, or worried about, thereby forming these negative emotions, people should take them very seriously and seek the truth to resolve them.

We will fellowship on the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry primarily from two aspects: The first will be to dissect people's difficulties to see what they are, and from there see exactly what the reasons are for the arising of the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry, and exactly how they arise; the second will be to dissect the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry in terms of the various attitudes

people have toward God's work. Do you understand? (Yes.) How many aspects are there? (Two.) We are to dissect the reasons for the arising of the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry, first from the difficulties people have, and second from people's attitudes toward God's work. Repeat that back to Me. (We are to dissect the reasons for the arising of the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry, first from the difficulties people have, and second from people's attitudes toward God's work.) There are many difficulties people can have, all of which people meet in their everyday lives, difficulties which arise often within the scope of living a life of normal humanity. And how do these difficulties come about? They come about because people are always trying to overreach themselves, always trying to control their own fate, to know their future ahead of time. If their future doesn't look good, they immediately go in search of a feng shui expert or fortuneteller to redress and correct it. That's why people encounter so many difficulties in their everyday lives, and it is these difficulties which cause people to often slide down into the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry. What are these difficulties? Let's first take a look at what people consider to be their greatest difficulty—what is that? It is their future prospects, meaning what a person's future will be in this lifetime, whether they will be wealthy or ordinary in the future, whether they will be able to stand out, achieve great success, and prosper in the world and among people. Especially among those who believe in God, they may not know what will happen to others in the future, but they often worry about their own future and always wonder, "Is this all there is to believing in God? Will I ever get to stand out from the crowd in the future? Will I be able to take on an important role in God's house? Will I be able to be a team leader or someone in charge? Will I be able to be a leader? What's going to happen to me? If I constantly perform my duty like this in God's house, what will become of me in the end? Will I attain salvation? Do I have any future prospects? Do I still need to keep doing my job in the world? Do I need to continue studying the professional skill I was learning before, or take it into further education? If I can keep performing my duty full-time in God's house, I shouldn't have any issues with the basic necessities of life, but if I don't perform my duty well and I get reallocated and replaced, how will I live then? Should I take the opportunity now, before I get replaced or cast out, to prepare for that eventuality?" They wonder about these things and see that they have some savings, and they think, "How many years can I last on what I have saved? I'm in my thirties now, and in ten years I'll be in my forties. If I get removed from the church, will I be able to keep up with the situation when I return to the world? Will my health be good enough to allow me to keep working? Will I be able to earn enough to live on? Will I find it hard to live? I perform my duty in God's house, but will God keep me until the end?" Although they think about these things all the time, they never find the answers. Although there is never any conclusion, they can't help but keep thinking these things—it is out of their control. When they encounter some setback or difficulty, or when something doesn't go the way they wanted, in their innermost hearts, they consider these things, without telling anyone.

When some people are pruned and dealt with, when they are replaced in their duties, when they are reallocated to different duties, or when they meet with some crisis or other, they involuntarily look for a route of retreat and can't help but make plans and schemes for their next steps. Regardless of what happens in the end, people still often make plans and schemes for the things they're feeling worried, anxious, and distressed about. Are these not things people think about for their own future prospects? Don't these negative emotions arise because people are unable to let go of their own future prospects? (Yes, they do.) When people are feeling particularly enthusiastic and when things are going very smoothly in the performance of their duties, and especially when they get promoted, used for some important tasks, when they enjoy the support of most of their brothers and sisters, and when their own value is reflected, they don't think about these things. The moment their reputation, status, and interests are threatened, they can't help but retreat back into the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry. When they go back into these negative emotions, the way they approach these negative emotions is not to flee from them or reject them, but rather it is to cater to them, and try to work hard to sink down into these feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry, to go deeper into them. Why do I say this? When people sink down into these negative emotions, they then have more reason, more of an excuse to, and can more freely make plans for their future and for their next steps. While they're making these plans, they think this is just how it should be, that this is what they're supposed to be doing, and they use the saying, "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," and another saying, "He who doesn't plan for the future will have troubles right at hand," meaning that if you don't make plans for and consider your future and fate in advance, then no one else will worry about them for you, and no one else will care about them for you. When you have no idea how to take your next step, you will face awkwardness, pain, and embarrassment, and the one who will suffer and endure the hardships will be you. So, people feel that they are very smart, and every step they take, they will look forward ten steps. The moment they encounter any difficulties or disappointments, they immediately return to their negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry in order to protect themselves, to have their future and their next step in life be foolproof, to have food to eat and clothing to wear, to not be wandering the streets, and to not be short of food or clothing. Therefore, under the influence of these negative emotions, they often warn themselves, thinking, "I must make plans in advance, hold some things back, and leave myself a sufficient way of retreat. I mustn't be stupid—my fate is in my own hands. People often say, 'Our fates are in God's hands, and God holds sovereignty over the fates of man,' but this is just empty pleasantries. Who has actually seen this? How does God hold sovereignty over our fates? Who has actually seen God personally arrange three meals a day for anyone, or arrange all the things they need in life? No one." People believe that when they don't see God's sovereignty, and if they feel distressed, anxious, and worried about their future prospects, then these negative emotions are like a protection for them, like a protective

shield, a safe haven. They constantly warn and remind themselves to make plans for the future, that they have to worry about tomorrow, that they mustn't just stuff themselves full of food all day and remain idle; that it's not wrong to make plans for oneself, to find a way out for oneself, and to work day and night for one's own future. They tell themselves that this is natural and perfectly justified and is not something to feel ashamed about. So, even though people believe distress, anxiety, and worry to be negative emotions, they never think that to feel them is a bad thing, they never think these negative emotions might be harming them in any way, or that they might be obstacles to their pursuit of the truth and entering the truth reality. Instead, they enjoy them tirelessly, and they willingly and tirelessly live within these negative emotions. This is because they believe that only by living within these negative emotions and constantly feeling distressed, anxious, and worried about their future prospects can they be secure. Otherwise, who else will feel distressed, anxious, and worried about their future? No one. No one loves them more than they do themselves, no one understands them like they do, or gets them like they do. So, even if people can recognize to a certain extent and in terms of words and doctrines that the existence of such negative emotions is harmful to them, they are still unwilling to give up such negative emotions because these negative emotions allow them to firmly take hold of the initiative to grasp and take control of their own future. Is this right to say? (Yes.) To people, therefore, worrying, feeling anxious, and feeling distressed about their future is a matter of tremendous responsibility. It is not shameful, nor pathetic, nor hateful, but to them it is rather just as things should be. That's why these negative emotions are very difficult for people to let go of, as if they have been with them since birth. Everything people think about since their birth is for themselves, and the most important matter to them is their own future prospects. They think that if they take a firm hold on their future and keep watch on it, then they will live a worry-free life. They think that with good future prospects, they will have everything they want, and it will all be a cinch. And so, people never get sick of feeling distressed, anxious, and worried about their future, over and over again. Even if God has given His promise, even if people have enjoyed or received much grace from God, even if they have seen God bestow all manner of blessings on mankind, and other such facts, people still want to live in the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry, and to make plans and designs for their future.

Besides future prospects, there is something else important, something which people also often feel distressed, anxious, and worried about, and that is marriage. Some people don't worry about it and are not concerned if they're still not married in their thirties, because there are many people now in their thirties who aren't married. This is something often seen in society, and no one laughs at you for it, and no one says there's something wrong with you. However, if someone isn't married by the time they get to their forties, they begin to faintly feel panic deep inside them, and they think, "Should I look for a partner or not? Should I get married or not? If I don't get married and have a

family, if I don't have any children, will I have anyone to look after me when I'm older? Will anyone take care of me when I'm sick? Will I have anyone to arrange my funeral when I die?" People worry about these things. Those who don't plan on getting married don't feel so distressed, anxious, or worried. For example, some people say, "I believe in God now, and I'm willing to expend myself for God. I'm not going to look for a partner, and I'm not going to marry. I'm not going to get distressed over these things no matter how old I get." Single people, people who have been single for 10 or 20 years, who have been single from the age of 20 to the age of 40, shouldn't have any major concerns. Even though they may occasionally feel some slight worry and distress because of environmental factors or objective reasons, because they believe in God and are busy performing their duty, and because their current resolve hasn't changed, the kind of worry they feel is vague and comes only now and then, and it's not a big deal. This kind of emotion which doesn't affect the normal performance of duties is not harmful to people, nor can it be considered a negative emotion, that is, this matter has not turned into a negative emotion for you. As for those who are already married, what kind of things do they worry about? If both husband and wife believe in God and perform their duties, then will this marriage be maintained? Does the family exist? What about the children? In addition, if one of the two pursues the truth and the other doesn't, if the one who doesn't pursue the truth always pursues the world, pursues a wealthy life, and the one who pursues the truth always wants to perform their duty, while the one who doesn't pursue the truth is always trying to stop their spouse but feels embarrassed to, occasionally voicing some complaint or saying negative things to discourage their spouse, then the one who pursues the truth will wonder, "Oh, my husband doesn't truly believe in God, so how will it go with us in the future? If we get divorced, I'll be single and unable to maintain a livelihood. If I stay with him, we won't be walking the same path, we'll be harboring different dreams, and then what will I do?" They feel distressed, anxious, and worried about these things. Once they have begun to believe in God, some sisters believe that, although their husbands don't believe in God, they don't try too hard to obstruct their own belief in God, and they aren't being persecuted, so there's no reason to divorce. If they stay together, however, they always feel restricted and influenced. What are they influenced by? They are restricted and influenced by their affections, and the various difficulties in family life and marriage occasionally stir things up in the depths of their hearts, causing them to experience some distress, anxiety, and worry of a kind that is neither major nor minor. Under such circumstances, marriage is a formality which maintains a normal family life, and it becomes something that fetters the wives' normal thinking, their normal lives, and even the normal performance of their duties—it is difficult to keep the marriage going, but they cannot extricate themselves from it. There is no particular reason to keep such a marriage as this going, nor is there any particular reason for them to get divorced either; there is no ample reason to take either action. They don't know what the right choice to make is, and they don't know

what the wrong thing to do is. Therefore, distress, anxiety, and worry arise in them. These feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry are constantly floating up in their minds and binding them in their daily lives, and they also affect their normal life. In the course of performing their duties, these things are always floating up in their minds and arising in their innermost hearts, influencing the normal performance of their duties. Although these things do not seem like a clear word on what these wives should do or what choice they should make, these matters cause them to become mired deep in the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry, which makes them feel oppressed and trapped. Is this not another kind of difficulty? (It is.) This is another kind of difficulty, a difficulty that is brought about by marriage.

There are also those who, because they've come to believe in God, live the church life, read God's words, and perform their duties, won't have any time to associate normally with their non-believing children, their wives (or husbands), their parents, or their friends and relatives. In particular, they will be unable to properly look after their non-believing children, or do any of the things their children require, and so they worry about their children's future and prospects. Especially when their children grow up, some people will begin to fret: Will my child go to college or not? What will they major in if they get into college? My child doesn't believe in God and wants to go to college, so should I, as someone who believes in God, pay for their studies? Should I take care of their daily needs and support them in their studies? And when it comes to them getting married, having a job, and even having a family and children of their own, what role should I play? What things should I do and not do? They have no idea about these things. The moment something like this comes along, the moment they find themselves in such a situation, they are at a loss and have no idea what to do, nor do they know how to handle such things. As time passes, distress, anxiety, and worry arise regarding these things: If they do these things for their child, they fear going against God's will and displeasing God, and if they don't do these things, they fear not fulfilling their parental responsibilities and being blamed by their child and other family members; if they do these things, they fear that they will lose testimony, and if they don't do these things, they fear being mocked by worldly people, and being laughed at, jibed at, and judged by their neighbors; they fear dishonoring God, but they're also afraid of earning themselves a bad reputation, and feeling so ashamed that they cannot show their face. As they vacillate around these things, distress, anxiety, and worry arise in their hearts; they feel distressed about not knowing what to do, they feel anxious about doing the wrong thing no matter what they choose, and not knowing whether anything they do is appropriate, and they worry if these things keep happening, then one day they won't be able to cope with them, and if they have a breakdown then things will be even harder for them. People in such a situation as this feel distressed, anxious, and worried about all of these things that crop up in life, whether they are big things or small things. Once these negative feelings arise in them, they become mired in this distress, anxiety, and worry, and are

unable to free themselves: If they do this, it's wrong, if they do that, it's wrong, and they don't know what the right thing to do is; they want to please other people, but they fear displeasing God; they want to do things for other people so that they are spoken well of, but they don't want to dishonor God or cause God to detest them. That is why they always become mired in these feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry. They feel distressed both for other people and for themselves; they feel anxious about things both for other people as well as for themselves; and they also worry about things for other people as well as for themselves, and so they become mired in a double difficulty from which they cannot escape. Such negative emotions as these not only affect their daily lives, but affect the performance of their duties as well, as well as, of course, affecting their pursuit of the truth to some degree. This is a kind of difficulty, that is, these are difficulties relating to marriage, family life, and personal life, and it is because of these difficulties that people often become stuck in distress, anxiety, and worry. Aren't people to be pitied when they become stuck in this kind of negative emotion? (They are.) Are they to be pitied? You still say, "They are," showing that you are still very sympathetic toward them. When someone becomes mired in a negative emotion, regardless of what the background is to the arising of that negative emotion, what is the reason for its arising? Is it because of the environment, because of the people, events, and things around that person? Or is it because the truth God expresses disturbs them? Is it the environment that affects the person, or is it that God's words disturb their lives? What exactly is the reason? Do you know? Tell Me, whether it be in people's normal lives or in the performance of their duty, are these difficulties present if they pursue the truth and are willing to practice the truth? (No.) These difficulties are present in terms of objective fact. You say they are not present, so could it be that you have resolved these difficulties? Are you capable of doing that? These difficulties are unresolvable, and they are present in terms of objective fact. What will the outcome of these difficulties be in people who pursue the truth? And what will their outcome be in those who don't pursue the truth? They will have two completely different outcomes. If people pursue the truth, they won't get caught up in these difficulties and sink into the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry. Conversely, if people don't pursue the truth, these difficulties are present in them just the same, and what will the outcome be? They will entangle you so that you're unable to escape, and if you're not able to resolve them, they will ultimately become negative emotions that tie themselves into knots in your innermost heart; they will affect your normal life and the normal performance of your duties, and they will make you feel oppressed and unable to find release—this is the outcome they will have on you. These two outcomes are different, aren't they? (Yes.) So, let's return to that question I asked just now. What was it I asked? (Is it environmental influences or is it God's words disturbing people that cause negative emotions to arise in them?) So, what is the reason? What's the answer? (It's because people don't pursue the truth.) That's right, it's neither of those things, but rather it's because people don't pursue the

truth. When people don't pursue the truth, they often become mired in extreme thoughts and negative emotions and are unable to free themselves. Repeat the question I asked just now. (Is the reason for the arising of negative emotions in people because of their environment and the people, events, and things around them, or is it because the truth God expresses disturbs people?) To say it simply, is it because of environmental influences or because God's words disturb people? Which one is it? (Neither of them.) Correct, neither of them. Environments influence everyone fairly; if you pursue the truth, then you won't sink into a negative emotion because of some environment. If you don't pursue the truth, however, you will very naturally become overwhelmed by your environment again and again and will become stuck in the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry. Looking at it from this perspective, is pursuing the truth not important? (It is.) There are the truth principles to be sought in everything that happens. In reality, however, because people don't pursue the truth and don't seek the truth principles, or else they know clearly what God requires, what the truth principles are, what path they should practice, and what the criteria for practice are, but they don't pay them any heed or follow them, when they always make their own choices and plans, what will happen to them in the end? When people don't practice in accordance with God's words, always worrying about this and that, then there is only one outcome, and that is that they become mired in distress, anxiety, and worry, and cannot get back out again. Is it possible for people to always rely on their own imaginings, for things to always go as they would wish, to keep other people happy as well as receive God's approval? That's impossible! They always want to handle things in a way that makes everyone around them happy, pleased, and full of praise for them. They want to be called a good person, and for God to be satisfied, and if they don't meet this standard, they feel distressed. And don't they deserve to feel distressed? (Yes.) This is what people choose for themselves.

There are also some absurd people who say, "If God didn't speak so many words, I would do things according to the moral standards of being a good person. That'd be so simple, and there wouldn't be so many statements made. Just like in the Age of Grace, people kept the commandments, and they endured and tolerated, and bore the cross and suffered, and it was so simple. Wasn't that the end of the matter? Now, with so many truths spoken by God and so many principles of practice given in fellowship, why can't people achieve them after such a long time? People's calibers are too lacking, and they aren't able to understand it all, and there are many truths they cannot achieve; there are also many difficulties in people putting the truth into practice, and even if they do understand it, they still find it hard to achieve. If you understand the truth but don't practice it, you feel uneasy, but when you do practice it, there are so many practical difficulties." People believe that God's words are disturbing them, but is this how it is in reality? (No.) This is called being unreasonable and irrational. They are sick of the truth and do not pursue the truth, nor do they practice the truth, but they still want to pretend

to be spiritual, pretend to be practicing the truth, and they want to attain salvation. In the end, when they cannot achieve these things, they feel depressed and distressed, thinking, “Who can balance all these things? It would be better if God lowered His standards a little, and then people would be fine, God would be fine, everyone would be fine—what a heavenly life that would be!” People like this always think that the words God speaks are inconsiderate toward man. In fact, when they have feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry, they are dissatisfied with God about many things. In particular, when it comes to how they approach the truth principles, they cannot achieve them or attain them, they cannot talk about them at all, and this has a severe impact on their reputation and prestige in the eyes of other people, as well as their desire to be blessed, causing them to become mired in distress, anxiety, and worry, and that’s why they believe there are many things God does that they’re not happy about. There are even some who say, “God is righteous, I don’t deny it; God is holy, and I don’t deny that either. Everything God says is the truth sure enough, it’s just a shame that what God says now is too lofty, His demands on people are too stringent, and it’s not easy for people to achieve it all!” They have no love for the truth, and they place all responsibility onto God. They begin with the premise that God is righteous, and God is holy, and they believe that all this is true. God is righteous, God is holy—is it necessary for you to acknowledge God’s essence? These are facts; they are not true only because you acknowledge them. So that they are not condemned for their blaming of God, they hurriedly say that God is righteous, God is holy. However, no matter what they say about God being righteous and holy, their negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry are still present and, not only are these emotions present, but they’re unwilling to let these emotions go, unwilling to leave them behind, unwilling to change their principles of practice, change the direction of their pursuit, and change the path they follow through life. Such people are both pitiable and hateful. They are simply undeserving of sympathy, and no matter how much they suffer, they are not worth our pity. All we need to do is tell them these few words: It serves you right! If you die from feeling so distressed, still no one will pity you! Who made you not seek the truth to resolve your problems? Who made you unable to submit to God and practice the truth? For whose sake are you feeling distressed, anxious, and worried? Are you feeling those things in order to gain the truth? Or to gain God? Or for the sake of God’s work? Or for the sake of God’s glory? (No.) Then what are you feeling those emotions for? It’s all for yourself, for your children, for your family, for your self-respect, for your reputation, for your future and prospects, for everything to do with yourself. Such a person doesn’t give anything up, or let anything go, or forsake anything, or abandon anything; they have no true faith in God, and no genuine loyalty to performing their duty. In their belief in God, they do not truly expend themselves, they just believe to get blessings, and believe in God only with a conviction to receive blessings. They’re filled with “faith” in God, in God’s work, and in God’s promises, but God does not commend such faith, nor does He remember it, but rather He detests it.

Such people don’t follow or practice the principles for handling any matter that God requires of them, they don’t let go of the things they should let go of, they don’t give up the things they should give up, they don’t abandon the things they should abandon, and they don’t offer up the loyalty they should offer up, and so they deserve to sink into the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry. However much they suffer, they do so only for themselves, not for their duty and not for the work of the church. Therefore, such people are simply not in pursuit of the truth—they are just a bunch of people who nominally believe in God. They know exactly that this is the true way, but they don’t practice it, nor do they follow it. Their faith is pitiable and cannot win God’s approval, and God will not remember it. Such people become mired in the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry because of the manifold difficulties in their home lives.

Then there are those who are in poor health, who have a weak constitution and lack energy, who are often sick with major or minor illnesses, who cannot even do the basic things necessary in daily life, who cannot live or get about like normal people. Such people often feel uncomfortable and unwell while performing their duties; some are physically weak, some have real illnesses, and of course there are some who have known and potential diseases of some kind or other. Because they have such practical physical difficulties, such people often sink into negative emotions and feel distress, anxiety, and worry. What are they feeling distressed, anxious, and worried about? They worry that if they keep performing their duty like this, expending themselves and running around for God like this, and always feeling this tired, then will their health deteriorate more and more? When they reach 40 or 50, will they be confined to their beds? Do these worries hold up? Will anyone provide a concrete way of dealing with this? Who will take responsibility for this? Who will be answerable? People with poor health and who are physically unfit feel distressed, anxious, and worried about such things. People with an illness will often think, “Oh, I’m determined to perform my duty well, but I’ve got this illness. I ask God to keep me from harm, and with God’s protection I need not be afraid. But if I get exhausted when performing my duties, will my condition flare up? What will I do if my condition really flares up? If I need to be admitted to hospital to undergo an operation, I have no money to pay for it, so if I don’t borrow the money to pay for my treatment, will my condition get even worse? And if it gets really bad, will I die? Could such a death be considered a normal death? If I really do die, will God remember the duties I’ve performed? Will I be considered to have done good deeds? Will I attain salvation?” There are also some who know they are sick, that is, they know they have some real illness or other, for example stomach diseases, lower back and leg pain, arthritis, rheumatism, as well as skin diseases, gynecological diseases, liver disease, hypertension, heart disease, and so on. They think, “If I keep performing my duty, will God’s house pay for treatment for my illness? If my illness gets worse and it affects the performance of my duty, will God heal me? Other people have been cured after believing in God, so will I be cured too? Will God cure me, just as He shows kindness to others?

If I loyally perform my duty, God should heal me, but if only I wish God to heal me and He doesn't, then what am I going to do?" Whenever they think of these things, they get a profound feeling of anxiety rising up in their hearts. Even though they never stop performing their duty and they always do what they're supposed to, they think constantly about their illness, their health, their future, and about their life and death. Finally, they reach the conclusion of wishfully thinking, "God will heal me, God will keep me safe. God won't abandon me, and God won't stand by and do nothing if He sees me getting sick." There is no basis at all for such thoughts, and they can even be said to be a kind of notion. People will never be able to resolve their practical difficulties with such notions and imaginings as these, and in their innermost hearts, they feel vaguely distressed, anxious, and worried about their health and their illnesses; they have no idea who will take responsibility for these things, or whether anyone will take responsibility for them at all.

There are also some who, although they don't actually feel sick and have not been diagnosed with anything, know they have some latent disease. What latent disease? For example, it could be a hereditary disease like heart disease, diabetes, or hypertension, or it could be Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or some kind of cancer—these are all latent diseases. Some people know that since they're born into such a family, this genetic disease will afflict them sooner or later. They wonder, if they believe in God and pursue the truth, perform their duty well, perform sufficient good deeds, and can please God, will this latent disease pass them by and not come upon them? God, however, never made such a promise to them, and they never had this kind of faith in God, and never dared to make any guarantees or have any unrealistic ideas. Because they cannot have any guarantee or assurance, they expend a lot of energy and exert great effort in the performance of their duties, they focus on suffering and paying the price, and they will always do more than others and stand out more than others, thinking, "I will be the first to suffer and the last to take my enjoyment." They always motivate themselves with this kind of motto, yet the fear and worry deep inside them about their latent disease cannot be driven away, and this worry, this distress, is always with them. Even though they may be able to endure suffering and hard work and are willing to pay the price in the performance of their duties, they still feel that they are unable to obtain God's promise or an accurate word from God on the subject, and so they continue to be filled with distress, anxiety, and worry concerning this matter. Even though they try their best not to do anything about their latent disease, they still occasionally and subconsciously go looking for all manner of folk remedies to prevent this latent disease from suddenly befalling them on a certain day, at a certain hour, or without them being aware of it. Some people may from time to time prepare some Chinese medicinal herbs to take, some people occasionally go asking about folk remedy preparations they can take when needed, while some people from time to time go online searching for exercise tips so that they can exercise and experiment. Although it may be only a latent disease, still it

is at the forefront in their minds; although these people may not feel unwell or have any symptoms at all, they are still filled with worry and anxiety about it, and deep inside them they feel distressed and depressed about it, always hoping to ameliorate or dispel these negative emotions from inside them through prayer or performing their duties. These people who really have an illness or who have a latent disease, along with those who worry about getting sick in the future, and those who were born with poor health, who have no major illness but who are constantly suffering from minor ailments, they constantly feel distressed and worried about the sicknesses and the various difficulties of the flesh. They wish to escape them, flee them, but they have no way to do it; they wish to let them go but they cannot; they want to ask God to take these sicknesses and difficulties from them, but they cannot say the words and feel embarrassed, because they feel that there is no justification for this kind of request. They know well that God is not to be beseeched regarding these matters, but they feel powerless in their hearts; they wonder, if they place all their hopes on God, will they feel more at ease, and will their conscience be comforted? Therefore, from time to time they pray silently on this matter in their innermost hearts. If they receive some additional or unexpected favor or grace from God, they feel a little joy or comfort; if they receive no special care from God's house at all, and feel no kindness from God at all, then they unknowingly slide once again down into the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry. Even though birth, old age, sickness and death are constants among mankind and are unavoidable in life, there are those with a certain physical constitution or special illness who, whether they're performing their duties or not, fall into distress, anxiety, and worry over the difficulties and diseases of the flesh; they worry about their illness, they worry about the many hardships their illness may cause them, whether their illness will become serious, what the consequences will be if it does become serious, and whether they will die from it. In special situations and certain contexts, this series of questions causes them to become mired in distress, anxiety, and worry and unable to extricate themselves; some people even live in a state of distress, anxiety, and worry because of the serious disease they already know they have or a latent disease they can do nothing to avoid, and they are influenced, impacted, and controlled by these negative emotions. Once they fall under the control of these negative emotions, some people utterly give up all chances and hope of attaining salvation; they choose to give up performing their duty and even any chance of receiving God's kindness. Instead, they choose to face and handle their own illness without asking for anyone else's help and without waiting for any opportunity. They dedicate themselves to treating their illness, they perform no duty anymore, and even if they are physically able to perform their duty, they still don't do it. What is the reason for this? They worry, "If my illness carries on like this and God doesn't cure me, I could keep performing my duty the way I'm doing now and still die in the end. If I stop performing my duty and seek treatment, I could live a couple more years, and maybe it could even be cured. If I continue performing my duty and God hasn't said He will cure me, my

health might get even worse. I don't want to perform my duty for another 10 or 20 years and then die. I want to live a few more years, I don't want to die so soon, so early!" So, they perform their duty in God's house for a time, observe for a time and, we could say, they watch to see what happens for a time, and then they begin to wonder, "I've been performing my duty, but my illness hasn't gotten any better and hasn't been alleviated. It looks as if there's no hope of getting better. Back then I had a plan, thinking that if I abandoned everything and performed my duty faithfully, perhaps God would take this disease from me. But nothing has turned out the way I planned, figured, and wished. My illness is just the same as it was. All these years have gone by, and this disease still hasn't let up any. It looks as if I must treat this illness myself. I can't rely on anyone else, no one else can be relied upon. I have to seize my fate in my own hands. Science and technology are now so developed, as is medicine, effective medicines are available to treat all manner of diseases, and there are advanced treatment methods for everything. I'm sure this disease can be treated." Having made such plans, they begin searching online or asking around and making inquiries, until finally they find some solutions. In the end, they decide what medicine to take, how to treat their illness, how to exercise, and how to take care of their own health. They think, "If I don't perform my duty and focus on treating this disease, then there's hope of being cured. There are so many instances of this kind of disease being cured." After planning and scheming like this for a while, they finally decide not to perform their duty anymore and treating their illness becomes their number one priority—nothing to them is more important than living. Their distress, anxiety, and worry turn into a kind of practical action; their anxiety and worry turn from mere thoughts into a kind of action. Unbelievers have a saying which goes: "Action is better than thought, and even better than action is immediate action." Such people think and then act, and they act fast. One day they think about treating their disease, and the next morning they have their things packed and are ready to leave. A few short months later, the bad news arrives that they died without being cured of their illness. Did they recover from their illness? (No.) It's not necessarily possible to cure a disease by yourself, but is it for certain that you won't get sick when performing your duty in God's house? No one will make you such a promise. So, how should you choose, and how should you approach the matter of becoming ill? It's very simple, and there is one path to follow: Pursue the truth. Pursue the truth and regard the matter according to God's words and according to the truth principles—this is the understanding people should have. And how should you practice? You take all these experiences and put into practice the understanding you have gained and the truth principles you have understood according to the truth and God's words, and you make them your reality and your life—this is one aspect. The other aspect is that you must not abandon your duty. Whether you are sick or in pain, as long as you have a single breath left, as long as you are still living, as long as you can still speak and walk, then you have the energy to perform your duty, and you should be well-behaved in the performance of your duty with your feet

planted firmly on the ground. You must not abandon the duty of a created being or the responsibility given to you by the Creator. As long as you are not yet dead, you should fulfill your duty and fulfill it well. Some people say, “These things You say are not very considerate. I’m sick and it’s hard for me to bear!” When it’s hard for you, you can take a rest, and you can take care of yourself and receive treatment. If you still wish to perform your duty, you can reduce your workload and perform some suitable duty, one that doesn’t impact your recovery. This will prove that you have not abandoned your duty in your heart, that your heart has not strayed from God, that you have not denied God’s name in your heart, and that you have not abandoned the desire to be a proper created being in your heart. Some people say, “I’ve done all of that, so will God take this sickness from me?” Will He? (Not necessarily.) Whether God takes that sickness from you or not, whether God cures you or not, what you do is what a created being ought to do. Whether you are physically capable of performing your duty or not, whether you can take on any work or not, whether your health permits you to perform your duty or not, your heart must not stray from God, and you must not abandon your duty in your heart. In this way, you will fulfill your responsibilities, your obligations, and your duty—this is the faithfulness you should hold to. Just because you cannot do things with your hands or you’re not able to speak anymore, or your eyes no longer see, or you cannot move your body anymore, you must not think that God ought to heal you, and if He doesn’t heal you then you want to deny Him in your innermost heart, abandon your duty, and leave God behind. What is the nature of such an act? (It is a betrayal of God.) It is a betrayal! When they’re not sick, some people will often come before God to pray, and when they’re sick and they hope that God will heal them, placing all their hopes on God, they will still come before God and not abandon Him. However, after some time has passed and God has still not cured them, they become disappointed in God, they abandon God deep in their hearts and they abandon their duties. When their illness isn’t so bad and God does not cure them, some people do not abandon God; when their illness becomes serious, however, and they are facing death, they know then for certain that God really hasn’t cured them, that they have waited all this time only to have waited for death, and so they abandon and deny God in their hearts. They believe that if God hasn’t cured them, then God must not exist; that if God hasn’t cured them, then God must not be God at all, and is not worth believing in. Because God hasn’t cured them, they regret ever having believed in God, and they stop believing in Him. Is this not a betrayal of God? This is a serious betrayal of God. Therefore, you absolutely must not go that way—only those who obey God until death have true faith.

When sickness comes calling, what path should people follow? How should they choose? People should not sink into distress, anxiety, and worry, and contemplate their own future prospects and paths. Rather, the more people find themselves in times like these and in such special situations and contexts, and the more they find themselves in such immediate difficulties, the more they should seek the truth and pursue the truth.

Only by doing this will the sermons you have heard in the past and the truths you have understood not be in vain and will take effect. The more you find yourself in such difficulties as these, the more you should relinquish your own desires and submit to God's orchestrations. God's purpose in setting up this kind of situation and arranging these conditions for you is not to make you sink into the emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry, and it is not so that you can test God to see if He will cure you when sickness befalls, or sound out the truth of the matter; God sets up these special situations and conditions for you so that you can learn the practical lessons in such situations and conditions, to attain deeper entry into the truth and into submission to God, and so that you know more clearly and accurately how God orchestrates all people, events, and things. The fates of man are in God's hands and, whether people can sense it or not, whether they are truly aware of it or not, they should obey and not resist, not reject, and certainly not test God. You may die in any case, and if you resist, reject, and test God, then it goes without saying what your end will be. Conversely, if in the same situations and conditions you are able to seek how a created being ought to submit to the Creator's orchestrations, seek what lessons you are to learn and what corrupt dispositions you are to know in the situations God brings about for you, and understand God's will in such situations, and bear your testimony well to meet God's demands, then this is what you should do. When God arranges for someone to get an illness, whether major or minor, His purpose in doing so is not to make you appreciate the ins and outs of being sick, the harm the illness does to you, the hardships and difficulties the illness causes you, and all the myriad feelings the illness causes you to feel—His purpose is not for you to appreciate sickness through being sick. Rather, His purpose is for you to learn the lessons from sickness, to learn how to feel for God's will, to know the corrupt dispositions you reveal and the wrong attitudes you adopt toward God when you're sick, and to learn how to submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements, so that you can achieve true obedience to God and be able to stand firm in your testimony—this is absolutely key. God wishes to save you and cleanse you through sickness. What about you does He wish to cleanse? He wishes to cleanse all your extravagant desires and demands toward God, and even cleanse the various plans, judgments, and schemes you make at all costs to survive and live. God does not ask you to make plans, He does not ask you to judge, and He does not allow you to have any extravagant desires toward Him; He requires only that you submit to Him and, in your practice of experiencing and submitting, to know your own attitude toward sickness, and to know your attitude toward these bodily conditions He gives to you, as well as your own personal wishes. When you come to know these things, you can then appreciate how beneficial it is for you that God has arranged the circumstances of the illness for you or that He has given you these bodily conditions; and you can appreciate just how helpful they are to changing your disposition, to you attaining salvation, and to your life entry. That is why, when illness comes calling, you must not always be wondering how you can escape it or flee from it

or reject it. Some people say, “You say that I mustn’t flee from it or reject it, and that I mustn’t try to escape it, so what You mean is, I mustn’t go and get treatment for it!” I never said that; that is your incorrect understanding. I support you in actively treating your illnesses, but I don’t want you to live in your illness or to fall into distress, anxiety, and worry because of the impact caused by your illness, until finally you stray from and abandon God because of all the pain caused by your illness. If your illness causes you great suffering and you wish to receive treatment and for your illness to go away, then that’s fine, of course. It is your right; you have the right to choose to get treatment, and no one has the right to stop you. However, you must not live in your illness and refuse to perform your duty, or abandon your duty, or reject God’s orchestrations and arrangements because you are receiving treatment. If your illness cannot be cured, you will fall into distress, anxiety, and worry, and will therefore be filled with complaints and doubt concerning God, and will even lose faith in God, lose hope, and some will choose to abandon their duties—this is something you really should not do. When facing illness, you may actively seek treatment, but you should also approach it with a positive attitude. As to how much your illness can be treated and whether it can be cured, and whatever may happen in the end, you should always submit and not complain. This is the attitude you should adopt, for you are a created being and you have no other option. You cannot say, “If I’m cured of this disease, then I’ll believe it is God’s great power, but if I’m not cured, then I’ll not be happy with God. Why did God give me this disease? Why does He not cure this disease? Why did I get this disease and not someone else? I don’t want it! Why do I have to die so early at such a young age? How come other people get to keep on living? Why?” Don’t ask why, it is God’s orchestration. There is no reason, and you shouldn’t ask why. Asking why is rebellious talk, and this is not a question a created being should ask. Don’t ask why, there is no why. God has arranged things and planned things like this. If you ask why, then it can only be said that you are too rebellious, too intransigent. When something dissatisfies you, or God does not do as you wish or let you have your way, you become unhappy, you’re disgruntled, and you always ask why. So, God asks you, “As a created being, why haven’t you done your duty well? Why haven’t you faithfully performed your duty?” And how will you respond? You say, “There is no why, this is just how I am.” Is that acceptable? (No.) It’s acceptable for God to speak to you that way, but it’s not acceptable for you to speak to God in that way. Your standpoint is wrong, and you are too senseless. No matter what difficulties a created being encounters, it is perfectly natural and justified that you should submit to the arrangements and orchestrations of the Creator. For example, your parents begat you, raised you, and you call them mother and father—this is perfectly natural and justified, and this is how it should be; there is no why. So, God orchestrates all these things for you and, whether you enjoy blessings or suffer hardships, this is also perfectly natural and justified, and you have no choice in the matter. If you can submit until the very end, then you will attain salvation like Peter did. However, if you blame God, abandon God,

and betray God because of some temporary illness, then all the relinquishing, the expending, the performing of your duty, and the paying the price you have done before will have been for nothing. This is because all your past hard work will not have laid any foundation for you to perform the duty of a created being well or take your proper place as a created being, and it will not have changed anything about you. This will then cause you to betray God because of your illness, and your end will be as Paul's, to be punished in the end. The reason for this determination is that everything you have done before was so that you can obtain a crown and for the sake of receiving blessings. If, when you finally face illness and death, you are still able to submit without any complaints, it proves that all you did before was done sincerely and willingly for God. You are obedient to God, and ultimately your obedience will mark a perfect end to your life of faith in God, and this is commended by God. Therefore, an illness can cause you to have a good end, or it can cause you to have a bad end; the kind of end you come to depends on the path you follow and what your attitude toward God is.

Has the problem of people falling into negative emotions because of illness now been resolved? (It has.) Do you now have the correct ideas and views about how to face illness? (Yes.) Do you know how to practice this? If not, I'll give you the trump card, the best thing to do. Do you know what it is? If illness befalls you, and no matter how much doctrine you understand you're still unable to overcome it, your heart will still become distressed, anxious, and worried, and not only will you be unable to face the matter calmly, but your heart will also be filled with complaints. You will be constantly wondering, "Why isn't anyone else sick with this disease? Why make me get this disease? How did this happen to me? It's because I'm unlucky and I have a bad fate. I've never offended anyone, nor have I committed any sin, so why has this happened to me? God is treating me so unfairly!" You see, besides distress, anxiety, and worry, you fall into depression as well, with one negative emotion following another and without any way to escape them no matter how much you might want to. Because it is a real illness, it is not easily taken from you or cured, so what should you do? You want to submit but you can't, and if you submit one day, the next day your condition worsens and it hurts so much, and then you don't want to submit anymore, and you start complaining again. You go back and forth like this all the time, so what should you do? Let Me tell you the secret of success. Whether you encounter a major illness or a minor one, the moment your illness gets serious or you're facing death, just remember one thing: Do not fear death. Even if you're in the final stages of cancer, even if the death rate for your particular illness is very high, do not fear death. Regardless of how great your suffering is, if you fear death then you will not submit. Some people say, "Hearing You say this, I feel inspired and have an even better idea. Not only will I not fear death, but I'll beg for it. Won't that make it easier to get through?" Why beg for death? Begging for death is an extreme idea, whereas not fearing death is a reasonable attitude to adopt. Isn't that right? (Right.) What is the right attitude you should adopt to not fear death? If your illness gets so serious

that you may die, and the death rate for it is high regardless of how old the person is who contracts the illness, and the time from when people contract the illness to when they die is very short, what should you think in your heart? “I must not fear death, everyone dies in the end. Submitting to God, however, is something most people can’t do, and I can use this illness to practice submitting to God. I should have the thinking and the attitude of submitting to God’s orchestrations and arrangements, and I must not fear death.” Dying is easy, much easier than living. You can be in extreme pain and you won’t be aware of it, and as soon as your eyes close, your breath ceases, your soul leaves the body, and your life ends. This is how death goes; it is this simple. Not fearing death is one attitude to adopt. Besides this, you mustn’t worry about whether your illness will get worse or not, or whether you will die if you cannot be cured, or how long it will be until you die, or what pain you will be in when it comes time to die. You mustn’t worry about these things; these are not things you should be worrying about. This is because the day must come, and it must come in some year, some month, and on some particular day. You cannot hide from it and you cannot escape it—it is your fate. Your so-called fate has been predestined by God and already arranged by Him. The span of your years and the age and time at which you die are already set by God, so what are you worried about? You can worry about it but that won’t change anything; you can worry about it, but you cannot prevent it from happening; you can worry about it, but you cannot stop that day from arriving. Therefore, your worry is superfluous, and all it does is make the burden of your illness even heavier. One aspect is to not worry, and another is to not fear death. Another aspect is to not feel anxious, saying, “After I’m dead, will my husband (or wife) remarry? Who will look after my child? Who will take over my duty? Who will remember me? After I’m dead, what will God determine my end to be?” Such matters as these are nothing you should be worrying about. People who die all have their proper place to go to and God has made the arrangements. Those who are living will keep on living; the existence of any one person will not affect the normal activity and survival of mankind, nor will the disappearance of any one person change anything, and so these things are nothing you should be worrying about. It is unnecessary to worry about your various relatives, and it is even more unnecessary to worry about whether anyone will remember you after you’re dead. What would be the point in anyone remembering you? If you were like Peter, then there would be some value to remembering you; if you were like Paul, then all you would bring to people would be calamity, and so why would anyone want to remember you? There is another matter for worry which is a most realistic thought people have. They say, “Once I’m dead, I’ll never lay eyes on this world again, and I’ll never again be able to enjoy the material life of all these things. Once I’m dead, nothing in this world will concern me anymore, and the feeling of living will be gone. Once I’m dead, where will I go?” Where you go is not something you should worry about, nor is it something you should feel anxious about. You won’t be a living person anymore, and you’re worrying about never again being able to sense all the people, events, things,

environments, and so on of the material world. This is even more so something you shouldn't be worrying about, and even if you can't let these things go, it'll be no use. What can bring you a little comfort, however, is that perhaps your death or your departure could be a new beginning for your next incarnation, a better beginning, a healthy beginning, a completely well beginning, a beginning for your soul to return again. It will not necessarily be a bad thing, as you could perhaps return to exist in a different way and in a different form. As to what form it will take exactly depends on the arrangements of God and of the Creator. On this point, it can be said that everyone should just wait and see. If you choose to live in a better way and in a better form after you die in this life, then regardless of how bad your illness gets, the most important thing is how you face it and what good deeds you should prepare, and not your pointless distress, anxiety, and worry. When you think in this way, doesn't the level of your fear, terror, and rejection of death decrease? (Yes.) How many aspects did we just talk about? One was not fearing death. What others were there? (We're not to worry about whether our illnesses will get worse or not, and we're not to feel anxious about our spouses or children, or about our own ends and destinations, and so on.) Leave all of this in God's hands. What else? (We're not to worry about where we go after we die.) It's useless to worry about these things. Live in the present and do the things you should be doing here and now well. You don't know how things will go in the future, so you should leave all of this in God's hands. What else? (We should hurry to prepare good deeds for our future destination.) That's right, people should prepare more good deeds for the future, and they should pursue the truth and be people who understand the truth and are in possession of the truth reality. Some people say, "You're talking about death now, so do You mean that everyone will have to face death in the future? Is this a bad omen?" This is not a bad omen, nor is it giving you a preventive inoculation, much less is it cursing anyone to death—these words are not curses. So, what are they? (They are a path of practice for people.) Correct, they are what people should practice, they are the correct views and attitudes people should hold to, and they are the truths people should understand. Even people who don't have any kind of illness should also adopt this kind of attitude to face death. So, some people say, "If we don't fear death, does that mean death will not come upon us?" Is this the truth? (No.) Then what is it? (It is a notion and their imagining.) It is absurd, it is logical reasoning, and satanic philosophy—it is not the truth. It is not the case that if you don't fear or worry about death then death will not come upon you and you won't die—this is not the truth. What I'm talking about is the attitude people should have toward death and illness. When you adopt this kind of attitude, you can then leave the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry behind you. You will then not be caught up in your illness, and your thinking and the world of your spirit will not be harmed or disturbed by the fact of your illness. One of the personal difficulties people face is their future prospects, and another is sickness and death. Future prospects and mortality can take control of people's hearts, but if you can correctly face

these two problems and overcome your negative emotions, then commonplace difficulties will not defeat you.

Besides illness, people often feel distressed, anxious, and worried about some other real problems in their lives. There are many real problems in life, for example, there are elderly people or children in your home who need looking after or raising, the money your children need for their schooling and living expenses, elderly people needing money to treat medical conditions, and the large amounts of money required for daily living expenses. You want to perform your duty, but if you give up your job, how are you going to live? Your home savings will be quickly exhausted, so what will you do then without any money? If you go out to earn money, it will cause delays in the performance of your duty, but if you give up your job to perform your duty, you will have no way to solve the difficulties at home. So, what should you do? Many people struggle with and get confused by such things, and so they all long for the day of God to come and wonder when the great disasters will befall and whether they need to make stores of food. If they prepare, they have no spare money at home and life becomes very difficult. They see other people wearing better clothes and eating better food and they feel unhappy and that their life is too hard. They go without eating meat for a long time, and if they have some eggs they feel reluctant to eat them, and they hurry to the market to sell them and make a few dollars. As they think of all these difficulties, they begin to worry: “When will these difficult days come to an end? They always say, ‘The day of God is coming, the day of God is coming,’ and ‘God’s work will soon come to an end,’ but when will anyone tell me when this is actually going to happen? Who can say this for sure?” Some people spend years performing their duty away from home, and from time to time they think, “I have no idea how big my kids are now, or whether my parents are in good health. I’ve been away from home all these years and haven’t looked after them. Do they have any difficulties? What will they do if they get sick? Will anyone look after them? My parents must be in their 80s or 90s by now, and I have no idea whether they’re even still alive.” When they think of these things, a nameless anxiety arises in their hearts. Beyond feeling anxious, they will worry, but worrying never solves anything, and so they begin to feel distressed. When they feel very distressed, their attention turns to God’s work and the day of God, and they wonder, “Why hasn’t the day of God arrived yet? Are we to always live a life of wandering and isolation like this? When will the day of God arrive? When will God’s work come to an end? When will God destroy this world? When will the kingdom of God be made manifest on earth? When will we see God’s person appear?” They think on these things over and over, and the negative emotions of worry, anxiety, and distress surge up into their hearts, they instantly wear a worried expression, they feel no joy anymore, they walk listlessly, they eat without any appetite, and they spend every day with their mind in a whirl. Is it a good thing to live within such negative emotions? (No.) Even a tiny difficulty in life can make people occasionally fall into these negative emotions of passivity, and even sometimes without any reason at all, or without

any particular context, or without any particular person saying anything special, these negative emotions will unknowingly surge into their hearts. When these negative emotions surge into people's hearts, the wishes people have, yearning for the day of God to arrive, for His work to come to an end, and for His kingdom to come, become even more insistent. Some people even kneel earnestly and pray to God in floods of tears, saying, "Oh God, I hate this world, and I hate this mankind. Please end it all as quickly as possible, end people's fleshly lives, and end all these hardships." They pray like this many times without result, and the negative emotions of worry, anxiety, and distress are still wrapped around their hearts, and remain in their thoughts and deep in their spirits, profoundly influencing them and encompassing them. In fact, this happens for no other reason than because they long for the day of God to come sooner, for God's work to end sooner, for them to receive blessings as soon as possible, for them to have a good destination, for them to enter into the heaven or the kingdom that they imagine and long for in their own notions; that is why they always get so worked up in their innermost hearts about these things. They show themselves getting worked up on the surface, but actually they are feeling distressed, anxious, and worried. When such feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry are constantly surrounding people, they get an active thought, thinking, "If the day of God is not coming soon, and God's work won't be completed as soon as possible, I should take advantage of my youth and my ability to work hard. I want to work and earn money, work hard in the world for a while and enjoy life. If the day of God is not coming soon, I want to return home and reunite with my family, find a partner, live well for a while, support my parents, raise my children. When I get old, I'll have lots of children and they'll live together with me, and we'll enjoy the family life—what a wonderful scene that is! What a sweet image!" Thinking like this, they look forward to enjoying that kind of life. Whenever people think that the day of God will soon be here and that God's work will soon come to an end, their desires burn even more fiercely, and their yearning for God's work to end as soon as possible grows even more intense. In such a situation, when facts do not accord with what people wish for, when people cannot see any indication of God's work ending or the day of God arriving, their feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry grow ever more severe. They worry about, in a few years' time, when they've gotten old and haven't found a partner, who will look after them in their old age. They worry, if they constantly perform their duty in God's house and have already broken all ties with society, whether they'll be able to integrate back into society when they return home to live. They worry, if they get back into business in a few years' time or go back to work, whether they'll be able to keep up with the times, whether they'll be able to stand out from the crowd, and whether they'll be able to survive. The more they worry about such things and the more anxious and distressed they feel about them, the more they are unable to calmly perform their duty and follow God in God's house. Thus, they worry about their future, their prospects, and their family life more and more, as well as worrying about all the difficulties that may arise

in life in the future. They think of everything they can, they worry about everything they can; they even worry about their grandsons and how life will be for their grandsons' descendants. Their thoughts reach far, their thoughts are very thorough, and they think everything through. When people have these worries, anxieties, and feelings of distress, they become unable to perform their duties calmly, and they cannot simply follow God, but instead they often have active thoughts and blow hot and cold. When they see that the gospel work is going very well, they think, "The day of God will soon come. I must perform my duty well, yeah! Come on! I have to keep going for a few more years, it's not long to go now. All this suffering will be worth it and it will all bear fruit, and I'll have no more worries!" After a few years, however, the great disasters still have not arrived and no one mentions the day of God, and so their hearts cool. This distress, anxiety, and worry, as well as their active thoughts, keep coming and going and repeating over and over in this way, going around in endless circles according to the international situation and the situation in God's house, and there's nothing they can do to control them—they're unable to change the state they're in no matter what anyone says. Are there such people? (Yes.) Is it easy for people like this to stand firm? (No.) Their attitude and mood in the performance of their duties, and the amount of energy they apply to their duties, are all based on "the latest news." Some people say, "According to reliable news, God's gospel is spreading wonderfully!" And some people say, "The latest news is that disasters are happening now across the world very frequently, and apparently the situation of the world and the disasters have now fulfilled the such-and-such disaster in the Book of Revelation. God's work will soon be completed, the day of God will soon be here, and the religious world is all in an uproar!" Whenever they hear "the latest news" or "reliable news," their distress, anxiety, and worry cease temporarily and no longer disturb them and they let their active thoughts go for a time. However, when they haven't heard any "reliable news" or any "accurate news" recently, their distress, anxiety, and worry, as well as their active thoughts, begin flooding out. Some people even prepare by thinking where to apply for a job, where to work, how many children to have, where their children will go to school in a few years, how to prepare for their college tuition, and they even plan to buy a house, land, or car. However, upon hearing "reliable news," these things are temporarily put on hold. Doesn't this seem like a joke? (It does.) They believe in God but they don't set their heart on this and say faith in God is the right path in life, that it is the most meaningful life, that to live this way has the most value; no matter how God leads them or what God does, they're certain that everything God does is done to save people, and so they will follow God till the very end. Whether it takes until heaven and earth grow old, until the stars change their positions, whether it takes until the seas dry up, the rocks turn to dust, or the seas become the land and the land becomes the seas, their heart remains the same, and it is set. Their heart will be given to God for the rest of their life, and if there is another life after this one, they will still follow God. These people who have so many difficulties in their lives, however, don't think like this. Their

faith in God involves watching for the time being, and they live their lives in whichever way they think they ought to live it. They will not change the ways and means in which they live or change their wishes or plans just because they believe in God and follow the path of faith in God. Whatever their plans were in the beginning, they don't change them just because they believe in God, they don't change anything at all, and they seek to live in whatever way the unbelievers live. Yet faith in God involves one special thing, and that is that the day of God will soon arrive, God's kingdom will soon come, and the great disasters will befall. Those who believe in God can then escape the disasters, they will not fall into the disasters, they can be saved, and it's only because of this special thing that they are so exceedingly interested in believing in God. Therefore, their purpose and what they focus on in their belief in God is only ever this one thing. No matter how many sermons they listen to, or how many truths they hear people fellowship on, or how long they've believed in God for, the way they believe in God doesn't ever change, and they never give it up. Neither because of the sermons they listen to nor the truths they understand do they change or let go of their wrong views on belief in God. And so, whether there is some change in or some saying about the situation in the outside world or in God's house, it always has an impact on this thing that they're most concerned about in their innermost hearts. If they hear that God's work will soon be completed, they're overjoyed; if they hear that it's still too early for God's work to be completed, however, and they can't keep going, their distress, anxiety, and worry will grow by the day, and they will begin preparing to take their leave of God's house and their brothers and sisters at any time, to make a clean separation from God's house. Of course, there are also those who, at any time, begin preparing to completely erase all contact details of their brothers and sisters and all their messages, and return the books of God's words that God's house has sent them back to the church. They think, "I really can't go on following this path of believing in God and pursuing the truth. I thought that believing in God meant I would live a happy life, have children, receive blessings and enter the kingdom of heaven. Now this beautiful dream has been smashed, so I will still choose to live a happy life, have children, and enjoy life. Yet I still can't give up my belief in God. If there's a chance I could receive a hundredfold in this life and eternal life in the life to come, wouldn't that be even better?" This is their view on belief in God, it is their plan and, of course, it is also what they do. This is the thinking and the planning in the innermost hearts of those who rely on their imaginings in their belief in God, who always feel distressed, anxious, and worried about their fleshly lives, and it represents what they pursue and the path they follow in their belief in God. What is it they're most hung up on? The thing they're most hung up on is when the day of God will arrive, when God's work will come to an end, when the great disasters will befall, and whether they will be able to escape the great disasters—this is what they're most hung up on.

As far as those who are always distressed, anxious, and worried about their fleshly lives are concerned, their pursuit in their belief in God is to "receive a hundredfold in this

life and eternal life in the life to come." They do not, however, like to hear about how far God's work has progressed, whether those who believe in God achieve the result of attaining salvation, how many people have gained the truth, come to know God, and borne good testimony, as though these things have nothing to do with them. So, what is it that they want to hear? (When God's work will come to an end.) They have greater hopes, right? Most people are too small-minded. Look at what they set their sights on and they hope just for great things—what a high state they're in! Most people are just so vulgar, always talking about dispositional changes, submitting to God, faithfully performing their duty, doing things in accordance with the truth principles—what are these people? They're too small-minded! What do Chinese people say? They're too low. What does low mean? It's too vulgar. And where do these people set their sights? They hope for great things, lofty things, upscale things. Those who hope for upscale things always want to progress upward, still vainly hoping that God will one day raise them up into the air to meet Him. You want to meet God but you don't ask whether or not God wants to meet you—you just keep wanting these amazing things! Have you only met God a few times? People don't know God, so when you meet Him you'll still be defying Him. So, what is the reason behind these people's distress, anxiety, and worry? Is it really all because of difficulties in their lives? No, it's not that they really have difficulties in their lives, it's that they have set the focus of their faith in God on their fleshly lives. The focus of their pursuit is not the truth, but rather it is to live a happy life, to enjoy the good life and to enjoy a good future. Are these people's problems easy to resolve? Are there people like this in the church? They're always asking others, "Oh, when will the day of God come? Wasn't it said a couple of years ago that God's work was about to come to an end? So why hasn't it ended yet?" Is there any way to deal with people like this? Just say one word to them, and tell them, "Soon!" When it comes to people like this, first ask them, "You're always asking about this. Have you made some plans? If so, then don't bother staying here when you don't want to. Just go with what you want. Don't go against your own desires, and don't make life hard for yourself. God's house isn't keeping you here, it isn't trapping you here. You can leave whenever you want. Don't always be asking what's new on the grapevine. To any of the news on the grapevine you'll just be told 'Soon!' If you're not happy with that answer, if you have already made plans in your heart and will carry them through sooner or later anyway, then take my advice: Give your books of God's words back to the church as soon as possible, pack your stuff and go. We'll just say goodbye to each other, and you won't ever need to feel distressed, anxious, or worried about these things again. Go back home and live your life. I wish you well! I wish you a happy and contented life and I hope everything works out for you in the future!" What do you think of this? (It's good.) Advise them to leave the church; don't try to keep them. Why not try to keep them? (They don't truly believe in God, so there's no point in keeping them.) That's right; they're nonbelievers! What would be the point in keeping nonbelievers and not kicking them out? Some people say, "But

they haven't done anything evil, and they haven't disrupted anything." Do they need to disrupt anything? Tell Me, does someone like this staying in a group of people not constitute a disruption? Wherever they go, their demeanor and actions already constitute a disruption. They never carry out spiritual devotions, they never read God's words, they never pray or give fellowship in gatherings, they just go through the motions in their duties, always asking for what's new on the grapevine. They are exceptionally emotional and capricious. They are also exceptionally focused on eating, drinking, and enjoying themselves, and there are even some who are lazy, who indulge in eating, who indulge in sleep, who mess around, who are just there to make up the numbers in God's house. They don't concern themselves with the performance of their duties, and they're just loafers. When they come to God's house, they're just there looking for things to benefit themselves and taking advantage. If they can't take advantage, they will leave at the drop of a hat. Seeing as they will leave at the drop of a hat, isn't it better for them to leave sooner rather than later? People like this can't even render service to the end and their service has no good effect. When they do render service, they don't do the right things—they're just nonbelievers. In their belief in God, they regard issues from a third perspective. When God's house prospers, they're happy, thinking that they have hope of being blessed, that they have the advantage, that their belief in God has not been in vain, that they haven't lost out, and that they've bet on the winning side. If, however, God's house is oppressed by satanic forces, abandoned by society, subjected to slander and persecution, and in dire straits, then not only are they not upset, but they laugh at it. Can we keep people like this in the church? (No.) They're nonbelievers and enemies! If an enemy is right beside you and yet you regard them as a brother or sister, then doesn't that make you stupid? If people like this are unable to willingly render service, then they should be kicked out, right? (Right.) Right indeed, do it promptly and thoroughly. There's no need to advise them, just comfortably ask them to leave. There's no need to waste your breath on them, you should just send them packing back home. In essence, they are not people who belong to God's house, they are just nonbelievers who made their way into the church. They can just go back where they came from, and you can just ask them to leave. After they've entered the church, some people actually draw a clear distinction between themselves and brothers and sisters and God's house. This is because they know what they've come to do, they know whether they truly believe or not, and besides their hopes regarding when God's work will come to an end and whether they can receive blessings, no work of God's house or any of the truths God requires people to enter have anything to do with them at all; they pay no attention to these things, they don't read the books of God's words the church sends them to read, and they just leave them lying around with the packaging still unopened. Such people only say they believe in God; they appear to believe as others do on the surface and they go through the motions to perform their duties, but they never read God's words. They've never once opened a book of God's words, they've never turned a single

page—they never read any of it. They never watch the videos of experiential testimony, the gospel movies, or the hymns and so on that God's house puts online either. What do they watch ordinarily? They watch the news, popular shows, video clips, and comedies, only watching what is pointless. What are these people? They occasionally visit the church to ask, "How many countries has the gospel work spread to now? How many people have turned to God? How many countries have churches been set up in now? How many churches are there? What stage is God's work at?" In their free time, they always ask about these things. Is there not a suspicion that this person is a spy? Tell Me, is it okay to keep someone like this? (No.) If they don't leave the church of their own accord, then you must remove them as soon as you discover them and rid the church of these scourges. Keeping them is pointless and will cause trouble. So, the things these people get distressed, anxious, and worried about have nothing to do with us whatsoever. Don't bother to offer them advice, and it's useless to fellowship on the truth with them. Just get rid of them and have done with it—this is the best way to deal with people like this.

Apart from nonbelievers, there are also elderly people among brothers and sisters, who are aged from 60 up to around 80 or 90 and who, because of their advanced age, also experience some difficulties. Despite their age, their thinking is not necessarily so correct or rational, and their ideas and views do not necessarily accord with the truth. These elderly people have problems just the same, and they're always worrying, "My health isn't so good anymore and I'm limited as to what duty I can perform. If I just perform this little duty, will God remember me? Sometimes I get sick, and I need someone to look after me. When there's no one to look after me, I'm not able to perform my duty, so what can I do? I'm old and I don't remember God's words when I read them and it's hard for me to understand the truth. When fellowshiping on the truth, I speak in a muddled and illogical way, and I haven't any experiences worth sharing. I'm old and I don't have enough energy, my eyesight isn't very good and I'm not strong anymore. Everything is difficult for me. Not only can I not perform my duty, but I easily forget things and get things wrong. Sometimes I get confused and I cause problems for the church and for my brothers and sisters. I want to attain salvation and pursue the truth but it's very hard. What can I do?" When they think of these things, they begin to fret, thinking, "How come I only started believing in God at this age? How come I'm not like those who are in their 20s and 30s, or even those in their 40s and 50s? How come I only came across God's work now when I'm so old? It's not that my fate is bad; at least now I've encountered God's work. My fate is good, and God has been kind to me! There's just one thing that I'm not happy about, and that is that I'm too old. My memory isn't very good, and my health isn't that great, but I have a strong heart. It's just that my body doesn't obey me, and I get sleepy after listening for a while at gatherings. Sometimes I close my eyes to pray and fall asleep, and my mind wanders when I read God's words. After reading for a bit, I get sleepy and doze off, and the words don't sink in. What can I

do? With such practical difficulties, am I still able to pursue and understand the truth? If not, and if I'm not able to practice in line with the truth principles, then won't all my faith be in vain? Won't I fail to attain salvation? What can I do? I'm so worried! At this age, nothing is important anymore. Now that I believe in God, I have no more worries or anything to feel anxious about, and my children are grown and they don't need me to look after or raise them anymore, my greatest wish in life is to pursue the truth, perform the duty of a created being, and ultimately attain salvation in the years I have left. However, looking now at my actual situation, dim-sighted from age and confused in mind, in poor health, not able to perform my duty well, and sometimes creating problems when I try to do as much as I can do, it seems as though attaining salvation isn't going to be easy for me." They think these things over and over and grow anxious, and then think, "It seems as though good things only ever happen to young people and not to old people. It looks as though no matter how good things are, I won't be able to enjoy them anymore." The more they think about these things, the more they fret and the more anxious they get. They not only worry about themselves, but they also feel hurt. If they cry, they feel it's not really worth crying over, and if they don't cry, that pain, that hurt, is always with them. So, what should they do? In particular, there are some elderly people who want to spend all their time expending themselves for God and performing their duty, but they're physically unwell. Some have high blood pressure, some have high blood sugar, some have gastrointestinal problems, and their physical strength cannot keep up with the demands of their duty, and so they fret. They see young people able to eat and drink, to run and jump, and they feel envious. The more they see young people do such things, the more distressed they feel, thinking, "I want to do my duty well and pursue and understand the truth, and I want to practice the truth, too, so why is it so hard? I'm so old and useless! Does God not want old people? Are old people really useless? Can we not attain salvation?" They're sad and unable to feel happy no matter how they think about it. They don't want to miss such a wonderful time and such a great opportunity, yet they're unable to expend themselves and perform their duty with all their heart and soul like young people do. These elderly people fall into deep distress, anxiety, and worry because of their age. Every time they encounter some difficulty, setback, hardship, or obstacle, they blame their age, and even hate themselves and have no liking for themselves. But in any case, it is to no avail, there is no solution, and they have no way forward. Could it be that they really have no way forward? Is there any solution? (Elderly people should also perform their duties as much as they're able.) It's acceptable for elderly people to perform their duties as much as they're able, right? Can elderly people not pursue the truth anymore because of their age? Are they not capable of understanding the truth? (Yes, they are.) Can elderly people understand the truth? They can understand some, and not even young people can understand it all, either. Elderly people always have a misconception, believing that they're confused, that their memory is bad, and so they can't understand the truth. Are they right? (No.) Although young

people have much more energy than elderly people, and are physically stronger, actually their capacity to understand, comprehend, and know is just the same as that of elderly people. Weren't elderly people once young as well? They weren't born old, and young people will all grow old one day, too. Elderly people mustn't always be thinking that because they're old, physically weak, unwell, and with bad memories, they're different from young people. In fact, there is no difference. What do I mean when I say there is no difference? Whether someone is old or young, their corrupt dispositions are the same, their attitudes and views on all manner of things are the same, and their perspectives and standpoints on all manner of things are the same. So, elderly people mustn't think that because they're old, with fewer extravagant desires than young people, and able to be stable, they have no wild ambitions or desires, and that they have fewer corrupt dispositions—this is a misconception. Young people can jockey for position, so can't elderly people jockey for position? Young people can do things against the principles and act arbitrarily, so can't elderly people do the same? (Yes, they can.) Young people can be arrogant, so can't elderly people also be arrogant? However, when elderly people are arrogant, due to their advanced age they aren't so aggressive, and it's not such a high-minded arrogance. Young people show more obvious manifestations of arrogance due to their flexible limbs and minds, while older people show less obvious manifestations of arrogance due to their rigid limbs and inflexible minds. However, their essence of arrogance and their corrupt dispositions are the same. No matter how long an elderly person has believed in God, or how many years they have performed their duty, if they are not in pursuit of the truth, then their corrupt dispositions will remain. For example, some elderly people who live alone are used to living by themselves and they're set in their ways: They have set times and their own arrangements for eating, sleeping, and resting, and they're unwilling to disrupt the order of things in their lives. These elderly people seem like wonderful people from the outside, but they still have corrupt dispositions, and you come to know this after you've associated with them for a long time. Some elderly people are incredibly capricious and arrogant; they absolutely must have what they want to eat, and no one can stop them when they want to go somewhere for leisure. When they set their minds on doing something, wild stallions couldn't drag them away. No one can change them, and they are capricious their entire lives. Such stubborn old people are even more troublesome than wayward youths! Therefore, when some people say, "Old people are not as deeply corrupted as young people. Old people lived through a time that was rather more conservative and closed off, and that's why this generation of old people aren't so deeply corrupted," does this saying hold true? (No.) This is just quibbling for their own sake. Young people don't like working with others, and can't elderly people be just the same? (They can.) Some elderly people have corrupt dispositions that are even more severe than those of young people, always flaunting their old age and priding themselves on their veteran years, saying, "I'm advanced in years. How old are you? Am I the elder, or are you? You won't like to hear

this, but I've been around the block more times than you've had hot dinners, and you have to listen to me. I'm experienced and knowledgeable. What do you young kids understand? I was believing in God before you were even born!" Isn't this more troublesome? (It is.) Once they have the title "elderly," older people can be more troublesome. So, it is not that elderly people have nothing to do, nor are they unable to perform their duties, much less are they unable to pursue the truth—there are many things for them to do. The various heresies and fallacies that you have accumulated during your lifetime, as well as the various traditional ideas and notions, ignorant and stubborn things, conservative things, irrational things, and absurd things that you have accumulated have all piled up in your heart, and you should spend even more time than young people to dig out, dissect, and recognize these things. It's not the case that you have nothing to do, or that you should feel distressed, anxious, and worried when you are at a loose end—this is neither your task nor your responsibility. First of all, elderly people should have the correct mindset. Although you may be getting on in years and you are relatively aged physically, still you should have a young mindset. Although you're getting old, your thinking is slowed and your memory is poor, if you can still know yourself, still understand the words I say, and still understand the truth, then that proves you are not old and that your caliber is not lacking. If someone is in their 70s but is not able to understand the truth, then this shows that their stature is too small and not up to the task. Therefore, age is irrelevant when it comes to the truth and, moreover, age is irrelevant when it comes to corrupt dispositions. Satan has existed for tens of thousands of years, hundreds of millions of years, and it is still Satan, yet we must still add an attributive adjective before the word "Satan," and that is "old Satan," meaning that it's evil to the nth degree, right? (Yes.) So, how should elderly people practice? One aspect is that you should have the same mindset as young people, pursue the truth and know yourself, and once you have come to know yourself, you should repent. Another aspect is that you should seek the principles in the performance of your duty and practice in accordance with the truth principles. You shouldn't write yourself off from pursuing the truth, saying that you're old, advanced in years, that you don't have the active thoughts that young people have, that you don't have the corrupt dispositions that young people have, that you've experienced everything in this life, gained insight into it all, and therefore you have no wild ambitions or desires. What you really mean by saying this is, "My corrupt dispositions aren't that serious, so pursuing the truth is for you young people. It has nothing to do with us old people. We old people just do whatever work and exert whatever effort we can in God's house, and then we will have done our duty well and we'll be saved. As for God revealing people's corrupt dispositions, antichrist dispositions, and antichrist essence, that's what you young people should understand. You may listen to it carefully, and it's enough that we host you well and keep an eye on the surroundings to keep you safe. We old people don't have wild ambitions. We're getting old, our brains respond slowly, and that's why all our responses are positive. Before we die, we become

kindhearted. When people get old, they become well-behaved, so we are well-behaved people." What they really mean is that they don't have any corrupt dispositions. When have we ever said that elderly people don't need to pursue the truth or that pursuing the truth differs depending on your age? Have we ever said this? No, we haven't. In God's house and when it comes to the truth, are elderly people a special group? No, they're not. Age is irrelevant when it comes to the truth, as it is when it comes to your corrupt dispositions, the depth of your corruption, whether you are qualified to pursue the truth, whether you can attain salvation, or what the probability is of you being saved. Isn't that so? (It is.) We've fellowshiped on the truth for so many years now, but we've never fellowshiped on different kinds of truths according to people's different ages. The truth has never been fellowshiped on nor corrupt dispositions revealed exclusively for either young people or elderly people, nor has it been said that, because of their old age, rigid thinking, and inability to accept new things, their corrupt dispositions naturally decrease and change—these things have never been said. No single truth has ever been fellowshiped on specifically according to people's age and excluding elderly people. Elderly people are not a special group in the church, in God's house, or before God, but are rather the same as any other age group. There is nothing special about them, it's just that they have lived a little longer than others, that they arrived in this world a few years earlier than others, that their hair is a little greyer than others, and that their bodies have gotten old a little earlier than others; besides these things, there is no difference. And so, if elderly people always think, "I'm old so that means I'm a well-behaved person, that I have no corrupt dispositions, and that I only have a slight bit of corruption," then is this not a fallacious understanding? (It is.) Isn't it somewhat shameless? Some elderly people are crafty old scoundrels, cunning to the nth degree. They say they have no corrupt dispositions, and even that their corrupt dispositions have been worn away, when in fact the outpourings of their corrupt dispositions are no less than those of other people. In reality, there are many ways in which we can describe the corrupt dispositions and quality of humanity of this kind of elderly person. For example, "crafty old scoundrels," and "old ginger is the spiciest, experience beats youth"—these both use the word "old," right? (Right.) What other descriptions are there that use the word "old"? (Old schemers.) Yes, that's a good one, "old schemers." You see, they all use the word "old." Then there's "old Satan" and "old devils"—the quintessential seniors! What do people believe when they're part of a group of elderly people? They believe, "Our corrupt dispositions have all been worn away. Corrupt dispositions are a matter for you young people. You're more deeply corrupted than we are." Isn't this a deliberate distortion? They want to paint themselves in a good way and blow their own trumpet, but in fact that is not the case, and things are not like that. "Old devils," "old Satan," "old schemers," "crafty old scoundrels," and "flaunting one's old age"—these descriptions that use the word "old" aren't good things, and they aren't positive things.

We're fellowshiping on this now to give elderly people a warning, to advise them, and to guide them, and also to give young people a preventive injection. The purpose of saying these things is primarily to resolve what problem? It is to resolve these elderly people's distress, anxiety, and worry, and to make sure they understand that this distress, anxiety, and worry are superfluous and unnecessary. If you wish to perform a duty and you are suited to performing a duty, will God's house refuse you? (No.) God's house will certainly give you an opportunity to perform a duty. It will absolutely not say, "You can't perform a duty because you're old. Get out. We're not giving you a chance." No, God's house treats all people fairly. As long as you are suited to performing a duty and there is no hidden danger, God's house will give you the opportunity and allow you to perform a duty as much as you are able. Moreover, if you wish to know yourself and pursue the truth, will anyone mock you and say, "Is such an old person as you qualified to pursue the truth?" Will anyone mock you? (No.) Will anyone say, "You're old and confused. What's the point in you pursuing the truth? God won't save someone as old as you"? (No.) No, they won't. Everyone is equal before the truth, and everyone is treated fairly. It's just that you might not pursue the truth and will always come the old soldier, always thinking, "I'm old and I can't perform any duty." In fact, there are many duties you can perform to the extent of your ability. If you don't perform any duty and instead flaunt your old age, wanting to lecture others, then who would want to listen to you? No one. You always say, "Oh, you young people just don't understand things!" and "Oh, you young people are just selfish!" and "Oh, you young people are just arrogant!" and "Oh, you young people are just lazy. We old people are hardworking, and in my day we were such and such." What's the use of saying such things? Don't go on about your "magnificent" history; no one wants to hear it. It's pointless talking about those obsolete things; they do not represent the truth. If you want to talk about something, then make some effort with the truth, understand the truth a little more, know yourself, see yourself as just another ordinary person and not as a member of a special group who should be respected by others, venerated by others, held in high esteem by others and with other people flocking around you. This is an extravagant desire, and it is wrong thinking. Age is not a symbol of your identity, age does not represent eligibility, and age does not represent seniority, much less does it represent that you are in possession of the truth or humanity, and age cannot weaken your corrupt dispositions. So, you're just the same as other people. Don't always label yourself as "elderly" to separate yourself from others, and even set yourself apart as holy. That shows you don't know yourself at all! While they're living, elderly people should strive even more to pursue the truth, pursue life entry, and work harmoniously together with brothers and sisters to perform their duty; only in this way can their stature grow. Elderly people must absolutely not presume themselves to be senior to others and flaunt their old age. Young people can reveal all kinds of corrupt disposition, and so can you; young people can do all manner of foolish things, and so can you; young people harbor notions, and so do elderly people; young

people can be rebellious, and so can elderly people; young people can reveal an antichrist disposition, and so can elderly people; young people have wild ambitions and desires, and so do elderly people, without the slightest difference; young people can cause disruptions and disturbances and get cleared out of the church, and so can elderly people. Therefore, besides being able to perform their duty well to the best of their abilities, there are many things they can do. Unless you're stupid, demented, and cannot understand the truth, and unless you're unable to take care of yourself, there are many things you should do. Just like young people, you can pursue the truth, you can seek the truth, and you should often come before God to pray, seek the truth principles, strive to view people and things and comport yourself and act wholly according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. This is the path you should follow, and you should not feel distressed, anxious, or worried because you're old, because you have many ailments, or because your body is aging. Feeling distress, anxiety, and worry is not the right thing to do—they are irrational manifestations. Elderly people should let go of their "elderly" title, integrate with young people and sit as equals with them. You mustn't flaunt your old age, always thinking that you are of lofty virtue worthy of respect, that you are supremely qualified, that you can manage young people, that you are the seniors and elders to young people, always having the ambition to control young people, and always having the desire to manage young people—this is an out-and-out corrupt disposition. Since elderly people have corrupt dispositions just as young people do, and often reveal their corrupt dispositions in life and when performing their duties just as young people do, why then do elderly people not do what is proper, and instead always feel distressed, anxious, and worried about their old age and what happens to them after death? Why don't they perform their duties like young people do? Why don't they pursue the truth like young people do? This opportunity has been given to you, so if you don't grab hold of it, and you really get so old that you cannot hear or see or take care of yourself, then you will regret it, and your life will pass by in this way. Do you understand? (Yes.)

Has the problem of elderly people's negative emotions now been resolved? When you grow old, will you flaunt your old age? Will you become crafty old scoundrels and old schemers? When you see an old person, will you call them "old brother" or "old sister"? They have names but you don't call them by their names, instead adding the word "old." If you always add the word "old" when speaking to elderly people, won't that harm them? They already think themselves old and have some negative emotions, so if you call them "old," it's like you're telling them, "You're old, older than I am, and you're of no use anymore." Will they feel comfortable when they hear you say this? They will certainly feel unhappy. Will it not hurt them if you address them in this way? Some elderly people will be delighted when they hear you addressing them like this, and will think, "See, I have a lofty virtue worthy of respect and a worthy reputation. When brothers and sisters see me, they don't call me by my name. In God's house, people don't call old people uncle, or grandpa, or grandma. Instead, when the brothers and sisters address

me, they add the word ‘old,’ and call me ‘old brother’ (or ‘old sister’). Look at how dignified I am, and look at how respectable I am before others. God’s house is good—people respect the old and care for the young!” Are you worthy of respect? What edification have you brought to your brothers and sisters? What benefit have you brought to them? What is your contribution to God’s house? How much of the truth do you understand? How much of the truth do you put into practice? You think yourself of lofty virtue worthy of respect and yet have made no contribution at all, so do you deserve to be called “old brother” or “old sister” by your brothers and sisters? Absolutely not! You flaunt your old age and always want other people to respect you! Is it good to be addressed as “old brother” or “old sister”? (No.) No, it isn’t, but I hear it often. It’s so bad, yet people still often address elderly people in this way. What kind of atmosphere does this create? It’s disgusting, isn’t it? The more you address an elderly person as “old brother” or “old sister,” the more they think themselves qualified, and the more they think themselves of lofty virtue worthy of respect; the more you address them as “old so-and-so,” the more special they think they are, more important and better than other people, their hearts incline toward leading other people, and the farther they stray from pursuing the truth. They always want to lead other people and manage other people, always regarding themselves as better than other people, always finding other people disagreeable, always seeing the problems other people have and seeing none in themselves. Tell Me, can such a person as this still pursue the truth? No, they can’t. So, addressing people as “old brother” or “old sister” is of no benefit to them, and all it can do is hurt them and harm them. If you simply call them by their name and drop the title “old,” if you regard them in the correct manner, and sit as equals with them, then their state and their mentality will become normal, and they will no longer pride themselves on their veteran years and look down on others. In this way, it will become easy for them to regard themselves as the equals of other people, they will be able to regard themselves and other people correctly, able to see themselves as just the same as other people, just the same as ordinary people, and not better than other people at all. In this way, their difficulties will grow smaller, and they will not experience the negative emotions that can arise due to their advanced years and them not having gained the truth, and they will then have hope of pursuing the truth. When these negative emotions do not arise, they will regard their own problems, especially their corrupt dispositions, with the correct mindset. This has a positive and helpful effect on their pursuit of the truth, their self-knowledge, and their ability to follow the path of pursuing the truth. Won’t the issues with negative emotions in elderly people then be resolved? (They will.) They will be resolved, and there will be no more difficulties. So what is the mindset that elderly people should first adopt? They must adopt a positive mindset; they must not only be prudent, but they must be magnanimous. They mustn’t make a fuss over things with young people but should set an example and show the way for young people, and not be too harsh on them. Young people have a quick temper and speak urgently, so don’t make a fuss over things with them. They’re young, immature, and inexperienced, and a few years of

tempering will see them right. This is how things should be, and elderly people should understand this. So what mindset should elderly people adopt that is in conformity with the truth? They should treat young people correctly and, at the same time, they mustn't be arrogant and self-conceited, thinking themselves greatly experienced, and insightful. They should regard themselves as ordinary people and just the same as everyone else—this is the correct thing to do. Elderly people mustn't be held back by their age, nor must they change to having a young person's mentality. Changing into having a young person's mentality isn't normal, either, so just don't be held back by your age. Don't always be thinking, "Oh, I'm so old, I can't do this, I can't say this, I can't do that. Because I'm so old, I must this, I must that, I must sit in a certain way and stand in a certain way, and I must even eat in a certain good way, all for young people to see, so that they don't look down on elderly people." This mindset is wrong, and by thinking this, you are being controlled and restricted by a kind of wrong thinking, and you are being a little artificial, fake, and false. Do not be held back by your age, be the same as everyone else, do whatever you are able to do, and do what you ought to do—in this way, you will have a normal mindset. Do you understand? (Yes.) So, when an elderly person has a normal mindset, the various negative emotions that can arise in them because of their advanced years disappear without them being aware of it; they can no longer entangle you, the harm they cause you also vanishes, and then your humanity, your reason, and your conscience all become relatively normal. Under the premise of having a normal conscience and rationality, people's starting point becomes relatively correct for pursuing the truth, performing their duty, engaging in any activity and any work, and the results that are achieved are also relatively correct. First, elderly people will not be held back by their age but will be able to take their own measure objectively and practically, do what they ought to do, be the same as other people, and perform the duty they ought to perform to the best of their ability. Young people shouldn't think, "You're so old, you never make way for me, nor do you look after me. You're so old, you should be experienced, but you don't give me tips on how to do things and there's no benefit to being with you. You're old, so how come you don't know how to be understanding toward young people?" Is this right to say? (No.) It's inappropriate to make such demands of elderly people. Therefore, all people are equal before the truth. If all your thinking is practical, objective, accurate, and rational, then it will certainly be in accord with the truth principles. If you are unaffected by any objective condition, cause, environment, or even any factor at all, if you only do what people should do and only do what God teaches people to do, then what you do will certainly be appropriate and proper, basically in conformity with the truth. You will not become mired in the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry due to your old age, either, and this problem will be solved.

Great, I'll end today's fellowship here. Goodbye!

October 22, 2022

How to Pursue the Truth (4)

Having believed in God for all these years, have you sensed the constant change happening in the people and things around you, and in the situation in the outside world? Particularly in the last few years, have you seen any big changes happening? (Yes.) You've seen this. And have you come to any conclusion about it? (God's work is approaching its end.) That's right, God's work is indeed approaching its end, and the people, events, things, and environments all around you are in a constant state of change. For example, there were ten people in this group before, now there are eight. What happened to the other two? One was sent away, and the other was replaced in their duty. All the different kinds of people in the church are constantly undergoing change and are constantly being exposed. At first, some people seem so enthusiastic, but after a while they suddenly become weak and so negative that they cannot go on. The enthusiasm, the fiery energy, and the so-called loyalty they had in the beginning is all gone, their determination to endure suffering is gone, they have no interest in believing in God at all, and they suddenly seem to be completely different people, and no one knows why. Environments are also constantly undergoing change. What changes are happening in people's environments? In some places, the environment is hostile and the persecution is severe, so people can't gather together anymore or get in touch with their brothers and sisters; in some places, the environment is somewhat better and safer; in other places, the environment for performing one's duty and the living conditions are somewhat more advantageous, tranquil, and stable than they were before, and the people there are much better than those who were there before; they all sincerely expend themselves for God, there are more people who are able to endure suffering and pay the price, all work projects progress more smoothly, work progresses more efficiently, and the results and effects seen are more optimistic and satisfactory. Furthermore, the plans, the forms, and the ways and methods in which work projects are carried out are constantly being improved. In short, even though people see all manner of wrong and negative people, events, and things constantly arising, there are of course also all manner of good, right, and positive people, events, and things constantly emerging. When people live in such a social environment, with various positive and negative things constantly alternating and changing around them, in fact, those who ultimately benefit are those who strongly desire God, pursue the truth, and yearn for the truth. They are those who yearn for light and righteousness, while those who do not pursue the truth, who abandon themselves to vice and are sick of the truth are exposed, cast out, and forsaken in relation to different people, events, things, and environments. With all these different environments, people, and events being exposed, and with new environments, people, and events constantly appearing, what is God's will? Having believed in God all these years, do you have an understanding of this? At the very least, do you feel that God is orchestrating all of this, and that God has always been guiding these things?

(Yes.) God's purpose and meaning in doing all of this is to enable those who follow Him to learn the lessons, grow in insight and experience, and thereby gradually enter into the truth reality. Have you achieved this yourselves? No matter how busy people are with work, or how advantageous or hostile their environment is, their aim in their belief in God is for their pursuit of the truth to not change. People must not forget to pursue the truth because they are busy with work, busy with things, or because they want to avoid their hostile environment, or forget that all these situations are arranged by God, or forget that God's will is for them to learn the lessons in these various situations, to learn how to discern between all manner of people, events, and things, to understand the truth, to grow in insight, and to know God. You should all make an earnest summary of whether you have achieved these things.

Church work has been incredibly busy in recent years, and so the transfer and reassignment, as well as the exposing, casting out, and cleansing away of members in each group has been relatively frequent. In the process of carrying out this work, the transfer of team members has been especially frequent and broad in scope. However, irrespective of how many transfers take place or how much things change, the determination to pursue the truth in those who truly believe in and desire God does not change, their wish to attain salvation does not change, their faith in God does not wane, and they are always developing in a good direction and have continued to persevere in performing their duties up to today. There are those who are even much better than this who, through being constantly reassigned, find their right place, and learn how to seek the principles and perform their duty. Those who do not pursue the truth, however, who have no love for positive things and who are sick of the truth, do not perform well. Some people are currently forcing themselves to keep performing their duties, when in fact their inner state is already a complete mess, and they are utterly depressed and negative. They still haven't left the church, however, and they appear as though they believe in God and they still perform their duties, but in reality their hearts have changed, and they have departed from and abandoned God. Some people get married and return home to live their lives, saying, "I can't afford to waste my youth. We're only young once, and I absolutely cannot waste my youth! I believe in my heart that there is a God, but I can't be as simple-minded as you, sacrificing your youth to pursue the truth. I'm supposed to get married and live my life. Life is short, and we're only young for a few years. Life is over in the blink of an eye. I just can't waste my youth here. Before my youth is gone, I can be carefree and live life to the full for a few years." Some people continue to pursue their dreams of becoming rich; some continue to pursue an official career and realize their dream of being an official or a bureaucrat; some pursue the prosperity of having children, so they take a wife who can bear them sons; some people are hounded for their belief in God, are persecuted for years until they become weak and sick, and then they abandon their duties and return home to live out their remaining years. Everyone's situation is different. Some people leave of their own accord and have

their names delisted, some are nonbelievers who are cleared out, and some do all manner of evil deeds and are expelled. What lies within the bones of all these people? What is their essence? Have you clearly seen it? Do you feel deeply touched every time these people's stories reach your ears? You may think, "How could they end up like this? How could they fall to such an end? They weren't like this before, they were wonderful, so how could they change so quickly?" These things cannot be figured out or understood no matter how much you ponder them. You consider it for a while and think, "This person doesn't love positive things; they are a nonbeliever." After some time, the things that these people do, their performance, behavior, some of their words and remarks, and their pursuits fade away in your own mind or in people's consciousness, and afterward you forget these things, and little by little your feelings about them disappear. When such people, events, or things appear again, you again think, "Oh, it's unthinkable! How could they? They weren't like this before. I just can't figure it out." You feel the same things again and you have the same understanding. Tell Me, is it a shame when these people are exposed and cast out? (No.) Do you not miss these people? (No.) Do you not fight these people's corner? (No.) Then you must be very ruthless. How come you're all so unsympathetic? They have left the church; how do you not fight their corner, and have no sympathy or compassion for them? How come you have no pity for them? Are you just incapable of sympathy? Are you ruthless? (No.) Tell Me, is this an appropriate way for God's house to deal with such people? (Yes.) How is it appropriate? Tell Me. (These people have believed in God for so many years and heard so much truth that for them to behave in such a way now and to betray God and depart from Him shows that they are nonbelievers who are not worth our pity and not worth missing.) So, when they started believing in God, they were filled with enthusiasm, they gave up their homes, their jobs, and they often made offerings and took on risky jobs for God's house. However you looked at them, they all sincerely expended themselves for God. So how come they have changed now? Is it because God disliked them and used them from the beginning? (No.) God treats everyone fairly and equally and gives opportunities to all. They all lived the church life, ate and drank God's words, and lived being provided for, watered, and shepherded by God, so how come they changed so much? Their behavior when they first began to believe in God and their behavior at the time they left the church was like they were two people. Has God caused them to lose hope? Has God's house or God's deeds caused them to feel bitterly disappointed? Has God, the words God utters, or the work God does hurt their dignity? (No.) So what's the reason then? Who can explain this? (I think these people came to believe in God dominated by their desire for blessings. They only believed in God to receive blessings. The moment they saw they had no hope of receiving blessings, they departed from God.) Isn't there a blessing right in front of them? It is not yet time to stop performing their duties, so what are they in such a rush for? How come they can't even understand this? (God, I think that, when these people first came to believe in God, they relied on their enthusiasm and good

intent, and they were able to do some things, but now God's house is treating all its work more and more seriously. It requires people to do things in line with the truth principles. But these people don't accept the truth, they run amok doing whatever they please when performing their duties, and they're often pruned and dealt with. So, they feel increasingly that they cannot keep on muddling along as they are, until finally they leave God's house. I think this is one reason.) They cannot keep on muddling along as they are—is this a true thing to say? (Yes.) They cannot keep on muddling along as they are—this is said regarding people who muddle through things. There are some people who come to believe in God who do not muddle through things, who are very earnest, who treat this matter very seriously, so how come they didn't keep going? (Because, by their very nature, these people do not love the truth. They came to believe in God in order to receive blessings. They see God's house always talking about the truth, and they get sick of the truth and feel resistant to it, and they become less and less willing to attend gatherings and listen to sermons, and this is how they get exposed.) This is a kind of situation, and there are many people like this. There are also some people who always perform their duties in a slipshod manner, who never perform their duty well or take responsibility for it whatever duty they do. It's not that they aren't capable or that their caliber isn't up to the task, it's that they're disobedient and they don't do things according to what God's house requires. They always do things however they want to do them, until finally they cause disruptions and disturbances because they run amok and do whatever they please. They don't repent no matter how they're pruned and dealt with, and so they end up being sent away. These people who are sent away have an incredibly odious disposition and an arrogant humanity. Wherever they go, they want to have the final word, they look down on everyone, and they act like tyrants, until finally they are removed. After some people are replaced and cast out, they feel that nothing goes smoothly for them anywhere they go, and no one values them or pays attention to them anymore. No one regards them highly anymore, they cannot have the final word anymore, they cannot get what they want, and they have no hope of attaining any status, much less of receiving blessings. They feel they have no hope of muddling along in the church anymore, they have no interest for it anymore, and so they choose to leave—there are many people like this.

There are also some people whose reason for leaving is the same as the majority of those who are cast out. No matter how long these people have believed in God for, what they personally experience and see in God's house is that gatherings in God's house are about perpetually reading God's words and fellowshiping on the truth, talking about knowing oneself, practicing the truth, accepting judgment and chastisement, accepting being pruned and dealt with, performing one's duty according to the truth principles, talking about dispositional change and casting off one's corrupt dispositions. The work God does—whether it be work fellowshiped on in the church life or the topics covered in sermons and fellowship given by the Above—is all the truth, all God's words, and all

positive. These people, however, don't accept the truth at all. They originally came to believe in God to receive blessings and to take advantage. Looking at their nature essence, not only do they not love positive things or the truth but, even more seriously, they are extremely averse and hostile toward positive things and the truth. That's why the more God's house fellowships on the truth, the more it talks about practicing the truth, the more it talks about pursuing the truth and doing things in accordance with principles, the more uneasy and averse these people feel inside, and the less willing they are to listen. Tell Me, what is it that these people like to hear? Do you know? (They like to hear topics about destinations and receiving blessings, and about the work of spreading the gospel reaching unprecedented levels.) These are some things they want to hear. They also like to shout slogans, preach doctrine, and talk about theology, theory, and mysteries. From time to time they talk about when God's work will come to an end, when the great disasters will befall, what mankind's future destination will be, how evil forces will be gradually destroyed when the disasters come, how God will perform some signs and wonders, and how the forces and scale of God's house will be constantly expanding and growing, and about how they will strut around showing off, too. Moreover, the most important thing to them is that they'll be constantly promoted and put to use in God's house. In this way, they'll be able to muddle along in God's house for a time but, while they're muddling along, none of the work done by God or God's house is what they want it to be, and everything they hear and see are matters concerned with the truth. In their hearts, therefore, they become extremely sick and tired of the church life; they're not interested in it, they feel restless, unable to stay, and they feel tormented by it. Some people find an excuse, a reason, and a pretext and find a way to leave the church, saying, "I will commit an evil act, give vent to some negativity, and do something bad. The church will then clear me out and expel me, so I'd be perfectly justified in leaving the church." Then there are those who hand in their books of God's words and pack their stuff and leave when they go out to sort out their foreign entry permits, without even so much as a goodbye. These people are like hooligans and whores, and they don't do things in the way that normal people do. What virtuous women and normal people think and what they say when around other people are the serious matters of how to live life. How to live a good life, how to enable one's whole family to eat well, wear decent clothes, and have a good place to live, how to raise their children into adults, and how to get their children to follow the right path—these are the things they think about. Those hooligans and whores, however, never think about these things. If you talk about these proper matters with them, they get aggravated by you, they hate you, and they distance themselves from you. So, what is it that they think about? Is it that they're always thinking about eating, drinking, and partying? (Yes.) They're always thinking about eating, drinking, and partying, and about lustful things. When they talk to normal people about these things, normal people don't respond; normal people are not like them, they share no common language, and they're not on the same wavelength. The things normal

people talk about are not in their hearts, they cannot tolerate them, and they don't want to listen to them. They think that to live that way is to grievously wrong themselves and to live fettered and without any freedom. They think that to always be beautifully dressed to seduce a member of the opposite sex is an exciting and carefree way to live—to them it is the perfect life! These people who leave the church are envious of the lives of the unbelievers, envious of the pleasures of sin, and they think that to spend their days and to live the way the unbelievers do is the only way they can live an exciting and happy life, and the only way to live without letting themselves down. These nonbelievers, just like hooligans and whores, have no normal humanity and they're not normal people. If you ask them to do something positive, they absolutely refuse to do it because, deep in their bones and in their nature essence, they do not love positive things and are sick of the truth. What things do they do? What do they do in the church, among brothers and sisters, and in the course of performing their duties? They perform their duties in a slipshod manner, they talk high-sounding theory, always shouting slogans but not really doing anything—this is their normal behavior. They never give their all to performing their duty, they're always slipshod and merely go through the motions, doing things only for others to see, while also jockeying for prestige and profit around other people. These wicked people also cause other people to suffer and suppress them, and wherever wicked people are, there is no peace and no rest—there is only chaos. With wicked people in charge, not only does work not progress efficiently, but it becomes paralyzed; with wicked people in control of a church, good people are bullied, the church becomes unbearably chaotic, the faith of God's chosen people will become lukewarm, and they will become negative and weak. Wherever wicked people are, they play a disturbing and destructive role. The most obvious manifestation of wicked people is their unwillingness to perform their duties. Even if they perform their duties, they do so in a slipshod manner and never treat them seriously, they also disturb other people in the performance of their duties. There is another point to make, and that is that wicked people never read God's words, never pray, never fellowship on the truth with others, and they've never even opened their books of God's words. Some people make specious arguments on behalf of wicked people, saying, "Even though they haven't read God's words, they still listen to sermons." But do they understand them? They simply don't listen in earnest, they never watch the videos and movies produced by God's house, they don't listen to hymns, they don't listen to experiential testimonies, and they don't listen to recordings of sermons. At gatherings, they get sleepy, and there are even some who mess around on their phones and watch entertainment programs. There are also some who watch adult films, and nothing they do all day has anything to do with believing in God or pursuing the truth. As God's house fellowships on the truth in more and more detail, their aversion to the truth and to positive things becomes increasingly obvious. They feel restless and, within the time limit they can tolerate, they are unable to see and cannot wait for the good destination, good end, and the great disasters they so long for. They cannot wait

for these things, so are their hearts not in turmoil? (They are.) What kind of turmoil? Are they not always calculating in their hearts? They are never prepared to accept God's judgment and chastisement, accept God's sovereignty and arrangements, submit to the arrangements of God's house, and give their all in the performance of their duties at any time and in any place. What is their mindset? They are ready, at any time and in any place, to pack their stuff and leave. They have long been ready to leave at any time, to bid farewell to the church and to the brothers and sisters, to make a clean break and sever all ties. The time they leave is when they get to the end of the time limit they are able to tolerate. Isn't that so? (It is.)

After they are replaced or cast out, some people, regardless of the reason, are still able to persevere in performing their duty to the best of their ability. Some don't seek the truth at all, and so they decide not to perform their duty anymore. While they were performing their duty, they were already exhibiting aversion and impatience toward it, always wanting to escape church life and not perform their duty. Because these people aren't interested in the truth, they don't enjoy living the church life, and they are unwilling to perform their duty. They look forward only to the arrival of the day of God, so that they can receive blessings; they are not able to keep muddling on as they are, they see the disasters getting greater and greater, and they think that if they don't seek fleshly pleasures now, they'll lose the opportunity to do so. So they leave the church without so much as a backward glance, without any reluctance at all. From that point on, they disappear into the vast sea of people and no one in the church hears any more about them—this is how these nonbelievers are exposed and cast out. The more God's house fellowships on the truth and requires people to practice the truth and enter reality, the more aversion they feel, and they don't want to hear it at all. Not only do they not accept these things, but they resist them. They understand the situation very well: They know that people like themselves have no place in God's house, that they don't truly expend themselves for God in their faith, that they don't give everything they have in the performance of their duty, that they're always slipshod in their duty, and that they feel extreme aversion and disgust toward the truth; they also know that, sooner or later, they will be cast out, that this will certainly be the outcome. They have long laid their plans, thinking, "In any case, someone like me will certainly not receive blessings, so it's best if I leave now, enjoy life in the world for a few years, live the good life for a few years and not let myself down." Don't they make plans like this? (They do.) With such intents and plans, can people perform their duty well? No, they can't. Therefore, no matter how many years these people have believed in God for, they feel no reluctance to part with God, God's house, the church, the brothers and sisters, or the church life. They say they're leaving one day, and the next day they're dressed like an unbeliever, dressed to the nines and wearing heavy makeup, immediately dressing, speaking, and acting just like an unbeliever; they dress in outlandish garb, and they don't look right to you, yet they remain unaware of how they appear to you. How is it that they change so quickly? (It's

because they've long laid their plans, and this is how their nature is.) That's right. They've long laid their plans; they haven't just come up with these plans in the few days prior to them leaving, but rather they determined that they were going to do this long ago. They have been scheming and planning for a long time how they will eat, drink, and party, how they will comport themselves, and how they will live. They don't like living the church life, or performing their duty, or fellowshiping on the truth, much less do they like listening to sermons and attending gatherings every day. They are sick to death of this kind of church life, and if it wasn't for receiving blessings and obtaining a good destination and escaping the great disasters, they wouldn't be able to keep going even for one day—this is their true face. So, how should you handle such people when you come across them again? Will you plead with them with tactful words, or offer them more support and help? Or will you be sad to see them go and use your love to try and change them? How should you approach them? (We should ask them to leave immediately and go to the world of the unbelievers.) Correct, ask them to go back to the world and not bother with them anymore. You say to them, "Think it through, so that you don't regret your decision later." They say, "I've thought it through, and no matter what difficulty I may face in the future, I won't turn back and I won't feel regret." You say, "So go, then. No one's stopping you. We all wish you well and hope that you achieve your ideals and realize the dreams you desire. We also hope that when the day comes that you see other people being saved, you feel no jealousy or regret. So long." Isn't this a very appropriate thing to say to them? (It is.) So, regarding such people as this, one aspect is that you must see their nature essence clearly, while another aspect is that you must approach them in the appropriate way. If they are nonbelievers, unbelievers, yet they are willing to render service and can be obedient and submit, then even if they don't pursue the truth, don't bother them and don't clear them out. Instead, permit them to continue rendering service, and if you can help them, then help them. If they have no desire even to render service, and they begin to be slipshod and commit evil acts, then we've done everything that is called for. If they want to leave, then let them leave, and don't miss them when they're gone. They are at the point when they should leave, and such people are not worth your pity, for they are nonbelievers. What is most pitiful is that there are some people who are incredibly foolish, who always hold personal feelings toward those who are sent away, who always miss them, who speak on their behalf, who fight their corner, and who even weep and pray and beseech for them. What do you think about what these people do? (It's so foolish.) How is it foolish? (Those who leave are nonbelievers, they don't accept the truth, and they are simply not worth praying for and not worth missing. Only those to whom God gives opportunities and who have hope of being saved are worth the tears and prayers of others. If someone prays for a nonbeliever or a devil, then they're very foolish and ignorant.) One aspect is that they do not truly believe that there is a God—they are nonbelievers; another aspect is that the nature essence of these people is that of an unbeliever. What is the implied meaning here? It is that they are not people at all,

but that their nature essence is that of a devil, of Satan, and that these people are opposed to God. This is how things are regarding their nature essence. Yet there is another aspect, and that is that God selects people, not devils. So, tell Me, are these devils God's chosen people, and are they selected by God? (No.) They are not God's chosen people, so if you always have emotional entanglements with these people and are sad to see them go, then doesn't that make you a fool? Doesn't that make you opposed to God? If you have no deep feelings toward true brothers and sisters and yet harbor deep feelings for these devils, then what are you? At the very least, you are muddle-headed, you don't view people according to God's words, you don't yet comport yourself with the correct standpoint, and you don't handle matters with principle. You are a muddle-headed person. If you have feelings for one of these devils, then you will think, "Oh, but he's such a good person and we have such a good relationship! We get along well together and he helps me so much! When I'm weak, he gives me such comfort, and when I do things wrong, he is tolerant and patient with me. He's so loving!" He was like this only to you, so what are you? Aren't you just another ordinary corrupt human being? And how does that person treat the truth, treat God, and treat the duty God's house entrusts him with? Why don't you see things from these perspectives? Is it accurate to see things from the perspective of your own personal interests, with your fleshly eyes and affections? (No.) Clearly it isn't! And as it is not an accurate way to see things, you should let it go and change the perspective and standpoint from which you regard that person. You should seek to approach and handle that person taking God's words as your basis—this is the standpoint God's chosen people should adopt and the attitude they should have. Don't be a nitwit! Do you think you're a kind person because you feel pity for others? You're incredibly foolish, without any principles at all. You're not treating people according to God's words; you're standing on the side of Satan and sympathizing with Satan and devils. Your sympathy is not directed at God's chosen people or at those whom God wants to save, and it is not directed at true brothers and sisters.

These people who are nonbelievers are never willing to perform their duty and they always perform it however they please. No matter how you fellowship on the truth with them, they don't accept it, and even if they do understand a little truth, they don't put it into practice. There is another main manifestation that they exhibit—what is that? It is that they've always performed their duty in a slipshod manner, they are always slipshod, and they stubbornly refuse to repent. They are very attentive, earnest, and rigorous in their own affairs, and dare not neglect them at all. They have thought carefully about their food and clothing, their status, reputation, self-respect, fleshly enjoyments, their illnesses, their future, prospects, retirement, and even matters regarding their own death—they've got all the bases covered. When it comes to matters concerning performing their duty, however, they are completely inattentive, much less do they pursue the truth. Some people get sleepy and doze off every time they attend a gathering, and they even feel aversion when they hear My voice. They feel deeply uneasy, they feel restless, they

stretch and yawn, scratch their ears and rub their cheeks. They behave like animals. Some people say, “Sermons last a long time at gatherings, and some people can’t sit still for that long.” In actuality, sometimes the gathering has only just begun and they start fidgeting, and they feel aversion as they listen. That’s why they never listen to sermons or read God’s words. The moment they hear someone fellowshiping on the truth, they feel aversion, and they’re sick and tired of seeing people listen with rapt attention. What is the nature essence of such people? They wear human skin; on the outside they are human, but if you peel the skin back, they are devils, not humans. God wants many to be saved, for those with humanity to be saved; He doesn’t want devils to be saved. God does not save devils! You must remember this always and not forget it! You must not associate with any of those who wear the skin of a human but whose nature and essence are that of a devil. If you have not severed all ties with such a person, and you try to please them and flatter them, then you will become Satan’s joke, and God will detest you and say, “You blind fool, you cannot understand anyone!” God does not save devils, understand? (Yes.) God does not save devils, nor does He select devils. Devils can never love the truth, nor pursue the truth, much less submit to God—they can never submit to God. They believe in God not because they love His righteousness and fairness, and not so that they can pursue the attainment of salvation. They express disgust with and contempt for Job’s fear of God and shunning of evil, and in their hearts they feel tremendous aversion and resistance toward the matter of pursuing the truth. If you don’t believe Me, then just look at those around you who have been sent away and exposed and see what it is that lies within their bones, what they talk about when no one else is listening, what they care about, what their attitude is toward their own life, survival, and the people, events, and things around them, as well as what they say and what views they express. From all of these expressions and outpourings, you can see clearly just what they are, why they are able to leave, and why God’s house wants to clear them out. Isn’t this a lesson worth learning? (Yes, it is.) And what is the lesson you’ve learned? What is it that you’ve understood? (We’ve learned how to be discerning and have understood that, deep within these people’s bones, they do not love the truth and are sick of the truth. They just muddle along in God’s house, and sooner or later they’ll be cleared out.) If you see things in this way, then it shows that you have learned the lesson.

Are you able to see how devils and Satan in the spiritual world are sick of the truth and hate the truth? Are you able to see how devils and Satan defy God and blaspheme against God? Are you able to see what words, sayings, and methods devils and Satan use to attack God? Are you able to see what God allows devils and Satan to do, how they do it, and what their attitude is? (No.) You can’t see these things. Therefore, whatever God says is merely an imagining or a picture in your heart; it is not fact. Because you haven’t seen these things yourself, all you can do is rely on your imagination and imagine such a tableau or imagine some kind of deed. However, when you encounter these living devils and Satans wearing human skin, you practically come

into contact with the speech and actions of devils and Satans, as well as the facts and evidence of their judging, attacking, defying, and blaspheming of God—you will see with absolute clarity their disposition which is sick of the truth and which hates the truth. These devils and Satans wearing human skin attack God in just the same way as devils and Satan in the spiritual world attack God; they are completely the same, only the devils and Satans wearing human skin have adopted a different form to attack God—yet their essence remains the same. They wear human skin and change into humans but still they come to judge, attack, defy, and blaspheme against God. The way in which these devils and Satans in the flesh and nonbelievers judge, attack, and defy God, and how they pull down His work and disrupt church work is exactly the way in which devils and Satan in the spiritual world do all these things. Therefore, when you see how devils and Satans in the world defy God, you are seeing how devils and Satan in the spiritual world defy God—there is no difference at all. They come from the same source and possess the same nature essence, and that's why they do the same things. Regardless of what form they take, they all do the same things. These devils and Satans wearing human skin, therefore, defy God and attack God, and exhibit extreme aversion and resistance toward the truth, because of their nature, and because they cannot help it. Why do I say that they cannot help it? They appear to be human, living together with other humans, eating three square meals a day, studying human education and knowledge, with the same life skills and ways of living that other humans have; however, their inner spirit is not the same as that of other humans, nor is their essence. So, it is the essence, root, and source behind the views they hold and the things they are capable of that dictate what these people are. If they attack God and blaspheme against God, then they are devils, and not humans. In human skin, however good-sounding or correct the things they say are, their nature essence is that of devils. Devils can say things that sound good to delude people, yet they don't accept the truth at all, much less do they put it into practice—this is absolutely the case. Look at those wicked people and antichrists and at those who defy and betray God—are they not this type of person? They are all capable of saying things which sound good, but they're not capable of doing anything practical. They can show some respect and say good-sounding things to people with status and power, especially their immediate superiors, but when they come before God, they don't even show the bare minimum of respect for the incarnate God. If you ask them to handle some matter for God, they really don't want to, and even if they do it, they do it in a slipshod way. Why are they capable of treating God in this way? Is it the truth that has let them down? Has God let them down? Has God interacted with them before? The answer to these questions is no, and God has never even met them. So how come these people harbor this kind of attitude toward God and the truth? There is one reason, and that is that their nature essence is inherently in opposition to God. That's why they cannot help but ridicule and blaspheme against God, and despise, judge, and attack God in their hearts, even doing so completely unscrupulously—this is decided by their nature

essence. They do these things with hardly any effort, with the words spilling from their mouths, without consideration, unmindfully, these things just naturally pouring out. They can show respect to other people, to people with status and to ordinary people, but they utterly despise God and the truth. What are they? (Devils.) That's right, they are devils, not humans, regardless of their age. Some people say, "Perhaps they're just young and they don't understand things." You think they're young and they don't understand things, but when they go into the world and society and they see older people, they always address them properly. It's only when they see God that they don't address Him, saying instead, "Oh," or "It's You," or just "You." They don't address God. They know to respect the old and care for the young in society, and they are civilized and polite. When they come before God, however, they're not able to do these things and don't understand how to honor Him. So, what are they? (Devils.) They're devils, typical devils! They're able to show respect and be polite to prestigious people in society, to those with status, to those they admire, and even to those from whom they can derive some benefit; it's just that when they come before God, they show no respect or politeness at all, but instead they immediately resist, openly despising Him, and treating Him with a contemptuous attitude. What are they? They're devils, typical devils! These nonbelievers, these people who infiltrate their way into God's house and are then cleared out and struck off, are all this kind of person, one hundred percent. They resist and treat God contemptuously in this way, and when it comes to the duty that God requires people to perform, they even more so pay no heed to it. Regardless of their status in society, how educated they are, or what their age or gender is, their nature essence is the same. When they're in the world and they encounter an official who asks them to do something, they can't grovel on the ground and kowtow fast enough. They're happy and willing to be the official's slaves and will try to flatter them in the best way they can think of. If they get a handshake or an embrace from a celebrity or a president, they feel honored, and perhaps will never again wash their hands or change their clothes for as long as they live. They feel that these celebrities and great people are higher and greater even than God, and that's why in their hearts they're capable of despising God. No matter what God says or what work He does, these people don't consider it worth mentioning. Not only do they consider it not worth mentioning, they also constantly want to get to work on God's words and change them, add their own meaning to them, make them entirely accord with what they think—these are all people with problems with their nature essence. Tell Me, is it appropriate to allow these people who are of devils, or these people with the nature essence of devils, to remain in God's house? (No, it isn't.) No, it isn't. They're not the same as God's chosen people: God's chosen people belong to God, whereas these people belong to the devils and Satan.

What kind of people must gather together for them to be called a church? What kind of people are wanted in God's house, and to what kind of people does God's house belong? Tell Me. (People who truly believe in God and pursue the truth.) This is a little

too severe. From where I'm standing, the lowest limit and minimum standard must be people who are willing to render service. They may have no love for the truth but that doesn't mean they're sick of the truth, they do what God's house asks them to do without question, and they are obedient and are able to submit. When it comes to the conditions for pursuing the truth, some people may think themselves to be lacking in caliber, they don't enjoy doing it and are not that interested. They might think that it's acceptable to listen to a sermon every now and then, and sometimes when they listen to a sermon, they fall asleep, and when they wake they wonder, "What was I just listening to? I've forgotten. I'd best get to work. It's enough for me to just do my work." They're not unruly or disruptive, and they work hard at whatever work is arranged for them. They have a real air of sincerity about them and they're like old workhorses—their owner just tells them to work, and whether it's turning a millstone, pulling a plow, working in the fields, or pulling a cart, they always have a real air of sincerity about them and can complete tasks without causing any trouble. What is it that they think? "I'm told that I'm a service-doer, so I'll render service. I'm not worth anything, I'm a lowly nobody. By rendering service for God, He exalts me, and I do not feel wronged at all." You see, this is the attitude they have. So, people like this should be kept in God's house. Even though they may have some faults, deficiencies, and bad habits, or they may be lacking in caliber or foolish, I can tolerate and include all these people; it is not a problem, and I give opportunities to these people. What opportunities? Do I give them the opportunity to render service or to attain salvation? Both, of course. As created beings, they're willing to render service to God, to render service in God's house, and it is their right to do so. Moreover, with this desire they have, they should be given the opportunity to attain salvation. Yet there are some who say, "But they don't seek to attain salvation!" If they don't seek to attain salvation, then that is their business, but at the very least, these people can be shown special favor and given the opportunity to attain salvation, and they have the chance to be saved. What do I mean by "they have the chance"? I mean that their caliber is lacking, they are a bit foolish, they can't take on very big or important work in the performance of their duties but just do an ordinary duty, they don't play a very important role in God's house, they don't take on any important jobs while God is expanding His work, and they make no great contribution; however, because they have this desire to be willing to render service to God, they are shown special favor and given the chance to be saved—this is the special favor they are granted. God gives many opportunities to every single person. Does God treat people fairly? (Yes.) Because no matter how weak they are, how lacking their caliber is, how foolish they are, they are members of the ordinary and corrupt human race; they just personally don't pursue the truth very actively, but they're still right as people. In the end, whether they're able to gain the truth or attain salvation, as far as God is concerned, He bestows kindness on them and shows them special favor, for these people are made from a completely different mold from those nonbelievers and those devils who oppose God, and they have

a different essence. Those people are devils and the enemies of God, whereas these people, despite seeking only to render service and settling for rendering service, have no resistance to God in their hearts. They will never actively attack God, judge God, or blaspheme against God and they harbor a positive and right attitude toward God, that is, they're willing to render service to God, whether they're able to attain salvation or not. Then there are some who are a little better than this, and who, during their time rendering service, are able to put some truths into practice as much as they're able, who actively and positively seek some of the truth principles, and who strive to not go against the principles. This is the desire and the attitude they possess, and so God bestows kindness upon them. God does not treat them unfairly, He just doesn't give up on them and always gives them opportunities. By the time God's work comes to an end, if they've achieved submission to God and can escape the influence of Satan, then God will lead them into the kingdom—this is the destination they ought to have. God wants to save these people and He will not give up on them; as to how God will do this and fulfill these words, one day you will know. What is God's attitude toward devils and Satans? (He's sick of them.) His attitude is that He is sick of them. Needless to say, He is sick of them. God uses devils and Satans to render service at the appropriate time and place, in the appropriate situation, and with the appropriate things, and once they have rendered service, they are kicked out without any consideration. Their nature essence which does not pursue the truth and which is sick of the truth is constantly being exposed in all manner of situations. God does not bestow kindness upon them, for God absolutely detests them and is extremely disgusted with them. These foolish people with poor calibers, some of which may even be muddled, however, are willing to render service to God, and they harbor the attitude and the determination of "wishing to render service to God and never regretting it." In day-to-day life, therefore, God will always forgive their foolishness and tolerate their weakness, as well as protect them and watch over them. What do I mean when I say that God will protect them and watch over them? I mean that God will enlighten them regarding the literal meanings of the few truths they are able to comprehend and allow them to understand the truths they are able to comprehend; God is with them, bestowing peace and joy upon them, and when they encounter temptation, God will arrange suitable environments for them to protect them from it. What are the main temptations? There are many temptations: Marriage, improper relationships between males and females, money, status, fame and profit, reputation, as well as a good job and a good pay package, and so on—these are all temptations. And in what other ways does God protect people? He cures you of sickness to prevent you from suffering, He keeps you from being snared and attacked by wicked people, and so on. Moreover, when you encounter some difficulties or some things that appear calamitous, God will arrange some people, events, and things to protect you from these calamities and difficulties, enabling you to smoothly render service to God in His house as you wish until the end—isn't this a good thing? (Yes, it is.) So, to be able to have everything go

smoothly and for everything to go as you wish, what does this come from? (God's protection.) Correct, it comes from God's protection, from God watching over you, and from God's kindness. Those people who are of devils, however, cannot help but do devilish things. They make mistakes in everything they do, and they all harbor evil intentions. It's normal for them to often fall into temptation; it's exactly what they need, like a great rock that falls suddenly from the sky, hitting them on the head, crushing them, and then they're dead. The people who are willing to render service to God will encounter these things, too, but with God's miraculous protection, this disaster doesn't befall them, it passes them by, and in their hearts, they say, "God is protecting me, it's not my time to die!" God is keeping you alive as you are still useful to Him. God gave you your life, and since you're willing to render service to Him and offer yourself up to Him, why would God not protect you? God will surely protect you. Does God want much from people? (No.) These people who are willing to render service to God actually aren't very talented and their caliber isn't that great; they have a limited understanding of the truth and may even understand some words and doctrines, and can learn to speak like other people do. They simply aren't able to grasp the truth principles, however, nor can they reach to pursuing the truth or attaining salvation. Their submission to God merely involves doing what they're told by God's house, and there is no way they can submit to the truth, that's all. And so, because they are only ordinary corrupt human beings, and because they're willing to render service to God, God does not discard them. Therefore, those people who are cleansed away are certainly nothing good. If you really are good people, if you really are people who have been selected by God, if you really have an attitude of submission to God, the desire and attitude to be willing to render service to God and never regret it, then God will absolutely never discard you, but instead will show you kindness. This will be a blessing to you, and God wants people like this. God wants people like this—they don't pursue the truth and are unable to understand the truth because their caliber is lacking, yet they're willing to render service to God. The other kind of people God wants are those who wish to pursue the truth, who love the truth, who love fairness and righteousness and positive things, who wish to submit to the truth, and who, once they have understood and comprehended the truth, once they have come to know and grasp the truth, are then able to obey, submit, and practice in accordance with the truth. Furthermore, these people have the determination to pursue the truth and attain salvation, and they have never doubted God. These people are, of course, those whom God loves and wishes to save. Are you able to meet this standard, however? And what will you do if you're not able to meet it? At the very least, your attitude toward God and the truth must not be that of the devils and Satan, you must at least draw close to God's standard of approval and must be willing to render service to God. If you consistently set yourself in opposition to God, act contrary to God, and if you're always attacking God and blaspheming against Him in your heart, then you will find yourself in a troublesome and dangerous situation. You should be clear in your heart about what

attitude you hold toward God, and you should categorize yourself according to the different types of people I've been talking about here.

Pursuing the truth is very important, but that doesn't mean that if people don't pursue the truth, then they cannot make it to the end of the road; that is not for definite. All people are created beings, and as long as they are not devils or Satans, then they will not actively attack God, or actively attack and blaspheme against God in clear awareness. Therefore, God is fair and reasonable to ordinary corrupt mankind, and He gives them all the chance to attain salvation. While man experiences attaining salvation, God is kind to them, He protects them, and looks after them. So, what is God's attitude toward those people who are devils and Satans? They see God as their enemy and continually judge, attack, and blaspheme against God, destroy His work, and never know to repent. If they interact with other people, they will have some they get along well with, but only when they come before God, they don't get along with Him at all, not for one minute or one second; they cannot work with God or coexist with Him or reach a consensus with Him on anything, and this shows that they are standard devils and Satans. God absolutely does not tolerate such people, and God's house absolutely does not keep such people. When one is discovered, they are cleared out; when a pair is discovered, they are cleared out; however many are exposed, that is how many are removed—the day they are exposed is the day they're finished. You see, when good people are promoted and put to some important use, that is when they are perfected, blessed, and they reap the greatest harvest; when wicked people and devils are promoted and put to use, they are naturally exposed and cast out, and their last day has arrived. Think of those around you who were exposed, cast out or cleared out recently or early on, and those who finally had their names delisted. It was when they reached the peak of their "career" in God's house that they were cast out, their last day had arrived, and a giant period mark was written against their life of faith in God. The nonbelievers come and go in the church and can't find a suitable place for themselves, nor can they perform any duty. The moment they commit some evil act, they are exposed, and their last day has arrived. Devils like to do big things and make a name for themselves, and the day they are reveling the most in glory is their final day. Why do I say this? Do you know? This is how things are. It is when they are reveling the most in glory that they are the most complacent, and isn't it when they are the most complacent that they are most likely to forget themselves? (Yes.) When they have no success and no glory, these devils keep their heads down. But just because I say they keep their heads down, that doesn't mean they're able to practice the truth, only that they do things very carefully and cautiously, always with a guarded heart and not a God-fearing heart. The moment they see an opportunity, or they find themselves with some power and status, able to command the wind and rain to do their bidding, they become complacent and forget themselves, thinking, "My time has come. It is now time for me to put forth my abilities and strengths and bring my capabilities into play!" And they jump into action.

What is the motivation behind their actions and what is the source of their actions? Where do the motivation and source of their actions spring from? They spring from devils, from Satan, and from their wild ambitions and desires. Under such circumstances, can the things they do accord with the principles of the truth? Can they have a God-fearing heart while they do things? Can they handle matters in accordance with what God's house requires? The answer to all these questions is no, they can't. And what are the consequences? (They cause disruptions and disturbances.) That's right, the consequences are that they cause severe disruptions and disturbances, and even cause severe disturbances and losses to God's house and to church work. So then, in line with the principles of how to handle people in God's house, how should people who bring about such consequences to the work of the church be handled? If the matter is a minor one, they should be replaced, and if the matter is a serious one, then they should be cleared out. When someone is promoted and put to some important use, or they are arranged to do some work, God's house will always clearly fellowship with them on the principles of doing work. Many principles and details are told to that person, and it is only when they have understood and comprehended, and they have written it all down, that the handover is considered complete. When they should do some work and perform their duty, however, they set to it with their devil's claws exposed and the devil they truly are begins to appear. They don't do things in line with the principles required by God's house at all, but instead do things completely as they themselves want, doing things however they like, however they wish. No one can control them, and they don't listen to anyone, thinking, "God's house, God, and the truth can all stand aside! Here, I'm calling the shots!" This is how devils do things, and it is the attitude devils have toward duty and toward the truth. If you have such an attitude toward the truth, then you will be exposed. If you take the work of God's house and your duty as trifling matters and you don't do things according to the principles God's house has enjoined you to follow, then you will not be treated courteously. God's house has principles with which it handles people; those who should be dismissed from their post are dismissed, and those who should be cleared out are cleared out, and that's all there is to say about it. Isn't that so? Isn't this what God's house does? And isn't this how those devils are revealed? And isn't this their motivation for doing things, the source of their actions, and the way they do things? (Yes.) By handling them in this way, is God's house treating them unjustly? (No.) Is it an appropriate way to handle them? (Yes.) It really is so appropriate! A normal person accepts their duty, receives a promotion, and is put to some important use. They carry out their work according to their own abilities and caliber and, to a greater or lesser extent, in accordance with the work principles they understand, or which God's house has enjoined them to follow. Despite the fact that they often reveal corrupt dispositions, this does not impact the normal performance of their duty. No matter what difficulties they encounter, what incorrect state they find themselves in, or what disruption they endure, in the end they will achieve some positive results in the performance of their

duty, and these results are acceptable to all. Those nonbelievers, however, regardless of how long they have been performing their duty for, never achieve any positive results. They always do bad things and try to ruin things, and this not only affects church work, but it also harms the church's interests, creating a foul atmosphere around their work and making a mess of it. If one devil disrupts and ruins some work, there must be many people behind the scenes doing the work over again from scratch, wasting the human and financial resources of God's house, and making many of God's chosen people wrathful. Once the devil has been removed, the work of the church immediately takes on a bright new look, and the results of the work are different. The devil that caused disruptions and disturbances is banned, people come to have a free and liberated mentality, work efficiency is increased, and everyone performs their duties normally. Therefore, these people who are of devils and Satan appear to be people from the outside and, regardless of how old they are or how educated, so long as they are wicked, then they can perform evil acts, and they play the role of devils and Satans corrupting and disturbing people. For example, you're making a pot of chicken soup which everyone is looking forward to eating, when suddenly a fly lands in the soup. Tell Me, can this chicken soup still be eaten? There's nothing for it, you just have to tip it away, and two or three hours of work is wasted. You then have to wash the pot several times, and even after you've washed it, it still doesn't seem clean to you, and you're left feeling a trace of disgust. What disturbed you? (The fly.) Although the fly is very small, its defiled essence is so disgusting. These people who are of devils are like flies. They find their way into the church and cause severe disruption to the normal order of church life, and they disturb the normal progression of church work. So, do you now have a clear understanding of these people who are of devils? Trying to get them to render some service and perform their duty well is harder than trying to get a cow to climb a tree; it's like trying to get a duck to sit on a perch. The hardest thing is trying to get devils and Satans to practice the truth, as is trying to get nonbelievers to faithfully perform their duty. This is just how things are. If you come across people who are of Satan and nonbelievers, and you need to ask them to help you do something temporarily, then that's fine. But if you arrange for them to perform some duty or do some work, then you're being blind and you're being played for a fool. Especially if you ask them to do some important work, then you're being even more foolish. If you really can't find anyone suitable to help you with something and so you ask them for help, then it's fine to ask them to do something, but you must keep an eye on them and not brush the matter aside. People like that are totally unreliable; because they are not human, but are devils, they are totally unreliable. So now, glance around at the people in charge of teams or team leaders, and at those who perform key duties and important work and see if they are such things as these devils. If you can replace them, then replace them as soon as you can; if you can't replace them as there is no one suitable there to take their place, then keep a close watch on them, supervise and follow them closely. You must not give

devils and Satans the chance to cause disturbances. A devil will always be a devil, they have no humanity, and they have no conscience and reason—you must remember this always! Nonbelievers are all of devils and Satan, and you must not believe them! Let's stop fellowshiping on this topic here.

When we fellowshiped on how to pursue the truth before, we talked about two things. What was the first one? (Letting go.) One of them was letting go. What about the other one? (Dedicating.) Dedicating. We talked about the first one, "letting go," three times. What did we fellowship on last time? (Last time, God dissected the reasons why the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry arise in people from the perspective of the difficulties they face, and their attitude toward God's work and the truth.) There are many reasons why the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry can arise, but in general they are caused by the objective reason that people do not understand the truth. This is one reason. There is another reason, and that is the primary reason that people do not pursue the truth. When people don't understand or pursue the truth, and they have no true faith in God, then they don't truly submit, and that's why all manner of negative emotions naturally arise in them. In day-to-day life, because of the practical difficulties people experience in their lives and all the different problems they encounter in their thinking, they end up feeling all manner of negative emotions in their objective environments. In particular, the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry which we spoke about last time, all arise because people face all kinds of difficulties and problems related to their fleshly lives. Because when people encounter these problems they don't seek the truth or believe what God says, much less do they seek the truth they should understand and practice in God's words, which would allow them to let go of their wrong views, their wrong thoughts and views about these matters, as well as let go of their incorrect ways of handling and approaching these things, the days go by, time passes, and the various difficulties that people face in daily life generate all manner of thoughts that disturb and constrain them deep within their hearts. Unbeknownst to them, these thoughts cause feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry to arise concerning their fleshly lives and all the different issues they face. In fact, when people haven't yet come before God or they have no understanding of the truth, these issues will cause feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry to arise in every single person to a varying degree—it is unavoidable. For those who live in the flesh, anything that happens to them will cause a certain disturbance and impact to their lives and their thoughts. When this disturbance and impact become more than they can endure and bear, or when their instincts, abilities, and social status are insufficient to hold them up or to solve or dispel these difficulties, distress, anxiety, and worry will naturally arise deep in their hearts and gather there, and these feelings will become their normal state. Fretting about various things such as one's future prospects, food, drink, and marriage, one's future survival or health, one's old age, and one's status and reputation in society is a condition shared by all mankind upon the basis of man not understanding the truth and not believing in God.

However, once people come to believe in God, when they understand a little truth, their resolve to pursue the truth will keep getting stronger. In this way, the practical difficulties and problems they encounter will gradually diminish, and the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry will gradually weaken and abate—this is very natural. This is because, after people have read many of God's words and come to understand some truth in their belief in God, they will always weigh up and approach the essence, the origin, and the source of the issues they encounter throughout their lives in accordance with God's words. In the final analysis, they will ultimately come to understand that their fate and all these things they experience in their lives are in God's hands, and so will understand from a general perspective that all of this is under the sovereignty of God, and none of it is up to them. Therefore, the simplest thing for people to do is to submit—submit to the arrangements and sovereignty of Heaven. They shouldn't struggle against their fate, but instead, when they encounter any matter, they should always positively and actively seek God's will and from there find the most appropriate way to resolve the issue—this is a most basic thing people should understand. That is to say, after people come to believe in God, because of the truths they understand and because they basically submit to God, their distress, anxiety, and worry gradually abate. This means that these emotions will not be able to vex them so grievously anymore, or make them feel confused, or bewildered, or that their future is bleak and uncertain, thereby often causing them to feel distressed, anxious, and worried about these things. On the contrary, because they have come to believe in God and understand some truth, and to have some discernment and understanding of all manner of things in life, or to have a more appropriate way to handle these things, their negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry will gradually abate. However, although you have believed in God for many years and have listened to many sermons, your negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry have still not been eliminated or weakened—that is to say, your attitude concerning how you viewed people and things and comported yourself and acted, and your thoughts and views, and the way you handled things before you came to believe in God have not changed—meaning that after you came to believe in God, you didn't accept the truth or gain the truth or use the truth to resolve these issues after reading God's words and listening to sermons, thereby resolving these negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry. If you never seek the truth to resolve these negative emotions, doesn't this show that you have a problem? (Yes.) What problem does it show? You have been a believer in God for many years and still feel that your future looks totally bleak and gloomy. You still often feel empty and helpless in your heart, and you still often feel lost and that you have no way forward. You don't know where your life is headed, and you still feel like you are groping in the fog, without a path, without a direction to move forward. What does this mean? At the very least it means that you haven't gained the truth, right? And if you haven't gained the truth, what is it you've been doing all these years? Have you been pursuing the truth? (No.) If, while

you've been giving things up, expending yourself, and performing your duties, you haven't been pursuing the truth and haven't been using the truth to resolve practical problems, what have you been doing all this time? (Idling and muddling along.) There are many people who perform their duty in a slipshod way, and these people are actually rendering service. Service-doers settle for being able to perform their duties, pay some price, and suffer a little, but they don't pursue the truth. That's why, after believing in God for many years, they haven't changed at all. These people are actually service-doers and, if we say what used to be said, we can say they are engaging in religious activities. Take a look at those religious activities in the religious world—on Sundays people go to worship and hold gatherings, and ordinarily they pray in the mornings, say grace, give thanks for everything, bless people with their prayers, and when they see other people they say, "God blesses you, God protects you." When they see a likely candidate, they preach the gospel and read a passage from the Bible to them. The better ones go clean the church, and when a preacher comes, they enthusiastically put them up in their homes; when they encounter elderly people with difficulties in their lives, they help them out, and take pleasure in helping them. Are these not all religious activities? Eating Easter eggs at Easter, celebrating Christmas and singing Christmas hymns—these are the activities they engage in. Your activities now are done somewhat more frequently than those done by religious people. Many of you leave your homes and perform your duties full-time. You perform your spiritual devotions in the morning, some church work in the daytime, you go to regular gatherings and read God's words, and before you go to bed in the evening, you pray to God and ask Him to protect you, to grant you a sound night's sleep and to keep bad dreams away, and then you do it all again the next day. Your everyday lives are exceptionally regular, yet they are exceptionally insipid and dull. You gain nothing and understand nothing for a long time, and you never reflect on or recognize these most basic of negative emotions, nor have you ever unearthed them or resolved them. In your free time, or when you encounter something that isn't to your liking in your duty, or you get a message from home saying your parents are unwell, or something unfortunate happens back home, you no longer feel like performing your duty and you become weak for several days. While you are feeling weak, those negative emotions that have been collecting inside you for a long time burst forth again. You think about them day and night, and they follow you like shadows. There are even some who have the thoughts and views they harbored before they believed in God suddenly burst forth again when they're feeling weak and negative, and they think, "Maybe it would have been better if I had gone to college, if I had studied some major, and found a good job—I could even have gotten married by now. My classmate so-and-so seemed like nothing special when we were at school together, but after school they went to college. They were promoted after they got a job, and now they have the perfect happy home life. They have a car and a house, and they live a wonderful life." When they think these things and slide into these negative states, all manner of negative emotions burst forth all at

once. They think of home, of their mothers, they pine for how things used to be, and good things, bad things, hurtful things, happy things, and unforgettable things all flood their minds, and as they think of all these things, they become sorrowful, and tears roll from their eyes. What does all this show? It shows that the way you used to live and the way you used to conduct your life can arise from time to time and disturb your current life and the state of your life right now. These things can even dominate the way you live your life now and your life attitude, as well as your views on things. They constantly disturb and dominate your life. This is not intentional on your part, but rather it is a case of you naturally becoming mired in these negative emotions. You may think now that you don't have these emotions, but only because the right time and environment have not arrived. As soon as the right time and environment arrive, then at any time and place you can slide into just these same emotions. Now, when you slide into these emotions, you are in danger, in danger of falling back into your original way of living at any time and place and falling under the domination of your original thoughts and views—this is very dangerous. This danger can strip you of your chance and hope to attain salvation at any time and place, and at any time and place it can carry you away from the path of faith in God. Therefore, regardless of how strong your resolve and desire to perform your duty is now, or how profound and lofty you think the truths are that you understand, or how great your stature is, as long as your thoughts do not change, as long as your outlook on life does not change, as long as the way you live your life does not change, and as long as your desire for what you want in life does not change—all of which are under the direction of these emotions—then you will be in danger at all times and in all places; when you can be devoured, overwhelmed, and carried off by these thoughts and views at any time and place, then you are in danger. Therefore, don't make light of these negative emotions. At any moment and in any place, they can strip you of your chance to attain salvation and destroy your chance to be saved, and this is not a small matter.

All of man's negative emotions are caused by their various wrong thoughts, wrong views, wrong ways of living, and wrong satanic life philosophies. There are also some things that happen in your real lives, in particular, at times when you're unable to clearly comprehend the essence of these things, you can very easily become frightened and hemmed in by how these things appear, and can very easily slip into confusion, thereby falling back into old ways of living; you will unconsciously protect yourself, abandon God, abandon the truth, and use your own methods and the ways you believe to be the most traditional and reliable to seek a way out, search for how to live, and look for the hope to go on living. Although, on the surface, these negative emotions present as just emotions, and if we describe these emotions in words, then they seem understated when taken literally and are not so serious, some people cling tightly to these negative emotions and won't let them go, as though clinging to a straw that will save their lives, and they are tightly bound and fettered by these things. In fact, their being bound by these negative emotions is really caused by the various ways upon which man relies for their survival,

as well as their various thoughts and views that dominate them, and their various attitudes toward life and living. Therefore, even though the feelings of depression, distress, anxiety, worry, inferiority, hatred, anger and so on are all negative, people still think these things can be relied upon, and only when they slip down into these emotions do they feel secure, and feel that they've found themselves and that they exist. In actuality, that people become mired in these emotions moves in the opposite direction from the truth and strays far from the truth, as well as from the correct ways of thinking, the correct thoughts and views, and the correct attitude toward and views on things which God tells them to have. No matter what negative emotion you are experiencing, the more deeply you sink into it, the more bound by it you will be; the more bound by it you are, the more you will feel the need to protect yourself; the more you feel the need to protect yourself, the more you will hope to be stronger and to be more capable and competent to win opportunities to live and find various ways of living to surmount the world, claim victory over all the difficulties you face in the world, and overcome all of life's difficulties and hardships. The more you slip down into these emotions, the more you actually want to control or resolve all the difficulties you come across in life. Isn't that so? (Yes, it is.) So then, how do these thoughts of man arise? Let's take marriage as an example. You feel distressed, anxious, and worried about marriage, but what exactly is the issue behind all of this? What are you worried about? Where does this worry come from? It comes from you not knowing that this marriage is arranged and ruled by fate, and that it is arranged and ruled by Heaven. Not knowing this, you always want to decide things for yourself, to plan, propose, and plot, thinking repeatedly such things as: "What kind of partner should I look for? How tall should they be? What should they look like? What kind of personality should they have? How educated should they be? What kind of family should they come from?" The more thorough your plans, the more you fret, isn't that so? The higher your requirements get and the more requirements you have, the more you fret, right? And the harder it becomes to find a partner, yes? (Yes.) When you don't know if someone is suitable for you or not, the greater your difficulties become, and the greater your difficulties become, the more severe your feelings of distress and anxiety become, right? The more severe your feelings of distress and anxiety become, the more these emotions get you into a tangle. So, how do you resolve this problem? Say you understand the essence of marriage, and that you understand the correct way forward and direction to go—what then is the correct approach to take to marriage? You say, "Marriage is a great event in life, and no matter what people choose, it has all been predestined long ago. God long ago ordained and arranged who your spouse would be and what they'd be like. People mustn't be too hasty or rely on their imaginations, much less on their preferences. Relying on one's imaginations and preferences and being too hasty are all manifestations of ignorance and do not accord with reality. People mustn't allow their fancies to run wild, and all imagining is at odds with reality. The most practical thing to do is to let things take their natural course and await the person whom God has

arranged for you." So, with this theory and this practical understanding as your foundation, how should you practice regarding this matter? You should have faith, await God's time, and await God's arrangement. If God arranges a suitable partner for you in this life, then they will appear at the right time, in the right place, and in the right environment. It will happen when conditions are ripe, and all you have to do is be the one who cooperates with this matter at such a time, and in such a place and environment. The only thing you can do is wait—wait for this time, wait for this place, wait for this environment, wait for this person to appear, wait for all of this to take place, being neither active nor passive, but rather just waiting for all these things to happen and arrive. What do I mean by "wait"? I mean having an obedient attitude, being neither active nor passive; this attitude is a seeking and obedient attitude, without importunity. Once you have adopted this kind of attitude, will you still feel distressed, anxious, and worried about marriage? (No.) Your individual plans, imaginings, wishes, predilections, and all your ignorant thinking that is at odds with the facts disappear. Your heart is then calm, and you feel no more negative emotions about the matter of marriage. You feel relaxed, liberated, and free regarding this matter, and you let things take their natural course. Once you come to have the correct attitude, everything you do and everything you express becomes rational and appropriate. The emotions that are manifested from within your normal humanity naturally cannot be distress, anxiety, and worry, but rather they are peaceful and stable. The emotions are not depressing or radical—you just wait. Your only way of practice and attitude regarding this matter in your heart is to wait and to submit: "I wish to submit to all that God arranges for me. I have no personal requirements or plans." Haven't you then let go of these negative emotions? And isn't it so that these emotions will not arise? Even if you did feel them, wouldn't you then gradually let them go? So, what kind of process is the process of letting go of these negative emotions? Is it a manifestation of pursuing the truth? It shows that you are both pursuing and practicing the truth. The end result achieved through pursuing the truth is that of practicing the truth—it is implemented through practicing the truth. When you attain the level of practicing the truth, your distress, anxiety, and worry will no longer follow you like shadows; they will have been thoroughly removed from your innermost heart. Is the process of removing these emotions the process of letting go? (Yes.) Practicing the truth is this simple. Is it easy? Practicing the truth is a transformation of thoughts and views and, even more so, it is a transformation of one's attitude toward things. To let go of a simple negative emotion, one must practice and achieve these processes. First undergo a transformation of one's thoughts and views, then a transformation of one's attitude to practice, before then undergoing a transformation of the way one practices, one's principles of practice, and one's path of practice. Won't you then have let that negative emotion go? It's this simple. The ultimate result you achieve through "letting go" is that you are no longer disturbed, perplexed, and controlled by this negative emotion, and at the same time you are no longer haunted by all manner of

negative thoughts and views caused by this negative emotion. In this way, you will live feeling relaxed, free, and liberated. Of course, feeling relaxed, free, and liberated are just human feelings—the real benefit people truly gain is that they come to understand the truth. The basis of man's existence is the truth and the words of God. If people rely on their imaginings to live within various negative emotions for self-protection, if they rely on themselves and rely on their own abilities, means, and methods to safeguard themselves, and they walk their own path, then they will have strayed from the truth and from God, and will naturally come to live under the power of Satan. Therefore, when you're faced with these same difficulties and situations, you should have understanding in your heart, and will naturally think, "I don't need to worry about these things. There's no point in worrying. People who are intelligent and wise will rely on God and will entrust all these things to God, submit to His sovereignty, await all the things God arranges, and await the time, place, person, or thing that God arranges. What man should and can do is only to cooperate and obey—this is the most sensible choice." Of course, if you don't do this and practice in this way, then everything that God arranges will still happen in the end—no person, no event, and no situation can be changed by the will of man. The distress, anxiety, and worry of man are just a meaningless sacrifice, and they are just the foolish thoughts and ignorant manifestations of man. No matter how profound or severe your feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry, or how thoroughly you think over a matter, it is all useless in the end and must be discarded. The final facts and results cannot be changed by the will of man. Man must live under the sovereignty and arrangements of God in the end; no one can change these things, and no one can break free of all these things. Isn't that so? (Yes.)

Let's talk now about sickness. When it comes to this old flesh of man's, it doesn't matter what sickness people get, whether they can get better, or to what degree they suffer, none of it is up to them—it is all in God's hands. If, when you get sick, you submit to God's orchestrations, and you're willing to endure and accept this fact, then you will still have this illness; if you don't accept this fact, you still won't be able to get rid of this sickness—this is a fact. You can face your sickness positively for a day, or face it negatively for a day. That is, regardless of your attitude, you cannot change the fact that you are sick. What choice do intelligent people make? And what choice do foolish people make? Foolish people will choose to live in feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry. They will even become mired in these feelings and will not wish to climb back out. They listen to no advice they're given, and wonder, "Oh, how did I get this sickness? Was it caused by tiredness? Was it caused by worry? Or was it caused by inhibition?" Every day, they wonder how they got sick and when it started, thinking, "Why didn't I notice it? How could I be so stupid and perform my duty so honestly? Other people get a physical checkup every year, and at least have their blood pressure tested and have an X-ray taken. How did I not realize that I should go have a physical checkup? Other people live so carefully. How come I live so obtusely? I got this sickness and didn't even know it. Oh, I must get

treatment for this sickness! What treatment can I get?" They then go online and search for how they got this illness, what caused it, how to treat it with Chinese medicine, how to treat it with Western medicine, and what folk remedies there are—they search for all these things. Afterward, they take Chinese medicine and then Western medicine at home, always feeling serious, anxious, and impatient about having gotten sick, and over time, they stop performing their duty, they fling their faith in God away, they stop believing, and they think only of how to cure their sickness; their duty is now curing their sickness. They are consumed by their sickness, they feel distressed every day about having gotten sick, and when they see anyone, they say, "Oh, I got this sickness in this way. Let what is happening to me be a lesson to you, and when you get sick you must go and get checked out and get treatment. Taking care of your health is most important. You must be savvy, and you mustn't live too obtusely." They say these things to everyone they come across. By getting sick, they have this experience and learn this lesson. Once they're sick, they're careful when eating and careful when walking along, and they learn how to take care of their own health. In the end, they reach a conclusion: "People have to rely on themselves to take care of their own health. I haven't paid much attention to looking after my health these last few years, and the moment I took my eye off the ball, I got this illness. Luckily, I caught it early. If I'd found it later, I'd be done for. It would be so unlucky to get sick and die at a young age. I haven't yet been able to enjoy life, there are so many good things to eat that I haven't yet eaten, and so many fun places I haven't yet been to!" They get sick and draw this conclusion. They get sick but don't die, and they believe themselves to be clever and that they caught the sickness in time. They never say that this is all down to God's sovereignty and predestined by Him, and that if someone is not supposed to die, then no matter how severely they're struck with sickness, they still cannot die, and that if someone is supposed to die, then they will die even without getting sick—they don't understand this. They believe their sickness has made them clever, when in fact they go too far with their "cleverness" and they are too foolish. When people who pursue the truth encounter sickness, will they become mired in feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry? (No.) What approach will they take toward sickness? (First, they are able to submit, and then, while they are sick, they seek to understand God's will and reflect on what corrupt dispositions they have.) Can these few words resolve the problem? If all they do is reflect, will they not still need to treat their sickness? (They will also seek treatment.) Yes, if it's a sickness that should be treated, a major illness, or an illness that could get worse if you don't seek treatment for it, then it must be treated—this is what intelligent people do. When foolish people are not sick, they always worry, "Oh, could I be sick? And if I am sick, will it get worse? Will I get that sickness? And if I do get that sickness, will I die a premature death? Will it be very painful when I die? Will I live a happy life? If I get that sickness, then should I make arrangements for my death and enjoy life as soon as possible?" Foolish people will often feel distressed, anxious, and worried about things like this. They never seek the truth or

seek the truths they should understand in this matter. Intelligent people, however, have some understanding of and insight into this matter either when someone else gets sick or when they themselves are not yet sick. So, what understanding and insight should they have? First of all, will sickness pass someone by because they feel distressed, anxious, and worried? (No.) Tell Me, is it not already fated when someone will get sick with some illness, what their health will be like at a certain age, and whether they will contract some major or serious illness? It is, and that's for certain, let Me tell you. We won't discuss now how God predestines things for you; people's appearance, facial features, body shape and their date of birth are clearly known to all. Those unbelieving diviners, astrologers, and those who can read the stars and people's palms, can tell from people's palms, faces, and birth dates when they will have a disaster, and when they will encounter some misfortune—these things have already been determined. So, when someone gets sick, it may seem as though it has been caused by exhaustion, feelings of anger, or because they live poorly and lack nutrition—it may seem like this on the surface. This situation applies to everyone, so why do some people in the same age group get this illness, while others don't? Is it fated to be like this? (Yes.) In layman's terms, it is fated. How do we say it in words that accord with the truth? All this comes under the sovereignty and arrangements of God. Therefore, irrespective of what your food, drink, accommodation, and living environment are like, they have nothing to do with when you will get sick or what sickness will afflict you. People who don't believe in God always look for reasons from an objective standpoint and always emphasize the causes of the sickness, saying, "You have to exercise more, and eat more vegetables and less meat." Is that truly the case? People who never eat any meat can still get high blood pressure and diabetes just the same, and vegetarians can still have high cholesterol. Medical science has not provided an accurate or reasonable explanation for these things. Let Me tell you, all the different foods God has created for man are foods which man is supposed to eat; just don't eat them to excess, but instead eat them in moderation. It is necessary to learn how to take care of your health, but always wanting to study how to prevent illness is wrong. As we just said, what someone's health will be like at a certain age and whether they will contract a major illness is all arranged by God. Unbelievers don't believe in God and they go looking for someone to see these things in palms, in birth dates, and in faces, and they believe these things. You believe in God and often listen to sermons and fellowships on the truth, so if you don't believe this, then you are nothing but a nonbeliever. If you truly believe that everything is in God's hands, then you should believe that these things—serious illnesses, major illnesses, minor illnesses, and health—all fall under the sovereignty and arrangements of God. The emergence of a serious illness and what someone's health will be like at a certain age are not things that happen by accident, and to understand this is to have a positive and accurate understanding. Does this accord with the truth? (Yes.) It accords with the truth, it is the truth, you should accept this, and your attitude and views on this matter should

be transformed. And what is resolved once these things are transformed? Are your feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry not resolved? At the very least, your negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry about sickness are resolved in theory. Because your understanding has transformed your thoughts and views, it therefore resolves your negative emotions. This is one aspect: Whether or not someone will get sick, what serious illness they will get, and what their health will be like at each stage of life cannot be changed by the will of man, but rather are all predestined by God. Some people say, "So is it okay if I don't want to get sick? Is it okay if I want to ask God to take sickness from me? Is it okay if I want to ask God to steer me clear of this disaster and misfortune?" What do you think? Are these things okay? (No.) You say this with such certainty, but no one is able to understand these things clearly. Perhaps someone is faithfully performing their duty and has the determination to pursue the truth, and they are so very important for some work in God's house, and God perhaps takes this serious illness that affects their duty, their work, and their physical energy and strength away from them, as God will take responsibility for His work. But is there such a person as this? Who is like this? You don't know, do you? There are perhaps people like this. If there really were people like this, then wouldn't God be able to take away their illness or misfortune with just one word? Wouldn't God be able to do it with just a thought? God's thought would be: "This person will encounter an illness in a particular month at this age. They are now so busy with their work, so they will not get this sickness. They do not need to experience this sickness. Let it pass them by." There is no reason why this shouldn't happen, and it would require only a word from God, right? But who could receive such a blessing? Whosoever truly possesses such determination and loyalty and can truly serve this function in God's work, that is for whom it is possible to receive such a blessing. This isn't the topic we need to talk about, so we won't talk about it right now. We're talking about sickness; this is something most people will experience during their lifetime. Therefore, the kind of sickness that will afflict people's bodies at what time or at what age and what their health will be like are all things arranged by God and people cannot decide these things for themselves; just like the time when someone is born, they are not able to decide it for themselves. So, is it not foolish to feel distressed, anxious, and worried about things you cannot decide for yourself? (Yes.) People should set about resolving the things they can resolve themselves, and for those things they cannot do themselves, they should wait for God; people should obey silently and ask God to protect them—this is the mindset people should have. When illness really does strike and death really is near, then people should submit and not complain or rebel against God or say things that blaspheme against God or things that attack Him. Instead, people should stand as created beings and experience and appreciate all that comes from God—they should not try to choose things for themselves. This should be a special experience that enriches your life, and it's not necessarily a bad thing, right? Therefore, when it comes to illness, people should first resolve their wrong thoughts and views concerning the

origin of the illness, and then they will no longer worry about this; moreover, people have no right to control known or unknown things, nor are they capable of controlling them, as all these things are under the sovereignty of God. The attitude and principle of practice people should have are to wait and submit. From understanding to practice, all should be done in line with the truth principles—this is to pursue the truth.

Some people are always worrying about their illness, saying, “Will I be able to endure it if my illness gets worse? If my condition deteriorates, will it take my life? Will I need to have an operation? And if I have an operation, will I die on the operating table? I have submitted. Will God take my life because of this illness?” What’s the point in thinking these things? If you can’t help but think these things, then you should pray to God. It’s no good relying on yourself, you will certainly be unable to endure it. No one wants to have to endure sickness, and no one beams with smiles, feels overjoyed and celebrates when they get sick. There is no one like this because that is not normal humanity. When normal people get sick, they will always suffer and feel down, and they have a limit to what they can endure. There’s one thing to note, however: If people always thought to depend on their own strength when sick to rid themselves of their sickness and escape it, what would the end result be? As well as their sickness, wouldn’t they suffer and feel down even more? That’s why the more people find themselves enveloped in sickness, the more they should seek the truth, and the more they should seek the way to practice to be in accordance with God’s will. The more people are enveloped in sickness, the more they should come before God and know their own corruption and the unreasonable demands they make of God. The more enveloped in sickness you are, the more your true obedience is tested. Therefore, when you are sick, your ability to continue to submit to God’s orchestrations and forsake your own complaints and unreasonable demands shows that you are someone who truly pursues the truth and truly obeys God, that you bear testimony, that your loyalty and obedience to God are real and can pass the test, and that your loyalty and obedience to God are not just slogans and doctrine. This is what people ought to practice when they get sick. When you get sick, it is to reveal all your unreasonable demands and your unrealistic imaginings and notions about God, and it is also to test your faith in God and obedience to Him. If you pass the test with these things, then you have true testimony and real evidence of your faith in God, your loyalty to God, and your obedience to Him. This is what God wants, and it is what a created being should possess and live out. Are these things not all positive? (They are.) These are all things which people should pursue. Moreover, if God allows you to get sick, can He not also take your sickness from you at any time and place? (He can.) God can take your sickness from you at any time and place, so can He not also cause your sickness to persist in you and never leave you? (He can.) And if God causes this same sickness to never leave you, can you still perform your duty? Can you keep your faith in God? Is this not a test? (It is.) If you get sick and then recover after several months, then your faith in God, and your loyalty and obedience to Him are not tested, and you have

no testimony. It's easy to endure sickness for a few months, but if your sickness persists for two or three years, and your faith and your wish to be obedient and loyal to God do not change, but instead grow more real, does this not show that you have grown in life? Do you not reap this harvest? (Yes.) So, while someone who truly pursues the truth is sick, they undergo and personally experience the myriad benefits brought by their sickness. They do not anxiously try to escape their sickness or worry what the outcome will be if their sickness drags on, what problems it will cause, whether it will get worse, or whether they will die—they don't worry about such things. As well as not worrying about such things, they are able to enter positively, and to have true faith in God, and be truly obedient and loyal to Him. By practicing in this way, they come to have testimony, and this also greatly benefits their life entry and dispositional change, and it builds a solid foundation for their attainment of salvation. How wonderful that is! Furthermore, sickness can be major or it can be minor, but whether major or minor it always refines people. Having undergone some illness, people do not lose their faith in God, they are obedient and do not complain, their behavior is basically acceptable, and they then reap some harvest after the sickness is gone and feel very pleased—this is what happens when people encounter an ordinary illness. They are not sick for long and are able to endure it, and the sickness basically falls within the scope of that which they can endure. There are some illnesses, however, which, despite getting better after receiving treatment for a while, come back again and get worse. This happens time after time, until finally the illness reaches such a degree that it can no longer be treated, and all the means available to modern medicine are of no avail. What degree does the illness reach? It reaches the degree whereby the afflicted person can die anywhere and at any moment. What does this signify? It signifies that that person's life is limited. It's not a time when they are not sick and death is distant and there is no sense of it, but rather the person senses that the day of their death is nigh, and they are facing death. Facing death heralds the arrival of the hardest, most crucial time in a person's life. So what do you do? Those who feel distressed, anxious, and worried will feel constantly anxious, distressed, and worried about their death, until finally the hardest moment in their life arrives and the thing they are anxious, distressed, and worried about finally becomes a fact. The more they fear death, the closer death comes and the less they want to face death so soon, and yet death unexpectedly makes a surprise attack on them. What are they to do? Do they try to flee death, reject death, oppose death, complain about it, or do they try to make a bargain with God? Which of these methods will work? None of them will work, and their distress and anxiety are useless. What is the saddest thing when they reach the moment of their death? They used to love eating red braised pork, but over the last few years they haven't eaten it very much, and have suffered tremendously and are at the end of their life. They think of red braised pork and want to eat it again, but their health is not up to it, and they cannot eat it, it's too greasy. They used to love making themselves look attractive and getting dressed up. Now they're

about to die, and all they can do is gaze upon their closet full of nice clothes, unable to wear any of them. How sad death is! Death is the most painful thing of all, and when they think of it, it feels like a knife twisting in their heart and all the bones throughout their entire body turn to jelly. When they think of death, they feel grieved and want to cry, they want to weep, and they do cry, they do weep, and they feel hurt that they are about to face death. They think, “Why do I not want to die? Why do I fear death so much? Before, when I wasn’t seriously ill, I didn’t think death was scary. Who won’t face death? Who doesn’t die? Let me die then! Thinking about it now, that isn’t such an easy thing to say, and when death really does come, it’s not such an easy thing to solve. Why do I feel so sad?” Do you feel sad when you think of death? Whenever you think of death you feel sad and pained, and this thing which causes you the most anxiety and worry finally arrives. Therefore, the more you think like this, the more afraid you feel, the more helpless you feel, and the more you suffer. Your heart is without comfort, and you don’t want to die. Who can solve this matter of death? No one can, and you certainly can’t solve it yourself. You don’t want to die, so what can you do? You must still die, and no one can escape death. Death hems people in; in their hearts, they don’t want to die, but all they ever think about is death, and isn’t this a case of dying before they’re even dead? Can they really die? Who dares say for sure when they will die or in what year they will die? Who can know these things? Some people say, “I’ve had my fortune read and I know the year, the month, and the day of my death, and what my death will be like.” Do you dare say this for sure? (No.) You cannot know this for sure. You don’t know when you will die—this is secondary. The crucial matter is what attitude you will adopt when your sickness really does bring you close to death. This is a question you should ponder and think about. Will you face death with an attitude of submission, or will you approach death with an attitude of resistance, rejection, or unwillingness? What attitude should you have? (An attitude of submission.) This submission is not achievable and practicable by just saying it. How can you achieve this submission? What understanding do you need to have before you can achieve willing submission? This isn’t simple, is it? (No, it isn’t.) So, say what is in your hearts. (If I got seriously ill, I would think that, even if I really did die, it would all be under the sovereignty of God and arranged by Him. Man is corrupted so deeply that if I were to die, it would be by God’s righteousness. It’s not that I absolutely must live; man is not qualified to make such a demand of God. Besides this, I think that now that I believe in God, no matter what happens, I have seen the right path in life and understood so many truths that, even if I was to die soon, it would all be worth it.) Is this the right way to think? Does this constitute a certain supporting theory? (It does.) Who else will speak? (God, if one day I really encounter an illness and may perhaps die, then there’s no way to avoid death anyway. This is God’s predestination and sovereignty, and no matter how much I fret or worry, it’s no use. I should spend the little time I have left focusing on how I can perform my duty well. Even if I really do die, then I will have no regrets. To be able to submit to God and to God’s arrangements at

the very end is much better than living in fear and terror.) What do you think of this understanding? Isn't this a little better? (Yes.) That's right, this is how you should regard the matter of death. Everyone must face death in this life, that is, death is what everyone must face at the end of their journey. However, there are many different attributes to death. One of these is, at the time predestined by God, you have completed your mission and God draws a line under your fleshly life, and your fleshly life comes to an end, though this doesn't mean that your life is over. When a person is without flesh, their life is over—is that the case? (No.) The form in which your life exists after death depends on how you treated God's work and words while you were alive—this is very important. The form in which you exist after death, or whether you will exist or not, will depend upon your attitude toward God and toward the truth while you are alive. If while you are alive, when you face death and all manner of illnesses, your attitude toward the truth is one of rebelliousness, opposition, and feeling sick of the truth, then when it comes time for your fleshly life to be over, in what way will you exist after death? You will certainly exist in some other way, and your life will certainly not continue. Conversely, if while you are alive, when you have awareness in the flesh, your attitude toward the truth and toward God is one of obedience and loyalty and you have true faith, then even though your fleshly life comes to an end, your life will go on to exist in a different form in another world. This is one explanation of death. There is something else to note, and that is that the matter of death has the same nature as other matters. It is not up to people to choose for themselves, much less can it be changed by the will of man. Death is the same as any other important event in life: It is entirely under the predestination and sovereignty of the Creator. If someone were to beg for death, they may not necessarily die; if they were to beg to live, they may not necessarily live. All this is under the sovereignty and predestination of God, and it is changed and decided by the authority of God, by God's righteous disposition, and by God's sovereignty and arrangements. Therefore, say you contract a serious illness, a potentially fatal serious illness, you will not necessarily die—who decides whether you will die or not? (God.) God decides. And since God decides and people cannot decide such a thing, what are people feeling anxious and distressed about? It's like who your parents are, and when and where you are born—these things cannot be chosen by you, either. The wisest choice in these matters is to let things take their natural course, to submit, and not to choose, not to expend any thought or energy on this matter, and not to feel distressed, anxious, or worried about it. Since people are not able to choose for themselves, expending so much energy and thought on this matter is foolish and unwise. What people ought to do when facing the tremendously important matter of death is not get distressed, or fret over it, or fear it, but what? People should wait, yes? (Yes.) Right? Does waiting mean waiting for death? Waiting to die when facing death? Is that right? (No, people should face it positively and submit.) That's right, it doesn't mean waiting for death. Do not be petrified of death, and do not use all your energy thinking about death. Do not think all day long, "Will I die? When will I die? What

will I do after I die?" Just don't think about it. Some people say, "Why not think about it? Why not think about it when I'm about to die?" Because it is not known whether you will die or not, and it is not known whether God will allow you to die—these things are unknown. Specifically, it is unknown when you will die, where you will die, what time you will die, or how your body will feel when you die. By racking your brains thinking about and pondering things you don't know and feeling anxious and worried about them, doesn't that make you foolish? Since it makes you foolish, you shouldn't rack your brains over these things.

Whatever matter people find themselves dealing with, they should always approach it with an active, positive attitude, and this is even more true when it comes to the matter of death. Having an active, positive attitude does not mean going along with death, waiting for death, or positively and actively pursuing death. If it doesn't mean pursuing death, going along with death, or waiting for death, what does it mean? (Submitting.) Submission is a kind of attitude toward the matter of death, and letting go of death and not thinking about it is the best way to handle it. Some people say, "Why not think about it? If I don't think it through, will I be able to overcome it? If I don't think it through, will I be able to let it go?" Yes, you will. And why is that? Tell Me, when your parents had you, was it your idea to be born? The way you look, your age, the industry you work in, the fact of your sitting here now, and how you feel right now—did you think all of this into being? You didn't think all of this into being, it has come about through the passing of the days and months and through you living your normal life from day to day, one day following another, until you have reached where you are now, and this is very natural. Death is just the same. Without being aware of it, you grow to become an adult, to become middle-aged, to become elderly, to get into your last years, and then death comes—don't think about it. You cannot avoid the things you don't think about by not thinking about them, nor will they come early by thinking about them; they cannot be changed by the will of man, right? Don't think about them. What do I mean when I say, "Don't think about them"? Because if this thing really is about to happen in the near future, then always thinking about it will feel like an invisible pressure on you. This pressure will make you afraid of life and living, you will be without an active and positive attitude, and instead you will become even more depressed. Because a person facing death has no interest in or positive attitude toward anything, they feel only depressed. They're going to die, it's all over, there's no longer any meaning in pursuing anything or doing anything, they no longer have any prospects or motivation, and everything they do is in preparation for death and heading in the direction of death, so what meaning is there to anything they do? Therefore, everything they do carries elements of and a nature of negativity and death. So, can you not think about death? Is that easy to achieve? If this matter is simply a result of your own mental reasoning and imagination, then you have given yourself a false alarm, you scare yourself, and it simply is not going to happen in the near future, so what are you thinking about it for? This makes it even more

unnecessary. What is supposed to happen will always happen; what is not supposed to happen will not happen no matter how you think about it. Fearing it is useless, as is worrying about it. Death cannot be avoided by worrying about it, nor will it pass you by just because you fear it. Therefore, one aspect is that you should let go of the matter of death from within your heart and don't think anything of it; you should entrust it to God, as though death has nothing to do with you. It is something God arranges, so allow God to arrange it—doesn't it then become simple? Another aspect is that you should have an active and positive attitude toward death. Tell Me, who among the billions of people all across the world is so blessed to hear so many of God's words, to understand so many of the truths of life, and understand so many mysteries? Who among them can personally receive God's guidance, God's provision, His care and protection? Who is so blessed? Very few. Therefore, you few being able to live in God's house today, receive His salvation, and receive His provision, makes it all worth it even if you were to die right now. You are so very blessed, isn't that right? (Yes.) Looking at it from this perspective, people should not be scared stiff by the matter of death, nor should they be constrained by it. Even though you haven't enjoyed any of the glory and wealth of the world, yet you have received the pity of the Creator and heard so many of God's words—isn't this blissful? (It is.) No matter how many years you live in this life, it's all worth it and you have no regrets, because you have been constantly performing your duty in God's work, you have understood the truth, understood the mysteries of life, and understood the path and goals you should pursue in life—you have gained so much! You have lived a worthwhile life! Even if you can't explain it very clearly, you are able to practice some truths and possess some reality, and that proves that you have gained some life provision and understood some truths from God's work. You have gained so much—a true abundance—and that is such a great blessing! Since the beginning of human history, no one throughout all the ages has enjoyed this blessing, yet you are enjoying it. Are you willing to die now? With such a willingness, your attitude toward death would be truly submissive, yes? (Yes.) One aspect is that people should have true understanding, they should cooperate positively and actively, and truly submit, and they should have the correct attitude toward death. In this way, aren't people's feelings of distress, anxiety, and worry about death greatly lessened? (They are.) They are greatly lessened. Some people say, "I've just now finished listening to this fellowship, but it doesn't feel as though these feelings have lessened very much. Maybe it takes some time. In particular, older people and those who have a sickness think about death a lot." People know their own difficulties. When some people have been sick for a long time, they sum it all up and think, "I've believed in God all these years and people who got the same illness as I have died long ago. If they were reincarnated, they might be in their twenties or thirties by now. I have lived for so many years by the grace of God, all freely given. If I didn't believe in God, I would be long dead by now. When I went to the hospital for a check-up, the doctors were startled. What a great advantage and blessing I have!

If I had died 20 years ago, then I wouldn't have heard these truths and sermons and wouldn't have understood them; if I'd died like that, I would've gained nothing. Even if I lived a long life, it would all have been empty and a wasted life. Now, I have lived all these extra years and been favored so much. I haven't thought about death all these years, and I don't fear it." If people are always afraid of death, then they will always think about all the questions to do with death. If people are not afraid to die and are not terrified of death, then it shows that they have suffered more than enough and are no longer terrified of death. Some people say, "If someone isn't terrified of death, does that mean that they are seeking death?" No, that's not right. Seeking death is a kind of negative attitude, an evasive attitude, whereas what I said before about not thinking about death is an objective, positive attitude; that is, looking upon death with indifference, not seeing it as so important, not thinking of it as such a sorrowful, anxiety-provoking event; not worrying about it anymore, not being concerned about it anymore, not being fettered by death, leaving it far behind you—people who can do this have some personal knowledge and experience of death. If someone is always bound up and constrained by sickness and death, is always mired in the negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry, is unable to perform their duty normally or live normally, then they should listen to experiential testimony concerning death more, see how those who are able to look upon death with indifference experience it and understand death in their experience, and then they will be able to gain something precious.

Death is not an easy problem to solve, and it is man's greatest difficulty. If someone says to you, "Your corrupt dispositions are so deep and your humanity is not good, either. If you don't earnestly pursue the truth and you do many evil things in the future, then you will go down to hell and be punished!" you may feel upset for a while afterward. You may ponder it, and feel a lot better after getting a night's sleep, and then you don't feel so upset. However, if you get sick with a mortal sickness, and you don't have long left to live, then that is not something that can be solved with a night's sleep, and it cannot be let go of so easily. You are required to be tempered in this matter for a time. Those who genuinely pursue the truth can leave the matter behind them, seek the truth in everything, and use the truth to resolve it—there is no problem they cannot solve. If people use the ways of man, however, then they will ultimately only be able to feel constantly distressed, anxious, and worried about death. When things are unsolvable, they take extreme measures to try to solve them. Some people take a depressed and negative approach, saying, "So I'll just die then. Who's afraid of death? After death, I'll just be reincarnated and live again!" Can you verify this? You're just looking for some words of comfort, and that doesn't solve the problem. All things and everything, visible or invisible, material or immaterial, are controlled and ruled in the hands of the Creator. No one can control their own destiny and the only attitude man should have, whether toward sickness or death, is that of understanding, acceptance, and submission; people should not rely on their imaginings or notions, they should not seek a way out of these things, and even less so

should they reject or resist them. If you blindly try to resolve the issues of sickness and death using your own methods, then the longer you live, the more you will suffer, the more depressed you will become, and the more trapped you will feel. In the end, you will still have to walk the path of death, and your end will truly be the same as your death—you will die indeed. If you can actively seek the truth and, whether with regard to understanding the sickness God has arranged for you or facing death, you can positively and actively seek the truth, seek the Creator's orchestrations, sovereignty and arrangements regarding this kind of major event, and achieve true submission, then this is in accord with God's will. If you rely on the strength and methods of man to cope with all these things, and you try hard to resolve them or escape them, then even if you don't die and you temporarily manage to avoid the difficulty of death, because you don't harbor true understanding, acceptance and submission toward God and the truth, leading you to not bear testimony in this matter, then the final result will be that when you encounter this same issue again, it will still be a major test for you. You will still have the possibility of betraying God and falling, and this will undoubtedly be a dangerous thing for you. Therefore, if you really are now facing sickness or death, then let Me tell you, it's better to take advantage of this practical situation right now to seek the truth and resolve this matter from the root, instead of waiting for death to truly come only to be caught off guard, to feel lost, perplexed, and helpless, thereby causing you to do things that you will regret for as long as your life lasts. If you do things that you regret and feel remorse over, then this could lead you to perish. Therefore, no matter what the issue is, you should always begin your entry with the understanding you should have on the matter and with the truths you should understand. If you constantly feel distressed, anxious, and worried about such things as sickness and you live enveloped within these kinds of negative emotions, then you should start seeking the truth right now and resolve these problems as soon as you can.

Negative emotions like distress, anxiety, and worry have the same nature as various other kinds of negative emotions. They are all kinds of negative emotions that arise in people because they don't understand the truth and live shackled by their manifold satanic corrupt dispositions, or else they live beleaguered and impacted by all kinds of satanic thoughts. These negative emotions cause people to live perpetually with all manner of incorrect thoughts and views as well as to be constantly controlled by all manner of incorrect thoughts and views, which affect and obstruct their pursuit of the truth. Of course, these kinds of negative emotions of distress, anxiety, and worry disrupt people's lives, direct their lives, affect their pursuit of the truth, and keep them from pursuing the truth. Therefore, although these negative emotions are emotions in a simple sense, their function must not be underestimated; the effect they have on people and the consequences they bring about to people's pursuit and the path they walk are perilous. In any case, when someone often has all manner of negative emotions bubbling up to disturb them, they should immediately discover and dissect why these negative

emotions often arise, and why they are often vexed by these negative emotions. Also, in a certain special environment, these negative emotions will vex that person constantly and greatly disturb their pursuit of the truth—these are things that people ought to understand. Once they have understood these things, the next thing for them to do is think about how to seek and understand the truth in this matter, strive not to keep being vexed and affected by those incorrect thoughts and views, and replace them with the truth principles taught to them by God. Once they have understood the truth principles, the next step is for them to practice in accordance with the truth principles God has taught them. While they do this, all their negative emotions will gradually emerge to disturb them, only to be gradually resolved and forsaken one by one, until, without them being aware of it, they will leave all these negative emotions behind them. So, what does the resolution of the various negative emotions rely upon? It relies upon people's dissection and understanding of them, it relies upon people's acceptance of the truth and, even more so, it relies upon people's pursuit and practice of the truth. Isn't that so? (It is.) As people gradually pursue and practice the truth, all their various negative emotions are gradually resolved and let go. So, looking at it now, which do you think are easier to let go and resolve, these various negative emotions or corrupt dispositions? (Negative emotions are easier to resolve.) You think negative emotions are easier to resolve? It varies from person to person. One is not harder or easier than the other, it just depends on the person. In any case, beginning with fellowshiping on letting go of negative emotions, we have added some content to people's pursuit of dispositional change, and that is letting go of the various negative emotions. Letting go of negative emotions is primarily done to resolve some incorrect thoughts and views, whereas resolving one's corrupt dispositions requires an understanding of the essence of corrupt dispositions. Tell Me, which is easier, resolving negative emotions or resolving corrupt dispositions? In fact, neither problem is easy to solve. If you are truly determined and can seek the truth, then whichever problem you attempt to solve will not be a problem at all. However, if you do not pursue the truth and are unable to sense just how serious these two problems are, then it won't be easy no matter which problem you try to solve. When it comes to these negative, adverse things, you need to accept the truth, practice the truth, and submit to the truth in order to resolve them, and replace them with positive things. This is always the process, and it always requires people to forsake negative things, and accept positive and active things, and things which accord with the truth. One aspect is to work on your thoughts and views, and one is to work on your dispositions; one is to resolve your thoughts and views, and one is to resolve your corrupt dispositions. Of course, these two things sometimes emerge together and involve each other. In any case, letting go of negative emotions is something people should practice when pursuing the truth. Right, let's end today's fellowship here.

October 29, 2022

How to Pursue the Truth (5)

During this period we fellowshiped on the first aspect of how to pursue the truth, which is about letting go. We mainly spoke about the first part of this topic—letting go of various negative emotions. How many times have we discussed the subject of letting go of various negative emotions? (Four times.) Do you have any paths for how to let go of negative emotions? The various negative emotions that we fellowshiped on and analyzed superficially appear to be kinds of emotions or thoughts, but actually, at their root, they stem from people's erroneous outlooks on life and value systems, and people's flawed thoughts and viewpoints. Of course, people's various corrupt dispositions lead to the emergence of different erroneous thoughts and viewpoints, which in turn give rise to various negative emotions. Therefore, the emergence of various negative emotions has its origin and its causes. The negative emotions that we have discussed are not momentary or impulsive thoughts, nor are they thoughts and viewpoints in the simple sense of these words, or fleeting moods. These emotions have the ability to influence people's way of life, what they practice, and their thoughts and viewpoints, as well as the perspectives and attitudes with which they view people and things. These negative emotions are concealed deep within people's hearts and in their minds, they constantly accompany them in their daily lives and impact the perspectives and stances they take when looking at various people, events, and things. These negative emotions have a significant negative effect on people's daily lives, comportment, and the paths that they choose in life. They invisibly result in various adverse consequences for people. Hence, people must slowly understand and resolve these negative emotions through the pursuit of the truth, and gradually let go of them. Letting go of these negative emotions is not like discarding a physical object, which you no longer think of, and which no longer dominates you afterward; it is not a matter of picking something up and letting it go in the simple sense of these words. So, what does it mean to "let go" in this context? Primarily, it means that you must expose and analyze your incorrect thoughts and viewpoints and the incorrect perspectives and attitudes with which you view people and things, until you understand the truth. Then you will be able to truly abandon your negative emotions. Regardless of what negative emotions arise in you, you must resolve them by seeking the relevant truths, until you possess the principles and paths for practicing the truth. Only then can you completely break free from the torment, bondage, and influence of negative emotions, ultimately attaining the ability to submit to the truth and to the environments that God has arranged, thus standing firm in your witness. You must view people and things, comport yourself and act according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. Only by doing so can you completely let go of your negative emotions and incorrect thoughts and viewpoints. Why is such a complex process needed to completely let go of them? The reason is that these negative emotions are not tangible things. They are not emotions that temporarily possess or afflict one's mind. They are

established, pre-existing, or even deeply ingrained thoughts and viewpoints that form within people, and their influence on people is particularly severe. Therefore, various methods and steps are necessary to let go of these negative emotions. This process of letting go is also the process of pursuing the truth, is it not? (It is.) The process of letting go of these negative emotions is indeed the process of pursuing the truth. So, the only way to face negative emotions is by seeking the truth and resolving them based on God's words. Do you understand the meaning of this statement? (Yes.)

When we first began fellowshiping on negative emotions, the various truths that we had previously fellowshiped on generally had not touched on this topic, so it was a very unfamiliar subject for all of you. People think that it is normal to have negative emotions, and they think of them as separate from corrupt dispositions; they believe that negative emotions are not corrupt dispositions, and that they have nothing to do with one another. This is incorrect. Some people believe that negative emotions are merely temporary thoughts or ideas that have no impact on people, and therefore, they believe that it does not matter if they let go of them or not. Now, through multiple sessions of fellowship and analysis, it has been proved that negative emotions do indeed have a real impact on people. In the past, we always fellowshiped on understanding and dissecting corrupt dispositions, and we only touched upon negative emotions a bit while exposing corrupt dispositions, but we did not fellowship on them in much detail. Now, after several concrete discussions, I hope that you can focus on this topic and start learning to analyze and understand these negative emotions in your daily life. When you understand their essence, you can reject and turn your back on them, and gradually let them go. Only after letting go of these negative emotions can you get on the right track in pursuing the truth and embark on the path of pursuing the truth. These are the steps that you must take, is that clear? (Yes.) Although negative emotions may not possess and control people to the same extent as corrupt dispositions when it comes to people's lives, existence, and the paths that they take, these negative emotions are also unavoidable. In certain situations and to a certain degree, the negative effects that they have when it comes to binding people's thoughts and influencing their acceptance of the truth and whether they walk the correct path or not, are no less significant than those of their corrupt dispositions. You will gradually begin to appreciate this in your future pursuits, experience, and praxis. Right now, as you have only just encountered this topic, some of you will not have any awareness or knowledge of it, and even less appreciation of it. When you experience this subject matter in the future, you will feel that negative emotions are not as simple as they seem. They occupy a significant place and space within people's thoughts, the depths of their hearts, and even in their subconscious. It can be said that these negative emotions fuel and drive individuals to act based on their corrupt dispositions to a great extent, and that they fuel and drive the control and bondage that corrupt dispositions have over people. They cause people to live stubbornly by their corrupt dispositions when it comes to how they view people and

things, and comport themselves and act, so you should not underestimate these negative emotions. In fact, in one respect, there are many negative thoughts and viewpoints hidden within negative emotions, and in another respect, different negative emotions are concealed within people's corrupt dispositions, to varying degrees. In short, these negative emotions occupy people's hearts, and they are of the same essence as people's corrupt dispositions. They are both facets of negativity, and they are negative things. What does "negative things" mean here? What does it refer to? One aspect is that these negative emotions do not play a positive role in people's life entry. They cannot guide you or help you to come before God, to actively seek His will, and to then achieve obedience to Him. When these negative emotions are hidden within people, their hearts are distant from God, they guard against Him and avoid Him, and they may even secretly, subtly, and involuntarily suspect, deny, and judge God. From this perspective, are these negative emotions positive things? (No, they are not.) That is one aspect. In another, these negative emotions do not lead people before God to submit to the truth. They lead people on paths and toward goals and directions that contradict and oppose the truth. This is without doubt. The function that these negative emotions serve within a person is to make them protect themselves, safeguard the interests of their flesh, and maintain their vanity, pride, and status. They constantly control you and bind you, preventing you from listening to God's words, from being an honest person, and from practicing the truth. They make you believe that you will lose out if you practice the truth, that you will lose face and status, that you will be ridiculed by others, and that your true self will be exposed to the world. These negative emotions control people, dominating their thoughts and making them only think about these negative things. Now, is the essence of these negative things contrary to the truth? (Yes.) So, while negative emotions are constantly reminding you of these things, at the same time they are also constantly hindering you from practicing and pursuing the truth. They act as walls to your pursuit of the truth and as stumbling blocks on your path toward entering into the truth reality. Whenever you wish to practice the truth, to speak honestly, to submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements, to act according to the principles, or to sincerely expend yourself for God, pay a price, and show your loyalty to God, these negative emotions immediately burst forth and prevent you from practicing the truth. They constantly emerge in your thoughts and flash across your mind, telling you what you will lose by acting in that way, what your ending will be, what the consequences will be, and what you will be able to gain. They repeatedly remind you and warn you, preventing you from accepting and practicing the truth, and from submitting to God. Instead, they make you think about yourself, consider your own interests, and as a result, you are unable to practice the truth or simply submit to God. In an instant, your thoughts become bound and controlled by these negative emotions. Although you want to practice the truth at first, and you are willing to submit to God, and want to satisfy Him, when negative emotions arise within you, you involuntarily follow them and become controlled by them.

They seal your mouth, bind your hands and feet, and prevent you from doing what you should do and from speaking the words that you ought to. Instead, you end up uttering false, deceptive, and judgmental words, and engaging in actions that contravene the truth. Your heart immediately grows dark and becomes trapped in torment. Your original ideas and plans are good—you want to practice the truth, and to offer up your devotion in order to do your duty well, and you have the drive, the desire, and the will to practice the truth. But at critical moments, these negative emotions take control of you. You do not have the ability to turn your back on or reject them, and in the end, you can only surrender to these negative emotions. When negative emotions haunt and disturb people, when they control people's thoughts and prevent them from practicing the truth, people appear so powerless, helpless, and pitiful. When there are no major issues occurring and when there are no principles involved, people think that they have limitless strength, that they are strong in resolve and faith, and they feel that they are full of motivation. They believe that they cannot love God enough, they think that they have a God-fearing heart, and that they can do no wrong, that they are incapable of creating disruptions or disturbances, and that they are certainly incapable of intentionally doing evil. But when something happens, why can they not help how they react? These involuntary actions of theirs are not planned or desired, but they still happen and become a reality, and they are far from how those people wished to act. It must be said that the occurrence of these things and the repeated appearance of such phenomena is caused by negative emotions. It is clear that the impact of negative emotions on people, and their control over people, is not as simple as people imagine, nor is it as easily resolved, and it is certainly not as easy to let go of or forsake. No matter how loudly people usually shout their slogans, no matter how strong their resolve usually is, or how high their aspirations are, or how great their God-loving hearts and faith in God are, when faced with reality, why does that resolve and faith, and those aspirations and ideals fail to have any effect? How are they influenced and stifled by transient negative emotions? It is clear from this that negative emotions have taken root in people's lives; they coexist with people's corrupt dispositions and they have the ability to influence and control people's thoughts and viewpoints, just like corrupt dispositions do. At the same time, and more seriously, they control people's words and actions, and more than this, they control their every thought and idea, and their every action and behavior in the face of all kinds of situations. So, is it not very important to resolve these negative emotions? (Yes.) Negative emotions are not positive things, this can be illustrated in two ways: Firstly, negative emotions cannot lead a person to actively come before God; secondly, they cannot enable a person to successfully practice the truth in the face of reality, and enter into the truth, as they would like to. They are stumbling blocks to people's pursuit of the truth, they hinder people from seeking and practicing the truth. Therefore, negative emotions must be resolved. By looking at the effect and essence of negative emotions, one can see that they are not positive things. Moreover, it can be said that in their

essence they have a greater ability to constrain and control people, to a certain extent, than corrupt dispositions. So, would you say that the existence of these negative emotions is a serious problem? (Yes.) If these negative emotions are not resolved, what consequences can be expected? You can be certain that these emotions will make a person live in negativity for a long time, and they have an even stronger ability to constrain and bind people, hindering them from pursuing the truth. Should such a serious problem be resolved? It should be resolved. At the same time as addressing their corrupt dispositions, people should also resolve their negative emotions. If people resolve their negative emotions and corrupt dispositions, their pursuit of the truth will go much more smoothly, and there will not be any significant obstacles to it.

Corrupt dispositions are hidden in some of people's surface-level outpourings and approaches, as well as in certain states, so how do you discern negative emotions? How do you differentiate between negative emotions and corrupt dispositions? Have you pondered on this before? (No.) Dispositions and emotions are two different kinds of things. If we just speak about dispositions and emotions, is it easy to distinguish between their literal meanings? Dispositions refer to the things that pour forth from a person's nature essence, while emotions are basically a kind of psychological state that people have while doing something. Regardless of how we interpret these terms literally, in any case, people's emotions—especially their negative emotions—contain many negative thoughts. When a person harbors these negative emotions, this can lead them to live in a negative state and under the domination of various incorrect thoughts and viewpoints, right? (Right.) These negative emotions can remain hidden in people's hearts for a long time, and if people do not understand the truth, they will never be aware of these emotions or feel their presence; they accompany people at all times, just like their corrupt dispositions. Many times, these negative emotions are hidden within people's various incorrect thoughts and viewpoints, and these incorrect thoughts and viewpoints cause people to doubt God, to lose their genuine faith, and to even make all kinds of unreasonable demands of God, and lose their normal reason. Under the packaging of different reasons, thoughts, and viewpoints, these negative emotions hide within a person's corrupt dispositions and within their various incorrect thoughts and viewpoints, fully representing that person's nature essence. Corrupt dispositions manifest themselves in the various states that are revealed through people's comportment and actions—these different states carry within them people's corrupt dispositions. Although negative emotions and corrupt dispositions are distinct from each other, there is a necessary link between them in some regards, and they can even become intertwined and inseparable from one another. In certain respects, they can support each other, fuel one another, and they can depend on each other and coexist. For example, the distress, worry, and anxiety that we fellowshiped about last time are one kind of negative emotion. It is this kind of negative emotion that causes people to live in distress, worry, and anxiety. When people are trapped in these emotions, they will naturally form certain

thoughts and viewpoints, leading them to doubt, speculate, guard against, misunderstand, and even judge and attack God, and they may also make unreasonable and transactional demands of God. At this point, these negative emotions have already escalated into a corrupt disposition. So, what have you understood from this example? Can you distinguish between negative emotions and corrupt dispositions? Tell Me. (Negative emotions give rise to certain incorrect thoughts and viewpoints, while corrupt dispositions are more deep-seated, and cause people to misunderstand and guard themselves against God.) I'll give an example. Take the negative emotions of distress, worry, and anxiety. Say that a person falls ill, and they think about their ailment and experience distress, worry, and anxiety as a result. These things control their heart, making them afraid of their illness becoming serious and of the various consequences that come with death. They then begin to fear death, to reject death, and wish to escape it. This series of thoughts and ideas arises due to their ailment. In the context of this ailment, this person produces many active thoughts. The source of these active thoughts is based on the interests of their flesh and is clearly not based on the fact that God governs all things, or on the truth. That is why we categorize these as negative emotions. That person feels bad because of their illness, but the illness is already upon them, and they have to face it—they cannot escape it, so they think, "Oh no, how should I face this illness? Should I treat it or not? What will happen if I don't? What will happen if I do?" As they continue thinking, they become distressed. The various thoughts and viewpoints they have about their ailment trap them in distress, worry, and anxiety. Has this negative emotion not then already begun to take effect? (Yes.) When they first start experiencing their ailment, they intend to try treating it, but then they feel that doing so is not appropriate, and plan to live by their faith instead, fulfilling their duty normally, while still worrying that the ailment will become serious. What is the appropriate way to handle this? They lack a path. Under the domination of their negative emotions, they always feel distressed, worried, and anxious about this matter, and once distress, worry, and anxiety arise within them, they cannot let go of them. They feel plagued by their ailment—what should they do about it? They start to think, "It's okay, I believe in God. God will heal me. I have faith." However, after a period of time, the ailment does not improve, and God does not heal them. The person continues to feel distressed, worried, and anxious about the matter, saying, "Is God going to heal me or not? I just have to wait, God will heal me. I have faith." They say that they have faith, but deep down, they are actually living amid their negative emotions, thinking, "What if God doesn't heal me, and I become seriously ill and die? Will I have performed my duty in vain? Will I not be able to receive any blessings? I should ask God to heal me." So they pray to God, saying, "God, based on the many years that I've fulfilled my duty, can You take away my illness?" Pondering further, they realize, "It is not right for me to ask God that. I shouldn't place such extravagant demands on God. I should have faith." When they have faith, they feel like their ailment has improved a bit, but after a while, they think, "I don't feel like my illness

has really gotten better. In fact, it seems to have gotten worse. What should I do? I'll try harder and exert more effort in my duty, I'll endure more suffering, pay a greater price, and strive to make God heal me. I'll show God my loyalty and my faith, and show Him that I can accept this trial." After some time, not only does their illness not improve, but it worsens, and they feel sadder and sadder, and think: "God hasn't healed me. What should I do? Is God going to heal me or not?" Their distress, worry, and anxiety intensify. In this context, they live continuously in the midst of negative emotions like distress, worry, and anxiety due to their ailment. From time to time, they develop some "faith" in God and they offer a bit of their loyalty and determination on occasion. Regardless of what they do or which approach they take, in any case, they are constantly trapped by emotions of distress, worry, and anxiety. They are deeply bound by their ailment, and everything they do is to improve and cure their illness, and to find liberation from it. When a person lives in the midst of such negative emotions, they do not just think about their illness briefly; rather, under the domination of those negative emotions, their thinking is often very active. When these active thoughts cannot be brought to pass or when reality does not align with what they want, from time to time, numerous ideas or even approaches emerge from their mind against their will. They say, "If God doesn't heal me, I'll still fulfill my duty, but if God truly won't heal me, then my faith in Him is useless, and I'll have to treat the illness myself." You see, they think to themselves, "If God doesn't heal me, I'll still perform my duty well—this is God testing me," but at the same time, they are also thinking, "If God truly won't heal me, then I'll have to treat the illness myself. If I have to treat it myself, then I won't fulfill my duty. If my faith in God can't even cure my illness, why should I believe in God? Why does God heal others but not me?" They are continuously entangled by their negative emotions, and not only are they unable to reverse or transform their incorrect thoughts and viewpoints, but these negative emotions lead them to gradually misunderstand God, to complain about God, and to doubt God during the process of experiencing their ailment. This process is that of the gradual transformation of their negative emotions, and of them entering into acting by their corrupt disposition. Once a corrupt disposition takes charge of a person's actions, that person will no longer just possess negative emotions—certain thoughts and viewpoints, or judgments and resolutions will arise within them, and they will produce certain actions. When a kind of emotion transforms into a kind of state, it is no longer simply a matter of negative emotions, of thinking about something or living in a certain status, it is about this status producing thoughts, viewpoints, and resolutions, producing movement and actions. So, what dominates these thoughts, viewpoints, movements, and actions? It is a corrupt disposition that dominates them. Is this process of transformation not all smoothed out now? (Yes.) At first, people produce negative emotions within a certain context, and these negative emotions are just a few simple thoughts, viewpoints, and ideas, but these ideas are all negative. These negative ideas stagnate within people's emotions and go on to cause them to produce various incorrect

states. When people are living in incorrect states, and deciding what to do, how to do it, and what approaches to adopt, erroneous viewpoints and theories form within them, and this, then, involves their corrupt disposition. It is as simple as that. Is this clear now? (Yes, it is clear.) So, tell Me about it. (In certain contexts, people produce some negative emotions. At first these negative emotions do not go any further than a few negative ideas. When these negative ideas go on to give rise to various incorrect states and people start deciding what to do and adopting certain approaches, they become dominated by certain thoughts and theories. This, then, involves their corrupt disposition.) Ponder on this and see if you understand it. Is it not simple? (It is.) It sounds simple, but can you distinguish between negative emotions and corrupt dispositions? Regardless of whether they are easy to distinguish in theory or not, in any case, have you understood the distinction between negative emotions and corrupt dispositions? (Yes.)

If the various negative emotions that we have fellowshiped exist in your own hearts, can you discern and dissect them? (We can somewhat discern them.) If you possess them, you ought to be able to discern them. The purpose of discerning negative emotions is not to merely have a general theoretical understanding of them or to grasp their meaning and that's all. It is to break free from the torment of negative emotions after gaining practical discernment of them, and to let go of these various negative emotions that should not exist within people, like the negative emotions we fellowshiped about earlier. Now, based on the distinction between negative emotions and corrupt dispositions that we just fellowshiped about, can we say that negative emotions are a root cause or a context that leads people to reveal their corrupt dispositions? For example, in the case of illness, if you do not develop negative emotions such as distress, worry, and anxiety due to the illness, it proves that you have knowledge and experience of the matter, that you possess correct thoughts and viewpoints, and genuine obedience. Consequently, your thoughts and actions in that regard ought to align with the truth. Conversely, if you constantly experience negative emotions about a certain matter, and remain trapped in negative emotions constantly because of it, it is natural that various negative states will arise in you because of these negative emotions. These negative states will cause you to naturally reveal your corrupt disposition while you are in those incorrect states. Then, you will act based on satanic philosophies, violate the truth in all respects, and live by your corrupt disposition. Therefore, regardless of how we differentiate between negative emotions and corrupt dispositions, in sum, these two things are connected, and they are inseparable. In particular, they share a common essence in that both negative emotions and corrupt dispositions are negative things—they share the same essence and underlying thoughts and viewpoints. The thoughts and viewpoints that lead to the emergence of negative emotions are all negative, they are all satanic philosophies, and these negative things lead people to reveal their corrupt dispositions and to comport themselves and act based on their corrupt dispositions. Is this not so? (It is.)

Last time, we fellowshiped about negative emotions such as distress, worry, and anxiety. Now, we are going to fellowship about another aspect of negative emotions, which is almost the same in essence as distress, worry, and anxiety but is even more negative in nature. What is this emotion? It is the state of mind that people encounter the most often in their daily lives—repression. Have you all heard of the term “repression”? (Yes, we have.) Then please make a sentence or give an example using the word “repression.” I’ll start with one. Some people say, “Oh, I often feel repressed while fulfilling my duty, and I can’t free myself from it.” Is this sentence constructed correctly? (Yes.) Now, it is your turn. (I always reveal corruption when things befall me, and I constantly have to reflect and try to know myself, so I feel repressed.) You feel repressed because you are trying to know yourself too much. What is the context for this repression? What is causing it? It is that you know that you are nothing at all, and it seems that you have no prospects or destination waiting for you, and that you have no hope of ever being saved, so you feel repressed. Who else wants to share? (In the country of the great red dragon, believing in God makes people feel repressed.) This is feeling repressed due to one’s environment. (Being constantly supervised by my leader while I’m fulfilling my duty makes me feel repressed.) Well put, that expresses the emotion of repression very concretely. (I always encounter failures and setbacks while fulfilling my duty, this makes me feel repressed.) Setbacks and failures make you feel repressed, as if there is no way forward. When your work progresses slowly, do you feel repressed? (Yes.) That has a somewhat positive connotation. Tell Me more. (I feel repressed when I am always being dealt with and pruned while fulfilling my duty.) That is the reality, is it not? (I feel repressed when I don’t get good results in my duty.) What is the cause of this repression? Is it really because you didn’t get good results? Are you not afraid that your duty will be adjusted or that you will be cast out? (Yes.) These are the concrete reasons for your repression. Any other feelings of repression? Tell Me about them. (All of my partners are better than me, so I feel repressed.) That is the trouble caused by jealousy—repression. Are there any other issues of repression? (I feel repressed due to a long-standing lack of progress in my field of work.) Is this pressure or repression? It’s a bit of pressure. Having this pressure is a good thing, then. Don’t you just need to turn this pressure into motivation? When the duties of the members of each team are always being adjusted, do you not feel repressed? (Yes.) You feel repressed then too. From the sentences you have provided, it seems that all of you experience the emotion of repression. It appears that people’s inner selves are very unsettled, constantly restless, and under a kind of invisible pressure, which is why the emotion of repression arises within them, and they then live amid this negative emotion of repression. Is this a good thing? (No, it is not.) It is not a good thing. Should it not be resolved, then? Since it is not a good thing, it should be resolved. When people constantly live amid a negative emotion, regardless of which emotion it is, on a smaller level it can have adverse effects on their bodies and minds, preventing them from living

healthily and from growing up strong. On a greater level, the impact of different negative emotions on people is not limited to the basic needs they have in their daily lives, like food, clothing, shelter, and transportation. More importantly, it affects how they view people and things, as well as their comportment and actions. More specifically, it influences their efficiency, progress, and effectiveness in their duties. Of course, more importantly it affects what they obtain from fulfilling their duties and the gains that people should reap from their faith in God. People's minds are constantly plagued and bound by these negative emotions, their hearts are often disturbed, and they frequently reside in feelings such as restlessness, unease, and impulsiveness. When people are trapped in these feelings, their normal conscience and reason, as well as their normal lives and their normal fulfillment of their duties are disrupted, affected, and destroyed. Therefore, you should promptly resolve these negative emotions and prevent them from further affecting your normal life and work. The concept of repression that we have discussed today is the same in essence as the various negative emotions we talked about earlier. People often worry and have misgivings about a great many things, or harbor a lot of unease in the depths of their hearts, so they feel repressed. If this emotion of repression remains unresolved for a long time, people will become even more uneasy and agitated deep within their hearts. In certain specific environments and contexts, people may even break free from the control of the conscience and reason of humanity, producing some extreme approaches in order to overcome their situations. This is because there is a limit to the human body's instinctive ability to withstand certain negative emotions. When that limit and peak is reached, people will break free from the constraints of the reason of humanity and adopt some extreme approaches in order to vent their emotions, and to vent all kinds of irrational ideas that lie deep within their hearts.

You just expressed some of the different reasons that people feel repressed through the sentences you provided. Today we will be fellowshiping primarily on three of the causes and reasons why this negative emotion of repression emerges in people. The first is that many people, whether in their daily lives or in the process of fulfilling their duties, feel that they cannot do as they please. This is the first reason: the inability to do as one pleases. What does it mean to be unable to do as one pleases? It means not being able to act upon every desire that passes through one's mind. Being able to do what they want, when they want, and how they want is a requirement that these people have in both their work and lives. However, due to various reasons, including laws, living environments, or the rules, systems, stipulations, and disciplinary measures of a group, and so on, people are unable to act according to their own wishes and imaginings. Consequently, they feel repressed in the depths of their hearts. To put it bluntly, this repression happens because people feel aggrieved—some people even feel wronged. Being unable to do as one pleases, to put it in frank terms, means not being able to act upon one's own will—it means that one cannot be willful or freely indulgent due to various reasons and the restrictions of various objective environments and conditions. For

example, some people are always perfunctory and find ways to slack off while performing their duties. Sometimes, the work of the church requires haste, but they just want to do as they please. If they don't feel very well physically, or are in a bad mood and in low spirits for a couple of days, they will be unwilling to endure hardship and pay a price to do the church work. They are particularly lazy and covetous of comfort. When they lack motivation, their bodies will become sluggish, and they will be unwilling to move, but they fear being dealt with by leaders and being called lazy by their brothers and sisters, so there's nothing they can do except reluctantly perform the work along with everyone else. They will, however, feel very unwilling, unhappy, and reluctant about this. They will feel wronged, aggrieved, annoyed, and exhausted. They want to act based on their own will, but they dare not break away from or go against the requirements and stipulations of God's house. As a result, an emotion begins to emerge within them over time—repression. Once this repressive emotion takes root in them, they will begin to gradually appear listless and weak. Like a machine, they will no longer have a clear understanding of what they are doing, but they will still do whatever they're told to do every day, in the way that they're told to do it. Although they will continue to carry out their tasks on the surface without stopping, without pausing, without stepping away from the environment of performing their duties, yet in their hearts they will feel repressed, and think that their lives are exhausting and full of grievances. Their current greatest desire is to one day no longer be controlled by others, to no longer be restricted by the stipulations of God's house, and to be released from the arrangements of God's house. They want to do whatever they want, whenever they want, doing a little work if they feel good, and not doing it if they don't. They yearn to be free from any blame, from ever being pruned or dealt with, and from anyone supervising, monitoring, or being in charge of them. They think that when that day comes, it will be a great day, and that they will feel so free and liberated. However, they are still unwilling to leave or give up; they are afraid that if they do not fulfill their duties, if they truly do whatever they please and are free and liberated one day, then they will naturally stray from God, and they are afraid that if God no longer wants them, they will not be able to gain any blessings. Some people find themselves in a dilemma: If they try to grumble to their brothers and sisters, they will find it hard to speak up. If they turn to God in prayer, they will feel unable to open their mouths. If they complain, they will feel that they themselves are at fault. If they do not complain, they will feel ill at ease. They wonder why their lives feel so full of grievances, so contrary to their own will, and so exhausting. They do not want to live that way, they do not want to be in unison with everyone else, they want to do whatever they want, however they want, and they wonder why they are unable to accomplish this. They used to feel they were only physically exhausted, but now their hearts feel tired too. They do not understand what is happening to them. Tell Me, is this not caused by repressive emotions? (It is.)

Some people say, "Everyone says that believers are free and liberated, that believers live particularly happy, peaceful, and joyous lives. Why can't I live as happily and

peacefully as others? Why don't I feel any joy? Why do I feel so repressed and exhausted? How come other people live such happy lives? Why is my life so miserable?" Tell Me, what is the cause of this? What brought about their repression? (Their physical bodies were not satisfied and their flesh suffered.) When a person's physical body suffers and they feel that a wrong has been done to it, if they can accept it in their heart and mind, won't they feel that their physical suffering is no longer so great? If they find comfort, peace, and joy in their heart and mind, will they still feel repressed? (No.) Therefore, saying that repression is caused by physical suffering is invalid. If repression arises due to excessive physical suffering, then are you not suffering? Do you feel repressed because you cannot do as you please? Do you get trapped in repressive emotions because you cannot do as you please? (No.) Are you busy in your daily work? (Somewhat busy.) You are all rather busy, working from dawn to dusk. Besides sleeping and eating, you spend almost your entire day in front of a computer, tiring your eyes and brain, and exhausting your body, but do you feel repressed? Will this tiredness bring about repression in you? (No.) What causes people's repression? It is certainly not due to physical fatigue, so what causes it? If people constantly seek physical comfort and happiness, if they constantly pursue physical happiness and comfort, and don't wish to suffer, then even a little bit of physical suffering, suffering a bit more than others, or feeling a bit more overworked than usual, would make them feel repressed. This is one of the causes of repression. If people do not consider a small amount of physical suffering a big deal, and they do not pursue physical comfort, but instead pursue the truth and seek to fulfill their duties in order to satisfy God, then they often will not feel physical suffering. Even if they occasionally feel a bit busy, tired, or worn out, after they go to sleep they will wake up feeling better, and then they will continue with their work. Their focus will be on their duties and their work; they won't consider a bit of physical fatigue a significant issue. However, when a problem arises in people's thinking and they constantly pursue physical comfort, any time that their physical bodies are slightly wronged or cannot find satisfaction, certain negative emotions will arise within them. So, why will this kind of person, who always wants to do as they please and to indulge their flesh and enjoy life, often find themselves trapped in this negative emotion of repression whenever they are unsatisfied? (It is because they pursue comfort and physical enjoyment.) That is true for some people. There is another group of people who do not pursue physical comfort. They seek to do things according to their own whims and to follow their own moods. When they are happy, they are able to endure more suffering, they can work continuously throughout the day, and if you ask them if they feel tired, they will say, "I'm not tired, how could fulfilling my duty make me tired!" But if they are unhappy one day, they will be disgruntled even if you just ask them to spend an extra minute on something, and if you reprimand them a little, they will say, "Stop talking! I feel repressed. If you keep talking, I won't fulfill my duty, and that'll be your fault. If I don't receive blessings in the future it will be on your head, and you will bear all the

responsibility for it!” People are volatile when they are in an abnormal state. Sometimes they will be capable of suffering and paying a price, but other times they will complain about just a little suffering, and even a minor issue will upset them. When they are in a bad mood, they will no longer want to fulfill their duties, read God’s words, sing hymns, or attend gatherings and listen to sermons. They will just want to be alone for a while, and it will be impossible for anyone to help or support them. After a few days, they might get over it and feel better. Anything that fails to satisfy them makes them feel repressed. Is this kind of person not particularly willful? (Yes.) They are particularly willful. For example, if they want to go to sleep right away, they will insist on doing so. They will say, “I’m tired, and I want to go to sleep right now. When I don’t have any energy I have to sleep!” If someone says, “Can’t you hold on for ten more minutes? This task will be finished really soon, and then we can all rest, how about that?” they will reply, “No, I have to go to sleep right now!” If someone persuades them, they will reluctantly hold on for a while, but they will feel repressed and annoyed. They often feel repressed about these matters and are unwilling to accept help from their brothers and sisters or to be supervised by leaders. If they make a mistake, they will not allow others to deal with or prune them. They do not wish to be restrained in any way. They think, “I believe in God so that I can find happiness, so why should I make things difficult for myself? Why should my life be so exhausting? People ought to live happily. They shouldn’t pay so much attention to these regulations and those systems. What’s the use of always abiding by them? Right now, in this moment, I am going to do whatever I want. None of you should have anything to say about that.” This kind of person is particularly willful and dissolute: They do not allow themselves to suffer any constraint, nor do they wish to feel constrained in any work environment. They do not wish to adhere to the regulations and principles of God’s house, they are unwilling to accept the principles that people should hold to in their comportment, and they do not even wish to abide by what conscience and reason say that they should do. They want to do as they please, do whatever makes them happy, whatever will benefit them and make them comfortable. They believe that to live under these constraints would violate their will, that it would be a kind of self-abuse, that it would be too hard on themselves, and that people should not live like that. They think that people should live free and liberated, indulging their flesh and desires with abandon, as well as their ideals and wishes. They think that they should indulge all of their ideas, say whatever they want, do whatever they want, and go wherever they want, without having to consider the consequences or other people’s feelings, and especially without having to consider their own responsibilities and obligations, or the duties that believers ought to perform, or the truth realities that they ought to uphold and live out, or the life path they should follow. This group of people always wants to do as they please in society and among other people, but no matter where they go, they can never obtain that. They believe that God’s house emphasizes human rights, grants people complete freedom, and that it cares about humanity, and about tolerating and

forbearing with people. They think that after they come to God's house they should be able to freely indulge in their flesh and desires, but because God's house has administrative decrees and regulations, they still cannot do as they please. Therefore, this negative repressive emotion of theirs cannot be resolved even after they join God's house. They do not live to fulfill any kind of responsibilities or to complete any missions, or to become a true person. Their belief in God is not to fulfill the duty of a created being, complete their mission, and attain salvation. Regardless of the people they are among, the environments they are in, or the profession they engage in, their ultimate goal is to find and gratify themselves. The aim of everything they do revolves around this, and self-gratification is their lifelong desire and the goal of their pursuit.

Some of you are responsible for hosting brothers and sisters and cooking meals for them, and in that case you need to ask the brothers and sisters what they like to eat, ask yourself what the principles and requirements of God's house are, and then host them based on these two types of principles. If you are hosting people from Northern China, make more wheat-based dishes such as steamed buns, Mandarin rolls, and stuffed buns. Occasionally, you can also make rice or the rice noodles that people from Southern China eat. All of this is acceptable. Suppose the majority of the people that you are hosting are from Southern China. They do not like wheat-based dishes, they prefer rice, and they feel like they have not eaten a meal if they do not have any rice. So, if you are hosting them, you have to make rice more often and ensure that your dishes suit the tastes of people from Southern China. If you are hosting people from both Southern and Northern China, then you can make two types of meals and let people choose what they prefer, giving them freedom of choice. Hosting brothers and sisters in this way is in line with the principles—it is a very straightforward matter. As long as the majority of people are satisfied, that is enough. You do not have to worry about a few odd individuals who are unsatisfied. However, if the person responsible for hosting does not understand the truth and does not know how to handle matters according to the principles, and always acts based on their own preferences, making whatever food they want without considering whether people will be happy to eat it—what kind of problem is that? It is one of excessive willfulness and selfishness. Some people are from the South of China, and the majority of the people they host are from the North. They make rice every day without considering whether the brothers and sisters are accustomed to it, and when you try to deal with them and give them some advice, a certain kind of emotion emerges within them, and their heart becomes resistant, disobedient, and full of resentment, and they say, "Cooking in God's house is not easy. Serving these people is so difficult. I work hard from dawn to dusk to cook for you, but you are still so picky. What's wrong with eating rice? Don't we Southerners eat rice three meals a day? Isn't that a pretty nice way to live? We are stronger than you and we have more energy. What's so good about always eating noodles and steamed buns? Can you get full from that? Why don't noodles taste good to me? Why don't I feel full from eating them? Well, there's nothing I can do.

I suppose that to fulfill my duty in God's house I will have to bear it and restrain myself. If I don't restrain myself, I might be replaced or cast out. I'll just have to make noodles and steamed buns, then!" They resentfully follow through on this every day, thinking, "I can't even eat rice for a meal. I just want to have rice for every meal. Without rice, I can't survive. I want to eat rice!" Although they reluctantly make noodles and steamed buns every day, their mood is extremely low. Why do they feel extremely low? It is because they feel repressed. They think, "I have to serve you people and cook the food that you like to eat, and not what I want to eat. Why do I always have to satisfy you and not myself?" They feel aggrieved, repressed, and that their life is exhausting. They refuse to do any extra work, and when they do a bit of work, they do so in a perfunctory manner; they fear being replaced or cleared out if they don't do any work. Consequently, the only thing they can do is reluctantly and unwillingly act and fulfill their duty in this way, without experiencing any moments of happiness, freedom, or liberation. People ask them, "How do you feel about hosting the brothers and sisters and cooking meals?" They respond, "It's not actually that tiring, but I feel repressed." People say, "Why do you feel repressed? You have rice, flour, and vegetables—you have everything. You don't even have to spend your own money to buy these things. You just have to tire yourself out and do a little more work than other people every now and then. Isn't that what you ought to do? Believing in God and fulfilling one's duty are joyful things. They're voluntary. So why do you feel repressed?" They reply, "Although I do these things voluntarily, I can't eat rice very often and I can't do as I please, eating what I like and what I find delicious. I'm afraid of being criticized if I'm seen trying to cook something delicious for myself, so I feel repressed, and I'm never happy." People like this live amid repressive emotions because they cannot satisfy their desire for food.

Some people grow vegetables on the church's farms. How should they go about doing this? They should plant a suitable crop of vegetables based on the seasons, climate, temperature, and the number of people they need to feed. There are regulations in God's house regarding the cultivation of various vegetables, which can be challenging for many people. There are some vegetables which people like to eat on a daily basis, and there are some that people do not enjoy eating. Some have their quantities regulated, and others are consumed seasonally. In this way, the amount that people can eat is limited. Some people thought, "Oh, we can never fully enjoy eating these vegetables. We eat a little bit, and they're gone. There isn't much to go around! Like cherry tomatoes, we only get a small handful each time, and they're finished before we can savor their flavor. It would be great if we could eat them by the bowlful!" So, in a place where ten or so people lived, they planted two hundred cherry tomato plants. They started eating them by the bowlful as soon as they woke up in the morning and continued eating them until they went to sleep at night. Eating cherry tomatoes and regular tomatoes by the bowlful, and eating cucumbers by the basket was so exciting for them. They felt that those were heavenly days, that they were blissful. People like this cannot

follow the stipulations of God's house in their actions, and they cannot adhere to the principles of science. They refuse to listen to anyone, prioritizing their own interests, considering only themselves in everything, and doing as they please. As a result, under the control, supervision, and management of God's house, these people who wanted to eat fruit by the mouthful were put under restriction, and some were dealt with and pruned. Tell Me, how do you think they feel now? Don't they feel incredibly disappointed? Don't they feel that the world is bleak, and that there is no love or warmth in God's house? Don't they feel incredibly repressed? (Yes.) They constantly think, "What's wrong with doing as I please? Can't I just enjoy eating some vegetables? They won't even let me eat cherry tomatoes by the bowlful. How stingy! God's house does not grant people freedom. If we want to eat cherry tomatoes, they make us plant them based on the number of people that need feeding. What's the problem with me planting two or three hundred plants? If we can't eat them all, we'll just feed them to the animals." Is it appropriate for you to eat by the bowlful? Shouldn't there be moderation and a limit to what you consume? The proportion that people eat of the various foods created by God should be based on their yield and seasonal availability. Staple foods should be those with a high yield, while those with a low yield, short seasons, short growth periods, or restricted yields should be consumed in smaller quantities—in some specific places, people do not even eat them at all, and they aren't missing out on anything. This is reasonable. People always harbor desires, and constantly wish to indulge their appetites. Is this appropriate? It is not appropriate to always harbor desires and appetites. God's house has its own rules. There are regulations, management, and appropriate systems in all aspects of work in God's house. If you want to become a member of God's house, you ought to strictly adhere to its regulations. You should not be brash, but learn to submit and to act in a way that everyone finds satisfactory. This aligns with the standards of conscience and reason. None of the regulations of God's house are established for the benefit of a single person, they are established for the sake of everyone in God's house. They are meant to safeguard the work and interests of God's house. These regulations and systems are reasonable and if people possess conscience and reason they ought to follow them. Therefore, no matter what you are doing, in one respect, you must do it according to the regulations and systems of God's house, and in another respect, you also have a responsibility and an obligation to uphold all of this, rather than constantly acting based on your personal interests and perspective. Isn't that so? (Yes.) If you feel particularly repressed living and working in God's house, it is not due to any problem with the regulations, systems, or managerial methods of God's house, but rather a personal issue of yours. Suppose that you always want to seek self-gratification and to satisfy your own desires in God's house, and always feel incredibly repressed, unfree, and unliberated, without any peace or joy. Say that you constantly feel uncomfortable and wronged, that you cannot do as you please in any matter, that you cannot eat or dress as you please, that you are not allowed to dress

fashionably or in an alluring way, and you feel miserable and ill at ease every day because of these things. Suppose that you always find interacting with your brothers and sisters uncomfortable, and think, “These people always fellowship about the truth with me, it’s too troublesome! I don’t want to comport myself in this way. I just want to live happily, contentedly, and freely. I feel that I am not as happy and free as I imagined I would be believing in God. I don’t want to be constrained by anyone. There are always people managing and constraining me, and I feel repressed.” People like this dislike this kind of living environment and feel aversion toward it. However, for the sake of receiving blessings, they have no choice but to commit to it. They have nowhere to vent their frustrations, they dare not cry out, and they often feel repressed. The only solution, the best method for dealing with such people, is to tell them: “You can leave. Go and eat what you want, wear the clothes you desire, live the life you want, do the things you wish, have the career you want, and pursue the goals and direction you wish to pursue. God’s house is not holding you back. Your hands and feet are liberated and free, as is your heart. You are bound by no one. Except for you committing yourself to God’s house in order to attain a certain goal, no one has imposed these regulations on you, saying that you have to, need to, and must stay in God’s house, or else God’s house will do something to you.” I’m telling you the truth, God’s house will not do anything to you. If you want to leave, you can leave at any time. Just return the books of God’s words to the church and hand over whatever work you have on hand. You can leave whenever you want. God’s house does not restrict you, it is not your prison, or a jail. God’s house is a free place, and its doors are wide open. If you feel repressed, it is because you cannot do as you please, and that means this place is not suitable for you. It is not the happy home you want to find, nor the place where you should stay. If you are living in a way that goes so much against your will, you should leave. Do you understand? God’s house never forces nonbelievers or those who do not pursue the truth. If you wish to do business, become wealthy, have a career, or venture out into the world and make a name for yourself, then that is your personal pursuit, and you should return to the secular world. God’s house never limits people’s freedom. The doors of God’s house are open wide. Nonbelievers and those who do not pursue the truth can walk out and leave God’s house at any time.

Some people are simply unwilling to fulfill their duties and to fellowship about the truth. They have not adapted to church life, they are unable to adapt to it, and they always feel particularly miserable and helpless. Well, I would say to those people: You should hurry up and leave. Go into the secular world to look for your own goals and direction, and live the life you ought to live. God’s house never forces anyone. None of the church’s regulations, systems, or administrative decrees are targeted at you as an individual. If you find them difficult, cannot abide by them, and feel particularly miserable and repressed, then you can choose to leave. Those who are able to accept the truth and uphold the principles are the ones suited to remain in the church. Of course, if you feel

that you are not suited to remain in God's house, will there be another suitable place for you? Yes, the world is vast, and there will be a suitable place for you. In short, if you feel repressed here, if you cannot find release, if you often want to vent and there is always a possibility of your nature bursting forth, then you are in danger and not suited to stay in God's house. The world is vast, and there will always be a suitable place for you. Take your time to find it on your own. Is this not an appropriate way to handle this matter? Is it not rational? (Yes.) If these people feel so uncomfortable, and you still want to keep them here, aren't you being foolish? Let's allow them to leave and wish them success in realizing their dreams, alright? What are their dreams? (To eat cherry tomatoes by the bowlful.) They also want to eat rice and fish at every meal, all year round. What other dreams do they have? To wake up naturally every day, to work whenever they want, and for no one to manage or supervise them when they do not want to work. Isn't this their dream? (Yes.) What a grand dream! How lofty it is! Tell Me, do people like this have good prospects? Do they attend to their proper work? (No.) To sum it up, people like this always feel repressed. To put it plainly, their wish is to indulge their flesh and to satisfy their desires. They are too selfish, they want to do everything according to their own whims and as they please, disregarding rules and not handling matters according to the principles, just doing things based on their own feelings, preferences and desires, and acting based on their own interests. They lack normal humanity and people like this do not attend to their proper work. People who do not attend to their proper work feel repressed in everything they do, everywhere they go. Even if they were living alone, they would feel repressed. To put it nicely, these people are not promising individuals and they do not attend to their proper work. To be more precise, their humanity is abnormal, and they are a bit simple-minded. What are people who attend to their proper work like? They are people who regard their basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, and transportation in a simple way. As long as these things are up to a normal standard, that's enough for them. They care more about their path in life, their mission as human beings, their life outlook and values. What do unpromising people ponder about all day? They are always pondering about how to slack off, how to play tricks so that they can shirk responsibility, how to eat well and have fun, how to live in physical ease and comfort, without considering proper matters. Therefore, they feel repressed in the setting and environment of fulfilling their duties in God's house. God's house requires people to learn certain common and professional knowledge that relates to their duties, so that they can perform them better. God's house requires people to frequently eat and drink God's words so that they may gain a better understanding of the truth, enter into the truth reality, and know what the principles for every action are. All of these things that God's house fellowships about and mentions relate to topics, practical matters, and so on, that fall within the scope of people's lives and the fulfillment of their duties, and are meant to help people to attend to their proper work and to walk the right path. These individuals who do not attend to their proper work and who do as they please do not wish

to do these proper things. The ultimate goal that they wish to achieve by doing whatever they want is physical comfort, pleasure, and ease, and to not be restricted or wronged in any way. It is to be able to eat enough of whatever they want, and to do as they please. It is because of the quality of their humanity and their inner pursuits that they often feel repressed. No matter how you fellowship about the truth with them, they will not change, and their repression will not be resolved. That's just the kind of people they are; they are just things that do not attend to their proper work. Although on the surface they do not seem to have committed any great evil or to be bad people, and though they appear to have only failed to uphold the principles and regulations, in reality, their nature essence is that they do not attend to their proper work or follow the right path. People like this lack the conscience and reason of normal humanity, and they cannot achieve the intelligence of normal humanity. They do not think about, ponder, or pursue the goals that people with normal humanity ought to pursue, or the life attitudes and methods of existence that people with normal humanity should adopt. Their minds are filled every day with thoughts of how to find physical ease and pleasure. However, in the living environment of the church, they cannot satisfy their physical preferences and so they feel uncomfortable and repressed. That is how these emotions of theirs come about. Tell Me, do people like this not have exhausting lives? (They do.) Are their lives pitiable? (No, they are not pitiable.) That is right, they are not pitiable. To put it lightly, these are the kind of people who do not attend to their proper work. In society, who are the people who do not attend to their proper work? They are idlers, fools, slackers, hooligans, ruffians, and loafers—people like that. They do not wish to learn any new skills or abilities, and they do not want to pursue serious careers or to find a job so that they can get by. They are the idlers and loafers of society. They infiltrate the church, and then they want to get something for nothing, and to obtain their share of blessings. They are opportunists. These opportunists are never willing to fulfill their duties. If things do not go their way, even slightly, they feel repressed. They always wish to live freely, they do not want to perform any kind of work, and yet they still want to eat good food and wear nice clothing, and eat whatever they wish and sleep whenever they want. They think that when a day like this comes, it will surely be wonderful. They do not want to endure even a little bit of hardship and they wish for a life of indulgence. These people even find living exhausting; they are bound by negative emotions. They often feel tired and confused because they cannot do as they please. They do not want to attend to their proper work or to handle their proper affairs. They do not want to stick to a job and do it constantly from start to finish, treating it as their own profession and duty, as their obligation and responsibility; they do not want to finish it and achieve results, or do it to the best standard possible. They have never thought in that way. They just want to act in a perfunctory manner and to use their duty as a means to make a living. When they face a little pressure or some form of control, or when they are held to a slightly higher standard, or made to shoulder a bit of responsibility, they feel uncomfortable and

repressed. These negative emotions arise within them, living feels exhausting to them, and they are miserable. One fundamental reason why living feels exhausting to them is that people like this lack reason. Their reason is impaired, they spend all day indulging in fantasies, living in a dream, in the clouds, always imagining the wildest things. That is why their repression is very difficult to resolve. They are not interested in the truth, they are nonbelievers. The only thing we can do is ask them to leave God's house, to return to the world and find their own place of ease and comfort.

Those who truly believe in God are all individuals who attend to their proper work, they are all willing to fulfill their duties, capable of shouldering a piece of work and doing it well according to their caliber and the regulations of God's house. Of course, it may be challenging to adapt to this life at first. You may feel physically and mentally exhausted. However, if you truly have the resolve to cooperate and the willingness to become a normal and good person, and to achieve salvation, then you must pay a bit of a price and allow God to discipline you. When you have the urge to be willful, you must turn your back on it and let go of it, gradually reducing your willfulness and selfish desires. You must seek God's help in crucial matters, at crucial times, and in crucial tasks. If you do have resolve, then you should ask God to chasten and discipline you, and to enlighten you so that you may understand the truth, that way you will get better results. If you genuinely have resolve, and you pray to God in His presence and supplicate to Him, God will act. He will change your state and your thoughts. If the Holy Spirit does a little work, moving you a little, and enlightening you a little, your heart will change, and your state will be transformed. When this transformation occurs, you will feel that living this way is not repressive. Your repressed state and emotions will be transformed and alleviated, and they will be different from before. You will feel that living like this is not tiring. You will find enjoyment fulfilling your duty in the house of God. You will feel that it is good living, comporting yourself, and fulfilling your duty in this way, enduring hardships and paying a price, following the rules, and doing things based on the principles. You will feel that this is the kind of life that normal people should have. When you live by the truth and perform your duty well, you will feel that your heart is steady and at peace, and that your life is meaningful. You will think: "Why didn't I know this before? Why was I so willful? Before, I lived according to Satan's philosophies and disposition, living as neither human nor ghost, and the more I lived, the more painful it felt. Now that I understand the truth, I can shed a bit of my corrupt disposition, and I can feel the true peace and joy of a life spent fulfilling my duty and practicing the truth!" Will your mood not then have changed? (Yes.) Once you realize why your life felt repressive and miserable before, once you find the root cause of your suffering, and resolve the problem, you will have hope of changing. As long as you strive toward the truth, put more effort into God's words, fellowship more about the truth, and also listen to the experiential testimonies of your brothers and sisters, you will have a clearer path, and won't your state then improve? If your state improves, your repressive emotions will gradually ease, and no

longer entangle you. Of course, in special circumstances or contexts, occasional feelings of repression and pain may arise, but as long as you seek the truth to resolve them, these repressive emotions will disappear. You will be able to offer your sincerity, full strength, and devotion while fulfilling your duty, and you will have hope of salvation. If you are able to undergo such a transformation, then you do not need to leave the house of God. Your ability to undergo this transformation will prove that there is still hope for you—hope for change, hope for salvation. It will prove that you are still a member of God's house, but you were influenced for too long and too deeply by various selfish motives and personal considerations, or by various bad habits and ideas, which caused your conscience to go numb and lose feeling, impaired your reasoning, and eroded your sense of shame. If you can undergo such a transformation, God's house will welcome you to stay, to fulfill your duty, to accomplish your mission, and to thoroughly finish the work you have at hand. Of course, people who have these negative emotions can only be helped with a loving heart. If a person consistently refuses to accept the truth and remains unrepentant despite repeated admonitions, we should bid farewell to them. But if someone is really willing to change, to turn themselves around, to reverse their course, we warmly welcome them to stay. As long as they are genuinely willing to stay and to change their previous approaches and ways of living, and they are able to gradually undergo a transformation while fulfilling their duty, and they become better at their duty the longer they perform it, then we welcome such people to stay and hope that they will continue to improve. We also express a great wish for them: We wish that they may emerge from their negative emotions, that they may no longer be entangled by them or enveloped by their shadow, and that they may instead attend to their proper work and walk the right path, acting and living out what normal people ought to according to God's requirements, and steadily fulfilling their duties in God's house according to His requirements, no longer drifting through life. We wish them promising futures, and that they will no longer do whatever they please, or solely concern themselves with pleasure-seeking and physical enjoyment, but instead think more about matters related to fulfilling their duties, to the path they walk in life, and to living out normal humanity. We wholeheartedly wish that they may live happily, freely, and liberated in the house of God, experiencing daily peace and joy, and feeling warmth and enjoyment in their lives here. Is this not the greatest wish? (Yes.) I have finished My wish, and I invite all of you to extend your heartfelt wishes to them. (Our heartfelt wish is that they may live happily, freely, and liberated in the house of God, experiencing daily peace and joy, and feeling warmth and enjoyment in their lives here.) What else? How about wholeheartedly wishing that they no longer live in the grip of repressive emotions? (Yes.) That is My wish. Do you have any other wishes for them? (My heartfelt wish is that they may be able to attend to their proper work, continuously improving in the fulfillment of their duties.) Is this a good wish? (Yes.) Any other wishes? (My heartfelt wish is that they can begin soon to live out normal humanity.) This wish may not be very lofty, but I think that

it is practical. Human beings should live out normal humanity and not feel repressed. Why are we unable to endure the hardships that others can endure? If a person possesses the conscience, reason, and sense of shame of normal humanity, as well as the pursuits, methods for existing, and proper goals in their pursuit that normal people ought to have, they will not feel repressed. Is this not a pretty good wish? (Yes.) Anything else? (My heartfelt wish is for them to cooperate harmoniously with their brothers and sisters, to feel God's love in His house, and to act according to the principles of God's house.) Is this requirement lofty? (No.) As it is not lofty, is it easy to achieve? Feeling the love of God's house is rather in line with reality—it is what these people need, is it not? (Yes.) The requirements for people like this are not high. First and foremost, they need to possess the conscience and reason of normal humanity. They should not be idle or drift through life; they should learn to live, to attend to their proper work, to shoulder their responsibilities and their duties. Then they need to learn how to live, to live out normal humanity, and to fulfill their responsibilities and duties well. In doing so, they will be able to feel comfort, peace, and joy in the house of God, and they will be willing to live and fulfill their duties here. After breaking free from their repressive, negative emotions, little by little they will be able to pursue the truth and cooperate harmoniously with others. These are the requirements for people like this. Regardless of their age, we do not have grand wishes or lofty requirements for them, just these ones that we have spoken of. First of all, they need to learn to attend to their proper work, to shoulder the responsibilities and obligations of an adult and a normal person, and then learn to abide by the rules, and accept the management, supervision, and the pruning and dealing with of the house of God, and perform their duties well. This is the correct attitude that a person with a conscience and reason should adopt. Secondly, they should have a correct understanding and knowledge of the responsibilities, obligations, and thoughts and viewpoints that involve the conscience and reason of normal humanity. You should get rid of your negative emotions and repression, and face the various difficulties that arise in your life correctly. To you, these are not extra things, or burdens, or bonds, but rather what you, as a normal adult, should bear. This means that every adult, regardless of your gender, regardless of your caliber, how competent you are, or what talents you possess, must bear all of the things that adults ought to bear, including: the living environments which adults must adapt to, the responsibilities, obligations, and missions that you should undertake, and the work that you should shoulder. First, you should positively accept these things instead of expecting others to clothe and feed you, or relying on the fruits of others' labor to scrape by. In addition, you should learn to adapt to and accept various kinds of rules, regulations, and management, you should accept the administrative decrees of God's house, and learn to adapt to an existence and a life among other people. You should possess the conscience and reason of normal humanity, approach the people, events, and things around you correctly, and handle and resolve the various problems that you meet with correctly. These are all things that a

person with normal humanity should deal with, it can also be said that this is the life and the living environment that an adult ought to face. For example, as an adult, you should rely on your own abilities to support and feed your family, regardless of how difficult your life may be. This is the hardship you should endure, the responsibility you should fulfill, and the obligation you should complete. You should shoulder the responsibilities that an adult ought to take on. No matter how much suffering you endure or how great of a price you pay, no matter how sad you feel, you should swallow your grievances and you should not develop any negative emotions or complain about anyone, because this is what adults are supposed to bear. As an adult, you must shoulder these things—without complaining or resisting, and especially without evading or rejecting them. Drifting through life, being idle, doing things as you please, being willful or capricious, doing what you want to do and not doing what you don't want to do—this is not the attitude in life that an adult should have. Every adult must shoulder an adult's responsibilities, regardless of how much pressure they face, such as hardships, illnesses, and even various difficulties—these are things that everyone should experience and bear. They are a part of a normal person's life. If you cannot bear pressure or endure suffering, it means that you are too fragile and useless. Whoever lives must bear this suffering, and no one can avoid it. Whether in society or in God's house, it is the same for everyone. This is the responsibility you should bear, the heavy burden that an adult should carry, the thing that they should shoulder, and you should not evade it. If you always try to escape or cast off all of this, then your repressive emotions will come out, and you will always be entangled by them. However, if you can properly comprehend and accept all of this, and view it as a necessary part of your life and existence, then these issues should not be a reason for you to develop negative emotions. In one respect, you must learn to shoulder the responsibilities and obligations that adults ought to have and undertake. In another respect, you should learn to coexist harmoniously with others in your living and working environment with normal humanity. Do not simply do what you please. What is the purpose of harmonious coexistence? It is to better complete the work and to better fulfill the obligations and responsibilities that you, as an adult, ought to complete and fulfill, to minimize the losses caused by the problems you face in your work, and to maximize the results and efficiency of your work. This is what you ought to achieve. If you possess normal humanity, you should accomplish this when working among people. As for work pressure, whether it comes from the Above or from God's house, or if it is pressure put upon you by your brothers and sisters, it is something that you should bear. You cannot say, "This is too much pressure, so I won't do it. I am just seeking leisure, ease, happiness, and comfort in fulfilling my duty and working in God's house." This will not work; it is not a thought that a normal adult should possess, and God's house is not a place for you to indulge in comfort. Every person takes on a certain amount of pressure and risk in their life and work. In any job, especially fulfilling your duty in God's house, you should strive for optimal results. On a greater level, this is the

teaching and demand of God. On a smaller level, it is the attitude, viewpoint, standard, and principle that every person should adopt in their comportment and actions. When you fulfill a duty in God's house, you must learn to abide by the regulations and systems of God's house, you must learn to comply, learn the rules, and comport yourself in a well-behaved manner. This is an essential part of one's comportment. You should not be spending all of your time indulging yourself instead of working, not giving serious thought to anything, and idling away your days, or engaging in wrongful acts, and pursuing your own way of living, like unbelievers do. Do not make others despise you, do not become a nail in their eye or a thorn in their side, do not make everybody shun or reject you, and do not become an obstacle or a stumbling block to any piece of work. This is the conscience and reason that a normal adult should possess, and it is also the responsibility that any normal adult should bear. These are a part of the things that you must do in order to bear this responsibility. Do you understand? (Yes.)

If you are a person with resolve, if you can treat the responsibilities and obligations that people should bear, the things that people with normal humanity must achieve, and those things that adults must accomplish as the aims and goals of your pursuit, and if you can shoulder your responsibilities, then no matter what price you pay and what pain you endure, you will not complain, and as long as you recognize it as God's requirements and will, you will be able to endure any suffering and fulfill your duty well. At that time, what would your state of mind be like? It would be different; you would feel peace and stability in your heart, and you would experience enjoyment. You see, just by seeking to live out normal humanity, and pursuing the responsibilities, obligations, and mission that people with normal humanity ought to bear and undertake, people feel peace and joy in their hearts, and they experience enjoyment. They have not even reached the point where they are conducting affairs according to the principles and obtaining the truth, and they have already undergone some change. Such people are those who possess conscience and reason; they are upright people who can overcome any difficulty and undertake any task. They are the good soldiers of Christ, they have gone through training, and no difficulty can defeat them. Tell Me, what do you think of such comportment? Do these people not have fortitude? (They do.) They do have fortitude, and people admire them. Would such people still feel repressed? (No.) Then how did they change these repressive emotions? For what reason will these emotions of repression neither trouble them nor find them? (It is because they love positive things and bear a burden in their duties.) That's right, it is about attending to one's proper work. When people keep their minds on proper matters, and when the conscience and reason of normal humanity, and the sense of responsibility and sense of mission that they possess all come into play, they do well no matter where they are placed. They can succeed in any task, without any repression, distress, or depression. Do you think God blesses such people? Would people who possess such a conscience, reason, and normal humanity face difficulties in pursuing the truth? (No.) Based on the pursuits,

viewpoints, and methods of existence of normal humanity, pursuing the truth will not be very difficult for them. When people reach this point, they are not far from understanding the truth, practicing the truth, acting according to the truth principles, and entering into the truth reality. What does “not far” mean here? It means that their perspective on their comportment, and the method of existence that they have chosen are completely positive and proactive, essentially aligning with the normal humanity that God demands. It means that they have reached the standards set by God. Once they meet these standards, such individuals can understand the truth when they hear it, and it will be much less difficult for them to practice the truth. It will be easy for them to enter into the truth reality and to act according to the truth principles. In total, how many aspects are there to what people with normal humanity ought to do? There are roughly three. What are they? Tell Me. (The first is about learning to bear the responsibilities and obligations that an adult should have and bear. The second is about learning to harmoniously coexist with others in one’s living and working environment with normal humanity, and not doing whatever one pleases. And the third is about learning to abide by God’s teachings within the scope of the reason of normal humanity, and adhering to the attitudes, viewpoints, standards, and principles that one ought to have in their comportment, which means following the rules.) These three aspects are what people with normal humanity ought to possess. If people start thinking and focusing on these aspects, and working hard toward them, they will begin to attend to their proper work—will they still experience negative emotions then? Will they still feel repressed? When you are attending to your proper work and handling your proper affairs, and shouldering the responsibilities and obligations that adults ought to bear, you will have so much to do and think about that you will be overwhelmingly busy. Especially for those who are currently fulfilling their duties in God’s house, is there any time for them to feel repressed? There is no time. So, what is the matter with those who feel repressed, get into bad moods, and feel low-spirited or depressed whenever they encounter something a little unpleasant? It is that they are not occupying themselves with the right things and they are idle. It is that they do not attend to their proper work, and they cannot see the things that they ought to do, so their minds become idle and their thoughts run wild. They think and they think, without any path to take, so they feel repressed. The more they think the more they feel aggrieved and helpless, and the less of a path they have; the more they think the more they feel as though their lives are not worth it, that they are miserable, and the sadder they feel. They are powerless to break free, and eventually, they become trapped in these emotions of repression. Isn’t that right? (Yes.) In fact, this problem is easy to resolve because there are so many things you should do, so many proper matters that you should think about and consider that you will not have the time to think about those useless things, those pleasure-seeking activities. People whose minds are idle enough to think about such things prefer to relax rather than work, they are gluttonous loafers, and they do not attend to their proper work. Those who do not attend to their proper work

often find themselves trapped by repressive emotions. These people do not occupy themselves with the right things while there is a mound of important matters that need attending to, and they do not think about or act upon them. Instead, they find time to let their minds wander, to complain and moan about their physical bodies, to worry about their futures, and to fret over the pain they have endured and the prices they have paid. When they cannot resolve all this, cannot bear it, or find an outlet for these frustrations, they feel repressed. They fear losing out on blessings when they think about leaving God's house, they fear going to hell if they do evil, and they are also unwilling to pursue the truth or to fulfill their duties properly. As a result, they feel repressed. Is this not the case? (It is.) That's right. If a person attends to their proper work and follows the right path, these emotions will not arise. Even if they experience repressive emotions occasionally due to temporary special circumstances, they will only be passing moods, because people with the correct way of life and the right perspective on existence will quickly override these negative emotions. As a result, you will not frequently find yourself trapped in emotions of repression. This means that such emotions of repression will not bother you. You may experience temporary bad moods, but you will not be trapped in them. This highlights the importance of pursuing the truth. If you seek to attend to your proper work, if you bear the responsibilities that adults should bear, and seek to have a normal, good, positive, and proactive mode of existence, then you will not develop these negative emotions. These repressive emotions will not find you or cling to you.

So, we have finished fellowshiping about the issue and difficulty of resolving repression, which includes the three aspects mentioned earlier. We wholeheartedly wish that those who have been entangled by emotions of repression, and those who have been trapped in emotions of repression but desire to break free from them, will no longer be controlled by these emotions. We hope that they can soon emerge from the negative emotions of repression and live out the likeness of a normal person, adopting a normal and proper way of existence. Is this a good wish? (Yes.) Then, you should wish it too. (We wish that those who have been entangled by emotions of repression, and those who have been trapped in emotions of repression but desire to break free from them, will no longer be controlled by these emotions. We hope that they can soon emerge from the negative emotions of repression and live out the likeness of a normal person, adopting a normal and proper way of existence.) This wish is realistic. Now that we have expressed our wishes, whether these people can break free from emotions of repression ultimately depends on their personal choices—this ought to be a simple matter. In fact, it is something that people with normal humanity should possess. If a person has a strong enough resolve and willingness to pursue the truth and positive things, then it will be easy for them to break free from emotions of repression. It will not be a difficult task. If someone does not enjoy pursuing the truth and positive things, and does not like positive things, then let them remain trapped in emotions of repression. Let them be. We no longer need to express wishes for them, alright? (Alright.) This is another way of handling

the situation. There is a resolution to every problem, and everything can be addressed and resolved based on the truth principles and people's actual circumstances. We have finished our wishes for today, and we have fellowshiped thoroughly on several different situations. We have said everything that needs to be said about this kind of person, so let's conclude this discussion here.

November 12, 2022

How to Pursue the Truth (6)

We fellowshiped last time about “letting go,” which is one of the principles of practice for how to pursue the truth. The first part of “letting go” means letting go of all negative emotions. We have already fellowshiped on this topic several times. Did we fellowship on the negative emotion of repression last time? (We did.) What did we fellowship on in regard to this? What causes people to feel repressed? (God fellowshiped that people do as they please in their duties, and are unwilling to abide by the church’s rules and regulations or be subject to restrictions. Due to their willfulness and their failure to act according to the principles, they can’t do their duties well, and so they are often pruned and dealt with. If they do not reflect on their actions and fail to resolve their problems by seeking the truth, they will feel repressed.) Last time, we fellowshiped about one kind of situation in which people feel the negative emotion of being repressed, which is mainly because they are unable to do as they please. That fellowship was primarily concerned with: situations where people are unable to do as they please, what things people wish to do as they please, and what common behaviors are present in people who wallow in the emotion of repression. We then fellowshiped on the path one must take to resolve this emotion. Have you reached any conclusions after hearing these fellowships on letting go of negative emotions, whether they were revealing the manifestations of man’s negative emotions, or telling people the path for letting go of them? What is this practice of letting go of negative emotions directed at? After listening to these fellowships, did you ponder on this? (God, my understanding is that this practice is directed at people’s views on things.) That is right, that is one aspect of it. It is concerned with people’s views on things. These views are primarily concerned with the various ideas and views that one clings to in the face of various people, matters, and things, and primarily directed at the various problems that one encounters in their normal human life and existence. Examples of this include: how to interact with others, how to defuse animosity, the attitude one should have toward marriage, family, work, their prospects, sickness, aging, death, and trivial matters in life. It also touches on how one should face their environment and how they should face the duty they are supposed to fulfill, among other issues. Does it not touch on these things? (It does.) As for all the major issues and matters of principle that relate to a normal human life and existence—if one has the right ideas, views, and attitude, then their humanity will be relatively normal. What I mean by “normal” is having normal reason and a normal perspective and stance on things. Only those who possess correct ideas and views will have an easy time understanding and entering into the truth when they are pursuing it. This means that only those with normal ideas and normal views, perspectives, and stances on people and things will be able to attain certain results in their pursuit of the truth. If a person’s perspective and stance on people and things, and their ideas, views, and attitude are all negative, do not conform with the conscience and rationality of normal humanity, and are radical, stubborn and impure—in

short, if they are all negative, adverse, and depressive—if a person who possesses these kinds of negative ideas and views pursues the truth, will they find it easy to understand and practice it? (No.) It is simple enough for you to say that from a theoretical perspective, but in actuality, you do not really understand it. To put it simply, with regard to the various negative emotions we are fellowshiping on, if a person has a negative and inaccurate perspective and stance on various people, matters, and things they encounter in their life and on their life path, will they be able to achieve an understanding of the truth? (No.) If they are always wallowing in negative emotions, can they achieve a pure understanding of God's words? (No.) If they are always dominated, controlled, and influenced by the thoughts and views of negative emotions, will their perspective and stance on all things, and their views of things that happen to them not be negative? (It will.) What is meant by "negative" here? Firstly, can we say that it runs counter to fact and objective laws? Does it violate the laws of nature that man should conform to, as well as the fact of God's sovereignty? (Yes.) If people carry these negative ideas and views with them while listening to and reading God's words, can they truly accept and submit to His words? Can they achieve submission to God and compatibility with God? (No.) Provide an example that illustrates this, so that I can see if you have understood. Find an example where one is dealing with major issues of their life and survival, like issues about marriage, family, children, or sickness, about their future, fate, whether their life goes smoothly, their worth, social status, personal interests, and so on. (I remember God fellowshiped last time that when people are faced with illness, they wallow in negative emotions like distress, anxiety, and worry, and are extremely afraid of dying. This affects their ability to perform their duty and live a normal life, and renders them unable to conform to objective laws. In reality, people's lives and deaths, when they become ill, and how much they suffer are all predestined by God. People should face and experience these situations with a proper, positive attitude. They should seek the treatment they need, and do the duty they are supposed to do—they should maintain a positive state of being and not be trapped in their illness. But when people are wallowing in negative emotions, they do not believe in God's sovereignty, and they do not believe that God has predestined their life and their death. They just feel worried, frightened, and anxious about their illness. They become increasingly worried and fearful—they are not governed by the truth of God's sovereignty over man's fate, and God is absent from their hearts.) That is a great example. Does this relate to the question of what view people ought to have on the significant matter of life and death? (Yes.) Do you all know something about this subject? This is a question of facing one's own life and death. Does this relate to problems within the scope of normal humanity? (Yes.) This is a major issue that everyone must face. Even if you are young or in good health and have not dealt with or experienced life-and-death issues, inevitably a day will come when you will have to—this is something that everyone must face. As a normal person, no matter if you are personally affected by it, or if you are far removed from it, in any case, it is the most

significant issue you will face in life. So, when faced with the significant matter of death, should people not ponder on how they should handle this issue? Will they not adopt some human methods to deal with it? What views should people cling to? Is this not a practical issue? (Yes.) If people are wallowing in negative emotions, what will they think? We fellowshiped on this before—if people live by thoughts and views of negative emotions, are their actions and expressions in keeping with the truth or not? Do they accord with the thinking of normal humanity or not? (No, they do not.) They do not accord with the thinking of normal humanity, and much less do they conform with the truth. They do not accord with objective facts or objective laws, and they certainly do not conform with God's sovereignty.

What is the ultimate result of our fellowship about letting go of various negative emotions? How can you specifically act out and practice "letting go" in order to possess the thinking and reason of normal humanity, in other words, to possess the thoughts, perspectives, and viewpoints that someone with normal humanity and reason should possess? What are the specific steps or paths of practice involved in this "letting go"? Isn't the first step to recognize whether your viewpoints on matters you face are correct and if they carry any negative emotions? This is the first step. For example, regarding the example we raised earlier about dealing with illness and death, you should first dissect your viewpoints toward such matters, whether there are any negative emotions in them, such as if you feel any distress, worry, or anxiety regarding these issues and how your distress, worry, and anxiety arise, and you should delve into the root cause of these problems. Next, keep dissecting, and you will discover that you haven't fully understood these matters. You haven't clearly recognized that everything of mankind is in God's hands and under His sovereignty. Even when they fall ill or are faced with death, people should not become ensnared within these things. Instead, they should submit to the arrangements and orchestrations of God, without being intimidated or overwhelmed by illness or death. They should not be afraid of these things, nor let them influence their own normal lives and fulfillment of duties. In one respect, they ought to actively experience and appreciate God's sovereignty and submit to His orchestrations and arrangements while going through illness, and they can seek treatment when necessary. That is, they should actively face, experience, and appreciate the process. In another respect, they ought to develop a correct understanding in their hearts about these matters and believe that everything is in the hands of God. Human beings can only do their part, and for the rest they should submit to Heaven's will. Because everything is in the hands of God, and people's life and death are all predestined by God. Even if people do what they are supposed to do, the ultimate outcome of all this does not shift according to their will, and it is not determined by people, right? (Right.) When faced with illness, you should first examine your own heart and identify any negative emotions. You should assess your understanding of the matter and the viewpoints you hold in your hearts, whether you are under the control or bondage of negative emotions and how these

negative emotions have come about. You should dissect the following, such as what it is you are worried about, what it is you fear, where it is you feel insecure, and what you are unable to let go because of your illness, then examine the cause of these things that make you feel worried, frightened, or afraid, and gradually resolve each of them one by one. You should first dissect and explore whether these negative elements exist within yourself, and if they do, dissect and ascertain whether they are correct or if there are elements that do not align with the truth. If you find elements that do not align with the truth, you should seek answers in the words of God and gradually seek the truth to resolve them. You should strive to reach a state where you are not troubled, affected, or bound by these negative elements, making it so they don't affect your normal life or work or the fulfillment of your duties, or disrupt the order of your life. And, of course, they should certainly not affect your belief in God and following Him. In summary, the goal is for you to eventually be able to face these kinds of problems you encounter or will encounter with reason, correctness, objectivity, and accuracy. Isn't this the process of letting go? (It is.) This is the specific path of practice. Can you summarize what the specific path of practice is? (First, one needs to understand the matter they are facing, dissect whether they have any negative emotions during this process, then seek answers in the words of God, seek the truth to resolve them, and not let themselves be troubled by these negative emotions, nor their lives and the fulfillment of their duties be affected. Also, they should believe that the matters they encounter arise out of the sovereignty and arrangements of God. With this kind of understanding, people can eventually achieve submission and carry out a positive and proactive practice.) Tell Me, if people live in negative emotions, what is their typical behavior whenever they face illness? How do you realize when you have negative emotions? (First, there is a lot of fear, and we'll start to have random thoughts like, "What kind of illness is this? Will it bring me a lot of suffering if I cannot cure it? Will it lead to death in the end? Will I still be able to fulfill my duty later on?" We will think about these things, worry about them, and feel afraid. Some people start paying more attention to their health, not willing to pay the price of fulfilling their duties, thinking that if they pay less of a price, their illness might be alleviated. These are all negative emotions.) Negative emotions can be probed from two angles. From one angle, you should know what you are thinking in your own mind. When you fall ill, you may think, "Oh no, how did I get this illness? Did someone pass it on to me? Is it because I'm tired? If I continue to tire myself out, will this illness grow worse? Will it become more painful?" This is one angle; you can perceive the things within your thoughts. From a different angle, when you have these thoughts, how are they manifested in your behavior? When people have thoughts, their actions are influenced accordingly. People's actions, behavior, and methods are all governed by various thoughts. When people have these negative emotions, they give rise to various thoughts, and governed by these thoughts, their attitudes or methods regarding the fulfillment of their duties undergo a transformation. For example, in the past, sometimes they would

start fulfilling their duties as soon as they woke up. But now, when it's time to get out of bed, they start pondering, "Could this illness be due to exhaustion? Maybe I should sleep a little longer. I used to suffer too much and feel exhausted. Now I need to focus on taking care of my body so that the illness doesn't get worse." Governed by these active thoughts, they end up getting up later than usual. When it comes to eating, they ponder, "My illness may be related to a lack of nutrition. In the past, I could eat anything, but now I have to be selective. I should eat more eggs and meat so that my nutrition can keep pace and my body can grow strong—this way I won't have to suffer from my illness anymore." When it comes to fulfilling their duties, they are also constantly thinking about how to take care of their bodies. In the past, after working continuously for one or two hours they would at most stretch or stand up and move around. But now, they set a rule for themselves to move around every half an hour, so as not to tire themselves out. Whenever fellowshiping at gatherings, they try to speak as little as possible, thinking, "I need to learn to take care of my body." In the past, no matter what question someone asked, or when, they would answer without hesitation. But now they want to speak less, to conserve their energy, and if someone asks too many questions, they say, "I need to rest." You see, they have become particularly concerned about their physical body, which is different from before. Oftentimes they also pay constant attention to taking dietary supplements, eating fruit and exercising regularly. They think, "In the past, I was too stupid and ignorant and I didn't know how to take care of my body. I followed my appetite and indulged in gluttony. Now that my body has problems, if I don't focus on my health, and if my illness becomes severe and I can't fulfill my duty, will I still receive blessings? I must pay attention to taking care of my body in the future and not let any ailments emerge." So they start to pay attention to their health, and they no longer fulfill their duties with full dedication. They even regret and feel discontented about the suffering they endured and the price they paid in the past while fulfilling their duties. Aren't these thoughts and behaviors influenced by and don't they emerge from negative emotions? These thoughts and behaviors are indeed caused by these negative emotions. Then can these thoughts and behaviors along with their negative emotions help them have more faith in God and be more devoted in fulfilling their duties? Definitely not. What will the ultimate result be? They will fulfill their duties in a perfunctory manner without devotion. When they do things, can they seek the truth and act according to the truth principles? (No, they cannot.) They will do whatever they want while governed by these negative emotions, setting the truth aside, not treasuring it or putting it into practice. Everything they do, everything they put into practice will revolve around the thoughts generated by their own negative emotions. Can someone like this achieve the pursuit of the truth? (No, they cannot.) Then are these kinds of thoughts the thoughts that people with normal humanity should have? (No, they are not.) Since these kinds of thoughts are not the thoughts that people with normal humanity should have, where do you think they go wrong? (People do not have any understanding of God's sovereignty

and arrangements. In reality, these illnesses are all in God's hands. The amount of suffering a person should endure is also determined and arranged by God. However, when a person lives in negative emotions, they tend to resort to scheming and are governed by erroneous thoughts and viewpoints. They rely on human methods and cherish their own physical bodies.) Is it right for a person to cherish their physical body like this? When a person is overly concerned about their physical body and keeps it well-fed, healthy, and robust, of what value is this to them? What meaning is there in living like this? What is the value of a person's life? Is it merely for the sake of indulging in fleshly pleasures such as eating, drinking, and being entertained? (No, it is not.) Then what is it? Please share your thoughts. (To fulfill the duty of a created being, this at least is what a person should achieve in their life.) That is correct. Tell Me, if a person's daily actions and thoughts throughout their entire life are solely focused on avoiding illness and death, on keeping their body healthy and free from diseases, and striving for longevity, is this the value a person's life should have? (No, it is not.) That is not the value a person's life should have. So, what is the value a person's life should have? Just now, someone mentioned fulfilling the duty of a created being, which is one specific aspect. Is there anything else? Tell Me the aspirations you usually have while praying or establishing resolve. (To submit to God's arrangements and orchestrations for us.) (To play the role well which God has assigned for us, and to fulfill our mission and responsibility.) Anything else? In one respect, it is about fulfilling the duty of a created being. In another, it is about doing everything within your ability and capacity to the best that you can, at least reaching a point where your conscience does not accuse you, where you can be at peace with your own conscience and be proven acceptable in the eyes of others. Taking it a step further, throughout your life, regardless of the family you were born into, your educational background, or personal qualities, you must have some understanding of the principles that people ought to comprehend in life. For example, what kind of path people should walk, how they should live, and how to live a meaningful life—you should at least explore a bit of the true value of life. This life cannot be lived in vain, and one cannot come to this earth in vain. In another respect, during your lifetime, you must fulfill your mission; this is the most important. We're not talking about completing a great mission, duty, or responsibility; but at the very least, you should accomplish something. For instance, in the church, some people put all their efforts into the work of spreading the gospel, dedicating the energy of their entire lives, paying a great price, and gaining many people. Because of this, they feel that their lives have not been lived in vain, and that they hold value and comfort. When facing illness or death, when summing up their entire lives and thinking back on everything they ever did, on the path they walked, they find solace in their hearts. They experience no accusations or regrets. Some people spare no effort while leading in the church or being responsible for a certain aspect of work. They unleash their maximum potential, giving all of their strength, expending all their energy and paying the price for the work they do. Through

their watering, leadership, help, and support, they help many people in the midst of their own weaknesses and negativity to become strong and stand firm, not to withdraw themselves, but instead to return to the presence of God and even finally bear witness to Him. Furthermore, during the period of their leadership, they accomplish many significant tasks, clearing out more than a few evil people, protecting many of God's chosen people, and recovering a number of significant losses. All of these achievements take place during their leadership. Looking back at the path they walked, recalling the work they did and the price they paid over the years, they feel no regrets or accusations. They believe that they did nothing to merit remorse, and they live with a sense of value, and steadiness and comfort in their hearts. How wonderful is that! Isn't this the result? (Yes.) This sense of steadiness and comfort, this lack of regrets, they are the result and the reward of pursuing positive things and the truth. Let's not set high standards for people. Let's consider a situation where a person is faced with a task they should do or want to do in their lifetime. After finding their place, they stand firmly in their position, holding their position, taking great pains, paying the price, and devoting all their energy to accomplish and finish what they should work on and complete. When they finally stand before God to give an account, they feel relatively satisfied, without accusations or regrets in their heart. They have a sense of comfort and of reward, that they have lived a valuable life. Isn't this a significant goal? Regardless of its scale, tell Me, is it practical? (It is practical.) Is it specific? It's specific enough, practical enough, and realistic enough. So, in order to live a valuable life and ultimately achieve this kind of reward, do you think it's worth it for a person's physical body to suffer a bit and pay a bit of a price, even if they experience exhaustion and physical illness? (It is worth it.) When a person comes into this world, it isn't just for the enjoyment of the flesh, nor is it solely for eating, drinking, and having fun. One shouldn't live just for those things; that is not the value of human life, nor is it the right path. The value of human life and the right path to follow involve accomplishing something valuable and completing one or multiple jobs of value. This is not called a career; it is called the right path, it is also called the proper task. Tell Me, is it worth it for a person to pay the price in order to complete some work of value, live a meaningful and valuable life, and pursue and attain the truth? If you truly desire to pursue and understand the truth, to embark on the right path in life, to fulfill your duty well, and to live a valuable and meaningful life, then you should not hesitate to give all of your energy, pay the price, and give all of your time and the extent of your days. If you experience a bit of illness during this period it will not matter, it will not crush you. Isn't this far superior to a lifetime of ease and idleness, nurturing the physical body to the point that it is well-fed and healthy, and ultimately achieving longevity? (Yes.) Which one of these two options is more conducive to a valuable life? Which one can bring comfort and no regrets to people when they face death at the very end? (Living a meaningful life.) Living a meaningful life means to feel results and comfort in your heart. What about those who are well-fed, and maintain a rosy complexion until death? They don't pursue

a meaningful life, so how do they feel when they die? (Like they lived in vain.) These three words are incisive—living in vain. What does “living in vain” mean? (To waste one’s life.) Living in vain, wasting one’s life—what is the basis for these two phrases? (At the end of their lives they find that they have gained nothing.) What should a person gain then? (They should gain the truth or accomplish valuable and meaningful things in this life. They should fulfill their duty as a created being. If they fail to do all that and only live for their physical bodies, they will feel that their life was lived in vain and wasted.) When facing death, they will ponder what they have done throughout their lives. They will say, “Oh, I only thought about eating, drinking, and having fun every day. My health was good, and I didn’t experience any illnesses. My entire life was peaceful. But now that I’m getting older and about to die, where will I go after death? Will I go to hell or heaven? How will God arrange my end? Where will I go for my destination?” They will feel uneasy. Enjoying physical comfort throughout their lives, they didn’t have any awareness before, but now they feel uneasy as death approaches. Because they feel uneasy, won’t they start thinking about making amends? Is there still time to make amends at that point? (There is no time.) They do not have the strength to run anymore, nor do they have the strength to speak. Even if they want to pay a bit of a price or endure a bit of hardship, their physical strength is inadequate. Even if they want to go out and preach the gospel, they are not in the physical condition for it. Moreover, they don’t understand any of the truth and cannot fellowship about even a bit of it. There isn’t time for them to make amends anymore. Let’s say they want to listen to some hymns. As they listen, they fall asleep. Let’s say they wish to listen to a sermon. As they listen, they become drowsy. They don’t have the energy anymore, and they are unable to focus. They think about what they did all those years, and where they spent their energy. Now they are advanced in years, and they want to attend to their proper work, but their failing bodies will no longer let them. They just don’t have the energy anymore, they can’t learn anything even if they wanted to, and their reactions are slow. They cannot understand many truths, and when they try to fellowship with others, everyone is busy and has no time to fellowship with them. They don’t have principles or a path in anything they do. What happens to them in the end? The more they ponder, the more uneasy they become. The more they ponder, the more they feel remorse. The more they ponder, the more regrets they accumulate. In the end, they have no choice but to wait for death. Their life is over, and there’s no way to make amends. Do they feel remorse? (Yes.) It’s too late! There’s no time left. When facing death, they realize that enjoying a life of physical comfort is entirely empty. They see through everything and want to turn back to pursue the truth and fulfill their duty and do something well, but they can’t achieve anything or strive for anything in any respect. This life is almost over, it ends with regrets, carrying remorse and unease with it. What is the final outcome for people like this when facing death? They can only die with regret, remorse, and unease. This life has been lived in vain! Their physical bodies haven’t endured any hardship. They have enjoyed only comfort, without being exposed to the

wind or the sun, or taking any risks. They haven't paid any price. They have lived in good health, rarely experiencing any illnesses, barely even catching a cold. They have taken care of their physical bodies well, but unfortunately, they haven't fulfilled any duties or gained any truths. Only at the moment of death do they feel regret. And what if they do feel regret? This is called suffering as a result of their own actions!

If a person wishes to live a valuable and meaningful life, they must pursue the truth. First and foremost, they should have a correct outlook on life, as well as the right thoughts and viewpoints on the various great and small matters that they face in life and on their life path. They should also view all of these matters from the right perspective and stance, rather than approaching the various problems they encounter in the course of their life or in their daily life using extreme or radical thoughts and viewpoints. Of course, they also must not view these things through a secular perspective, and instead they should let go of such negative and incorrect thoughts and viewpoints. If you wish to achieve this, you should first dissect, expose, and recognize the various negative thoughts that people harbor, and then become capable of changing and correcting your various negative emotions, letting go of them, and attaining correct and positive thoughts and viewpoints, as well as the right perspectives and stances from which to view people and things. By doing so, you will possess the conscience and reason necessary to pursue the truth. Of course, it could be said specifically that when a person possesses the correct viewpoints, perspectives, and stances for viewing people and things, that is what it means to possess normal humanity. If people possess this kind of normal humanity and these correct thoughts and viewpoints, it becomes much less challenging and much easier for them to pursue the truth. It is like when a person wishes to reach a destination—if they are on the right path and heading in the right direction, then, regardless of their speed, they will eventually reach that destination. However, if a person is heading in the opposite direction of their intended destination, then, no matter how fast or how slow they go, they will only get farther away from their goal. How does that idiom go? "Trying to go south by driving north." It is just like how some people believe in God and desire salvation, but pursue fame, profit, and status, which means that they have no way of attaining salvation. What will their ultimate outcome be? It will certainly be punishment. To give an example, say that a person has gotten cancer and they are afraid to die. They refuse to accept death and constantly pray for God to protect them from death and to extend their life for a few more years. They carry the negative emotions of distress, worry, and anxiety with them as they go through day after day, though they manage to survive for a few more years, attaining their goal and experiencing the happiness that comes from avoiding death. They feel fortunate, and believe that God is so good, that He is truly magnificent. Through their own efforts, repeated pleas, self-love, and self-care, they evade death, and, in the end, go on living, just like they wished to. They express gratitude for God's preservation, grace, love, and mercy. Every day they thank God and come before Him to offer praise for this. They often weep while

singing hymns and while pondering on God's words, and they think about how wonderful God is: "God truly has control over life and death; He has allowed me to live." While fulfilling their duty each day, they often consider how to put suffering first and pleasure last, and how to do better than others in everything, so that they may preserve their own life and avoid death—they end up living a few more years, and feel quite satisfied and happy. But one day, their illness worsens, and the doctor gives them one final notice, telling them to prepare for the end. They now face death; they are truly on the verge of dying. How will they react? Their greatest fear has come upon them, their greatest worry has finally materialized. The day they were most reluctant to behold and experience has arrived. In an instant their heart sinks and their mood hits rock bottom. They are no longer of a mind to fulfill their duty, and they have no words left to pray to God. They no longer want to praise God or to hear Him speak any words or supply any truths. They no longer believe that God is love, righteousness, mercy, and kindness. At the same time, they feel regret, "All these years, I forgot to eat more good food and to go and have some fun during my free time. Now I don't have the chance to do those things anymore." Their mind is filled with grievances and lamentations, and their heart is filled with pain, as well as complaints, resentment, and denial toward God. Then, with regret, they leave this world. Before they departed, was God still in their heart? Did they still believe in the existence of God? (They no longer believed.) How did this outcome come about? Didn't it begin with the erroneous viewpoints that they held toward life and death from the very beginning? (Yes.) Not only did they hold incorrect thoughts and viewpoints at the outset, but even more seriously, after this they followed and conformed to their own thoughts and viewpoints in their pursuit forward. They never gave up, and they charged ahead and sprinted down the wrong path without looking back. As a result, they lost faith in God in the end—their journey of faith came to an end in this way, and their life was thus concluded. Did they attain the truth? Did God gain them? (No.) When they finally died, did the perspectives and attitudes toward death that they clung to change? (No.) Did they die with comfort, joy, and peace, or with regret, reluctance, and bitterness? (They died with reluctance and bitterness.) They gained nothing at all. They did not attain the truth, and God did not gain them either. So, would you say that this kind of person has attained salvation? (No.) They have not been saved. Before their death, did they not run about a lot and expend a great deal? (Yes, they did.) Just like other people, they believed in God and fulfilled their duty, and on the surface, there didn't appear to be any difference between them and anyone else. When they experienced illness and death, they prayed to God and still did not abandon their duty. They kept working, even to the same level that they did before. However, there is something that people ought to understand and see through to: The thoughts and viewpoints that this person harbored were consistently negative and erroneous. Regardless of the extent of their suffering or the price they paid while fulfilling their duty, they harbored these erroneous thoughts and viewpoints in their pursuit. They were constantly governed by them and bringing their negative emotions

into their duty, seeking to offer the fulfillment of their duty to God in exchange for their own survival, to achieve their aim. The goal of their pursuit was not to understand or gain the truth, or to submit to all of God's orchestrations and arrangements. The goal of their pursuit was the exact opposite of this. They wanted to live according to their own will and requirements, getting that which they wished to pursue. They wanted to arrange and orchestrate their own fate and even their own life and death. And so, at the end of the road, their outcome was that they gained nothing at all. They did not obtain the truth and they ultimately denied God, and lost faith in Him. Even as death approached, they still failed to understand how people should live and how a created being should treat the Creator's orchestrations and arrangements. That is the most pitiful and tragic thing about them. Even on the verge of death, they failed to understand that throughout a person's life, everything is under the sovereignty and arrangement of the Creator. If the Creator wants you to live, then even if you are plagued by a deadly illness, you will not die. If the Creator wants you to die, then even if you are young, healthy, and strong, when your time comes, you must die. Everything is under the sovereignty and arrangement of God, this is God's authority, and no one can rise above it. They failed to comprehend such a simple fact—isn't that pitiful? (Yes.) Despite their believing in God, attending gatherings, listening to sermons, and fulfilling their duty, despite their belief in the existence of God, they repeatedly refused to acknowledge that human destiny, including life and death, is in the hands of God rather than subject to human will. No one dies simply because they want to, and no one survives solely because they want to live and fear death. They failed to grasp such a simple fact, they failed to see through it even when faced with impending death, and they still did not know that a person's life and death are not determined by themselves but instead depend on the predestination of the Creator. Isn't this tragic? (Yes.) Therefore, although various negative emotions may seem insignificant to people, they are all involved in the attitude with which a person views people and things within the scope of normal humanity. If a person can positively approach every kind of thing that occurs in a normal human life and existence, then they will have relatively few negative emotions. It can also be said that their conscience and reason will be relatively normal, making it easier for them to pursue the truth and enter into reality, reducing the difficulties and obstacles they'll face. If a person's heart is filled with all kinds of negative emotions, which means that they are brimming with various negative thoughts in their approach to the challenges of life and existence, then they will encounter more obstacles and difficulties in their pursuit of the truth. If their will to pursue the truth is not strong, if they do not have a lot of zeal, or such a tremendous desire for God, then the difficulties and obstacles they face in their pursuit of the truth will be significant. What does this mean? It means that they will struggle to enter into the truth reality. Leaving aside the severity of their corrupt disposition, these negative emotions alone will bind them, making every step difficult. When some people are faced with hatred, anger, various kinds of pain, or other problems, the different thoughts that emerge from them are

negative. That is, in almost every matter, their status is basically always dominated by negative emotions. If you lack the necessary determination and perseverance to resolve these negative emotions and to emerge from this status of negative emotions, it will be extremely challenging for you to enter into the truth reality. It will not be easy. This means that before entering into the reality of pursuing the truth, people must first possess the most fundamental correct thoughts, viewpoints, and stances regarding every problem that relates to normal humanity. Only then can they comprehend and accept the truth, and gradually enter into the truth reality. Before formally pursuing the truth, you must first resolve your various negative emotions and pass this stage. Once people have passed this stage, and their thoughts and viewpoints concerning various matters, as well as the perspective and stance from which they view people and things, are all correct, then pursuing the truth and entering into reality will be easier for them.

Last time we fellowshiped about one reason why the negative emotion of repression emerges in people. It is brought about because they cannot do as they please. Today we will continue to fellowship on another reason for the emergence of this negative emotion of repression, namely that people often live in this repressive emotion because they cannot put their expertise to use. Isn't this another reason? (Yes.) Last time, we talked about how some people often desire to do as they please in the church or in their daily lives, idling about and failing to attend to their proper work, so when their desires go unfulfilled, they feel repressed. This time, we will fellowship about the manifestations of another group of people. These people possess certain gifts, strengths, or professional skills and abilities, or they have mastered a particular kind of technical profession, and so on, yet they are unable to utilize their gifts, strengths, and professional skills normally within the church, and as a result, they are often in low spirits, feeling that life in this environment is uncomfortable and unhappy, and that they are devoid of joy. In short, the word that describes this feeling is repression. In secular society, what are people like this called? They are called professionals, technical experts, and specialist experts—in short, they are referred to as experts. What characteristics do experts possess? They have high foreheads and bright eyes, they wear glasses, and hold their heads high, walking at a hurried pace, handling matters decisively and efficiently. Their most prominent feature is that they carry laptops in their bags wherever they go. They are recognized immediately as professionals and technical experts. In short, people like this have certain professional abilities or are relatively proficient in a specific kind of technology. They have received professional education and tutoring, and undergone professional instruction and training, or some of them may not have received professional tutoring and training, but they were born possessing certain talents and qualities. People like this are known as professionals and technical experts. When these people join the church, just like in society, they often carry their laptops around, and want to be recognized as professionals and technical experts wherever they work. They enjoy being called experts and even prefer for "Professor" to be added in front of their

surnames, and so on; they like to be treated and addressed in this way. However, the church is a special place, and a place of special work. It is different from any group or any organization or institution in secular society. What is usually discussed here? The truth, principles, rules, and work arrangements, as well as protecting the interests of God's house, and testimony to God. Of course, more concretely, people are also required to practice the truth, submit to God's words and the truth principles, and to submit to the arrangements of God's house and the principles it communicates, and so on. As soon as these explicit rules are promoted, and people are required to practice and abide by them, these experts who have joined the church feel somewhat wronged. The skills they have learned or the knowledge they hold in certain areas often go unused in the church. They are usually not put in important positions or highly regarded, and they are frequently sidelined. Naturally, these individuals often feel idle, and that their abilities are not being utilized. What do they think to themselves? "Oh, this is just like the saying, 'If a tiger comes down to the plains, he will be insulted by dogs'! Back in the day when I worked for such-and-such state-owned or foreign company, how glorious that was! I didn't even have to carry my own bag, and others would arrange every aspect of my daily life and work for me. I didn't have to worry about a thing. I was a high-level expert, a master technician, so I was a big shot in the company. What does it mean to be a big shot? It means that without me, the company couldn't function, it couldn't secure any orders, and all of its employees would have to take a break—the company would be at risk of going out of business, it couldn't do without me. Those were the glory days, a time when I really felt seen!" Now that they believe in God, they still want to enjoy the same level of glory. They think to themselves, "With my abilities, there should be even more of a place for me to shine in God's house. So why am I not being utilized? Why do the leaders and brothers and sisters in the church always overlook me? What am I lacking compared to others? In terms of appearance, I'm good-looking; in terms of temperament, I'm no worse than anyone else; in terms of reputation and prestige, I have no problems at all; and in terms of technical expertise, mine is top-notch. So, why does no one pay attention to me? Why does no one listen to my words and suggestions? Why am I not well-received in God's house? Could it be that God's house does not need an expert like me? How come I don't have anywhere to use my skills since coming here? One aspect of the work of God's house must need the technical skills that I have learned. My expertise should be valued here! I am a professional, I should be a team leader, a supervisor, a leader—I should lead other people. Why am I always just an underling? No one pays attention to me, no one respects me. What is going on? Is this really the treatment I should receive if I don't understand the truth?" They ask themselves these questions repeatedly, but they can never find the answers, and so they fall into repression.

When the choir came on stage to sing, they once asked Me about their hairstyles. I said, "Sisters can tie their hair in a ponytail or have it cut to ear-length or shoulder-length.

Of course, they can also wear it in a bun or an updo. Brothers can do a crew cut or have it parted. There is no need for any adornment or styling. Just make sure it looks neat, clean, sharp, and natural. In short, as long as you appear upright and dignified, and have the look of a Christian, that's fine. The main thing is to sing and perform the program well." Were My words spoken clearly? Were they easy to understand? (Yes.) The hairstyles for both men and women were made clear. What are the principles for selecting hairstyles? Brothers can have parted hair or a crew cut, and sisters can have either short or long hair. If it's long, they can tie it in a ponytail, and if it's short just make sure it isn't too short. That's one principle. The other principle is cleanliness and tidiness, an appearance that is positive and dignified, and a positive character. We are not aiming to become celebrities or famous people in society. We don't seek a glamorous image, just an upright and dignified appearance. In short, one should look clean, tidy, upright and dignified. Have I made Myself clear? Are these two principles easy to understand and carry out? (They are easy.) Once people hear them, they understand them clearly in their hearts, and there is no need to repeat them. They are all too easy to achieve. After a little over ten days, they sent Me a video. As I watched it, I saw three or four rows of sisters. The first row all had styled hair, each person with a different hairstyle and arrangement. Everyone looked different, every style looked strange, and some sisters in their twenties appeared to be in their thirties or forties, and some looked like old ladies. In short, each person had a different hairstyle. The person who sent the video said, "We've arranged many different hairstyles for You to choose from. You can choose any one of them, and we can make it happen. It won't be difficult for us! After You pick, just give us the word and we can get it done, no problem!" How do you think I felt after watching this video? I felt a bit disgusted, then upon closer inspection I started to get annoyed. When I remembered the principles I had explained to them, in the end I was speechless. I didn't know what to say. I thought, "Ah, these people don't understand human language." I pondered over the words I had said and the principles I had communicated to them, about how they were all things that anyone could understand and comprehend. Such simple things weren't difficult for people, and people could do them—but why did they send Me such a video? After investigating, I realized it wasn't that I didn't explain My point clearly, and it especially wasn't that I told them to do various different hairstyles. There are two reasons for this behavior: One reason is that they were unable to understand My words. Another reason is that, as soon as people are able to do something, as soon as they understand something and have mastered certain skills and techniques, they don't know their place in the universe. They don't respect anyone and always want to show off. They become arrogant to the extreme. Even if they understand My words, they don't accept them or put them into practice. They don't take My words to heart, don't consider them important, and simply ignore what I say. They are just not interested in what I ask them to do or in what I need. When they asked Me about the principles, in reality they had already determined what they were going to do

and how they would do it. The fact that they asked Me was simply a step in their process. Isn't it a kind of mockery for them to ask that? (Yes.) After they finished with their mockery, no matter what I said, they did what they wanted in the end, without following My words at all. They were so self-willed! What were they thinking? "You underestimate us. We are professional technicians. We interact with influential people in society. We have these skills and expertise, and wherever we go, we can live a good life and earn people's respect. Only when we come into God's house do we become service-doers, and we are constantly looked down upon. We have skills, we are experts, we are not ordinary people. We should be respected in God's house. You cannot suppress our talents like this. We utilize our expertise in God's house, and You should support us and back us up." Isn't this rude and unreasonable? (Yes.) Is there any normal humanity in it? (No, there isn't.) When I saw it, I thought, "Ah, these people cannot be reasoned with!" When I told them the principles, I even asked them repeatedly, "Have you understood? Will you remember?" They promised Me thoroughly to My face, but then as soon as they turned around they immediately went back on their word. They said things that sound so good, "I am here to fulfill my duty, I am here to satisfy God." Is that what you call fulfilling your duty? Are you really satisfying God? You are satisfying your own flesh, your own reputation. You are here to pursue your own career, not to perform your duty. In other words, you have come into God's house to wreak havoc. Tell Me, who has the final say in the principles people should uphold in all aspects of the work of God's house? Is it you or God? (God has the final say.) Are your words the truth, or are God's? (God's words are the truth.) Everything you say is a kind of doctrine. If that doctrine does not align with the truth, then it becomes a fallacy. Since you admit that what I say is the truth, why are you unable to accept it? Why is it that when I speak to you, it has no effect? You say nice things in front of My face, but behind My back, you do not practice the truth. What is going on? When corrupt humanity possesses just a little bit of talent, expertise, or ideas, they become arrogant and conceited and refuse to submit to anyone. They don't listen to what anyone tells them. Isn't this just too irrational? If you think you are doing what is right, then why do you let Me examine it? When I point out your flaws and expose your mistakes, why are you unable to accept it? You do not understand the truth, but I can fellowship with you about the truth. I know how to act in accordance with the truth, in accordance with the principles, with saintly decency. I know how to act in a way that edifies others. Do you? If you don't even know these things, why are you still unable to accept the truth? Why don't you do as I say?

Some people excel in writing; they are naturally gifted with organizing language and conveying ideas. They may also possess a certain level of literary competence, employing certain techniques and styles when describing things. But does having these qualities mean they understand the truth? (No, it doesn't.) This is merely one aspect of knowledge, one facet of a person's gifts and talents. It means that you possess a certain talent, that you are good at writing and conveying ideas through language, and that you

are well-grounded in the use of words. Being good at such things makes some people think, “I wield the pen in God’s house; I should engage in text-based work.” It’s good to have more people engaged in text-based work; the house of God needs it. However, what the house of God requires is not only what you excel in, nor just your professional capabilities. Your professional skills and expertise are merely tools for the work you engage in. Regardless of your professional abilities and skill level, you should align yourself with the principles required by God’s house and achieve the desired results and goals set forth by the house of God. God’s house has required standards and related principles for these results and goals; it does not let you act based on your personal taste or preferences. For example, some people have good writing skills, and write scripts with elaborate language and a vividly organized plot. But does that achieve the desired result? Far from attaining the effect of bearing witness to God, such scripts simply don’t hold up. However, these scriptwriters feel satisfied and confident with their ability to write fancy language, and they think highly of themselves. They do not understand that a script must achieve the effect of bearing witness to God, of spreading God’s word. This is the aim. God’s house requires that a script must portray the words of God that the protagonist reads, and the genuine understanding that the protagonist gains through experiencing and practicing God’s words under the guidance of God’s work. In one respect it must serve as a testimony to God, and in another it must spread His word. Only then does the script achieve the desired result. The house of God has these requirements. Do you think this makes things difficult for people? (No, this doesn’t.) No, this is the work of God’s house. However, these scriptwriters are unwilling to do it this way. Their attitude is, “What I have written is already perfect and specific enough. If you ask me to add that material, it will go against my intention. I’m not happy with it, and I don’t want to write it that way.” Although this material was reluctantly added later, their emotions have changed significantly by then. Some say, “It feels so repressive to fulfill our duty in the house of God. There are always people dealing with and finding fault with us. I feel truly cornered, as they say, Beggars can’t be choosers. If only I could have the final say and write what I please, how great would that be! While fulfilling our duty in God’s house we always have to listen to others and accept pruning and dealing with. It’s too repressive!” Is this the correct attitude? What kind of disposition is this? It’s too arrogant and self-righteous! There are also those in the choir who fulfill their duty in applying makeup. They like the hairstyles of unbelievers, but the end result of those hairstyles is rejected. Why? Because the house of God does not want demonic hairstyles; it wants hairstyles that are normal, dignified, and upright. Whatever hairstyle you’re able to do, you can go and display it in the world of unbelievers. They need such experts, but the house of God does not. Some people say they are willing to work for free in God’s house, but their work is not considered necessary or valuable; it’s disgusting to witness. What the house of God requires is for you to appear dignified and upright, like a decent person. It doesn’t need you to be elegant, to resemble palace

nobility, and certainly not to be like a princess, a lady, a wealthy young master, or a lord. We are ordinary people, without any status, position, or value, just the most normal and unremarkable people. It is best to be an ordinary person, not noble or refined, to wear ordinary clothes and have the appearance of an ordinary person, to not pretend, but to enjoy what you are able to do and be content with living the life of an ordinary person without ambition or desire. This is the best, this is the life of someone with normal humanity. You are just an ordinary person, yet you are always trying to act like a noble person. Isn't that disgusting? (It is disgusting.) You are always trying to display your expertise in the house of God and show off. Let Me tell you, is it valuable to show off your expertise? If it truly has value, then it's acceptable. But if it has no value whatsoever and instead becomes disruptive and destructive, then you are just showing your repulsive nature and undesirable qualities. Do you know the consequences of revealing such things? If you don't know, please don't reveal them. What you can do, what technical skills you possess, what special talents you naturally excel in or possess, none of that is considered noble; you are merely an ordinary person. Some people say, "I'm proficient in several languages." Then go work as a translator and do your translation work well; then you can be considered a good person. Some people say, "I can recite the entire Xinhua Dictionary." So what if you've memorized the entire Xinhua Dictionary? Does that enable you to spread the gospel? Does it enable you to bear witness to God? Some people say, "I can read ten lines at a glance. I can read 100 pages of God's word in a day. Look at this skill, isn't it impressive?" You may be able to read 100 pages of The Word Appears in the Flesh in one day, but what do you understand from it? What aspect of the truth do you understand? Can you put it into practice? Some people say, "I am a child prodigy. I could sing and write poems by the age of five." Is that useful? Unbelievers may admire you, but there is no use for you in the house of God. Let's say I ask you to compose a song right now praising God. Could you do it? If you can't, it means you don't understand any aspect of the truth. Having gifts alone is not a big deal. If you don't understand the truth, you won't be able to accomplish anything. Regardless of the gifts, skills, or talents a person possesses, in reality these are merely tools. If they can be used for positive things and have a positive impact, they may be said to hold some value. If they cannot be used for positive things or have a positive impact, then they have no value, and learning them is useless and burdensome to you. If you can apply your professional skills or talents in the performance of your duty and fulfill a task in God's house in accordance with the truth principles, then your professional skills and talents may be said to be used in the proper place and to serve a purpose—this is the value they possess. On the other hand, if you can't apply them at all to your performance of duty, then your professional skills and talents have no value and are worth nothing to Me. For example, some people are naturally eloquent and articulate, and are skilled linguists and agile thinkers. This can be considered a talent. In the world, if people like this engage in public speaking, publicity, or negotiation, or work as judges, lawyers, or

in similar occupations, then they have a place for their talents. In God's house, however, if you possess such a talent but don't understand any aspect of the truth, not even a basic understanding of the truth of visions, and cannot spread the gospel or bear witness to God, then your gift or talent is of little value. If you constantly live off your gift, parading your talent everywhere you go, boasting and preaching words and doctrines, you will become repulsive to people. Because every word you speak will become nauseating, and every thought or viewpoint you express will become tiresome. In that case, it will be better for you to remain silent. The more you try to showcase yourself and perform, the more repugnant you will become. People will say, "Shut your foul mouth! What you're saying is all doctrine, but who doesn't understand it already? How many years have you been preaching? Your words are no different from those of the Pharisees, full of empty theories that pollute the church environment. No one wants to listen!" You see, it stirs up anger and repulses people. Therefore, it's better for you to focus more on the truth and seek more understanding of the truth, and that is a true ability. The more I say this, the more these "capable" and "expert" people feel repressed, thinking, "It's over now, there's no way out. I've always considered myself talented, excelling and being put in key positions wherever I go. Isn't there a saying, 'If it's gold, sooner or later it's going to shine'? But I've unexpectedly hit a wall in God's house. It feels repressive, so repressive! How did I end up like this?" Believing in God is a good thing, so why do exceptionally talented and advanced experts like this feel repressed when they come into the house of God? They have felt repressed for so many years now that they suffer from depression. They no longer even know how to speak or act. In the end, some say, "Being dealt with constantly feels so repressive. Now I'm much more well-behaved, and I agree with whatever the church leaders or group leaders say, always replying 'yes' or 'okay.'" It may seem like they've learned to submit and obey, but they still don't understand the principles or how to fulfill their duties properly. They carry this sense of repression with them and feel indignant and undervalued. When asked about their education level, some say, "I received my bachelor's," others, "I have a Master's," others, "I have a Ph.D.," or "I graduated from medical school," "I studied finance," or "I studied management," while others are programmers or engineers. If they do not already have a "Dr." in front of their name, then they have some other formal title. These people are not addressed as such in God's house, nor are they treated with any high regard. They often feel repressed and lose their sense of identity. The church has all kinds of experts, including musicians, dancers, filmmakers, technicians, business professionals, economists, and even politicians. While among the brothers and sisters, these people often say, "I'm a respected executive in a state-owned enterprise. I'm the senior executive of a multinational corporation. I'm the CEO, who have I ever been afraid of? Who have I ever submitted to? I was born with management skills, and wherever I go I should be in a position of authority, I should be the one in charge, always the one managing other people, and no one can manage me. So, in God's house I should at the very least be a

group leader or a person in charge!" Not long after, it becomes clear to everyone that these people have no truth reality, are incapable of doing any task, and are particularly arrogant and self-conceited. They fail to fulfill any duty properly, and ultimately, some of them can only be assigned tasks of manual labor, while others are always unwilling to submit, constantly trying to show off their abilities, and running amok. As a result, they cause too much trouble, anger the congregation, and are finally cleared out. Won't these people feel repressed? In the end, they summarize their experience with a statement: "The house of God is not a place for talented people like us. We are like thoroughbred horses, but there is no discerning judge in the house of God. Those who believe in God are ignorant and ill-informed, especially those who are leaders at various levels. Although they understand the truth, they fail to recognize that we are thoroughbreds. We must go and find someone who can recognize our talents." In the end, they come to this conclusion. There are others who say, "There is too little space in the house of God to accommodate us. We are all important figures, while those who believe in God are humble people from the lower classes of society: farmers, street vendors, and small business owners. There are no top-ranking experts among them. Although the church is small, the world is wide, and in such a big world there must be a place for us. We, the talented ones, will eventually find our own appraiser!" Let's wish these people good luck in finding their appraiser, shall we? (Alright.) On the day they say goodbye to us after finding their appraiser, let us give them a farewell dinner and hope that they find their rightful place, free from any emotions of repression. May they live better than us, and may they have a peaceful life. By our saying this, do these people with repressed emotions feel a bit relieved? Their feelings of tightness in the chest, swelling in the head, heaviness in the heart, physical discomfort, and uneasiness—have those feelings disappeared? I hope their wishes come true, that they no longer feel repressed, and that they are able to live happily and freely.

Tell Me, do you think that God's house is intentionally making things difficult for these talented individuals? (No.) Absolutely not. Then why do the various principles, work arrangements, and the requirements for each item of work in God's house give rise to repressive emotions in them? Why do these talented individuals get trapped within repressive emotions in God's house? Did God's house make a mistake? Or is God's house intentionally making things difficult for these people? (Neither.) In terms of doctrine, you all understand that both of these explanations are absolutely incorrect. Then why does this happen? (It is because people impose the professional expertise they have acquired in the secular world or their personal preferences onto the principles and requirements of God's house in the course of fulfilling their duties.) But does God's house allow them to impose these things onto its requirements and principles? Absolutely not. Some people feel repressed because God's house does not permit this. What do you think they should do about that? (Before fulfilling each duty, they must first understand the requirements and principles that God's house has for that duty. After

accurately grasping these principles, they can then apply the professional expertise that they have mastered in a reasonable manner.) This principle is correct. Now tell Me, is constantly wanting to display one's expertise and show off one's abilities in God's house the correct starting point? (No, it is not.) In what way is it incorrect? Please explain the reason. (Their intention is to show off and distinguish themselves—they are pursuing their own careers. They are not thinking about how they can perform their duties well or how to act in a way that benefits the work of God's house. Instead, they want to act according to their own preferences, without safeguarding the interests of God's house or seeking the truth principles.) How do others view this matter? (Always showing off whenever something happens is a satanic disposition. They do not think about how to fulfill their duties and bear witness to God; they always want to bear witness to themselves, and this path is inherently wrong.) This starting point is inherently incorrect, that is certain. So, in what way is it incorrect? This is an issue that you are all unable to refute. It seems that all of you are feeling repressed, and that you all want to display your expertise in order to showcase your abilities—isn't that right? Among the unbelievers there is a saying, what is it? "An old lady puts on lipstick—to give you something to look at." Isn't this what "showcasing your abilities" means? (Yes.) Showcasing your abilities means wanting to display your capabilities and show off, to gain prestige and status among others, and to be highly regarded. At the very least, it is about wanting to use the opportunity of showcasing one's abilities to inform and notify others that: "I have some real skills, I am not an ordinary person, do not look down on me, I am a talented individual." At the very least, that is the meaning behind it. So, when someone has such intentions and always wants to showcase their abilities, what is the nature of this? They want to pursue their own career, to manage their own status, to gain a foothold and prestige among other people. It's as simple as that. They are not doing it to fulfill their duty, or for the sake of God's house, and they are not seeking the truth and acting according to the principles and requirements of God's house. They are doing it for themselves, to make themselves more widely recognized, to elevate their worth and reputation; they are doing it so that people will elect them as a supervisor or as a leader. Once they are elected as a leader or a worker, won't they then have status? Won't they then be in the spotlight? This is their pursuit, their starting point is as simple as that—it is nothing more than the pursuit of status. They are purposefully chasing status, and they are not protecting the work of God's house or its interests.

How should people with gifts and talents practice in order to avoid feeling repressed? Is this easy to achieve? (It is easy.) So, how can you resolve the negative emotions of repression that arise from not being able to utilize your expertise? First and foremost, you need to understand what the technical skills, or any kinds of talents and expertise, that people study and master are—are they life itself? (No, they are not.) Can they be classified as positive things? (No, they cannot.) They cannot be classified as positive things; at best, they are a kind of tool. In society and in the secular world, they are, at

most, abilities that enable people to adequately provide for themselves and to maintain their survival. But in the eyes of God's house, you have just acquired a kind of technical skill; it is merely a kind of knowledge, it is a kind of simple and pure knowledge. It certainly does not indicate someone's nobleness or lowliness—a person cannot be said to be more noble than others just because they possess a certain expertise or skill. So, how can a person's nobleness or lowliness be seen? By looking at their humanity, their pursuits, and the path they follow. Technical skills or expertise can only represent what specific skill or knowledge you have acquired, how deep or shallow your understanding of it is, and what level of proficiency you have achieved in it. These technical skills and expertise can only be discussed in terms of proficiency, quantity, depth, and whether one is highly experienced in that field, or just has a superficial knowledge of it. They cannot be used to evaluate the quality of a person's humanity, their pursuits, or the path they walk. They are purely a kind of knowledge or tool. This knowledge or tool may enable you to perform some related tasks, or make you more competent in a particular kind of work, but this merely provides you with job security and a guaranteed livelihood. That is all. Regardless of how society views your technical skills and expertise, in any case, this is how God's house views them. God's house will never regard someone differently, make exceptions to promote them, or even exempt them from any form of pruning or dealing with, or any form of chastisement or judgment, just because they possess some kind of special skill. Regardless of what technical skills or expertise a person may possess, their corrupt disposition still exists, and they are still a corrupted human being. One's gifts, talents, and technical skills are separate from and unrelated to one's corrupt disposition, and they also have nothing to do with one's humanity or character. Some individuals have slightly better caliber, slightly higher intelligence, or slightly greater wits and perception, which allows them to acquire somewhat deeper knowledge when studying certain technical skills. They attain slightly greater achievements and results, and achieve more of them when performing work that involves this profession. In society, this may bring them somewhat greater and higher financial returns, and slightly higher status, seniority, or prestige within their field. That is all. Nevertheless, none of this indicates the path they are walking, their pursuits, or their attitude toward life and existence. Technical skills and expertise are things of a pure realm of knowledge, and they have nothing to do with a person's thoughts, viewpoints, or the perspective and stance they take on anything. They are not connected to these things in any way. Of course, the ideas that are promoted in some fields of knowledge are heresies and fallacies that mislead people about understanding the truth and recognizing positive things. That is a different matter altogether. Here, we are referring to pure knowledge and technical skills, which do not provide any positive or active support and correction for people's corrupt dispositions or normal humanity. They also have no ability to restrain or restrict a person's corrupt disposition. That is their nature. Whether one is engaged in literature, music, or any aspect of the arts, in the sciences,

biology, or chemistry, or in design, architecture, commerce, or even in craftsmanship, regardless of the field, the nature of their technical knowledge is like this—this is its essence. Do you think that I have spoken accurately? (Yes.) No matter which field you engage in or which technical skills you study, or if you possess some innate expertise, it does not indicate your nobleness or lowliness. For example, those who engage in business and economics in society, especially the elites, are believed to have noble character by some people, and because the professions and knowledge that they have learned are highly regarded by man, and they earn particularly high incomes, they have high social status. However, such an opinion does not exist in God's house, and God's house will not evaluate them in this way. Because the principles and standards used by those people to appraise this matter are not the truth but human understandings, which belong to human knowledge, such viewpoints are not tenable in God's house. To give another example, some people are fishermen, street vendors, or craftsmen in society; they are considered low-status and nobody holds them in high regard there. However, in God's house, all of God's chosen people are equal. Before the truth, everyone is equal, and there is no distinction between noble or lowly people. You will not be considered honorable because you have high status or engage in a noble profession in society, nor will you be regarded as lowly because you perform a low-status occupation in society. Therefore, in God's house and in the eyes of God, whether your identity, worth, and status are considered high or low has absolutely nothing to do with your professional abilities, technical proficiency, or the expertise that you possess. Some say, "I used to be a commander, a general, and a marshal in the army." I say to them, "You, go stand to the side." Why should you stand to the side? Because your satanic disposition is too severe, and it disgusts Me to look at you. First, spend some time reading God's words, gain an understanding of some truths, and live out a bit of human likeness, and then, when you come back, everyone will be able to accept you. In God's house, you will not be esteemed because you have engaged in a kind of work in society that is considered noble by man, nor will you be looked down upon because you once had low status in society. The standards and principles of God's house for assessing people are solely based on the criteria of the truth. So, what are the criteria of the truth? There are specific aspects to these criteria: Firstly, people are assessed based on the quality of their humanity, whether they have conscience and reason, a good heart, and a sense of justice; secondly, people are assessed based on whether or not they love the truth, and what path they are walking—whether they pursue the truth, love positive things, and love God's fairness and righteousness, or they do not pursue the truth, are sick of the truth and positive things, are always engaging in personal endeavors, and so on. Therefore, regardless of whether you possess some kind of technical skills or expertise, or whether you don't have any professional skills or expertise, in God's house you will be treated fairly. God's house has always functioned this way, continues to do so now, and will do so in the future. These principles and standards will never change. Therefore, what

needs to change are those who feel repressed because they cannot utilize their expertise. If you truly believe that God is righteous, that it's the truth that rules God's house, and that there is fairness and righteousness in God's house, then I ask you to make haste and let go of your incorrect viewpoints and opinions regarding technical skills and expertise. Don't think that possessing a few gifts or a little expertise makes you superior. Although you may possess technical skills or expertise that others lack, your humanity and corrupt disposition are no different from those of others. In the eyes of God, you are just an ordinary person, and there is nothing special about you. You may say, "I used to be a high-ranking official," well, you're still an ordinary person. You may say, "I used to accomplish great things," well, you're still an ordinary person. You may say, "I used to be a hero," but no matter what kind of hero or celebrity you were, it is of no use. From God's perspective, you're still just an ordinary person. This is one aspect of the truth and principles that people should understand about technical skills and some kinds of expertise. Another aspect—how to approach these professional skills and expertise—is a specific path of practice that people should understand. First of all, you need to know clearly in your thoughts and consciousness that regardless of the professional skills or expertise you possess, you are not coming to God's house to perform a job, to demonstrate your worth, to earn a salary, or to make a living. You are here to fulfill your duty. Your only identity in God's house is as a brother or sister, in other words, a created being in the eyes of God. You don't have a second identity. A created being in God's eyes is not an animal, a vegetable, or a devil. It is a human being, and as a human being, you should fulfill your duty. Fulfilling your duty as a human being is the most basic goal that you should have for coming into God's house, and the most fundamental viewpoint that you should possess. You should say, "I am a person. I am someone with normal humanity, a conscience, and reason. I should fulfill my duty." This is the thought and viewpoint that people should first possess, in terms of theory. Next is how you should fulfill your duty: Should you listen to yourself or to God? (Listen to God.) That's right, and why should you listen to God? In principle and in theory, people know that they must listen to God, that God is the truth, and that God has the final say. This is the viewpoint that one should have in terms of theory. In reality, you fulfill this duty not for yourself, not for your family, not for your day-to-day existence, nor for your personal career or endeavors, but for God's work, for God's management to save humanity. It has nothing to do with your personal affairs. You need to understand and possess this viewpoint. After you possess this viewpoint, next you must understand that since fulfilling your duty is not for the sake of yourself, but for the sake of God's work, you need to pray to and seek from God on how you should fulfill this duty, and what the principles and requirements of God's house are. Do your duty however God tells you to do it, doing whatever He asks you to do, without saying anything about it, without hesitation or refusal. This is an absolute. Because this is the house of God, it is only right and proper for people to fulfill the duties they ought to fulfill here. But people aren't doing this for

themselves, for their day-to-day existence, lives, families, or careers. Then what are they doing it for? For God's work, and for God's management. Regardless of which specific profession or kind of work it involves, whether it's as small as a punctuation mark or a formatting style, or as significant as a specific item of work, it all falls within the scope of God's work. Therefore, if you possess reason, you should first ask yourself, "How should I carry out this work? What are God's requirements? What principles has God's house set forth?" Then, list out the relevant principles one by one and act in strict accordance with each rule and principle. As long as it aligns with the principles and doesn't extend beyond their scope, everything you do will be appropriate, and God will treat and classify it as you fulfilling your duty. Isn't this something that people should understand? (Yes.) If you understand this, you shouldn't always be pondering on how you wish to do things or what you wish to do. Thinking and acting in this way lacks reason. Should things that lack reason be done? No, they shouldn't. If you wish to do them, what should you do about it? (Forsake myself.) You should forsake and let go of yourself, and put your duty and the requirements and principles of God's house first. If you feel ill at ease, and you gratify your interests and hobbies in your spare time, then God's house will not interfere with this. This is one aspect of what you should understand—what your duty is and how you should fulfill it. Another aspect pertains to the issue of people's professional expertise and skills. How should you approach the matter of professional skills and expertise? If God's house needs you to provide the professional expertise and skills that you excel at or have already mastered, what should your attitude be? You should provide them without reservation, allowing them to perform their function and showcase their value in your duty to the greatest extent possible. You shouldn't let them go to waste; because you can employ them, you understand them, and you have mastered them, you should let them be utilized. What is the principle of their utilization? It is that, whatever God's house needs, however much it needs, and to what extent it needs, you employ these skills in a way that is restrained and measured. Apply your technical skills and expertise in your duty, allowing them to fulfill their function, and enable you to achieve better results in your duty. In this way, will your professional skills and expertise not have been studied for a reason? Won't they have value? Won't you have made a contribution? (Yes.) Are you willing to contribute in this way? (Yes.) That's a good thing. As for the skills and expertise that have no use at all in God's house, God's house simply does not require or encourage them, and those who possess such skills or expertise should not exercise them arbitrarily. How should you receive this matter? (By abandoning those skills.) Exactly, the simplest approach is to abandon them, to act as if you never learned them. Tell Me, if you willingly let them go, will they still come out and disturb you when you are in the process of fulfilling your duty? No, they won't. Isn't it up to you to decide? They are just a bit of knowledge. How much trouble, how great an effect can they cause? Just treat them as if you never learned them, as if you do not possess them, and then won't the matter be done with? You should handle this matter correctly. If it's something

that God's house does not require you to do, don't keep forcibly showcasing your skills in order to show off, to satisfy your own interests, or to show everyone that you know a few tricks. That's wrong. This is not the performance of your duty and it won't be remembered. Let Me tell you, not only will it not be remembered, but it will be condemned, because you're not fulfilling your duty, you're engaging in personal endeavors, and that is very serious! Why is it serious? Because, at its nature, it is a disruption and a disturbance! God's house has repeatedly told you that you must not do things that way, or do those things, or use that kind of method, but you don't listen. You keep doing them, you keep refusing to let go, and persisting. Isn't that a disturbance? Isn't that deliberate? You know well that God's house doesn't need these things, yet you intentionally continue doing them. Don't you just enjoy showing off? If the videos or programs you make humiliate God, then the consequences will be unimaginable, and your transgression will be great. You understand this, right? (Yes.) Therefore, for the things you personally enjoy and the professional skills you possess—if you like them, if you're interested in them, if you cherish them, do them privately at home. That's fine. But don't publicly display them. If you want to publicly display something, you must be able to do it to a high standard, and not humiliate God or discredit His house. It's not simply about whether you possess insight or how proficient you are in certain professional skills. It's not that simple. There is a basis for the principles and standards that God's house demands for each piece of work that you do, as well as for the direction and objectives that guide your work at each stage. They are all meant to safeguard the work and interests of God's house, not to disrupt, disturb, discredit, or destroy them. If your personal caliber, insight, experience, and taste cannot keep up with these, or fall short of them, then fellowship in private, and ask for guidance and assistance from those who understand and can keep up with them. Do not resist, do not constantly harbor negative emotions just because you're not allowed to do certain things. Your few tricks simply aren't good enough. Why do I say you aren't good enough? Because your thoughts and viewpoints are too warped. Not only are your taste, insight, judgment, and experience inadequate and unsatisfactory, you also harbor many old religious notions. Your religious notions are too numerous and deeply rooted, and even some young people in their twenties have significantly outdated thoughts and notions. Although you are people of the modern age, who study modern technical skills, and possess certain professional knowledge, because you don't understand the truth, your perspectives, viewpoints, and stances regarding various matters and the thoughts you possess are all outdated. So, no matter how many professional skills you learn, your thoughts remain outdated. You need to understand this problem, and this true situation. Therefore, you must let go of those things which God's house requires you to eliminate, ban, or does not permit you to use. You need to learn to obey. If you don't understand the underlying reasons for this, at the very least, you must possess enough reason to learn to obey, and first act based on the requirements of God's house. Don't resist, first learn to submit.

After having fellowshiped about the correct attitude people should have toward the professional skills they possess, what else should you understand? In the process of fulfilling your duty, if you fail due to the poor application of certain technical skills or expertise, resulting in disruptions and losses in the work of the church, and you face pruning and dealing with, what should you do? This is easy to manage. Quickly turn and repent, and God's house will give you a chance to correct your mistakes. Because no one is perfect, everyone makes mistakes and has moments where they feel confused. Mistakes aren't troubling, what is worrying is if you continue to make the same mistakes repeatedly, persistently committing the same errors and not turning around until you hit the end of the road. If you realize your mistakes, then correct them. That's not so difficult, right? Everyone has made mistakes, so no one should ridicule another. If you can acknowledge your mistakes after making them, learn your lesson, and turn around, then you'll make progress. Furthermore, if the problem is due to a lack of proficiency in your work, you can continue learning and master the necessary skills, and the problem can be resolved. If you can ensure that you won't make that mistake in the future, won't that be the end of it? It's such a simple matter! There is no need for you to feel repressed just because you constantly make mistakes due to the misapplication of your professional skills, and you face pruning and dealing with. Why feel repressed? Why are you so fragile? Regardless of the situation or work environment, people sometimes make mistakes, and there are areas where their qualities, insights, and perspectives fall short. This is normal, and you need to learn how to handle it correctly. In any case, no matter what your practice is, you should face and handle it correctly and actively. Do not become depressed or feel negative or repressed when faced with a bit of difficulty, and do not fall into negative emotions. There's no need for all of that, don't make it into a big deal. What you should do is immediately reflect on yourself, and determine if there is an issue with your professional skills or a problem with your intentions. Examine if there are any impurities in your actions or if certain notions are to blame. Reflect on all aspects. If it is a problem with a lack of proficiency, you can continue learning, find somebody to help you explore solutions, or consult with people in the same field. If there are some wrong intentions in the mix, involving a problem that may be resolved using the truth, you can seek out church leaders or someone who understands the truth for consultation and fellowship. Talk with them about the state you are in and let them help you resolve it. If it is an issue involving notions, once you have examined and realized them, you can dissect and understand them, then turn away from and forsake them. Isn't that all there is to it? The days ahead still await you, the sun will rise again tomorrow, and you have to go on living. Since you are alive, since you are human, you should continue to fulfill your duty. As long as you are alive and have thoughts, you should strive to fulfill your duty and complete it. This is a goal that should never change throughout a person's life. No matter when, no matter what difficulties you encounter, no matter what you face, you should not feel repressed. If you feel repressed, you will stagnate and be defeated. What

kind of people always feel repressed? Weaklings and fools are often repressed. But you are not without a heart or thoughts, so what are you feeling repressed about? It is just that at the moment your technical skills or expertise are not being utilized normally. What does it mean to be utilized normally? It means doing what God's house requires of you and applying your learned technical skills to meet the required standards of God's house. Isn't that enough? Isn't that what we call normal utilization? God's house does not forbid you from utilizing your abilities. It simply wishes for you to utilize them purposefully, with moderation, standards, and principles, rather than using them recklessly. Apart from that, God's house does not interfere in matters not involving the fulfillment of your duties or in your personal life. Only in matters of fulfilling your duties, God's house has strict rules and required standards. So, when it comes to handling your professional skills and expertise, your hands and feet are not bound, and your thoughts are not controlled. Your thoughts are free, your hands and feet are free, and your heart is also free. It's just that, when you give rise to negative emotions, you choose to retreat, become depressed, refuse, and resist. But if you choose to face things positively, listen carefully, and follow the principles, rules, and requirements of God's house, you won't find yourself without a path to follow or things to do. You are not a useless person, a weakling, or a fool. God has given you free will, normal thinking, and a normal humanity. So, you have a duty to fulfill, and you should fulfill your own duty. Moreover, you possess professional skills and expertise, and so, in God's house, you are a useful person. If you can utilize your expertise as you should in certain aspects of the work of God's house involving professional skills and expertise, you will find your place and fulfill the duty of a created being. As long as you stand firm in your place, fulfill your duty, and do your work well, you are not a worthless person but a useful one. If you can fulfill your duty, have thoughts, and work competently, no matter what difficulties you face, you should not feel repressed, you should not retreat, nor should you refuse or evade. Now, at this moment, what you should do is not immerse yourself in negative emotions so that you are unable to extricate yourself. You should not complain like a resentful woman about God's house being unfair, about your brothers and sisters looking down on you, or about God's house not valuing you or giving you opportunities. In fact, God's house has given you opportunities and entrusted you with the duty you should fulfill, but you did not handle it well. You still kept to your own choices and requirements, you didn't listen carefully to God's words or pay attention to the principles God's house told you regarding your work. You are too self-willed. Therefore, if you are trapped in the negative emotion of repression, it is not anyone else's responsibility. It is not that God's house has let you down, much less that you cannot be tolerated here. It is because you haven't fully utilized your abilities in fulfilling your duty. You have not handled or utilized your technical profession and expertise correctly. You have not approached this matter rationally but have opposed it impulsively and with negative emotions. This is your mistake. If you let go of your negative emotions and come out of this state of repression, you will realize that there are many tasks you can do and many tasks you need to do. If

you can come out of these negative emotions and face your duty with a positive attitude, you will see that the road ahead is bright, not dark. No one is blocking your vision, and no one is hindering your footsteps. It is merely that you do not wish to move forward. Your preferences, desires, and personal plans have hindered your steps. Put these things aside, let go of them, learn to adapt to the work environment in God's house, to adapt to the help and support given you by your brothers and sisters, and to the method of fulfilling your duty and working in God's house. Bit by bit, let go of your preferences, desires, and unrealistic, fanciful ideas. Gradually, you will naturally come out of these negative emotions of repression. One more thing you must understand is that no matter how advanced your professional skills and expertise, these do not represent your life. They do not represent your maturity in life or that you have already received salvation. If you fulfill your duty in God's house in a normal and obedient manner according to the truth principles, using your professional skills and expertise, then you are doing well here and are truly a member of God's house. However, you always fly the banner of fulfilling your duty, take advantage of the opportunity of fulfilling your duty, take advantage of the opportunities given by God's house, and keep to your preferences, ambitions and desires to fully utilize your own expertise, using this to pursue your own career and personal endeavors, and as a result you hit a dead end and feel repressed. Who has caused this repression? You have caused it yourself. If you continue to pursue personal endeavors while fulfilling your duty in God's house, it won't work here, because you have come to the wrong place. From beginning to end, what is discussed in God's house is the truth, it is God's requirements and His words. Apart from these, there is nothing more to speak of. Therefore, regardless of the requirements made of people by God's house in any aspect of their work or profession, or any special work arrangements, they are not aimed at any particular individual, nor are they meant to suppress anyone or extinguish anybody's enthusiasm or pride. They are solely for the sake of God's work, in order to bear witness to God, spread His word, and bring more people before His presence. Of course, they are meant also for each and every one of you present here to embark as soon as possible on the path of pursuing the truth and to enter into the reality of the truth. Do you understand? If the examples mentioned today apply to certain individuals, do not feel disheartened. If you agree with what I say, accept it. If you disagree and still feel repressed, then continue in your repression. Let us see to what extent such people can feel repressed, and how long they can hold on in God's house while carrying such negative emotions, without pursuing the truth or turning around.

If they do not let go of repression, those who live in this negative emotion face another disadvantage: As soon as they are presented an opportunity, they jump up and go to work, taking charge on their own and disregarding all the requirements, rules, and principles of God's house, acting recklessly and fully indulging in their own desires. Once they make their move, the consequences are unimaginable. To a lesser extent they can cause financial losses to God's house, or to a greater extent they can disrupt the work

of the church. If those leaders and supervisors shirk their responsibility and fail to solve problems, this will also affect the work of expanding the gospel of God's house, which involves resisting God. If such incidents and consequences occur to these people, their end will come. Rather than foreseeing their future, it is better for them to let go of repression early on and change the attitudes and opinions they have continuously held of overestimating and attaching importance to technical skills and expertise. It is important for them to reverse their viewpoints and not hold them dear. The reason for not holding them dear is not because they are fundamentally insignificant in the house of God or because of My judgment or negative opinion toward these things. It is because technical skills and expertise are essentially a kind of tool. They do not represent the truth or life. When the heavens and the earth pass away, any technical skills and expertise will also perish, while the positive things and truths acquired by humans will not only not perish, they will never go away. No matter how profound, great, or irreplaceable the technical skills or special expertise you possess may be, they cannot change humanity or the world, nor can they change even a single small thought or viewpoint that people have. These things cannot even change a single small thought or viewpoint, let alone the corrupt disposition of human beings, which they are even less able to change. They cannot change humanity, nor can they change the world. They cannot determine humanity's present, their coming days, or their future, and they certainly cannot determine the fate of humanity. That is just the fact of the matter. If you don't believe Me, just wait and see. If you don't believe My words, and keep cherishing such things as knowledge, technical skills, and expertise, see who will be delayed when you cherish them to the end and what you will gain from them. Some people are highly skilled and knowledgeable in computer technology, surpassing the average person and excelling in this field. They are senior technicians, carrying themselves with an air of superiority wherever they go and proclaiming, "I'm very skilled at the computer, I'm a computer engineer!" If you continue to carry yourself like this, let's see how far you will truly go and where you will end up. You should cast off this title and redefine yourself. You are an ordinary person. Understand that technical skills and expertise come from human beings. They are limited to people's mental capacity and thoughts, at most flooding the neurons in people's brains, leaving impressions and traces in their memories. However, they have no positive impact on a person's life disposition, or on their future path. They provide no real benefits. If you continue to cling to your acquired technical skills or expertise, and are unwilling to let them go, always thinking they are precious and lovable, believing that by possessing them you are superior, you're a cut above the rest, you're worthy of honor, then I say you are foolish. Those things are totally worthless! I hope you can try to let go of them, release yourself from the title of technician or professional, step out of the technical and professional domains, and learn to say and do everything, and treat everyone and everything in a grounded manner. Do not indulge in fanciful ideas or have your head in the clouds. Instead, you ought to keep your feet

firmly planted on the ground, do things in a down-to-earth manner, and maintain a practical comportment. You ought to learn to speak honestly, sincerely, and realistically, fostering the correct thoughts and viewpoints, perspectives, and stances toward people and things. This is fundamental. It means that you let go of and remove the technical skills and expertise that you have held in your heart for many years and which have occupied your heart and thoughts, and that you can learn such fundamental things as how to comport yourself, how to speak, how to view people and things, and how to fulfill your duty according to God's words and requirements. This is all relevant to the paths people walk, to their existence, and their future. These things that are relevant to the paths people walk and to their future can change your fate, determine your fate, and save you. On the other hand, technical skills and expertise cannot change your fate or your future. They cannot determine anything. If you use these skills and expertise to do a job in society, they may only help you make a living or improve your life to some degree. But let Me tell you, when you come into God's house, they don't determine anything. Instead, they can become obstacles to fulfilling your duty and hinder you from being an ordinary and normal person. Therefore, no matter what, you must first have the correct understanding and perspective regarding them. Don't think of yourself as a special talent or believe that in God's house you are extraordinary, superior to others, or more special than them. You are not special at all, at least not in My eyes. Besides possessing some special abilities or knowledge and skills that others don't have, you are no different from anyone else. Your words, your actions and conduct, and your thoughts and viewpoints are filled with the toxins of Satan, filled with erroneous and negative thoughts and viewpoints. There are many things you need to change, many things you need to turn around. If you remain trapped in a state of complacency, self-contentment, and self-admiration, then you are too foolish and you overestimate yourself. Even if you once made some contributions to God's house because of your professional skills and expertise, it is not worth it for you to continue to cherish these things. No professional skill or expertise is worth dedicating your whole life to, even jeopardizing your future and wonderful destination in order to cherish, uphold, shield, and hold on to them, going so far as to live and die for them. Of course, you also should not let their existence affect your thoughts and emotions in any respect, and even less should you feel repressed because of them, because you lose them or no one recognizes them. That would be a foolish and irrational approach. To put it bluntly, they are like pieces of clothing, which can be discarded or picked up and worn at any time. There's nothing remarkable about them. You wear them when you need them, and you can take them off and discard them whenever you don't. You should feel indifferent about them; that is the attitude and viewpoint you should have toward any piece of knowledge, skill, or expertise. You shouldn't cherish or regard them as your own life, finding joy or happiness because of them, or living and dying for their sake. There's no need for that. You should approach them rationally. Of course, if you become trapped in negative emotions of repression

because of them, affecting your fulfillment of duties and the most important matter in your life which is to pursue the truth, that is even more unacceptable. Because they are merely a tool that you can use or discard at any time, they shouldn't evoke any attachment or sentiment in you. So, no matter how God's house treats the professional skills or expertise you have acquired, whether it approves of them or asks you to give them up, or even condemns and criticizes them, you should not have any ideas of your own. You should accept the matter from God, facing and treating them rationally with the correct positions and perspectives. If God's house uses your skills but finds them lacking, then you can learn and improve upon them. If God's house does not utilize them, you should let them go without hesitation, without any concerns, and without any difficulties—it's that simple. The fact that God's house has no use for your professional skills and expertise is not directed at you personally, nor does it deprive you of the right to fulfill your duty. If you fail to fulfill your duty, it is due to your own disobedience. If you say, "God's house looks down on me, on my talents, and on the knowledge I have acquired, and it does not treat me as a talented individual. Therefore, I won't perform my duty anymore!" That is your personal choice not to perform your duty; it is not that God's house has denied you the opportunity or taken away your right to perform it. If you fail to fulfill your duty, it is equivalent to giving up your opportunity for salvation. Because you prioritize the maintenance of your professional skills, expertise, and personal dignity, you abandon the fulfillment of your duty and the hope of receiving salvation. Tell Me, is this rational or irrational? (Irrational.) Is this foolish or wise? (Foolish.) So, is there a path for what you should choose? (Yes.) There is a path. Then, do you still feel repressed? (No, I don't.) You don't feel repressed anymore, do you? Individuals with repressive emotions and those without repressive emotions have completely different attitudes toward fulfilling their duties, and completely different ways of doing things. Repressed people can never be happy, they will never feel peace or joy, and they won't experience the enjoyment and consolation that come from fulfilling their duties. Of course, after breaking free from this negative emotion of repression, people will feel happiness, comfort, and enjoyment in fulfilling their duties within God's house. After this, some people should then put effort into their pursuit of the truth—the future will be bright for people like this. However, if you constantly feel repressed and do not seek the truth to free yourself, then go ahead, continue in your repression and see how long you can endure. If you remain in this state of repression, your future will be bleak, dark as pitch, so that you can't see a thing, and there will be no path ahead. You will live each day in a daze, how ignorant you will be! In reality, this is a trivial matter, just a small thing, but people cannot break free from it, let it go, or turn it around. If they could turn it around, their mindset and the aspirations of their heart, as well as their pursuits, would be different. Alright, we will end our fellowship here today. I hope you will soon break free from the negative emotion of repression!

November 19, 2022

How to Pursue the Truth (7)

During this season, our main topic of fellowship has been “How to Pursue the Truth.” We previously summarized two principles of practice for pursuing the truth. What is the first principle? (The first principle is letting go, and the second is dedicating.) The first principle is letting go, and the second is dedicating. We have not finished fellowshiping about the topic of “letting go.” What is the first theme of “letting go”? (Letting go of various negative emotions.) What did we mainly fellowship about in terms of letting go of various negative emotions? We mainly fellowshiped about and revealed the negative emotions that people experience, that is, what types of negative emotions often accompany people in their daily lives and on their life path, as well as how to let go of them. These negative emotions manifest as a kind of feeling within people, but in reality, they are triggered by various erroneous thoughts and beliefs which people hold. Various negative emotions are triggered due to different thoughts and viewpoints in people and are revealed and exhibited in them. Based on the issues of negative emotions we fellowshiped about earlier, the various behaviors of people, and their various thoughts and viewpoints, what problems do you see? In other words, by dissecting the external manifestations of various negative emotions, can you perceive some underlying essence to people’s thoughts? When negative emotions are exhibited in a person, if we delve deeper and carefully dissect them, we can observe their various incorrect views, perspectives, and attitudes toward people, events, and things hidden within those negative emotions, and even see their approaches to handling and resolving various people, matters, and things from within them, right? (Right.) So, from the various times we have fellowshiped about dissecting these negative emotions, can we say that people’s various erroneous, fallacious, biased, negative, and adverse thoughts and viewpoints are concealed within their negative emotions? Can we say that? (Yes, we can.) What did I just say? (God just said that people’s various erroneous, fallacious, biased, negative, and adverse thoughts and viewpoints are concealed within their negative emotions.) Have you understood Me clearly? (Yes, I have understood You.) If we don’t fellowship about these negative emotions, people may not pay much attention to the temporary or long-term negative emotions that come to the surface. However, after dissecting the various thoughts and viewpoints hidden within negative emotions, do people acknowledge this fact? Various negative thoughts and viewpoints are concealed within people’s different negative emotions. In other words, when a person experiences negative emotions, on the surface, these may appear as certain feelings. They might vent their emotions, say depressing things, spread lifelessness and bring about certain negative results, or do things that are relatively extreme. This is what is revealed outwardly. However, behind these manifestations of negative emotions and extreme behaviors, there actually exist various negative thoughts and viewpoints in people. Therefore, although we have been discussing negative emotions during this period, in reality, we are dissecting people’s

various negative thoughts and viewpoints by exposing and dissecting their different negative emotions. Why do we expose these thoughts and viewpoints? Do these negative thoughts and viewpoints only affect people's emotions? Is it solely because they give rise to negative emotions in people? No. These erroneous thoughts and viewpoints do not only influence one's emotions and pursuits; however, their emotions and external behaviors are what people can see and perceive. Therefore, we use the simple and convenient method of dissecting negative emotions to expose people's various negative, adverse, and inappropriate thoughts and viewpoints. We expose these thoughts, viewpoints, and negative emotions because these thoughts and viewpoints are related to people's perspective and stance toward viewing people and things, comporting themselves, and acting in real life. They also have to do with people's survival goals and direction, and naturally also with their views on life. Hence, we have carried out this exposure of certain negative emotions. Regardless, the main purpose of fellowshiping about various negative emotions is to expose, dissect, and resolve people's various erroneous, negative, and adverse thoughts and viewpoints. By our revealing these negative thoughts and viewpoints, people will be able to clearly recognize the incorrect views, attitudes, and perspectives that exist in their thoughts toward various people, events, and things. This helps to resolve the various negative emotions caused by these erroneous thoughts and viewpoints and thus allows people to recognize and see through these erroneous thoughts and viewpoints, after which they can seek the correct path, let go of them, and completely abandon them. The ultimate goal is to develop the ability to face, approach, handle, and resolve various people, events, and things one encounters in their day-to-day life or over the course of their life with the correct thoughts and viewpoints. In summary, what is the desired outcome? It is to enable people to recognize and see through the various negative thoughts present within themselves, and after recognizing them, to continuously change and correct these erroneous thoughts and viewpoints in their lives and life paths, to seek, accept, or submit to the correct thoughts and viewpoints that align with the truth, and ultimately to live and comport themselves with the right thoughts and viewpoints. That is the purpose. Do you agree? (Yes.) On the surface, we expose people's negative emotions, but in fact, we expose their erroneous thoughts and viewpoints toward different people, events, and things. It aims to enable people to use the correct thoughts and viewpoints when encountering various people, events and things to face and handle them, and ultimately act in accordance with the truth principles when viewing people and things, comporting themselves, and acting. Doesn't this return to the theme of "How to Pursue the Truth"? (Yes.)

Fellowshiping about letting go of various negative emotions ultimately still returns to the broader topic of "How to Pursue the Truth," without deviating from the main theme, right? (Yes.) At first, some people may think, "Letting go of various negative emotions doesn't seem to have much to do with pursuing the truth. Negative emotions are just temporary moods or momentary thoughts and ideas." If it's a momentary thought or a

temporary mood, it doesn't fall within the scope of the negative emotions we are fellowshiping about. These negative emotions involve issues of principle and substance related to how people view others and things, and how they comport themselves and act. They involve the correct viewpoints, stances, and principles that people should uphold in life, as well as their views on life and ways of living. The ultimate purpose of fellowshiping about these is to enable people, when faced with various matters in life, to no longer handle these matters with their naturalness or hotheadedness, or to deal with these issues using their corrupt dispositions. It also means of course they won't handle these problems based on the various satanic philosophies instilled in them by society. Instead, they will approach them in the right way, with the conscience and reason that a person should at least possess when dealing with the problems encountered in life. Furthermore, under the basic conditions of normal human conscience and reason, they will treat the various people, events, and things involved and encountered in life and existence according to God's words, the truth, and the various principles taught by God. Fellowshiping about and dissecting various negative emotions is intended for the sake of achieving this objective. Do you understand? (Yes, I understand.) Tell Me. (God's objective in fellowshiping about and dissecting these negative emotions is to enable people to discern and turn around the erroneous thoughts and viewpoints within their negative emotions, thereby letting go of these negative emotions and relying on conscience and reason to correctly handle and deal with the various people, events, and things they encounter in life according to God's words and the truth principles. This allows them to gradually change their view on life, to view people and things based on the truth, to comport themselves and act in accordance with the truth, and to live out their normal humanity.) If I didn't fellowship about or dissect these negative emotions, if I neither fellowshiped about nor exposed people's various negative thoughts and viewpoints, then when people encountered problems in their daily lives, they would often take the wrong stance and perspective, facing, handling, and resolving these matters with erroneous thoughts and viewpoints. In this way, to a large extent, people would often be constrained, bound and controlled by these negative thoughts, unable to handle various problems in life according to God's requirements or the principles and methods revealed in God's words. Of course, if a person has the correct thoughts and viewpoints toward various people, events, and things, as well as the right perspective and stance, it will greatly assist them, when they encounter these people, events, and things, to handle them with the correct perspective, or at least within the scope of normal human conscience and reason, and avoid handling various issues in a hotheaded way or according to their corrupt dispositions, which can lead to unnecessary trouble and bring about unwanted consequences. For example, how a person approaches the future, illness, family, marriage, affections, money, relationships between people, and their own talents, as well as their social status and worth, and other similar issues, is based on what they have heard, learned, or been influenced and affected by in their family or

society before coming to an understanding of the truth, not to mention some experiences or methods they have come up with themselves. Each person has their own unique way of approaching things, and each person emphasizes a certain attitude when dealing with matters. Of course, there is a common factor in the different ways people approach things, in that they are all dominated and governed by negative, adverse, erroneous, or biased thoughts and viewpoints. Their ultimate aim is to achieve their own fame, fortune, and self-interest. To be more specific, these thoughts and viewpoints come from the instillation and teachings of Satan. It can also be said that they originate from the various erroneous thoughts and viewpoints that Satan spreads, advocates, and nurtures throughout humankind. Under the direction of these erroneous thoughts and viewpoints, people unconsciously use them to protect themselves and ensure the maximization of their own interests. They try their best to utilize these various thoughts and viewpoints that originate from society and the world to safeguard themselves and seek the maximization of their own benefits in order to attain their self-interests. Of course, this quest for attainment stops at nothing and goes beyond moral boundaries as well as conscience and reason. Therefore, under the direction of these negative emotions and negative thoughts and viewpoints, the ultimate result of how people view others and things and how they comport themselves and act can only lead to mutual exploitation, deception, harm, and conflicts among people. Eventually, under the direction, bondage, or enticement of various negative thoughts and viewpoints, people will drift further away from God's requirements, or even from the principles of how to comport oneself and act as taught by God. It can also be said that under the direction and enticement of various negative thoughts, people will never truly gain the truth or enter into the reality of practicing the truth as required by God. It also becomes difficult for them to abide by the principle of basing their views on people and things and their comportment and actions on God's words, with the truth as their criterion. Therefore, as people resolve their own negative emotions, in actuality they are also required to let go of various negative thoughts and viewpoints. Only when people recognize the various erroneous thoughts and viewpoints within themselves can they let go of every kind of negative emotion. Of course, as people let go of various negative thoughts and viewpoints, their negative emotions are also largely resolved. For example, let's consider the depressive emotions we fellowshiped about earlier. In simple terms, if a person gives rise to these negative emotions because they constantly feel that their fate is bad, then when they hold onto the thoughts and viewpoints that their fate is bad, they unconsciously sink into the emotion of depression. Moreover, their subjective consciousness increasingly reinforces the belief that their fate is bad. Whenever they encounter something slightly difficult or challenging, they think, "Oh, my fate is bad." They attribute it to their bad fate. As a result, they live in the negative emotions of despair, self-abandonment, and depression. If people can correctly face the various difficulties they encounter in life or seek the truth when negative thoughts and viewpoints arise, relying on God's words to face them,

recognizing what human destiny is all about, and believing that their fate is in God's hands and that He is in control, they can then approach these adversities, challenges, obstacles, and difficulties in life correctly, or understand these struggles correctly. In doing so, does their thought and viewpoint of having a bad fate change any? At the same time, do they gain a proper stance to face these problems? (Yes.) When people have the right stance in confronting these issues, their feelings of depression gradually improve, changing from severe to moderate, transitioning from moderate to mild, until from a mild state they dissipate completely and disappear from their being. Consequently, their feelings of depression cease to exist. What is the reason for this? It is because their previously held thought and viewpoint of "My fate is bad" undergoes a transformation. After it is corrected, they no longer view their fate with a sense of depression but approach issues with a proactive and optimistic attitude, the methods of God's teachings, and the perspective of the essence of destiny He has revealed to humanity. Therefore, when faced with the same problem they encountered before, they no longer view their destiny through the thoughts and viewpoints of having a bad fate, and they no longer resist or rebel against these issues with feelings of depression. Although initially they may ignore or handle them with indifference, over time, as they delve deeper into the pursuit of truth and grow in stature, as their perspective and stance in viewing people and things become increasingly correct, their feelings of depression not only disappear, but they also become more proactive and optimistic. Eventually, they gain a complete understanding and clear insight into the nature of human destiny. They can handle and approach these matters correctly with an attitude or reality of submission to God's orchestration. At that point, they have completely let go of their feelings of depression. Letting go of negative emotions is such a process, it is a significant topic in life. In summary, when a negative emotion takes root deep within a person's heart or influences how they view people and things, and how they comport themselves and act, it is without doubt more than just a simple negative emotion. Behind it lies an incorrect thought or viewpoint regarding this, that, or another matter. In such cases, what you need to do is not only analyze the source of the negative emotions but, more importantly, examine the hidden killer within your negative emotions. This hidden element is a negative thought or viewpoint that has deeply rooted itself within your heart over a long period, a wrong or erroneous thought or viewpoint toward dealing with things. In terms of erroneous and negative aspects, this thought or viewpoint definitely contradicts the truth and stands in opposition to it. At this point, your task is not simply to think about, dissect, and become acquainted with it, but rather to thoroughly understand the harm it poses to you, the control and bondage it exerts over you, and the negative impact it has on your pursuit of truth. Therefore, what you need to do is to expose, dissect, and recognize various negative thoughts and viewpoints; at the same time, you must seek God's words to discern and see through to them according to the truth principles fellowshiped about by God, replace your erroneous or negative thoughts and viewpoints with the truth and

completely resolve the negative emotions that have been entangling you. This is the path to resolving negative emotions.

Some people say, “I haven’t noticed any negative emotions in myself so far.” Don’t worry, sooner or later, at the right time, in the appropriate environment, or when you reach the appropriate age or a special significant juncture in life, these negative emotions will naturally emerge. You don’t have to consciously look or dig for them; more or less, to some extent they exist in everyone’s hearts. That’s because people live in the human world, no one approaches anything like a computer would, without bringing their own thoughts and viewpoints into consideration, and people’s thoughts are active, they are like a container capable of receiving positive and negative things. Unfortunately, long before people started accepting positive thoughts and viewpoints, they already accepted various erroneous and incorrect thoughts and viewpoints from Satan, society, and the corrupt humankind. These incorrect thoughts and viewpoints have filled the depths of people’s souls, severely impacting and interfering with their daily lives and life paths. Therefore, at the same time as various negative thoughts and viewpoints accompany people’s lives and their existence, various negative emotions also accompany their lives and the path of their existence. So, regardless of the individual, one day you will discover that not only do you have a few temporary negative emotions, you have many. Not only do you possess one negative thought or viewpoint, numerous negative thoughts and viewpoints exist in you simultaneously. Although they have yet to be revealed, it is only because there is no suitable environment, appropriate time, or trigger that might cause you to expose your erroneous thoughts and viewpoints or vent and reveal your negative emotions, or that environment or time has not yet arrived. If one of these factors comes into play, it will act as a fuse, igniting your negative emotions and negative thoughts and viewpoints so that they explode. You will involuntarily be influenced, controlled, and bound by them. They may even become an obstruction for you and influence your choices. It is only a matter of time. It’s because the various negative emotions we have fellowshiped about are issues that may be encountered in people’s life or on the path of their existence, and they are realistic problems faced by every person in their life or existence. They are not empty but concrete. Because these negative emotions directly involve the principles one should uphold and the outlook on survival they should have, it is necessary for us to carefully dig into and dissect these issues.

Previously, we fellowshiped about the negative emotion of “repression.” How many times did we fellowship about the issue of “repression”? (We fellowshiped about it twice.) What did we fellowship about the first time? (The first time we fellowshiped about how people often cannot do as they please, giving rise to negative emotions of repression. The second time, we fellowshiped about how people cannot utilize their expertise and often live in a state of repressed negative emotions.) We fellowshiped about these two aspects. From them, can we say that behind these two types of repression, there are similarly hidden thoughts and viewpoints regarding how people approach life? The first

type, which stems from the inability to do as one pleases, represents what kind of thought or viewpoint? It is the mindset of always wanting to be willful and irresponsible, doing things based on impulse, mood, feeling, and interest, without understanding the need to take on responsibility. Isn't this a certain attitude people adopt toward life? (Yes.) It is also a survival method. Is this a positive attitude and survival method? (No.) It is not positive. People always want to live as they please, doing things willfully based on mood, interest, and hobbies. This is not the correct way of living; it is negative and needs to be resolved. Of course, the negative emotions arising from this negative attitude and survival method should be resolved even more so. The other type is negative emotions of repression that emerge from the inability to utilize one's own expertise. When people cannot demonstrate their expertise, showcase themselves, reflect their individual value, receive validation from others, or satisfy their own preferences, they feel unhappy, melancholy, and repressed. Is this a correct method and perspective of existing? (No.) Incorrect things ought to be changed and the truth should be sought in order to resolve them and replace them with the right way that aligns with the truth and normal humanity. We previously fellowshiped about these two reasons behind the emergence of repressive emotions, such as the inability to do as one pleases and the inability to utilize one's expertise. There is another reason for the emergence of repressive emotions, can you think of what it is? What are some other things related to one's own existential viewpoint that can make people feel repressed? Not sure? Another reason is feeling repressed and giving rise to negative emotions of repression because one cannot fulfill their ideals and desires. Think about this for a moment, does this issue of repression exist? Is it a real problem for humans? (Yes.) The people we discussed earlier who wish to do as they please tend to be more self-centered and willful. Their attitude toward life is characterized by acting on their impulses and doing whatever they want. They prefer to lord themselves over others and are not suited to living in a community. Their survival method is to make everyone else revolve around them, and they are selfish and unable to live in harmony or collaborate harmoniously with others. The second type of person who gives rise to repression is someone who always wants to show off, to put themselves on display, who thinks they are all that's necessary, and never gives others the space to exist. As long as they possess a bit of expertise or talent, they'll want to exhibit it regardless of whether the environment is suitable or whether their expertise is valuable or can be used in God's house. This kind of person also tends to emphasize individualism, right? Are all of these involved in people's survival methods? (Yes.) Both these methods of living and survival are incorrect. Now, let's return to the negative emotions of repression we discussed earlier that arise from not being able to fulfill one's ideals and desires. Regardless of the occasion, environment, or period, and no matter what kind of work they engage in, they always center on the goal of realizing their own ideals and desires, making it their standard. If they cannot realize or accomplish this purpose, they feel repressed and sad. Isn't this also a survival method for a certain type

of person? (Yes.) This is also a survival method for certain people. So, what is the main thought or viewpoint of those who live by this survival method? It is that as long as they have ideals and desires, regardless of where they are or what they are doing, their purpose is to realize their own ideals and desires. This is their survival method and their goal. Regardless of the price others have to pay or the sacrifices others have to make, regardless of how many people have to bear the burden or sacrifice their own personal interests for their ideals and desires, they will pursue the goal of realizing their own ideals and desires without giving up. They are even willing to step on the shoulders of others or sacrifice others' interests without hesitation. If they cannot achieve this goal, they feel repressed. Is this kind of thought or viewpoint correct? (No.) What is wrong with it? (It's too selfish!) Is the term "selfish" positive or negative? (It's negative.) It is a negative and an adverse thing, so it must be resolved based on the truth.

How should one resolve these repressed emotions that arise from being unable to fulfill their ideals and desires? Let's first examine the various ideals and desires that people have. How about starting our fellowship from there? (Alright.) Starting our fellowship from what ideals and desires people have makes it easier for people to understand and follow a clear train of thought. So, let's first take a look at the ideals and desires that people have. Some ideals and desires are realistic, while others are unrealistic. Some people have idealistic ideals, while others have realistic ones. Should we first fellowship about the ideals of idealists or the ideals of realists? (The realistic ones.) The realistic ones. What about unrealistic ideals? Should we fellowship about them or not? If we don't fellowship about them, will people be aware of them? (They won't be aware.) If they won't be aware of them without fellowshiping, then we truly need to fellowship about them. Often, even without fellowshiping, people can perceive the ideals of realists. These things exist in everyone's thoughts and consciousness. Some ideals and desires remain unchanged from childhood to adulthood, regardless of whether they are realized or not, while others change with age. As people grow older and their knowledge, horizon, and experience expand, their ideals and desires constantly change. They become more realistic, closer to real life, and more specific. For example, some people wanted to become a singer when they were young, but as they grew up, they realized they couldn't stay in tune, so becoming a singer was not realistic. Then they thought about becoming an actor. Several years later, they looked in the mirror and realized they weren't very attractive. Although they were slightly taller, they weren't good at acting, and their expressions didn't look very natural. Being an actor was also unrealistic. So, they thought about becoming a director instead, so they could direct movies for actors. When they reached their twenties and had to choose a major in college, their ideal changed into becoming a director. After graduation, when they received their diploma for directing and entered the real world, they realized that being a director required fame and prestige, required qualifications, as well as financial resources, which they lacked in every respect. No one would hire them as a director.

Therefore, they had to settle for less and find their way in the film industry, perhaps as a script supervisor or a production coordinator. Over time, they thought, “Being a producer might suit me. I enjoy being busy and raising money, I can speak well, and I’m reasonably good-looking. People don’t find me irritating, and I can communicate well with others and win their favor. Producing might be a good fit for me.” You see, their ideal gradually changed. Why did it change? It initially changed because their thoughts gradually matured, their perception of things became more accurate, more objective and practical. Then, living in the real world, based on their real-life environment and the practical needs and pressures of life, their previous ideals were gradually altered by that environment. At a dead end, unable to become a director, they chose to become a producer instead. But did becoming a producer actually realize their ideals or not? They couldn’t quite figure it out themselves. Anyway, once they started, they did it for about ten years, or even until retirement. This is a general overview of the ideals of realists.

We were just discussing how people’s ideals can be divided into the ideals of idealists and the ideals of realists, these two categories. Let’s begin talking about the ideals of idealists. The ideals of realists should be easy to distinguish. The ideals of idealists, on the other hand, are not very concrete and are somewhat distant from real life. They are also far removed from the practical matters involved in human survival, such as daily necessities. These ideals have concrete concepts but lack a specific landing point. You could say that these ideals and desires are fantasies, relatively empty and detached from human nature. Some can be considered abstract, and some are even ideals and desires that arise from a fragmented personality. What are the ideals of idealists? Idealism should be easy to understand. It is a daydream, a fantasy, unrelated to the practical matters of daily necessities in real life. For example, being a poet, an immortal poet, wandering the earth; or being a swordsman, a knight-errant, also wandering the earth, remaining unmarried and childless, free from the entanglement of life’s trivialities, free from the worry of daily necessities, living easy and relaxed, drifting here and there, always aspiring to become immortal and escape from real life. Is this the ideal of an idealist? (Yes.) Do any of you have such thoughts? (No.) What about those famous poets in China’s past who used to get drunk and write poetry? Were they idealists or realists? (Idealists.) The ideas they advocated were the fantasies and daydreams of idealists. They were always drifting here and there, and spoke in vague and uncertain terms, imagining how beautiful the world was, how peaceful humankind could be, how people could coexist in harmony. They detached themselves from the conscience, reason, and life necessities of normal humanity. They divorced themselves from these real-life issues and imagined a utopian or imaginary realm that was completely disconnected from reality. They envisioned themselves as beings within that realm, living in that space. Isn’t this the ideal of an idealist? There is a poem from the past, and one of the lines reads “I’d like to ride the wind and fly home.” What was the title of that poem? (“Water Melody.”) Read the lines of that poem. (“I’d like to ride the

wind and fly home. I'm afraid it's too cold in the sky, with the jade-palace being too high. Dancing to my shadow, I feel no longer the mortal tie.") What does he mean by saying, "Dancing to my shadow, I feel no longer the mortal tie"? Do these two lines convey the repressive and resentful emotions of an idealist whose ideals could not be achieved or realized? Are they something expressed under this repressive emotion? What is the focus of this? Which sentence indicates the environment and background in which he found himself at that time? Is it "I'm afraid it's too cold in the sky"? (Yes.) He was exposing the darkness and evil of officialdom, a corrupt place to be in. He wanted to be like an immortal, to escape such an environment and situation. Wouldn't it be enough for him to simply quit being an official? Could it be that he wanted to change this environment? He was dissatisfied with such an environment, feeling that it did not match the environment of the ideal life he envisioned, and he felt repressed deep within. This is a type of ideal that an idealist has. The ideals of idealists mostly tend toward fantasies, they are unrealistic and abstract, disconnected from real life. It's as if they live in another world outside the material realm, in an independent and individual space, indulging in fantasies and detached from reality. Just like some people living in modern society, they always want to dress in ancient clothing, style their hair in ancient ways, and speak in an ancient language. They think, "Ah, that kind of life is too wonderful! Just like an immortal, drifting and wandering, free from the troubles of the physical body, free from the various hardships of real life. In that kind of living environment, there is no oppression, no exploitation, no worries. People are equal, helping and living in harmony with one another. How beautiful and desirable are those ideal living conditions!" Among unbelievers, there are some who pursue these things. Some people sing similar songs or write similar poems, or put on similar performances. As a result, people yearn even more for that other world that idealists dream of. And when some people sing these songs or put on these shows, the more they sing, the more melancholy their mood becomes, the more they long for and cling to that ideal world. What happens in the end? Some people, after singing for a long time, feel that they can't escape their worries. No matter how much they sing, they still can't feel the warmth of human world. No matter how much they sing, they still feel that the imagined realm of their idealism is better. They become disillusioned with the world, no longer wanting to live in this human realm, and they ultimately make a firm decision to go to that ideal world in their own way. Some swallow poison, some jump off buildings, some strangle themselves with their leggings, and some become monks and pursue spiritual practice. In their words, they have seen through the illusion of worldly attachments. In fact, there is no need to resort to such extreme measures and methods to resolve their disillusionment with the world. There are many ways to address such problems and difficulties, but because they fail to perceive the underlying essence of these issues, they ultimately choose extreme methods to address these difficulties and escape from them in order to achieve the purpose of realizing their ideals. This represents some of the idealists who dwell among unbelievers and their problems.

In the house of God, in the church, are there people who have similar ideals? Certainly, you just haven't discovered them yet, so I'll tell you about them. There are individuals who, while in the secular world, yearn for an ideal society of peace, harmony, tranquility, and equality for all, as the idealists among unbelievers do. This ideal society is like the utopias depicted by some poets or authors, though, of course, more often it's like some spaces, ways of life, or living environments that exist within people's ideal worlds. These people, driven by such needs and ideals, unconsciously seek out their own faith in order to realize their ideals. While searching, they discover that believing in God is a good path and a fine choice of faith. Carrying their ideals with them, they come into the house of God, hoping to experience warmth, care, and being treasured and looked after among people, and of course, they hope even more to feel God's great love and protection. They enter God's house with their ideals, and whether they fulfill their duties or not, in any case, their ideals remain unchanged—they always carry and hold their ideals within them. From beginning to end, their ideals can be described as follows: Upon entering the house of God, they hope that it is a place where they can feel warmth, where they can enjoy warmth, happiness, and well-being. They hope that it is a place without any strife, suspicion, or discrimination between people, a place where there is no bullying, deceit, harm being done, or exclusion happening among people. These are basically the ideals that can be found in the minds of such idealists. That is, they envision a place where people treat each other like machines, devoid of life and any thoughts, smiling, nodding, and bowing mechanically when they meet to show friendliness, to show that there is no hostility. In this ideal place, there is great love between people, and they can care for, treasure, look after, help, understand, and accommodate one another, and even shield and cover up for each other. These are all some of the things that idealists idealize and dream about. For example, when idealists enter the house of God, their ideal and hope is that older people might be respected, treasured, looked after, and given meticulous attention and care by the younger ones. Besides respect, they also hope that people will use honorific titles, addressing brothers as "Big Uncle So-and-So," "Uncle This-or-That," or "Uncle So-and-So," and their sisters as "Grandmother Such-and-Such," "Aunt So-and-So," or "Sister So-and-So"—basically, with everyone having their own form of address. They hope that people will be especially cordial, harmonious, and courteous to each other externally, and that no one will have any ill-will or any bad or evil things either on the surface or deep within their hearts. They hope that if anyone makes a mistake or encounters difficulties, everybody can extend a helping hand to assist them, and furthermore, also supply them with deep care and tolerance. Especially when it comes to those who are weak, and to those relatively guileless people who are easily bullied or oppressed by others in the world—they hope even more so that when such people come into the church, to the house of God, they can receive meticulous care, attention, and special treatment. As these idealists say, when they came into the house of God, they wished that everyone would be happy and well, and they hoped that

since they all believed in God, they'd be a big family and siblings together. They think that there should be no bullying, no punishing, no harm being done. They believe that if a problem arises, there should be no disputes or anger among people, and that instead everyone should treat each other calmly, and with great patience and helpfulness, that they should always make others feel comfortable, and that each person should only show their best and kindest side to others, while keeping their evil or bad side to themselves. They believe that people should treat each other like machines, that they should not hold any negative views or opinions about other people, and much less do anything negative to one another; they think that people should have good intentions toward others, and that this proverb puts it well, "The good have peaceful lives." They think that only this is the true house of God and the true church. However, the ideals of these idealists have yet to be realized. In their place, God's house focuses on principles, emphasizing mutual help and support among people, and requiring everyone to treat all kinds of people based on the truth principles and God's words. God's house has even put forward some requirements that are "inconsiderate" toward people, like distinguishing between different types of people, and treating them differently. God's house also requires that people stand up to expose and deal with anyone they see harming the interests of the house of God, violating the work arrangements, or going against the principles, so that the interests of the house of God may be safeguarded, and it does not permit people to shield or cover up for anyone based on feelings. Of course, God's house has also established various levels of leadership. In one respect, God's house requires leaders at all levels to take care of the day-to-day work of the church. In another, it requires them to strictly supervise, manage, and follow up on various tasks, while also staying informed about, understanding, and paying attention to the states and church life of different kinds of individuals at all times, observing the attitudes and tendencies they have while fulfilling their duties, and making reasonable and appropriate adjustments when necessary. Of course, God's house also requires leaders and workers to strictly deal with and prune any individuals they discover going against the work arrangements of God's house or violating the principles and disrupting and disturbing the church's work, issuing warnings for minor offenses, and handling more serious cases appropriately. In this context, some people have been cleansed away, expelled, or had their names struck off. Of course, when people come into the house of God to fulfill various duties and engage in various tasks, many of them hear, see, or experience the chastisement and judgment that comes from God's words; furthermore, they experience being dealt with and pruned by leaders of different ranks. These different environments and matters that people encounter in God's house are completely different from the ideal house of God and church envisioned by idealists, to the extent that they are enormously outside of their expectations, and this causes them to feel a significant amount of pressure deep within their hearts. In one respect, they find the various occurrences that appear in the church, or the church's methods and principles for handling problems, to be

inconceivable. In another respect, repressive emotions arise within the depths of their hearts due to their ideals and their misconceptions about positive things, the church, and God's house. After these repressive emotions arise, because they fail to promptly correct their erroneous thoughts and viewpoints, or see through to and clearly recognize the problems with their ideals, many notions consequently start to emerge within them. In addition, since they are unable to understand the truth or to use the truth to resolve these notions, they start to take root deep in their thoughts or in the depths of their souls, causing their repressive emotions to be constantly amplified and to become increasingly severe. In reality, God, the house of God, the church, believers, and Christians are all incompatible with the idyllic paradise, heaven, or utopia imagined by these idealists in their ideals. As a result, the repression that lies deep within their hearts continues to accumulate constantly, and they have no way to free themselves from it. Are there people like this in the church? (Yes.)

Some people say, "Oh, why does the house of God always talk about accepting judgment and chastisement? How can believers in God still face being dealt with and pruned? Oh, why does the house of God expel people? There is no love in it at all! How can such things happen in 'heaven on earth'? How can antichrists appear in the church? How can there be occurrences of antichrists repressing and punishing others? In the church, in God's house, how can people expose and analyze one another? How can there be disputes? How can there be jealousy and conflict? What is going on? Since we have come into the house of God, there should be love among us, and we should all be able to help one another. How can these things still occur?" Are there many people with these ideas? Many people view the house of God through the lens of their imaginations. Now, tell Me, are these imaginings and interpretations objective? (No, they are not objective.) Where do they lack objectivity? (Humanity is deeply corrupt, and those whom God saves all have corrupt dispositions, so they will inevitably reveal corruption in their interactions with others. There will be jealousy and conflict, and there will be incidents of bullying and suppression. These things are bound to happen. The things imagined by idealists like these do not exist. Furthermore, in order to safeguard the church life and work, the church will deal with and prune people based on the truth principles, or adjust and replace people, or clear out and expel evil people and nonbelievers—this is in accordance with the principles. That is because when people act according to their corrupt dispositions, they disrupt and disturb the work of the church. It would be unrealistic if the church did not take measures like dealing with and pruning, or replacing and removing such people.) It is unrealistic, which is why these people's ideas are the ideals of idealists. None of them are realistic, they are all empty and imagined, right? Even now, such people still don't understand why they should believe in God. Some people say, "Believing in God is good. Believing in God means doing good things and being a good person." Is this statement correct? (No, it is not correct.) "Believers in God should have good intentions in their hearts." Is this statement correct? (No, it is not

correct.) Having good intentions in one's heart—what kind of statement is this? Can you have good intentions simply by wanting to? Do you have good intentions? Is having good intentions in one's heart a principle of human comportment? It is just a slogan, a doctrine. It is an empty thing. When your own interests aren't involved, you can say this quite nicely, thinking, "I have good intentions in my heart, I don't bully, harm, cheat, or take advantage of others." But when your own interests, status, and pride are involved, will the statement "having good intentions in one's heart" be capable of restraining you? Can it solve your corrupt disposition? (No, it cannot.) Therefore, this statement is empty; it is not the truth. The truth is able to expose the essence of your corrupt disposition, it can expose and dissect the essence and true nature of the kind of things that you do, and determine and condemn the essence of these things that you do and of the disposition you reveal. Then it provides you with the appropriate path and principles to change your way of living and the way you comport yourself and act. In this way, if people can accept the truth and change their way of living, then their corrupt dispositions can be resolved; it is not urging people to have good intentions in their hearts that can do this, only the truth can. The truth resolves one's corrupt dispositions not by providing slogans, doctrines, or regulations and rules, but by giving them principles, criteria, and directions for how to comport themselves. It uses these principles, criteria, and directions to supplant and replace people's corrupt disposition. When people's principles, criteria, and directions for how to comport themselves change and are corrected, all the various erroneous ideas and wrong thoughts in their minds naturally change as well. When a person understands and gains the truth, their thoughts change accordingly. It is not a matter of having good intentions in one's heart but of a change in the source of their thoughts, in their disposition, and in their essence. What is revealed and lived out by such a person becomes positive. The direction, manner, and source of how they comport themselves all undergo a change. Their speech and actions have God's words as their basis and criterion, and they can live out normal humanity. So, is it still necessary to simply tell them to "have good intentions in their hearts"? Is it useful? That statement is empty; it cannot resolve any problems at all. After idealists come into the house of God, the church, their ideals still cannot be realized, and they feel repressed in their hearts because of this. It's like how some idealists go deep within the government or society and then find that their ideals cannot be realized or fulfilled. As a result, they often feel disheartened. After some people become officials or emperors, they feel very pleased with themselves and become deeply arrogant, just like that line in a poem that says, "A strong wind rises, the clouds are scattered." How does the next line go? ("Now that my might rules all within the seas, I return to my homeland.") You see, their words sound strange. They possess a kind of emotion that people with normal humanity and reason find hard to understand. These idealists always speak in a lofty tone. What does it mean to speak in a lofty tone? It means they never face reality or solve real problems in anything they do. They don't understand what reality is, they are always driven by

emotions. When these people come into the house of God, no matter how much of the truth they hear, they don't understand what it means to believe in God or the significance of believing in God. They don't comprehend the value of the truth, let alone the value of pursuing it. What they always pursue is the ideals of idealists. Their dream is for the house of God to one day be as they envision, where people treat each other with respect, live harmoniously together, get along very well with each other, and treasure, look after, cherish, help, and thank one another. Where people say nice things and words of blessing to each other, without any unpleasant or hurtful words, or words that expose people's corrupt essence, or any disputes, or people exposing and dealing with one another. No matter how much of the truth they hear, these people still do not understand the meaning of believing in God, or what God's requirements are, and what kind of person God wants people to be. Not only do they not understand these things, but they also hope even more that one day they can enjoy the idealistic treatment they desire in God's house. If they don't receive such treatment, they feel that there is no place in the house of God where their ideals may be realized, nor any opportunity to realize them. Therefore, some people often think about giving up while feeling repressed, saying, "Believing in God feels boring and empty. Believers in God do not help, cherish, and respect each other in the same way those who believe in Buddhism do. And believers in God are always discussing the truth and the principles, they often talk about discernment in interpersonal relationships, there is the occasional exposure and criticism, and they even frequently encounter being dealt with and pruned. This is not the kind of life I want." If they didn't have their ideals and the thread of hope that they will get into heaven, idealists like this could leave the church at any time and find another path. So, tell Me, are these people of God's house? Are they suited to remain in the house of God? (No, they are not.) Where do you think they should go? (They are suited to join the monastic life.) They could go to Buddhist or Taoist temples, either would be fine. They don't feel repressed in the secular world but feel particularly repressed in the house of God, they feel that they don't have the opportunity to realize their ideals or a space to put them to use. Therefore, these people are very suited to places filled with wreaths of smoke and the continual burning of incense. Those places are quiet, and they don't teach you how you ought to comport yourself. They don't expose your various erroneous thoughts and viewpoints, and they don't expose or deal with your corrupt disposition. There is distance and respect between people there. People don't exchange more than a few words a day, and there aren't any disputes. You're under nobody's supervision or regulation. You'll live a self-sufficient life there, barely encountering strangers throughout the year. You won't have to worry about daily affairs. If you need something for your physical sustenance, you can take a small bowl or a begging bowl and beg for alms from the general populace, and get some food to eat, without needing to earn money. In those places, all worldly troubles disappear. People treat each other very kindly, and no one argues with anyone else. If there are any disagreements, they remain in people's hearts.

Days are spent in ease and comfort. This is what is known as the land of ultimate bliss, it is the place of idealist's ideals, and the place where idealists can realize their ideals. These people should live in the place of their imagining, not in the church. For people like them, there are too many things to do in the church. Every day, they must read God's words, attend gatherings, learn each of the principles, and fellowship on the truth and on understanding their own corrupt dispositions all the time; some people, who act based on their corrupt dispositions and violate the principles, face being dealt with and pruned, and a few people even encounter these things frequently. These people feel particularly repressed and unhappy here. The church is not their ideal environment. They believe that instead of using up their time or wasting their youth in this place, it would be better to go live in a place that they like a bit sooner. They think that there is no need to use up their time here, constantly feeling repressed and leading an uncomfortable, joyless, and unhappy life. This is the only typical manifestation of the ideals of idealists that we will cover. There is nothing much to say about these people. No matter how much of the truth you fellowship with them, they will not listen to it. All day they indulge in fantasies, and the things they think about are all very unrealistic and vague, and are just too far removed from normal humanity. They think about these things all day long and cannot communicate with normal people. Normal people also cannot understand the stuff their world is made of. Therefore, no matter what kind of thoughts and viewpoints these people hold, their ideals are hollow. Because their ideals are hollow, their thoughts and viewpoints are naturally hollow as well. They are not worth dissecting or digging into very deeply. Since they are hollow, let them continue to be so. These people can go wherever they want, and the house of God will not interfere. If they are willing to stay in the house of God and fulfill a bit of their duties or render service, as long as they don't cause a disturbance or do evil, we will meet their needs and give them the opportunity to repent. In short, as long as they remain amicable toward the brothers and sisters, toward the house of God, and toward the church, there is no need for us to handle this type of person, unless they themselves express a desire to leave. If that's the case, let us welcome this with open arms, alright? (Alright.) That's settled, then.

The ideals of idealists tend to be hollow, while those of realists are much more practical and closely aligned with people's lives and actual environments. Of course, they also relate more concretely to questions of human life and existence, including questions of settling down and starting one's life. Settling down and starting one's life involves the skills, abilities, and talents people acquire, the various types of education they receive, and their gifts, capabilities, and expertise. The ideals of realists encompass these aspects. In the realm of realists' ideals, whether aimed at improving their living conditions or satisfying their own spiritual world, these ideals manifest concretely in people's real lives. For instance, some people possess leadership abilities and enjoy being in the limelight. They may excel in public speaking or verbal communication, or have a keen understanding of people and adeptness in utilizing them, which can be more

aptly described as ordering people about. Consequently, people like this are particularly fond of holding office, assuming leadership roles, or working in human resources. Once aware of their aptitude in these areas, they aspire to be leaders or organizers among people, overseeing tasks and personnel or even directing a certain task. Their primary ideal is to become leaders. Of course, this is how they act in society. When they enter the house of God, they perceive it as a religious organization, a unique one at that. After joining the church, their ideals remain unchanged. Their ideals are unaffected by changes in the environment or background in which they live. They bring with them the same ideal of leadership into the house of God. Their desire is to hold leadership positions in God's house, such as leading a church, being responsible for a specific level, or leading a group. This is their ideal. However, because work arrangements in God's house have principles and regulations for selecting leaders or workers, and these people fail to meet the qualifications required, even if they occasionally participate in the leadership selection process for a specific level, they ultimately cannot achieve their ideal and become the leaders they aspire to be. The more they are unable to attain leadership or do their ideal job, the more their ideals stir within them, intensifying their longing for leadership. Consequently, they exert great effort in various endeavors, be it among their brothers and sisters or in front of higher-level leaders, to showcase themselves, make themselves look outstanding and exceptional, and make sure their talents are recognized. They may even compromise their own conscience to cater to the preferences of their brothers and sisters, doing or saying certain things and purposefully manifesting certain behaviors in order to conform to the leadership requirements set by the work arrangements of God's house. However, despite their persistent efforts, they are still unable to achieve their ideals of becoming leaders. There are those who feel disheartened, lost, and disconnected from themselves. The negative emotions of repression they had previously experienced intensify when they believe in God but cannot accept the truth or find solutions to their problems. They have always desired to hold office and be leaders, and these ideals had already sprouted in their hearts even before they came to believe in God. Because they were unable to realize their ideals, there was always an invisible sense of repression deep within them. Even after entering the house of God, where their ideals still cannot be realized, the feelings of repression within them grow stronger and heavier. These people grow resentful because their leadership abilities are not being utilized, and they feel unfortunate, disappointed, and repressed because their ideals cannot be achieved. Since their ideals remain unfulfilled, they feel a sense of injustice within themselves. As they have no outlet for their abilities, they become disheartened about life and the path ahead. Consequently, in their daily lives, they often carry a feeling of repression while doing various tasks. Some people, even after many efforts and attempts, still cannot become leaders or achieve their ideal. In such situations, they begin to resort to various means to vent their emotions and release or convey their repression. Of course, some who believe in God while still holding

on to their ideals to hold office obtain their hearts' desire and become leaders in the church. However, they are unable to fulfill their duties as leaders according to God's requirements and the arrangements of God's house. At the same time, they find themselves reluctantly fulfilling these leadership roles under the demands and supervision of God's house and of their brothers and sisters. Although they have achieved their ideals and are doing the things they ideally wished to do, they still feel repressed. This is because they are leading based on the foundation of realizing their personal ideals, and even though they may appear to externally or superficially be fulfilling the tasks required by the house of God, their ideals go far beyond these responsibilities. Their ambitions, ideals, desires, and vision extend far beyond the scope of their current roles. Due to the work arrangements of the house of God and God's requirements, their actions and thoughts, as well as their plans and intentions, are bound and restricted. Therefore, even after assuming leadership positions, they still feel repressed. What is the cause of these problems? It is because, despite becoming leaders, they continue to pursue the realization of their own ideals and the promises they have made in their own ideals. However, serving as leaders in the house of God or in the church does not realize their ideals and desires, and their feelings become mixed and contradict each other. Due to these conflicts and their inability to let go of their own ideals and pursuits, they often feel repressed deep within and unable to find release. This is one type of person. In the house of God, among these idealists, there are those who fight for their ideals but still cannot achieve them, and there are also those who fight for and eventually realize their ideals but still feel repressed. Regardless of which situation they find themselves in, these are people who have not given up on their ideals and still continue to pursue them while fulfilling their duties and living their lives in the house of God.

There are also others who possess a talent for writing, verbal communication, and literature. They hope to express their thoughts through their literary skills and, at the same time, showcase these skills and make people notice their ability, value, and contribution to the house of God. Their ideal is to pursue becoming an outstanding and qualified writer and intellectual. When they enter the house of God and begin to fulfill text-based duties, they feel that they have found a place to utilize their abilities. They eagerly demonstrate their strengths and talents to realize their ideal of becoming writers and intellectuals. Although they continue fulfilling their duties, they do not give up on their ideals. In their fulfillment of duties, it can be said that 80 to 90 percent of it is based on their ideals, in other words, the motivation for fulfilling their duties comes from their pursuit of and hope for these ideals. Consequently, the fulfillment of duties for people like this is quite adulterated, making it difficult for them to meet the standards of fulfilling duties according to the truth principles and the required standards of God. They do not come into the house of God solely to fulfill their duties, rather they hope to take advantage of the opportunity of fulfilling their duties to display their own talents, longing

to achieve their ideals and demonstrate their value through the exhibition of their talents. Hence, their greatest obstacle in fulfilling their duties to standard is their ideals, that is, their process of fulfilling duties is mixed up with personal preferences and their thoughts and perspectives on various people, events, and things. Some people have an understanding of certain professional skills or have a certain talent, for example, some understand computer technology and enjoy working as computer engineers. They wear glasses, dress professionally, and most characteristically, carry laptops that are unique or that others seldom see. No matter where they go, they sit there with their laptops and open them up to check information on different webpages and handle various problems with the computer, all with a professional flair. In short, a professional perspective, bearing, speech, and manner is what they demand of themselves and flaunt before others, striving to become professionals in the computer engineering industry. After entering God's house, these people finally realize their ideal and perform tasks related to computer technology. They are constantly studying technology and updating their skills, diligently identifying and solving various problems, with the purpose of keeping up with industry trends and the promotion and publication of new information in their field. People like this have a particular interest in and understanding of a specific professional skill, making them professionals and experts. Consequently, their ideal is to become professionals, and they hope that the house of God will place them in an important position, esteem them, and rely on them. Of course, in God's house and in the present period, most people like this have indeed utilized their strengths and achieved their ideals. However, while realizing their ideals, have these people considered whether they are fulfilling their duties or pursuing their own ideals in doing their work? It's not entirely clear, is it? The work they engage in is specialized, complex, and painstaking. However, the skills they possess fall far short of the house of God's requirements for this work. Therefore, while pursuing their own ideals and fulfilling their duties, they feel somewhat restricted and controlled. These people, due to the ideals they have in their hearts, may feel a certain level of repression when faced with the various truths of believing in God and the principles of fulfilling duties. A portion of people are like this.

There is another group of people who are involved in spreading the gospel. They aspire to become leaders in evangelism, to be the first, and to lead and excel in any church they are a part of, never content to be left behind. Although they fulfill their duties and carry out their work, their pursuit is of their own ideals and the goals they plan and envision, which have nothing to do with faith in God or the truth. When these goals and ideals are exposed and labeled, or they face certain obstacles, and these people realize that their ideals cannot be realized nor their value demonstrated, they feel particularly repressed and dissatisfied. Many of them wish to receive affirmation and validation while pursuing their ideals. When they do not receive these things, or when the cost of their efforts does not bring immediate returns, they feel that it isn't worth it, that it's unfair, and so they feel repressed. Don't they exhibit such behaviors? (Yes, they do.) Among those

involved in spreading the gospel, there are some who have always wanted to be qualified and exemplary preachers or evangelists. When they hear so-and-so, a famous evangelist and preacher, they are filled with envy and hope that one day they too can be like this, commemorated and praised by future generations, and remembered by God. They always want to preach in their own idealized way, using their ideal as their goal and motivation to become a preacher and gain fame or be remembered by future generations in the house of God. This is their ideal. However, in God's house there are strict requirements for any task, and principles with which God has told people to do this task. Consequently, these individuals feel repressed because they cannot become the kind of evangelists they idealized, they are often under supervision and regulation, and there is follow-up and inquiry from the leaders and workers regarding their work. There are also those who, because they possess special skills or talents, keep pursuing their ideals after coming into God's house. For example, among those who are actors, some are skilled in performing and have a basic understanding of acting techniques. They aspire to become an ideal actor, hoping that one day they might be like the famous actors popular among unbelievers: bigshots, stars, like kings and queens. However, in the house of God, the disposition and manifestation of corruption in this regard are always exposed, and there are specific requirements and principles for actors. Even after gaining some renown as actors, they're still unable to become celebrities whom people worship and follow, which leads them to feeling repressed. They say, "God's house is troublesome. They're always restricting people in everything. What's wrong with following the example of celebrities? What's wrong with dressing uniquely, with a bit of personality and requirements?" Due to the requirements for actors' costumes and specific performances in God's house, in their eyes there is always conflict and incompatibility between these requirements and their ideal of becoming celebrities and bigshots. Consequently, they feel deeply upset in their hearts, thinking, "Why is it so difficult to realize my ideals? Why in God's house do I encounter obstacles at every turn?" When they experience such thoughts or these expectations are not met, they feel repressed. Behind this feeling of repression is their belief that their ideals are legitimate and hold value. They also believe that there is nothing wrong with pursuing their ideals, that it is their right to do so, and consequently, repressive emotions begin to emerge within them. For example, some directors feel that after directing several movies they have gained quite a bit of experience. They believe that their films are worthy of being shown, and have improved in terms of cinematography, editing, actor performances, and similar management of all kinds, compared to before. After receiving guidance from the Above, their films finally meet the appropriate standards and are released on time. This seems to confirm that their pursuit of becoming a qualified director is a suitable, legitimate, and necessary aspiration. However, while pursuing their goal of becoming a qualified director, some of their unprincipled ideas, viewpoints, and actions are often rejected, overturned, or go unacknowledged. They may even often face pruning and

dealing with. This gives them a sense of repression deep in their hearts, and they say, “Why is it so difficult to be a director in God’s house? Look at those directors in the world of unbelievers, how glamorous they are. They have people serving them tea, pouring drinks for them, and even washing their feet. In God’s house, being a director lacks status and panache, and no one regards or admires us. Why are we always being pruned and dealt with? No matter what we do, it’s never right. How repressive! We have our own ideas, viewpoints, and professional abilities, so why are we always being dealt with? Is it wrong to pursue our own ideals, or is it possible that the pursuit of our ideals is illegitimate? Why is realizing our ideals so difficult? It’s so repressive!” No matter which way they think about it, they still feel repressed. There are also certain singers who say, “In God’s house, I don’t pursue anything other than being a qualified singer, singing well, showcasing my own style, and being loved by everyone who listens to me.” However, God’s house often puts forth various requirements and principles for singing hymns, and these singers are often pruned and dealt with for frequently violating those requirements. When they are not being dealt with, they feel that they can realize their ideals smoothly. But when they are dealt with and experience a few setbacks, they feel that their efforts and achievements during that period seem to have been invalidated, and they are back to square one. This gives rise to a feeling of repression deep in their hearts, and they say, “Ah, it is truly difficult to realize my ideals! The world is wide, yet there seems to be no place for me. It’s the same in God’s house. Why is pursuing my own career so difficult? Why is it so difficult to do the things I want to do? No one gives me the green light, I encounter obstacles at every turn, and I’m constantly being pruned and dealt with. All of this is truly challenging and repressive! In the world of unbelievers, they are always scheming and fighting with each other, and there are career obstacles everywhere, so it’s normal to feel repressed. But why do I still feel repressed when I come into God’s house with my ideals?” Those who engage in various tasks in God’s house often encounter setbacks in the process of pursuing their ideals, are frequently invalidated, are often pruned and dealt with, and often fail to receive recognition. After passively experiencing these things, they unknowingly fall into low spirits, feeling like their life might as well be over and that it’s impossible to realize their ideals. Before coming into God’s house they used to think, “I carry my own ideals and aspirations with me. I have my own desires, and in God’s house there are infinite possibilities. I can become a qualified director, actor, writer, or even a qualified dancer, singer, or musician.” While they were unable to showcase their talents and achieve their ideals, they believed that God’s house would provide them with their own stage, with a vast space where their ideals, dreams and aspirations could come true. They felt that the stage in God’s house was especially large. However, after so many years, they wonder, “Why do I feel like the stage is shrinking beneath my feet? Why is my world shrinking? The possibility of realizing my ideals seems increasingly remote and even impossible. What is happening?” At this point, these people still won’t give up on their ideals or question the correctness of these

ideals and desires. They still carry these ideals and desires into the fulfillment of their duties. Consequently, people's repressive emotions accompany them everywhere, whether while pursuing their ideals and desires or as they carry out their real duties. For those who carry repressive emotions, or who cannot let go of them, the contradiction between these two cannot be reconciled. They carry a sense of repression into both the pursuit of their ideals and desires and the fulfillment of their duties. So, no matter what, people are constantly adjusting themselves, constantly pursuing their ideals and dreams while fulfilling their duties. You can also say that people fulfill their duties with a contradictory attitude, feeling repressed and reluctant the whole time. But in order to realize their ideals and desires, to demonstrate their value and pursue these ideals and desires, they have no choice but to fulfill their duties. They are not sure why they're doing it, what they're seeking to gain, what purpose they're trying to achieve, trying to pursue, or trying to realize. It becomes increasingly unclear to them, and the road ahead seems more and more unclear. In such a state, isn't it difficult for them to let go of or resolve their repressive emotions? (Yes.)

Having fellowshiped up to this point, let's continue fellowshiping about how people should understand and perceive the relationship between their ideals, desires, and their duties. First, let's talk about ideals, specifically the ideals of those people we mentioned earlier. Is it appropriate for people to pursue the realization of their own ideals in God's house? (No, it is not appropriate.) What is the nature of the issue? Why is it inappropriate? (By pursuing the realization of their ideals while fulfilling their duties, they are showcasing themselves and establishing their own careers, rather than pursuing the fulfillment of their duties as created beings.) Tell Me, is it improper to pursue the realization of one's own ideals and desires? (Yes, it is improper.) If you say it is improper, does this deprive one of their human rights? (No, it doesn't.) Then what's the problem? (When people believe in God, they should pursue the truth and follow the path that God's words point out for them to pursue. If they only pursue their own desires and ideals, they are pursuing what their flesh desires, which is an ideology instilled by Satan.) In the world, it is considered proper to pursue the realization of one's own ideals. Regardless of what ideals you pursue, it's fine as long as they're legal and don't cross any moral boundaries. Nobody questions anything, and you don't get caught up in matters of right or wrong. You pursue whatever you may personally prefer, and if you get it, if you reach your goal, then you are successful; but if you miss, if you fail, that is your own affair. However, when you enter God's house, a special place, regardless of what ideals and desires you carry with you, you should let go of all of them. Why is that? The pursuit of ideals and desires, regardless of what you pursue specifically—let's just talk about the pursuit itself—its course of action and the path it takes all revolve around egoism, self-interest, status, and reputation. These things are all what it revolves around. In other words, when people pursue the realization of their ideals, the only beneficiary is themselves. Is it righteous for a person to pursue the realization of their ideals for the

sake of status, reputation, vanity, and physical interests? (No, it is not.) For the sake of personal and private ideals, thoughts, and desires, the methods and approaches they adopt are all self-centered and focused on personal gain. If we measure them against the truth, they are neither righteous nor legitimate. People should let go of them, isn't that certain? (Yes, it is.) They should let go, let go of egoism, let go of personal ideals and desires. This is seen from the perspective of the essence of the paths people take—pursuing the realization of one's own ideals and desires is not a positive thing, it has been negated. That is one aspect. Now let's discuss another aspect, what kind of venue is God's house, the church, regardless of its name? What kind of place is it? What is the essence of the church, God's house? First, from a theoretical perspective, it is not the world, society, or any human corporation or organization in society. It does not belong to the world or to mankind. Why was it established? What was the reason for its appearance and existence? The reason is because of God and His work, right? (Yes.) The church, God's house, exists because of God's presence and His work. Therefore, is the church, God's house, a place to showcase personal talents and fulfill personal ideals, aspirations, and desires? (No, it is not.) Clearly, it is not. The church, God's house, exists because of God's presence and the presence of His work. As such, it is not a place to demonstrate personal talents or realize personal ideals, aspirations, and desires. It does not revolve around life in the flesh, fleshly prospects, fame and fortune, status, reputation, and so on—it does not work for these. Neither did it emerge or exist because of the material fame, status, enjoyment, or prospects of humans. So, what kind of place is it then? Since the church, God's house, was established because of God's presence and the presence of His work, isn't it supposed to carry out God's will, proclaim His words, and bear witness to Him? (Yes.) Isn't this the truth? (Yes.) The church, God's house, exists because of the presence of God and His work, so it can only carry out God's will, proclaim His words, and bear witness to Him. It has nothing to do with personal status, fame, prospects, or any other interests. The principles that govern any and all work done by the church, God's house, should be based on God's words, His requirements, and His teachings. Broadly speaking, it can be said to revolve around God's will and His work; specifically, around expanding the gospel of the kingdom and bearing witness to and proclaiming His word. Is that correct? (Yes.) Apart from carrying out God's will, proclaiming His words, and bearing witness to Him, is there something even more important to the church, God's house? (It is the place where God's chosen people experience His work, receive cleansing, and obtain salvation.) You've hit the nail on the head. The church, God's house, is a place where God's will is carried out, His word proclaimed, He is borne witness to, and most importantly, it is a place where people can receive salvation. Have you remembered that? (Yes, I have.) Read it. (The church, God's house, is a place where God's will is carried out, His word proclaimed, He is borne witness to, and God's chosen people receive cleansing and salvation.) The church, God's house, is a place where God's will is carried out, His word proclaimed, He is borne

witness to, and His chosen people receive cleansing and salvation. It is such a place. In a place like this, is there any task or project, no matter what it may be, that aligns with the fulfillment of personal ideals and desires? There is no work or project serving the purpose of fulfilling personal ideals and desires, nor does any aspect of these exist for the realization of personal ideals and desires. Therefore, should personal ideals and desires exist in God's house? (They should not.) They should not, because personal ideals and desires are in conflict with any work that God wishes to do in the church. Personal ideals and desires contradict any work that is done in the church. They contradict the truth, deviate from God's will, from the proclamation of His words, from bearing witness to Him, and from the work of cleansing and salvation for God's chosen people. Regardless of one's ideals, as long as they are personal ideals and desires, they will hinder people from following God's will, and affect or hinder the proclamation of His words and bearing witness to Him. Of course, as long as they are personal ideals and desires, they cannot allow people to receive cleansing and salvation. It is not just a matter of contradiction between the two sides, they run fundamentally counter to each other. While pursuing your own ideals and desires, you obstruct the carrying out of God's will, the work of proclaiming His words and bearing witness to Him, as well as people's and of course your own salvation. In short, no matter what people's ideals are, they are not to do God's will and cannot achieve the actual result of absolute submission to God. When people pursue their ideals and desires, their ultimate purpose is not to understand the truth, or understand how to comport themselves, how to satisfy God's will, and how to perform their duties well and fulfill their role as created beings. It is not for people to have true fear of and submission to God. On the contrary, the more one's ideals and desires are realized, the farther one drifts from God and the closer one gets to Satan. Similarly, the more one pursues their ideals and achieves them, the more rebellious against God one's heart becomes, the farther one moves away from God, and in the end, when one is able to fulfill their ideals as they wish and realize and satisfy their desires, they grow more disdainful of God, His sovereignty, and everything about Him. They may even walk the path of denying, resisting, and standing in opposition to God. This is the final outcome.

After understanding what God's house, the church, is, people should also understand what attitude and stance to adopt as they live and survive in God's house as a member of it. Some people have said, "You won't let us pursue the realization of our own ideals or realize our own desires." I am not restricting you from pursuing your own ideals; I am telling you how to appropriately live in God's house, how to appropriately take a proper stance and fulfill your duties in God's house as a created being. If you insist on pursuing the realization of your own ideals, then I can be straightforward and say: Please leave! The church is not a place for you to pursue the realization of your ideals. Outside of God's house, you can do anything in your ideals you want to do and pursue your own ideals and aspirations. All you have to do is leave God's house, and no

one will interfere with what you do. However, the church, God's house, is not a suitable place for you to pursue the realization of your ideals. To put it more precisely, it is impossible for you to pursue your own ideals and desires in this place. Should you stay in God's house, the church, for even a day, don't even think about realizing or pursuing your own ideals. If you say, "I give up on my own ideals. I am willing to fulfill my duties according to God's requirements and become a competent created being," then this would be acceptable. You could fulfill your duties according to your place and according to rules in God's house. But if you insist on pursuing and realizing your own ideals, aiming to not live your life in vain, then you can give up your duties and leave God's house. Or you can write a statement, saying, "I voluntarily withdraw from The Church of Almighty God to pursue the realization of my own ideals and desires. The world is wide, and there must be a place for me there. Farewell." That way, you can leave in a way that's proper and fitting and pursue your own ideals. However, if you say, "I would rather give up my own ideals, fulfill my duties in God's house, be a competent created being, and pursue salvation," then we can find some common ground between us. Since you wish to remain peacefully in God's house as a member, you should first learn how to be a good created being and fulfill your duties according to your place. In God's house, you would then become a created being that lives up to its name. Created being is your outward identity and title, and it should come with specific manifestations and substance. It's not just about having the title; but since you are a created being, you should fulfill the duties of a created being. Since you are a created being, you should fulfill the responsibilities of such. So, what are the duties and responsibilities of a created being? God's word clearly lays out the duties, obligations, and responsibilities of created beings, doesn't it? From today onward, you are a genuine member of God's house, that is to say, you acknowledge yourself as one of the created beings of God. Consequently, from today, you should reconsider your life plans. You should no longer pursue but should let go of the ideals, desires, and goals you previously set for your life. Instead, you should change your identity and perspective in order to plan the life goals and direction that a created being should have. First and foremost, your goals and direction should not be to become a leader, or to lead or excel in any industry, or to become a renowned figure who carries out a certain task or masters a particular skill. Your goal should be to accept your duty from God, that is, to know what work you should be doing now, at this moment, and to understand what duty you need to fulfill. You need to ask what God requires of you and what duty has been arranged for you in His house. You should understand and gain clarity on the principles that should be understood, laid hold of, and followed regarding that duty. If you can't remember them, you can write them down on paper or record them on your computer. Take the time to review them and ponder over them. As a member of creation, your primary life goal should be to fulfill your duty as a created being and be a competent created being. This is the most fundamental life goal you should have. Second and more specific is how to fulfill your duty as a created being and

be a competent created being. Of course, any goals or directions related to your reputation, status, vanity, future, and so on should be relinquished. Some may ask, “Why should we give them up?” It’s simple. Pursuing fame, wealth, and status will hinder the carrying out of God’s will, disrupt certain work in God’s house or the church, and even undermine certain work of the church. It will impact the spreading of God’s word, bearing witness to God, and, most seriously, people receiving salvation. In order to fulfill your duty competently and become a competent created being, you can set goals and summarize your experiences in any way you want, but you should never pursue the realization of your own ideals. Your ideals should not become intermixed in any of the principles or approaches you take in fulfilling your duty. In order to fulfill your duty competently and become a competent created being, you should seek principles within God’s words and a more accurate path of practice, rather than summing up your own personal ideas and opportunities outside of God’s words. These principles of practice ultimately revolve around how to be a competent created being and fulfill your duty. Everything is centered on understanding the truth, fulfilling your duty as a created being, and ultimately understanding the principles to abide by when facing various people, events, and things in the process of fulfilling your duty or in your daily life. Is this clear? (Yes.) Of course, if you fulfill your duty according to the requirements and principles of God’s house, and strive to be a competent created being, you can achieve these results. However, if you pursue the realization of your own ideals, you will never receive God’s approval.

If people persistently pursue the realization of their own ideals without following the path of pursuing the truth, they will ultimately become more arrogant, selfish, aggressive, ferocious, and greedy. What else? They will also grow increasingly inflated and full of themselves. However, when people give up pursuing the realization of their own ideals and desires, and instead pursue an understanding of various truths as well as various aspects of God’s words and criteria of the truth concerning how to view people and things, comport themselves, and take action, they will live with more of a human likeness. When carrying out various tasks or experiencing different environments, they will no longer feel lost and confused as before. Moreover, they will no longer be trapped in negative emotions as they often used to be, unable to extricate themselves, constrained and bound by negative thoughts and emotions, eventually leading to being controlled and covered by various negative emotions. Pursuing the realization of their own ideals and desires only takes people further away from the principles both of God’s words and of accurately becoming competent created beings. They are unaware of how to submit to God’s arrangements and orchestrations, and have no understanding of what human life, aging, illness, and death are all about. They don’t know how to handle hatred or deal with various negative emotions. Of course, they are also clueless about how to navigate the people, events, and things that come into their lives. When faced with various people, events, and things, they are helpless, filled with confusion, and at a loss. In the end, they

can only allow negative emotions and thoughts and viewpoints to spread and develop in their hearts, allowing themselves to be controlled and bound by them. Furthermore, led by these negative emotions or thoughts and viewpoints, they may also engage in extreme behaviors, or do things that harm themselves and others, creating unthinkable consequences. Such actions obstruct people's legitimate pursuits and damage the conscience and reason they should have. Therefore, the most important thing now is for people to examine deep within their hearts what are the things they still yearn for, and what are the things that belong to the flesh, to the world, and to the interests of the flesh, such as fame, prestige, reputation, status, wealth, and so on, that they still yearn for, still need, and are unable to see through, and that frequently bind and tempt them. They may even be deeply trapped by these things or have a deep admiration for them, and with a slight misstep, they could be easily captured by them at any time and in any place. In that case, these things are their ideals. Once they achieve these ideals, that is when they become their downfall and the source of their demise. How do you view this matter? (People should examine deep within their hearts what things they still yearn for. They need to see through things such as fleshly and worldly fame, prestige, reputation, status, wealth, and so on; otherwise, they might easily be captured by them.) They can be captured by them, right? So, these things of the flesh are very dangerous. If you cannot see through them, you will always be in danger of being influenced or even captured by them. So, the most crucial thing for you to do now is to dissect and understand these fleshly things I mentioned earlier based on God's words and the truth. Once you can dig them up and discern them, you should let go of them and invest your body, mind, and energy into becoming an ordinary created being, as well as into your current duties and work. Stop seeing yourself as a special or invincible person, or someone with extraordinary talents or abilities. You are just an insignificant individual. How insignificant? Among all the created beings and all things created by God, you are merely one of them, the most ordinary one. To what extent are you ordinary? You are as common as any blade of grass, as any tree, mountain, drop of water, or even a grain of sand on the shore. There's nothing for you to boast about, nothing worthy of admiration. That's how ordinary you are. Moreover, if there still exist the images of idols, grand figures, celebrities, great people standing tall in the depth of your heart, or certain things that you envy, you should remove and let go of them. You should see through to their nature essence, and return to the path of being an ordinary created being. Being an ordinary created being and fulfilling your duties is the most fundamental thing you should do. Then, you should return to this topic of pursuing the truth and put more effort into the truth. Try to minimize your exposure to external news, information, events, and celebrity profiles. It's best to avoid anything that could reignite the desire to realize your own ideals. Now, you need to distance yourself from people, events, and things that are of no benefit to you and are negative. Isolate yourself from them and try to steer clear of everything in this complicated and chaotic world. Even if they pose no threat or

temptation to you, you should still distance yourself from them. Just like how Moses lived in the wilderness for forty years; wasn't he still able to live well? In the end, despite his poor speaking ability, he was chosen by God, which was the most honorable thing in his life. It wasn't anything bad. Therefore, first and foremost, recover your heart deep within your thoughts, and deep in your thoughts you should possess a mindset of hungering and thirsting for righteousness that pursues the truth in your faith. You need to have such a plan, such a will and a desire, rather than constantly dwelling on your ideals or putting continuous efforts and contemplation into whether or not you can achieve them. You should completely sever your attachment to previous ideals and desires, and strive to be a competent and ordinary created being. Being a part of ordinary creation is not a bad thing. Why do I say this? It is actually a good thing. From the moment you start to let go of your fleshly ideals and desires, from the moment you make a firm decision to be an ordinary created being without any special status, position, or worth, it means you have the willingness and determination to fully submit yourself under God's dominion, under the dominion of the Creator, allowing God to orchestrate and rule over your life. You have the willingness to obey, to give up and cast aside personal ideals and desires, to let God be your Lord and rule over your destiny, to become a competent created being with such a mindset, and to fulfill your duty well with such a mindset and attitude. This is the life outlook you should have. Is this correct? Is this the truth? (Yes.) What do your life goals and the direction of your life center on? (Fulfilling the duties of a created being.) That is the most basic thing. What else? (The pursuit of becoming an ordinary created being.) Anything else? (Pursuing the truth to attain salvation.) That's another one. Anything else? (Centering on God's words and putting more effort into the truth.) That's a little more concrete, isn't it? All of your life goals and the direction of your life should revolve around God's words, and you should put more effort into the truth. Take the enthusiasm you had before in pursuing vague ideals and redirect it toward reading God's words and pondering the truth, and see if you will make progress toward the truth. If you have truly made progress toward the truth, there will be specific manifestations in yourself. That is, when faced with various people, events, and things involving human thoughts and viewpoints, as well as principles, you will no longer feel at a loss, confused, perplexed, or bewildered. Instead, you will pray to God, be guided by His words, have a calm and steadfast heart, and know how to act in a way that submits to God and meets His will. That is when you will truly be on the right path in life. Many people make slow progress in their lives because, in the process of fulfilling their duties, they always pursue their own ideals, fame, status, and the life goals they imagine, and wish to receive blessings while satisfying their fleshly desires. As a result, they cannot fulfill their duties in a down-to-earth manner, and they do not experience true life entry. From start to finish, they are unable to share a genuine experiential testimony. Consequently, no matter how long they have been fulfilling their duties, their progress entering into life and the truth remains minimal, and they bear little fruit. If you truly devoted yourself to fulfilling your

duties, putting all your energy into the pursuit of the truth and working hard toward the truth, you would not find yourself in the current state, stature, and condition you are in. It is because people usually focus only on mundane tasks, professional work, and the task at hand, and the underlying essence of these activities is to fulfill personal desires and aspirations while realizing their own ideals. What are these ideals? It is that people always want to find themselves in their work, and having won certain achievements, earned certain results, and gained recognition from others, at the same time they always want to realize their dreams and the goals of their pursuit in order to demonstrate their own value. Then they feel fulfilled. However, this is not the pursuit of truth; it is merely satisfying the emptiness within themselves and using work to enrich their lives. Isn't this the way it is? (Yes.) Therefore, no matter how long a person labors or how much work they have done, it is all unrelated to the truth. They still don't understand the truth and are far from pursuing it. In terms of the principles related to their work responsibilities, people still have no entry or understanding. Consequently, you feel exhausted and wonder, "Why are we always being dealt with? We put in a lot of effort, endured a lot of hardships, and paid a heavy price. Why are we still being dealt with?" It is because you don't understand the principles. You have never understood or grasped the principles, nor have you put any effort into them. In other words, you haven't put effort into the truth, into God's words. You simply follow a few rules and act according to your own imagination. You always live in a world of your own ideals and notions, and everything you do is irrelevant to the truth. You are pursuing your own career, not doing God's will. So, you still don't understand the principles in God's words, and in the end, some people are labeled as being service-doers, and some feel wronged. What is the reason they feel wronged? It is because they think that their suffering and paying a price is equivalent to practicing the truth. Actually, their suffering and paying a price is just enduring some hardship. It is not practicing the truth or following God's way. More accurately, it has nothing to do with practicing the truth; it is just exerting effort and doing work. Is merely exerting effort and doing work fulfilling your duties competently? Is it being a competent created being? (No.) There is distance and a gap between these two.

Regarding the topic of letting go of negative emotions of repression, let's stop our fellowship here for today. Can you clearly see these problems that arise for those people who feel repressed because they cannot achieve their own ideals and desires? (Yes, it is clear.) What's clear? Let's summarize a little. First, let's talk about what ideals are. The ideals being dissected here are negative, they are not legitimate or positive things. What are ideals? Use precise language to provide a definition for "ideals." (They are empty thoughts that deviate from normal human conscience and reason, that humans imagine for themselves but do not align with reality. They are not real.) What you have mentioned are the ideals of idealists. How would you define ideals in general? Can you define them? Are they difficult to define? What are the pursued goals that people establish for their own status, reputation, and prospects? (The pursued goals established

by people for their own status, reputation, and prospects are ideals.) Is this definition correct? (Yes.) The pursued goals established for people's own status, reputation, prospects, and interests are ideals and desires. Is this the broad definition of ideals as referred to by unbelievers? We are defining it based on its underlying essence, right? (Yes.) Regardless of the specific type of ideals, whether they are lofty, lowly, or average, they are all pursued goals established by people for their own interests. These goals are their ideals or desires. Isn't this the ideal of those whom we fellowshiped about and dissected in the previous examples? The pursued goals established by people for their own status, reputation, prospects, interests, and so on, are ideals and desires. Those who pursue ideals and desires but cannot realize them often feel repressed within the church. These people feel repressed. Think for a minute, are you also in such a state and situation? Do you also often live in such a condition, with such emotions? If you have these emotions, what are you striving for? It is for your own status, reputation, prospects, and interests. The ideals and pursued goals you have established are often restricted and hindered by the truth and positive things—they are not able to be realized. As a result, you feel unhappy and live with emotions of repression. Is that not it? (Yes.) This is the issue of human ideals. First, we dissected human ideals, and then what did we fellowship about? We fellowshiped that the church, God's house, is not the place for people to fulfill their ideals. Then we fellowshiped about the correct goals that people should pursue in their faith in God, how to be a competent created being, and how to fulfill the duties of a created being. Is that not it? (Yes.) The main purpose of fellowshiping about these things is to tell people how to choose and how to treat their ideals and duties. People should abandon their improper ideals, while their duties are what they should pay for in this life and devote their entire lives to. The duties of a created being are positive things, while human ideals are not and should not be held on to but relinquished. What people should hold on to and pursue is to become a competent created being and fulfill their duties as such. So, what should people do when their ideals conflict with their duties? (They should let go of their own ideals and abandon them.) They should abandon their ideals and hold on to their duties. No matter when or to what age they may live, what people should do and what they should pursue must revolve around how to fulfill the duties of a created being and achieve submission to God, His words, and the truth. Only through such a practice can one live a meaningful and valuable life, right? (Yes.) Alright, let's conclude our fellowship here for today. Goodbye!

December 10, 2022

How to Pursue the Truth (8)

Previously, we fellowshiped about the first major aspect of how to pursue the truth, which is letting go. With respect to letting go, we fellowshiped about the first aspect of practice, which is letting go of various negative emotions. Our aim in fellowshiping about and dissecting people's various negative emotions is mainly to address the incorrect and fallacious ideas and viewpoints hidden beneath those negative emotions. Isn't that right? (Yes.) That is, by resolving the negative emotions in people's hearts, we aim to address the negative ideas and viewpoints they hold deep within their hearts toward various people, events, and things. Of course, it is also by exposing and dissecting various negative emotions and providing people with the correct thoughts, viewpoints, and understanding that people's various negative emotions might be resolved. This is so that people are not troubled or bound by erroneous and fallacious ideas and viewpoints whenever things befall them, whether in their daily lives or on their life's path, and instead face each day, and the people, events, and things that befall them during each day, with positive, correct ideas and viewpoints that accord with the truth. Thus, when encountering people, events, and things in real life, they will not respond with hotheadedness but will live within the realm of normal human conscience and reason, and will be able to approach and handle every situation they face or experience in their life and on life's path rationally, using the accurate and correct ways that God has taught. One aspect of doing this is so that people live under the guidance and influence of correct ideas and viewpoints. The other aspect is so that they handle every situation correctly under the guidance and influence of these positive ideas and viewpoints. The ability to handle every situation correctly is not the ultimate goal of course. The ultimate goal is to accomplish what those who believe in God should accomplish, which is to fear God and stay away from evil, to submit to God, and to His arrangements and orchestrations, to submit to every environment He has set up, and of course to submit to one's destiny over which He is sovereign, and live rationally among every person, event, and thing, in every environment. In summary, whether we are fellowshiping about and dissecting people's negative emotions or negative ideas and viewpoints, all this relates to the path that a created being should walk, the life path that God requires of a normal person. And, of course, it also relates to the principles that a created being should have, in terms of how they view people and things, how they comport themselves, and how they act. Letting go of various negative emotions is ostensibly about resolving people's negative emotions and addressing the negative and erroneous ideas and viewpoints concealed beneath those negative emotions. But in fact, you could also say that essentially it is about guiding people, providing for them, and helping them, or about teaching people how to comport themselves, and how to be a true and normal person, a rational person, the person that God requires them to be, one He loves, and one who pleases God, when encountering various environments, people, events, and things. It is the same as other

aspects of the truth principles, in that they all relate to one's comportment. On the surface, the topic of letting go of various negative emotions seemingly involves a completely mundane emotion, or a state in which people are living at the moment. But in reality, these emotions and these simple states are related to the path that people walk and the principles by which they comport themselves. From a person's perspective, they may seem insignificant and not worth mentioning. However, because they relate to the viewpoints that people hold and the perspectives and standpoints they adopt when encountering various people, events, and things, they have to do with one's comportment. More specifically, they involve how to view people and things, how to comport oneself, and how to act. Because they involve how to view people and things, how to comport oneself, and how to act, these negative emotions and negative ideas and viewpoints need to be constantly examined and reflected upon in people's daily lives. Of course, it is also necessary for people to be able to promptly correct themselves whenever they discover during the process of reflection that they have negative emotions or negative and erroneous ideas and viewpoints, and to be able to promptly replace these negative emotions and erroneous ideas and viewpoints with positive and correct thoughts and viewpoints that accord with the truth principles. This enables them to view people and things, comport themselves, and act with God's words as the foundation and with the truth as the criterion. It is also a way for people's dispositions to be transformed so that they align with God, and so as to achieve fear of God and to stay away from evil. The above things that we have fellowshiped on are basically the key details of the first aspect, "letting go," in "How to Pursue the Truth." Of course, among various human emotions, there are also certain specific, minor negative things, or some special negative emotions that are not at all representative, and which also relate to some negative or erroneous thoughts and viewpoints. These negative emotions or erroneous thoughts and viewpoints can be said to have minimal effects on people, so we will not fellowship about them individually in greater detail.

All the negative emotions we fellowshiped about earlier can basically represent issues that exist in people's real lives or on their life's path. These emotions involve various viewpoints on how to view people and things, and how to comport oneself and act. These various negative thoughts and viewpoints on how to view people and things, and how to comport oneself and act relate to broader directions, major principles, and to people's pursuit of the truth. So, these are things that people should let go of and address within their thoughts and viewpoints. Some particular, non-representative, or more personalized matters that remain—such as food, clothing, personal life, and so on—do not involve the major principles of how one views people and things, and how they comport themselves and act, and it could be said that they do not involve making a distinction between positive and negative things. Therefore, they are not within the scope of the topic we are fellowshiping on. For example, when someone says, "I like things that are black," that is their freedom, their personal taste and preference. Does this involve

any principles? (No, it doesn't.) It doesn't involve how one views people and things, let alone how they comport themselves and act. For example, someone who wears glasses for shortsightedness says, "I like frames with a gold rim." And someone else says, "Gold rims are so outdated. I prefer glasses without rims." Does this involve principles of how to view people and things, and how to comport oneself and act? (No, it doesn't.) It doesn't involve principles of how to view people and things, and how to comport oneself and act. Others say, "I have negative feelings about daily household chores and cleaning. I always feel that they are troublesome and make my life exhausting. Even eating is a bother. It takes over an hour to prepare a meal, and after eating, I still have to wash the dishes, clean the pots, and tidy up the kitchen, and these things are particularly annoying as well." Still others say, "Life is so troublesome. Your clothes need to be switched out every season, and yet it's too hot in summer no matter how thin your clothes are, and too cold in winter no matter how thick your clothes are. This physical body is really a pain!" When their hair gets dirty, they don't want to wash it, but when they don't wash it, it itches. They have an air of lethargy and untidiness. They can't get away with not washing their hair, but they get irritated when they do wash it, thinking, "Wouldn't it be great to have no hair? It's so annoying to have to cut and wash it all the time!" Are these negative emotions? (Yes.) Should these negative emotions be resolved? Do they belong to the various negative emotions that should be let go of? (No, they don't.) Why don't they belong? (These are just some habits and issues related to the physical life of the body.) Women, especially adult women, can handle these trivial daily matters, such as washing, tidying up, and cleaning up after themselves. Men are a little worse off. They tend to find cooking, doing laundry, and household chores troublesome. They particularly struggle when it comes to doing laundry. Should they wash it? They don't feel like it. Should they not wash it? It's too dirty, and they worry they'll be mocked, so they just rinse it off for a second in water. Men and women have slightly different approaches and attitudes toward handling these trivial daily matters. Women tend to be more meticulous and particular, paying attention to cleanliness and appearance, while men may be relatively rough in handling these affairs. But there's nothing wrong with that. It's not good to be too messy; especially when you're living with other people, you will be exposing too many of your flaws and this will make others dislike you. These flaws are defects in your humanity, and you should overcome those that need to be overcome, and resolve those that need to be resolved. Be a bit more diligent, organize things in your living space, fold your clothes and blankets properly, and clean and organize your work environment every other day or every few days so as not to bother others—it's really that simple. There's no need for you to feel challenged, is there? (No.) As for how often you personally bathe or change clothes, it's fine as long as it doesn't affect others' moods. This is the standard. If you don't bathe, wash your hair, or change clothes for an extended period of time, you start to smell, and no one wants to be near you, that's not okay. You should wash up and make yourself presentable, at least so as not to affect

the mood of others. They shouldn't have to cover their nose or mouth while talking to you, and feel embarrassed because of you. If others treat you like this and you don't mind it or care, then you can continue living that way. No one has put any excessive demands on you. As long as you are able to accept it. But if you feel embarrassed, try your best to manage your personal living environment and hygiene, so that others won't be bothered by these. The goal is not to lay any undue burden or stress upon your own life and to consider the feelings of others. Do not put pressure or force your influence on others. This is the minimum requirement for normal human conscience and reason. If you don't even possess this much, how can you comport yourself with decency? Therefore, these things that someone with normal humanity should be able to attain don't require much explanation. God's house doesn't need to give you specific assignments or commands. You should be able to handle them yourself. The personal matters I mentioned above don't involve principles or criteria for how to view people and things, how to comport oneself, and how to act. Therefore, you can rely on the most basic human conscience and reason to handle them. A person with a normal human conscience and reason ought to possess this level of intelligence. There's no need to make a big deal out of it, and what's more, these trivial matters should not be treated as issues that require understanding or resolution through the pursuit of the truth, because these are things that any person with normal humanity can accomplish. Even a small dog understands what it means to be decent. If humans don't understand that, then they fall short of the standards of being human, don't they? (Yes.) I have a pet dog. This dog is particularly good-looking, with big eyes, a wide mouth, and a nicely shaped nose. Once, it got into a fight with its own pup over food, and the pup bit it on the nose. There was a small wound in the middle of its nose after that, which ruined its appearance. I quickly applied medication to the wound and said, "What can we do now? If such a good-looking dog is left with a scar, what a sad sight it would make!" I told it, "From now on, don't follow us when we go out. If people see a scar on your face, they'll think you look ugly." After hearing this, it made a sound of agreement, stared blankly for a moment, and widened its eyes. I continued, "You're injured. You have such a big wound on your nose, people might laugh at you if they see it. You need to rest and heal. You can't follow us out until you're fully recovered." After hearing My words, it didn't make another sound, and didn't insist on going out. I thought, even a dog knows what's what. After a while, the wound scabbed over and improved significantly, so I took it outside. One sister saw the little dog and asked, "Hey, what happened to your nose?" After hearing that, it turned its head and ran without looking back, straight to the car, refusing to come back. When the sister began talking to it, it behaved itself, drinking water when she offered. It didn't run away. But as soon as she asked, "What happened to your nose?" it turned its head and ran without looking back. When we returned home, I asked it, "Your nose was injured, why did you run away when the sister asked you about it? Are you shy?" It looked at Me with a shy expression, constantly lowering its head and feeling too embarrassed

to look at Me. It snuggled into My arms, letting Me pet and hold it. I told it, “You can’t fight with your pup anymore. If you get injured and it leaves scars again, you might look ugly. People will laugh at you. Where will you hide your face?” Look, even a little five-year-old dog knows what it means to feel shy. It knows to hide from people because its face is injured and is afraid of being laughed at. If a small dog has this level of intelligence, shouldn’t humans have it too? (Yes.) Humans should have it, that is to say it should be something that they possess within the scope of their reason. What does it mean to be decent? What does it mean to become edified and not to be disliked or repulsed by others? You should have this standard within yourself. It is the simplest matter in daily life, and with a normal human conscience and reason, you can handle things accurately without the need for fellowshiping about truths such as resolving people’s corrupt disposition or negative emotions. Of course, if you live in your own home, you can be a bit messy, the standards are not as strict. However, if you live together with brothers and sisters, you must ensure that your normal humanity is well-maintained. Although we don’t have any specific requirements or strict standards for this, as a normal human being, you should have a sense of these matters. These are things that people with normal humanity should do and possess. They do not involve thoughts, viewpoints, perspectives, or standpoints on how to view people and things, comport oneself, and act, and they certainly do not involve a greater life path, direction, or goal. Consequently, it would be best for you to resolve these matters according to the requirements of normal human conscience and reason, so that others don’t gossip or feel disgusted by you because of these things. As for personal habits, hobbies, differences in personality, or choices regarding matters unrelated to the principles, these things that do not involve thoughts and viewpoints, you are free to choose and keep your own mannerisms. God’s house will not interfere. God has given people free will and basic conscience and reason, allowing individuals to choose their own interests, hobbies and habits, or the lifestyles that suit their personalities. No one has the right to control, restrict, or lay blame on you. Regarding matters that do not involve the truth principles or God’s requirements in His words, specifically speaking, matters that do not involve how to view people and things, comport themselves, and act, people have the right to freely choose their own way of life without any interference from others. If a leader, group head, or supervisor criticizes or interferes with you regarding personal matters, you have the right to turn them away. In summary, these matters of normal humanity have nothing to do with the requirements of God’s words or the truth principles. As long as you feel comfortable and appropriate, and your behavior doesn’t have any impact on or disturb others, that’s fine. For example, if you enjoy dressing up and staying tidy, as long as you don’t affect others, it’s not a problem. But if it’s late at night and others need to go to sleep at eleven, and you’re still doing laundry or cleaning, that’s not acceptable. If you’re in your own home and you’re not affecting other people’s lives, you can stay up all night until four or five in the morning if you want. That’s your freedom. However, now that

you're living together with brothers and sisters, your actions will impact their daily routines and schedules. That's not good. By doing so, you're not exercising your rights and freedom correctly; instead, you're being willful, which is called lacking humanity. For the sake of your own freedom and to satisfy the preferences and desires of your own flesh, you disrupt others' lives and even sacrifice their time to rest. This behavior does not align with normal human conscience and reason. It needs to change. This relates to the principles of self-comportment. It's not about whether there's something wrong with your personal lifestyle or habits of cleanliness. It's about a problem with the principles of how you comport yourself. You don't consider others' feelings, moods, or interests. You protect and preserve your own interests at the expense of others'. This way of behaving is not in line with God's requirements for comporting oneself or with the principles of comportment. Therefore, any preferences, interests, lifestyle choices, habits, freedoms, rights, etc., of normal humanity must stay within the scope of a person's conscience and reason in order to be considered normal humanity. If they exceed the boundaries of normal human conscience and reason, then that is not normal humanity, is it? (No.) Within the boundaries of normal human conscience and reason, you are behaving like a normal person. If you go beyond the boundaries of normal human conscience and reason and still emphasize your freedom, then you're not acting like a normal person; you're subhuman. This is something that needs to change, it should be clear. What should be clear? It should be clear that these personal matters should be handled within the boundaries of normal human conscience and reason, and that this is a principle of self-comportment. Your personal habits, demands, lifestyle choices, etc., are all up to you, as long as they don't exceed the boundaries of normal human conscience and reason. There are no specific requirements regarding these matters.

In the first section of how to pursue the truth, "letting go," as regards letting go of various negative emotions, such as inferiority, hatred, anger, depression, distress, worry, anxiety, and repression, these are basically the major directional issues and issues involving principles that we need to fellowship about. As for the minor, side issues that do not involve principles or directions, earlier we fellowshiped about them comprehensibly. As for the reluctance, dissatisfaction, discontentment, and so on, you feel toward your own personal issues, as long as they do not involve genuine thoughts and viewpoints and do not touch upon the principles of how one views people and things, or how they comport themselves and act, they are your own personal matters. You need to adjust and address them within the scope of your conscience and reason. For example, you're hungry and don't feel like cooking, but you're too weak to work on an empty stomach, and when you do cook, you get irritated. You might think, "Is this a negative emotion?" This isn't a negative emotion; it's your physical laziness and dislike for cooking. It's a matter of your corrupted flesh. If your financial conditions allow, you can hire someone to help you with cooking. If you don't have the financial means, then you can only solve it yourself. Others are not obligated to solve these life problems for

you; it's your own responsibility. These mundane tasks of eating, getting dressed, and brushing and scrubbing are a part of human life. They're inherent to man's existence. Humans are different from cats and dogs. Once you adopt a kitten or a puppy, you are responsible for its food and drink. When it's hungry, you need to feed it. But this won't work for humans; humans have to take care of and shoulder these aspects of life themselves. It's not a burden; learning to handle these things properly is something people with normal humanity can achieve. It's only that some people might feel that they've never done these things before, especially certain men whose parents or family members helped them stay organized and pampered them so much they never learned how to cook, wash clothes, or take care of things in their own lives. This is a result of family environment. However, once they leave their parents and start living independently, they are capable of doing everything themselves, including washing clothes and making their bed. In fact, these are things that normal humanity can achieve. They are not difficult tasks for any adult, and are certainly not overwhelming. These problems are easily resolved. If you have higher standards for your quality of life, then you can do better. If you have less strict or lower expectations for your quality of life, then you can be more casual about it. These are all matters that do not involve principles.

Regarding the first major topic of how to pursue the truth—letting go of various negative emotions—let's conclude our fellowship here, as it is basically finished. Next, in the process of pursuing the truth, apart from letting go of negative emotions, one should also let go of personal pursuits, ideals, and desires. This is the second major aspect of "letting go" in the practice of how to pursue the truth, which we will fellowship about today. Letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires—do you understand? (Yes, we understand.) Just now I mentioned the objects of this specific practice of "letting go," and you have also taken note of them. Now, let's examine the topic: What comes to mind when we talk about letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires? What examples can you think of? (I can think of the ideals people have, which God has fellowshiped about earlier, such as people with a particular talent, like acting, aspiring to become celebrities or superstars. Others who possess writing abilities and a bit of literary talent may aspire to perform text-based duties in God's house and become writers. These are some ideals that emerge in people.) Anything else? (People pursue success as well as their own prospects and hopes, and desire to receive blessings.) Think further, what else? What should the emphasis be here? It is about the pursuits, ideals, and desires that people should let go of. In addition to people's luxurious desires and the hopes they put toward their prospects and destiny, in the context of people's real lives, in the necessary circumstances of human existence, what else is involved in the pursuits, ideals, and desires that people should let go of? What are some significant matters in life that can affect your faith in God and pursuit of the truth? (When people reach the age of marriage, they may be subject to the constraints of marriage. Also, when a person's career conflicts with their faith in God, they may choose to pursue their own career.

These are the two aspects that also need to be let go of.) Well said. Your faith in God during the past few years has given you results and an appreciation. You have correctly mentioned two significant aspects, marriage and career. These two major items are among the issues having to do with lifelong matters on the path of human life. Marriage is a significant matter for everyone, and a person's career is also a major concern that is inescapable and unavoidable. Are there any other major matters besides these two? (There is also the aspect of dealing with family, parents and children. When these matters conflict with faith in God and the pursuit of the truth, it becomes difficult for people to let go.) When you create an outline, you shouldn't use such long sentences. Earlier, we mentioned marriage and career. So, what should this topic be called? (Family.) That's right, family is also a major aspect. Does this involve every individual? (Yes.) It involves every individual, and it is specific and representative enough. Marriage, family, and career are all major topics that involve the main theme of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires. There are a total of four major topics related to letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires. You have correctly identified three of them, which is great. It seems that this topic requires detailed fellowshiping, it is a topic that is already present in your minds, and it is rather closely related to your lives or to your stature and experience. There is one more topic, which is actually quite simple. What is it? It is a person's interests and hobbies. Isn't that simple? (Yes.) Why do I say a person's interests and hobbies? Take a closer look at the topic and see if interests and hobbies are related to the people's pursuits, ideals, and desires that we need to discuss. (Yes.) Is marriage related to them? (Yes.) Is family related to them? (Yes.) Is career related to them? It is too. Each of these four aspects is related to a person's pursuits, ideals, and desires. Each aspect involves imaginings and specific requirements about it deep within their heart, and the things one wishes to obtain in their flesh and emotions. Each aspect has specific elements and concrete pursuits, and it also involves the effort a person puts in and the price they pay for them. Each aspect involves and influences a person's thoughts and views throughout their life and can affect their pursuit of correct goals. Of course, it also impacts how one views people and things and how they conduct themselves and act. If I were to speak in general terms, you might find it unclear and difficult to understand. So let's fellowship about each aspect one by one, examine them carefully, and you might gradually gain a clear understanding of the issues. Once they become clear, people may seek here the principles they should implement and abide by.

First, let's talk about interests and hobbies. Interests and hobbies of course do not involve what people occasionally do for fun, or their temporary pastimes or study interests—they have nothing to do with temporary things. Here, interests and hobbies refer to the genuine longing and pursuit that reside in a person's spiritual being and deep within their soul. They will even take action and make plans for these things, and more so they will make concrete efforts and strive to satisfy or further develop these interests and hobbies, or in order to do work that aligns with their own interests and hobbies. In

this context, interests and hobbies imply that individuals have set goals and ideals, and have even paid a price, expended energy, or taken specific actions. For example, they have gone and studied relevant knowledge for the sake of their interests and hobbies, spending the majority of their daily lives on the study of this knowledge, and obtaining practical experience in and hands-on appreciation for it. For instance, some people have the specific interest and hobby of painting, and these paintings aren't as simple as just drawing portraits or landscapes. It goes beyond such simple interests and hobbies. They study various techniques of painting, such as sketching, landscapes, and portraits, and some even study oil and ink painting. Their reason for studying like this does not solely arise from their interests and hobbies, but rather from the ideals they have developed and established, and the desires they possess, because of their interest in painting. They even wish to dedicate their entire life's energy to painting, become accomplished painters, and pursue painting as a profession. Before engaging in this profession, extensive preparation and planning are necessary, for example, attending specialized schools for further education and training, studying various aspects of painting, conducting on-site sketches, seeking guidance from experts and master artists, and participating in competitions, among other things. All these activities revolve around their pursuits, ideals, and desires. Of course, all these pursuits, ideals, and desires are based on their interests and hobbies. It is due to these interests and hobbies that they have developed their life's pursuits, ideals, and desires. Some people have a strong passion for studying history, including ancient and modern, domestic and foreign history. As their interest grows stronger, they begin to see themselves as individuals with a talent in this field, and they feel compelled to pursue a career related to it. They continue to learn and further their education. During this process, of course, their pursuits, ideals, and desires continue to take shape and solidify, and they ultimately aspire to become historians. Before becoming a historian, most of their time and energy revolves around this interest and hobby. There are also some people who have a particular interest in economics, and enjoy working with numbers and studying things related to the field of economics. They hope one day to become outstanding or successful figures in the finance industry. In short, they also develop a pursuit based on their interest and hobby, and develop ideals and desires related to that interest and hobby. At the same time, they also invest their time, take action, pay the price, and expend energy to learn, research, further their education, and acquire comprehensive knowledge related to their interests and hobbies. Others have a passion for the arts, such as performing arts, dance, singing, or directing. After developing such interests and hobbies, under the impetus of these interests and hobbies, their ideals and desires gradually take shape and solidify. As their ideals and desires gradually become their life goals, they also dedicate their efforts, labor, and actions toward pursuing those goals. Some people are fond of working in the field of education. They study various aspects of education, such as psychology and other relevant knowledge, to pursue a career related to their interests and hobbies. Some

people enjoy design, engineering, technology, electronics, or researching insects, microorganisms, and various animal behaviors, survival patterns, origins, and more. Some people enjoy media work and aspire to be employed by the media industry as hosts, anchors, reporters, and so on. Driven by their diverse interests and hobbies, people continue learning and exploring in-depth, and gradually gain understanding. Their pursuits, ideals, and desires deepen in their hearts and continue to take shape. Of course, during the process of their pursuits, ideals, and desires gradually taking shape, individuals also strive and move forward toward their ideals and desires. Every specific action they take invests their energy, time, youth, and even emotions and efforts into these things.

Regardless of which field or industry one's interests and hobbies are in, no matter the category they involve, once they ignite a pursuit and establish corresponding ideals and desires, their life goals and direction also become fixed. When one's ideals and desires become their life goals, their future path in this world is basically set. Why do I say it is set? What is the issue being addressed here? It is that once you have determined the ideals and desires arising from your interests and hobbies, you must also strive and struggle in that direction, even to the point of having an unwavering and resolute spirit and mindset, willing to pay a lifetime's worth of energy, time, and price. Your life, destiny, prospects, and even your ultimate destination will inevitably be influenced by, if not tied up with, the life goals you have already established. What is the main point I want to emphasize here? Once a person establishes their pursuits, ideals, and desires based on a particular interest or hobby, they will no longer remain idle and do nothing. Because of specific interests and hobbies, concrete actions begin to take shape. Simultaneously, under the guidance of these specific actions, you will establish your ideals and desires. From then on, your heart will not stop, and your feet won't stand still. You are destined to live your life for your ideals and desires. You will never simply settle for acquiring a little knowledge and calling it a day. Because you have such talents, and possess such potential and gifts, you will undoubtedly search for a position that suits you, or you will make relentless efforts to soar high and become extraordinary in this world and in the midst of the crowd, without any regrets. You will pursue your ideals and desires with a firm belief in victory, and even be willing to pay any price, and face any difficulties, dangers, and suffering in order to achieve them. Why are people able to do this? Why, after developing ideals and desires based on their interests and hobbies, can they behave in such a way? (They do it to realize their ideals, to pursue higher things, and to be a cut above the rest. Consequently, they do not retreat in the face of any difficulty but continue to pursue their ideals and desires.) There is an innate instinct in people. If they never know what their strengths are, what their interests and hobbies are, they feel that they don't have a place, are unable to realize their own value, and have a sense of worthlessness. They are unable to demonstrate their value. However, once a person discovers their interests and hobbies, they will turn them into a bridge or a

springboard to realize their self-worth. They are willing to pay the price to pursue their ideals, to live a more valuable life, to become a useful individual, to stand out in the crowd and be seen, to be admired and validated, and to become an extraordinary person. In this way, they can live a fulfilling life, have a successful career in this world, and have their ideals and desires fulfilled, thus living a valuable life. Looking around at the bustling crowds of people, there are only a few who are as naturally gifted as themselves, who have set lofty ideals and desires, and who ultimately have achieved these things through relentless efforts. They have built a career doing what they love, attained the fame, profit, and prestige they desired, demonstrated their value, and realized their self-worth. This is the pursuit of people. Each person, driven by their unique interests and hobbies, has their own pursuits, ideals, and desires. Of course, after setting their own pursuits, ideals, and desires, they may not be able to achieve these ideals and desires. However, once individuals establish their ideals and desires, once they have these pursuits, they will certainly not allow themselves to remain ordinary. As the saying goes, everyone likes to strut their stuff, they want others to think they are unique. No one is willing to be an ordinary person who says, “This is how my life will be. I could be a cattle herder, a farmer, an ordinary bricklayer, or a janitor. I could even be a delivery person or a takeout driver.” No one has that kind of ideal. Suppose you say, “Is it a kind of ideal to be a happy delivery person?” Everyone will respond, “No, that’s not an ideal at all! Becoming the owner of a delivery company, a world-renowned boss, that’s an ideal and a desire!” No one willingly accepts their role as an ordinary person. Once a person gets even the slightest whiff of an interest or hobby, if there is a one-in-a-million chance of becoming a prominent figure in society or achieving modest success, they will not give up. They will put in 120 percent and pay any price for it, right? (Yes.) People never give up.

What is the nature of the ideals and desires that arise from people’s interests and hobbies? We are not exposing people’s interests and hobbies here, so what are we actually exposing and dissecting? Isn’t it the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise from certain interests and hobbies people have? (Yes.) Aren’t we exposing the various behaviors people exhibit and the paths they take as a result of their pursuits, ideals, and desires? Isn’t this the essence we are exposing? (Yes.) So what are the paths that people take for the sake of their pursuits, ideals, and desires? What kind of path do the pursuits, ideals, and desires of any person lead them on? What kind of goals do they achieve? While people are realizing their pursuits, ideals, and desires, apart from investing their energy and time, as well as enduring more pain and all kinds of physical labor, fatigue, stress, and other similar hardships, most importantly, what is the path that they take? That is, while people are pursuing the realization of their own ideals and desires, what is the path they must take in order to achieve the realization of their pursuits, ideals, and desires? First and foremost, in order for people to realize their own pursuits, ideals, and desires in this world, what should they study as their first step? (All

kinds of knowledge.) That's right, they should learn and equip themselves with all kinds of knowledge. The more abundant, comprehensive, and profound their knowledge is, the closer they will be to their pursuits, ideals, and desires. The more comprehensive, abundant, and profound their knowledge is, the more likely they are to be recognized as experienced individuals, and the higher status they will enjoy in society. At the same time, the more abundant, profound, and comprehensive their knowledge is, this means they will need to invest more time and energy. This is spoken from the perspective of physical energy. Furthermore, after acquiring a foundation of knowledge, people are one step closer to the realization of their pursuits, ideals, and desires. Having sufficient knowledge is only the first step, the bottom foundation. After this, people need to immerse themselves in society, in the masses, in the vast dyeing vat or one might say meat grinder of the industry related to their ideals and desires, contending, struggling, and competing with forces on all sides, and participating in various contests, competitions, and seminars. While spending a great deal of energy, people also need to adapt to different situations and environments in order to achieve the realization of their pursuits, ideals, and desires. At the same time, in this vast dyeing vat, people must rely on their knowledge, and more so what they have learned from the masses, as well as the methods, philosophy, and rules of survival they already possess, in order to adapt to the masses and to society's mechanisms and rules of the game. Through this process, people gradually get closer to the goals of their pursuits, ideals, and desires. After surviving so many ordeals, so many twists and turns, what is the ultimate outcome? As the winners, they take the crown, and the losers get nothing. In the end, with this result they achieve their life's pursuits, ideals, and desires, realizing their life goals and gaining a firm footing in their industry. By that time, people have usually already arrived at middle or old age, and some may even be in their late years, with failing eyesight, balding heads, loss of hearing, and loose teeth. At that age, although they have achieved their ideals and desires, they have also done many harmful things. They have thrown their entire lives into this. Throughout their lives, in order to realize their ideals and desires they have said many things that went against their will, committed many acts that violated ethics and conscience and crossed certain boundaries, and even engaged in many unconscionable and immoral acts. They have deceived others and been deceived more than a few times, they have defeated others and been defeated as well. They are fortunate enough to have survived and to have gained a foothold, and their lives seem perfect, as if they have realized their self-worth and have not lived in vain. They have struggled their whole lives for their ideals and desires, and seem to have lived a valuable and meaningful life. Yet they fail to see through the path of self-comportment they should have taken, they lack any kind of motto for their life, and have struggled their entire lives solely for the sake of realizing their ideals and desires, battling against humanity, society, and even themselves. They have lost the conscience, boundaries, and principles needed for self-comportment. Although their ideals and desires have been realized, and after

numerous twists and turns the life goals they set at each stage have been achieved, on the inside they do not feel at ease or fulfilled. The pursuits, ideals, and desires they have established for the sake of their own interests and hobbies, to put it plainly, ultimately lead them to a path of pursuing fame and profit. Although they may feel that, after attaining their ultimate goals, they have realized their self-worth, earned a sense of presence, and gained and possess both fame and profit, they remain ignorant about the future, their destination, and the value of human existence that people should truly understand. As they reach old age, they increasingly feel that everything they ever pursued is terribly elusive and hollow. This hollowness and elusiveness bring with them waves of emptiness and apprehension. It is only in old age that people realize that the ideals and desires they pursued have only served to satisfy their vanity and provide temporary fame and profit, which are nothing more than a fleeting consolation. Such consolation quickly turns into a kind of unease and apprehension, because as people reach old age, they are more prone to contemplate their future, what will become of them, and what will happen to them after death, and when all these questions remain unanswered, when they lack any correct thoughts and viewpoints on these matters, people will begin to feel apprehensive and uneasy. This unease and apprehension persist with them until they close their eyes and pass away. The joy that comes from fame and profit quickly disappears from the human heart, and the more one even attempts to grasp and hold on to it, the more easily it fades away, and this sense of joy more easily transforms into unease and fear. Consequently, regardless of the ideals and desires that arise from people's various interests and hobbies, they ultimately lead to a path of pursuing fame and profit, and the ultimate goal achieved, what people gain, is nothing more than fame and profit. This fame and profit only provide temporary consolation and the momentary satisfaction of fleshly vanity. When people do not understand the truth, they feel that their pursuits, ideals, and desires are real, make them feel grounded, that they are better able to find their place in the world, better able to control the direction of and maintain a grasp on their lives, to be in charge of their own destiny. However, when their ideals and desires are realized, people finally experience an awakening. What is the cause of this awakening? It is the realization that what they have devoted their life's energy to is an empty thing that cannot be seized by the hand or felt by the heart. The more they try to seize and hold onto it, the more it slips away, leaving them with a heightened sense of loss and emptiness, and of course, greater feelings of fear and regret. Because people have interests and hobbies, they develop ideals and desires, and these ideals and desires create an illusion that makes people believe they have the ability to control their lives, to steer their life's path, and to determine their mode and objectives of existence. At the root of this illusion is the fact that people do not pursue the truth, they have no love for the truth, and of course one might say that it is brought about by people not understanding the truth. When people do not understand the truth, they often instinctively pursue things that can make their

flesh or their spirit feel satisfied. Regardless of how distant from them these things may be, as long as they feel they can attain and lay hold on them, they are willing to pay the price, even spending a lifetime of energy and time. Because people do not understand the truth, they easily mistake their interests and hobbies as the cornerstone or as a kind of qualification or capital for pursuing their life goals, and for this, they are willing to pay any price. You don't realize that once you pay this price, once you embark on this path, you are destined to walk a path controlled by Satan and by the world's trends and rules of the game. At the same time, you are destined to involuntarily immerse yourself in society's dyeing vat, in society's meat grinder. No matter what color it dyes you, no matter what it grinds you into, no matter how distorted your humanity becomes, you console yourself, saying, "In order to realize my ideals and desires, and for the sake of my future, I must endure!" You also constantly tell yourself, "I must adapt to this society, no matter what color I am dyed, I must accept and adapt to it." While you are adapting to all these different environments, you are also adapting to the different colors you are being dyed, and constantly accepting different versions of yourself with different styles and different characters. In this way, people unknowingly become more and more numb, more and more without a sense of shame, and their conscience and reason are more and more unable to guide or control their thoughts, desires, and choices. In the end, to varying degrees, most people achieve their ideals and desires while pursuing them. Of course, a few individuals, no matter how they pursue, or how much effort and hardship they go through, still are unable to realize their ideals and desires. Regardless of the ultimate outcome, what do humans gain? Those who succeed gain fame and profit, while those who fail may be unable to gain this fame and profit, but what they receive is the same as the successful people—they receive the various harms and negative thoughts imbued by Satan, by this evil humanity, and by the entire social mechanism and society's evil influence. Otherwise, why would people frequently use phrases like: "been around the block," "a conniving old fox," "a seasoned and wily snake," or "weathered many storms," and so on? It is because as you pursue your ideals and desires, you also "learn" a lot in this vast dyeing vat and this meat grinder of society. You "learn" things that don't exist in your physical instincts—the term "learn" here should be in quotation marks. What does "learn" refer to? It means society, Satan, and evil mankind indoctrinating you with various thoughts that defy normal human conscience and reason, making you live with less and less conscience and reason, increasingly devoid of shame, and increasingly despise normal people and those who walk the right path. At the same time, what is the worst result? Not only will you increasingly look down upon people with normal humanity, conscience, and reason, but at the same time you will also envy and admire the despicable acts of those who betray their conscience and morality, and envy the rich material or economic benefits they gain from their despicable acts and bad behavior. Isn't this the consequence? (Yes.) This is a more terrifying consequence, that is, as people pursue the realization of their ideals and desires, their countenance becomes

increasingly grim and terrifying, their conscience and reason are gradually lost, and their moral outlook, life outlook, and behavior become more and more wicked, ugly, despicable, and sordid.

From the moment a person develops interests and hobbies to realizing their ideals and desires, during this process, the path they walk and the activities they engage in—that is, their whole current life situation—is a life situation, one might say, that is in the grip of society and evil trends. In fact, it is also a process during which people willingly accept the manipulation, trampling, and exploitation of Satan while pursuing the realization of their ideals and desires. It is of course also a process during which Satan corrupts people further and more specifically in everything. In every situation you encounter, Satan continuously instills in you the idea that in order to achieve your goals, you must use any means necessary, abandoning things that are positive and that normal humanity ought to uphold, such as human dignity, personal integrity, moral boundaries, one's conscience, and the criteria for self-comportment. As it misleads you into gradually relinquishing these, it also challenges your conscience, reason, and moral boundaries, as well as the little bit of shame you have left. After it finishes challenging these, it leads you to continually make compromises in the midst of the deception, temptation, control, and trampling of evil trends. In the process of making constant compromise, you choose to adopt the thoughts and viewpoints instilled by Satan concerning how to view people and things and how to comport oneself and act, and you actively practice the thoughts and viewpoints Satan has imparted to you as well as the ways and methods for how to comport oneself and act. You reluctantly and involuntarily engage in all of this, but at the same time, in order to achieve your ideals and desires, you willingly and actively do it all with a very accommodating attitude. In short, during this process, people remain passive, but from another perspective, they are actively conforming to Satan's control and corruption. While pursuing the realization of their ideals and desires, they live all the time in the vast dyeing vat of society's evil trends, in their grip. Similarly, they live in a complex and contradictory mindset of being both willing and unwilling, and in a real environment that is both complex and contradictory. Through this process, as people draw closer to the ideals, desires, and life goals they've been pursuing, they become less and less like a human being, their conscience grows increasingly numb, and their reason diminishes. However, deep down people believe that they have ideals and desires, some even say that their ideals and desires are their convictions, that having convictions in their hearts means that they have beliefs, and that one should have beliefs in life. They believe that they are normal human beings because they have beliefs, and that they should therefore continue their pursuits according to their former methods and laws of survival, and that as long as the results of this are good, and it brings them closer to their life ideals and goals, then any price they pay for this is worth it, even if it means losing everything. Consequently, within the contradictory mindset of being both willing and unwilling, people will continue to accept Satan's control, its thoughts, and its manipulation and

trickery. Even when people are well aware that they have been corrupted by society and evil trends, in these kinds of circumstances, they will still keep up a relentless pursuit in order to realize their ideals and achieve their life goals. They may even congratulate themselves on the fact that they are able to resort to any means necessary and have never given up, rejoicing in their ability to persist till now. Looking at the behaviors people exhibit during the pursuit of their ideals and desires, as well as the paths they take and their various transformations, what manner of path is that of pursuing the realization of people's ideals and desires? (It is a path leading to destruction.) It is a path without return, where the further people walk down it, the further they drift away from God. One might also say that it is a path of destruction. The life goals, to which the ideals and desires that people have established lead, have Satan waiting for them there. And along the way to these life goals, that which accompanies and follows them isn't the truth, it isn't God's words. Then who is it? (It is Satan, along with its evil trends and various worldly philosophies.) They are accompanied by Satan, by its control, corruption, trickery, and repeated temptations. This is a path of no return, a path of destruction, is it not? (It is.) Because while people pursue their ideals and desires, what they are actually pursuing is not the actualization of their ideals and desires as the goal, rather they use the pursuit of these things as their driving force and foundation to acquire fame and profit. That is the essence and the truth of the matter. This path only makes people yearn more and more for fame and profit, for the world's evil trends. This path only leads people to sink deeper and deeper, making them more and more depraved, and more devoid of rationality and bereft of conscience, distancing them away from positive things. At the same time, it leads them further away from the more practical ways of living and life goals that someone with normal humanity should have. It can only make people's corrupt dispositions become more deeply rooted, and it can only distance them further from the sovereignty and orchestration of God. Of course, it also makes it increasingly difficult for people to discern between positive and negative things. This is a fact. So, how can we resolve these problems? Once we understand the essence of human pursuits, ideals, and desires, what should we fellowship about? It should be about how to let go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires, isn't that right? (Yes.)

We were fellowshiping just now about how pursuing the realization of one's own ideals and desires is a path of no return, a road leading to destruction—then should people abandon such a way of life? (Yes.) They should let go of and change the way they live: It is neither a correct approach nor a right path in life. Since it is not correct, one should let go of it, change the way they live and adopt a correct approach to life and existence. Of course, they should adopt a correct approach in how they treat people's interests and hobbies, and how they treat people's pursuits, ideals, and desires. People's talents and gifts, along with these interests and hobbies, let them establish their pursuits, ideals, and desires, and at the same time, they also let them develop their goals to pursue. These goals are not right, and will lead people on a path of no return, taking

them further away from God and eventually bringing them to destruction. Since they are not right, what is the right course of action? Let's first take a look at whether it is right for people to have interests and hobbies, that is to say, can their interests and hobbies be listed under the category of negative things? (No, they cannot.) People's interests and hobbies are not inherently wrong, and of course one certainly cannot say that they are negative things. They should not be condemned or criticized. It is a part of normal humanity for people to have interests, hobbies, and talents in certain areas—every person has them. Some people like dancing, some enjoy singing, drawing, performing, mechanics, economics, engineering, medicine, agriculture, sailing, or certain sports, others like studying geography, geology, or aviation, and, of course, still others might enjoy the study of even more obscure subjects. Regardless of a person's interests and hobbies, they are all a part of humanity and of normal human life. They should not be vilified as negative things, neither should they be criticized, and banned even less. That is, any interest and hobby you may have is legitimate. Since any interest or hobby is legitimate and should be allowed to exist, how should the ideals and desires related to them be treated? For example, some people enjoy music. They say, "I want to become a musician or a conductor," then disregard everything else to go study and further themselves in music, setting their life's goals and direction on occupying the seat of a musician. Is this the right thing to do? (It's not the right thing to do.) If you don't believe in God, if you're a part of the world and spend your life realizing the ideals and desires established by your own interests and hobbies, we have nothing to say about that. Now, as a believer in God, if you have such interests and hobbies and want to dedicate your whole life, paying the price of a lifetime to realize the ideals and desires established by your own interests and hobbies, is this path good or bad? Is it worth promoting? (It's not worth promoting.) Let's not talk just yet about whether or not it's worth promoting; everything ought to be worked through solemnly, so how do you do that in order to determine whether this matter is right or wrong? You need to consider whether the pursuits, ideals, and desires you've established have any connection to God's teachings and His salvation and expectations for you, to God's will to save mankind, to your mission, and to your duty, whether they will help you complete your mission and fulfill your duty more effectively, or whether they will increase your chances of being saved and help you achieve the satisfaction of God's will. As an ordinary person, your pursuit of ideals and desires is your right, but as you realize your own ideals and desires and pursue this path, will they lead you down the path of salvation? Will they lead you down the path of fearing God and shunning evil? Will they ultimately lead you to the result of absolute submission to and worship of God? (They will not.) That's for sure. Since they will not, then as a believer in God, are the ideals and desires established because of your interests, your hobbies, and even your talents and gifts, positive or negative? Should you have them or not? (They are negative; we shouldn't have them.) You shouldn't have them. So, what does the nature of a person's ideals and desires become?

Do they become positive or negative things? Do they become a right you should have or something you shouldn't have? (They become negative, something I shouldn't have.) They become something you shouldn't have. Some people say, "Then if I shouldn't have them, it must mean You're taking away my rights!" I'm not taking away your rights; I'm talking about what kind of path people should take and how to pursue the truth. I'm not taking away your rights; the freedom of choice is yours, you are allowed to choose. But as for what is the nature of this matter and how it should be judged, we have a basis for our arguments and are not speaking at random. If you take God's words as your basis and speak from the perspective of the truth, then a person's ideals and desires are not positive things. Of course, to be more precise, if as a believer in God you wish to pursue the truth and attain salvation, if you wish to pursue the truth and achieve fearing God, shunning evil, and submitting to God, then you shouldn't have the same ideals and desires as worldly people do. In other words, if you want to pursue the truth and attain salvation, then you should let go of your own pursuits, ideals, and desires. To put it differently, if you want to pursue the truth and attain salvation, then you shouldn't pursue your own ideals and desires, and you especially shouldn't use the pursuit of these ideals and desires for the purpose of garnering fame and profit. Can it be put this way? (Yes.) It's all clear now. As a believer in God, since you are willing to pursue the truth and wish to attain salvation, you should then let go of your pursuits, ideals, and desires, you should abandon this path, that is the path of seeking fame and profit, and let go of these ideals and desires. You should not choose the realization of your ideals and desires as your life's goal; instead, it should be to pursue the truth and attain salvation.

Some people ask, "Since I can't realize my pursuits, ideals, and desires, and I've let them all go, what should I do about my interests and hobbies?" That is your own business. Though you may have interests and hobbies, as long as they do not disturb your normal pursuit, do not interfere with fulfilling your duty and completing your mission, and do not affect your life goals or the path you are taking, then you can keep these interests and hobbies. Of course, it can also be understood like this: Since these interests and hobbies are a part of your humanity, then one might also say that they are given to you by God. All aspects, such as a person's appearance, family, background, and survival habitat, have been predestined by God. Therefore, we cannot deny that the interests and hobbies you have are also given by God. This fact cannot be denied, it is certain. For instance, some people are skilled in languages, in drawing, in music, in distinguishing sounds, colors, etc. Regardless of whether these things are your special skills or interests and hobbies, one might say that they are all a part of humanity. Why does God give people certain interests and hobbies? It is to make your human life a bit more rich and colorful, so that your life may be accompanied by certain elements of entertainment and leisure without affecting you walking the right path in life, making your life less dry, less dull and monotonous. For example, when it is time to sing hymns at gatherings, someone who is able to perform a musical instrument can accompany the

singing by playing the piano or guitar. If no one could perform, then everyone would be deprived of this delight. If there is someone to provide an accompaniment, then the result will be much better than singing without accompaniment, and everyone will enjoy it. At the same time, it broadens horizons, enriches experiences, life gains more substance, people feel that life is more beautiful, and their moods grow more cheerful. This is beneficial to both their normal humanity and the path they take in belief in God. For instance, if you enjoy drawing, then when life for the brothers and sisters has grown monotonous, you can make humorous drawings, and depict certain people's negative expressions and faces, and negative remarks, as witty and humorous cartoons, then compile them into a little booklet and share it with everyone, including those Negative Nancies. When they see it and say, "Yikes, is this a drawing of me?" they'll chuckle and feel happy, and they won't be negative anymore. Isn't this a good thing? It didn't take too much effort, yet it helped them come out of their negativity rather easily. In one's free time, drawing, playing musical instruments, discussing art, or exploring acting and performing various characters, including different kinds of negative people, different kinds of arrogant individuals, and the various manifestations of antichrists who act arbitrarily, can help people improve their discernment and broaden their horizons. Isn't this a good thing? How are these interests and hobbies not useful? They are beneficial to people. However, if you give rise to ideals and desires because of your interests and hobbies, and they have the effect of steering you toward a path of no return, then they are not good for you. But if you apply your interests and hobbies to your life in a way that is insightful to your humanity, makes your life more abundant and colorful, and makes you more witty and cheerful, living more well-nourished, free, and liberated, then your interests and hobbies will have a positive effect, benefiting everyone and providing you with edification, while not affecting the performance of your duty and completion of your mission. Of course, to some extent they will assist you in fulfilling your duty. When you are feeling down or discouraged, singing a song, playing an instrument, or playing lively and rhythmic music can uplift your mood, enabling you to come before God in prayer. You will no longer harbor negativity, complain, or want to quit. At the same time, you will discover your weaknesses and defects, realizing that you are too fragile and unable to withstand tempering or setbacks. Playing an instrument will help you improve your mood; this is called knowing how to live. Haven't these interests and hobbies had a positive effect? (Yes.) Interests and hobbies can be viewed as tools that, when used properly, can change your mood, allowing you to live a more normal and rational life. To some extent, they can expedite or facilitate your entry into the truth reality and provide an additional tool to help you fulfill your duties. Of course, some people's humanity is bad and wicked; they're always ambitious, with the disposition of an antichrist, or they are antichrists. For them, having interests and hobbies can be troublesome, as they might use them as a capital and think no end of themselves, which undoubtedly feeds their aggression and audacity in doing wicked deeds. Therefore, interests and hobbies

themselves are not inherently bad or negative things. Good and normal people use them for positive things, while bad, wicked, and negative individuals use them to do evil and bad deeds. So, interests and hobbies can either make you better or worse, isn't that the case? (Yes.) Let's return to the theme of how to let go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires. After understanding the essence of interests and hobbies, people should not view someone's interests and hobbies through colored glasses, and they should certainly not reject people with any interests or hobbies. Interests and hobbies are a part of normal humanity, and people should treat them correctly. Unless your interests and hobbies start affecting others' lives or causing discomfort to others, or if you preserve your interests and hobbies at the expense of affecting or disturbing others, then this is inappropriate. Apart from this, your interests and hobbies are legitimate, and it is hoped that people can treat them properly and make reasonable use and employment of them. Of course, the best and most correct way to use and employ them is to let your interests and hobbies have the greatest impact on the work you do and the duties you fulfill, and employ them to the fullest extent without letting them go to waste. Some people say, "My interests and hobbies can play a significant role in fulfilling my duties, but I feel that my knowledge in this area is not sufficient and comprehensive enough right now. I want to further myself and carry out a better and more systematic study of subjects related to this area, then apply it to my duties. Can I do that?" Yes, you can. God's house repeatedly encourages you to keep learning. Knowledge is a tool, and if it doesn't contain anything that corrodes or erodes one's thoughts, you can study and deepen your understanding of it. You can use it as a positive and beneficial tool to fulfill your duties, allowing it to be effective and have an impact. Isn't that a good thing? Isn't this an appropriate approach? (Yes.) Of course, this method of practice is also a proper way to handle your interests and hobbies, and at the same time it is also a correct way to let go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires. You are using and employing your interests and hobbies correctly, not using them to achieve personal goals or to achieve the goal of pursuing the satisfaction of personal ambitions and cravings. This, then, is legitimate and an accurate way of practice, and of course it is also a correct and positive way of practice. Moreover, it also serves as a concrete path of how to let go of pursuits, ideals, and desires.

We have clarified the issue of how to treat interests and hobbies correctly; now, what does truly letting go refer to? We are not criticizing or condemning interests and hobbies, rather we are dissecting the pursuits, ideals, and desires that people establish with interests and hobbies as their foundation and capital. Consequently, it is these pursuits, ideals, and desires that must be truly let go. We fellowshiped earlier about letting your interests and hobbies play a positive role and produce a positive effect—this is an active method of practice for letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires. In another respect, people should not pursue their own ideals and desires because they have interests and hobbies—this is a more practical form of letting go. In other words, one

aspect is to utilize your interests and hobbies well, while another is that you shouldn't pursue ideals and desires established because of your own interests and hobbies, that is, don't pursue the life goals you have because of your interests and hobbies. So how might you determine that you are employing interests and hobbies normally, and not pursuing ideals and desires? If you have an interest or hobby, and you apply it correctly to your work, to the performance of your duty, and to your own daily life, if the goal of your pursuit is not to showcase yourself or blow your own trumpet, certainly not to increase your own popularity or gain the esteem, commendation, and admiration of others, and of course more especially not to make people have a place in their hearts for you because of your interests and hobbies, and thereby establish and follow you, then you have carried out a positive, proper, appropriate, and rational application of your interests and hobbies, which aligns with normal humanity and conforms to God's will, and you are utilizing them according to the truth principles. But if, while utilizing or applying your interests and hobbies, you force others to admire and accept you, with the especially strong purpose of showcasing yourself, if you unscrupulously, shamelessly, and forcefully get others to listen to and accept you, satisfying the vanity you get from showcasing your interests and hobbies, regardless of how others feel, ultimately using your interests and hobbies as capital to control others, gain a place in their hearts, and establish prestige among people, and if ultimately you achieve fame and profit as a result of your own interests and hobbies, then this is neither a legitimate use of interests and hobbies, nor a normal employment of your interests and hobbies. Such actions should be condemned, they should be discerned and rejected by others, and of course they should also be let go of by people. When you use opportunities to fulfill your duties, or you give yourself the pretext of being a leader, a person in charge, or someone with exceptional talent, in order to show others that you have certain talents and skills, and show them that your interests and abilities are above theirs, this way of doing things is inappropriate. It involves using the employment of your interests and hobbies as a pretext to establish prestige among people and satisfy your own ambitions and desires. To put it precisely, this process or course of action amounts to exploiting your interests and hobbies and people's admiration for them to realize your pursuits, ideals, and desires. This is what you should let go of. Some people say, "After hearing this, I still don't know how to let go." In reality, is letting go easy? When you possess certain unique interests and hobbies, if you do nothing, these interests and hobbies stay within your humanity and don't have anything to do with what path you take. However, once you are constantly showcasing your interests and hobbies, attempting to win fame among people or increase your popularity, make yourself known to more people, and attract more attention, this process and this course of action are not simple ways of doing things. When all these actions and behaviors are combined, they form the path a person takes. So, what is this path? It is an effort to pursue the realization of one's ideals and desires within God's house, to pursue the admiration of others, and to achieve the satisfaction

of their own ambitions and desires. Once you start this kind of pursuit, the path you are on becomes a path of no return, a path leading to destruction. Shouldn't you quickly turn around, reverse these actions, and let go of these actions, ambitions and desires? Some may say, "I still don't know how to let go." Then, don't do it. What does "don't do it" mean? It means you should keep your interests and hobbies hidden and try your best not to showcase them. Some may ask, "But if fulfilling my duties requires it, should I show them?" When you should, when you must show them, you should do so—that's the right time for it. However, if you are currently on a path of pursuing your ideals and desires, then don't reveal them. When you feel the urge to show them off, you should pray to God, make a firm resolution, restrain these desires, and at the same time accept God's scrutiny and discipline, control your heart and confine your ambitions and desires to their cradle, making them disappear, and never letting them become a reality—is this good? (Yes.) Is it easy to do? It isn't easy, is it? Who has a bit of talent but doesn't want to show it off? Don't even mention those who have some special skill. Some people can cook and prepare meals, and they want to show off wherever they go, even calling themselves "Tofu Beauty" or "Noodle Queen." Are these minor skills worth showcasing? If they were to possess exceptional gifts, how excessive would their arrogance become? They would undoubtedly end up on a path of no return. Of course, apart from people taking the wrong path, or a path of no return, due to their interests and hobbies, the majority of them often have active thoughts because of their interests and hobbies in the process of believing in God. While believing in God and fulfilling their duties, in their minds they are constantly turning over the ideals and desires they established, or they may continuously remind themselves of their unrealized ideals and desires, constantly telling themselves in their hearts that they still have these ideals and desires that have never been realized. Even though they have never paid any specific price or adopted any specific practice toward these things, these ideals and desires have taken root deep in their hearts, and they have never let them go.

Earlier, we fellowshiped about and dissected that the pursuit of realizing ideals and desires, as well as following the path of this world, is a path of no return, a road that leads to destruction. This and the pursuit of the truth are like two parallel lines, there will never be a point where these lines intersect, and of course they too will never intersect with each other. If you believe in God and wish to pursue the truth and attain salvation, then you must completely let go of any ideals and desires you previously held in your heart. Do not preserve or cherish them; they should be discarded. Pursuing the realization of your ideals and desires and pursuing the truth are like paths of oil and water. If you have ideals and desires and wish to realize them, you will be unable to pursue the truth. If, through an understanding of the truth and so many years of experience, you wish to set your mind on pursuing the truth in a grounded manner, then you should abandon your past ideals and desires, removing them completely from your consciousness or the depths of your soul. If you wish to pursue the truth, then your ideals

and desires will never come to fruition. Instead, they will disrupt your pursuit of the truth and your entry into the truth reality, while dragging you down and making your path to pursue the truth arduous and challenging. Since you know you will be unable to realize your ideals and desires, it is better to decisively cut ties with them, and let them go completely, don't think about them again, and don't hold onto any illusions about them. If you say, "I am still not very interested in the path of pursuing the truth and attaining salvation. I still don't know whether I can pursue the truth, whether I am a pursuer of the truth. I am still unclear about this path of attaining salvation. On the contrary, I have a very concrete path toward pursuing worldly ideals and desires, and a very concrete plan and strategy." If this is the case, then you can let go of the path of pursuing the truth and fulfilling your duties to go realize your ideals and desires. Of course, if you are unsure whether to pursue your own ideals and desires or the truth, I advise you to remain calm for a period of time. Perhaps stay another one or two years in the house of God: The more you eat and drink God's words, the more environments you experience, the more your perspective and approach to how you view things mature, your mood and state will improve, which will undoubtedly be an immense blessing for you. Perhaps after a couple of years, you may come to understand certain truths, gaining a thorough insight into the world and humanity, then you will be able to completely let go of your ideals and desires and willingly follow God for the rest of your life, accepting His orchestrations. No matter how great the hardships you may face in God's house, you will be able to persist in fulfilling your duties and completing your mission. And most importantly, you will have firmly resolved and decided to abandon your previous ideals and desires, allowing you to pursue the truth in a grounded manner without wavering. However, if you are unable to be certain now and wish to reassess in one or two years whether you can pursue the truth, God's house will not force you, or say, "You are distracted and unsteady." After a year or two, as you read more of God's words, listen to more sermons, understand a bit of the truth, and your humanity matures, your perspective on how you view things, your outlook on life, and your worldview will change. By then, your choices will be somewhat more accurate than they are now, or, to use a phrase from the unbelievers, by then you will know what you yourself need, which path you must take, and what kind of person you must be. This is one aspect. Suppose you genuinely have no interest in believing in God and only did so because your parents or co-workers presented the gospel to you, and you accepted out of saving face or politeness; you reluctantly attend gatherings and fulfill your duties in God's house, while thinking that the church brothers and sisters are not bad and, at the very least, they don't bully people, and God's house is a place of reason, where the truth holds authority, and where people are not subject to oppression or the bullying of others, and you feel that God's house is better than the world of unbelievers; but your ideals and desires have never been let go of or changed, and on the contrary, these previously held ideals and desires have been growing stronger and clearer in the depths of your heart, mind, and spirit; and as they become more

pronounced, you find that, when it comes to faith in God, the truth being fellowshiped about, as well as the daily words, actions, and way of life, etc., are increasingly dull and dry; you feel uncomfortable, and pursuing the truth is out of the question, you have no interest whatsoever in pursuing the truth, and have no good opinions in your mind about walking the correct path in life, how to conduct oneself properly, or what constitutes positive things; if you are someone like this, then I tell you, hurry up and go pursue your own ideals and desires! There is a place for you in this world, a place amid the complex and chaotic currents of evil. You will undoubtedly realize your ideals and desires just as you had hoped and will obtain the things you wish for. God's house is not suitable for you to stay, it is not your ideal place, and certainly, the path of pursuing the truth is not what you want to take, and it is especially not what you need. Take advantage right now, while your ideals and desires are taking shape, and while you are still young and still have the energy or resources to go strive in the world, hurry up and leave God's house, go realize your ideals and desires. God's house won't hold you back. Don't wait until the day when you lose hope of receiving blessings and you have nothing to say about your experiential testimony, when you haven't finished fulfilling your duties properly and finally wake up at the age of fifty, sixty, seventy, or eighty, wishing to pursue the truth—then it will be too late. If you don't wish to stay in God's house, then you will abandon yourself to ruin. For people like you, there is no need to go against your will and let go of your pursuits, ideals, and desires. Because the premise I discussed of letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires is that you are a person who pursues the truth or although right now you have yet to start pursuing the truth, you have set your heart on becoming one, and you won't leave God's house no matter if you attain salvation or not, regardless of whether you live or die. I am addressing people like this. Of course, I should add a disclaimer: As I have been fellowshiping today about the topic of "letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires," it is with the premise that people are willing to pursue the truth and attain salvation. It is specifically aimed at people who are willing to pursue the truth and attain salvation. Apart from them, those who are not concerned with the path, direction, willingness, or resolve of pursuing the truth and attaining salvation, need not listen to today's topic. This is the disclaimer I have added; it is a necessary one, is it not? (Yes.) We grant people freedom, we don't force anyone. Any truth principle, any teaching, provision, support, or help is given to people based on rationality and on the condition that they are willing. If you are unwilling to listen, you can cover up your ears and neither listen nor accept it, or you can also leave—both are acceptable. The fellowship of the truth in God's house is not forced upon anyone to accept it. God grants people freedom and does not compel anyone. Tell Me, is this a good thing? (Yes.) Is there a need to force them? (No.) There is no need for force. The truth brings life, eternal life. If you are willing to receive this, and you accept and submit to it, then you will receive it. If you do not accept it, but reject and resist, then you will not attain it. Whether you can attain it or not, you must accept the consequences. Isn't this the case? (Yes.)

The reason why we fellowship about the need to let go of certain things while pursuing the truth is because pursuing the truth and attaining salvation is similar to when people participate in a marathon. Contestants participating in a marathon don't need extraordinary physical strength or exceptional skills, but they are required to possess certain endurance and perseverance, and they are required to have faith, as well as the determination to persevere. Of course, in the process of participating in a marathon, apart from these spiritual elements, people are also required to gradually let go of certain burdens in order to reach their destination more easily, more freely, or in a way that is more in line with their wishes. The marathon, as a sport, doesn't care about the ranking of participants reaching their destination; rather, it cares about the performance of individuals over the course of the event, their perseverance, endurance, and everything they undergo in the process. Isn't that so? (Yes.) When it comes to belief in God, pursuing the truth and ultimately attaining salvation is similar to a marathon; it requires a very long process, and in this process it also requires letting go of many things unrelated to the pursuit of the truth. These things are not just simply unrelated to the truth, but more importantly, they can obstruct your pursuit of the truth. Consequently, in the process of letting go of and resolving these things, one may inevitably experience some pain and need to abandon certain things and make correct choices. The pursuit of the truth requires people to let go of many things because these things diverge from the path of pursuing the truth and go against the correct life goals and direction toward which God guides people. Anything that goes against the truth and obstructs a person from pursuing the truth and taking the correct path in life is a negative thing, all for the sake of pursuing fame and profit, or to achieve such results as abundant property and money. This path of pursuing the realization of one's own ideals and desires relies on people's abilities, as well as their knowledge, their erroneous thoughts and viewpoints, and their various worldly philosophies, methods, tricks, and schemes. The more one pursues the realization of their own ideals and desires, the further they drift away from the truth, from God's words, and from the right path that God has pointed out for them. The so-called ideals and desires in one's heart are actually empty things, they cannot teach you how to comport yourself, how to worship and understand God, or how to submit to God, to God's will, and to the Sovereign, among other positive things like this. When you pursue your ideals and desires, you will not gain any of these positive and valuable things alike that align with the truth. Any life path oriented toward people's pursuits, ideals, and desires has the same ultimate goal, essence, and nature—they all go against the truth. However, the path of pursuing the truth is different. It will correctly guide your life path—this is a somewhat broad manner of speaking. More specifically, it will expose your incorrect and erroneous thoughts and viewpoints toward how you treat various people, events, and things. At the same time, it will inform you, guide you, supply and teach you correct and accurate thoughts and viewpoints. Of course, it will also tell you what manner of thoughts and viewpoints to have as you view people and things, comport yourself,

and act. This path of pursuing the truth tells you how to comport yourself, how to live within the boundaries of normal humanity and comport yourself according to the truth principles. At the very least, you should not dip below the standard of conscience and reason—you should live like a human and as a human. Apart from this, this path informs you more specifically about the thoughts, viewpoints, perspectives, and stances you should have as you view every matter and do every thing. These correct thoughts, viewpoints, perspectives, and stances are at the same time the correct criteria and principles of self-comportment and action that one should uphold. When a person achieves or enters into the reality of viewing people and things, comporting oneself, and acting wholly according to God's words, with the truth as their criterion, that person has become saved. Once a person is saved and gains the truth, their point of view toward things will completely transform, aligning perfectly with God's words and in accordance with God. When this stage is reached, a person will no longer rebel against God, and God will no longer chastise or judge them, nor will He detest them. It is because this person is no longer an enemy of God, they no longer stand in opposition to God, and God has truly and rightfully become the Creator of His created beings. People have returned under God's dominion, and God enjoys the worship, submission, and fear that people should offer to Him. Everything falls naturally into place. All things created by God are for humankind, and humankind, in turn, manages all things under God's sovereignty. All things are under humankind's management, everything follows the rules and laws set by God, progressing and continuing forward in an orderly manner. Humankind enjoys all things God has created, and all things exist in an orderly manner under the management of humankind. All things are for humankind, and humankind is for all things. All of this is so very harmonious and orderly, all of it comes from God's sovereignty and His salvation of humankind. It is really such a wonderful thing. This is one of the ultimate meanings of letting go of pursuits, ideals, and desires. You see, although you let go of your temporary ideals and desires now, in the end, what you gain is the truth, it is life, it is the most precious thing. Compared to the worthless ideals and desires you let go of, they are who knows how many thousands, or even tens of thousands of times more valuable. They are virtually incomparable. Isn't that so? (Yes.) Of course, one thing should be made clear: People should understand that pursuing ideals and desires will never teach you how to comport yourself. Since the day you were born, your parents told you, "You must learn to lie, learn to protect yourself, and don't let others bully you. When someone bullies you, you must be tough, don't be weak, don't let others think you are that easy to bully. Furthermore, you must acquire knowledge and strengthen yourself, so that you can stand firm in society. You must pursue fame and profit, women ought to be independent, and men should carry the weight of the world." From a young age, your parents educated you in this way, as if they were teaching you how to comport yourself; but in reality, they were striving, doing whatever it took, and even seeming to put their lives on the line in order to push you into this world, into this

evil tide, to leave you ignorant of what is positive and what is negative, ignorant of how to distinguish between justice and evil, how to discern between positive and negative things. At the same time, your parents also taught you, “Do whatever it takes, don’t be too polite with others. Tolerance to others is cruelty to yourself.” They have been educating you like this since you first began to understand things, and then at school, and in society, everyone teaches you the same things. They do not teach you this so that you will comport yourself as a human, but so that you will become a demon, lie, do evil, and perish. It’s only after you believe in God that you come to know that one must comport themselves as an honest person and speak the truth and the facts. You muster up the courage and finally manage to speak the truth, you hold onto your conscience and moral boundaries in order to speak it once, but you are spurned by society, blamed by your family, even ridiculed by your friends, and in the end, what happens? You are hit hard, you’re unable to bear it, and you don’t know how to comport yourself anymore. You feel that comporting yourself as a human is too difficult, being a demon is easier. Just be a demon and follow the evil tide of this society—no one will say anything. No one in the whole of humankind teaches you how to comport yourself. After you believe in God you hear that every word God speaks and everything God does is to teach you how to comport yourself, how to practice the truth so that you can become a true human being. Only in God’s words can you find the correct answer to what is true human life. Consequently, how to view people and things, and how to comport oneself and act must be wholly based on God’s words, with truth as its criterion. This is what is called acting like a person. When you understand the basis of comporting yourself according to God’s words, and comprehend and enter into the truth principles, then you will know how to comport yourself, and you will become a real human being. This is the foundation for self-comportment, and only such a person’s life is worthwhile, only they deserve to live and should not die. On the contrary, those who act like demons, those walking corpses wearing human skin, those people do not deserve to live. Why? Because everything God created is prepared for humankind, for God’s created beings, not for demonic kind. Then why are those people still able to remain alive today? Aren’t they sharing in the benefit of those people whom God intended to save? If it weren’t for God’s work of salvation at this stage, utilizing the devils and Satan to do service, letting God’s chosen people discern negative things, and seeing through the devils’ essence, God would have long destroyed them, because these people are unworthy of enjoying all the things that God created, and they squander and ruin the things God has made. How do you think God will feel when He sees this? Will He be in a good mood? (No.) Therefore, God urgently wants to save a group of people with normal humanity who are true human beings, and teach them how to comport themselves. When these people attain salvation, become qualified to remain and not to be destroyed—then God’s great work will be accomplished. That is to say, regardless of whether these things attain the level of being accurate and correct, when their laws of survival, their outlooks on life, the paths they

take, as well as their pursuits, and the attitudes with which they treat God, the truth, and positive things, at the very least do not go against the truth, and certainly don't go so far as to offend God's disposition, when these people won't be destroyed, because they are able to submit to God in a basic way—then God's great work will be accomplished. What does it mean for this great work to be accomplished? It means that those whom God has saved can exist forever, can live on forever. To put it in human language, it means this human race will have successors, the ancestors of humans created by God will have successors, and there will be humans capable of managing all things. Then, God will feel at ease, then He will rest, and He won't need to be concerned with things anymore. All things have their own rules and laws, already established by God, and God does not need to give them a single thought, idea, or project. All things exist within their respective rules and laws, humans have but to maintain and manage them. With such a race of humans, do you think God will still need to worry? Will He still need to be preoccupied? God will rest, and when He rests, the time for His great work to be accomplished will have come. Of course, this will also be a time for humans to celebrate—that is, they will ultimately attain salvation on the foundation of the path of pursuing the truth, no longer defying God, but aligning with God's will. Humans will have been gained by God, and they will no longer have to taste death—then they will have already received salvation. Isn't this something worth celebrating? (Yes.) Now, since there will be such tremendous benefits, and you know that God's intentions are these, isn't it worth it for people to let go of the small ideals and desires they held previously? (Yes.) It is appropriate any way you measure it. So, since it is appropriate, shouldn't you let go? (Yes.) In theory, everyone knows they should let go, but how is it specifically done? Actually, it's quite simple. It means you no longer take any action, put forth any effort, or pay any price for the sake of your ideals and wishes. You no longer let them occupy your mind or make any sacrifices for them. Instead, you turn back to God, let go of your personal desires and ideals, stop obsessing over them, and even stop dreaming about them when you dream. Instead, bit by bit in your heart you shift your direction and inclination toward the path of pursuing the truth and attaining salvation. Day in and day out, everything you do, the thoughts, energy, and price that you pay, are all done for the sake of pursuing the truth and attaining salvation—this is how you gradually let go.

Concerning today's fellowship about the topic "letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires," have I fellowshiped about it comprehensibly? Do you know how to let go? Some people might say, "Oh, I've already been letting go before You even brought it up." But that's not necessarily true. In fact, it's only through the process of pursuing the truth that people gradually see through the world's evil tide and also gradually see through and let go of the path of pursuing fame and profit taken by unbelievers. If you haven't yet pursued the truth, and you're merely thinking about letting go in your heart, that isn't at all the same as truly letting go. You preparing to let go and truly letting go are two separate things—there is still a difference. Therefore, the most important thing is to begin

pursuing the truth, and that should not change no matter when—it is the most important thing. Once you start pursuing the truth, letting go of ideals and desires becomes easier. If you don't accept the truth but say, "I really want to let go of these ideals and desires. I don't want to be dyed in the vast dyeing vat or ground up in the meat grinder," and if you still want to survive, I'm telling you that's not possible. There's no way, you won't get such a good deal! If you don't wish to pursue the truth but still want to let go of ideals and desires, that is impossible. All normal people have ideals and desires, especially those who have a few gifts or talents. Where is there a person who is happy being lonely and willingly resigns themselves to living a mundane life? Nowhere is there a person like this. Everyone wants to stand out, to make something of themselves, to have a certain aura about them, and to make their life more comfortable. If you want to let go of personal ideals and desires, attain salvation, and live out a meaningful life, then you must accept the truth, pursue the truth, and submit to God's work—this way you will have hope. Listening to God's words and following God is the only way. Therefore, despite all apparent changes one thing remains essentially the same—the pursuit of the truth. This is the most important topic, isn't it? (Yes.) Alright, let's end today's fellowship about our topic here. Goodbye!

December 17, 2022

How to Pursue the Truth (9)

Last time we gathered, we fellowshiped on the second part of what needs to be let go of in the context of “how to pursue the truth”—namely, letting go of people’s pursuits, ideals, and desires. On this subject, we listed four things in total: first, interests and hobbies; second, marriage; third, family; and fourth, career. Last time, we fellowshiped about interests and hobbies. One of the elements of letting go of people’s pursuits, ideals, and desires is the people’s pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise as a result of interests and hobbies. Having listened to My fellowship, does everyone have a correct attitude and perspective on interests and hobbies? (Yes.) The point of us fellowshiping is to let go of the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise as a result of interests and hobbies, but to let these things go, you must first understand what interests and hobbies are, then understand how you ought to treat them, and how to let go of these things that arise as a result of them. It does not matter whether we fellowship on the positive or on the negative. In short, the goal is to enable people to comprehend what interests and hobbies are, and then to correctly treat and apply them, to give them the appropriate space or value for existing, and at the same time, to enable people to let go of the pursuits, desires, and ideals which are incorrect, inappropriate, which they ought not to have, which influence their belief in God and the doing of their duty. One could say that the pursuits, ideals and desires that arise from your interests and hobbies will influence your life, survival, and your view of survival; of course, they will have an even greater influence on the path you walk, and your duty and mission in this life. So, from a passive perspective, the pursuits, ideals, and desires that interests and hobbies bring to people are not the goals they pursue, nor are they the direction they pursue—much less are they the view on life and the values that they ought to establish in this lifetime. By fellowshiping on what interests and hobbies are, I tell people how to correctly know and treat them, and then get them to know whether their pursuits, ideals, and desires are correct or not from the perspective of the influence interests and hobbies have. That is to say, I use both the positive and negative sides to allow people to clearly see how to correctly treat interests and hobbies. For one thing, if someone has a correct knowledge and an accurate comprehension of interests and hobbies, and they are able to treat them accurately, then they are also truly letting go of the ideals and desires that arise from interests and hobbies. Once you have a correct understanding of interests and hobbies, the methods and the ways you treat them will be correct and relatively in accordance with principles and with God’s requirements of man. In this way, you will be enabled to let go of the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise from interests and hobbies in a positive way. Additionally, this fellowship also allows you to clearly see the various detrimental influences that the pursuits, ideals, and desires which arise from interests and hobbies bring, or the oppositional, negative influence they produce, which then allows you to actively let go of these inappropriate pursuits, ideals, and desires. After our

fellowship on all this, are there not some who will say: “The various kinds of people in this world all have different interests and hobbies, and their individual interests and hobbies give rise to different pursuits, ideals, and desires. Suppose we went according to our current way of speaking, and people had not gone to pursue their ideals and desires—would this world have developed? How could fields like mankind’s technology, culture, and education, which touch on mankind’s survival and life, still have developed? Would mankind still be able to enjoy their current lifestyle? Would the world have developed to this current state? Would the world not be like a primitive society? Would we have today’s modern human lifestyle?” Is this an issue? It is possible that no matter what topic we fellowship on, you all accept it from the perspective of “God’s words are the truth, they should be accepted and submitted to,” so most of the time, you do not have differing opinions with which to refute the words I fellowship to you. But that is not the same thing as there not being anyone—or there not being a third party—who would bring up such doubts, is it? If there really was someone who brought up such a question, how would you respond? (I feel that the perspective expressed in this question is wrong, because people’s interests and hobbies do not control the development of technology, nor do they control the progress of the ages. The development of technology and the progress of the ages are all under God’s sovereignty. You can’t say that someone with an interest or a hobby can push the world’s development forward, that they can change the world.) You are speaking on a macroscopic level. Are there any different ways of looking at it? It depends on whether or not you really understand the truth. Do you think that after hearing these words of fellowship, the unbelievers will bring up such a question? (Probably.) So if they bring up this question, how can you answer in accordance with objective facts, with the truth? If you cannot answer, then they will say that you have been hoodwinked. You not being able to answer at least proves one fact, which is that you do not understand this aspect of the truth. Are you not unable to answer? (We are unable.) Then let us talk about this matter.

Some people say: “If mankind did not pursue their ideals, then would the world have developed to its current state?” The answer is “yes.” Is that not simple? (It is.) What is the simplest, bluntest explanation for this “yes”? It is that whether or not mankind pursues their ideals does not have any influence on the world, because the world’s development up to the present has not been pushed forward and led by mankind’s ideals; rather, the Creator has led mankind to the present, to today. Without their pursuits, ideals, and desires, mankind would have come to today just the same, but without the leadership and sovereignty of the Creator, they would not have. Is such an explanation suitable? (Yes.) What is suitable about it? Does it answer the question? Does it explain the essence of the question? It does not explain it; it merely answers the question theoretically, in what could be called the terms of a vision. But there is a more detailed, essential explanation which has not been voiced. What is that detailed explanation? Let us first talk simply. In all mankind, people follow their own kind, each kind of person

having their own mission. The mission of those who believe in God is to testify of the sovereignty of the Creator, to testify of His conduct, to complete what He has entrusted to them, to do their duty well, and in the end, to be saved. This is their mission. To speak in more detail, it is to spread God's word and His work, and then by accepting His leadership and experiencing His work, to throw off their corrupt disposition and be saved. This kind of person is chosen by God. They are the kind of person who cooperates with the work He does in His management work. The mission of this kind of person is to do their duty well and complete what God has entrusted to them. One could say that such people are a unique group among all mankind. This unique group of people bear a unique mission in God's management work, in His six-thousand-year management plan; they have a unique duty and a unique responsibility. So when I say to let go of the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise from interests and hobbies, I am requiring these people—by which I mean you all—to let go of personal pursuits, ideals, and desires, because your mission, your duty, and your responsibility are in the house of God and in the church, not on this earth. That is to say, you all have nothing to do with the development and advancement of this world or with any of its trends. One could also say that God has not bestowed upon you any mission regarding the development and advancement of this world. This is His ordination. What is the mission that God has bestowed upon those He has chosen, those He will save? It is to do their duty well in the house of God, and to be saved. One of the things He requires of people in order to be saved is to pursue the truth, and one of the ways He requires people to pursue the truth is to let go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires. So these words and requirements are not directed at all mankind; rather, they are directed at you, at every one of God's chosen people that He has selected, and at everyone who wants to be saved—and of course, they are directed at everyone who is able to do their duty in God's management work for the salvation of mankind. What is the role that you are able to play in the work of God's management plan? You are the ones God is going to save. So when it comes to the ones God is going to save, what does this "salvation" include? It includes accepting God's words, His chastisement and judgment, His ordination, His sovereignty and arrangements, submitting to all His words, walking in His ways, and ultimately, worshiping Him and shunning evil; by so doing, you will be saved, and enter into the next age. This is the role you play among all mankind, and is the unique mission that God has bestowed upon you among all people. Of course, speaking from your perspective, this is a special kind of responsibility and duty that you have among all mankind. This is speaking of this issue from the perspective of those of God's chosen people that He has selected. Secondarily, among all mankind, God has given this unique group of people a unique mission. He does not need them to have any obligation or responsibility toward the development of, advancement of, or anything else having to do with the world. Besides this unique group of people, God has bestowed various missions upon the remaining people of all kinds that He has not chosen, regardless of their nature essence.

In mankind's different time periods, different social environments, and among different races, their different missions cause them to play all kinds of roles, filling up all walks of life. Because of the various roles God has ordained them to play, they each have their own interests and hobbies. Under the preconditions of those interests and hobbies, all kinds of pursuits, ideals, and desires arise in them. Because they have all kinds of pursuits, ideals, and desires, in different eras and in different social environments, the world produces all kinds of new things and new industries—for example, technology, medicine, business, economics, and education, or light industries like textiles and handicraft, as well as aviation and maritime industries, and so forth. Thus, the leading figures, outstanding individuals, and unique enthusiasts who arise in every field as a result of their various pursuits, ideals, and desires have their own missions at different times and under different social environments. At the same time, in their particular social environment, they are also continuously fulfilling their mission. In this way, in mankind's different time periods and social environments, society continuously develops and advances as a result of the realization of the pursuits, ideals, and desires of these unique individuals. And of course, it continuously brings mankind different qualities of material life. For example, a few hundred years ago, there was no electricity, so people used oil lamps. In these unique circumstances, a unique person came along and invented electricity, and mankind started to use electricity for illumination. As another example, in one particular social environment, another unique person appeared. He saw that writing on bamboo slips was too much trouble, and he hoped the day would come in which one could write on a thin, flat surface, which would be both convenient and easy to read. Then he started to research the techniques of paper manufacturing, and through his continuous research, exploration, and experimentation, he ultimately invented paper. Then there was also the invention of the steam engine. In a unique time period, a unique person came along who thought that working by hand was too exhausting, too wasteful of human energy, and too inefficient. If there were a machine or some other method that could replace human labor, then people would save a lot of time and be able to do other things. Thus, with research and exploration, the steam engine was invented, and then all kinds of mechanical things were invented one after another which used the motive principles of the steam engine. Is that not right? (It is.) Thus, at different times, the continuous realization and verification of the pursuits, ideals, and desires of one person or a group of people gradually and continuously advance and develop both light and heavy industry, causing the quality of life and the living conditions of all mankind to continuously improve. Light industries, like textiles and handicraft, are now developing to increasing levels of quality, fineness, and precision, and mankind's enjoyment of them grows. Heavy industries, like all kinds of transportation, such as cars, trains, steamships, and planes, bring great ease to people's lives, making it easy and convenient for people to travel. This is the true process and detailed manifestation of humanity's development. In short, whether light industry or heavy industry, no matter the aspect, everything is

initiated and produced by one unique person's or a group of unique people's interests and hobbies. Because of their unique interests and hobbies, they have their own pursuits, ideals, and desires. At the same time, because of their unique pursuits, ideals, and desires, in mankind's different time periods and in the social environments they live in, the various fields among them give rise to more advanced things of all kinds, more convenient things, things which are more beneficial to raising the quality of life among all mankind. This brings ease to mankind and raises their quality of life. We will not talk about all this. We will instead take a look at the origins of these unique individuals. Where do these unique individuals in different time periods come from? Are they not ordained by God? (They are.) This point is certain beyond a doubt, and no one can deny it. Seeing as they are ordained by God, their missions are also related to God's ordination. What does that mean, "related to God's ordination"? It means that God has bestowed unique missions upon these unique individuals, causing them to come forth at particular times, to do what they want to at particular times, and then spurring on humanity at different times through the unique things those individuals do. Because of these unique individuals, the world is continuously undergoing subtle changes and renewals. This is how humanity develops.

What is the difference between those who have these unique interests and hobbies and the chosen people God has selected? The difference is that although God has ordained a unique mission for these people, they are not the ones He has ordained for salvation, so His requirements of them are just that they must do something unique in their unique age, their unique time. They complete their mission, and then at their unique time, they leave. While they live on the earth, God does not do the work of salvation on them. They just have a mission for the development and advancement of this society and mankind, or in order to change mankind's living conditions at different periods. They have absolutely nothing to do with the work of the salvation of mankind in God's management plan, so no matter what kind of mission they complete, how great their contributions to mankind are, or how profound an influence they have on mankind, they have nothing to do with God's work of the salvation of mankind. They belong to the world, to its trends, its development, and its every field and industry; they have nothing to do with God's work of the salvation of mankind, so they have nothing to do with each word He speaks, each word He provides to mankind, the truth and life He expresses, or the various requirements He has of mankind. What does this mean? It means that the utterances of God to all mankind, to the whole universe, all the way down to the specific requirements and principles He talks about, are not directed to all people; of course, they are much less directed to those unique people who have an important role to play in the development of human society. God's words—the truth, the way, and the life—are directed only at the chosen people He has selected. This issue is easily explained: God's words are directed at whoever He chooses, whoever He wants to save, whoever He wants to be saved. If someone is not chosen by God, and if He does not plan on saving

them, then these words of life are not being spoken to them—they have no part in them. Do you understand? (Yes.) These unique individuals have unique interests and hobbies, so they have different, higher pursuits, ideals, and desires from ordinary people. Because they have these unique pursuits, ideals, and desires, and because they have different or unique interests and hobbies, they play an important role in the course of the development of human society, and of course, at different times, they complete their important missions. Regardless of whether or not they ultimately complete their missions to an acceptable standard, they are the only ones who have anything to do with the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise because of these interests and hobbies. Because these people have unique missions, they must realize their pursuits, ideals, and desires at particular times and under particular social circumstances. This is the mission God bestows upon them, the mission He adds unto them; this is their responsibility, and is how they must act. No matter how much stress their flesh, their hearts, or their mental worlds bear, or how great a price they pay, in order to pursue the realization of their ideals and desires, they all will—or must—complete the mission they ought to, because this is the ordination of God. No one can escape God's ordination, nor can anyone escape His sovereignty and arrangements. So, they have absolutely nothing to do with what we are talking about regarding letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires. What does it mean that they have nothing to do with one another? It means that these words about letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires are not directed at them. No matter the time period, no matter the social circumstances, and no matter the point to which mankind develops, these words from God have nothing to do with them. These words are not directed at them, so these words are not a requirement of them. They must complete the mission they ought to under God's ordination, sovereignty, and arrangements. They must do what they ought to at the different times and under the different social circumstances of wicked and corrupt mankind, fulfill their obligations, and complete the mission they ought to. So are they playing the part of a service-doer or a foil? However you say it is fine. In short, they are not the ones chosen by God, nor are they the ones He wants to save—that is all. So, no matter how believers let go of pursuits, ideals, and desires, it will not delay the development of the world or of mankind; and of course, neither will it delay the development of various fields and industries in the different time periods and different social circumstances of the world. Is this not the case? (It is.) What is the reason? It is that the development of mankind and of society's industries has nothing to do with the believers, or with the people God has chosen, so you need not worry: "If we do as You say and let go of pursuits, ideals, and desires, then will this society and mankind keep developing?" Why would you be anxious? You need not be. God has plans and arrangements—you understand that, right? (Yes.) Your anxiety is superfluous, caused by you not seeing things clearly, and by you not understanding the truth.

What are the pursuits, ideals, and desires that a believer in God ought to have? You must do your duty well, to an acceptable standard, complete that which God has

entrusted to you, pursue and practice the truth in the process of doing your duty, achieve entry into the truth reality, viewing people and things, and comporting yourself and acting wholly according to God's words, with the truth as your criterion. These are the pursuits, ideals, and desires you ought to have. The worldly pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise from interests and hobbies are the things you ought to let go of. Why do you need to let them go? You are different from people outside the church; God has chosen you, you have chosen to pursue the truth, and you have made up your mind to follow the path of pursuing the truth, so your life goals and direction should experience a change, and you should totally and utterly let go of the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise from interests and hobbies. Why do you need to let them go? Because that is not the road you ought to walk. That is the road of the unbelievers, those who do not believe in God. If you pursue walking that road, then you are not one of those God has chosen. If you pursue the ideals and desires that the unbelievers do, then you cannot pursue the truth, and you cannot attain salvation. To speak more specifically, if you cannot let go of your pursuits, ideals, and desires, and moreover want to realize them, then you are unable to submit to God's work or fear God and shun evil, and you can never be saved. What does this mean? Being unable to let go of your pursuits, ideals, and desires, and moreover wanting to realize them, is equivalent to abandoning your pursuit of the truth, abandoning salvation, and not wanting to submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements. Is this not the case? (It is.) So in the end, it is as I said: If you want to pursue the truth, you should first let go of the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise from interests and hobbies. You must let go of them, because the pursuit of worldly ideals and desires has nothing to do with those who pursue the truth and salvation; that is not the road you should walk, nor is it the goal and direction you should establish and have in your life. If you often plan and calculate for it in your heart, racking your brains to ponder and consider it, then you should let go of it as soon as possible. You cannot have one foot in both camps, wanting to pursue the truth and attain salvation, while also wanting to pursue the world, and realize your own ideals and desires. In this way, you would not only be unable to attain or realize either one, but moreover—and most importantly—it would affect your salvation. Ultimately, you would miss out on God's work of human salvation, let slip the best opportunity for God's salvation of mankind, and lose out on the chance to be saved. In the end, you would fall into disaster, beating your chest and stomping your feet, and it would be too late for regret—this would be your sorry fate. If you are smart, and have already made up your mind to pursue the truth, then you should let go of the ideals and desires you once had or are still pursuing. Silly people, idiots, the unwise, and muddled people—these people want to pursue the truth and be saved, but they do not want to let go of their worldly pursuits, ideals, and desires. They want to have it both ways. They think that acting this way is taking advantage, that it is smart, when in fact, it is the stupidest course of action of all. Smart people will utterly abandon their worldly pursuits, ideals, and desires, and choose to pursue the truth and be saved. No matter the degree

to which the world develops, and no matter the state of affairs or development of various fields and industries, none of it has anything to do with you. Let those who belong to the world, those devils who live on the earth, do whatever they ought to. That which we will do is, for one thing, to complete the duty we ought to do, and for another, it is to enjoy the fruits of their labor. How wonderful! For example, the computers and the software they invent are very beneficial to you doing your duty and working. You take and use it, make it serve you; you make it assist you as you do your duty, assist you in better completing your work, increasing the efficiency with which you do your duty, and bettering the results thereof, while also saving more time. How wonderful! You do not need to rack your brains researching: "How was this software invented? Who does it come from? How should I put effort into this software, into this technical area?" Racking your brains like this is useless. Your thoughts and energy are not meant for this. You do not need to contribute your energy or brain cells to this matter. Let those worldly people who ought to do so contribute; after their contributions, we take and use it. How wonderful! Everything is ready-made. God arranged everything in advance, so you do not need to pursue it, and in these matters, you need not be anxious or put effort. In these matters, you need not take anything upon yourself, nor worry or concern yourself about anything. All you need to do is do your duty well, pursue the truth, achieve an understanding of the truth, and enter into the truth reality. Is this not the most correct path in life? (It is.)

Do you now understand the issue of pursuing ideals and desires? Some people say: "If people did not pursue their ideals, then would the world still have forward development?" I say it would. Do you comprehend this answer? Do you understand? (Yes.) Then do you also clearly see the essence of the issue we are talking about? Is this not in fact how it is? (It is.) When it comes to the last word—the world's development, progress, and affairs—let the devils who belong to the world, or the so-called "humans" who belong to the world, deal with it. It has nothing to do with those who believe in God. What is the mission and responsibility of those who believe in God? (To do their duty well, to pursue the truth, and to achieve salvation.) That's right. This is very specific and practical. Is this not simple? (It is.) Those who believe in God need only to pursue the truth and walk in His ways, and they will ultimately be saved. This is your mission, and is God's greatest expectation and hope for you. God arranges the remaining matters, so you need not be anxious or worried. When the time comes, you will enjoy all that you ought, eat all that you ought, and use all that you ought. Everything will surpass your imagination and expectations, and will be abundant. God will not let you go without, nor be poor. There is a line in the Bible which says that the Lord's burden is light. What does the original say? ("For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:30).) Is that not the meaning? (It is.) Requiring you to let go of your own pursuits, ideals, and desires is not meant to make you mediocre, nor to make you lazy, nor without pursuits, nor to make you a walking corpse, a soulless person; rather, it is meant to change the incorrect

direction and goals of your pursuits. You are meant to let go of the pursuits, ideals, and desires you ought not to have, and to establish correct pursuits, ideals, and desires. Only in this way can you walk on the correct path of life. So is this problem done being resolved? If people did not pursue their ideals, would the world keep developing? The answer is “yes.” Why is that? (Because God has ordained a mission for those who belong to the world; they will do this work.) That’s right, it’s because God has His ordination and arrangements, so you do not need to be anxious. The world will develop, and it does not need believers in God to take upon themselves this mission, to fulfill this responsibility and obligation. God has things arranged. You do not need to worry about who God arranges. It is enough for you to pursue the truth, walk in God’s ways, and achieve salvation. Do you need to worry about anything else? (No.) No. So, letting go of people’s pursuits, ideals, and desires is a path you ought to practice. You need not worry about what will become of the world or of mankind after you let go of your ideals and desires. That is not something you need to worry about. It has nothing to do with you. God has things arranged. It’s that simple. Do you understand? (Yes.) By fellowshiping in this way, have I not resolved the problem at its roots? (You have.) If someone asked you again, how would you look at and explain this problem? If someone who does not believe in God were to ask: “You always talk about not pursuing ideals, letting go of ideals and desires. If everyone were to practice according to you, then would the world still exist? Would humanity keep developing?” then you can answer by saying: “Each person has their own aspirations; you cannot force them.” This is a popular saying in the world. You should say: “God requires people to let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires; that is the truth. If you are willing to accept this, then you can let go of these things. If you are unwilling to accept this, then you can also choose to not let go of them. God will not force anyone. Letting go of your pursuits, ideals, and desires is voluntary on your part, and it is your right. Not letting them go is also voluntary, and is also your right. Every individual has their specific mission. Among all mankind, each person has their own mission, their own role they should play. People’s choices are different, so the paths they walk are different. You choose to pursue the world, to realize your ideals and desires in the world, and to embody your values, while I choose to let go of my pursuits, ideals, and desires to follow God, to listen to His words, to walk in His ways, and to satisfy Him. Ultimately, I will be able to attain salvation. You do not pursue this path, which you are free to do. No one can force you.” How is this answer? (It is good.) If you can accept the idea of “letting go of people’s pursuits, ideals, and desires,” then these words are directed at you. If you cannot accept it, then there is no indication that you must listen to and accept these words. You can choose not to listen; you can choose to forfeit God’s management work for the salvation of mankind, and abandon your chance at salvation. This is your right. You can also not let go of your pursuits, ideals, and desires, and go out into the world and self-assuredly, boldly realize them. No one will force you, and no one will condemn you. This is your right. Your choice is also your mission, and your mission is

the role that God has ordained you to play among men. That is all. This is the true state of the facts. Whatever you choose, that is the kind of road you will walk; whatever kind of road you walk, that is the role you will play among men. It's that simple. This is the true state of the facts. So, it is still the words from before: "Each person has their own aspirations; you cannot force them." But where does that aspiration come from? At its source, it is ordained by God. If you do not choose to accept the truth and do your duty, then this means God did not choose you, and you do not have an opportunity for salvation. To speak plainly, you do not have this blessing; it was not ordained by God. If you are not interested in believing in God or pursuing the truth—if you do not pursue this aspect—then you lack this blessing. Those who are ordained to come into the house of God are willing to do their duty there. Whatever God says, they listen; if He wants them to let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires, they do it. If they cannot let go of them, then they rack their brains pondering how to do so. Someone like this is willing to pursue salvation. This is the deepest need and requirement of their soul, which is ordained by God, so they have this blessing, which is their good fortune. The role God ordains for you is the one you should play. That is the source. Those who are not blessed pursue the world, while those who are blessed pursue the truth—is that not a fact? (It is.) So if someone asks you again, will you be able to answer? (Yes.) What is the simplest answer? (Each person has their own aspirations; you cannot force them.) Each person has their own aspirations; you cannot force them. Requiring you to let go of your pursuits, ideals, and desires is just meant to give you a path of practice. You can choose to let go of them, and you can choose not to let go of them. Each person has their own aspirations; they cannot be forced. If you accept, then these words are directed at you. If you do not accept, then these words are not directed at you, and letting go of pursuits, ideals, and desires has nothing to do with you; you are free. Is this issue resolved? (Yes.) It is resolved, so no one will keep harping on this matter, right? (Right.)

There is another issue when it comes to letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires. Some people say: "You speak now of letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires—is it because the time is near, the last days are here, and the disasters have come, and because the day of God has come, that You requires people to let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires?" Is that the case? (No.) The answer is in the negative: No! So let us talk of the specific reason. Since the answer is no, there are certainly some detailed issues here that need to be fellowshiped on and understood. Let's talk about this: Two thousand, or even a few hundred, years ago, the entire social environment was different from today; the state of affairs for all mankind was different from today. Their life environment was very orderly. The world was not as wicked as it is now, human society was not as chaotic as it is now, and there were no disasters. Did people still need to let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires? (Yes.) Why? Give a reason, and speak to your specific knowledge. (Now that mankind is corrupted by Satan, they have Satan's corrupt disposition, so when they pursue their ideals and desires, it is all in the pursuit of

fame, profit, and status. Because they pursue fame and profit, they struggle and fight with one another, fighting for life and death, and the result is that they are corrupted ever more deeply by Satan, increasingly losing the semblance of humanity, growing further and further away from God. Thus one can see that the path of pursuing ideals and desires is mistaken. So it is not because God's day is near that He requires people to let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires; rather, people should not pursue these things in the first place. They should pursue correctly, according to God's words.) Do you think that letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires is a principle of practice? (Yes.) Is letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires the truth? Is it a requirement God has of man? (Yes.) It is a truth, a requirement God has of man. So is it the way in which people ought to walk? (Yes.) Since it is the truth, a specific requirement God has of man, and the way in which people ought to walk, is it made different by time and background? (No.) Why not? Because the truth, God's requirements, and God's ways do not change with changes of time, place, or environment. No matter the time, no matter the place, and no matter the space, the truth is always the truth, and the standard God requires of man does not change, nor does the standard He requires of His followers. So no matter the time, place, or context, the ways of God in which those who follow Him are to walk do not change. So, requiring people to let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires in today's age is not a requirement put forward for man just because the time is near, or because the last days are here; nor is it because the days are few and the disasters are great, nor is it for fear of man falling into disaster, that there is such an urgent requirement of man, requiring them to engage in extreme or radical courses of action, in order to achieve the fastest entry into the truth reality. This is not the reason. What is the reason then? No matter the time, whether a few hundred or a few thousand years ago—even at present—God's requirements of man in this regard have not changed. It's just that a few thousand years ago, even up to any time before today, God had not publicly published these words to mankind in detail, but His requirements of man have never changed at any point in time. Starting from the time that humankind first kept records, God's requirements of them have never been for them to diligently pursue the world, or to realize their own ideals and desires in the world. His only requirements of them are to listen to His words, to walk in His ways, to not wallow in the mire with the world, and to not pursue the world. Let the people of the world deal with worldly matters; let them complete these things. They have nothing to do with those who believe in and follow God. The only thing believers in God need to do is walk in God's ways and follow Him. Walking in God's ways is something that believers and followers of God are duty-bound to do. This matter is not made different by time, place, or background. Even in the future, when mankind is saved and enters into the next age, this requirement will not change. Listening to God's words and walking in His ways is the attitude and specific practice that a follower of God ought to have toward Him. Only by listening to God's words and walking in His ways can people successfully fear God and shun evil. So, God requiring

people to let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires does not arise because of time, nor because of unique environments or backgrounds; rather, as long as man has existed, even if God has not clearly given them the words, He has always required this standard and principle of them. No matter how many people can achieve it, how many people are able to practice His words, or how many of His words they are able to understand, this requirement from God is unchanging. Look in the Bible, where there are records of those unique people that God chose at unique times—Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Job, etc. God's requirements of them, the ways in which they walked, their life goals and direction, as well as the goals they pursued and the specific courses of action they took for life and survival, all embody God's requirements of man. What are God's requirements of man? Included in them is that people must let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires, right? (Right.) Whether in spirit or in form, they must shun noisy, disorderly, wicked mankind, and shun their noisy, disorderly, wicked trends. Before, there was a word which was not too suitable—"sanctified." In reality, the meaning of this word is to require you to let go of your pursuits, ideals, and desires—to prevent you from becoming an unbeliever, or from doing the things unbelievers do, or from pursuing the pursuits of an unbeliever, and rather making you pursue the things a believer ought to. That is what it means. So, when some people say: "Is it because the time is near, the last days are here, and the disasters have come, that God requires people to let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires?" what should the answer to this question be? It should be that any and all of God's requirements of man are the truth, and the ways in which people ought to walk. They do not change based on changes of time, place, environment, geographical location, or social background. God's words are the truth, the truth that has not changed from time immemorial, which does not change throughout all eternity—so every one of God's requirements of man and every specific principle of practice He puts forth to them date back to after He created mankind, when they did not yet have records of time. They are coexistent with God. In other words, from the moment there were humans, mankind has been able to understand God's requirements of them. No matter the area on which the requirements touch, they are all eternal, and will not change. Overall, God's requirements of man are to listen to His words and walk in His ways. Do you understand? (Yes.) God's requirements are totally unrelated to the development of the world, to human social backgrounds, to time or place, or to the geographical environment and space in which people live. After listening to God's words, it is right for people to keep and practice them. God has no other requirements of people. When they hear and understand His words, it is enough for them to practice and keep them; they will have achieved the standard of being an acceptable created being in His eyes. Do you understand? (Yes.) So, no matter the time, social environment or background, or geographical location, what you have to do is listen to God's words, understand what He says and what His requirements are of you, and then the next thing you ought to do is hearken, submit, and practice. Do not concern yourself with things like "Are the disasters

in the outside world great right now? Is the world chaotic? Is it dangerous to go out into the world? Could I fall ill with a plague? Could I die? Will I fall into the disasters? Are there temptations out there?" Thinking on such things is useless, and they have nothing to do with you. You just need to concern yourself with pursuing the truth and walking in God's ways, not with the environment of the outside world. No matter what the environment of the outside world is like, you are a created being, and God is the Creator. The relationship between Creator and creation will not change, your identity will not change, and God's essence will not change. You will always be someone who ought to walk in God's ways, who ought to listen to His words and submit to Him. God will always be the One who rules over you, arranges your fate, and leads you through life. Your relationship with Him will not change, His identity will not change, and your identity will not change. Because of all this, no matter the time, your responsibility, obligation, and highest duty are to listen to God's words, submit to them, and practice them. This will never be wrong, and it is the highest standard. Is this issue resolved? (Yes.) It is resolved. Have I spoken clearly? Have I spoken more correctly than you did? (Yes.) In what way am I correct? (We were just speaking in broad strokes, but God has dissected this issue quite thoroughly, and has also fellowshiped that God's words are the truth, the ways people are to abide by, and that people should listen to God's words and walk in His ways. God has spoken this all clearly.) What I'm saying is an aspect of the truth. The phrase "an aspect of the truth" is a theory, so what is there supporting this theory? It is these previously spoken-of, specific facts and content. There is evidence of all these facts; not one of them is fabricated, not one is imagined. They are all facts, or they are the essence and reality of the outward phenomena of the facts. If you can comprehend and understand them, it proves that you understand the truth. The reason you cannot say it out loud is because you do not yet understand this aspect of the truth, nor do you understand the underlying essence and reality of these phenomena, so you just talk a little about your feelings and knowledge, which is a far cry from the truth. Is this not the case? (It is.) This issue is resolved, so let's leave it at that. Regarding the topic of letting go of the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise as a result of interests and hobbies, was it necessary to include this question as an additional point? (Yes.) It was necessary. Every question touches on some of the truth, that is to say, it touches on the reality and essence of some facts, and behind the reality and the essence is always God's arrangements, plans, ideas, and wishes. And what else? Some of God's specific methods, as well as the basis, goals, and background of His actions. These are the reality.

After finishing fellowshiping on the topic of letting go of the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise from interests and hobbies, we should fellowship on the next topic. What is the next topic? It is that people should let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise from marriage. Obviously, this topic touches on all the various problems associated with marriage. Is this topic not a bit bigger than interests and hobbies? But do not fear its size. We will break it down bit by bit, slowly understanding and piercing

this topic through fellowship. The line we will take in fellowshiping on this topic is dissecting the issue of marriage from the perspectives and aspects of the essence of the problems here, both positive and negative; people's varied understandings of marriage, both correct and incorrect; the mistakes they make in marriage, as well as various incorrect ideas and viewpoints to which the issue gives rise, ultimately enabling people to let go of the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise from marriage. The best and easiest practice to achieve "letting go" is this: First, you must clearly see the essence of the problems, and see through them, whether they are positive or negative. Then you must be able to correctly and rationally deal with the problems. This is the active side of things. On the passive side of things, you must be able to understand and see through the mistaken ideas, viewpoints, and attitudes the problems bring you, or the various harmful and negative influences they produce in your humanity, and then from these aspects, be able to let go. In other words, you must be able to understand and see through these problems, without being tied up or bound by the mistaken ideas these problems produce, and without letting them control your life and lead you into crooked paths, or lead you to make wrong choices. In short, whether we are fellowshiping on the positive or the negative, the ultimate goal is to enable people to deal with the problem of marriage rationally, to not use erroneous ideas and views to comprehend and approach it, nor to have incorrect attitudes toward it. This is the correct comprehension of the practice of "letting go." Alright, let us continue to fellowship on the pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise from marriage. First, let us look at the definition of marriage, what the concept is. The majority of you have not entered into marriage, right? I see that the majority of you are adults. What does it mean to be an adult? It means that you have already reached or passed a marriageable age. Whether you are at or have passed that age, every person has some relatively bourgeois views, definitions, and concepts of marriage, whether correct or incorrect. So let us first explore what marriage actually is. First, in your own words: What is marriage, actually? If we want to speak of who is qualified to talk about what marriage is, it's probably those who have been married before. So let us first start with those who have been married, and when they are done speaking, we can move on to unmarried adults. You can talk about your views on marriage, and we will listen to your comprehension and definition of marriage. Say what you have to say, whether it is nice to listen to or not—complaints about marriage or expectations of marriage, it's all fine. (Before getting married, everyone has expectations. Some people get married so they can live a rich lifestyle, while some people pursue a happy marriage, looking for a prince on a white stallion, fantasizing that they will live a happy life. There are also some who want to use marriage to achieve some of their own purposes.) So in your view, what is marriage, actually? Is it transactional? Is it a game? What? Some of the situations you have mentioned are about living well-off, which is a kind of transaction. What else? (I feel like for me, marriage is just something I yearn for, something I long for.) Who else wants to talk? What knowledge do the married people

have about marriage? Especially the people who have been married for ten or twenty years—what feelings do you have about marriage? Are you not usually full of reflections on marriage? For one thing, you have experience with your own marriage, and for another, you have seen the marriages of those around you; at the same time, you have considered the marriages of others that you have seen in books, literature, and movies. So from those aspects, what do you think marriage is? How would you define it? What do you comprehend about it? How do you define marriage? Married people, those who have been married for a few years—especially those of you who have raised children—what are your feelings on marriage? Speak. (I can fill in a little. I watched a lot of television programs from a young age. I would always yearn for a happy married life, but after getting married, I realized that it wasn't the way I had imagined. After getting married, the first thing I had to do was work hard for my family, which was very tiring. For another thing, because of incompatibility between my husband's and my temperaments, and between the things we yearned for and pursued—especially the difference between the roads we pursued—we had many differences in life, to the point that we would argue. Life was hard. At this point, I felt that the kind of married life I had yearned for as a child was actually not realistic. It was just a pleasant desire, but real life is not like that. These are my thoughts on marriage.) So your comprehension of marriage is that it is bitter, is that right? (Yes.) So all your memories and recollections are bitter, tiring, painful, and unbearable to look back on; you felt upset, so afterward, you had no better expectations of marriage. You think that marriage does not conform to your wishes, that it is not good or romantic. You comprehend marriage as a tragedy—is that about what you mean? (Yes.) In your marriage, whether in things you were able to do or in things you were unwilling to do, you were particularly tired and bitter about everything, is that right? (Yes.) Marriage is bitter—that is one kind of feeling, a feeling that people can relate to or feel themselves. Regardless of form, there are probably more than a few different statements about marriage and family in the world right now. There are more than a few in films and books, and there are marriage experts and relationship experts in society who analyze and dissect all kinds of marriages, who deal with and resolve the contradictions that come up in those marriages, in order to mediate them. Ultimately, society has popularized some sayings about marriage. Which of these popular sayings about marriage do you agree with or sympathize with? (God, people in society often say that getting married is like entering a grave. I feel that after getting married, establishing a family, and having children, people have responsibilities, that they have to work endlessly to support their family, and add to that the disharmony that comes from two people living together, and all kinds of problems and difficulties arise.) What is the phrase specifically? "Marriage is a grave." Are there some famous, popular sayings in China? Is the phrase "Marriage is a grave" not quite popular? (It is.) What else? "Marriage is a city under siege—those outside want to get in, and those inside want to get out." What else? "A marriage without love is immoral." They think that marriage is a sign of love,

and a marriage without love is immoral. They use romantic love to measure the standard of morality. Are those the definitions and concepts of marriage that married people have? (Yes.) In short, those who are married are full of bitterness. To use a phrase to describe it: “Marriage is a grave.” Is it that simple? The married people are finished speaking, so we can now listen to what the unmarried, single people have to say. Who wants to talk about their comprehension of marriage? Even if it’s childish, or a fantasy or expectations that are out of touch with reality, it’s all fine. (God, I feel that marriage is two people living as partners, a life of daily necessities.) Have you been married before? Do you have any personal experience? (No.) Daily necessities, living as partners—is that really what you think? That practical? (In my ideals, marriage is not like that, but that’s what I have seen in my own parents’ marriage.) Your parents’ marriage is like this, but your ideal marriage is not. What is your comprehension and pursuit when it comes to marriage? (When I was little my comprehension was just to find someone I admired, then to live happily and romantically with him.) You wanted to live with him, hold his hand and grow old together, is that right? (Yes.) This is your specific comprehension of marriage, which involves you yourself; you are not getting it from looking at others. What you see in the marriages of others is just their superficial appearance, and because you have not yet experienced it yourself, you do not know if what you see is the reality of the facts or just a superficial appearance of the facts; the thing you think is real will forever be in your ideas and viewpoints. One part of the understanding young people have of marriage is to live romantically with their beloved, to hold hands and grow old together, and to live this life together. Do you all have any other comprehension of marriage? (No.)

Some people say: “Marriage is about finding someone who loves you. Whether they are romantic or not does not matter, nor do you need to love them so much. At the very least, they should love you, have you in their heart, and have shared pursuits, ideals, character, interests, and hobbies with you, so you can find one another congenial and live together.” Other people say: “Find someone to live with who you love and who loves you. That alone is happiness.” And there are others whose understanding of marriage is: “You must find someone who is economically strong, so you will not worry about clothing and food the latter part of your life, and so your material life will be plentiful, and you will not suffer poverty. Regardless of their age or how they look, regardless of their character, and regardless of their tastes, they’re fine as long as they have money. As long as they can give you money to spend and can satisfy your material needs, they’re acceptable. Living with this sort of person brings happiness, and you will be physically comfortable. This is marriage.” These are some of the requirements and definitions people give marriage. The majority of people understand marriage to be finding the lover, the beloved of their dreams, a Prince Charming, and living with them and finding one another congenial. For example, some people imagine their Prince Charming to be some star or celebrity, someone with money, fame, and wealth. They think that only living with such a person is a creditable, pleasant marriage, a perfect marriage, and that only such

a life is happy. Some people imagine their other half to be someone with status. Some people imagine their other half to be someone pretty and beautiful. Some people imagine their other half to be someone with a well-connected, powerful, wealthy family, a rich person. Some people imagine their other half to be ambitious and strong in their work. Some people imagine their other half to be uniquely talented. Some people imagine their other half to have some particularities of character. All these and more are requirements that people have of marriage, and of course, they are the imaginings, notions, and viewpoints that they have about marriage. In short, those who have been married before say that marriage is a grave, that entering into marriage is entering into a grave, or into a disaster; those who are unmarried imagine marriage to be especially pleasant and romantic, and they are full of yearning and expectations. But whether those who have been married or those who have not, no one can speak too clearly on their comprehension or understanding of marriage, or what the actual definition and concept of marriage is, can they? (No.) Those who have experienced marriage say: “Marriage is a grave, it is bitter.” Some of those who are unmarried say: “Your understanding of marriage is incorrect. You say marriage is bad, which is because you are too selfish. You did not put much out in your marriage. Because of your various flaws and problems, you managed your marriage into a mess. You destroyed and broke up your marriage with your own hands.” There are also some who are already married who say to those single people who have not yet entered into marriage: “You’re an ignorant child, what do you know? Do you know what marriage is like? Marriage is not a matter of a single person, nor of two people—it is a matter of two families, or even two clans. There are many issues contained therein that are neither simple nor straightforward. Even in a world of only two, where it is only a matter of two individuals, it is not so simple. No matter how pleasant your understanding and fantasy of marriage is, as the days drag on, it will be ground down by the trivialities of everyday needs, until its color and flavor will fade. You aren’t married, so what do you know? You have never been married, have never managed a marriage, so you are unqualified to evaluate marriage or make critical remarks. Your understanding of marriage is imagination, wishful thinking—it is not grounded in reality!” No matter who is talking about it, there is an objective rationale, but when all is said and done, what actually is marriage? Which perspective is the most correct, most objective way to look at it? Which is most in line with the truth? How should one look at it? Whether speaking of those who have experienced marriage before or those who have not, for one thing, their understanding of marriage is filled with their own imaginations, and for another, corrupt mankind is full of emotions regarding the role they play in marriage. Because corrupt mankind does not understand the principles to which they should hold in various environments, and does not understand the role they play in marriage or the obligations and responsibilities they ought to fulfill, some of their sayings about marriage are unavoidably emotional, and involve their personal selfishness and hotheadedness, etc. Of course, whether an individual is married or not, if they do not

see marriage from the perspective of the truth, and if they do not have a pure understanding and knowledge of it from God, then except for all their practical personal experience of marriage, their understanding of marriage is in great degree influenced by society and by wicked mankind. It is also influenced by the atmosphere, trends, and public opinions of society, as well as by the mistaken, biased—and what might more specifically be termed inhumane—things said about marriage by the people of every level and stratum of society. Because of these things others say, people will, for one thing, be unconsciously influenced and controlled by these thoughts and viewpoints, and for another thing, they will unconsciously accept these attitudes and ways of looking at marriage, as well as these ways of dealing with marriage, and the attitudes toward life held by those who live married. To begin with, people do not have a positive understanding of marriage, nor a positive, accurate knowledge and cognition of it. Besides, both society and wicked mankind instill negative and mistaken thoughts about marriage into them. Therefore, people's thoughts and viewpoints about marriage become biased, and even wicked. As long as you live and survive in this society and have eyes to see, ears to hear, and thoughts to ponder questions, you will to differing degrees accept these mistaken thoughts and viewpoints, which leads to an incorrect, biased understanding and knowledge of marriage. For example, one hundred years ago, people did not understand what romantic love was, and their understanding of marriage was very simple. When someone reached a marriageable age, a matchmaker would introduce them, their parents would handle everything, and then they would hold a wedding with a member of the opposite sex, enter into marriage, and the two of them would live together and pass their days. Thus they would accompany one another through this life, until they got to the end. That is how simple marriage was. It was a matter of two individuals—two people from different families living together, accompanying one another, taking care of one another, and living a lifetime together. It was that simple. But at some point, people started bringing up what they call romantic love, and romantic love was added to the content of marriage, all the way up to the present day. This term "romantic love," or the meaning and idea of it, is no longer something that people, deep in their hearts, feel embarrassed about or have difficulty talking about. Rather, it very naturally exists in people's thoughts, and is natural for people to discuss, to the point that even people who are not yet adults discuss what they call romantic love. So these kinds of thoughts, viewpoints, and statements intangibly form an influence on everyone, men and women, old and young. This influence is the reason that everyone's understandings of marriage are so pretentious—to speak more accurately, they are prejudiced. Everyone has started to play with love and toy with passion. Man's so-called "romantic love" is just the joining of love and passion.[a] What does "love" mean? Love is a kind of affection. What does

a. The original text does not contain the phrase "Man's so-called 'romantic love' is just the joining of love and passion."

“passion” mean? It means lust. Marriage is no longer as simple as two people passing the days together as partners; rather, it has become a toy for affection and lust. Is this not the case? (It is.) People have come to understand marriage as a joining of lust and affection, so can their marriages be good? Men and women do not live well, nor do they fulfill their responsibilities well, and they pass their days in a way that is not down to earth. They often speak of love, of passion, of affection and lust. Do you think they can thus live smoothly and steadily? (No.) What person is there that can pass through these temptations and enticements? No one can pass through these temptations and enticements. In society, people are filled with lust and affection for one another. This is what they call romantic love, and it is the way contemporary people understand marriage; it is their highest evaluation of marriage, the highest of tastes. So, contemporary people’s marriage situation has changed beyond recognition, and is in a terrible, awful mess. Marriage is no longer as simple as a matter of a man and a woman; rather, it has become a matter of all people, men and women, playing with affection and lust—totally depraved. Under the enticement of wicked trends, or through the inculcation of wicked thoughts, people’s understanding and perspective on marriage become deformed, abnormal, and wicked. In addition to this, society’s films and TV programs, as well as literary and artistic works, continually put out ever more wicked and immoral interpretations and statements about marriage. Directors, writers, and actors all elaborate on marriage as a terrible state. This is full of wickedness and lust, which leads to proper marriages being thrown into chaos. So, ever since there has been romantic love, divorce has become more and more common in human society, as have extramarital affairs; more children have been compelled to endure the injury of parental divorce, compelled to live with single mothers or single fathers, thus passing their childhood and youth, or growing up under the improper marriage situations of their parents. The reason for all these different marital tragedies, these incorrect or malformed marriages, is that the view of marriage which society advocates is prejudiced, wicked, and immoral, to the point that they lack ethics and morality. Because mankind does not have an accurate understanding of things positive or proper, people will unwittingly accept these thoughts and viewpoints that society advocates, no matter how malformed they are. These things are like a plague, spreading throughout your body, corroding your every thought and idea, and corroding the correct parts of your humanity. The conscience and reason of your normal humanity quickly become blurred, indistinct, or weak; then, these thoughts and viewpoints that come from Satan which are deviant, wicked, and lack ethics and morals, take the superior position and dominant role in the depths of your thoughts and heart, and in your mental world. After these things take the superior position and dominant role, your perspective on issues like marriage quickly becomes twisted and deviant, and devoid of ethics and morals, to the point that it becomes wicked, but you yourself do not know it, and you think it entirely proper: “Everyone thinks this way, so why should I not? Everyone thinking this way is proper, so

is it not proper for me to think this way as well? So if no one else blushes talking about romantic love, I shouldn't either. The first time, I was a little bashful, a little embarrassed, and I had a hard time opening my mouth. After talking about it a few more times I was fine. Listening more and talking about it more made it my own." True, you are talking and listening, and this thing has become your own, but the true, original understanding of marriage cannot stand firm in the depths of your thoughts, so you have lost the conscience and reason you ought to have as a normal person. What is the reason for losing it? It is because you have accepted the so-called "romantic love" view of marriage. This so-called "romantic love" view of marriage has swallowed up the original understanding and feeling of responsibility your normal humanity has toward marriage. Very quickly, you start to personally put into practice your own understanding of romantic love. You continuously seek out people who you find congenial, people who love you or who you love, and you pursue romantic love by fair means or foul, taking great pains and being quite shameless, to the point of expending a lifetime of energy for the sake of romantic love—then you are done for. In the process of pursuing romantic love, say a woman finds someone she admires, and she thinks: "We are in love, so let's get married." After she gets married, she lives with the person for a while, then realizes that he has some flaws, and she thinks: "He doesn't like me, and I don't really like him. The two of us are unsuitable, so our romantic love was a mistake. Fine, we'll get divorced." After the divorce, she carries around a child of two or three years and prepares to find someone else, thinking: "Since my last marriage was loveless, I need to make sure that the next one has true romantic love. This time I have to be certain, so I have to spend some time examining." After a while, she runs into someone else, "Ah, this is the lover of my dreams, the person I imagined I would like. He likes me, and I like him. He can't stand to be apart from me and I can't stand to be apart from him; we are like two magnets attracting one another, always wanting to be together. We are in love, let's get married." And so she gets married again. Once married, she has one more child, and after two or three years, she thinks: "This person has more than a few flaws; he is both lazy and greedy. He likes to boast and brag, as well as chit chat. He does not fulfill his responsibilities, he does not give the money he earns to the family, and he drinks and gambles all day long. This is not the person I want to love. This is not how the person I love is. Divorce!" Carrying two children around, she divorces again. After getting divorced, she starts to consider: What is romantic love? She cannot say. Some people have two or three failed marriages, and what do they say in the end? "I don't believe in romantic love, I believe in humanity." You see, they go back and forth, and they do not know what they should believe in. They do not know what marriage is; they accept erroneous thoughts and perspectives, and use these thoughts and perspectives as their standards. They personally put into practice these thoughts and perspectives, and at the same time, they also ruin marriage and themselves, as well as ruining other people; to different degrees, they harm the next generation and themselves, both physically and

spiritually. These things are all part of the reason why people feel pained and helpless regarding marriage, why they have no good feelings about marriage. I just fellowshiped about people's various perspectives and definitions of marriage, as well as the situation that human marriage is in as a result of the incorrect viewpoints modern people hold regarding marriage; in short, is the situation of modern human marriage good or bad? (Bad.) It has no prospects, it is not optimistic, and it is ever more turned upside-down. From the East to the West, from the South to the North, human marriage is in a terrible, awful state. People of the current generation—people under the age of forty or fifty—all witness the misfortune of the previous and next generations' marriages, as well as these generations' views on marriage, and their failed marriage experiences. Of course, many people under the age of forty are victims of all kinds of unfortunate marriages; some of them are single mothers, others are single fathers, though of course, relatively speaking, there are not as many single fathers. Some people grow up with their birth mother and stepfather, some grow up with their birth father and stepmother, and others grow up with siblings from different mothers and fathers. Others have divorced parents who remarry, and none of the parents want them, so they become orphans, who grow up into adults after a few years of muddling through society; then they become a stepfather or stepmother, or they become a single mother or father. This is the situation of modern marriage. Is mankind's management of marriage to this degree not the result of Satan's corruption of them? (It is.) This necessary form of mankind's most basic survival and multiplication has been utterly mutilated and made a mess of. How do you think mankind lives? Seeing each family's life is vexing, too awful to even look at. Let us speak no more of this; the more one says, the more vexed one feels, right?

Seeing as we are talking about the topic of marriage, we ought to see what the accurate, correct definition and concept of marriage actually is. Since we are talking about the accurate, correct definition and concept of marriage, we have to look for the answer in the words of God, to give marriage a correct definition and concept based on all that God has said and done regarding the matter, to clarify the true state of marriage, and to clarify the original intent behind the creation and existence of marriage. If one wants to clearly see the definition and concept of marriage, then one must first start by looking at the ancestors of mankind. What is the reason for starting by looking at the ancestors of mankind? Mankind has been able to survive to the present because of the marriage of their ancestors; that is, the root cause of there being so many people today is the marriage between the people God created in the beginning. So, if one wants to understand the accurate definition and concept of marriage, one must start by looking at the marriage of mankind's ancestors. When did marriage start for mankind's ancestors? It started with God's creation of man. It is recorded as early as the Book of Genesis, so we must open the Bible and see what these passages say. Are the majority of people interested in this topic? Those who are already married might think that there isn't even anything to talk about, that this topic is very commonplace, but young single individuals

are especially interested in this topic, because they think that marriage is mysterious, and that there are many things they do not know about it. So let us begin talking at the root. Someone read Genesis 2:18. (“And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”) Next, Genesis 2:21–24. (“And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her to the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall join to his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”) Next, Genesis 3:16–19. (“To the woman He said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in sorrow you shall bring forth children; and your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you. And to Adam He said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return to the ground; for out of it were you taken: for dust you are, and to dust shall you return.”) We’ll stop there. There are five verses in chapter two and four verses in chapter three, nine verses of scripture in total. Nine verses in Genesis describe one thing, which is how the marriage of mankind’s forefather came about. Is that not the case? (It is.) Do you understand now? Do you understand the general meaning a bit better, and are you able to remember it? What is the main thing being talked about here? (How the marriage of mankind’s forefather came about.) So how did it actually come about? (God prepared it.) That’s right, that is the true state of affairs. God prepared it for man. God created Adam, then created a partner for him, a spouse to help and accompany him, to live with him. This is the origin of marriage for mankind’s forefather, and is the source of human marriage. Is this not the case? (It is.) We know the source of human marriage: It was ordained by God. God prepared a partner for mankind’s forefather, which could also be termed a spouse, who would then help and accompany him through life. This is the origin and source of human marriage. So having looked at the origin and source of human marriage, how should we correctly understand marriage? Would you say that marriage is sacred? (Yes.) Is it sacred? Does it have anything to do with sanctity? It does not. You cannot say it is sacred. Marriage is arranged and ordained by God. It has its origin and source in God’s creation. God created the first man, who needed a partner to help and accompany him, to live with him, and so God created a partner for him, and then human marriage came into being. That is all. It is that simple. This is the rudimentary understanding of marriage you should have. Marriage comes from God; it is arranged and ordained by Him. At the very least, you can say that it is not a negative thing, rather, it is a positive thing. It could also accurately be said that marriage is proper, that it is a proper segment in the course of

human life and within the process of people's existence. It is not wicked, nor is it a tool or means by which to corrupt mankind; it is proper and positive, because it was created and ordained by God, and of course, He arranged it. Human marriage originates in God's creation, and it is something He personally arranged and ordained, so looking at it from this angle, the only perspective that one ought to have regarding marriage is that it comes from God, that it is a proper and positive thing, that it is not negative, wicked, selfish, or dark. It does not come from man, nor from Satan, much less did it organically develop within nature; rather, God created, arranged, and ordained it with His own hands. This is absolutely certain. This is the most original, accurate definition and concept of marriage.

Now that you understand the accurate concept and definition of marriage that people ought to have, let us take a look: What is the meaning behind God's ordination and arrangement of marriage? This is mentioned in the Bible verses we just read, namely, why mankind has marriage, what God's thoughts were, what the situation and circumstances of that time were, and under what kind of circumstances God gave this marriage to man. Jehovah God said it this way: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." These words are saying two things. First, God saw that this man was too lonely being alone, without a partner, without someone to talk to, or a companion to share his happiness and thoughts with; He saw that his life would be dry, insipid, and uninteresting, so a thought occurred to Him: One man is a little lonely, so I must make a partner for him. This partner will be his spouse, who will accompany him everywhere and help him do everything; she will be his partner and spouse. The purpose of a partner is to accompany him through life, to walk onward together with him on the path of his life. Whether for ten, twenty, a hundred, or two hundred years, this partner will be the one at his side, the one with him everywhere, who will speak with him, share in happiness, pain, and every emotion with him, and at the same time, accompany him and keep him from being alone or lonely. These thoughts and ideas arising in the mind of God are the circumstances of the source of human marriage. Under these circumstances, God did something else. Let us look at the biblical record: "And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her to the man." God took a rib from the man, and took clay, and used the rib to make another person. This person was made from the rib of the man, created from his rib. To speak colloquially, this person—Adam's partner was created from the flesh and bone taken from his body, so could one not say that as she was his partner, she was also part of his body? (Yes.) In other words, she was derived from him. After she was created, what did Adam call her? "Woman." Adam was a man, she was a woman; clearly, these were two people of different sexes. God first made a person with male physiological characteristics, then He took a rib from the male and created a person with female physiological characteristics.

These two people lived together as one, which constitutes a marriage, and so marriage came about. So, no matter what set of parents someone is raised by, in the end, they all need to get married and be joined with their other half under God's ordination and arrangements, and walk to the end of the course. This is God's ordination. For one thing, looking at it objectively, people need partners; for another, looking at it subjectively, seeing as marriage is ordained of God, husband and wife ought to be as one, a single person who cannot be divided. This is both a subjective and objective fact. So, each person needs to leave the family of their birth, enter into marriage, and establish a family with their other half. This is inevitable. Why? Because it is ordained of God, and it is something that He arranged from the beginning of man. What does this tell people? No matter who you imagine your other half to be, whether or not they are the one you subjectively need and hope for, and no matter what their background is, the person you will marry, with whom you will establish a family and spend this life, is certainly the one already arranged and ordained for you by God. Is this not the case? (It is.) What is the reason for it? (God's ordination.) The reason is God's ordination. Looking at it in the context of previous lives, or from God's perspective, a husband and wife who enter into marriage are actually one, so God arranges for you to marry and spend your life with the person with whom you are one. Put plainly, that is the way it is. Regardless of whether the person you marry is the lover of your dreams, whether they are your Prince Charming, whether they are the person you were expecting, whether you love them or they love you, whether you are very naturally married by luck and coincidence or under some other circumstance, your marriage is ordained by God. You are the partners that God has ordained for one another, the people that God has ordained to accompany one another, and that He has ordained to spend this life together and walk to the end with hands joined. Is this not the case? (It is.) Do you think this understanding is pretentious or erroneous? (No.) It is neither pretentious nor erroneous. Some people say: "You might be wrong in saying this. If these marriages are really ordained by God, then why do some marriages still end in divorce?" That is because these people's humanity has problems, which is a separate matter. This touches on the subject of pursuing the truth, which we will fellowship about later. Right now, speaking to the definition, understanding, and accurate concept of marriage, the fact is that this is the case. Some people say: "Since You say that husband and wife are one, then is it not as unbelievers say, 'If it's meant to be, then it's meant to be, and if it's not meant to be, then it's not meant to be,' and as people from some nations say,[a] 'it takes a hundred years of good karma to earn the chance to share a boat journey with someone, and a thousand years of good karma to share a marital bed'?" Do you think that marriage, as we are talking about it now, has anything to do with these sayings? (No.) They are unrelated. Marriage is not cultivated into existence—it is ordained by God. When God ordains two people to become husband

a. The original text does not contain the phrase "as people from some nations say."

and wife, to become one another's partners, they need not self-cultivate. What would they cultivate? Moral fiber? Humanity? They need not self-cultivate. That is a Buddhist way of speaking, which is not the truth, and has nothing to do with the truth. Human marriage is arranged and ordained by God. Whether in form or literally, in definition or concept, marriage should be understood this way. Through the words recorded in the Bible, through this fellowship, do you have an accurate, truth-aligned definition and concept of marriage? (Yes.) This concept, this definition, is not erroneous; it is not a perspective seen through colored glasses, much less is it understood and defined by human emotion. Rather, it has a basis; it is based on the words and actions of God, and it is based on His arrangements and ordinations. Having gotten to this point, does everyone grasp the understanding and basic definition of marriage? (Yes.) Now that you understand it, you will no longer hold any non-objective fantasies about marriage, or your complaints about marriage will lessen, right? There might be some who say: "Marriage is ordained of God—there is nothing to talk about there—but marriages break apart. What is that all about?" There are many reasons for this. Corrupted mankind has corrupt dispositions, they cannot see through to the essence of issues, they pursue the satisfaction of their own lusts and preferences, to the point of advocating wickedness, so their marriages break apart. This is a separate topic, which we will not speak more of.

Let us talk about helping one another and accompanying one another in marriage. God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Those who are married know that marriage brings many benefits to a family and to a person's life which they would not have imagined. People are initially very lonely and solitary when they live alone, with no one to confide in, no one to talk to, no one for company; life is particularly dry and helpless. Once they are married, they no longer need to suffer this loneliness and solitude. They have someone to confide in. Sometimes, they pour out their miseries with their partner, and sometimes, they share their emotions and joys, or even vent their anger. Sometimes, they pour out their hearts to each other, and life seems joyful and happy. They are one another's confidants, and they believe in one another, so aside from no longer being lonely, they experience many more delights, and they enjoy the happiness of having a partner. Aside from various moods, emotions, and feelings, as well as various thoughts which need to be expressed, people have to face many practical issues in their daily lives, in the process of living, issues like daily necessities, clothing, food, and housing. For example, say two people want to live together, and they need to build a little storehouse. The man has to be a bricklayer, laying bricks to build a wall, and the woman can help him out, handing him bricks and mixing mortar, or wiping away his sweat and giving him water. The two of them talk and laugh together, and he has a helper, which is good. Before it is even dark, the work is done. It is like the old Chinese opera "Fairy Couple" describes: "I draw water and you water the garden." What else? ("You till the fields and I weave the cloth.") That's right. One weaves cloth while the other tills the field; one is mistress inside, the other is

master outside. Living this way is quite good. One could call it harmonious complementing, or coexisting in harmony. In this way, in life, the male's skills are put on show, and the areas in which he is lacking or is unskilled are made up for by the female; where the female is weak, the male forgives her, helps and assists her, and her strengths are also put on show, benefiting the male in the family. Husband and wife each do their duty, learning from each other's strengths to make up for their own weaknesses, and working together to safeguard the household's harmony and the whole family's life and survival. Of course, more important than companionship is that they each support and help one another through life, passing the days well, whether in poverty or in wealth. In short, as God said, it is not good for man to be alone, so He arranged marriage on man's behalf—the man to chop wood and keep the yard, the woman to cook, clean, mend, and wait upon the whole family. Each one does their work well, doing what they each need to in life, and their days pass happily. The lives of humans have gradually developed outward over the whole from this singular point, with human beings propagating and multiplying to the present day. So marriage is indispensable to mankind as a whole—indispensable to their development, and indispensable to them as individuals. The true meaning of marriage is not just for the multiplication of the human race, but more importantly, it is for God to arrange a partner for each man and woman, who will accompany them through each time of their life, whether difficult and painful, or easy, joyful, and happy—in it all, they have someone to confide in, to be one with them in heart and mind, and to share in their sorrow, pain, happiness, and joy. This is the meaning behind God arranging marriage for people, and it is the subjective need of each individual person. When God created mankind, He did not want them to be lonely, so He arranged marriage for them. In marriage, men and women each take on different roles, and the most important thing is that they accompany and support one another, living each day well, moving well along the road of life. For one, they can accompany each other, and for another, they can support each other—this is the meaning of marriage and the necessity for its existence. Of course, it is also the understanding and attitude people ought to have toward marriage, and it is the responsibility and obligation they ought to fulfill toward marriage.

Let us go back and look at Genesis 3:16. God said to the woman: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in sorrow you shall bring forth children; and your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you." This is the charge that God has given to the female sex, which is, of course, also a command, in which He ordains the role that the woman would play in marriage and the responsibilities she would take on. The woman must give birth, which in one respect was a punishment for her previous transgression, and in another, was the responsibility and obligation that she was supposed to accept in marriage as a woman. She would conceive and give birth, and moreover, she would bring forth children in sorrow. Consequently, after entering into marriage, women should not reject having children because they fear suffering. This is a mistake. Bearing children is a responsibility you ought to take on. Therefore, if you

want to have someone to accompany you, to help you in life, then you must consider the first responsibility and obligation that you take upon yourself when you enter into marriage. If there is a woman who says, “I do not want to bear children,” then men will say, “You don’t want to bear children, then I don’t want you.” If you do not want to suffer through the pain of childbirth, then you should not marry. You should not enter into marriage, you are not worthy of it. Upon entering into marriage, the first thing you ought to do as a woman is to have children, and moreover, to suffer. If you cannot do this, then you should not enter into marriage. Although it cannot be said that you are unworthy to be a woman, at the very least, you have failed to fulfill your responsibility as a woman. To conceive and bear children is the first requirement of women. The second requirement is “Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.” Being a man’s other half—as a woman, marrying a man proves that you are his other half, and to speak somewhat dogmatically, that you are thus a part of him, so the desire of your heart must be toward him, which is to say, he must be in your heart. Only when he is in your heart can you take care of him and gladly accompany him. Only then, even when your husband is sick, when he encounters difficulties and setbacks, or when he encounters failure, stumbling, or distress either among other people or within his own life, can you fulfill your responsibilities and obligations as a woman, caring for him, treasuring him, taking care of him, talking sense into him, comforting him, and advising and encouraging him in a womanly way. This is a companionship that is true, that is better. Only in this way will your marriage be happy, and only then will you be able to fulfill your womanly responsibility. Of course, this responsibility is not entrusted to you by your parents, but by God. This is the responsibility and obligation that a woman ought to fulfill. As a woman, this is the way you ought to be. This is the way you ought to treat and care for your husband; this is your responsibility and obligation. If a woman cannot do this, then she is not a good woman, and of course, she is not an acceptable woman, because she has failed to do even the bare minimum of God’s requirements of women: “Your desire shall be to your husband.” Do you understand? (Yes.) As the other half of a man, you are able to adore and take care of your husband when things are smooth, when he has money and power, when he is obedient and takes good care of you, when he makes you happy and satisfied in all things. But when he encounters difficulties, sickness, frustrations, failures, discouragements, or disappointments, when things do not go his way, then you are unable to fulfill the responsibilities and obligations that a woman ought to, unable to comfort him heart to heart, talk sense into him, encourage him, or support him. In this case, you are not a good woman, because you have not fulfilled a woman’s responsibility, and you are not a good partner for a man. So could one say that such a woman is a bad woman? “Bad” is out of the question; but at the very least, you do not have the conscience and reason that God requires, that someone with normal humanity ought to have—you are a woman without humanity. Is that not so? (It is.) We are done speaking about the requirements made of women. God has stated the

responsibility of a woman to her husband, which is: “Your desire shall be to your husband.” This word “desire” is not about love or affection; rather, it means that he must be in your heart. He must be dear to you; you must treat him as your beloved one, your other half. He is the one you must cherish, accompany, and care for, the one whom you must mutually look after until the end of your lives. You must take care of him and treasure him with all your heart. This is your responsibility—this is what is referred to as “desire.” Of course, when God here says “your desire shall be to your husband,” this “desire shall be” phrase is a teaching given to people. As a woman with humanity, an acceptable woman, your desire should be to your husband. Moreover, God has not told you to desire both your husband and other men. Did God not say this? (He did not say this.) God requires that a woman be faithful to her husband, and that the only person in her heart, the only one her desire is intended for, is her husband. He does not want her to be changeable in who her affections are directed toward, or to be promiscuous, or unfaithful to her husband, or desiring someone else outside of her marriage. Rather, He wants her to desire the person she’s married to and spends the rest of her life with. This man is the one to whom your true desire should be directed, he is the one you should spend a whole lifetime of painstaking effort taking care of, treasuring, caring for, accompanying, helping, and supporting. Do you understand? (Yes.) Is this not a fine thing? (It is.) This kind of fine thing is present among the birds and fowls, and among the rest of the animal kingdom, but it is virtually nonexistent among humans—you can see how deeply Satan has corrupted mankind! We have fellowshiped clearly about the most basic obligations a woman ought to fulfill in marriage, as well as the principles according to which she should treat her husband. Additionally, there is something else here, that is, marriage as ordained and arranged by God is monogamous. From where in the Bible do we find a basis for this? God pulled one rib from the body of the man to create a woman—He did not pull two or more ribs from the man, creating multiple women. He created only one woman. That is to say, God created the only woman for the only man He created. This means there was only one partner for the man. The man had only one other half, and the woman had only one other half; moreover, at the same time, God cautioned the woman, “Your desire shall be to your husband.” Who is your husband? It is the person with whom you enter into marriage, and no one else. It is not your secret lover, nor is it the famous idol whom you adore, nor is it the Prince Charming of your dreams. It is your husband, and you only have one. This is the marriage God has ordained—monogamy. Is it embodied in the words of God? (Yes.) God said: “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” God did not say that He made a few or many help meets for him, it was not necessary. One was enough. God also did not say that a woman should marry multiple husbands, or that a man should take multiple wives. God did not make several spouses for a man, nor did He take a rib from several different men to make several women, so a man’s spouse can only be the woman made from his own rib. Is that not a fact? (It is.) So in the later

development of mankind, polygyny arose, as did polyandry. Such marriages are abnormal, and are not marriage at all. This is all fornication. The exception is for a few unique circumstances, like a man dying, and his woman remarrying. This is ordained and arranged by God, which is allowed. In short, marriage has always maintained monogamy. Is this not the case? (It is.) Look at the natural world. The wild goose is monogamous. If a human kills one of the geese, the other goose will never "remarry"—it will become a lone goose. It is said that when flocks of geese fly, the one in the lead is usually a lone goose. Things are hard for a lone goose. It has to do the things that the other geese in its flock are unwilling to do. When the other geese are eating or resting, it has to be responsible for keeping the rest of the flock safe. It can neither sleep nor eat; it must pay attention to the safety of its surroundings to protect the flock. There are many things it cannot do. It can only be solitary, it cannot take another love. It cannot take another mate for as long as it lives. Wild geese always keep the rules God has ordained for them, never changing, even up to the present, but humans are turned upside down. Why are humans so upside down? Because humans are the ones Satan has corrupted, and because they live in wickedness and promiscuity, they cannot stay monogamous, and they cannot uphold their marital roles or keep the responsibilities and obligations they ought to. Is that not true? (It is.)

Let us read on. God said: "Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you." What does "rule over" mean? To govern with a rod, to make women into slaves, is that what it means? (No.) So what does it mean? (To take care of her and be responsible for her.) This idea of "responsibility" is a little closer. This ruling over is related to the matter of the woman enticing the man to sin. Because the woman first violated the words of God and was tempted by the serpent, and then led the man to be enticed the same as she, to betray God, God was a little angry with her, and therefore required her to refrain from taking the initiative, to counsel with the man in everything she did; it would be best for her to allow the man to be the master. So are women given the opportunity to be the master? Such may be given to them. A woman can counsel with her man, and can also be the master, but it is best for her not to make decisions on her own; she must counsel with her husband, with her man. It is best for her to counsel with her man in big matters. As a woman, you not only need to accompany your husband, you also need to help your husband handle household duties. More importantly, the role your husband should fill in the family and in your marriage is as the master, so you should counsel with your husband in whatever you do. Because of differences between the sexes, women do not have an advantage over men in their thoughts, their forbearance, their perspectives, or in any kind of external matters; on the contrary, men hold the advantage over women. So, based on this difference between the sexes, God has given men unique authority—in the family, the man is the master, and the woman is auxiliary. The woman needs to assist her husband, or accompany her husband in managing matters large and small. But when God said "he shall rule over you," He did not mean

that males are higher in status than females, or that males should dominate all of society. That is not the case. In saying this, God was only speaking with regard to marriage; He was only speaking of families, and of trivial household matters that are handled by men and women. When it comes to trivial household matters, God does not require the man to control or coerce the woman in everything; rather, the man needs to actively take up the burdens and responsibilities of his family, and at the same time, he needs to attend to the woman, who is relatively weak, and he needs to provide correct guidance. As one can see from this point, men have been given some unique responsibilities. For example, the man should take the initiative in taking up the responsibility for major matters of right and wrong; he should not thrust the woman into the fiery pit, nor should he allow her to suffer social indignity, bullying, and trampling. The man should take the initiative in taking up this responsibility. It does not mean that because of the words of God which say “he shall rule over you” that he can drive the woman with a stick, or that he can control her, or make her into a slave to treat as he will. Under the preconditions and framework of marriage, male and female are equal before God; it is just that the man is the husband, and God has given him this right and responsibility. This is just a kind of responsibility, not a unique power, and not a reason to treat a woman as something other than a person. The two of you are equal. The male and female are both created by God, it is just that there is a unique requirement made of the male, which is that for one thing, he must bear the burdens and responsibilities of the family, and for another, when big matters appear, the man must step forward boldly and bear the responsibilities and obligations that he ought to in the role of a male, of a husband—to protect the woman, to work his hardest to prevent his woman from doing things a woman ought not to, or to speak colloquially, to keep her from having a hard time, to keep her from suffering as a woman ought not to. For example, in order to elevate their position, to live well and get rich, to pursue fame, profit, and status, and to make others think highly of them, some men give their wives to their bosses as concubines or lovers, prostituting their wives’ flesh. After selling out their wives, when their goals are accomplished, they stop valuing their woman, and they do not want her. What kind of man is this? Do such men not exist? (They do.) Is this man not devilish? (It is.) The point of ruling over a woman is for you to fulfill your responsibilities and protect her. This is because, from a physiological gender standpoint, males have an advantage over women in the various ideas, viewpoints, levels, and insights they have toward things; this is a fact, which no one can deny. So, seeing as God has given women to men, saying “he shall rule over you,” the responsibility that a male ought to fulfill is to bear the burdens of the family, or when serious things happen, to protect and cherish his woman, to sympathize with and understand her; not to thrust her into temptation, but to bear the responsibilities that a husband and a man ought to. This way, in the family and under the framework of marriage, you will fulfill the responsibilities and obligations that you ought to, and you will make your woman feel like you are worth her entrustment, that you are the person she

will spend her life with, that you are trustworthy, and that your shoulders are reliable. When your woman relies on you, when she needs you, her husband, to make a decision to deal with some serious matters, you do not want to be off sleeping, or drinking, or gambling, or wandering the streets. This is all unacceptable; this is cowardly. You are not a good man; you have not fulfilled the responsibilities you ought to. If you as a man always need your woman to come forward in every major matter, and if you are pushing her, who has a role more delicate than a man, toward the fiery pit, pushing her to where the wind and waves are highest, pushing her toward the whirlpool of diverse kinds of complicated matters, then this is not something a good man ought to do, nor is it the way a good husband ought to behave. Your responsibility is not merely to make your woman desire you, accompany you, and assist you in living well; that is not all it is, you also have the responsibility you ought to take on. She has fulfilled her responsibilities toward you—have you fulfilled your responsibilities toward her? It is not enough to give her good food, warm clothes to wear, and to set her heart at ease; what's more important is that in various big matters and disputes over right and wrong, you should be able to accurately, correctly, and appropriately help her deal with everything, to keep her from having any worries, to enable her to receive real benefits from you, and to see that you fulfill the responsibilities you ought to as a husband. This is the source of a woman's happiness in marriage. Is this not the case? (It is.) No matter how honeyed your words are, or how you charm her, or how much you accompany her, in big matters, if your woman cannot rely on you or trust you, if you do not bear the responsibilities you ought to, and instead allow a delicate woman to come forward and endure humiliation, or to endure any pain, then such a woman will be unable to feel happiness or joy, and she will see no hope in you. So, any woman who married such a man would feel unlucky in her marriage, and that her future days and life were without hope and without light, because she married an unreliable man, a man who does not fulfill his responsibilities, a chicken-heart, a good-for-nothing, and a coward; she would feel no happiness. So, males need to bear their own responsibilities. For one thing, this is a requirement of humanity, and for another—and more importantly—they need to understand this from God's perspective. This is the responsibility and obligation that God has given to every man in marriage. So, speaking to the women: if you want to get married and find your other half, then at the very least, you must first look at whether or not the man is reliable. His looks, his height, his diploma, whether he is rich, and whether he makes a lot of money is all secondary. The key is to see whether or not this person has humanity and a sense of responsibility, whether or not their shoulders are broad and thick, and when you rely on him, whether he will fall or be able to hold you up, and whether he is reliable. To speak accurately, whether or not he can fulfill a husband's responsibilities as God has said, whether or not that is the kind of person he is; to say nothing of walking in God's ways, at the very least, he should be someone who has humanity in God's eyes. When two people live together, it does not matter whether they are rich or poor, what their quality

of life is, what is in their house, or whether they are of compatible character or not; at the very least, the man you marry needs to fulfill his obligations and responsibilities toward you, to have a sense of responsibility for you, to have you in his heart. Whether he is fond of you or loves you, at the very least, he needs to have you in his heart, to fulfill the responsibilities and obligations that he ought to in the framework of marriage. Then your life will be joyful, your days will be happy, and your future path will not be hazy. If the man a woman marries is always unreliable, and runs away and hides the moment anything happens, and he brags and boasts when nothing is wrong, as if he has great skill and is manly and virile, but then he turns into tofu when something happens, do you think that woman would be upset? (Yes.) Would she be happy? (No.) A decent, good woman would think: "I'm always taking care of him and cherishing him, I'm willing to suffer anything, to fulfill my responsibilities as a wife, but I cannot see a future with this man." Is such a marriage not painful? Is this pain the woman feels not related to the male, her other half? (It is.) Is this the male's responsibility? (It is.) The male should self-reflect. He cannot always complain that the woman is nitpicky, that she likes to nag and split hairs. Both parties must mutually reflect on whether or not they are fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities, and whether they are doing so according to God's words after hearing them. If they are not fulfilling them, they need to quickly turn around, quickly put themselves right and remedy the situation; it is not too late. Is this a good way to conduct oneself? (Yes.)

Let us now read on. After this is another command of God to Adam, the first of mankind's ancestors. God said: "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return to the ground; for out of it were you taken: for dust you are, and to dust shall you return" (Genesis 3:17–19). This passage is primarily God's command to males. No matter the circumstances, seeing as God has given a command to males, His command is the obligations and tasks they need to fulfill in the framework of marriage and in the family. God requires males to uphold the family's livelihood after marriage, which is that they must work hard their whole lives to maintain their livelihood. Males need to maintain their livelihood, so they must labor; using modern language, they need to go get a job and work to make money, or they need to grow grain out of the ground, and harvest it to maintain the family's livelihood. Males need to toil and labor to support the whole family, to maintain their livelihood. This is God's command for husbands, for males; this is their responsibility. So under the framework of marriage, males cannot emphasize: "Ah, my health is bad!" "Ah, work is hard to find in today's society, I'm so stressed!" "I was pampered by my parents growing up, I can't do any job!" If you can't do any job at all, why did you get married? If you cannot support a family, and you do not have the ability to labor to take upon yourself

the livelihood of a whole family, then why did you get married? This is an irresponsible thing to say. For one thing, God requires men to work diligently, and for another, He requires them to labor in order to get food from the earth. Of course, these days He does not insist that you get food from the earth, but labor is a necessity. That's why man's physique is so thick and strong, while the woman's is comparatively weak; they are different. God created different physiques for men and women. By nature, the man should labor and work to maintain his family's livelihood, to support the family; that is his role, he is the family's main strength. The woman, on the other hand, is not thus commanded by God. So can the woman reap where she has not sown, waiting to eat ready-made meals without doing anything? That is also not right. Although God has not commanded the woman to uphold the family's livelihood, she cannot just sit idle. Do not think that because God has not commanded women that they can just stand off to the side in this matter. That is not the case. Women also need to fulfill their responsibilities; they should assist their husbands in maintaining the family's livelihood. A woman does not only need to be a partner—at the same time, she needs to help her man fulfill his responsibilities and mission in the family. She cannot just stand off to the side, looking on and making fun of her husband, nor can she wait for ready-made food. The two of them need to be in harmony. This way, the obligations and responsibilities that men and women ought to fulfill will all be fulfilled, and will be done well.

Let us read on. God said: "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field." You see, on top of the labor God has given to men, there are additional burdens; it is not enough that you labor, the fields also grow weeds that you must pull. This means that if you are a farmer, you have additional work to do beyond planting. You must also pull weeds, and you cannot sit idle; you must labor hard enough to maintain the livelihood of your family, just as God said: "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread." What does this phrase mean? It means that there is further weight given to men on top of their labor. Until when? "Till you return to the ground." Until you breathe your last, when you finish the journey of life; then you will no longer need to act this way, and your responsibilities will be fulfilled. This is the instruction given to men by God and it is the commandment of God to men, as well as a responsibility and burden He has given them. Whether you are willing or not, this is ordained of God, and you cannot escape it. So, in all society or all mankind, whether one looks at it from a subjective or an objective viewpoint, men have greater stress in their survival on earth compared to women, which unavoidably must be said to be the result of God's ordination and orchestration. In this matter, men need to understand it from God's perspective and bear the responsibilities and obligations they ought to; in particular, those people in the framework of marriage who have families and spouses should not try to escape or reject the fulfillment of their responsibilities because life is too hard, bitter, or tiring. If you say, "I don't want to do this responsibility, and I don't want to labor," then you can choose to back out of marriage or reject marriage. So, before you get married, you must first think

it out, think and understand clearly about what the responsibilities are that God requires a married man to take upon himself, whether or not you can fulfill them, whether or not you can do them well, whether or not you can play your role properly, God's commands to you, and whether or not you can bear the burdens of family that God will give you. If you feel that you lack the faith to do all this well, or if you lack the willingness to do so—if you don't want to do it—if you refuse this responsibility and obligation, refuse to bear a burden within the household and within the framework of marriage, then you should not get married. To both male and female, marriage implies responsibilities and burdens; it is not a trifling matter. Although it is not sacred, by My understanding, marriage is at the very least solemn, and people should rectify their attitudes toward it. Marriage is not for playing around with carnal lusts, nor is it for satisfying one's own momentary emotional needs, much less is it for satisfying one's curiosity. It is a responsibility and an obligation; and of course, even more so, it is a confirmation and verification of whether or not a man or woman has the ability and faith to bear the responsibilities of marriage. If you do not know whether or not you have the ability to bear the responsibilities and obligations of marriage, if these are totally unknown quantities to you, or if you do not want to get married—or if you are even sick of the very idea—if you do not want to bear the responsibilities and obligations of family life, be they trivial or bigger matters, and you want to be single—"God said it is not good to be alone, but I think being alone is pretty nice"—then you can reject marriage, or even leave your marriage. This varies from individual to individual, and each person can choose freely. But, no matter what you say, if you look at what's recorded in the Bible about the sayings and ordinations given by God with regard to mankind's earliest marriage, you will see that marriage is not a game, nor a trifling matter; of course it is much less the grave which people describe it as. Marriage is arranged and ordained by God. From the beginning of man, God ordained and arranged it. So those worldly sayings—"Marriage is a grave," "Marriage is a city under siege," "Marriage is a tragedy," "Marriage is a disaster," and so on—do they hold any water? (No.) They do not. This is just the understanding that corrupt mankind has toward marriage after warping, corrupting, and stigmatizing it. After warping, corrupting, and stigmatizing proper marriage, they criticize it as well, spouting a few inappropriate falsehoods, releasing fallacies, and as a result, those who believe in God also become misled, so they also have incorrect and abnormal views on marriage. Have you also been misled and corrupted? (Yes.) Then through our fellowship, after you have an accurate and correct understanding of marriage, when someone again asks, "Do you know what marriage is?" will you still say, "Marriage is a grave"? (No.) Is this statement correct? (No.) Should you say that? (No.) Why not? Seeing as marriage is arranged and ordained by God, humans should treat marriage correctly. If people act wantonly and indulge their lusts, messing around with promiscuity and bringing about evil consequences, saying that marriage is a grave, then I can only say that they are digging their own grave and are making trouble for themselves; they cannot complain. It has

nothing to do with God. Is this not the case? Saying that marriage is a grave is Satan's warping and condemnation of marriage and of a positive matter. The more positive a thing is, the more Satan and corrupt mankind warp it into something wicked. Is this not evil? If a person lives in sin, engaging in promiscuity and love triangles, why do people not say that? If a person fornicates, why do people not say so? Proper marriage is not fornication, nor promiscuity, it is not the satisfaction of carnal lusts, nor is it a trifling matter; of course much less is it a grave. It is something positive. God has ordained and arranged human marriage, and He has given entrustment and commands regarding it; of course, even more so, He has given responsibilities and obligations to both parties in marriage by way of command, as well as His sayings about what constitutes marriage. Marriage can only be comprised of one man and one woman. In the Bible, did God create a man, then create another man, and then marry them? No, there is no homosexual marriage between two men or between two women. There is only the marriage of one man and one woman. Marriage is comprised of one man and one woman, who are not only partners, but also helpers, who accompany one another, take care of one another, and mutually fulfill their responsibilities, living well and accompanying each other properly on the paths of their lives, accompanying each other through every difficult period of life, every different and unique period; and of course, they also get through the ordinary times. This is the responsibility that both parties in marriage ought to take on themselves, and it is also God's entrustment to them. What is God's entrustment? It is the principles that people ought to keep and practice. So, for everyone who gets married, marriage is meaningful. It has a supplementary effect on your personal experience and knowledge, as well as the growth, maturity, and perfection of your humanity. And on the contrary, if you are not married, and just live with your parents, or live alone all your life, or if you have an abnormal marriage, a marriage which is immoral and not ordained of God, then what you experience will not be the life experience, knowledge, or encounters, nor the growth, maturity, and perfection of humanity that you would obtain from a proper marriage. In marriage, beyond the two people experiencing mutual company and support, they of course also experience the disagreements, disputes, and contradictions that come up in life. At the same time, they experience together the pain of bearing children, and the experience of educating and raising children, and providing for their elders, watching the next generation grow up, watching the next generation get married and have children just like them, repeating their same course. In this way, the experience, knowledge, or encounters of people's lives is quite rich and varied, is it not? (It is.) If you had had such life experience before you believed in God, before you accepted God's work, words, judgment and chastisement, and in addition, if you could worship God and follow God after you came to believe in Him, then your life would be a bit more abundant than most people; your experience and personal understanding would be a bit greater. Of course, all of this I'm speaking about is based on the premise that, under the framework of marriage, you should earnestly carry out your own

responsibilities and obligations, the responsibilities and obligations of men and women, and the responsibilities and obligations of husbands and wives. These are things that should be done. If you do not carry out your responsibilities and obligations, then your marriage will be a mess, and it will fail, and in the end, your marriage will break apart. You will experience a broken, failed marriage, as well as the troubles, entanglements, pains, and turbulence that marriage will bring to you. If the two parties who enter into marriage together cannot take the initiative and personally carry out their responsibilities and obligations, then they will argue and contradict one another. As time goes on, they will argue more and more, their contradictions will grow deeper and deeper, and cracks will start to appear in their marriage; as the cracks are around longer, they will be unable to repair the broken mirror of their marriage, and such a marriage will certainly be headed toward breaking apart, toward destruction—such a marriage is certainly failed. So from your perspective, the marriage God has ordained is not according to your wishes, and you think it unsuitable. Why do you think that way? Because in the framework of marriage, you do not do anything according to God's requirements and commands; you selfishly pursue the satisfaction of your own requirements, the satisfaction of your own preferences and wishes, and the satisfaction of your imagination. You do not restrain yourself or change on your partner's behalf, nor endure any pain; rather, you just emphasize your own excuses, your own profit and preferences, and you do not ever think about your counterpart. What will happen in the end? Your marriage will break apart. The source of this breakage is people's corrupt dispositions. People are too selfish, so even husband and wife, who should be as one, are unable to live together in harmony, unable to sympathize with, understand, comfort, and accept one another, or change and give things up for each other. You can see how corrupt mankind has become. Marriage cannot restrain people's conduct, nor can it make people give up their selfish desires, so there are no moral principles or good practices that come from society that can make people better, or that can maintain their conscience and reason. So when it comes to marriage, people should come to know it from the way God first ordained marriage for man. Of course, they should also understand this matter from the perspective of God. Understanding all this from God's perspective is pure, and when people are able to understand all this, the angle and viewpoint from which they see marriage will be correct. The reason their angle and viewpoint on marriage needs to be correct is not merely to make them know the concept and correct definition of marriage; it is also to enable people to have a proper, correct, accurate, appropriate, and reasonable method of practice when they encounter marriage, so they will not be misled by Satan or the various ideas of the wicked trends of the world in the way they treat marriage. When you choose marriage on the basis of God's words, those of you who are women need to clearly see whether or not your counterpart is the kind of person who is able to fulfill a man's responsibilities and obligations as God has said, whether or not he is worth entrusting your whole life to. Those of you who are men need to clearly see

whether or not a woman is the kind of person who is able to set aside her own profit for the sake of family life and her husband, to change her shortcomings and flaws. You must consider all these things and more. Do not rely on your imagination, or on momentary interests or hobbies; much less should you rely on the mistaken ideas of love and romanticism that Satan instills in you to blindly choose marriage. With this fellowship, is everyone clear on the ideas, viewpoints, angles, and standpoints people should have on marriage, as well as the practice they ought to choose and principles they ought to hold to with regard to marriage? (Yes.)

Today, we have not yet spoken about letting go of the pursuits, ideals, and desires of marriage; we have only clarified the definition and concept of marriage. Have I not spoken clearly on the subject? (You have.) I have spoken clearly. Do you have still any complaints about marriage? (No.) And the one you were once married to, the one you left, do you have any enmity for them? (No.) Do your abnormal, biased understandings and views of marriage, or even your childish fantasies which were out of line with the facts, still exist? (No.) You should be more realistic now. But marriage is not a simple matter of daily necessities. It touches on the lives of people with normal humanity, and on people's responsibilities and obligations, and moreover, there are the more practical standards and principles that God has warned people about, required of them, and commanded them of. These are the responsibilities and obligations that people should complete, and are the responsibilities and obligations that they ought to take on themselves. This is concrete definition of marriage and the significance of the concrete existence of marriage, which people with normal humanity ought to possess. All right, this is where we'll end for today. Goodbye!

January 7, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (10)

Today we will continue to fellowship on the content of our last meeting. What was our last meeting's fellowship about? (Last time, God mainly fellowshiped on two subjects. First, God fellowshiped about the question people raise: "If mankind had not pursued their ideals and desires, then would the world have developed as it has to the present?" Next, God fellowshiped on some of people's mistaken perspectives and viewpoints about marriage, and then fellowshiped about the correct concept and definition of marriage.) Last time I fellowshiped on a very broad topic—marriage. Marriage is a broad topic which touches on all mankind and permeates the history of human development. This topic touches on people's everyday life, and it is important for everyone. Last time we fellowshiped on some content touching on this topic, mainly about the origin and formation of marriage, as well as God's instructions and ordination for both parties in marriage, and the responsibilities and obligations both parties in marriage ought to take upon themselves. What was this content primarily based on? (The biblical record.) This fellowship was based on the words and verses recorded in the Bible, in which after God created mankind, He ordained marriage for them, right? (Right.) Through our last fellowship, and through reading about some of the sayings and doings of God regarding human marriage as recorded in the Bible, do you have an accurate definition of marriage now? Some people say: "We are young, we have no concept of marriage, nor do we have any experience. Defining marriage is awkward for us." Is it awkward? (No.) It is not awkward. So how should we define marriage? Based on God's sayings and doings regarding human marriage, should you not have an accurate definition of marriage? (We should.) With regard to marriage, whether or not you are married yourself, you need to have an accurate knowledge of the words of my fellowship now. This is an aspect of the truth you ought to understand. Speaking from this perspective, whether or not you have any experience with marriage, and whether or not you feel any interest in marriage, and whatever calculations and plans you may have had in the past regarding marriage, as long as this matter touches on your pursuit of the truth, you ought to know about it. This is also a matter you ought to see clearly, because it touches on the truth, on human ideas and viewpoints, on people's pursuit of the truth, and on your principles and path of practice on your road of pursuing the truth. So, whether or not you have experienced marriage before, whether or not you are interested in marriage, or what your marriage situation is, if you want to pursue the truth and attain salvation, then you need to have an accurate knowledge and correct ideas and viewpoints regarding marriage, just as you would with any matters that touch on the truth; you should not resist it in your heart, or wear colored glasses and have notions about it, or deal with it based on your own background and circumstances, or make any choices regarding it. These are all incorrect viewpoints. Marriage, like any other matter, touches on people's viewpoints, standpoints, and perspectives. If you want to have correct, truth-aligned ideas, viewpoints,

perspectives and standpoints on the matter of marriage, then you must have an accurate knowledge and definition of the matter, which all touches on the truth. So, when it comes to marriage, you should have a correct knowledge and understand the truth that God wants people to in this matter. Only by understanding the truth here can you have the correct ideas and viewpoints to face marriage when you get married, or when things arise in your life that touch on the matter of marriage; only then can you have correct standpoints and perspectives on it, and of course, have an accurate path for resolving problems involving marriage. Some people say: “I will never set foot in marriage.” And maybe you never will set foot in it, but you will unavoidably have some ideas and viewpoints about marriage, big or small, right or wrong. Additionally, in your life you will unavoidably encounter some people or things that present problems that involve the matter of marriage, so how will you view and resolve these problems? When these problems that touch on marriage appear, what do you need to do to have accurate ideas, viewpoints, standpoints, and principles of practice? How do you need to act to be in line with God’s will? This is something you ought to understand, something you ought to pursue moving forward. What do I mean when I say that? I mean that there are some people who might think that marriage has nothing to do with them, so they listen inattentively. Is this the right viewpoint? (No.) No. No matter the topic I fellowship about, as long as it touches on the truth, touches on pursuing the truth, and touches on the basis and criteria for viewing people and things, and for comporting oneself and acting, then you should accept it and earnestly, carefully listen. Because this is not common sense, nor is it knowledge, much less is it professional understanding—it is the truth.

Let us return and continue fellowshiping on the subject of marriage. What should the definition of marriage be? Based on the ordination and arrangements of God in regard to marriage, as well as His exhortations and instructions to both married parties that I fellowshiped on last time, your concept and definition of marriage should not be muddled; rather, it should be clear and unequivocal. Marriage should be the uniting of one man and one woman under the ordination and arrangements of God. This is the composition of marriage, which has preconditions. Under the ordination and arrangements of God, one man and one woman united constitutes a marriage. Is that not the case? (It is.) Is such a definition of marriage not theoretically accurate? (It is.) Why say it is accurate? How can you be sure it is accurate? Because it is based on the biblical record, and it has indications that can be followed. The biblical record clearly explains the origins of marriage. This is the definition of marriage. On the foundation of this clear definition of marriage, let us look at what are the duties that each party in marriage takes on themselves. Did the Bible passages we read at the last meeting not clearly record this? (They did.) The simplest of all the duties each party in marriage takes on is to accompany and help one another. Then, what was God’s instruction to the woman? (God said to the woman: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in sorrow you shall bring forth children; and your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you”

(Genesis 3:16).) This is the original way of speaking in the Bible. Using our modern words, God's instruction to the woman was her duty. What was that duty? To bear children, to raise them, and to take care of her husband and adore him. This was God's instruction to the woman. So what duty did God instruct the man to do? As the head of the house, the man must bear the burden of family life and provide for the family by the sweat of his brow. He must also bear the burden of managing the family members, his woman, and his own life. This is God's division of duties between women and men. You should be clear and definite on the duties of men and women. This is the definition and formation of marriage, as well as the responsibilities both parties should take upon themselves and the obligations they should fulfill. This is marriage itself and the real content thereof. Are there any negative things in the content we have discussed regarding marriage? (No.) There are no negative things in it. It is all maximally pure, in line with the truth, and in line with the facts, and it is in line with the basis of God's words. With biblical records as the foundation, the matter of marriage becomes very definite and clear to modern people; we do not need to lay down too many preconditions or use too many words to speak of the origin of marriage. It is not necessary. The definition of marriage is clear, and the duties that both parties in marriage should take on themselves, and the obligations they should fulfill, are clear and definite. Once one is clear and definite on these things, what effect does that have on one's pursuit of the truth? What is the meaning behind understanding the definition and composition of marriage and the duties of both parties? That is to say, what are the results that fellowshiping on this content has on people, and what are the effects that it causes? To speak colloquially, what good does it do you to listen to this content? (It allows us to have a correct and truth-aligned viewpoint for looking at things when we face marriage, or when we look at marriage; we will not be influenced or misled by wicked trends or the ideas inculcated by Satan.) This is one positive effect. Does fellowshiping on the definition and formation of marriage and the duties of both parties allow people to have correct ideas and viewpoints regarding marriage? (Yes.) When a person has correct ideas and viewpoints, do the benefits and positive effects of this allow them to establish a correct view of marriage in their consciousness? Once someone has a correct view of marriage and correct ideas and viewpoints, do they have a certain resistance and immunity to opposing, negative ideas and viewpoints, which belong to wicked trends? (Yes they do.) What does this resistance and immunity refer to? It means that, at the very least, you have discernment when it comes to some wicked ideas and viewpoints regarding marriage that come from the world and society. Once you have discernment, you will no longer look at marriage based on the ideas and viewpoints that come from the wicked trends of the world, nor will you accept those ideas and viewpoints. So what is the benefit to you in not accepting those ideas and viewpoints? It is that those ideas and viewpoints will not control your perspectives and actions regarding marriage, and will no longer corrupt you, nor will they seed in you those wicked ideas and viewpoints; therefore, you will not look at marriage

by following the wicked trends of the world, nor will you be carried off by those wicked trends, so you will be able to stand firm in your testimony on the matter of marriage. So in a certain sense, will you have already given up some of those satanic, worldly ideas, viewpoints, and perspectives regarding marriage? (Yes.) After people have an accurate definition of marriage, they are able to let go of some of their pursuits, ideals, and desires regarding marriage, but is it enough to stop there? Are they able to completely let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires regarding marriage? It is not nearly enough. They have nothing more than an accurate definition and concept of marriage, merely an initial, basic concept and knowledge of marriage in their thoughts. But the various ideas, viewpoints, and topics that the world and society disseminate regarding marriage will still influence your ideas and viewpoints, and affect your perspectives—and even actions—regarding marriage. So up to the present, after having an accurate definition of marriage, people are still unable to totally and completely let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires regarding marriage. So next, should we not fellowship about the various pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise in people regarding marriage? (Yes we should.)

I'll bring this fellowship about the definition of marriage to a close. Next, we'll fellowship about how to let go of the various pursuits, ideals, and desires that arise because of marriage. First off, let us fellowship about people's various fantasies regarding marriage. When I mention fantasies, I mean the pictures that people imagine in their heads. These pictures have not yet become factual; they are just imaginings triggered by people's daily lives or the circumstances they encounter. These imaginings form images and illusions in people's heads, even becoming their pursuits, ideals, and desires regarding marriage. So, in order to let go of your pursuits, ideals, and desires regarding marriage, you should first let go of the various fantasies that were once or have been seeded in your mind and in the depths of your heart. This is the first thing you need to do to let go of your pursuits, ideals, and desires regarding marriage—that is, let go of your various fantasies of marriage. So let us first talk about what fantasies people have about marriage. The various opinions about marriage from ancient people hundreds or thousands of years ago are too far removed from the present, so we will not go into those. We will speak instead about what modern people's fresh, popular, fashionable, and mainstream opinions and actions are regarding marriage; these things influence you, causing you to continually have all kinds of fantasies arise in the depths of your hearts or in your minds regarding marriage. First, some opinions regarding marriage become popular in society, and then various works of literature carry the ideas and opinions of the authors regarding marriage; as these works of literature are turned into television programs and films for the screen, they even more vividly expound upon people's various opinions about marriage, their various pursuits, ideals, and desires about it. Whether more or less, visibly or invisibly, these things are continually instilled into you. Before you have any accurate concept of marriage, these societal opinions and messages about marriage create preconceptions in you and are accepted by you; then

you start to fantasize about how your own marriage will be, and what your other half will be like. Whether you accept these messages through television programs, films, and novels, or through your social circles and the people in your life—regardless of the source, these messages all come from humans, society, and the world, or to speak accurately, they evolve and develop from wicked trends. Of course, to speak even more accurately, they come from Satan. Is this not the case? (It is.) In this process, regardless of what kind of ideas and viewpoints about marriage you have accepted, the fact is, while accepting various ideas and viewpoints about marriage, you are continually fantasizing about marriage in your thoughts. These fantasies all revolve around one thing. Do you know what it is? (Romantic love.) In society right now, the more popular or mainstream message revolves around speaking about marriage in terms of romantic love; the happiness of a marriage depends on the existence of romantic love, and whether or not husband and wife are in love with one another. These opinions of society concerning marriage—these things which permeate people's thoughts and the depths of their souls—are primarily about romantic love. These opinions are instilled into people, causing them to develop all kinds of fantasies about marriage. For example, they fantasize about who the person they love will be, what kind of person they will be, and what their requirements of a marriage partner are. In particular, there are multifaceted messages that come from society, which say they certainly need to love that person and that that person needs to love them back, that only this is true romantic love, that only true romantic love can lead to marriage, that only marriage based on romantic love is good and happy, and that a marriage without romantic love is immoral. So, before they have found the person they will love, everyone prepares to find romantic love, making advance arrangements for marriage, preparing for the day in which they encounter the person they love so they can recklessly pursue their love, and realize their love. Right? (Right.) In the past, people did not speak of romantic love, nor did they speak of so-called freedom of marriage, or that love is guiltless, that love is supreme. At that time, people felt shy talking about marriage, love, and romance. Especially when it involved the opposite sex, people would feel embarrassed, they would blush and their hearts would race, or they would have a hard time speaking. Today, people's attitudes have changed. When they see others discussing romance and marriage so calmly and confidently, they also want to be such a person, discussing romance and marriage freely and openly, without a red face or a racing heart. Moreover, they want to be able to openly confess their feelings when they come upon the person they want to pursue, to pour out their heart; they even fantasize about all kinds of scenes for courting or being courted, and even more, they fantasize about what kind of person the one they will love and pursue will be. Women fantasize that the person they pursue will be a Prince Charming, at least 1.8 meters tall, a witty conversationalist, refined, well-educated, with a good family background, and even better, that he will have a car and a house, social standing, a certain amount of wealth, and so on. As for men, they fantasize that their other half will

be a fair-skinned beauty, a superwoman who can shine at social gatherings as well as in the kitchen. They even fantasize that their other half will be a beautiful and wealthy woman, and so much the better if she has a solid family background. Then people will say that the two of them joining together are like Romeo and Juliet, like a perfect couple or a match made in heaven, a couple that bystanders envy, that never argues or gets angry at each other, that would never quibble for any reason, that love one another deeply—like couples in the movies who swear to love each other until the seas run dry and the rocks turn to dust, to grow old together, to never dislike or avoid one another, to never give up on one another, and to never leave one another. Women fantasize that one day they will enter into the hall of matrimony with the one they love, and then with the blessing of the minister, they will exchange rings, exchange vows, swearing solemn pledges of love, committing to live this life with one another and to not leave or forsake each other regardless of sickness or poverty. Men also fantasize that one day they will enter the hall of matrimony with the woman they love, and with the blessing of the minister exchange rings and make their promises, swearing that no matter how old or ugly their new bride gets, they will not leave or forsake her, and that they will give her the most wonderful, happy marriage, and make her the happiest woman on earth. Men and women all fantasize like this, pursue like this, and in their real lives, they continually learn all kinds of pursuits, ideals, and desires about marriage. At the same time, they also endlessly repeat these fantasies in the depths of their hearts, hoping that one day their fantasies will play out in their real lives, making them no longer a kind of ideal or desire, but rather something real. Under the influence of modern life and the conditioning of all kinds of societal messages and information, each woman hopes to wear a white wedding dress and become the world's most beautiful bride, the world's happiest woman; she also hopes to wear her very own diamond ring, which must certainly exceed one carat, and must be of the finest purity. It can have no flaws, and her most beloved man must place it on her finger. This is a woman's marriage fantasy. For one thing, she has some fantasies regarding the form of getting married; for another, she also has all kinds of fantasies about married life, hoping that the man she loves will not fail to live up to her expectations, that he will love her just as deeply in marriage as when they first fell in love, that he will not love another woman, that he will give her a happy life, make good on his commitment, and that until the seas dry up and the rocks turn to dust, they will stay together in this life and the next. For yet another thing, she also has all kinds of fantasies and requirements regarding the person she falls in love with. At the very least, he must be a Prince Charming, if not on a white horse, then on a black one. It is certainly this level of prince-like quality that a woman has in mind for her ideal man—how romantic and grand that would be, how happy her life would become. The basis of these fantasies that people develop regarding marriage is from society, their social groups, or all kinds of messages, all kinds of books, works of literature, and films; add to that some of those slightly bourgeois elements in their hearts which align with their own preferences, and

so they fantasize about all kinds of people to fall in love with, all kinds of lovers, all kinds of marital forms and lives. In short, people's various fantasies are all based on society's understanding of marriage, interpretation of marriage, and various opinions on marriage. Women are like this, and men are the same. Men's various pursuits of marriage are no less than those of women. A man also hopes to find a girl he likes, who is virtuous, gentle, good, and considerate, who treats him with care and affection, and who is dependent on him like a little bird, who is unerringly devoted to him, who does not disdain any of his flaws or shortcomings, who would even accept all his shortcomings and flaws, who, when he feels disheartened or frustrated, and when he fails, would reach out a hand to help and support him, and then say to him: "Darling, it doesn't matter, I'm here. There's nothing we can't get through together. Don't be afraid. No matter when, I will always be by your side." Women have all kinds of requirements of men, and just the same, men have all kinds of requirements of women, so whether men or women, they are looking for their own other half among the crowd, and the basis for searching out their other half is their various fantasies regarding marriage. Of course, a man will more often fantasize about having a firm foothold in society, establishing a career, accruing a certain amount of wealth, and accumulating a certain level of capital, after which he can seek out a better half who is his equal in status, identity, taste, and preferences. As long as he likes her and she is in line with his requirements, he will be willing to do anything for her, even walk over burning coals for her. Of course, speaking a little more realistically, he will buy some nice things for her, satisfy her material needs, buy her a car, a house, a diamond ring, a brand name handbag and clothes. If he has the means, he will also buy a private yacht and a private plane, and will take his beloved woman out to sea just the two of them, or take her to see the world, to travel to the world's most famous mountains, lands, and scenic places. How wonderful such a life would be. Women pay all kinds of prices for their various marriage fantasies, and in the same way, men strive and work for their various marriage fantasies. Regardless of what kind of fantasy you have regarding marriage, as long as it comes from the world, from the understanding and opinions that corrupt mankind has about marriage, or from the information about marriage that the world and corrupt mankind instill in you, these ideas and viewpoints will to some extent and to some degree influence your life and faith, and will influence your outlook on life and the path you walk through life. This is because marriage is something that no adult can avoid, and it is also an unavoidable topic. Even if you choose to remain single all your life, never getting married, your fantasies about marriage will still exist. You may choose to stay single, but beginning from the moment you had your most rudimentary concept and thoughts regarding marriage, you had all kinds of fantasies about it. These fantasies not only occupy your thoughts, they also flood your daily life and influence your ideas, viewpoints, and choices as you deal with all kinds of things. Put simply, if a woman has a standard for who she falls in love with, then regardless of the maturity or soundness of the standard, she will use it to weigh the

goodness and badness of the humanity and character of members of the opposite sex, as well as whether or not those members are the sort she would like to spend time with. This standard is inseparable from the standard by which she chooses a marriage partner. For example, let's say the kind of man she likes has bold features, a large, square face, and clear skin; he speaks elegantly, with a slight bookish air, and he is fairly polite. In her view of love, she feels good about this kind of man, and she leans more toward this kind of man. So in her life, whether or not such a person is the one she falls in love with, she will certainly feel good about him. I mean that when she comes into contact with such a person, whether his humanity is good or bad, whatever his character is like, whether he is a treacherous person or an evil person, these things are all secondary; these are not the standard she uses to view members of the opposite sex. What is her standard? It is the standard by which she chooses a husband. If her counterpart is in line with the standard she has for choosing a husband, then even if he is not the person she actually chooses as a husband, he is still someone she would like to spend time with. What does this issue illustrate? A person's view of love—more specifically, a person's standard regarding a partner in love or marriage—to a large degree influences her view on all members of the opposite sex. When she encounters a man who meets her standard for choosing a husband, she finds everything about him pleasing to the eye, his voice pleasant to hear, and his words and actions comfortable to observe. Even if he is not the one she intends to fall in love with and pursue, she still finds him pleasing to the eye. This pleasantness is where the trouble comes in. Whatever he says, you do not discern whether it is right or wrong; you find everything about him good and right, and think he does everything well. From these good feelings you have about him, you gradually start to admire and worship him. Where does this admiration and worship come from? The source is the standard you use for choosing a partner for love and marriage. On a certain level, this standard misleads how you view other people; more accurately, it blurs the criteria and the grounds you use to view members of the opposite sex. His outward appearance matches your aesthetic standards, so no matter what kind of character he has, whether or not his actions are in line with principles, whether or not he has the truth principles, whether or not he pursues the truth, whether or not he has genuine faith and submission to God—these things become very blurred to you, and you're likely to be emotionally swayed in how you view this person. Because you have good feelings toward this person, and because on an emotional level he satisfies your standard, you see everything he does as good and quite fine; you safeguard him and worship him, to the point that when he does something evil, you do not discern it, nor do you reveal or forsake him. What is the reason for this? It is that your feelings are at play, capturing your heart. As soon as your feelings act up, is it easy for you to do things according to principles? Your feelings have the advantage, so you have no principles. So, the consequences this matter brings about are very serious. Even though he is not the person you are in love with, or is not the person you want to marry,

he is still in line with your aesthetics and your emotional needs; under this precondition, you are unavoidably influenced and controlled by your feelings, and it is very hard for you to view this person, deal with the problems that come about in this person, and deal with your own problems based on God's words. As soon as feelings control you and become the dominating force in you, it is very difficult to break free from the emotional shackles that bind you, to enter into the reality of practicing the truth. So what do I mean by all of this? I mean that everyone has all kinds of fantasies about marriage. This is because you do not live in a vacuum or on another planet, and of course you are not a minor, much less mentally deficient or an idiot; you are an adult, and you have an adult's ideas. At the same time, you have also involuntarily accepted society's various opinions about marriage, having accepted the information about marriage that comes from society and from wicked mankind. After accepting these things, you involuntarily fantasize about who your romantic partner will be. What does fantasizing refer to? It means entertaining unrealistic, empty thoughts. Based on what we have now fellowshiped and revealed, it is mainly directed at the various opinions about marriage that come from society and from wicked mankind. Because you do not have a correct, truth-aligned view of marriage, you are unavoidably influenced, corroded, and corrupted by the various opinions about marriage that come from society and from wicked mankind, but you do not know and are not aware. You cannot feel that this is a corrosion, a corruption. Unwittingly, you receive this influence, and unwittingly, you start to think that this is all quite fair and reasonable, and you take it as a matter of course, thinking that these are all ideas that adults ought to have. You will quite naturally turn all this into your own appropriate requirements and appropriate needs—the proper ideas that an adult ought to have. So, from the time that you start receiving these messages, your fantasies about marriage will escalate more and more and become ever deeper. At the same time, your sense of shame about marriage will continually diminish, or one might say, you will feel more and more disinclined to proactively reject these fantasies about marriage. To put it another way, your fantasies regarding your partner in love or the various scenes and things related to marriage will grow more and more involuntary and audacious. Is this not the case? (It is.) The more people accept opinions and information about marriage from society and from wicked mankind, the more bold and unbridled they become in imagining their own marriage, in looking for a partner in love, and pursuing that partner. At the same time, they hope that their lover could be just like a character described in a romance novel, TV drama, or romantic film—that they will love them unconditionally, until the seas dry up and the rocks turn into dust, remaining faithful until death. As for themselves, they also deeply love their partner just like TV dramas and romance novels portray, until the seas dry up and the rocks turn into dust, remaining faithful until death. In short, these fantasies are divorced from the real-world needs of humanity and life. Of course, they are also divorced from the essence of humanity; they are completely incompatible with real life. Just like with anything that people think is good, they are just pleasant thoughts

produced by people's imaginations. Seeing as these thoughts are not in line with God's definition of marriage and His arrangements for it, people should let go of these ideas and viewpoints which are totally misaligned with the facts, which they ought not to pursue in the first place.

How should people let go of these unrealistic fantasies about marriage? They should rectify their thoughts and views on romance and marriage. First, people should let go of their so-called view on love, let go of the illusory things and sayings such as loving someone until the seas dry up and the rocks turn to dust, the unwavering love until death, and the love that lasts from life to life. People don't know if they will have that love for all their life, let alone into future lives or until the seas dry up and the rocks turn to dust. How many years will it take for the seas to dry up and the rocks to turn to dust? Wouldn't people be monsters if they could live that long? It's good enough just to live this life well, and to live it with awareness and clarity. It's good enough just to play your role well in marriage, to do what a man or woman should do, to perform the obligations and responsibilities that a man or woman should perform, to fulfill your mutual responsibilities, support each other, help each other, and be with each other for life. This is a perfect and proper marriage, and all that other stuff, that so-called love, those so-called solemn pledges of love, that love that lasts from life to life—these things are all useless, they have nothing to do with the marriage God has ordained, and nothing to do with God's instructions and exhortations to men and women. This is because no matter what the premise to any marriage is, or what the individual conditions of the husband or wife are, whether poor or rich, or what talents, social status, and social background they might have, or whether they're a perfect match or the perfect couple; no matter whether the marriage came together because of love at first sight or whether it was arranged by parents, whether it happened accidentally or was formed through the love of long association—no matter what kind of marriage it is, as long as the two people get married and enter into marriage, then this marriage must necessarily come back down to earth, back to the real life of the daily necessities. No one can escape real life, and every marriage, whether it has love or not, must eventually return to daily life. For example, the utility bills need paying and the wife complains, "Oh my, the bills have gone up again. Everything is going up, everything except wages. How can people live when the prices of things are going up like this?" But despite her complaints, she still has to use water and electricity, she has no choice. So she pays the bills, and once they're paid she has to save money on food and expenses, trying to save back the money that she's had to pay extra for the higher bills. Seeing that there are discounted vegetables in the market, the husband says, "Beans are on sale today. Buy more, buy enough for two weeks." The wife says, "How much should we buy? If we buy too much and can't eat it all, it'll spoil. And if we buy that much, we won't even be able to fit it all in the freezer!" The husband replies, "If we can't fit it all in, couldn't we just eat more? We can eat beans twice a day. Don't always be so concerned about buying expensive things to eat!" The husband

receives his wages and says, “I’ve received a bonus again this month. If I get a big end-of-year bonus, we can go on holiday. Everyone’s going on holiday to the Maldives or Bali. I’ll take you there on vacation too, so you can have a good time.” The fruit trees around their home bear an abundance of fruit, and the husband and wife have a discussion: “We didn’t get a good crop last year. The fruits this year are huge, so we can sell some and make some money. Once we’ve made some money, perhaps we could renovate our house? We could install larger aluminum alloy windows and have a large new iron door.” When the cold winter weather comes, the wife says, “I’ve been wearing this cotton jacket for seven or eight years, and it’s getting thinner and thinner. When you get your wages, you can spend a bit less and set aside money for me to buy a winter jacket. A down jacket costs at least three to four hundred, or maybe five to six hundred yuan.” “Fine,” says the husband. “I’ll set some money aside and buy you a good, warm duck down jacket.” The wife says, “You want to buy me one, but you don’t have one either. Buy one for yourself as well.” The husband replies, “If I have enough money, I’ll buy it. If I don’t, I’ll make do with my jacket for another year.” Another husband says to his wife, “I hear there’s a big restaurant opened nearby serving all kinds of seafood. Shall we go?” The wife says, “Let’s go. We have enough money, we can afford it.” They go eat seafood and come home delighted and feeling very happy. The wife thinks, “Look at how cozy my life is now. I married the right guy. I can eat fresh seafood. Our neighbors can’t afford to eat fresh seafood. I have a great life!” Isn’t this married life? (Yes.) Their lives are spent calculating and arguing. They work every day from dawn till dusk, going to work at eight so having to wake up at five in the morning. When the alarm clock sounds, they think, “Oh, I really don’t want to get up, but I’ve got no choice. I have to get up to put food on the table and to live,” and so they struggle to get out of bed. “Luckily I wasn’t late today, so they won’t reduce my bonus.” They finish work and return home, and say, “What a hard day it’s been, so difficult! When will I not have to work?” They have to keep so busy to earn a wage and put food on the table; they have to live like this in order to live well, to maintain the life of two people within the framework of marriage, or so that they can have a stable life. They spend their lives in this way until they get old and reach their advanced years, and the old wife says, “Oh my, look husband, my hair is gone grey! I’ve got crow’s feet around my eyes and jowl lines are appearing. Am I now old? Will you dislike how old I look and go looking for another woman?” Her husband replies, “No way, you silly old dear. I’ve spent my whole life with you and you still don’t know me. Do you really think I’m that kind of man?” His wife is constantly worrying that he won’t like her getting old and she’s afraid that he won’t want her anymore. She nags more and more, her husband speaks less and less, they talk less and less with each other, and they watch their own shows on TV, paying no mind to each other. One day, the wife says, “Husband, we’ve argued a lot in our lives. It’s been so hard living with you all these years. I won’t spend my next life with a man like you. After meals, you never offer to help me tidy up, you just sit there and do nothing. You’ve never remedied this

fault of yours all your life. When you change clothes, you never wash your clothes yourself, I always have to wash them and put them away for you. If I died, who would help you then?" Her husband says, "Well, would I be unable to live without you? There are so many young women after me that I can't get rid of them." His wife replies, "Such big talk! Look at how slovenly you look. You couldn't be with anyone but me." Her husband says, "Be angry if you want, but there are lots of people out there who like me. It's only you who looks down on me and doesn't take me seriously." What kind of marriage do they have? The wife says, "Oh, even though I've got nothing to be happy about and no pleasant memories after a lifetime with you, now that I'm old I've been thinking: If I don't have you, I'll feel like I'm missing something. If you go before me, I'll be sorrowful and I won't even have anyone to nag. I don't want to be alone. I have to go before you so that you have to live life alone with no one to wash your clothes or cook your meals, no one to take care of your daily life, and so that you remember my kindness. Didn't you say you had a lot of young women after you? When I die you can go and get one straight away." Her husband says, "Relax, I'll make sure you go before I do. When you're gone, I'll definitely find someone better than you for a partner." But what does he really think in his heart? "You go first, and when you're gone, I'll endure the loneliness. I'd rather I endure this hardship and suffer like this than have you suffer." The old wife, however, is always complaining about her husband, that he does this wrong and that wrong, has this failing or that failing, and even though her husband doesn't rectify his failings, they keep on living in this way, and as time goes by she gets used to it. In the end, the woman resigns herself to it, the man endures it, and in this way they live together all their lives. This is married life.

Although there are a lot of things not to one's liking in marriage, and there is a lot of arguing, and the couple experiences sickness, poverty, financial difficulties in life, and even encounter extremely joyful and sorrowful events, as well as other such events, yet they come through all manner of obstacles together, and their partner is someone they could never leave, someone they could never let go before they close their eyes for the last time. What is a partner? It is a spouse. The man fulfills a lifetime of responsibilities toward the woman, and likewise the woman fulfills a lifetime of responsibilities toward the man; the woman keeps the man company through life, and the man keeps the woman company through life. Neither of them can say clearly which of them accompanies the other more; neither can say clearly who has made more of a contribution, who has made more mistakes, or who has more faults; neither can say clearly which of them is the primary mainstay or the main breadwinner of their life together; neither can say clearly who is the head of the household or who is in charge and who is auxiliary; neither can say clearly which of them is unable to leave the other, whether it is the man who cannot leave the woman, or the woman who cannot leave the man; and neither can say clearly who is right and who is wrong when they argue: This is life, this is the normal life of a man and a woman within the framework of marriage, and it is the most normal and

common living situation for human beings. This is how life is, inseparable from all manner of humanity's faults and biases, and even more so, all manner of humanity's needs, as well as of course all humanity's correct or incorrect, rational or irrational choices made under the dominion of one's conscience and reason. This is life, this is the most normal life. Right and wrong don't come into it, it is just a comparatively proper and conventional living situation and the actuality of life. Now, what fact does this actuality of life and living situation within the framework of marriage tell people? It is that people should let go of all their various unrealistic fantasies about marriage, let go of all ideas that have nothing to do with the correct definition of marriage and God's ordination and arrangements. These are all things which people should let go of, as they have nothing to do with the life of normal humanity or the obligations and responsibilities a normal person fulfills in life. Therefore, people should let go of those various definitions of and sayings on marriage which come from society and from evil mankind, especially that so-called love that has absolutely nothing to do with real married life. Marriage is not a lifelong commitment, nor is it a lifelong solemn pledge of love, much less is it a lifelong fulfillment of vows. Rather, it is the real life of a man and woman in marriage, it is what they need in real life and their expression in real life. Some people say, "If You're fellowshiping on the topic of marriage and You don't talk about love, You don't talk about solemn pledges of love, or love that lasts until the seas dry up and rocks turn to dust, or the vows married couples make to one another, then what are You talking about?" I'm talking about humanity, about responsibility, about doing what a man and woman should do in accordance with the exhortations and instructions of God, about fulfilling the obligations and responsibilities a man and woman should fulfill, about shouldering the obligations and responsibilities a man and woman should shoulder—in this way, your obligations, your responsibilities, or your mission, will be fulfilled. In any case, what is the correct way to practice concerning letting go of various fantasies about marriage that we need to fellowship on? It is that you must not base your thoughts or actions on the various ideas that come from evil mankind and evil trends, but rather you must base them on God's words. However God talks about the issue of marriage, you must base your thoughts and actions on His words. This principle is correct, yes? (Yes.) Have we now pretty much finished fellowshiping on the topic of letting go of various fantasies about marriage? Is it now basically clear to you? (Yes, it's clear now.)

We just fellowshiped on letting go of various fantasies about marriage, and some people said, "If I don't want to be single and plan to date someone and find someone to marry, how then should I practice God's words so that I can let go of my various fantasies about marriage? How should I practice this principle?" Is this not related to the principles regarding choosing a spouse, the principles regarding choosing a partner to marry? What are the principles regarding choosing a spouse instilled in you by the world? A Prince Charming, a fair-skinned beauty, a handsome and wealthy man, a beautiful and wealthy woman, best if they're the second generation of a wealthy family. By marrying

someone like that, you cut 20 years of struggle out of your life. The man must be someone who can afford a diamond ring, a wedding dress, and a glamorous wedding for you. He must be someone who has career ambition, who can make a fortune, or who already has a certain amount of wealth. Are these not the thoughts and views instilled in you by the world? (They are.) Then there are those who say, “My partner has to be someone I love.” Someone else says, “That’s not right. The one you love won’t necessarily love you. Love must be mutual; the one you love must also love you. If he loves you then he’ll never choose to abandon you or give you up. If the one you love doesn’t love you, then one day he’ll just up and abandon you.” Are these views correct? (No.) So then tell Me, what principle should you follow when choosing a spouse that is based on God’s words and that takes the truth as its criterion? Talk about this topic according to the correct thoughts and views you now possess. (If I wanted to find a partner, he must at the very least be someone who believes in God, someone who can pursue the truth, who has the same life pursuits as I do and follows the same path as I follow.) Someone who shares the same aspirations and follows the same path as you do and who believes in God—you mention some specific criteria for choosing a spouse. Who else would like to speak? (We also have to look at whether they’re someone with humanity, and whether they can fulfill their responsibilities and obligations in a marital family. There is something else as well: It’s not the case that someone will definitely find a partner for marriage just because they now want to find one. It is down to God to arrange this, and one must submit and wait.) There is a specific practice and there is also a specific basis of thought and theory. You have to submit and wait, entrust this matter to God and let Him arrange it for you, while at the same time you must also approach this matter with principles. Who else would like to speak? (God, my view is the same as theirs, that is, one has to find someone who shares the same aspirations and follows the same path, someone with humanity and who can take responsibility. One should let go of the wrong views on marriage that Satan instills in them, put their heart into their duty, submit to God’s sovereignty and await God’s arrangements.) If he couldn’t afford a diamond ring for you, would you still marry him? (If he was a man with humanity, then I would accept him even if he couldn’t afford to buy me a diamond ring.) Say he has some money and could afford to buy you a one carat diamond ring, but instead he buys you a 0.3 carat diamond ring—would you be willing to marry him then? (I wouldn’t demand such a thing from him.) It’s okay not to demand such a thing. By saving money, you can then spend it over time, and this is taking a long-term view. Before even finding a partner, you’ve already got a mindset for living well—that’s quite down-to-earth! Who else? (God, I think that first of all, I have to let go of those worldly criteria for choosing a spouse. That is, I mustn’t always be fantasizing about finding a Prince Charming, or a handsome and wealthy man, or someone romantic. Once I’ve let go of these things, I should approach marriage with the correct view, and then submit to and await the time of God. Even though someone like this may appear, they must be someone who shares

the same aspirations and follows the same path as myself. I mustn't rely on my worldly views to demand that the man be considerate to me. What's most important is that he can pursue the truth and be considerate to God's will.) If he pursues the truth, is considerate to God's will, goes out to perform his duty so that he's never at home and you have to bear the burden of family life alone, and the gas tank runs out of gas so you have to carry it upstairs by yourself—then what will you do? (I'll just carry it myself.) And if you can't carry it, you can hire someone to help. (Or I could find a brother or sister to help.) Yes, these are all ways of dealing with this situation. So, would you be angry if he was away for a year or two, or for three years or five years? "Isn't this like living as a widow? What was the point in marrying him? Isn't it just like before I was married, just living on my own? I have to handle everything on my own. How unfortunate it is that I married him!" Wouldn't you think like this? (No, I shouldn't think like this, because he would be performing his duty and working for a just cause. I shouldn't get in a mood about that.) Those are excellent thoughts, but would you be able to overcome all this in real life? If this man you found was exceptionally upright, usually reserved in speech and manner, not romantic, and he never bought you decent clothes, never gave you flowers, and especially never said "I love you" or any such thing, so that in your heart you had no idea whether he loved you or not, yet he was a really good man who was very considerate to you and looked after you in life, who just didn't say such things and didn't do anything romantic, and who wouldn't even try to coax you or placate you when you got into a mood—wouldn't you harbor any resentment toward him in your heart? (I would probably feel resentment when I didn't believe in God and didn't understand the truth, but after listening to God's fellowship, I know that it wouldn't matter whether he said those things and did those romantic things or not. These are the views of worldly people and are not what should be pursued by people with normal humanity. I should let go of these things and then I wouldn't complain.) You shouldn't complain, right? (Right.) Right now, you are not in that situation, and you don't know what you would feel in that circumstance, or how your moods would surge and change. However, right now, in theory, you all know that since you believe in God, you shouldn't make such unreasonable demands on your partner, nor should you complain against your partner when those things happen, because these are not the things you want. You have these ideas now, but are you able to achieve them? Are they easy to achieve? (We must forsake our preferences and our worldly views; then it should be relatively easy to let these things go.) I'll tell you how to handle this matter. Men and women will all face these problems and have these thoughts and moods in married life and will all have these needs. However, the most fundamental point you must understand is that, if the partner you choose is your heart's desire—setting aside the fact that this was arranged by God—you chose them yourself and are satisfied with everything about them, and in particular, they share the same aspirations and follow the same path as you, they can perform their duty in God's house, and everything they do is just, then you should take a rational

approach and allow them to do that, allow them to ignore your feelings, allow them even to ignore your existence—in theory, this is something you should achieve. Moreover, if such a need or mood arises in you induced by a special situation or a particular event, then you must come before God to pray. Will you be able to let these things go entirely after you pray? No way. People live within their normal humanity after all, they have minds, and their minds will cause all manner of moods to arise in them. We won't discuss now whether these moods are right or wrong. For now, the most practical problem is that you find these moods difficult to let go. Even if you let them go this one time, they may appear again in some kind of objective situation. So, what should you do? You don't need to bother with them, because in theory, and in terms of form and rationality, you've already given up this pursuit or need. It's just that, because of their humanity, people of different ages will have these needs and experience these moods to varying degrees and to a greater or lesser extent. You are clear on these real situations and have prayed to God, you let the mood go this time, or else the mood you're experiencing is not so severe and you don't take it too seriously. However, you will definitely experience this mood again next time. So what then is your specific practice? It is that you don't need to pay it any mind or take it seriously, saying, "Oh, this aspect of my disposition still hasn't changed." This isn't any kind of disposition; it is just a temporary mood that has nothing to do with your dispositions. Nor do you need to make a mountain out of a molehill, saying, "Oh, why am I still like this? Don't I pursue the truth? How come I'm behaving this way? This is terrible!" There's no need to make a mountain out of a molehill; it is just the expression of a mood belonging to the various emotions of your normal humanity. Pay it no mind. This is an attitude regarding handling moods. Furthermore, as long as it doesn't affect the order and regularity of your normal life, your spiritual life, or the performance of your duty, then that's okay. For example, because your husband (or wife) is busy performing their duty, it's been a long time since you've seen each other, and you have no time to talk together. One day you suddenly see a sister with her husband talking together, and a mood arises in your heart, and you think, "See, she can perform her duty together with her husband. They're so happy and joyful. Why is my husband so unfeeling? Why doesn't he ask me, 'How've you been lately? Are you well?' Why isn't he concerned about me? Why doesn't he cherish me or love me?" You experience this kind of mood, and after a while you think, "Oh, it's not good to feel sulky." You know it's not good to feel that way but you still feel a little angry and you argue with yourself, saying, "I won't bother with him, I'll just wait for him to take the initiative to pay attention to me. If he doesn't, then I'll be angry at him. We've been married all these years, we haven't seen each other in all this time and he still doesn't say he misses me. Does he miss me or not? He doesn't bother with me, so I won't bother with him!" You argue with yourself and you live within this mood. Just for a moment, a surge of anger and a mood arise. As long as you can sleep and eat normally, read God's words, attend gatherings, perform your duty normally, and get along with your brothers and sisters normally, you

don’t have to worry about such moods, and you can think whatever you want in your heart. Whatever you think, so long as your sense of reason is normal and you’re performing your duty normally then that’s fine. You don’t need to forcefully suppress it, nor do you need to forcefully pray to God and ask Him to discipline or chasten you or feel like you’re a sinner. There’s no need to make a mountain out of a molehill, as this mood will soon be gone. If you really miss your husband that much, then you can call him and ask how he is, the two of you can open your hearts to each other and talk, and won’t those temporary moods and misunderstandings then be gone? Actually, you don’t need him to do anything. Sometimes you will just have a momentary feeling and will want to hear his voice, or you might feel a temporary loneliness, or feel disgruntled for a short while, or you may feel unhappy, and then you call him and hear him talk. You then see that he’s fine, that he dearly loves you just as he did before and that you’re in his thoughts. It’s just that he’s busy working, or it’s because men can be somewhat neglectful of the finer details and he’s been busy with his duty and doesn’t think that it’s been that long, and that’s why he hasn’t contacted you. Isn’t it a good thing that he’s busy and performing his duty normally? Isn’t this just what you wanted? If he did something wicked, causing disturbances and disruptions, and was cleared out, wouldn’t you worry about him? Everything is normal with him now, and everything is just as it was before—isn’t your mind then at ease? What more do you want? Isn’t this how it is? (Yes, it is.) Calling in this way and saying a few words to each other relieves the loneliness in the heart and the feelings of longing, just as the unbelievers say, and isn’t this issue then resolved? Is there any difficulty? Calling your husband and showing concern for each other—tell Me, does God condemn such a thing? (No.) You are husband and wife by law, and calling him, talking, and confiding your longing for each other is all proper, it is normal human feeling, and it is something you should do within the scope of humanity. What’s more, this is included in God’s ordination of marriage for mankind—accompanying each other, comforting each other, and supporting each other. If he doesn’t fulfill these responsibilities, can’t you just help him fulfill them? This is a very simple matter that is very easy to handle. Isn’t this problem solved by practicing in this way? Is it necessary for all manner of moods to sprout up in your heart? No, it isn’t. It’s simple to put this into practice.

Let’s go back to the question I posed just now: “How should people let go of their various fantasies about marriage?” You’ve all said some ideas in response to this question. If people want to let go of their various fantasies about marriage, then they must first have faith and submit to God’s arrangements and ordination. You shouldn’t have any subjective or unrealistic fantasies about marriage, about who your partner is or what kind of person your partner is; you should have an attitude of obedience to God, you should submit to God’s arrangements and ordination, and trust that God will prepare someone most suitable for you. Isn’t it necessary to have an obedient attitude? (Yes.) Second, you must let go of those criteria for choosing a partner instilled in you by the

evil trends of society and then establish the correct criteria for choosing a partner, that is, at the very least your partner should be someone who believes in God as you do and who walks the same path as you do—this is from a general perspective. Furthermore, your partner must be able to fulfill the responsibilities of a man or a woman in marriage; they must be able to fulfill the responsibilities of a partner. How can you judge this aspect? You must look at the quality of their humanity, whether they have a sense of responsibility, and whether they have conscience. And how do you judge whether someone has conscience and humanity? If you don't associate with them then you have no way of knowing what their humanity is like, and even if you do associate with them, if it is only for a short time, you may still be unable to discover what they're like. So then, how do you judge whether someone has humanity? You look at whether they take responsibility for their duty, for God's commission, and for the work of God's house, and you look at whether they can safeguard the interests of God's house and whether they are faithful to their duty—this is the best way to judge the quality of someone's humanity. Suppose this person's character is very upright and, when it comes to the work God's house delegates to them, they are extremely dedicated, responsible, serious and earnest, very meticulous, not at all careless, and never neglectful, and they pursue the truth, and they listen carefully and conscientiously to everything God says. Once it is clear to them and they understand it, they immediately put it into practice; although such a person may not have high caliber, they are at the very least someone who is not slipshod toward their duty and the work of the church, and who can earnestly take responsibility. If they are conscientious and responsible toward their duty, then they will certainly wholeheartedly live their life with you and will take responsibility for you until the very end—the character of such a person can withstand tests. Even if you get sick, grow old, grow ugly, or you have faults and deficiencies, this person will always treat you correctly and tolerate you, and they will always do their best to safeguard you and your family and protect you, give you a stable life, so that you live with peace of mind. This is the happiest thing for a man or woman in married life. They won't necessarily be able to give you a wealthy, luxurious, or romantic life, and they won't necessarily be able to offer you anything different in terms of affection or any other aspect, but at the very least, they will make you feel at ease and that, with them, your life will be settled, and there will be no danger or feeling of unease. When you look at that person, you'll be able to see what their life will be like 20 or 30 years from now and even into old age. This kind of person should be your criterion for choosing a partner. Of course, this criterion for choosing a partner is a little high and someone like this is not easy to find amongst modern mankind, right? To judge what someone's character is like and whether they'll be able to fulfill their responsibilities in marriage, you must look at their attitude toward their duty—this is one aspect. Another aspect is that you must look at whether they have a God-fearing heart. If they do, then at the very least they will not do anything inhumane or that is immoral or unethical, and so they will certainly treat you well. If they don't have a God-fearing heart,

and they are brazen, willful, or their humanity is vicious, deceitful, and arrogant; if they don't have God in their heart and consider themselves superior to others; if they handle work, duties, and even God's commission and any major matter of God's house recklessly according to their own will, acting wantonly, never being cautious, not seeking principles, and especially when dealing with offerings they recklessly take and misappropriate them, fearing nothing, then you must absolutely not look for someone like that. Without a God-fearing heart, they are capable of anything. Right now, a man like that may be sweet-talking you and pledging his undying love, but when the day comes when he's not happy, when you aren't able to satisfy his needs and are no longer his beloved, then he'll say he doesn't love you and that he has no feelings for you anymore, and he'll just up and leave you whenever he wants. Even if you're not divorced yet, he'll still go looking for someone else—all this is possible. He can abandon you anytime, anyplace, and he's capable of anything. Such men are very dangerous and aren't worth you entrusting your whole life to. If you find a man like this to be your lover, your darling, your chosen partner, then you'll be in trouble. Even if he's tall, rich, and handsome, incredibly talented, and he takes good care of you and is considerate of you, and superficially speaking, he particularly makes the grade whether he is your boyfriend or your husband, yet he doesn't have a God-fearing heart, then this person cannot be your chosen partner. If you are infatuated with him and start dating him and then you get married, then he will be a nightmare and a disaster for you all your life. You say, "I'm not afraid, I pursue the truth." You've fallen into the hands of a devil, and he hates God, defies God, and employs all manner of ways to disturb your belief in God—are you able to overcome this? Your little bit of stature and faith cannot stand his torment, and after a few days you're so tormented that you beg for mercy and are unable to carry on believing in God. You lose your faith and your mind is filled with this feuding back and forth. It's like being thrown into a meat grinder and torn to pieces, with no human likeness, entirely mired in it, until finally you are doomed to the same fate as that devil you're married to, and your life will be over.

We've just fellowshiped on two criteria concerning how to judge whether someone is able to fulfill their responsibilities in marriage. Can you remember what they are? (Yes.) These two criteria relate to the quality of people's humanity. One criterion is to look at whether they perform their duty conscientiously and responsibly, and whether they can safeguard church work and the interests of God's house. You may not be able to judge some people clearly just by looking at them; they may be able to perform their duty and safeguard church work in order to pursue status or when they have status, but what they'll be like when they no longer have status is something you haven't yet seen clearly. At this time, there is no way you can make an accurate judgment of them. However, when you see them making a scene, cursing God and blaspheming against God when they lose their status, saying that God is not righteous, that is when you'll have discernment of them, and will think, "This guy doesn't have a God-fearing heart at all.

Luckily he's shown his true colors in time. If he hadn't, then I would've chosen him to be my partner in marriage." You see, the other criterion for choosing a partner—whether they have a God-fearing heart—is also key. If you judge and measure people using this criterion then it will save you from that nightmare of a marriage. Are these two criteria for choosing a partner important? (Yes.) Do you understand them? (Yes.) See, some women are very much in love with money. When they start dating a man, they come across as very gentle and sensible, and the man thinks, "This woman's adorable! She's like a little bird, snuggling up against me all day and stuck to me like glue. She is exactly the kind of woman a man dreams of and pursues. A man needs a woman like this, someone who speaks gently, who depends on her man, and who really makes her man feel needed. With a woman like this attached to me and by my side, life will be so happy." So, they get married, but then he sees that she believes in God but doesn't try hard to pursue the truth. Whenever he mentions performing her duty, she says she has no time, she's always finding excuses and saying she's tired, and is unwilling to suffer anything. At home, she doesn't cook or clean but just watches TV all the time; when she sees that someone's bought a designer bag, or that someone's family is living in a luxurious mansion and they've bought an expensive car, she remarks on how capable the man in that family must be; she usually spends extravagantly, and whenever she goes to a gold store, jewelry store, or luxury goods store, she always wants to spend money and buy nice things. You don't understand it and think, "She used to be so adorable. How can she have become this kind of woman?" You see? She's changed, right? When you were dating before, she was able to perform her duty and suffer a tiny bit, but that was all on the surface. Now that you're married, she's not like that anymore. She sees that you're unable to meet her material demands and starts blaming you, saying, "Why aren't you out making money? What's the use of believing in God and performing your duty? Can believing in God put food on the table? Can believing in God make you rich?" She even says things an unbeliever would say—does this woman truly believe in God? (No.) She never wants to perform her duty, she thinks nothing of faith in God, pursuing the truth, or seeking to attain salvation, until finally she says even extremely rebellious things and has no God-fearing heart whatsoever. So, what is it that this woman thinks about all the time? (Food, clothing, and fun.) All she thinks about is money and physical pleasures, that's all. She is a money-loving thing of the world. If you marry her and she obstructs your faith in God and encourages you to give up your duty and pursue worldly things, what will you do? You still want to pursue the truth and attain salvation, but if you follow her then you won't be able to attain salvation. If you don't follow her, she'll argue with you and divorce you. And after you're divorced, you'll live alone with no partner—will you be able to overcome this? If you'd never had a partner, then that would be fine, but you've now been with your partner for many years and are used to living with her. Suddenly you find yourself divorced with no partner anymore—can you overcome this? It's not easy to overcome, right? Regardless of whether it is in terms of your life needs,

emotional needs, or your inner spiritual world, you can't overcome it. The way you live your life has changed from how it was before to another way, and the pattern, rhythm and way of life you had before have been totally thrown into chaos. What kind of marriage did you have? What has this marriage brought you? Happiness or disaster? (Disaster.) It brought disaster. Therefore, if you don't know how to judge people and you take people's measure without basing it on correct principles and God's words, then you must do your best to not engage in casual dating or entertain any ideas or have any plans to date, marry, or enter into marriage. That's because, nowadays, the enticement of the evil trends of this world for people is too great, and every single person faces many temptations and faces all kinds of them in life; no one is able to overcome them, and even if you pursue the truth, you will still find them difficult to overcome. If you pursue the truth and attain understanding of the truth and gain the truth, then you'll be able to overcome them. However, before you have understood and gained the truth, temptation will always be tempting to you, and it will always be a danger to you. Moreover, there is a critical issue for you, and that is that you don't know how to judge people and you aren't able to see people's essence clearly—this is the most critical issue. What do you know how to judge only? Men only know how to judge whether the woman is pretty, whether she's been to college, whether her family's rich, whether she can dress up nicely, whether she knows how to be romantic, and whether she can be affectionate. In more detail, men can get to know whether the woman will be a good wife and mother, whether she can teach their children well in the future, and whether she can run the home. These are the things men know how to judge at most. And what can women judge about men? They can judge whether the man knows how to be romantic, whether he is capable, whether he fills the family coffers, whether he's destined to be rich or poor, and whether he has any tricks for getting along in the world. On a better level, women can judge whether the man is able to suffer, whether he can manage the family well, whether she will be able to eat and dress well if she gets with him, what his family background's like, whether his family's well-off, whether they own a house, a car, and a business, whether they're in business or are farmers or laborers, what his family's current economic circumstances are, and whether his parents have put money aside for him to get married. These are the things women get to know at most. As to what the potential suitor's humanity essence is like, or what choice they'll make regarding the path of belief in God, are you able to see these things clearly? (No.) To be more precise, is this person capable of following an antichrist's path? Are they wicked? Judging by the summary of the outpourings and expressions of their humanity's quality, are they someone who pursues the truth or are they someone who's sick of the truth? Are they capable of following the path in pursuit of the truth? Are they capable of attaining salvation? And if you marry them, will you both be able to enter the kingdom as husband and wife? You can't see these things clearly, can you? Some people say, "Why do we need to see these things clearly? There are so many married people in the world. They can't see

these things clearly, either, but they still get on with their lives, don't they?" Many people do not see marriage clearly. If you encounter a good person who lives decently and with whom you can spend your life with no great upsets or highs and lows, and with whom there is no great suffering, then this can be considered a good life and a good marriage. Some people, however, don't see others clearly and focus only on how the other person looks and what status they have. They get sweet-talked, and it's only after they're married that they discover their partner is a wicked person, a devil, and that every day spent living with that kind of person is like a year. Women often shed tears, while men are also greatly deceived and victimized, resulting in divorce after a few years. Some married couples get divorced when their children are three or four years old or in their teens, and some even have grandchildren when they find they can't stand to live together anymore, and so they get divorced. What do these people say in the end? "Marriage is a grave," and "Marriage is a crematorium." So, was the mistake on the part of the women or the men that brought about this result? Both made mistakes, and neither were any good. They don't know what the nature of marriage or married life is. The nature of marriage is to take responsibility for each other, to enter into real life and support each other. This depends on the normal[a] humanity of both partners so that they can make it happily and stably to old age and stay together till the end. And what is the nature of married life? It also depends on the normal[b] humanity of both partners, and only in this way can they live peacefully, settled and happy. Both partners must take responsibility for each other, and only then can they finally live hand-in-hand through old age till the end. That's not entering the kingdom, however; it's not easy for a married couple to enter the kingdom together. Even if they can't enter the kingdom, for a married couple to finally live hand-in-hand until old age at the very least requires them to have conscience and reason, with humanity that is up to standard. Isn't this so? (It is.) Does fellowshiping in this way cause you to have more faith in marriage or less, or does it cause you to have the correct attitude and view? (It causes us to have the correct attitude and view.) Fellowshiping in this way has nothing to do with having more or less faith, right? I'm talking about letting go of various fantasies about marriage not to make you give up on or reject marriage, but rather so that you take the correct and rational approach to this matter. More precisely, it's so that you can consider, approach, and resolve this matter according to God's words. It's not so that you completely stop thinking about marriage—not thinking is not the same as letting go. True letting go means having the correct and accurate thoughts and views. Now, by fellowshiping in this way, haven't you already let go of some of your various fantasies about marriage? (Yes.) Do you fear marriage more now, or do you yearn for it more? None of these are the case, actually. There's no need to fear it or yearn for it that much. If you're now single and you say, "I want to pursue the

a. The original text does not contain the word "normal."
b. The original text does not contain the word "normal."

truth and expend myself for God. I'm not thinking about marriage right now and I have no plans to get married, so I'll let marriage be a blank space in my heart, I'll let it be a blank page," is this view correct? (No, God is fellowshiping this truth to us because we need to equip ourselves with it, understand it, and put it into practice. We should also act according to what God says, view people and things, and comport ourselves and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as our criterion. Whether we're considering marriage right now or not, we still have to understand this truth, and only then will we avoid making a mistake.) Is this understanding correct? (Yes.)

Is there now anyone who says, "We're single and the world of the unbelievers says that it's noble to be single, so can we not say that in God's house single people are holy and married people are unclean?" Is there anyone who says things like this? There are some married people who always have a misconception in their understanding of marriage. They believe that their thoughts after they get married are not as pure or simple or clean as they were before, that their thoughts get complicated after they marry, and in particular that married people have relations with the opposite sex and are no longer holy. And so, after accepting God's work, they resolutely tell their partner, "I have accepted God's work, and from this day on, I must pursue holiness. I can't sleep with you anymore. You must sleep on your own, and I must go sleep in another room." From then on, they sleep apart and their partner sleeps alone, but they still live together. What are people like this pursuing? They're pursuing a kind of holiness of the flesh. Isn't this a misunderstanding of marriage? (Yes.) Is this misunderstanding easy to resolve? There are some married people who believe that they're no longer holy after having relations with the opposite sex. The underlying meaning here is that if they do not have relations with the opposite sex, if they leave their marriage and get divorced, then they will become holy. If that is how someone becomes holy, wouldn't that mean that unmarried people are even more holy? With such deviant and mistaken understandings, the choices or actions people make cause their partners to feel baffled and angry. Some unbelieving husbands or wives misunderstand and develop an aversion to faith, and there are some who even speak blasphemously about God. Tell Me, is it right, what these people in pursuit of "holiness" do? (No, it isn't.) Why not? First of all, there is a problem with their thinking. What problem is that? (They misunderstand God's words.) First, their views on marriage are deviant and mistaken; second, their definitions and understandings of holiness and uncleanness are deviant and mistaken. They believe that not having relations with the opposite sex makes one holy, so then what is uncleanness? What is holiness? Does holiness mean being without corrupt dispositions? When someone gains the truth and their disposition changes, they then have no corrupt dispositions anymore. Does someone who has not had relations with the opposite sex have no corrupt dispositions? Do people's corrupt dispositions only arise when they have relations with the opposite sex? (No.) Clearly, this understanding is wrong. Once you are married and have relations with the opposite sex, your corrupt dispositions don't get any worse, but

remain just as they were before. If you aren't married and haven't had relations with by the opposite sex, do you have any corrupt dispositions? You have many. Therefore, whether man or woman, whether such a person has corrupt dispositions is not measured based on their marital status, on whether they're married or whether they've had relations with the opposite sex. Why do people who think and act this way have this kind of misconception about marriage? Why do they act this way? Isn't this a problem that should be solved? (It is.) Can you solve it? Someone only needs to come into contact with the opposite sex and have relations with them and then they're unclean and utterly corrupted—is that so? (No.) If it were so, then God's ordaining the union of man and woman would be a mistake. So, how can we solve this problem? What is the source of this problem? This problem can be solved by dissecting and understanding its source. Don't you also have this view? Doesn't everyone, whether married or unmarried, have this view on marriage? (Yes.) I know you can't get away from this problem. So, what is the source of this view? (People aren't clear on what holiness is and what uncleanness is.) And what is the source of people's not knowing what holiness is and what uncleanness is? (People aren't able to purely comprehend God's words or understand the truth.) What aspect of God's words are they not able to purely comprehend? (Marriage is something people should normally experience in their lives and it is also ordained by God, yet people link getting married and having relations with the opposite sex with whether they are holy or not, when really being holy means that someone is without corrupt dispositions, and it has nothing to do with whether they're married or not. Take the nuns in the Catholic church for example. If they don't accept God's work of the last days and they don't understand the truth, then even though they spend their whole lives unmarried, they still cannot be said to be holy, because their corrupt dispositions have not been resolved.) Does this explain the matter clearly? Does the distinction between holiness and uncleanness lie in whether someone is married or not? (No.) No, it doesn't, and there is substantial evidence to prove it. For example, the mentally disabled, the cretinous, the mentally ill, Catholic nuns, Buddhist nuns, and Buddhist monks are all unmarried, but are they holy? (No.) People who are mentally disabled, idiots, and the mentally ill don't possess normal sense; they can't get married, no man among them finds a wife, and no woman among them finds a husband, and they're not holy. Catholic nuns, Buddhist nuns, and Buddhist monks, along with some other special groups don't get married, and they're not holy either. What does "not holy" mean? I mean they are unclean. What does "unclean" mean? (They have corrupt dispositions.) Correct, it means they have corrupt dispositions. All these unmarried people have corrupt dispositions and none of them are holy. So, what about married people? Is there any difference in essence between those who are married and these unmarried people? (No.) In terms of essence, there is no difference between them. What do I mean by saying there is no difference between them? (They have all been corrupted by Satan and they all have corrupt dispositions.) That's right, they've all been corrupted by Satan

and they all have corrupt dispositions. They're not able to obey God or submit to the truth, and they can't follow the path of fearing God and shunning evil. They're not commended by God, they are not saved, and they're all unclean. So, whether someone is holy or unclean cannot be measured by whether they're married or not. Why then do people have this kind of misconception about marriage, believing that people who get married are not holy, that they are unclean? What is the focus of this misconception? (Their views on marriage are deviant and mistaken.) Is it that their views on marriage and married life are deviant and mistaken, or that their views on something else are deviant and mistaken? Can anyone explain this clearly? As we said before, any marriage will eventually return to real life. So, is this married life the source of what people believe to be unclean? (No.) It's not the source of what people believe to be unclean. The source in people's thoughts of what they believe to be unclean is actually known to them in their minds and innermost hearts: It is their sexual desire, and this is where the misconception lies. The definition and distinction of a person as holy or unclean based on whether they're married or unmarried is a misunderstanding and a misconception, and the source of this is the absurdly mistaken and incorrect understanding people have toward their sexual desire of the flesh. Why do I say this understanding is absurdly mistaken? People believe that once they feel sexual desire and get married then they have relations with the opposite sex and that, once they have relations with the opposite sex, they then start living the so-called life of sexual desire of the flesh, and they are then unclean. Isn't this what they believe? (Yes, it is.)

So, let's discuss exactly what kind of thing sexual desire is. As long as you comprehend it correctly and have an accurate, correct, and objective comprehension and understanding of it, then you will unravel this problem and this misconception of uncleanness and holiness. Isn't that so? Once people get married, they have their sexual desire satisfied and they give expression to their sexual and physical desires, and so they think, "We married people are not holy, we're unclean. Those young single men and women are holy." This is clearly a deviant and mistaken understanding, which comes from not knowing exactly what sexual desire is. Now let's look at the very first human being: Did Adam have sexual desire? The mankind God has created is possessed of thought, language, sense perception, as well as free will and emotional needs. What does "emotional needs" mean? It means that people need a partner to keep them company and to support them, to have a partner to talk to, someone to care for, look after, and cherish them—these are emotional needs. Another aspect is that people also have sexual desire. What is the basis for saying this? It is that, after God created Adam, God said he needed a partner, a partner only for his life needs and emotional needs. But there was another need as well that God spoke of. What did God say? Genesis, chapter 2, verse 24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall join to his wife: and they shall be one flesh." The meaning of these words is very clear; we don't need to be so blunt about it. You understand these words, right?

Obviously, when God created Adam, the ancestor of mankind, Adam had this need. Of course, this is an objective interpretation. More importantly, when God created him, he had this sensory organ, and he had these physiological conditions and characteristics—this was the actual situation of Adam, the first ancestor of mankind created by God, who was the first human being of the flesh. He was possessed of language, he could hear, he could see, he could taste, and he had sensory organs, emotional needs, sexual desire, physiological needs, and of course he had free will, as we said just now. These things together constitute a human being created by God. Is this not the actual situation? (It is.) This is the physiological structure of men. What about women? God created a physiological structure for women different to that for men, and of course created the same sexual desire as that of men. What is the basis for saying this? In Genesis, chapter 3, verse 16, God said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in sorrow you shall bring forth children." Where do the children mentioned in this "bring forth children" come from? Say there is a woman who doesn't possess this kind of physiological need, or more precisely, she does not possess the needs of female sexual desire—would she be able to conceive? No, and this is very clear. So now, looking at these two lines from God, the men and women God created have different physiological structures, yet they both share the common physiological characteristic of sexual desire. This is confirmed by these deeds done by God and the message between the lines of the instructions given to human beings. The human beings created by God possess physiological structures and also possess the needs of their physiological structures. So, how should we regard this matter now? This thing called sexual desire is a part of the flesh, like a human organ. For example, you eat breakfast at six in the morning, and by midday all that food has more or less been digested and your stomach is empty. The stomach transmits this information to the brain, and the brain tells you, "Your stomach is empty; time to eat." What is this feeling in the stomach? It feels a little empty and uncomfortable, and you want to eat something. And how does this feeling of wanting to eat something come about? It's the result of the operation and metabolism of your entire nervous system and your organs—it's that simple. Sexual desire has the same nature as any other bodily organ; every organ is associated with the nervous system, which sends commands to your various organs. For example, your nose smells odors, and when it smells a foul odor this odor enters your nervous system, and the nervous system tells your brain, "This odor is foul, it is not a nice smell." It passes this information on to you, and then you immediately cover your nose or wave your hand before your nose—there is this series of movements. You see, this series of movements and actions, and this kind of feeling and awareness are all commanded by certain organs and the nervous system in your body. For example, you hear an incredibly loud, ear-piercing sound, and after your ears have received this information, you feel upset or repulsed, and you cover your ears. Actually, all that has been received by your ears is a sound, a piece of information, but the brain distinguishes whether this sound is beneficial to you or not. If

it has no major effect on you, you just hear it and discern it, and then it goes without you paying it much notice; if it has a negative effect on your heart or body, your brain will distinguish this and will then tell you to cover your ears or open your mouth wide—a series of actions and thoughts such as these will take place. Human sexual desire is just the same, with corresponding organs that have different judgments and interpretations under the control of corresponding nerves. Human sexual desire is just such a simple thing as this. This thing is at the same level and equivalent to any other organ in the human body, but it has its own particularity, and that's why people will always have various different ideas, views, or thoughts about it. So, by fellowshiping in this way, shouldn't you now have the correct understanding? (Yes.) Human sexual desire is nothing mysterious; it was created by God and it has existed ever since humans came to be. Because it was ordained by God and created by God, it cannot become a negative thing or an unclean thing just because people have all manner of misunderstandings and notions about it. It's just the same as any other human sensory organ; it exists within the human body and, if it is within a proper marriage arranged and ordained by God, then it is a reasonable thing. If, however, people indulge in it or misuse it, then it becomes a negative thing. Of course, sexual desire itself is not negative, but the people who use it or those thoughts are negative. For example, love triangles, promiscuity, incest, as well as rape and sexual assault and so on—these things that are related to sexual desire become negative things and have nothing to do with the original sexual desire of human flesh. Sexual desire of the flesh is the same as a physical organ: It was created by God. However, because of the evil and corruption of mankind, all manner of evil things related to sexual desire occur, and then it has nothing to do with proper and normal sexual desire—these are matters of two different natures. Isn't that so? (Yes.) Love triangles, extra-marital affairs, as well as incest and sexual assault—these are all evil things related to sexual desire that occur amongst corrupt mankind. These things have nothing to do with proper sexual desire and marriage; they are unclean, improper, and they are not positive things. Do you now see this clearly? (Yes.)

Through fellowshiping in this way, can you now clearly comprehend those deviant and mistaken understandings and actions of married people, and discern the rights and wrongs of them? (Yes.) When you encounter someone new to the faith who says, "We've accepted God's work, so do we as a married couple have to live separately?" what will you say? (We will say no.) You may ask them, "Why do you need to live separately? Have you had an argument? Is one of you snoring so loudly that the other is losing sleep? If so, then that's your problem and you can live separately. If it's for some other reason, then no, there's no need." Someone else says, "Oh, we've lived together as a married couple for almost forty years. We've grown old, our children are all grown up, so should we sleep in separate beds? We shouldn't sleep together anymore, our children will laugh at us. We should keep our integrity in old age." Is this a tenable thing to say? (No.) No, it isn't. They want to keep their integrity in old age; what kind of thing is this

integrity? What were they doing when they were young? Aren't they just pretending? Aren't people like this disgusting? (Yes.) When you encounter such people, say to them, "We don't say such things in our belief in God, nor does God's house have such requirements or rules. You'll learn this in time. You can live however you want to live; that's your business, and it has nothing to do with faith in God or pursuing the truth, nor anything to do with attaining salvation. You don't need to ask about these things, nor do you need to sacrifice anything for them." Isn't the matter then resolved? (Yes.) The issue of human sexual desire in marriage is then resolved—the greatest difficulty is overcome. Are you all clear on this by fellowshiping in this way? Do you still think that sexual desire is mysterious? (No.) Do you still think sexual desire is unclean or dirty? (No.) With regard to sexual desire, it is not unclean and it is not dirty; it is something proper. However, if people play with it, then it is no longer proper, and it becomes a different thing altogether. In any case, after fellowshiping in this way, aren't people's various realistic and unrealistic fantasies about marriage resolved? (Yes.) After fellowshiping on the definitions and concepts of marriage, your warped, deviant and mistaken pursuits, ideals, and desires concerning marriage have basically been let go of to some extent in your minds. Those that are left will require you to gradually identify them in yourselves and go on to gradually experience and learn through your personal practice in real life. Of course, the most important thing is that people should have the correct understanding and perspective on marriage itself—this is very important. Whether you're planning on getting married in the future or not, your attitude toward and perspective on marriage will influence your pursuit of the truth, and that's why you must read God's words on the subject in detail, and finally achieve the correct perspective and understanding of marriage, which at the very least should accord with the truth. Once we've finished fellowshiping on this matter, won't your knowledge be broadened? (Yes.) You won't be so childish and narrow-minded anymore, right? When you discuss this matter with people in the future, they'll see that you look young yet you have understanding of it, and they'll ask, "How long have you been married?" You'll reply, "I'm not married yet." They'll say, "Then how come you have such an adult understanding of marriage, like your understanding is more mature even than that of adults?" You'll reply, "I understand truth, and there is a basis for these truths I understand. If you don't believe me, I'll get my Bible and show you the situation when God created Adam, and you'll see whether what I say is accurate or not." In the end, you convince them in heart, and that's because everything you say stems from your pure understanding and comprehension, without any adulteration by human imaginings or notions or any deviant and mistaken human views—everything you say accords with the truth and with God's words.

Now that we've finished fellowshiping on the problem of married people's deviant and mistaken understandings and practices, let's fellowship on the topic of "pursuing marital happiness is not your mission." People letting go of various fantasies about marriage just means that they come to have some correct understandings and ideas that

are comparatively in accordance with the truth in terms of the concept and definition of marriage; it does not mean, however, that they can completely let go of their pursuits, ideals, and desires concerning marriage. As for those who have entered marriage, how do they maintain their marital happiness? It can be said that many people are unable to correctly approach marital happiness, or unable to correctly approach the relationship between marital happiness and man's mission. Isn't this a problem too? (It is, yes.) Married people always regard marriage as a major event in life and place great emphasis on marriage. They therefore entrust all their life's happiness to their married lives and to their partners, believing that the pursuit of marital happiness is the only goal to be pursued in this life. That's why many people expend great effort, pay a great price, and make great sacrifices for the sake of marital happiness. For example, someone gets married and, to attract their partner and keep their marriage and their love "fresh," they will do many things. Some woman says, "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," and so she learns from her mother or elders how to cook, how to make fine cuisine and pastries, making all sorts of things her husband likes to eat and striving to provide delicious and agreeable food for him. When her husband is hungry, he thinks of her fine cuisine, then he thinks of home, then he thinks of her, and then he hurries home. In this way, she's not often left alone in the house but instead often has her husband beside her, and so she feels that learning to make some delicious dishes to get to her man through his stomach is very important. Because this is one way to maintain marital happiness and because it is the price a woman should pay and responsibility she should fulfill for the sake of her marital happiness, she works hard to sustain her marriage in this way. There are also some women who feel insecure about their marriage, and they often use various ways to please, attract, and prompt their husbands. For example, a woman like this will often ask her husband if he remembers when their first date was, when they first met, when their wedding anniversary is, and other dates. If her husband remembers, then she feels that he loves her, that she's in his heart. If he doesn't remember, then she gets upset and complains, "You can't even remember such an important date as this. Don't you love me anymore?" You see, in a continuous attempt to attract their partner, draw their attention, and maintain their marital happiness, both men and women use worldly ways to prompt their partner, and they all do meaningless and childish things. There are also some women who will pay any price to do things harmful to their own health. For example, some women over the age of thirty, seeing that their skin is no longer so lovely and fair, and their faces are not so bright and beautiful anymore, go for a facelift or hyaluronic acid injection. There are some women who, in order to look more beautiful, have double eyelid surgery and they have their eyebrows tattooed, often dressing themselves up in especially beautiful and sexy ways to attract their husbands, and they even learn to do the romantic things that others do for the sake of their own marital happiness. For example, on a special day, a woman like this may lay on a sumptuous dinner with candles and red wine. Then she turns out the lights and, when

her husband comes home, she makes him close his eyes and asks, “What day is it today?” Her husband tries to guess for a long time but can’t think what day it is. She lights the candles and when her husband opens his eyes and looks, it turns out to be his own birthday and he says, “Oh, how wonderful! I love you so much! I didn’t even remember my own birthday. You remembered my birthday, you’re so adorable!” The woman then feels happy and pleased. With just these few words from her husband, she feels satisfied and at ease. Men and women both rack their brains thinking of ways to maintain their marital happiness. The wife makes great changes and sacrifices, expending much time and effort, and the husband does just the same, strenuously working hard and earning money in the world, filling his wallet, bringing more and more money home, making a better and better life for his wife to enjoy. In order to maintain his marital happiness, he also has to learn from what others do and buys roses, birthday presents, Christmas presents, chocolates on Valentine’s Day, and so on, racking his brains thinking of ways to try to make his wife happy, doing all he can to do these pointless things. And then one day he loses his job and doesn’t dare tell his wife, afraid that she’ll divorce him or that their marriage won’t be as happy as it used to be. So he keeps up the pretense of going to work and finishing work on time every day, while at the same time he goes everywhere applying for jobs, looking for work. What does he do when pay day comes and he doesn’t get any money? He borrows from all and sundry to make his wife happy, and says, “Look, I received a 2,000 yuan bonus this month. Buy yourself something nice.” His wife has no idea what’s really going on, and really goes and buys some luxury items. His mind is fraught with worry and he feels there’s nowhere to turn, and his anxiety grows. Whether man or woman, they all take many actions and spend much time and effort to sustain their marital happiness, even going so far as to do things against their own better judgment. Despite wasting so much time and effort, the people involved still have no idea how to correctly face or handle these things, even racking their brains to learn from, study, and consult others in order to maintain their marital happiness. There are even some people who, after they’ve come to believe in God, accept their duty and the commission given to them by God’s house, but in order to maintain the happiness and satisfaction of their marriage, they fall far short when it comes to performing their duty. They were originally supposed to go to a distant place to preach the gospel, returning home once a week or once in a long while, or they could leave home and perform their duty full time according to their various calibers and conditions, but they’re afraid their partner will be displeased with them, that their marriage won’t be happy, or that they’ll lose their marriage altogether, and for the sake of maintaining their marital happiness they give up a lot of time that should be spent performing their duty. Especially when they hear their partner complain or sound displeased or have a moan, they become even more cautious with maintaining their marriage. They do all they can to satisfy their partner and work hard to make their marriage a happy one so that it doesn’t break apart. Of course, even more serious than

this is that some people refuse the call of God's house and refuse to perform their duty in order to maintain their marital happiness. When they should be leaving home to perform their duty, because they can't bear to part with their spouse or because their spouse's parents oppose their belief in God and oppose them abandoning their job and leaving home to perform their duty, they make compromises and abandon their duty, instead choosing to maintain their marital happiness and the integrity of their marriage. In order to maintain their marital happiness and the integrity of their marriage, and to prevent their marriage from breaking up and ending, they choose only to fulfill their responsibilities and obligations in married life and abandon the mission of a created being. You don't realize that, regardless of your role in the family or in society—whether it be as wife, husband, child, parent, employee, or anything else—and regardless of whether or not your role in married life is an important one, you have only one identity before God and that is as a created being. You have no second identity before God. Therefore, when God's house calls upon you, that is the time when you should fulfill your mission. That is to say, as a created being, it is not that you should fulfill your mission only when the condition of maintaining your marital happiness and the integrity of your marriage is fulfilled, but rather it is that, as long as you are a created being, then the mission God bestows upon you and entrusts to you should be fulfilled unconditionally; regardless of the circumstances, it is always incumbent upon you to prioritize the mission entrusted to you by God, while the mission and responsibilities bestowed upon you by marriage are secondary. The mission you should fulfill as a created being which God has bestowed upon you should always be your top priority under any conditions and in any circumstances. Therefore, no matter how much you wish to maintain the happiness of your marriage, or what your marital situation is like, or how great a price your partner pays for your marriage, none of these are reasons to refuse the mission God has entrusted to you. That is to say, no matter how happy your marriage is or how strong its integrity, your identity as a created being does not change and, as such, the mission God entrusts to you is what you are duty-bound to fulfill first and foremost, and this is not conditional. So, when God entrusts you with your mission, when you come to have the duty and mission of a created being, you should let go of your pursuit of a happy marriage, abandon your pursuit of sustaining an intact marriage, make God and the mission God's house entrusts you with your number one priority, and not act foolishly. Maintaining marital happiness is just a responsibility you bear as a husband or wife within the framework of marriage; it is not the responsibility or mission of a created being before the Creator, therefore you should not abandon the mission entrusted to you by the Creator in order to maintain your marital happiness, nor should you do so many foolish, puerile, and childish things that have nothing to do with the responsibilities of being a wife or husband. All you need to do is fulfill your responsibilities and obligations as a wife or husband in accordance with God's words and God's requirements—that is, in accordance with God's earliest instructions. At the very least, you should fulfill the

responsibilities of a wife or husband with the conscience and reason of normal humanity, and that is enough. As for that so-called “The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach,” or romance, or constantly celebrating all manner of anniversaries, or the world of two, or the pursuit of “holding hands and growing old together,” or “I’ll love you forever like I love you today,” and other such meaningless things, these are not the responsibilities of a normal man and woman. Of course, to be more precise, these things are not the responsibilities and obligations within the framework of marriage of someone who pursues the truth. These ways of living and life pursuits are not what someone who pursues the truth should engage in, and so you should first of all let go of these insipid, foolish, childish, superficial, nauseating and disgusting sayings, viewpoints, and practices from the depths of your minds. Don’t let your marriage deteriorate, and don’t let your pursuit of marital happiness bind your hands, feet, thoughts, and steps, making you childish, foolish, vulgar, and even wicked. These worldly pursuits of a happy marriage are not the obligations and responsibilities someone with normal reason should fulfill, but instead they have evolved purely from this evil world and corrupt mankind and have a corrosive effect on all people’s humanity and thoughts. They will cause your mind to degenerate, they will twist your humanity, and they will cause your thoughts to become evil, complex, chaotic, and even extreme. For example, some women see other men being romantic, giving roses to their wives on their wedding anniversary, or taking their wives out shopping or embracing them or giving them special gifts when they’re angry or unhappy, or even surprising them to try to make them happy, and so on. Once you accept these sayings and practices within you, you will also want your partner to do those things, you will also want that kind of life and those kinds of treatments, and so your sense of reason will become abnormal and will be disturbed and corroded by such sayings, ideas, and practices. If your partner doesn’t buy you roses, doesn’t try to make you happy, or doesn’t do anything romantic for you, then you feel angry, resentful, and dissatisfied—you feel all kinds of different things. When your life is filled with these things, then the obligations you should fulfill as a woman and the duty and responsibilities you should fulfill in God’s house as a created being are all thrown into disorder. You will live in a state of dissatisfaction, and your normal life and routine will be disrupted by these feelings and thoughts of dissatisfaction. Therefore, your pursuits will influence the logical thinking of your normal humanity, your normal judgment and, of course, the responsibilities and obligations you should fulfill as a normal person. If you pursue worldly things and marital happiness, then you will unavoidably become “secularized.” If you pursue only marital happiness, then you will certainly always be needing your spouse to say such things as “I love you,” and if your spouse has never said “I love you,” you’ll think, “Oh, my marriage is so unhappy. My husband is as numb as a plank, like a moron. At most, he brings a bit of money home, exerts some effort, and does some manual work. At mealtimes he says, ‘Let’s eat,’ and when it’s time for bed he says, ‘Time for bed, sweet dream, night night,’ and that’s it. Why can’t he ever say, ‘I love you’? Can’t

he even say this one romantic thing?" Can you be a normal person when your heart is filled with such things? Aren't you always in an abnormal and emotional state? (Yes.) Some people have no discernment of these evil trends of the world; they have no resistance, no immunity. A woman like this regards this matter, this phenomenon of saying romantic things as a sign of marital happiness, and she then wants to pursue it, imitate it, attain it, and when she can't attain it she gets angry, and will often ask her husband, "Tell me, do you love me or not?" Being asked so many times, her husband then gets angry and, blushing red, he blurts out, "I love you, baby." And she says, "Oh, say it again." Her husband restrains himself so much that his face and neck both flush red and, thinking, he says, "Baby, I love you." See, this decent man says this sickening thing, but it doesn't come from his heart, and so he feels uncomfortable. When his wife hears him say this, she's overjoyed, and says, "That'll have to do!" And what does her husband say? "Now look at you. Are you happy now? You're just looking for trouble." Tell Me, when a woman and a man live this kind of married life, is this happiness? (No.) Are you happy when you hear the words "I love you"? Does this explain marital happiness? Is it this simple? (No.) Some woman is always asking her husband, "Hey, do you think I look old?" Her husband is honest, and so he says honestly, "Yes, a little. Who doesn't after they reach forty?" She replies, "Oh, don't you love me? Why don't you say I look young? Do you dislike me getting old? Do you want to find a mistress?" Her husband says, "What a nuisance! I can't even say anything honestly to you. What's the matter with you? I was just being honest. Who doesn't grow old? Do you want to be some kind of monster?" Women like this are irrational. What do we call people who pursue this kind of so-called marital happiness? To be vulgar, they're bitches. And what can we call them if we're not being vulgar? They're mentally ill. What do I mean by "mentally ill"? I mean that they are without the thinking of normal humanity. At the age of forty or fifty, they're approaching old age and they still cannot see clearly what life is, what marriage is, and they always love doing pointless and nauseating things. They believe that this is marital happiness, that it is their freedom and their right, and that they are supposed to pursue in this way, live in this way, and approach marriage in this way. Isn't this them not acting properly? (It is.) Are there many people who don't act properly? (Yes.) There are many in the world of the unbelievers, but are there any in God's house? Are there many? Romance, presents, embraces, surprises, and those words "I love you," and so on are all signs of the marital happiness they pursue and they are the goals of their pursuit of marital happiness. People who don't believe in God are like this, and there are inevitably many who do believe in God who now engage in such a pursuit and who have such views. So, there are many who have believed in God for ten years or more, who have listened to some sermons and understood some truths, but who, for the sake of maintaining their marital happiness, accompanying their spouse, and keeping the promises made regarding their marriage and the goal of marital happiness they vowed to pursue, have never fulfilled their responsibilities and duties before the Creator.

Instead, they won't set foot outside their home, they won't leave home no matter how busy the work of God's house gets, and they won't relinquish their spouse in order to perform their duty, but rather they regard the pursuit and maintenance of marital happiness as a lifelong goal for which they struggle and exert unremitting efforts. By engaging in such a pursuit, are they in pursuit of the truth? Clearly not. Because in their minds, in their innermost hearts, and even in their actions, they have not let go of the pursuit of marital happiness nor the idea, view, and outlook on life of "the pursuit of marital happiness is one's mission in life," they are therefore absolutely unable to gain the truth. You are not married yet and have not yet entered into marriage. If you still retain this view when you do enter into marriage, then you won't be able to gain the truth, either. Once you've gained marital happiness, you then won't be able to gain the truth. Because you regard the pursuit of marital happiness as your mission in life, you will inevitably relinquish and give up the opportunity to fulfill your mission before the Creator. If you give up the opportunity and right to fulfill the mission of a created being before the Creator, then you give up the pursuit of truth, and of course, you also give up on attaining salvation—this is your choice.

We're fellowshiping on letting go of the pursuit of marital happiness not so that you give up on marriage as a formality, nor is it to encourage you to get divorced, but rather it is so that you give up on those pursuits regarding marital happiness. First of all, you should let go of those views which dominate you in your pursuit of marital happiness, and then you should let go of the practice of pursuing marital happiness and devote the majority of your time and energy to performing the duty of a created being and pursuing truth. As for marriage, as long as it doesn't clash or conflict with your pursuit of truth, then the obligations you should fulfill, the mission you should accomplish, and the role you should play within the framework of marriage will not change. Therefore, asking that you let go of the pursuit of marital happiness doesn't mean asking you to abandon marriage or to divorce as a formality, but rather it means asking you to fulfill your mission as a created being and properly perform the duty you should perform with the premise of fulfilling the responsibilities you should perform in marriage. Of course, if your pursuit of marital happiness impacts, obstructs, or even ruins your performance of the duty of a created being, then you should abandon not only your pursuit of marital happiness, but also your entire marriage. What is the final purpose and meaning of fellowshiping on these issues? It is so that marital happiness doesn't impede your steps, tie your hands, blind your eyes, distort your vision, disturb and occupy your mind; it is so that the pursuit of marital happiness doesn't fill your life path and fill your life, and so that you correctly approach the responsibilities and obligations you should fulfill in marriage and make the correct choices concerning the responsibilities and obligations you should fulfill. A better way to practice is to devote more time and energy to fulfilling your duty, perform the duty you should perform, and accomplish the mission God has entrusted to you. You must never forget that you are a created being, that it is God who has led you through life to

this moment, that it is God who has given you marriage, who has given you a family, and that it is God who has bestowed upon you the responsibilities you should fulfill within the framework of marriage, and that it is not you who chose marriage, it is not that you came to be married out of thin air, or that you can maintain your marital happiness by relying on your own abilities and strength. Have I now explained this clearly? (Yes.) Do you understand what you're supposed to do? Is the path now clear to you? (Yes.) If there is no conflict or contradiction between the responsibilities and obligations you should fulfill in marriage and your duty and mission as a created being, then under such circumstances, you should fulfill your responsibilities within the framework of marriage however they are to be fulfilled, and you should fulfill your responsibilities well, shoulder the responsibilities you should shoulder, and not try to shirk them. You must take responsibility for your partner, and you should take responsibility for your partner's life, their feelings, and everything about them. However, when there is a clash between the responsibilities and obligations you shoulder within the framework of marriage and your mission and duty as a created being, then what you must let go of is not your duty or mission but are rather your responsibilities within the framework of marriage. This is what God expects of you, it is God's commission for you and, of course, it is what God requires of any man or woman. Only when you are capable of this will you be pursuing the truth and following God. If you are not capable of this and cannot practice in this way, then you are just a nominal believer, you do not follow God with a true heart, and you are not a pursuer of truth. You now have the opportunity and conditions to leave China to perform your duty, and some people say, "If I leave China to perform my duty, then I'll have to leave my spouse at home. Are we never to see each other again? Won't we have to live separately? Won't we have no marriage anymore?" Some people think, "Oh, how will my partner live without me? Won't our marriage fall apart if I'm not there? Will our marriage be over? What will I do in the future?" Should you be thinking about the future? What should you be thinking about most? If you want to be someone who pursues the truth, then what you should be thinking about most is how to let go of that which God asks you to let go of and how to accomplish that which God asks you to accomplish. If you are to be without a marriage and without your partner beside you in the future, in the days to come, you can still live until old age and live well just the same. If you abandon this opportunity, however, then that is tantamount to you abandoning your duty and the mission God has entrusted to you. To God, you would then not be someone who pursues the truth, someone who truly wants God, or someone who is in pursuit of salvation. If you actively wish to abandon your opportunity and right to attain salvation and your mission and you instead choose marriage, you choose to stay united as husband and wife, you choose to be with and satisfy your spouse, and you choose to keep your marriage intact, then in the end you will gain some things and lose some things. You understand what it is you will lose, right? Marriage is not your everything, nor is marital happiness—it cannot decide your fate, it cannot decide your future, and

even less so can it decide your destination. So, what choices people should make, and whether or not they should let go of the pursuit of marital happiness and perform the duty of a created being is up to them to decide. Have we now fellowshiped clearly on the topic of “pursuing marital happiness is not your mission”? (Yes.) Is there any issue you find difficult and concerning which, after listening to Me fellowship, you don’t know how to practice? (No.) After listening to this fellowship, do you now feel clearer, that you have an accurate path of practice, and that you have a correct goal to practice toward? Do you now know how you should practice from now on? (Yes.) Then let’s end this fellowship here. Goodbye!

January 14, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (11)

Where did we get to in our fellowship at the last gathering? We fellowshiped on the topic of “letting go” with regard to marriage as part of “How to Pursue the Truth.” We’ve fellowshiped on the topic of marriage several times—what did we fellowship on mainly last time? (We fellowshiped on letting go of various fantasies about marriage and rectifying some fallacious ideas and understandings married people have about marriage, as well as correctly approaching sexual desire. At the end, we fellowshiped that pursuing the happiness of marriage is not our mission.) We fellowshiped on the topic of “letting go of various fantasies about marriage,” so how much did you understand, and how much can you remember? Did we not primarily fellowship on the various unrealistic, impractical, childish and irrational opinions and desires people have toward marriage? (Yes.) Correctly comprehending and understanding marriage and taking the correct approach to marriage—this is the attitude people should have toward marriage. Marriage should not be taken as a game, nor should it be taken as something to satisfy all one’s fantasies and unrealistic pursuits. What do the various fantasies about marriage involve? There is a certain relationship between these fantasies and the various attitudes people have toward life and, most importantly, they are related to the various sayings, interpretations, and attitudes about marriage people receive from the world and society. These sayings, interpretations, and attitudes are a myriad of unrealistic and false sayings and views derived from society and all the peoples of mankind. Why do people need to let these things go? Because these things come from corrupt mankind, because they are all kinds of views and attitudes on marriage that have arisen from the wicked world, and these views and attitudes completely deviate from the correct definition and concept of marriage that God has ordained for mankind. The concept and definition of marriage God has ordained for mankind are more focused on human responsibilities and obligations, as well as on the humanity, conscience, and reason that people should embody in life. God’s definition of marriage mainly exhorts people on how to take on their responsibilities correctly within the framework of marriage. If you are unmarried and are not engaged in fulfilling the responsibilities of marriage, then you should still have the correct understanding of God’s definition of marriage—this is one aspect. Another aspect is that God exhorts people to prepare to shoulder the responsibilities they should take on within the framework of marriage. Marriage is not a game to be played, or like children playing house. The first thing to know in one’s mind, and to have a concept of, is that marriage is a sign of responsibility. Even more important is to prepare or ready oneself for the responsibilities that should be fulfilled in one’s normal humanity. And what do the concepts, understanding, and sayings about marriage from Satan and from the wicked world focus more on? They focus more on playing with emotions and sexual desires, satisfying physical desires, and satisfying fleshly curiosity toward the opposite sex, as well as, of course, satisfying human vanity. They never mention responsibility or

humanity, much less how the two parties involved in the marriage ordained by God, that is, the male and the female, should shoulder their responsibilities, fulfill their obligations, and do everything well that a male and a female should do, within the framework of marriage. The various interpretations, sayings, and attitudes on marriage the world indoctrinates people with focus more on the satisfaction of human emotion and desire, the exploration of emotion and desire, and the seeking after emotion and desire. Therefore, if you accept these various sayings, understandings, or attitudes on marriage that come from society, then you will be unable to avoid being affected by these evil ideas. To be more precise, you will be unable to avoid being corrupted by these views on marriage that come from the world. Once you have been corrupted and affected by these ideas and views, you are then unable to avoid being controlled by these ideas, and at the same time, you will also accept being fooled and manipulated by these views just like unbelievers do. Once unbelievers accept these ideas and views on marriage, they talk of love and of satisfying their sexual desires. Similarly, once you have unreservedly accepted these ideas and views, you will also talk of love and of satisfying your sexual desires. This is unavoidable and you cannot escape it. While you are without the correct definition of marriage, and without the correct comprehension and attitude toward marriage, you will naturally accept all the various views and sayings on marriage that come from the world, from society, and from mankind. So long as you hear them, so long as you see them, so long as you know them, and so long as you have no immunity to fight off these ideas, then you will unknowingly be affected by this kind of social climate, and you will unknowingly accept these views and sayings on marriage. When you accept these things within you, you then cannot avoid these ideas and views affecting your attitude toward marriage. Because you don’t live inside a vacuum, you are very prone to being affected and even controlled by the various sayings on marriage that come from the world, from society, and from mankind. Once they have control over you, you will find it very difficult to pull free of them, and you won’t be able to help but fantasize about what your own marriage should be like.

Last time, we fellowshiped on the various fantasies about marriage, and these fantasies hail from the manifold wrong understandings and views on marriage of wicked mankind. These understandings and views, whether specific or general, are all things which a pursuer of the truth should let go of. Firstly, they should let go of all the various wrong definitions and understandings of marriage; secondly, they should correctly choose their partner; and thirdly those who are already married should take the correct approach to their marriage. The word “correct” here refers to the attitude and responsibility people should have toward marriage which God enjoins and instructs them to have. People should understand that marriage is not a symbol of love and that entering marriage is not entering a palace of marriage, nor is it entering a tomb, much less is it a wedding dress, a diamond ring, a church, speaking vows of eternal love, candlelit dinners, romance, or a world of two people—none of these things signify marriage. So,

when we talk about marriage, the first thing you should do is remove the fantasies about marriage that have been planted in your heart along with the symbolic things that arise from your fantasies about marriage. By fellowshiping on the correct interpretation of marriage and dissecting the various fallacious ideas about marriage that come from Satan's evil world, do you not come to have a more accurate understanding of the definition of marriage? (We do.) As for those who aren't married, does saying these things not make you feel somewhat steadier about the matter of marriage? And does it not help you to grow in insight? (Yes.) In what aspect do you grow in insight? (My previous fantasies about marriage involved just vague things like flowers, diamond rings, wedding dresses, and saying vows of eternal love. Now, after listening to God give fellowship, I understand that marriage is actually ordained by God, and that it is two people together being able to show consideration for each other, look after each other, and take responsibility for each other. It's a sense of responsibility, and this view on marriage is more practical and doesn't involve those vague things.) You've grown in insight, right? In general terms, you've grown in insight. In terms of the minute specifics, has there been a slight change in standards for the objects you previously admired and were fascinated by? (There has, yes.) You always used to talk about wanting to find a tall, rich, handsome man, or a pale, rich, beautiful woman; what is it you focus on now? At the very least, you focus on someone's humanity, and on whether someone is dependable and has a sense of responsibility. Tell Me, if someone chooses a partner in accordance with this direction, this objective, and this method, is it more probable that they will have a happy marriage or that they will be unhappy and get divorced? (It's more probable that they'll be happy.) It's somewhat more probable that they'll be happy. Why don't we say that this kind of marriage will be one hundred percent guaranteed to be a happy one? How many reasons are there for this? At the very least, one reason is that people can make mistakes and not see someone clearly before marrying them. Another reason is that, before they get married, someone may have wonderful imaginings about marriage, thinking, "We have compatible personalities and share the same aspirations. He also made a promise to me that he's willing to take responsibility and fulfill his obligations to me after we get married, and that he will never let me down." After they get married, however, not everything in married life goes as they might wish, not everything goes smoothly. Also, some people love the truth and love positive things, whereas some people may appear to have a humanity that isn't bad or evil, but they have no love for positive things and don't pursue the truth. When they're married and living together, that little sense of responsibility or obligation he has in his humanity is gradually worn away, he changes over time, and he shows his true colors. Tell Me, if one person in a married couple pursues the truth and one doesn't, if you unilaterally pursue the truth and he doesn't accept the truth at all, how long will you be able to put up with him? (Not long.) You can grudgingly tolerate and put up with some life habits or some minor defects or failings in his humanity, but as time goes on, the two of you will

not share a common language or pursuit. He doesn't pursue the truth, nor does he love positive things, and he always likes the things of the evil trends of the world. Gradually, the two of you speak less and less, your aspirations drift apart, and his desire to fulfill his responsibilities is soon worn away. Is this kind of marriage a happy one? (No.) What should you do if you're not happy? (If two people cannot go on together then they should separate at the earliest opportunity.) Correct. How long is it from having this idea in the beginning to when they separate? At first, the two people rub along well together, and after rubbing along well together for a while, they begin to clash. After they clash, they become reconciled, and once they're reconciled, the woman sees that the man has not changed, so she endures, and after some time enduring this, they again begin to argue. After this conflict reaches its peak, things cool down again, and she thinks, "We're not well-suited and this isn't how I imagined it would be in the beginning. Living together is painful. Should we divorce? But it's been so hard for us to get to this point and we've broken up and gotten back together so many times. I mustn't divorce him so easily. I should just endure it. Living alone is never as good as two living together." So she endures for a year or two; the more she looks at him the more dissatisfied she feels, and the longer it goes on the more frustrated she becomes. Living together doesn't make her happy, and they speak less and less on the same wavelength. She sees his faults growing more and more in number and she feels less and less like she wants to put up with and tolerate him. After five or six years, she can't take it anymore, blows her top, and wants to make a complete break with him. Before she decides to make this complete break, she must think this whole thing through from start to finish and must think clearly and thoroughly about how she will live after they divorce. After thinking it all through, she cannot muster up her resolve, but after thinking it through several more times, she reluctantly decides to leave her husband, thinking, "I'll divorce him. Living a peaceful life alone is better than this." The two of them are always arguing and can't get along. What she used to be able to tolerate is now unbearable. Seeing him makes her feel upset, hearing him speak makes her angry, and even hearing his voice, seeing his appearance, his clothes, and the things he has used all turns her stomach and makes her feel sick. It has reached an unbearable point where the two of them have become strangers to each other and she has to divorce him. What was the premise to her having to divorce him? The two of them living together was too painful, and her living on her own is better. When things get to this point, she'll no longer stay connected to him. There's no feeling there anymore, she's thought it through and got it figured out: It's better to live alone, just like the unbelievers often say, "When you live alone, you don't need to worry about anyone else." Otherwise, she'd always have to be thinking about him, wondering, "Has he eaten? Is he dressing well? Is he sleeping okay? Is it exhausting for him working away from home? Is he getting pushed around? How is he feeling?" She'd always have to be worrying about him. But now, she sees that it's more peaceful to live alone, with no one else to think about or be concerned about. Such a man is not worth living like that for.

He’s not worth her concern, not worth her love, not worth her taking on any responsibility for him, and there’s nothing lovable about him at all. In the end, she files for divorce, their marriage comes to an end, and she never looks back and never regrets her decision. There are marriages like this, aren’t there? (Yes.) There are also marriages that come about due to various reasons such as past kindnesses and grudges from one’s previous life. As we discussed before, some people get together because one owes the other a debt. Between the couple, either the woman owes the man, or the man owes the woman. In the previous life, one may have taken advantage too much, owed too much, and so in this life they are put together so that person can repay their debt. Many marriages like this are unhappy ones, but they can’t divorce. Whether they’re forced to stay together because they have a family, or because of their children, or for some other reason, in any case, the couple can’t get along with each other, they’re always fighting, always arguing, and their personalities, interests, pursuits, and hobbies don’t match at all. They don’t like each other and living together doesn’t bring any happiness to either of them, but they can’t divorce each other, so they stay together until death. When death approaches, they still have to taunt their partner and say, “I don’t want to see you in the next life!” They hate each other so much, right? But in this life they can’t divorce each other, and this is ordained by God. All these different kinds of marriage, regardless of what their structure or origins are like, whether you’re married or not, in any case you should always let go of the various unrealistic and naive fantasies you have about marriage; you should correctly face marriage and not toy with people’s emotions and desires, much less become caught in the snare of wrong views on marriage which society indoctrinates you with, always ruminating over how you feel about marriage: Does your partner love you? Can you feel that your partner loves you? Do you still love your partner? How much love do you still have for your partner? Does your partner still feel anything for you? Do you still feel anything for your partner? There’s no need to feel these things or ruminate over these things—they are all absurd and meaningless ideas. The more you ruminate over these things, the more you feel that your marriage is in crisis, and the more you slip down into these thoughts, the more it proves that you have been caught in the snare of marriage, and you will certainly not be happy or have any sense of security. This is because when you slide down into these ideas, views, and thoughts, your marriage becomes malformed, your humanity becomes distorted, and you also become completely controlled and kidnapped by various ideas and views on marriage from society. Therefore, with regard to the various views and sayings on marriage that come from society and from evil mankind, you must be able to accurately discern them, and you must also reject these views and sayings. No matter what other people say or how their sayings on marriage change, ultimately people should not relinquish God’s definition of marriage, nor should people be affected or have their eyes clouded by the wicked world’s views on marriage. To put it bluntly, marriage is the beginning of a different stage of a person’s life from adolescence to adulthood. That is,

after you become an adult you enter a different stage of life, and in this stage of life you enter into matrimony and live with someone who bears no blood relationship to yourself. From the day you start living with that person, it means that as a wife or a husband you have to shoulder the responsibilities and obligations of all the things of married life and, what's more, the two of you must face all the things of married life together. That is to say, marriage signifies that a person has left their parents, said farewell to the single life, and has entered into the life of two people with someone else. This is the stage wherein two people face life together. This stage signifies that you will enter a different stage in life as well as, of course, that you will face all manner of life's tests. How you will handle life within the framework of marriage and how you and your partner together will face all the things encountered within the framework of marriage may be tests to you, or these things could be perfection to you, or they could be disasters. They could, of course, also be sources of more experience in life; they could be sources that provide you with a deeper understanding and appreciation of life, right? (Right.) We'll finish our recap here on the topic of having the correct understanding of marriage and the various fantasies about marriage.

We fellowshiped on another topic last time, which was that pursuing marital happiness is not your mission. What did we emphasize when fellowshiping this topic? (It was that we mustn't entrust our life's happiness to our partner, and we mustn't do things which please our partner just to attract them or protect our so-called love. We mustn't forget that we're created beings and that the responsibilities and obligations that we should fulfill in marriage do not conflict with the duties and responsibilities we should fulfill as created beings.) Many people make their life's happiness dependent upon their marriage, and their goal in pursuing happiness is the pursuit of the happiness and perfection of marriage. They believe that if their marriage is a happy one and they're happy with their partner, then they will have a happy life, and so they regard the happiness of their marriage as a lifelong mission to be achieved through unremitting efforts. For this reason, when they enter into marriage, many people rack their brains thinking of many things they can do to keep their marriage "fresh." What does "fresh" mean? It means, as they say, that no matter how long they've been married, the two people always feel like they're joined at the hip and can never leave each other, just like they did when they started dating, and they always want to be stuck together and never part. Furthermore, wherever they are and at all times, they're always thinking of and missing their partner, and their hearts are filled with the other person's voice, smile, speech, and behavior. If they don't hear their partner's voice for one single day, their heart feels desolate, and if they don't see their partner for one single day, they feel as though they've lost their soul. They think these are the symbols and the signs of marital happiness. So, some so-called full-time housewives stay at home and feel that waiting for their husbands to come home is the happiest thing. If their husbands don't come home on time, they call them, and what is the first question out of their mouths? (What

time will you be home?) Looks like you hear this often—this question is rooted deeply in the hearts of many. The first question is “What time will you be home?” Once they’ve asked this, regardless of whether or not they receive an accurate answer, in any case the lovesickness of a woman in a happy marriage is revealed. This is a normal state in the lives of those who pursue the happiness of marriage. They quietly wait at home for their other half to come home from work. If they go out, they dare not go far or be out for long, afraid that their partner will come home to find an empty house and will feel so hurt, disappointed, and upset. These people are filled with hope and faith in their pursuit of marital happiness, and they don’t hold back on paying any price or making any change. There are even some who continue to pursue marital happiness after they come to believe in God just as they did before, seeking to love their partner and always asking their partner whether they love them. Therefore, during gatherings, a woman may think, “Has my husband got home yet? If so, has he eaten anything? Is he tired? I’m still here at this gathering and I feel a little uneasy. I feel a little like I’ve let him down.” When she goes to attend the next gathering, she asks her husband, “What time do you think you’ll be back? If you get back when I’m out at a gathering, won’t you feel lonely?” Her husband replies, “How could I not feel lonely? The place is empty and I’m on my own. Normally, we’re always here together, and now suddenly I’m here on my own. Why do you always have to attend gatherings? You can attend them, but it would be great if you could get home before I do!” She knows in her heart, “Oh, he doesn’t ask much of me, I just need to be home before he gets back.” At the next gathering, she keeps looking at the clock, and when she sees that it’s almost time for her husband to finish work, she can’t sit still any longer and says, “You guys carry on, I’ve got something at home I need to take care of so I have to get going.” She rushes home and thinks, “Great, my husband isn’t back yet! I’ll hurry and make a meal and tidy up the house so he can see when he gets back that the place is clean, he can smell the food, and know that someone’s here. It’s wonderful that we can be together when it comes time to eat! Although I lost some time at the gathering and listened to less and gained less, to be able to get back home before my husband does and give him a hot meal is pretty good, and this is fundamental to maintaining a happy marriage.” She often does this at gatherings thereafter and occasionally a gathering overruns, and when she rushes home she finds that her husband is already there. He’s a little displeased and unhappy with her, and he grumbles, “Can’t you miss just one gathering? Don’t you know how I feel when you’re not at home and I come home and don’t see you here? I get upset!” She feels so moved hearing this and thinks, “What he means by this is that he really loves me and can’t live without me. He gets upset when he sees that I’m not here. I’m so happy! Although he sounds a little angry, I can still feel his love for me. I must take notice next time and no matter how many hours the gathering runs on for, I must come home early. I can’t disappoint his love for me. It’s not important if I gain a little less and listen a little less to God’s words at gatherings.” When she attends gatherings from then on, all she can think

about is getting home to be worthy of her husband's love as well as to maintain the happiness she pursues in her marriage. She has a faint feeling that if she doesn't get home early, then she will disappoint her husband's love for her, and if she keeps disappointing him in that way, she wonders whether he will go off and find someone else and not love her like he used to. She believes that loving and being loved is always a happiness, and sustaining this relationship of loving and being loved is her pursuit in life, something she's determined to pursue, and so that is what she does without reservation or hesitation. There are even some people who, when they go and perform their duty away from home, often tell their leader, "I can't stay overnight away from home. I'm married, so if I don't go home my husband will be lonely. I won't be there when he wakes up at night and he'll be upset. I won't be there when he opens his eyes in the morning and he'll feel hurt. If I don't often return home, won't my husband doubt my faithfulness and innocence? When we got married, we made an agreement that we would be faithful to each other. No matter what happens, I must keep my promise. I want to be worthy of him, as there's no one else in this world who loves me like he does. So, in order to prove my innocence and that I'm completely faithful to him, I absolutely cannot stay overnight away from home. No matter how busy church work is or how urgent my duty is, I must go home at night no matter how late it is." She says that this is to maintain her innocence and faithfulness, but this is just a formality, just words, when actually she's afraid that her marriage will become unhappy and break up. She'd rather lose her duty and abandon the duty she's supposed to perform in order to maintain her marital happiness, as though marital happiness is her motivation for and the source of everything she does. Without a happy marriage, she cannot perform the duty of a created being; without a happy marriage, she cannot be a good created being. She regards not disappointing her husband's love for her and staying loved as the signs of marital happiness as well as her life's goals to pursue. If one day she feels that she isn't so loved anymore, or she does something wrong and disappoints her husband's love for her, makes him disappointed in her and displeased with her, she'll feel like she's going out of her mind, she'll no longer attend gatherings or read God's words, and even when the church needs her to perform some duty, she'll come up with all kinds of excuses to refuse. For example, she says she's not feeling well or that there's some urgent issue at home, and she even makes up some nonsensical and whimsical excuses to get out of having to perform the duty. These people regard marital happiness as supremely important in life. Some people even give everything they can to maintain the happiness of their marriage, and do not hesitate to pay any price to tether and hold their spouse's heart so that their spouse always loves them, they never lose that sense of the love they had when they first got married, and they never lose that feeling they had about marriage in the beginning. There are even some women who make even greater sacrifices: Some have the bridges of their noses raised, some have their chins reshaped, and some have breast augmentation surgery and liposuction, enduring any pain. Some women even think their calves are too

thick, so they go for surgery to make their legs slimmer, and in the end they suffer nerve damage and can't stand up anymore. When the husband of a woman like this sees this, he says, "You had thick legs before, but you were still a normal person. Now you can't stand up, and you're no good for anything. I want a divorce!" You see, she paid such a large price and this is what she got in the end. There are also some women who dress beautifully every day, who wear perfume and powder their faces. They apply all kinds of cosmetics such as lipstick, blusher, and eye shadow to their faces to keep themselves looking young and beautiful in order to be attractive to their partner and make their partner love them like they did in the beginning. Similarly, men also make many sacrifices for the sake of marital happiness. Someone gets told, "You're a well-known believer in God. Too many people around here know you and this makes you vulnerable to being reported and arrested, so you have to leave here and go perform your duty somewhere else." He then feels distressed and thinks, "But if I leave, does that mean my marriage is over? Will it all start to fall apart now? If I leave home, will my wife get with someone else? Will we just go our separate ways from now on? Will we never be together again?" He gets upset thinking these things, and so he begins to bargain, saying, "Could I stay? It would be okay even if I only went home once a week—I have to look after my family!" In fact, he's not really thinking about looking after his family. He's afraid his wife will run off with someone else and that he will never again have any marital happiness. His heart is filled with worry and fear, he doesn't want the happiness of his marriage to vanish and disappear like this. In such people's hearts, marital happiness is more important than anything else, and without it, they feel as though they're totally soulless. They believe, "Love is the most important thing for a happy marriage. Only because I love my wife and she loves me do we have a happy marriage and have been able to make it this long. If I were to lose this love and this love were to end because of my belief in God and because I perform my duty, then wouldn't that mean that my marital happiness is over and gone, and I wouldn't be able to enjoy this marital happiness again? Without marital happiness, what will happen to us? What would my wife's life be like without my love? What will happen to me if I lose my wife's love? Can performing the duty of a created being and accomplishing man's mission before God make up for this loss?" They don't know, they have no answer, and they don't understand this aspect of the truth. Therefore, when God's house requires those who pursue the happiness of marriage above all else to leave their homes and go to a distant place to spread the gospel and perform their duty, they often feel frustrated, helpless, and even uneasy about the fact that they may soon lose their marital happiness. Some people abandon or refuse to perform their duties in order to sustain their marital happiness, and some even refuse the important arrangements of God's house. There are also some who, to sustain their marital happiness, often try to get to know their spouse's feelings. If their spouse feels slightly displeased or shows even a hint of displeasure or dissatisfaction with their faith, with the path of faith in God they have taken, and with their performing their duty, they instantly

change course and make concessions. To sustain their marital happiness, they often make concessions to their spouse, even if it means giving up chances to perform their duty, and giving up time for gatherings, reading God's words and carrying out spiritual devotions in order to show their spouse that they're there, to keep their spouse from feeling alone and lonely, and to make their spouse feel their love; they would rather do this than lose or be without their spouse's love. This is because they feel that, if they give up their spouse's love for the sake of their faith or the path of faith in God they've taken, then this means that they've abandoned their marital happiness and they won't be able to feel that marital happiness anymore, and they will then be someone lonely, pitiful, and lamentable. What does it mean to be someone lamentable and pitiful? It means someone without the love or adoration of another. Even though these people understand some doctrine and the significance of God performing His work of salvation and, of course, they understand that as a created being they should perform the duty of a created being, because they entrust their spouse with their own happiness and they also, of course, make their own happiness dependent upon their marital happiness, even though they understand and know what they should do, they still can't let go of their pursuit of marital happiness. They mistakenly view the pursuit of marital happiness as the mission they should pursue in this lifetime, and mistakenly view the pursuit of marital happiness as the mission that a created being should pursue and accomplish. Isn't this a mistake? (Yes, it is.)

Where does the fault lie with pursuing marital happiness? Is it in conformity with God's definition of marriage and what He entrusts married couples with? (No, it isn't.) What is wrong with it? Some people say, "God said it's not good for a man to live alone, so He created a spouse for him, and this spouse keeps him company. Isn't that God's definition of marriage? Is this not part of pursuing marital happiness? Two people accompanying each other and performing their mutual responsibilities—what's wrong with that?" Is there a difference between performing one's responsibilities within the framework of marriage and uncompromisingly regarding pursuing marital happiness as one's mission? (Yes, there is.) What is the problem here? (They regard pursuing marital happiness as their most important mission, when in fact for living man performing the duty of a created being before the Creator is their greatest responsibility. They've misunderstood the goal to pursue in life.) Anyone else want to pick up on this? (When someone can't take the correct approach to the responsibilities and obligations they should fulfill in marriage, they will spend their time and energy on sustaining their marriage. However, the correct approach to the responsibilities of marriage is first of all to not forget that one is a created being and that one should spend most of one's time performing one's duty and accomplishing that which God entrusts them with and the mission God gives them. They should then fulfill their responsibilities and obligations within the framework of marriage. These two things are different.) Is the pursuit of marital happiness not the goal people should pursue in life once they're married? Does this have

anything to do with the marriage that God has ordained? (No.) God has given marriage to man, and He has given an environment to you in which you can fulfill the responsibilities and obligations of a man or a woman within the framework of marriage. God has given you marriage, which means He has given you a partner. This partner will accompany you until the end of this life and will accompany you through every stage of life. What do I mean by “accompany”? I mean your partner will help and look after you, share with you all the things you encounter in life. That is, no matter how many things you encounter, you will no longer face them alone, but rather the two of you will face them together. Living in this way makes life somewhat easier and more relaxed, with both people doing what they’re supposed to do, each bringing their skills and strengths into play, and getting their life started. It is just that simple. However, God never made a demand of people, saying, “I have given you marriage. You are married now so you absolutely must love your partner until the end and constantly flatter them—this is your mission.” God has given you marriage, given you a partner, and given you a different living environment. Within this kind of living environment and situation, He makes your partner share and face everything together with you, so that you can live more freely and easily, while at the same time allowing you to appreciate a different stage of life. However, God hasn’t sold you out to marriage. What do I mean by this? I mean that God hasn’t taken your life, your fate, your mission, the path you follow in life, the direction you choose in life, and the kind of faith you have and given it all to your partner to determine for you. He hasn’t said that the kind of fate, pursuits, life path, and outlook on life a woman has must be decided by her husband, or that the kind of fate, pursuits, outlook on life, and life a man has must be decided by his wife. God has never said such things and has not ordained things in this way. You see, did God say any such thing when He established marriage for mankind? (No.) God has never said that the pursuit of marital happiness is a woman’s or a man’s mission in life, and that you must maintain the happiness of your marriage well in order for your life’s mission to be accomplished and for you to successfully conduct yourself as a created being—God has never said any such thing. Neither has God said, “You must choose your life path within the framework of marriage. Whether you will attain salvation or not will be decided by your marriage and by your spouse. Your outlook on life and fate will be decided by your spouse.” Has God ever said such a thing? (No.) God has ordained marriage for you and given you a partner. You enter into marriage but your identity and status before God do not change—you’re still you. If you’re a woman then you’re still a woman before God; if you’re a man then you’re still a man before God. But there is one thing which you both share, and that is, regardless of whether you’re a man or a woman, you are all created beings before the Creator. Within the framework of marriage, you tolerate and love each other, you help and support each other, and this is fulfilling your responsibilities. Before God, however, the responsibilities you should fulfill and the mission you should accomplish cannot be replaced by the responsibilities you fulfill to your partner. Therefore, when

there is conflict between your responsibilities to your partner and the duty a created being should perform before God, what you should choose is to perform the duty of a created being and not to fulfill your responsibilities to your partner. This is the direction and the aim you should choose and, of course, it is also the mission you should accomplish. Some people, however, mistakenly make the pursuit of marital happiness, or the fulfilling of their responsibilities to their partner, and their caring for, looking after, and loving their partner, into their mission in life, and they regard their partner as their sky, their destiny—this is wrong. Your destiny is under God's sovereignty and is not governed by your partner. Marriage cannot change your destiny, nor can it change the fact that God governs your destiny. Concerning the kind of outlook on life you ought to have and the path you ought to follow, you should seek these in the words of God's teachings and requirements. These things are not dependent upon your partner and are not for them to decide. Besides fulfilling their responsibilities to you, they shouldn't have control over your destiny, nor should they demand that you change your direction in life, nor decide what path you follow, nor decide what outlook on life you should have, much less should they constrain you or obstruct you from pursuing salvation. As far as marriage goes, all people can do is accept it from God and adhere to the definition of marriage God has ordained for man, with both husband and wife fulfilling their responsibilities and obligations to each other. What they cannot do is decide their partner's destiny, previous life, present life, or the next life, let alone eternity. Your destination, your destiny, and the path you follow can only be decided by the Creator. Therefore, as a created being, whether your role is that of wife or husband, the happiness you should pursue in this life comes from you performing the duty of a created being and accomplishing the mission of a created being. It does not come from marriage itself, much less from you fulfilling the responsibilities of a wife or husband within the framework of marriage. Of course, the path you choose to follow and the outlook on life you adopt shouldn't be built upon marital happiness, much less should they be determined by one or the other of the spousal couple—this is something you ought to understand. So, people entering marriage who only pursue marital happiness and regard this pursuit as their mission should let go of such thoughts and views, change the way they practice, and change the direction they're headed in life. You are entering marriage and living together with your partner under the ordination of God, that's all, and it's enough to fulfill the responsibilities of a wife or husband while you share your life together. As for what path you follow and what outlook on life you adopt, your partner is under no obligation and has no right to decide these things. Even though you are already married and have a spouse, your so-called spouse can only carry the meaning of being a spouse that has been ordained by God. They can only fulfill the responsibilities of a spouse, and you can choose and decide everything else that is unrelated to your spouse. Of course, what is even more important is that your choices and decisions should not be based upon your own preferences and understanding, but rather on the words of God. Do you understand

the fellowship on this matter? (Yes.) Therefore, the actions of any partner within the framework of marriage who pursues marital happiness at all costs or makes any sacrifice shall not be remembered by God. No matter how well or how perfectly you fulfill your obligations and responsibilities to your partner, or how much you live up to your partner's expectations—in other words, no matter how well or how perfectly you maintain your marital happiness, or how enviable it is—it does not mean that you have fulfilled the mission of a created being, nor does it prove that you are a created being who is up to standard. Perhaps you're a perfect wife or a perfect husband, but that remains confined to the framework of marriage. The Creator takes the measure of what kind of person you are based on how you perform the duty of a created being before Him, what kind of path you follow, what your outlook on life is, what you pursue in life, and how you accomplish the mission of a created being. With these things, God measures the path you follow as a created being and your future destination. He does not measure these things based on how you fulfill your responsibilities and obligations as a wife or a husband, nor on whether your love for your partner pleases Him. As for the pursuit of marital happiness not being your mission, I've today provided these details to round this topic off. You see, if I didn't fellowship on these issues, people might think they understand and know a little about them, but when something actually happens to them, they'd still get stuck and obstructed by many specious issues, wanting to fulfill the obligations of a wife or a husband while also wanting to do well the things a human being, a created being, should do. However, when these two things conflict with or contradict and obstruct each other, how one should handle it has not been entirely clear. Is it now clear after fellowshiping on it in this way? (Yes.) There's a difference between the things which people believe to be good and right in their notions on the one hand and the things which are positive, right, and good according to the truth on the other. When this is clarified, it becomes clear. The things people believe to be positive and good are often filled with the notions, imaginings, and sentiments of man, and they are unrelated to the truth. What do I mean by "unrelated"? I mean they are not the truth. If you regard fallacious things and things which are not the truth as positive things and as the truth, and you follow them and cling rigidly to them, believing that they are the truth, then you will be unable to walk the path in pursuit of the truth, and you will end up very far from the truth. And whose responsibility is that?

The topic we just fellowshiped on was that people should let go of pursuing marital happiness, and that it's enough to just fulfill their responsibilities within the framework of marriage. We've finished fellowshiping on letting go of pursuing marital happiness, so now we'll fellowship on another issue: You are not the slaves of marriage. This is an issue we should fellowship on. After they get married, what do some people believe? "My life is set like this now. I'm destined to live with this person for the rest of my life. My parents and family elders are not my lifelong reliance, nor are my friends. So who is my lifelong reliance? The person I enter into marriage with is the one I will rely on for all my

life.” Under the prompting of these kinds of thoughts, many people see marriage as very important, believing that once they get married they will have a stable life, a sheltered haven, and someone to confide in. Women say, “With marriage, I have strong arms to rely on.” Men say, “With marriage, I have a peaceful home and I’m no longer adrift; just thinking about it makes me happy. Look at those single people around me. The women wander around all day with no one to rely on, without a stable home, without a shoulder to cry on, and the men don’t have a warm home. How pitiful they are!” So, when they consider their own marital happiness, they think it’s quite fulfilling and satisfying. Besides feeling satisfied, they feel they should do something for their marriage and for their home. Therefore, once they’re married, some people are prepared to devote all they can do to their married life, and they prepare to strive, struggle, and work hard for their marriage. Some desperately earn money and suffer and, of course, even more entrust their life’s happiness to their partner. They believe that whether they will be happy and joyful in life depends on what their partner is like, whether they’re a good person; whether their personality and interests match their own; whether they are someone who can bring home the bacon and run a family; whether they are someone who can ensure the basic necessities for them in the future, and provide them with a happy, stable, wonderful family; and whether they are someone who can comfort them when they encounter any pain, tribulation, failure or setback. To verify these things, they pay special attention to their partner while they’re living together. With great care and attention, they observe and record their partner’s thoughts, views, speech and behavior, every move they make, as well as any of their strengths and weaknesses. They remember in detail all the thoughts, views, words, and behaviors revealed by their partner in life, so that they can better understand their partner. At the same time, they also hope to be better understood by their partner, they let their partner into their heart, and they let themselves into their partner’s heart so that they can better restrain each other, or so that they can be the first person to appear before their partner whenever something happens, the first person to help them, the first person to stand up and support them, encourage them, and be their solid support. In such living conditions as these, the husband and wife seldom try to discern what kind of person their partner is, living entirely in their feelings for their partner, and using their feelings to care for their partner, tolerate them, handle all their faults, flaws, and pursuits, even to the point of responding to their every beck and call. For example, a woman’s husband says, “Your gatherings go on for too long. Just go for half an hour and then come home.” She replies, “I’ll do my best.” Sure enough, next time she goes to a gathering for half an hour and then returns home, and her husband now says, “That’s more like it. Next time, just go and show your face and then come back.” She says, “Oh, so that’s how much you miss me! Okay then, I’ll do my best.” Sure enough, she doesn’t disappoint him the next time she goes to a gathering, and comes home after ten minutes or so. Her husband is very pleased and happy, and says, “That’s better!” If he wants her to go east, she doesn’t dare go west; if he wants her to laugh, she doesn’t

dare cry. He sees her reading God's words and listening to hymns and he hates it and feels disgusted, and says, "What's the use in reading those words and singing those songs all the time? Can't you just not read those words or sing those songs while I'm at home?" She replies, "Okay, okay, I won't read them anymore." She doesn't dare to read God's words or listen to hymns anymore. With her husband's demands, she finally understands that he doesn't like her believing in God or reading God's words, so she keeps him company when he's at home, watching TV together, eating their meals, chatting, and even listening to him vent his grievances. She will do anything for him, so long as it makes him happy. She believes that these are the responsibilities a spouse ought to fulfill. So, when does she read God's words? She waits for her husband to go out, then locks the door behind him and hurriedly begins to read. When she hears someone at the door, she quickly puts the book away and is so frightened she dares not read it anymore. And when she opens the door she sees that it isn't her husband returning—it was a false alarm, so she keeps reading. As she continues to read, she feels on tenterhooks, she's nervous and fearful, thinking, "What if he really does come home? I'd better not read anymore for now. I'll give him a call and ask where he is and when he'll be back." So she rings him up and he says, "Work is a bit busy today, so I might not be home until three or four o'clock." This calms her down, but can her mind still settle down so she can read God's words? It can't; her mind has been disturbed. She hurries before God to pray, and what does she say? Does she say her belief in God lacks faith, that she's afraid of her husband, and cannot quiet her mind to read God's words? She feels she can't say these things, so she has nothing to say to God. But then she closes her eyes and clasps her hands together. She calms down and doesn't feel so flustered, so she goes to read God's words, but the words don't sink in. She thinks, "Where was I reading just now? Where did I get to in my contemplations? I've totally lost my train of thought." The more she thinks about it, the more annoyed and uneasy she feels: "I just won't read today. It's no big deal if I miss my spiritual devotions this once." What do you think? Is life going well for her? (No.) Is this marital distress or marital happiness? (Distress.) At this point, some single people might say, "So, you've jumped into the fire, haven't you? There's nothing great about marriage, is there? See how great my life is, I don't have to worry about anyone else, and there's no one to stop me from attending gatherings and doing my duty whenever I want." To get your partner to feel pleased with you and agree to your occasional reading of God's words or attending a gathering, you get up very early every day to make breakfast, tidy the house, clean up, feed the chickens, feed the dog, and do all sorts of exhausting tasks—even those normally done by men. In order to satisfy your husband, you work tirelessly like an old maidservant. Before he comes home, you shine his leather shoes and arrange his slippers, and after he gets home, you hurry to brush the dust off him and help him remove his coat and hang it up, asking, "It's so hot today. Are you hot? Are you thirsty? What would you like to eat today? Something sour or something spicy? Do you need to change

clothes? Take those clothes off and I'll wash them for you." You're like an old maidservant or a slave, already having exceeded the scope of responsibilities you should fulfill within the framework of marriage. You are at your husband's beck and call, and you regard him as your lord. In such a family as this, there is an obvious difference in status among the two spouses: One is a slave, the other is the master; one is servile and humble, the other looks fierce and commanding; one bows and scrapes, the other is swollen by arrogance. Clearly, the status of the two people within the framework of marriage is unequal. Why is this? Isn't this slave demeaning herself? (Yes.) The slave is demeaning herself. You've failed to uphold the responsibility toward marriage that God has ordained for humankind, and you've gone too far. Your husband fulfills no responsibility and does nothing, and yet you would still wait at the beck and call of a spouse like this and submit to his authority, willingly becoming his slave and his old maidservant to serve him and do everything for him—what kind of person are you? Just who exactly is your Lord? Why don't you practice in this way for God? God has ordained that your partner provides for your life; this is something he should do, you don't owe him anything. You do what you ought to do and fulfill the responsibilities and obligations you ought to fulfill—does he? Does he do what he ought to do? In a marriage, it's not that whoever is the formidable one is the lord, and whoever can work hard and do the most should be the slave. In a marriage, both people should fulfill their responsibilities to each other and accompany each other. Both people have a responsibility toward each other, and both people have obligations to fulfill and things to do within the framework of marriage. You should act according to your role; whichever one your role is, you should do what you ought to do in that role. If you don't, then you are without normal humanity. In colloquial terms, you're not worth a dime. Then if someone's not worth a dime and yet you can still be at their beck and call and willingly be their slave, that is utterly foolish and makes you worthless. What's wrong with believing in God? Is your belief in God an act of evil? Is there a problem with reading God's words? These are all upright and honorable things to do. What does it demonstrate when the government persecutes people who believe in God? It demonstrates that humankind is so evil, and it represents evil forces and Satan. It does not represent the truth or God. Therefore, believing in God doesn't mean that you're below others or inferior to others. On the contrary, your belief in God makes you nobler than worldly people, your pursuit of the truth makes you honorable in the eyes of God, and He regards you as the apple of His eye. And yet you demean yourself and unstintingly become your spouse's slave just to fawn on the other person in your marriage. Why don't you act like this when performing the duty of a created being? Why can't you manage that? Isn't this an expression of human lowliness? (Yes.)

God has ordained marriage for you only so that you may learn to fulfill your responsibilities, learn to live peacefully together with another person and share life together, and experience what life shared with your partner is like and how to handle all

the things you encounter together, making your life richer and more different. However, He does not sell you out to marriage and, of course, He does not sell you to your partner to be their slave. You are not their slave, and they are not your slave master, either. You are equals. You only have the responsibilities of a wife or a husband to your partner, and when you fulfill these responsibilities, God considers you to be a satisfactory wife or husband. There is nothing your partner has that you do not, and you are not worse than your partner. If you believe in God and pursue the truth, can perform your duty, often attend gatherings, pray-read God's words, and come before God, then these are things God accepts and they are what a created being should do and the normal life a created being should live. There is nothing shameful about this, nor must you feel like you owe your partner anything because you live this kind of life—you owe them nothing. If you wish, you have the obligation to bear testimony to your partner of God's work. If they don't believe in God, however, and they don't follow the same path as you, then you do not need and are under no obligation to tell them or explain to them anything or any information about your faith or the path you follow, nor do they have any right to know about it. It is their responsibility and obligation to support, encourage, and defend you. If they can't do this, then they are without humanity. Why? Because you follow the right path, and it's because you follow the right path that your family and your partner are blessed and enjoy the grace of God along with you. It's only right for your partner to be grateful for this, rather than discriminating against you or bullying you because of your faith or because you're being persecuted, or else believing that you should do more household chores and other things, or that you owe them something. You don't owe them emotionally, spiritually, or in any other way—they owe you. Because of your faith in God, they enjoy extra grace and blessings from God, and they gain these things exceptionally. What do I mean by "they gain these things exceptionally"? I mean that someone like that doesn't deserve to gain those things and shouldn't gain those things. Why shouldn't they gain them? Because they don't follow God or acknowledge God, therefore the grace they enjoy comes because of your faith in God. They benefit along with you and enjoy blessings with you, and it's only right for them to be grateful to you. In other words, because they enjoy these extra blessings and this grace, they should fulfill their responsibilities more and support your belief in God more. Because one person in the home believes in God, some people have their family business go well and become greatly successful. They make a lot of money, their family lives a good life, they become rich in material things, and their quality of life increases—how did all these things come about? Would your family be able to obtain all these things if one of you didn't believe in God? Some people say, "God ordained them to have a rich fate." It's correct that God ordained this, but if their family didn't have that one person who believes in God, their business wouldn't be so graced and blessed. Because they have that one person who believes in God, because that one who believes in God has true faith, sincerely pursues, and is willing to devote themselves and expend themselves for God,

their non-believing spouse receives the grace and blessings exceptionally. It's so easy for God to do this small thing. Those who don't believe are still not satisfied, and they even suppress and bully those who believe in God. The persecution the country and society subject believers to is already a disaster for them, and yet their family members go to even greater lengths and pile on the pressure. If, in such circumstances, you still believe you are letting them down and are willing to become a slave to your marriage, then that really is something you shouldn't do. So they don't support your belief in God, fine; so they don't defend your belief in God, also fine. They are free to not do those things. However, they shouldn't treat you as a slave because you believe in God. You're not a slave, you're a human being, a dignified and upright person. At the very least, you're a created being before God, and not anyone's slave. If you must be a slave, then you can only be a slave to the truth, a slave to God, and not a slave to any person, much less have your spouse as your slave master. In terms of fleshly relationships, apart from your parents, the one who is closest to you in this world is your spouse. Yet because you believe in God, they treat you like an enemy and attack and persecute you. They object to you attending gatherings, if they hear any gossip, they come home to scold and mistreat you. Even when you're praying or reading God's words at home and not affecting the normality of their life at all, they will still scold and oppose you, and even beat you. Tell Me, what kind of thing is this? Are they not a demon? Is this the person who's closest to you? Does someone like this deserve to have you fulfill any responsibility toward them? (No.) No, they don't! And so, some people who are in this kind of marriage are still at their partner's beck and call, willing to sacrifice everything, sacrifice the time they should spend performing their duty, the opportunity to perform their duty, and even their opportunity to attain salvation. They shouldn't do these things, and at the very least they should relinquish such ideas. Besides owing God, people don't owe anyone anything. You don't owe your parents, your husband, your wife, your children, much less your friends—you don't owe anything to anyone. Everything people have has its source in God, including their marriages. If we must talk about owing, people only owe God. Of course, God doesn't demand that you pay Him back, He just asks that you follow the correct path in life. God's greatest intention with regard to marriage is for you not to lose your dignity and integrity because of your marriage, not to become someone with no correct path to pursue, without their own outlook on life or their own direction for pursuit, and not to become someone who even gives up pursuing the truth, gives up their chance to attain salvation, and gives up any commission or mission God has given to them, to instead become a willing slave to your marriage. If you handle your marriage in this way, then it would have been better if you hadn't gotten married at all, and the single life would suit you better. If you cannot rid yourself of this kind of marital situation or structure no matter what you do, then it would be best if you extricated yourself from the marriage completely, and it would be better for you to live as a free person. As I have said, God's purpose in ordaining marriage is so that you can have a

partner, to go through the ups and downs of life and pass through every stage of life in the company of your partner, so that you're not alone or lonely in every stage of life, to have someone beside you, someone to confide your innermost thoughts to, and someone to comfort and take care of you. However, God doesn't use marriage to bind you, or to bind your hands and feet, so that you have no right to choose your own path and become a slave to marriage. God has ordained marriage for you and arranged a partner for you; He hasn't found you a slave master, nor does He want you to be confined within your marriage without your own pursuits, your own life goals, without the correct direction for your pursuits, and without the right to seek salvation. On the contrary, whether you're married or not, the greatest right God has bestowed on you is the right to pursue your own life goals, to establish the correct outlook on life, and to seek salvation. No one can take this right away from you, and no one can interfere with it, including your spouse. So, those of you who play the role of slaves in your marriages should relinquish this way of living, relinquish your ideas or practices concerning wanting to be a slave to your marriage, and leave that situation behind. Don't be constrained by your partner, and don't be affected, limited, restricted or bound by your partner's feelings, views, words, attitudes, or even their actions. Leave it all behind and bravely and boldly rely on God. When you want to read God's words then read God's words, attend gatherings when you're supposed to attend gatherings, for you are a human being, not a dog, and you need no one to regulate your behavior or restrict or control your life. You have the right to choose your own goals and direction in life—God has bestowed this right upon you, and in particular, you are walking the right path. The most important thing is that, when God's house needs you to do a certain job, when God's house gives you a duty, you should dutifully relinquish everything without choice or reservation and perform the duty you should do and complete the mission God has given you. If this job requires you to leave home for ten days or a month, then you should choose to perform your duty well, complete the commission God has entrusted you with, and satisfy God's heart—this is the attitude, determination, and desire those who pursue the truth should possess. If this job requires you to be away for six months, a year, or for an unknown period of time, then you should dutifully relinquish your family and your marital spouse and go complete the mission God has given you. That's because this is the time when the work of God's house and your duty need you the most, and not the time when your marriage and your partner need you the most. Therefore, you mustn't think that if you're married then you must be a slave to your marriage, or that it's a disgrace if your marriage ends or breaks up. Actually, it's not a disgrace, and you must see the circumstances in which the marriage ended and what God's arrangement was. If it was ordained and governed by God, and not caused by man, then that is glorious, it is an honor, for you have given up and ended your marriage for a just cause, seeking to satisfy God and accomplish your mission as a created being. This is something that will be remembered and accepted by God, and that's why I say it is a glorious thing, not a disgrace! Even though

some people's marriages end because their partner abandons and betrays them—in colloquial terms, they get dumped and given the boot—this isn't anything shameful. Instead, you should say, "This is my honor. Why? That my marriage has gotten to this point and has ended in this way is ordained and governed by God. It was God's guidance that led me to take this step. If God hadn't done this and made him boot me out onto the street, I really wouldn't have had the faith and the courage to take this step. Thanks be to the sovereignty and guidance of God! All glory be to God!" This is an honor. In all kinds of marriages, you can have this kind of experience, you can choose to follow the right path under God's guidance, accomplish the mission God has given you, leave your spouse under this kind of premise and with this kind of motivation, and end your marriage, and this is something to be congratulated on. There is at least one thing that is worth rejoicing about, and that is that you are no longer a slave to your marriage. You have escaped the slavery of your marriage, and you no longer have to worry, feel pained, and struggle because you are a slave to your marriage and want to get free but are unable to. From that moment on, you have escaped, you're free, and that is a good thing. Having said this, I hope that those whose marriages have previously ended in pain and who are still shrouded in the shadows of this matter can truly let go of their marriage, let go of the shadows that it has left you with, let go of the hatred, anger, and even anguish that it has left you with, and no longer feel pain and anger because all the sacrifices and efforts you made for your partner were repaid with their infidelity, betrayal, and ridicule. I hope you leave all that behind you, rejoice that you are no longer a slave to your marriage, rejoice that you no longer have to do anything or make unnecessary sacrifices for the slave master in your marriage, and instead, under God's guidance and sovereignty, follow the right path in life, perform your duty as a created being, and are no longer upset and have nothing else to worry about. Of course, there's no longer any need to be concerned, worried, or anxious about your marital spouse or to have your mind occupied with thoughts of him, everything will be good from now on, you don't need to discuss your personal matters with your spouse anymore, you don't need to be constrained by them anymore. You only need to seek the truth, and just look for the principles and basis in God's words. You are already free and are no longer a slave to your marriage. It's fortunate that you have left that nightmare of marriage behind you, that you have genuinely come before God, are no longer restricted by your marriage, and you have more time to read God's words, attend gatherings, and perform spiritual devotions. You're completely free, you don't have to act a certain way depending on anyone else's moods anymore, you don't have to listen to anyone's jeering taunts anymore, you don't have to consider anyone's moods or feelings anymore—you're living the single life, great! You're no longer a slave, you can get out of that environment where you had various responsibilities to fulfill toward people, you can be a true created being, be a created being under the dominion of the Creator, and perform the duty of a created being—how wonderful it is to do this purely! You never have to argue, worry, bother with,

tolerate, endure, suffer, or be angry about your marriage again, you never have to live in that odious environment and complicated situation again. This is great, all these are good things, and everything is going well. When someone comes before the Creator, they act and speak according to God's words and in accordance with the truth principles. Everything goes smoothly, there are no more of those messy disputes, and your heart can become quiet. These are all good things, but it's a shame that some people are still willing to be slaves in such an odious marital environment, and they do not escape or leave it behind them. In any case, I still hope that, even if these people don't end their marriages and don't live with broken marriages behind them, they should at least not be slaves to their marriages. No matter who your spouse is, no matter what talents or humanity they possess, how high their status is, how skilled and capable they are, they are still not your master. They're your spouse, your equal. They're no nobler than you, nor are you lowlier than them. If they aren't able to fulfill their marital responsibilities, then you are within your rights to rebuke them, and it is your obligation to manage them and lecture them. Don't degrade yourself and allow yourself to be exploited because you think they're too formidable or you're afraid that they'll tire of you, reject and detest you or abandon you, or because you want to maintain the continuity of your marital relationship, willingly compromising yourself to be their slave and a slave to your marriage—this is not appropriate. This is not how someone should behave, nor is it the responsibilities someone should fulfill, within the framework of marriage. God does not ask you to be a slave, nor does He ask you to be a master. He asks only that you fulfill your responsibilities, and that's why you must correctly understand the responsibilities you ought to perform in marriage, and you should also correctly understand and see clearly the role you play in marriage. If the role you play is distorted and does not accord with humanity or with what God has ordained, then you should check yourself and reflect on how to get out of this state. If your spouse can be rebuked, then rebuke them; if by rebuking your spouse you will suffer unwelcome consequences, then you should make a wiser, more appropriate choice. In any case, if you wish to pursue the truth and attain salvation, then you must relinquish your ideas or practices concerning being a slave to your marriage. You must not be a slave to your marriage, but rather you should leave that role behind, be a genuine human being, be a genuine created being, and at the same time perform your duty. Do you understand? (Yes.)

We've just fellowshiped on the issue of "people shouldn't be the slaves of marriage," telling people to relinquish their wrong views on marriage. That is, some people think that they must keep their marriage going and do all they can to keep their marriage from breaking up and ending. In order to achieve this goal, they make compromises. They'd rather sacrifice many of their own positive pursuits to keep their marriage going, and they become willing slaves to their marriage. These people mistakenly interpret the existence and definition of marriage, and their attitude toward marriage is wrong, therefore they should relinquish such wrong thoughts and views, get away from this kind of distorted

marital state, take the correct approach to marriage, and correctly handle these issues that crop up in marriage—this is the third issue people should relinquish regarding marriage. Next, we'll fellowship on the fourth issue concerning marriage: Marriage is not your destination. This is also an issue. Since it is a topic we fellowship about, this is a demonstrative issue within the current situations in people's marriages. It exists in all kinds of marital circumstances. It's also a kind of attitude people have toward marriage or a kind of state of living, so we should fellowship on this issue and make it clear. After they get married, some women think they've found Mr. Right. They believe they can rely on and trust this man, that he can be a solid support for them on their life path, and that he will be solid and reliable when they need to rely on him. Some men think they've found the right woman. She is beautiful and generous, gentle and considerate, virtuous and understanding. With this woman, they believe they will have a stable life and a peaceful and warm home. When people get married, they all think themselves lucky and happy. Most people believe that when they get married, their partner is a symbol of their chosen future life and that, of course, their marriage is the destination they seek in this life. What does this mean? It means that everyone who gets married believes that marriage is their destination, and that once they have such a marriage, that marriage is their destination. What does "destination" mean? It means a foothold. They entrust their prospects, their future, and their happiness to their marriage as well as to the partner they entered marriage with, and so after they get married, they think that they will never again want for anything or have any more worries. This is because they feel they've already found their destination, and this destination is both their partner and also the home they build together with that person. Since they've found their destination, they no longer need to pursue anything or hope for anything. Of course, from people's attitudes and views toward marriage, it's beneficial for the stability of the marriage structure. At the very least, if a man or woman has a fixed partner of the opposite sex as their marital spouse, they'll no longer have affairs or have more sexual relationships with the opposite sex. This is beneficial for most marital partners. At the very least, their hearts will settle down concerning relationships, they will be attracted to one regular partner of the opposite sex and will be stabilized in a basic living environment by a regular spouse of the opposite sex—this is a good thing. However, when someone enters into marriage, if they regard their marriage as their destination, while they regard all their pursuits, their outlook on life, the path they follow in life, and what God requires of them as superfluous things for their spare time, then imperceptibly having their marriage as their destination is not a good thing, but conversely it becomes an obstacle, a stumbling block, and a hindrance for their pursuit of the correct goals in life, their establishment of the correct outlook on life, and even for their pursuit of salvation. This is because when someone who gets married considers their partner to be their destination and their destiny in this life, they believe that their partner's various emotions, their happiness and unhappiness, are related to themselves, and that their own happiness and unhappiness and various

emotions are related to their partner, and so their partner's life, death, happiness and joy are linked together with their own life, death, happiness and joy. Therefore, these people's idea that their marriage is their life destination makes their pursuit of their life path, positive things, and salvation very sluggish and passive. If the partner of someone who follows God in their marriage chooses not to follow God and instead chooses to pursue worldly things, then the one who does follow God will be severely impacted by their partner. For example, the wife believes she should believe in God and pursue the truth, and that she should give up her job and perform her duty, expend herself, and dedicate herself in God's house, whereas her husband thinks, "Belief in God is a good thing, but we still have to live. If we both perform our duty, who's going to earn money? Who will support the home? Who will sustain the life of our family?" With this view he chooses to keep working and to keep pursuing worldly things; he doesn't say he doesn't believe in God, and he doesn't say he opposes it either. The wife who believes in God is always thinking, "My husband is my destination. I'm fine only when he's fine. If he's not fine, then I can't be fine either. We're like grasshoppers tied to the same rope. We share the same joys and sorrows, and we live and die together. I go wherever he goes. Now we have disagreements in choosing our path and cracks have begun to appear, so how can we be reconciled? I want to follow God, but he's not interested in faith in God. If he doesn't believe in God, then I won't be able to progress in my own faith and won't feel like following God anymore. This is because from the very beginning, I thought of him as my sky, my destiny. I can't leave him. If he doesn't believe in God then neither of us will, and if he does believe in God then we both will. If he doesn't believe in God, I'll feel like I'm lacking something, as though my soul has been taken away." She feels anxious and worried about this matter all the time. She often prays, hoping that her husband can believe in God. But no matter how she prays, her husband is unmoved and he doesn't believe in God. She is distressed—whatever is she to do? There's nothing she can do, so she makes the utmost effort, and so long as her husband is at home, she takes him to go read God's words. Her husband reads God's words and listens while she reads them without aversion, but he doesn't actively participate in fellowship. Because they are husband and wife, he just doesn't argue with her. When asked to learn to sing hymns, he goes along with it and learns to sing them, and after he's learned them he doesn't say whether he has learned them completely or whether he likes them. When asked to attend gatherings, on occasion when he has some spare time he'll go with his wife to the gathering, but normally he's busy working and earning money. He never mentions anything to do with faith in God, he never takes the initiative to ask to attend a gathering or perform a duty. In short, he's lukewarm toward it all. He doesn't oppose belief in God, but neither does he support it, and he doesn't show what his attitude toward it is. The wife who believes in God takes all this to heart and remembers it, and says, "Since we're a married couple and we two are a family, if I enter the kingdom then so must he. If he doesn't follow me in my faith then he won't be able to enter the kingdom

or attain salvation, and then I won't want to live either and will want to die." Even though she isn't dead yet, in her heart she is always feeling worried, pained, and tormented by this matter, thinking, "If one day the disasters come and he dies in the disasters, what will I do? There is now such a big plague. If he gets this plague, then I won't live anymore. He isn't saying he opposes my belief in God, but what will I do if one day he really says he doesn't want me to believe in God anymore?" She worries that, when that time comes, she'll follow her husband and will choose not to believe in God and betray God. This is because in her heart, her husband is her soul, he is her life, and even more so he is her sky, her everything. The husband in her heart loves her the most, and she is the one who loves her husband the most. But now she's run up against a problem: If her husband opposes her belief in God and her prayers are to no avail, what then? She frets about this a lot. When she is required to go perform her duty away from home, although she also wishes to perform her duty in God's house, when she hears that to perform her duty she must leave home and travel far away, and that she must be away from home for a long time, she feels incredible anguish. Why is that? She worries that by leaving home her husband will have no one to look after him, she will miss her husband and won't be able to stop worrying about him. She will be concerned about him and will long for him and will even feel that she can't live without him at her side, that she will lose hope and direction in life, and that she won't be able to wholeheartedly perform her duty either. Now, she just has to think about it and her heart is pained, never mind if this really were to happen. So, in the church, she never dares to ask to go perform her duty in another place, or if there is some job that requires someone to stay away for a long period of time and sleep overnight away from home, she never dares to put herself forward for the job or dares to agree to such a request. She just does everything within her power delivering letters for her brothers and sisters, or sometimes hosting them for gatherings at her home, but she never dares to part from her husband for a whole day. If there really is some special circumstance and her husband must go on a business trip or is away for a few days, then she will cry at home for two or three days before her husband leaves, crying until her eyes have swollen up like tomatoes. Why does she cry? She worries that her husband will die in a plane crash and not even his body will be found, and what will she do then? How will she live and get through the days? Her sky will be gone, it will feel as though her heart has been stolen. Just thinking about it terrifies her, and that's why she cries when she thinks of it. Her husband hasn't even left yet and she's been crying for two or three days, and she keeps crying until he comes back, crying so much that her husband gets annoyed and says, "What on earth's the matter with her? I'm not even dead and she's crying. Is she cursing me to die?" There's nothing he can do, she just keeps on crying, saying, "I just don't want you to go away, I don't want you out of my sight." She stakes her fate and destination on her husband whom she entered into marriage with, and regardless of whether this way of doing things is foolish or childish, there are people like this in any case. Are there more men like this or more women?

(Women.) There seems to be more women like this, women can be a little feeble. No matter who leaves whom between men and women, can they still go on living? (Yes.) No matter who leaves whom, is that something you're able to choose? Is that something you can control? (No.) No, that's not something you can control, and so you're lost in foolish fancies, and you cry, and feel vexed, and worried, and pained—is there any point to all this? (No.) These people feel that being able to look at their partner, hold their hand, and live with them means that they have a lifetime of support, like being soothed and comforted. They think they will have no worries about food or clothing, no concerns, and that their partner is their destination. Unbelievers have a saying that goes, "If I have you in this life, then I need nothing else." This is how these people feel toward their marriage and their partner in their innermost hearts; they feel happy when their partner's happy, anxious when their partner's anxious, and they suffer when their partner suffers. If their partner dies, they don't want to live anymore either. And if their partner goes off and falls in love with someone else, what do they do? (They don't want to live.) Some don't want to live anymore and so they commit suicide, and some people lose their minds. Tell Me, what's this all about? What kind of person loses their mind? To lose one's mind shows that they're possessed. Some women believe their husband to be their destination in life, and that once they've found such a man, they will never again love any other man—it is a case of "If I have him in this life then I need nothing else." But her husband disappoints her, goes off to love someone else, and doesn't want her anymore. So what happens in the end? She then hates absolutely all members of the opposite sex. When she sees another man, she wants to spit at him, curse him, and hit him. She develops violent tendencies, and her sense of reason gets warped. There are some who really do lose their minds. These are the consequences when people don't correctly understand marriage.

These people view marriage as a symbol of their successful pursuit of happiness, as well as a life destination and goal they have long dreamed of and now achieved. Marriage to them is the last of their life objectives, and their pursuits regarding marriage are to share this life with their partner, to grow old together, and to live and die together. In order to verify the thought and idea that their marriage is their destination, they do many things in married life that go beyond rationality and the range of a person's responsibilities. These things that go beyond the range of a person's responsibilities include the extreme things whereby they lose their integrity, their dignity, and the goals they pursue. For example, they often keep tabs on who their partner is with every day, what they do when they go out, whether they have had any contact with other members of the opposite sex, and whether they have had any interactions or friendly relations with other members of the opposite sex that go beyond the scope of friendship. There are also some people who spend a lot of time observing and probing their partner's attitude toward themselves to see whether they are on their partner's mind and whether their partner still loves them. There are also some women who smell their husbands' clothes

when they get home, checking them for any women's hairs, checking their shirts for signs of other women's lipstick. They also check their husbands' phones to see if there are any women's numbers they don't recognize, even checking to see how many phones their husbands have, who they've associated with, and whether what they say when they call every day is true. For example, a woman calls her husband and asks, "Where are you? What are you doing?" Her husband replies, "I'm at work, reviewing documents." She says, "Take a photo of the documents you're reviewing and send it to me." Her husband does as she says, and then she asks, "Who's in the office with you?" He replies, "It's just me." She says, "Can you video call me so I can see who else is in the office?" He video calls her and she sees that there seems to be the figure of a woman walking away, so she says, "That's not true, who is that woman?" He says, "That's just the cleaner." She says, "Ah, okay." Only then does she relax. People like this check their husbands' phones, their whereabouts, what they're doing at all hours of the day. They have such great expectations for their marriage and even greater feelings of insecurity. Of course, they have a tremendous desire to possess and control their spouse. Because they're certain that their spouse is their destination and that their spouse is the one they must and should be with all their life, they therefore cannot possibly allow any cracks to appear in the marriage, or even any flaws or minor problems—all this they cannot allow. And so they put most of their energy into monitoring their spouse, sounding out their spouse, inquiring about their movements and whereabouts, and into controlling them. Especially when their spouse has an affair, this is something they cannot abide. They make a scene, roll around, cry, cause trouble, and threaten suicide. Some even take their troubles with them to gatherings and discuss strategies with their brothers and sisters, saying, "He's my first love, the man I love the most. In my whole life I've never even held another man's hand or touched another man's skin. He's the only man for me, he's my sky, and he's the one for me in this life. He's gone off with someone else and I just can't swallow what he's done to me." Someone says to her, "What's the use in not being able to swallow this? Can you change what's happened? Other people could see your husband had this predilection long ago." She replies, "Whether he has this predilection or not, I just can't accept what's happened. Who is going to help me come up with an idea to punish him and try to stop his mistress from taking my place?" You see, she is so upset that she brings her troubles to a gathering to fellowship on it. Is this fellowship? This is venting inappropriate remarks, venting negative messages, and spreading negative information. It's your own business, and whether you go home, close the door and beat him and argue, that's your business, but you mustn't bring your troubles and talk about them at gatherings. If you wish to seek the truth at a gathering, you may say, "This has happened to me, so how can I extricate myself from this situation and not be constrained by him? How can I not let this matter affect my faith in God and the performance of my duty?" It's fine for you to seek the truth, but if you go to a gathering and talk about your disputes, then that is something you shouldn't do. Why shouldn't you

do that? You have encountered this issue and now find yourself in your current life circumstances because of your incorrect understanding of marriage. You then want to bring these disputes and consequences to your brothers and sisters for fellowship, and not only does this have an impact on other people, but it doesn't benefit you either. You talk about your disputes, but most people don't understand the truth and have no stature, and all they can do is help you come up with ideas and go over your disputes. Not only can they not help you to attain positive entry, but on the contrary, they make things worse and make the problem more serious and complicated. Most people are muddle-headed and they don't understand the truth or God's will—can such people provide you with beneficial and valuable assistance? Someone says, "You will always be his legal wife. Evil can never overcome justice." Is this the truth? (No.) Someone else says, "Don't make way for his mistress, and then we'll see whether she can replace you!" Is this the truth? (No.) Does it make you happy when you hear people say these things, or does it make you angry? Do they say these things to make you hotheaded or so that you understand the truth and have a path of practice? Someone else says, "I totally get it. There are no good men nowadays. Any man with money turns bad." Is this the truth? (No.) And then someone says, "You mustn't put up with this. You have to let that mistress know you won't be pushed around so easily. Show her who's boss. Go to where she works and tell everyone, cause a scene, and say she's your husband's mistress. You're his legal wife and everyone will surely be on your side and not on hers. Get her to make way and back off." Is this the truth? (No.) Are these sayings not the fallacious understandings of the majority of people? (They are.) Someone else speaks in a somewhat reserved way, saying, "He's been with you for a lifetime, aren't you fed up with him yet? If he wants to be with someone else, then let him. So long as he brings money home and you have things to eat and drink, isn't that enough? You should be happy, and then you won't always have him bothering you. So long as he keeps coming home and acknowledges this as his home, isn't that enough? What are you angry about? You are actually taking advantage of this." This sounds comforting, but is it the truth? (No.) Would a decent person say any of these things? (No.) If it's not intended to stir up discord or provoke confrontation, it's intended to calm things down and make an unprincipled compromise. Is there a word here that reflects the perspective the wife should have on the matter, a perspective that is both correct and in accord with the truth? (No.) Don't most people say things like this? (Yes.) What does this prove? (Most people are quite muddle-headed and the ideas they come up with don't help.) Most people are muddle-headed, they don't pursue the truth, nor do they understand the truth. In any case, they don't understand what the truth is, nor do they understand what God's requirements of man are. To be more specific, concerning marriage, people simply don't understand how, in terms of God's words on and definition of marriage, they should tackle the problems that arise in marriage in a way that conforms with God's will, and not get hotheaded.

No matter what issue you encounter, whether it be great or small, you must always approach it with God's words as your basis and with the truth as your criterion. So then, what is the basis in God's words concerning these issues that appear in marriage? What is the truth's criterion? Your spouse is not faithful to your marriage, and that is his problem. But you cannot allow his problem to affect your having the correct attitude and sense of responsibility toward marriage. He is the transgressor, but you cannot allow his transgressions to affect the attitude you should have toward marriage. You believe him to be your destination, but that is just what you think, and in fact it is not like this. God never required or ordained this to be the case, either. It's just that you insist on believing that he is your destination, your soul mate, out of emotion, out of human desire, and more precisely, out of human hotheadedness. It is wrong for you to insist on believing this. No matter what you believed before, in any case you should now change course and see what the correct thoughts and attitudes are that God requires people to have. How should you handle it when your spouse is unfaithful? You shouldn't quarrel and make trouble, nor should you make a scene and roll around on the ground. You should understand that when this happens, the sky does not cave in, nor is your dream of your destination destroyed, nor of course does it mean that your marriage must end and break up, much less does it mean that your marriage has failed or that it has come to the end of the road. It's just that, because everyone has corrupt dispositions, and because people are influenced by the evil trends and common practices of the world and they have no immunity to defend themselves against evil trends, people cannot avoid making mistakes, being unfaithful, straying in their marriages, and letting their partner down. If you look at this problem from this perspective, then it's not such a big deal. All marital families are influenced by the general environment of the world and by the evil trends and common practices of society. Also, from an individual's perspective, people have sexual desires, and in addition are influenced by such phenomena as the love affairs between men and women in movies and TV dramas and the trend of pornography in society. It's difficult for people to adhere to the principles they should uphold. In other words, it's difficult for people to maintain a moral baseline. The boundaries of sexual desire are easily broken; sexual desire itself is not corrupt, but because people have corrupt dispositions, plus the fact that people live in this kind of general environment, they easily make mistakes when it comes to relations between males and females, and this is something you should clearly understand. No one with a corrupt disposition can withstand temptation or enticement in this kind of general environment. Human sexual desire can overflow anytime and anywhere, and people will engage in infidelity anytime and anywhere. This is not because there is a problem with sexual desire itself, but because there is something wrong with people themselves. People will use their sexual desires to do things that cause them to lose their morality, ethics, and integrity, such as engaging in infidelity, having affairs, having mistresses, and so on. So, as someone who believes in God, if you can regard these things correctly, then you should handle them

rationally. You are a corrupted human being, and he is a corrupted human being too, and so you mustn't demand that he be like you and stay faithful just because you are able to stay faithful to your marriage, demanding that he mustn't ever be unfaithful. When something like that happens, you should face it in the correct way. Why is that? Everyone has the opportunity to encounter such an environment or temptation. You can watch your spouse like a hawk but it won't matter, and the more closely you watch him, the faster and sooner it happens. That's because everyone has corrupt dispositions, everyone lives in this general environment of an evil society, and very few are not promiscuous. They are kept from being so only by their situation or conditions. There are not many things in which humans are superior to beasts. At the very least, a beast naturally reacts to its sexual instincts, but that's not the case with humans. Humans can consciously engage in promiscuity and incest—only people can engage in promiscuity. Therefore, in the general environment of this evil society, not just those who don't believe in God but almost all people are capable of doing such things. This is an indisputable fact, and one cannot escape from this problem. So, since this kind of thing can happen to anyone, why don't you permit it to happen with your husband? This is actually a very normal thing to happen. It's only because you are emotionally entangled with him that when he abandons you and dumps you, you aren't able to overcome it and you can't bear it. If something like this happened to someone else, you would just wear a wry smile and think, "That's just normal. Isn't everyone like this in society?" How does that saying go? Something about a cake? (They want to have their cake and eat it too.) These are all popular words and things of the world's evil trends. This is something commendable for a man. If a man has no cakes and isn't able to eat any, it shows that the man has no ability and people will laugh at him. So when this kind of thing happens to a woman, she can make a scene, roll around, and vent her hotheadedness, crying, making trouble, and not eating because this has happened, and wanting to seek death, hang herself, and commit suicide. Some women get so angry that they lose their minds. This is imperceptibly related to her attitude toward marriage, and of course it is also directly related to her idea that "her spouse is her destination." The woman believes that by breaking up their marriage, her husband has destroyed the entrustment and wonderful aspiration of her life's destination. Because her husband was the first to destroy the balance of their marriage, the first to break the rules, because he dumped her, violated the vows of marriage, and turned her beautiful dream into a nightmare, this causes her to express herself in these ways and engage in these extreme behaviors. If people accept the correct understanding of marriage from God, then they will behave somewhat more rationally. When this kind of thing happens to them, normal people will feel hurt, they will cry, and they will suffer. But when they calm down and think about God's words, think about the general environment in society, and then think about the actual situation, that everyone has corrupt dispositions, they will handle the matter rationally and correctly, and they will let it go rather than cling onto it like a dog with a bone. What do I

mean by “let it go”? I mean that since your husband has done this thing and has been unfaithful to your marriage, you should accept this fact, sit down with him and talk, asking, “What’re your plans? What will we do now? Shall we continue to keep our marriage going or end the marriage and choose to live separately?” Just sit and talk; there’s no need to fight or cause trouble. If your husband insists on ending the marriage, then that’s not a big deal. Unbelievers often say, “There are plenty of fish in the sea,” “Men are like buses—there will always be another along soon,” and what is that other saying? “Don’t give up the whole forest for the sake of one single tree.” And not only is this tree ugly, but it’s also rotten inside. Are these sayings right? These are things unbelievers use to comfort themselves, but do they have anything to do with the truth? (No.) So what should the correct thinking and view be? When you encounter such an event, first of all you shouldn’t get hotheaded, and you must contain your anger and say, “Let’s calm down and talk. What do you plan to do?” He says, “I plan to keep trying with you.” And then you say, “If so, then let’s keep trying. Don’t have any more affairs, perform your responsibilities as a husband, and we can draw a line under this matter. If you can’t do that, then we’ll break up and go our separate ways. God may have ordained that our marriage should end here. If so, then I am willing to submit to His arrangement. You can follow the way that is broad, I’ll follow the path of faith in God, and we won’t affect each other. I won’t interfere with you, and you shouldn’t constrain me. My fate is not up to you and you are not my destination. God decides my fate and my destination. Which stop I reach in this life will be my last stop, and will be the arrival of my destination—I must ask God, He knows, He holds sovereignty, and I wish to submit to His orchestrations and arrangements. In any case, if you don’t want to keep this marriage going with me, then we will part in peace. Although I have no particular skill and this family depends on you financially, I can still go on living without you, and I will live well. God won’t let a sparrow starve, so how much more will He do for me, a living human being. I have hands and feet, I can look after myself. You don’t need to worry. If God has ordained that I will be lonely for the rest of my life without you by my side, then I’m willing to submit, and I’m willing to accept this fact without complaint.” Isn’t this a good thing to do? (Yes, it is.) It’s great, right? There’s no need to argue and quarrel, much less make endless trouble about it so that everyone ends up knowing about it—there’s no need for any of that. A marriage is no one’s business but yours and your husband’s. If a conflict arises in the marriage, then the two of you must resolve it and bear the consequences. As someone who believes in God, you should submit to God’s orchestrations and arrangements regardless of the outcome. Of course, when it comes to marriage, no matter what cracks appear or what consequences arise, whether the marriage continues or not, whether you embark on a new life within your marriage, or whether your marriage ends right then and there, your marriage is not your destination, and neither is your spouse. He was just ordained by God to appear in your life and your existence to play a role accompanying you on your path through life. If he can accompany you all the way to the end of the road

and get to the very end with you, then there's nothing better than that, and you should thank God for His grace. If there's a problem during the marriage, whether cracks appear or something happens that's not to your liking, and ultimately your marriage comes to an end, that doesn't mean you have no destination anymore, that your life is now thrown into darkness, or that there is no light, and you have no future. It could be that your marriage ending is the beginning of a more wonderful life. All of this is in God's hands, and it is for God to orchestrate and arrange. It could be that your marriage ending gives you a deeper comprehension and appreciation of marriage, and a deeper understanding. Of course, it could be to you that your marriage ending is an important turning point in your life goals and direction and in the path you walk. What it brings you will not be gloomy memories, much less painful memories, nor will it be all negative experiences and results, but rather it will bring you positive and active experiences which you could not have had if you were still married. If your marriage carried on, you would perhaps always live this plain, mediocre, and dull life until the end of your days. If, however, your marriage ends and breaks up, then that is not necessarily a bad thing. You were previously constrained by the happiness and responsibilities of your marriage, as well as by the emotions or way of living of your concern for your spouse, your looking after him, consideration for him, caring for him, and worrying about him. Beginning from the day your marriage ends, however, all the circumstances of your life, your goals for living and your life pursuits undergo a thorough and complete change, and it must be said that this change is brought to you by your marriage ending. It could be that this result, change, and transition is what God intends you to gain from the marriage that He has ordained for you, and is what God intends you to gain by leading you to end your marriage. Although you have been hurt and have taken a tortuous path, and although you have made some unnecessary sacrifices and compromises within the framework of marriage, what you receive in the end cannot be obtained within married life. Therefore, whatever the case, it is correct to let go of the thought and view that "marriage is your destination." Whether your marriage keeps going or is facing a crisis, or your marriage is facing a breakup or has already ended, whatever the situation, marriage itself is not your destination. This is something people should understand.

People shouldn't harbor the thought and view that "marriage is a person's destination." This thought and view pose a great threat to your freedom and your right to choose your path in life. What do I mean by "threat"? Why do I use this word? I mean that, whenever you make any choice, or whenever you say anything or accept any view, if it relates to your marital happiness or the integrity of your marriage, or it relates even to the idea of your partner being your destination and your ultimate support, then you will be bound hand and foot, and will even be super cautious and careful. Imperceptibly, in this way your free will, your right to choose your path in life, as well as your right to pursue positive things and pursue the truth, will all be bound and even stripped away by this thought and view, and so the frequency with which you come before God will

gradually diminish. What does it signify when the frequency with which you come before God diminishes? Your hopes for attaining salvation will gradually shrink and your life circumstances will become wretched, pitiful, dark, and sordid. Why is that? It's because you have fixed all your hopes, expectations, and life goals and direction on the partner you entered into marriage with, and you regard them as your all. It's precisely because you consider your partner to be your all that they strip you of all your rights, they confound and obstruct your vision, they strip you of your integrity and dignity, of your normal thinking and rationality, and they deprive you of the right to believe in God and follow the right path through life, the right to establish the correct outlook, and the right to pursue salvation. At the same time, these rights of yours are all governed and controlled by your spouse, and that's why I say such people live pitifully, sordidly, and basely. The moment the spouse of someone like this feels a little unhappy about something or uncomfortable in some way, even saying their heart doesn't feel right, they get so scared they can't eat or sleep for days and they even come before God to pray in floods of tears—never have they felt so upset and anxious about anything in their life before, they're truly worried—the moment something like this happens, it's as though they're about to die. Why so? They believe the sky is about to cave in, that their main support will be knocked out from under them, and that this means they'll be finished, too. They don't believe that a person's life and death are in the hands of the Creator, and they're terribly afraid that God will take their spouse from them, cause them to lose their partner, lose their support, lose their sky, and lose their soul—this is such a rebellious way to be. God gave you a marriage, and once you have your support and your partner, you forget all about God, you don't want Him anymore. Your partner has become your God, your lord, as well as your support. This is treasonous and it is the most rebellious act one can do against God. There are even some who, when their spouse gets a little angry or gets sick, get so scared that they don't attend gatherings for many days. They don't tell anyone, nor do they hand their duty over to someone else to do, they just disappear as though they've just evaporated. Their spouse's life and death are what they are most concerned with and what they care about most in life, and nothing could be more important than this—it is more important to them than God, God's commission, and their duty. People like this lose the identity, worth and meaning they should have before God, and God detests them. God has given you a settled life and a partner only so that you can live better and have someone to look after you, have someone beside you, not so that you can forget God and forget His words or abandon your obligation to perform your duty and your life goal of pursuing salvation once you have a spouse, and then live for your spouse. If you really act this way, if you really do live this way, then I hope you will change course as soon as possible. No matter how important someone is to you, or how important they are to your life, your living, or your life path, they are not your destination because they are only a corrupted human being. God has arranged your current spouse for you, and you can live together with them. If God changed His mood and arranged someone else

for you, you could still live just as well, and so your current spouse is not your one and only, nor are they your destination. Only God is the One to whom your destination is entrusted, and only God is the One to whom the destination of mankind is entrusted. You can still survive and live if you leave your parents, and of course you can still live just as well if you leave your partner. Your parents aren't your destination, nor is your partner. Just because you have a partner, someone to entrust your spirit, your soul, and your flesh to, don't forget the most important things in life. If you forget God, forget what He has entrusted you with, forget the duty a created being should perform, and forget what your identity is, then you will have lost all conscience and reason. Regardless of what your life is like now, whether you're married or not, your identity before the Creator will never change. No one can be your destination, and you cannot entrust yourself to anyone. Only God can give you a suitable destination, only God is the One to whom the survival of mankind is entrusted, and this will always be so. Is that clear? (Yes.)

We will finish our fellowship on marriage here. If you wish to express your own ideas, views, or give voice to your feelings, please do so now. (I used to have those views and thoughts that marriage was a person's destination. If my spouse had an affair, then I'd feel desperate and that I couldn't carry on living. I heard from some brothers and sisters that they'd also had experiences like this, and going through something like this was very painful. But today, after listening to God's fellowship, I can take the correct approach to this matter. First, God mentioned that in this wicked society, people can be seduced by the people, events, and things of the outside world and it is very easy for them to make mistakes, so I can now understand this kind of thing. Second, we must also take the correct approach to our spouses. Our marital partner is not our destination in life. Only God is our destination, and only by relying on God can we truly carry on living. I feel like I have a little new understanding of this now.) Excellent. All the views and attitudes concerning the truth that we fellowship on are intended to enable people to shuck off all manner of fallacious, incorrect, and negative thoughts and views; then, they are fellowshiped on so that, when people encounter such a matter, they can be fortified with the correct thoughts and views, they can have the correct path of practice, so that they will not go astray, and not be deluded and controlled by Satan any longer; they are fellowshiped on so that people don't do extreme things, so that they can accept from God in all things, obey God's arrangements in all things, and be true created beings. This is the right way to be. Okay, let's leave our fellowship here for today. Goodbye!

February 4, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (12)

In the last few gatherings, we fellowshiped on topics concerning marriage in “letting go of people’s pursuits, ideals, and desires,” did we not? (Yes.) We have basically finished fellowshiping on topics concerning marriage. This time, we ought to fellowship on topics concerning family. Let’s first look at what aspects of family involve people’s pursuits, ideals, and desires. People should be no strangers to the concept of family. The first things that come into people’s minds whenever this topic is brought up are the composition and members of a family, and some affairs and people that involve family. There are many such topics that involve family. Regardless of how many images and thoughts exist in your mind, do they relate to “letting go of people’s pursuits, ideals, and desires,” which we will fellowship on today? You don’t even know whether these things are related before we start our fellowship. So before we proceed to fellowshiping, can you tell Me what family is in people’s minds, or anything you can think of that should be let go of when it comes to family? Previously we talked about several aspects relating to people’s pursuits, ideals, and desires. Did you identify what each aspect of this topic that we fellowshiped on involves? Regardless of which aspects are involved, what people need to let go is not the matter itself, but the wrong ideas and views they approach it with, as well as the various problems that people have in relation to this matter. These various problems are the crux of what we must fellowship on regarding such aspects. These various problems are issues that affect people’s pursuit of the truth, or rather, more precisely, they are all issues that impede people from pursuing and entering into the truth. That is to say, if there are deviations or problems in your knowledge of a matter, then there will also be corresponding problems in your attitude, approach, or handling of this matter, and these corresponding problems are the topics that we need to fellowship on. Why do we need to fellowship on them? Because these problems have a major or overwhelming impact on your pursuit of the truth and on your correct, principled views regarding a matter, and they naturally also affect the purity of your method of practice regarding this matter, as well as your principles for handling it. Just as we fellowshiped on the topics of personal interests, hobbies, and marriage, we are fellowshiping on the topic of family because people have many incorrect ideas, views and attitudes about family, or because family itself exerts many negative influences on people, and these negative influences will naturally lead them to adopt incorrect ideas and views. These incorrect ideas and views will affect your pursuit of the truth, and lead you to extremes, so that whenever you encounter family-related matters, or face family-related issues, you won’t have the correct views or path for approaching or dealing with these matters and issues, and for resolving the various problems that they give rise to. This is the principle for our fellowships on each topic, and also the main problem that must be resolved. So, as regards the topic of family, can you think of what the negative influences are that family exerts on you, and in what ways family hinders your pursuit of the truth?

In the course of your faith and the performance of your duty, and while you pursue the truth or seek the truth principles, and practice the truth, in what ways does family influence and hinder your thinking, your principles of comportment, and your values, and outlook on life? In other words, you were born into a family, so what influences, what incorrect ideas and views, and what hindrances and disruptions does this family bring to your everyday life as a believer, and to your pursuit and knowledge of the truth? Just as fellowshiping on the topic of marriage follows a principle, so does fellowshiping on the topic of family. It demands not that you let go of the concept of family in the formal sense, or in terms of your thinking and views, nor that you let go of your actual, physical family, or any member of your physical family. Rather, it demands that you let go of the various negative influences that family itself exerts on you, and let go of the hindrances and disruptions that family itself causes to your pursuit of the truth. More specifically, it can be said that your family causes specific and precise entanglements and troubles that you can feel and experience in the course of pursuing the truth and performing your duty, and that constrain you so that you are unable to find release or effectively perform your duties and pursue the truth. These entanglements and troubles make it difficult for you to cast off the constraints and influences caused by this word “family” or by the people or affairs it involves, and make you feel oppressed in the course of your faith and the performance of your duty due to the existence of family or due to any negative influences that family exerts on you. These entanglements and troubles also often afflict your conscience and prevent your body and mind from finding release, and frequently prompt you to feel that, if you were to go against the ideas and views you acquired from your family, then you would have no humanity, and would lose your morality and the minimum standards and principles of comportment. When it comes to family issues, you often hover between the red line of morality and the practice of the truth, unable to find release and extricate yourself. What specific problems are there—can you think of any? Do you ever feel some of the things I mentioned just now in your everyday lives? (Through God’s fellowship, I recall that because I had some wrong views about my family, I couldn’t practice the truth, and felt conscience-stricken about doing so. Previously, when I had just finished my studies and wanted to devote myself to performing my duty, I was conflicted inside. I felt that, because my family had raised me and funded my studies all this time, now that I had graduated from university, if I didn’t earn money and provide for my family, I would be unfilial and lack humanity, which weighed heavy on my conscience. At the time, I struggled with this matter for several months, until finally I found a way out in God’s words, and decided to do my best to perform my duty. I feel that these erroneous views about family do indeed affect people.) This is a typical example. These are invisible shackles that family places on people, as well as troubles that people’s feelings, ideas or views about their family cause with regard to their life, pursuits, and faith. To a certain extent, these troubles create pressure and a burden in the depths of your heart, which deep down give rise to some bad feelings from time to time. Who can add anything else?

(God, I harbor a view that as a child who is now grown up, I should show filial piety and take care of all my parents' worries and problems. But because I'm doing my duty full time, I'm unable to be filial to my parents or do some things for them. Seeing my parents still rushing around making a living, I feel in my heart that I owe a debt to them. When I first came to believe in God, I almost betrayed Him because of this.) This is also a negative effect that the enculturation of one's family has on one's thinking and ideas. You almost betrayed God, but some people really did betray God. Some people couldn't let go of their family because of their strong familial notions. In the end, they chose to continue living for the sake of their family and gave up performing their duties.

Everyone has a family, everyone grows up in a distinct family, and comes from a distinct family environment. Family is very important to everyone, and it is something that leaves the biggest impression on a person's life, something from deep within that is difficult to give up and let go of. What people cannot let go of and what they find difficult to give up is not the family house or all the appliances, utensils, and objects in it, but the members who make up that family, or the atmosphere and emotions that run through it. This is the concept of family in people's minds. For example, the elder members of the family (grandparents and parents), those of similar age to you (brothers, sisters, and spouse), and the younger generation (your own children): These are the important members in people's concept of family, and they are also important components of every family. What does family mean to people? For people it means emotional sustenance and a spiritual anchor. What else does family mean? Somewhere that one can find warmth, where one can pour one's heart out, or be indulgent and capricious. Some say that family is a safe haven, a place where one can draw emotional sustenance, a place where a person's life begins. What else? You describe it to Me. (God, I think that the family home is a place for people to grow, a place where family members keep each other company and depend on each other.) Very nice. What else? (I used to think that family was a cozy haven. No matter how much injustice I've suffered out in the world, whenever I return home, it can relax my mood and spirit in every way due to my family's support and understanding, so I felt that family was a safe haven in that sense.) The family home is a place full of comfort and warmth, is it not? Family is important in people's minds. Whenever someone is happy, they hope to share their joy with their family; whenever someone is distressed and sad, they likewise hope that they can confide their troubles to their family. Whenever people have any feelings of joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness, they tend to share them with their family, without any pressure or burden whatsoever. To every person, family is a warm and beautiful thing, a kind of sustenance for the spirit that people can't give up on or do without at any point in their lives, and the family home is a place that provides tremendous support to people's mind, body, and spirit. Therefore, family is an indispensable part of each person's life. But what kind of negative influences does this place, which is so important in people's existence and life, have on their pursuit of the truth? First of all, it can be said with certainty that no matter

how important family is in people's existence and life, or what role it plays and what function it serves in their existence and life, it still creates some problems—both big and small—for people on their path of pursuing the truth. While it plays an important role in the course of people's pursuit of the truth, it also creates all manner of upsets and problems that are difficult to avoid. That is, in the course of people's pursuit and practice of the truth, the various psychological and ideological problems created by family, as well as problems to do with formal aspects, cause people a great deal of trouble. So what exactly do these problems entail? Of course, in the process of pursuing the truth, people have already experienced these problems in varying number and magnitude, it's just that they haven't carefully considered and contemplated them, to find out what exactly the inherent issues are. What's more, they haven't recognized the essence of these problems, let alone the truth principles that people should understand and abide by. So, today, let us fellowship on the topic of family, and what troubles and obstructions family puts in the way of people's pursuit of the truth, as well as what pursuits, ideals, and desires people should let go of when it comes to the issue of family. This is a very real problem.

Although the topic of family is a big one, it nevertheless poses specific problems. The problem which we are going to fellowship on today is the negative influence, interference and hindrance that people on the path of pursuing the truth face as a result of family. What is the first problem one should let go of with regard to family? It is the identity that one inherits from family. This is an important matter. Let's talk specifically about how important this matter is. Everyone comes from a distinct family, each with its own distinct background and living environment, its own quality of life, and specific way of living and life habits. Each person inherits a distinct identity from their family living environment and background. This distinct identity not only represents each person's specific worth in society and among others, but is also a distinct symbol and marker. So what does this marker signify? It signifies whether a person is regarded as distinguished or lowly in the group they belong to. This distinct identity determines a person's status in society and among other people, and this status is inherited from the family they were born into. Therefore, your family background and the kind of family you live in are very important, because they have a bearing on your identity and status among other people and in society. So, your identity and status determine whether your standing in society is distinguished or lowly, whether you are respected, highly regarded, and looked up to by others, or whether you are despised, discriminated against, and trampled underfoot by others. Precisely because the identity that people inherit from their family affects their situation and future in society, this inherited identity is very critical and important to each person. Precisely because it impacts on your prestige, status, and worth in society, and on your sense of honor or humiliation in this life, you yourself also tend to attach great importance to your family background and to the identity that you inherit from your family. Because this matter has an overwhelming impact on you, it is a very important and

significant thing for you on the path of your existence. Because it is such an important and significant matter, it occupies a crucial place deep in your soul, and in your view it matters greatly. Not only does the identity that you inherit from your family matter greatly to you, but you also view the identity of anyone you know or don't know from the same vantage point, with the same eyes and in the same way, and you use this vantage point to weigh up the identity of everyone you come into contact with. You use their identity to judge their character, and to determine how to approach and interact with them—whether to interact with them on friendly, equal terms, or to be subservient to them and follow their every word, or to simply interact with them and view them with a contemptuous and discriminatory eye, or even to associate and interact with them in an inhumane way and on unequal terms. These ways of viewing others and dealing with things are largely determined by the identity that a person gains from their family. Your family's background and standing decides what kind of social status you will have, and what kind of social status you have determines the ways and principles by which you view and deal with people and things. Therefore, the attitude and ways that a person adopts in dealing with things depend, to a large extent, on the identity they inherited from their family. Why do I say, "to a large extent"? There are some particular situations, which we won't talk about. For the vast majority of people, the situation is as I have just described. Everyone tends to be influenced by the identity and social status that they gain from their family, and everyone also tends to adopt corresponding ways of viewing and dealing with people and things according to this identity and social status—this is very natural. Precisely because it is an inevitability and an outlook on existence that is naturally brought about by one's family, the origin of a person's outlook on existence and way of life depends on the identity that they inherit from their family. The identity that a person inherits from their family determines the ways and principles by which they view and deal with people and things, as well as their attitude when choosing and making decisions in the course of viewing and dealing with people and things. This inevitably gives rise to a very serious problem in people. The origin of people's ideas and viewpoints in viewing and dealing with people and things is, in one sense, unavoidably influenced by family and, in another sense, it is influenced by the identity that a person inherits from their family—this influence is very difficult for people to step away from. As a result, people are unable to treat themselves correctly, rationally, and fairly, or to treat others fairly, and are also unable to treat people and everything in a way that accords with the truth principles taught by God. Instead, they are flexible in the way they deal with matters, apply the principles, and make choices, based on the differences between their own identity and those of others. Since people's ways of viewing and dealing with things in society and among other people are influenced by their family's standing, these ways must be at odds with the principles and ways of dealing with things that God has communicated to people. To be more precise, these ways must be antagonistic to, in conflict with, and in violation of these principles and ways that God has taught. If people's

ways of doing things are based on the identity and social status they inherit from their family, then they will inevitably adopt different or particular ways and principles of doing things, due to their own distinct or special identities and those of others. These principles which they adopt are not the truth, nor are they in accordance with the truth. They not only violate humanity, conscience and reason, but even more seriously, they violate the truth, because they determine what a person should accept or reject based on their preferences and interests, and the degree to which people place demands on each other. Therefore, within this context, the principles by which people view and deal with things are unfair and not in accordance with the truth, and they are entirely based on people's emotional needs and their need to profit. Regardless of whether you inherited a distinguished or lowly identity from your family, this identity occupies a place in your heart, and even a very important position in the case of some people. So, if you want to pursue the truth, this identity will inevitably influence and interfere with your pursuit of the truth. That is, in the process of pursuing the truth, you will inevitably encounter issues such as how to treat people and how to deal with things. When it comes to these issues and important matters, you will inevitably view people and things by adopting the perspectives or views associated with the identity you inherited from your family, and you can't help but use this very primitive or socialized way of viewing people and dealing with things. Whether the identity you acquire from your family makes you feel that your status in society is distinguished or lowly, in any case, this identity will have an impact on your pursuit of the truth, your correct outlook on life, and your correct path of pursuing the truth. More precisely, it will impact on your principles of dealing with things. Do you understand?

Various families bring people various identities and social statuses. Having a good social status and a distinguished identity is something that people enjoy and revel in, whereas those who inherit their identity from a humble and lowly family feel inferior and embarrassed to face others, and also feel that they are not taken seriously or highly regarded. Such people are often also discriminated against, which causes them to feel anguish and low self-esteem deep within their hearts. For example, some people's parents may be smallholders who work the land and sell vegetables; some people's parents may be merchants with a small business, such as running a street stall or street hawking; some people's parents may work in the craft industry, making and repairing clothes, or relying on handicrafts to make a living and support their whole family. Some people's parents may work in the service industry as cleaners or nannies; some parents may work in the removals business or transportation; some may be masseurs, beauticians, or barbers, and some parents may repair things for people, such as shoes, bicycles, spectacles, and so on. Some parents may have more advanced craft skills and repair things like jewelry or watches, while others may have an even lower social status and depend on collecting and selling waste to support their children and raise their family. All these parents have a relatively low professional status in society, and

obviously as a consequence, the social status of everyone in their family will also be low. So, in the eyes of the world, people who come from these families are of lowly status and identity. Precisely because society adopts this way of viewing a person's identity and measuring a person's worth, if your parents are smallholders and someone asks you, "What do your parents do? What is your family like?" you will reply "My parents … oh they're like … it's not worth mentioning," and you won't dare say what they do, because you are too embarrassed to. When meeting with classmates and friends or going out for dinner, people will introduce themselves and talk about their nice family background or their high social status. But if you come from a family of smallholders, petty merchants, or peddlers, you won't want to say so and will feel ashamed. There is a popular saying in society that goes, "Don't ask a hero about his origins." This saying has a very noble ring to it, and to those with low social status it offers an ounce of hope and a glimmer of light, as well as a scrap of comfort. But why is such a sentence popular in society? Is it because people in society pay too much attention to their identity, worth, and social status? (Yes.) Those who come from humble backgrounds constantly lack confidence, so they use this saying to comfort themselves, as well as to reassure others, thinking that although their status and identity are lowly, they have a superior state of mind, which is something that cannot be learned. No matter how lowly your identity, if your state of mind is superior, it proves that you are an honorable person, even more so than those people of distinguished identity and status. What issue does this indicate? The more that people say, "Don't ask a hero about his origins," the more it proves that they care about their identity and social status. Especially when a person's identity and social status are very humble and lowly, they use this saying to comfort themselves and make up for the emptiness and dissatisfaction in their hearts. Some people's parents are worse off even than petty merchants and peddlers, smallholders and artisans, or worse off than parents who do any of those insignificant, humble, and especially low-income jobs in society, so the identity and social status that they inherit from their parents is even more lowly. For example, some people's parents have quite a bad name in society, they don't really do things that they ought to do, and they don't have a socially acceptable occupation or a fixed income, so they struggle to support their family's living expenses. Some parents frequently gamble and lose money with each bet. In the end, the family are left broke and penniless, unable to afford everyday expenses. The children born into this family wear shabby clothes, go hungry, and live in poverty. Whenever the school holds parent-teacher meetings, their parents never show up, and the teachers know that they have gone gambling. It goes without saying what sort of identity and status these children have in the eyes of teachers and among their classmates. Children born into this kind of family are bound to feel that they cannot hold their head up high around others. Even if they study well and work hard, and even if they are strong-minded and stand out from the crowd, the identity which they inherit from this family has already determined their status and worth in the eyes of others—this can make a person feel

very depressed and anguished. Where does this anguish and depression come from? It comes from school, from teachers, from society, and especially from humankind's incorrect views toward dealing with people. Is this not so? (Yes.) Some parents don't have a particularly bad name in society but have done some unsavory things. For instance, take the case of parents who have been imprisoned and sentenced for embezzlement and taking bribes, or because they broke the law by doing something illegal or engaging in speculation and profiteering. The result is that they have a negative and adverse impact on their family, by forcing their family members to suffer this disgrace alongside them. So, belonging to this kind of family effectively has a greater impact on a person's identity. Not only are their identity and social status lowly, but they are also looked down upon, and even labeled with such titles as "embezzler" and "member of a thieving family." Once a person is labeled with titles like these, it will have an even greater impact on their identity and social status, and will further exacerbate their predicament in society, making them feel all the more unable to raise their head up high. No matter how hard you try or how friendly you are, you still cannot change your identity and social status. Of course, such consequences are also the effect that family has on a person's identity. Then there are family structures that are relatively complicated. For instance, some people don't have a biological mother but only a stepmother, who is not very kind or considerate to them, and who didn't give them much care or maternal love when they were growing up. So for them, belonging to a family like this effectively gives them a particular identity, that of being unwanted. Within the context of this particular identity, more shadows arise in their heart and they feel that their status among others is lower than that of anyone else. They have no feelings of happiness, no sense of existence, let alone a purpose to live for, and they feel especially inferior and unfortunate. There are other people whose family structure is complex because their mother, due to some particular circumstances, went through a succession of marriages, so they have several stepfathers and don't know who their real father is. It goes without saying what kind of identity such a person would get from belonging to this particular family. Their social status would be low in the eyes of others, and from time to time there would be people who use these issues or some opinions regarding family to humiliate this person, and to slander and provoke them. Not only would this lower the person's identity and status in society, but it would also make them feel ashamed and unable to show their face around others. In summary, the particular identity and social status that people inherit from being part of a particular family like the ones I have mentioned, or the common, ordinary identity and social status that people inherit from belonging to a common, ordinary family, is a kind of faint pain deep in their heart. It is both a shackle and a burden, but people cannot bear to cast it off, and are unwilling to leave it behind. Because for every person, the family home is the place where they were born and grew up, and it is also a place full of sustenance. For those whose family saddles them with a humble and lowly social status and identity, family is both good and bad, because psychologically people cannot

live without family, but in terms of their actual and objective needs, family has brought them varying degrees of disgrace, preventing them from getting the respect and understanding they deserve among other people and in society. So for this section of the population, the family home is a place that they both love and hate. This kind of family is not valued or highly regarded by anyone in society, but rather is discriminated against and looked down upon by others. Precisely because of this, the people born into this kind of family also inherit the same identity, status, and worth. The shame they feel from belonging to this family often impacts on their deepest emotions, their views on things, and also the ways in which they deal with things. This inevitably affects their pursuit of the truth to a great extent, and also their practice of the truth while they are pursuing it. It is precisely because these things can affect people's pursuit and practice of the truth, that no matter what identity you inherited from your family, you should let go of it.

Some may say: "The parents you just talked about are all smallholders, petty merchants, peddlers, cleaners, and those who do odd jobs. These social statuses are very low, and it's right that people should let go of them. As the saying goes, 'Man struggles upwards; water flows downwards,' people should look upward and aim high, and should not look at these things that are associated with low status. For example, who wants to be a smallholder? Who wants to be a petty merchant? Everyone wants to make big money, become a high-ranking official, have status in society, and achieve meteoric success. No one aspires to be a smallholder from a young age, and to be content with working the land and having enough to eat and drink. No one regards that as making it big, there are no such people. It is precisely because families like this bring shame to people and cause them to be treated unfairly for their identity, that they should let go of the identity that they inherit from their family." Is this the case? (No, it is not.) No, it is not. If we discuss it from a different aspect, some people are born into families that are advantaged, or which have a nice living environment or a high social status, so they inherit a distinguished identity and social status, and are highly regarded in all quarters. Growing up, they are treated with kid gloves by their parents and their family elders, to say nothing of their treatment in society. Because of their special and noble family background, at school, their teachers and classmates all look up to them, and no one dares to bully them. Teachers talk to them softly and cordially, and their classmates are especially respectful of them. Because they come from an advantaged family with a distinguished background, which gives them a noble identity in society and makes others think highly of them, they have a sense of superiority and feel that they have a respectable identity and social status. As a result, in any group they show themselves to be overconfident, saying whatever they please without considering anyone's feelings, and are totally unrestrained in whatever they do. To other people, they are sophisticated and elegant, not afraid to think big, speak out, and act, and no matter what they say or do, because they have the support of their strong family background, there are always

some distinguished people on hand to help them, and everything they do goes smoothly. The smoother things go, the more superior they feel. Wherever they go, they are intent on throwing their weight around and standing out from the crowd, and being different from others. Whenever they eat with others, they pick the big portions, and if they don't get them they get angry. When living with brothers and sisters, they insist on sleeping on the best bed—the one situated in the sunniest spot, or near to the heating, or wherever the air is fresh—and it belongs to them alone. Is this not a sense of superiority? (Yes.) Some people's parents earn good money, or are civil servants, or are talented professionals on high salaries, so their family is particularly comfortable and well-off, and has no worries about affording things like food or clothing. As a consequence, such people feel extremely superior. They can wear whatever they want, buying the most fashionable garments and discarding them once they go out of fashion. They can also eat whatever they want—all they have to do is say the word and someone will deliver it. They needn't worry about anything at all, and they feel extremely superior. The identity they inherit from this type of advantaged family means that in the eyes of others, they are effectively a princess if they are female, or a playboy if they are male. What have they inherited from this type of family? A noble identity and social status. What they have inherited from this type of family is not shame, but glory. No matter what environment or group of people they are in, they always feel that they are head and shoulders above everyone else. They say things like, "My parents are wealthy businesspeople. My family has lots of money. I spend it whenever I want, and I never have to budget," or "My parents are high-ranking officials. Wherever I go about my business, I can get things done with just a word, without going through the normal procedures. You see how much effort it takes you to get things done, you have to go through the proper procedures, wait your turn, and go cap in hand to people. Look at me, I just tell one of my parents' aides what needs doing and it gets done. How's that for identity and social status!" Do they have a sense of superiority? (Yes.) Some people say: "My parents are public celebrities, you can look their names up on the internet and see whether they appear." When someone checks the celebrity lists and the parents' names really are there, it gives those people a sense of superiority. Wherever they go, if someone asks them, "What's your name?" they reply, "It doesn't matter what my name is, my parents' names are such-and-such." The first thing they tell people is the names of their parents, to let others know their identity and social status. Some people think to themselves: "Your family has status, your parents are both officials, or celebrities, or wealthy businesspeople, which makes you the privileged children of high-ranking officials or super-rich parents. What am I?" After thinking about it, they reply, "There's nothing special about my parents, they're just ordinary workers earning average wages, so nothing to brag about—but one of my ancestors was a prime minister in some dynasty." Others say: "Your ancestor was a prime minister. Wow, so you have special status. You are the descendant of a prime minister. Anyone who is descended from a prime minister is no ordinary person, it means

you are the descendant of celebrities too!" You see, once a person associates themselves with a celebrity, their identity will be different, their social status will be raised immediately, and they will be a respected person. There are others who say: "My ancestors were a generation of wealthy businesspeople. They were extremely rich. Later, due to social changes and changes in the social system, their assets were confiscated. Now many of the houses that people live in, within a radius of tens of miles of here, were the houses of my ancestors. In the past, my family home had four or five hundred rooms, or at the very least, two or three hundred rooms, and over a hundred servants in all. My grandfather was the proprietor of the business. He never did any work, he just ordered others to do it. Grandma led a pampered life, and they both had attendants to dress them and wash their clothes. Later, because the social environment changed the family went to ruin, so we were no longer part of the nobility but became commoners. In the past, my family used to be big and prestigious. If they stomped their feet at one end of the village, the tremors could be felt right at the other end of the village. Everyone knew who they were. That's the kind of family I come from, so what do you think of that? It's pretty exceptional, isn't it? You should be looking up to me, right?" Still others say: "There's nothing impressive about your ancestors' wealth. My ancestor was an emperor, and a founding emperor at that. It is said that my surname was passed down from him. My family are all his direct relatives, not distant kindred. What do you think of that? Now that you know the background of my ancestor, shouldn't you regard me with renewed admiration and show me a bit of respect? Shouldn't you be looking up to me?" Some people say: "Although none of my ancestors were emperors, one was a general who killed countless enemies, accomplished countless military exploits, and became an important minister in the imperial court. My family are all his direct descendants. To this day, my family still studies the martial arts moves passed down by my ancestors, which are kept secret to outsiders. What do you think of that? Is my identity not special? Is my status not distinguished?" These special identities that people inherit from their so-called distant ancestral families, as well as from their modern families, are seen as honorable and glorious by people, and from time to time, they name-drop them and flaunt them as a symbol of their identity and social status. In one sense they do it to prove that their identity and status are exceptional. In another sense, when people are telling these stories, they are also striving to carve out a higher standing and social status for themselves, so as to increase their worth among others and appear exceptional and special. What is the purpose of becoming exceptional and special? It is to gain a greater degree of respect, admiration, and esteem from others, so that they can live a more comfortable, easy, and dignified life. Particularly in some special environments, for example, there are people who are constantly unable to assert their presence within a group, or to gain the respect and esteem of others. So, they look for opportunities and from time to time they use their special identity or special family background to assert their presence and let people know that they are exceptional, and

to make people value and respect them, so as to gain prestige among people. They say: “Although my own identity, status, and caliber are ordinary, one of my ancestors was counselor to a prince’s family in the Ming Dynasty. Have you heard of so-and-so? That was my ancestor, my great-grandfather’s grandfather, he was an important counselor to the prince’s family. He was known as ‘The Mastermind.’ He was an expert in everything from astronomy to geography, ancient and modern history, and Chinese and foreign affairs. He was also able to make predictions. We still have the geomantic feng shui compass he used in our family.” Though they might not talk about it often, they nevertheless regale others with stories about the dazzling history of their ancestors from time to time. No one knows if what they are saying is true or not, and some of it may be tall stories, but some of it may be true. In any case, in people’s minds, the identity that they inherit from family is very important. It determines their standing and status among others, the treatment they receive among people, and also their situation and rank among people. It is precisely because, when among others, people perceive these things that they get out of their inherited identity, that they regard them as very important. Consequently, they show off those “glorious” and “brilliant” chapters of their family history from time to time, while repeatedly avoiding mention of those aspects of their family background or those things that have happened in their family that are shameful, or which might be looked down upon or discriminated against. In short, the identity that people inherit from their family is very important in their hearts. When they experience some particular events, they often use their special family identity as capital and as a reason to show themselves off, in order to gain people’s recognition and earn status among others. No matter whether your family brings you glory or shame, or whether the identity and social status you inherit from your family are noble or humble, as far as you are concerned, this family is nothing more than that. It doesn’t determine whether you can understand the truth, whether you can pursue the truth, or whether you can embark on the path of pursuing the truth. Therefore, people should not regard it as a very important matter, because it does not determine a person’s fate, nor a person’s future, and less still does it determine the path that a person takes. The identity that you inherit from your family can only determine your own feelings and perceptions among others. Regardless of whether the identity that you inherit from your family is something you despise or is worth bragging about, it cannot determine whether you will be able to embark on the path of pursuing the truth. So when it comes to pursuing the truth, it doesn’t matter what kind of identity or social status you inherit from your family. Even if the identity you inherit makes you feel superior and honored, it is not worth mentioning. Or, if it gives you feelings of shame, inferiority, and low self-esteem, it will not affect your pursuit of the truth. Is it not so? (Yes.) It will not affect your pursuit of the truth in the slightest, nor will it affect your identity as a created being before God. On the contrary, no matter what identity and social status you inherit from your family, from God’s point of view, everyone has the same opportunity to be saved, and performs their duty and

pursues the truth with the same status and identity. The identity that you inherit from your family, whether it be honorable or shameful, does not determine your humanity, nor does it determine the path you take. However, if you attach a great deal of importance to it, and regard it as an essential part of your life and being, then you will hold onto it tightly, never let go of it, and take pride in it. If the identity you inherit from your family is noble, then you will regard it as a kind of capital, whereas if the identity you inherit from your family is lowly, you will regard it as a shameful thing. No matter whether the identity you inherit from your family is noble, glorious, or shameful, that is just your personal understanding, and merely the result of looking at the issue from the perspective of your corrupt humanity. It is just your own feeling, perception and understanding, which is not in line with the truth and has nothing to do with the truth. It is not capital for your pursuit of the truth and, of course, it is not a hindrance to your pursuit of the truth. If your social status is noble and elevated, that does not mean it is capital for your salvation. If your social status is lowly and humble, that does not mean it is a hindrance to your pursuit of the truth, let alone a hindrance to your pursuit of salvation. Although a family's environment and background, quality of life, and living conditions all derive from God's ordination, they have nothing to do with a person's true identity before God. Any person, no matter what family they come from, or whether their family background is illustrious or inferior, is a created being in God's eyes. Even if your family has an illustrious background and you are of noble identity and status, you are still a created being. Likewise, if your family status is humble and you are looked down upon by others, you are nevertheless an ordinary created being in God's eyes—there is nothing special about you. Different family backgrounds provide people with different growing environments, and different family living environments give people different viewpoints for dealing with material things, the world, and life. Whether one is well-off or wanting in life, or whether one's family circumstances are advantaged or not, it's just a different experience for different people. Relatively speaking, those who are poor and whose family has a modest standard of living have a deeper experience of life, whereas, for those who are rich and whose family is particularly advantaged, it is more difficult for them to attain this, right? (Yes.) No matter what kind of family environment you grew up in, and no matter what identity and social status you gained from that family environment, when you come before God, when you are acknowledged and accepted by God as a created being, you are the same as other people in God's eyes, you are equal to other people, there is nothing special about you, and God will apply the same methods and the same standards in His requirements for you. If you say, "I have a special social status," then before God, you must disregard this "specialness"; if you say, "My social status is lowly," then you must also disregard this "lowliness." Before God, each of you must step away from the identity you have inherited from your family, let go of it, accept the identity that God has given you as a created being, and adopt this identity in performing the duty of a created being. If you come from a good family and are of noble status, you have

nothing to boast about, and you are no more noble than anyone else. Why is that? In God's eyes, as long as you are a created human being, you are full of corrupt dispositions, and you are one of those whom God wants to save. Likewise, if the identity you inherit from your family is lowly and humble, you must nevertheless accept the identity of a created being that God has given you, and come before God as a created being to accept His salvation. You may say: "My family's social status is low, and my identity is also lowly. People look down on me." God says that it doesn't matter. Today, before God, you no longer appear as a person whose identity was given to you by your family. Your current identity is that of a created being, and what you should accept is God's requirements for you. God does not show partiality to anyone. He does not look at your family background or your identity, because in His eyes, you are the same as everyone else. You have been corrupted by Satan, you are a member of the corrupted human race, and you are a created being before God, so you are one of those whom God wants to save. It doesn't matter whether you are the offspring of high-ranking officials or super-rich parents, whether you are a young man of privilege or a princess, or whether you are the child of smallholders or some ordinary person. These things are not important, and God doesn't look at any of this. Because what God wants to save is you as a person. He wants to change your corrupt disposition, not your identity. Your corrupt disposition is not determined by your identity, nor is your worth determined by your identity, and your corrupt disposition does not come from your family. God wants to save you not because your status may be humble, and especially not because your status may be distinguished. Rather, God has chosen you because of His plan and His management, because you have been corrupted by Satan, and you are a member of the corrupt human race. Before God, no matter what identity you inherit from your family, you are the same as everyone else. You are all members of the human race, who have been corrupted by Satan, and have corrupt dispositions. There is nothing special about you. Is that not so? (Yes.) Therefore, the next time someone around you says, "I used to be a county magistrate," or "I was a provincial governor," or someone says, "Our ancestors were emperors," or someone says, "I was a member of congress," or "I ran for president," or someone says, "I was the president of a large company," or "I was the boss of a state-owned enterprise," what's so amazing about that? Is it important that you were once a senior executive or a commanding officer? This world and this society attach great importance to people's identity and social status, and decide how to treat you according to your identity and social status. But now you are in God's house, and God will not look at you differently because of how brilliant you were in the past, or how brilliant and glorious your identity used to be. Especially now that He requires you to pursue the truth, is there any point in showing off your qualifications, social status, and worth? (No, there isn't.) Would it be foolish to do so? (Yes.) Foolish people tend to use these things to measure themselves against others. There are also some new believers who have little stature and do not understand the truth, and who often use these things

from society and family to compare themselves to others. People who have some foundation and stature in their belief in God generally wouldn't do this, nor would they talk about such things. Using one's family identity or social standing as capital does not accord with the truth.

Now that I have fellowshiped a great deal about it, do you understand what I said about the identity you inherit from your family? (Yes.) Tell Me something about it. (God, I'll say something about it. People often attach particular importance to the family they were born into, and to their family's identity and status in society. People who are born into a family with low social status tend to think that they are somehow inferior to others. They feel that they come from very humble origins, and they can't hold their heads up in society, so they want to strive to better their social status; those who are born into a family with a relatively high standing and status tend to be quite arrogant and conceited, they love to show off, and they have an innate sense of superiority. But actually, people's social status is not the most important thing, because before God, people have the same identity and status—they are all created beings. A person's identity and status cannot determine whether they can pursue the truth, practice the truth, or be saved, so one cannot constrain themselves because of their identity and status.) Very good. People who don't pursue the truth care a lot about a person's identity and social status, so in some special circumstances, they will say things like: "You know that so-and-so in our church, their family is well-off!" Their eyes light up when they say the words "well-off," indicating their extremely envious and jealous mentality. Their envious feelings have been growing for so long that it reaches the point where they're drooling over such people and saying, "Oh, you know those people over there, her father is a high-ranking official, and his is a county magistrate, hers is a mayor, and that one's father is a secretary in some government department!" When they see someone wearing nice clothes, or someone who dresses well, or who has a bit of class or insight, or who uses particularly high-end things, they feel envious and think, "Their family is rich, they must be rolling in money," and they are consumed with admiration and envy. Whenever they talk about so-and-so being the boss of some company, they care about that person's identity more than the person does themselves. They're always talking about the person's job even if the person never brings it up themselves, and they even vote for that person when it's time to elect the church leader. They have particular feelings for people who have a higher social status than they do, and reserve them special attention. They are always trying to pander to those people, get close to them, and fawn over them, while hating themselves and thinking, "Why isn't my father an official? Why was I born into this family? Why don't I have anything good to say about my family? The families they were born into are families of either officials or wealthy businesspeople, whereas my family doesn't have anything. My siblings are all ordinary people, smallholders who work the land and who are all at the lower end of society. And the less said about my parents the better—they're not even educated. The shame of it!" As soon as anyone

mentions their parents, they become evasive and say, “Let’s not bring up this topic, let’s talk about something else. Let’s talk about so-and-so in our church. Look at the management position he holds, he knows how to be a leader. He’s been doing it for decades, no one could replace him. That guy was born to lead. If only the same could be said about us. Now that he believes in God it’s a blessing upon a blessing. He really is a blessed person, because he already has everything one could want in society, and now that he has come into God’s house, he can also enter the kingdom and have a beautiful destination.” They believe that when an official comes into God’s house, he or she should be the church leader, and have a beautiful destination. Who decides that? Do they have the final word? (No.) This is clearly something that nonbelievers say. If they see someone with a bit of ability and innate talent, who dresses well and enjoys the good things in life, and who drives a nice car and lives in a big house, then they persistently associate with that person, fawn over them and ingratiate themselves with them. Then there are others who feel that they have a high social status and standing. When they come into God’s house, they always demand special privileges, shout orders at their brothers and sisters, and treat them like slaves, because they’ve become so accustomed to leading the life of an official. Do such people think that their brothers and sisters are their subordinates? When it’s time to elect a church leader, if they don’t get chosen, they get angry and say, “I won’t believe anymore, God’s house isn’t fair, it doesn’t give people a chance, God’s house looks down on people!” They have become accustomed to being an official out in the world, and think that they are the real deal, so when they come into God’s house, they’re always trying to call the shots, take the lead in everything, and demand special privileges, and they treat God’s house like they do the world and society. Perhaps someone is the wife of an official out in the world, but she still wants to be treated like the wife of an official when she comes into God’s house, and have people flatter her and follow her around. During gatherings, if the brothers or sisters neglect to greet her, she gets angry and stops coming to gatherings, because she feels that people don’t take her seriously, and that believing in God is meaningless. Is this not unreasonable? (Yes.) No matter what special identity you have in society, when you come into God’s house, you lose your special identity. Before God and before the truth, people have only one identity, which is that of a created being. Out in the world, whether you are a government official or wife of an official, whether you are a member of society’s elite or a rank-and-file pen pusher, or whether you are a general or a soldier, you have only one identity in God’s house, which is that of a created being. There is nothing special about you, so don’t seek special privileges or make people worship you. There are still others who come from a special Christian family, or from a family that has believed in the Lord for generations. Perhaps their mother was trained in a seminary, and their father is a pastor. They are especially well-received in the religious community, and believers gather around them. After accepting this stage of God’s work, they still feel that they have the same identity as before, but they’re living in dreamland! It’s time for

them to stop dreaming and wake up. It doesn't matter if you are a pastor or a leader, when you come into God's house, you must understand the rules of God's house and learn to change your identity. This is the first thing you need to do. You are not some high-ranking official, nor some rank-and-file pen pusher, you are not a wealthy businessperson, and neither are you poor and penniless. When you come into God's house, you have only one identity, which is the identity God has given you—that of a created being. What should created beings do? You shouldn't flaunt your family history, or the social status you inherited from your family, nor use your superior social status to run amok in God's house and seek special privileges, and you certainly shouldn't use the experience you have accumulated in society, and the sense of superiority that your social status gives you, to act like a sovereign ruler in God's house and to call the shots. Rather, in God's house you should fulfill your duty as a created being, comport yourself in a proper manner, not mention your family background, not harbor any sense of superiority, and neither should you have an inferiority complex; there is no need for you to feel inferior, or have a sense of superiority. In short, you need to obediently do that which a created being ought to do, and perform the duty that a created being should perform. Some people say: "So does that mean I have to rein myself in and keep a low profile?" No, you don't need to rein yourself in or keep a low profile, you don't need to be subservient, and you certainly don't need to act high and mighty. You don't need to try to stand out, you don't need to put on a pretense, and you don't need to make concessions just to keep everyone happy. God treats people fairly, and in a just manner, because God is the truth. God has spoken many words to people and made many demands, and ultimately what He requires is for you to perform your duty as a created being properly, and do everything that a created being should do properly. In dealing with this matter of the identity that people inherit from their family, you are also required to view people and things, conduct yourself and act on the basis of God's words and with truth as the criterion, rather than flaunting the sense of superiority that your family gave you. And of course, if you come from a disadvantaged family, you don't need to be outspoken and open up to everyone about how bad it is. Some other people may say: "Does God's house require that we 'Don't ask a hero about his origins'?" Is this saying the truth? (No.) This saying is not the truth, so you don't need to measure anything on the basis of this saying, nor use it as a criterion for abiding by the requirements that God places on you. Regarding the identity that you inherit from your family, what God requires of you is that you perform your duty. Before God, your only identity is that of a created being, so you should let go of things that can impact on you being a good created being, or prevent you from doing it. You shouldn't make room for these things in your heart, nor attach too much importance to them. Whether in terms of appearances or attitude, you should let go of the distinct identity that you inherit from your family. What do you think of that? Is it doable? (Yes.) Perhaps you inherited an honorable identity from your family, or perhaps your family background casts a shadow over your identity. No matter what, I

hope you walk free from that, take this matter seriously, and then afterward, when you encounter some special situations, and these things affect the performance of your duty, and influence your treatment of people, and impact your correct principles for dealing with things, and your principles for getting along with others, I hope that you can stop being influenced by the identity you inherited from your family, and treat everyone and handle everything correctly. For instance, say there is someone in the church who is always careless in her duty and constantly being disruptive. How should you deal with her? You puzzle over this, thinking, “I must deal with her, because if I don’t deal with her, it will impact on the church’s work.” And so you set about dealing with her. But she refuses to give way, and comes up with a raft of excuses. You aren’t afraid of her, so you continue fellowshiping and dealing with her. She says, “Do you know who I am?” and you reply, “What does it matter to me who you are?” She says: “My husband is your husband’s boss. If you make things difficult for me today, your husband will be in trouble.” You reply: “This is the work of God’s house. If you don’t do it well and keep on being disruptive, I will dismiss you from your duty.” So she says, “In any case, I’ve told you how it’s going to be. Decide for yourself what should be done!” What does she mean by “decide for yourself”? She’s telling you that if you dare dismiss her, she will get your husband sacked. At this point, you’re thinking, “This woman has powerful backing, no wonder she speaks so arrogantly all the time,” so then you change your tone and say: “Well, this time I’ll let it go, but next time I won’t! I didn’t mean anything by what I said, it’s all for the sake of church’s work. We are all brothers and sisters who believe in God, we are all one family. Think about it, I’m the church leader, how can I not take responsibility for this? If I didn’t take responsibility, you wouldn’t have elected me, would you?” You begin to try and smooth things over. Are there any principles behind this? The defensive wall deep in your heart has collapsed, you daren’t stick to the principles, and you cave in. Is this not the case? (Yes.) So you end up letting her off the hook. You are ashamed that your identity is not as noble as hers, and that her social status is higher than yours, so you feel obliged to let yourself be controlled by her, and obey her. Though you both believe in God, you still let yourself be blackmailed by her. If you cannot get rid of the influence that social status exerts on you, you will not be able to uphold the principles, you will not be able to practice the truth, and you will not be faithful before God. If you are not faithful to God, will God accept you? Will God trust you? Will He still entrust you with important work? To Him you will be an untrustworthy person, because at the critical juncture, you sold out the interests of God’s house to protect your own interests. At the critical juncture, you took fright at the evil forces that come from society and from Satan, causing you to sell out the interests of God’s house and fail to stand firm in your testimony. This is a grave transgression and a mark of having brought dishonor to God. Why is that? Because when you did this, you betrayed your identity as a created being, and violated this principle of doing what a created being ought to do. In handling this matter, you allowed yourself to be influenced by your social status and your

identity in society. In confronting any issue, if you cannot let go of the negative influences created by the identity that you inherited from your family, then you may react to these issues by doing unexpected things. In one sense, these things will make you violate the truth, and in another sense, they will leave you utterly at a loss, not knowing what choices to make. This will easily lead you into transgression and regret, so that before God you will be stained and regarded as an untrustworthy person who has violated the principle that God impresses on humankind, which is to perform one's duty as a created being, and to do as a created being ought to do. Think about it, this matter is somewhat trivial but also very significant in its severity, is it not? (Yes.)

I fellowshiped just now about letting go of the identity that you inherit from your family. Is this easy to do? (Yes, it's easy to do.) Is it easy to do? Under what circumstances will this matter affect you and disturb you? When you don't have a correct and pure understanding of this matter, in a particular type of environment you will be influenced by it, and it will affect your ability to perform your duty well, and impact on your methods for handling things and on the outcomes. Therefore, when it comes to the identity you inherit from family, you should treat it correctly, and not be influenced or controlled by it, but instead view people and things, and comport yourself and act normally according to the methods that God gives to people. That way, you will have the attitude and principles that an acceptable created being should have in this respect. Next, we will fellowship about letting go of the conditioning effects that family exerts on you. In this society, people's principles for dealing with the world, their methods for living and existing, and even their attitudes and notions toward religion and belief, as well as their various notions and views toward people and things—all these things are inevitably conditioned by family. Before people come to understand the truth—no matter how old they are, or what gender they are, or what occupation they are engaged in, or what kind of attitude they have toward everything, whether it be extreme or rational—in short, in all manner of things, people's thoughts and views and their attitudes toward things are greatly influenced by family. That is to say, the various conditioning effects that family exerts on a person determine, to a large extent, that person's attitude toward things and their method for dealing with them, as well as their outlook on existence, and even impact on their faith. Since family conditions and impacts on people so significantly, family is inevitably at the root of people's methods and principles for dealing with things, as well as their outlook on existence, and their views on faith. Because the family home itself is not the place where truth arises, nor is it the source of truth, there is practically only one motivating force or aim that drives your family to condition into you any idea, viewpoint, or method for existing—that of acting in your best interests. These things that are in your own best interests, no matter who they come from—whether it be from your parents, grandparents, or from your ancestors—in short, they are all intended to enable you to defend your own interests in society and among others, to prevent you from getting bullied, and to enable you to live among people in a way that is more unconstrained and

diplomatic, and which is intended to protect your own interests to the greatest extent. The conditioning you receive from your family is meant to protect you, to avoid you getting bullied or suffering any humiliation, and to turn you into someone who is a cut above, even if that means bullying others or hurting others, just as long as you are not harmed yourself. These are some of the most important things that your family conditions into you, and they are also the essence and chief aim underlying all the ideas that are conditioned into you. Is this not the case? (Yes.) If you consider the aim and essence of all the things your family has conditioned into you, is there anything that accords with the truth? Even if these things do accord with the ethics or legitimate rights and interests of humanity, do they have any connection to the truth? Are they the truth? (No.) It can be said with all certainty that they are definitely not the truth. No matter how positive and legitimate, humane, and ethical the things that your family conditions into you are, they are not the truth, nor can they represent the truth, and of course they cannot replace the truth. Therefore, when it comes to the topic of family, these things are another aspect that people should let go of. What specifically is this aspect? It is the conditioning effects that family exerts on you—this is the second aspect that you should let go of when it comes to the topic of family. Since we are discussing the conditioning effects that family exerts on you, let's first talk about exactly what these conditioning effects are. If we differentiate them according to people's concept of right and wrong, some are relatively correct, positive, and presentable, and can be laid out on the table, whereas some are relatively selfish, despicable, vile, relatively negative, and nothing more. But at any rate, these conditioning effects from family are like a layer of protective clothing that collectively safeguards a person's fleshly interests, preserves their dignity among others, and prevents them from getting bullied. Is it not so? (Yes.) Let us talk, then, about what conditioning effects your family exerts on you. For example, when family elders often tell you that "People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark," it is to make you attach importance to having a good reputation, living a proud life, and not doing things that heap disgrace upon you. So does this saying guide people in a positive or negative way? Can it lead you to the truth? Can it lead you to understand the truth? (No, it cannot.) You can say with all certainty, "No, it cannot!" Think about it, God says that people should comport themselves as honest people. When you have transgressed, or done something wrong, or done something that goes against God and rebels against the truth, you need to admit your mistake, gain an understanding of yourself, and keep dissecting yourself in order to achieve true repentance, and thereafter act in accordance with God's words. So, if people are to comport themselves as honest people, does that conflict with the saying "People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark"? (Yes.) How does it conflict? The saying "People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark" is intended to make people attach importance to living out their bright and colorful side and doing more things that make them look good—rather than doing things that are bad or dishonorable, or exposing their ugly side—and to prevent them from living without pride or dignity. For

the sake of one's reputation, for the sake of pride and honor, one cannot rubbish everything about oneself, let alone tell others about one's dark side and shameful aspects, because one must live with pride and dignity. In order to have dignity one needs a good reputation, and to have a good reputation one needs to put up a pretense and dress oneself up. Doesn't this conflict with comporting oneself as an honest person? (Yes.) When you comport yourself as an honest person, what you are doing is completely at odds with the saying "People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark." If you want to comport yourself as an honest person, don't attach importance to pride; a person's pride isn't worth a cent. Faced with the truth, one should expose oneself, not put up a pretense or create a false image. One must reveal to God one's true thoughts, the mistakes one has made, the aspects that violate the truth principles, and so on, and also lay these things bare to one's brothers and sisters. It is not a matter of living for the sake of one's reputation, but rather, it is a matter of living for the sake of comporting oneself as an honest person, living for the sake of pursuing the truth, living for the sake of being a true created being, and living for the sake of satisfying God and being saved. But when you don't understand this truth, and don't understand God's will, the things that are conditioned into you by your family tend to dominate. So when you do something wrong, you cover it up and put up a pretense, thinking, "I can't say anything about this, and I won't allow anyone else who knows about it to say anything either. If any of you say anything, I won't let you off lightly. My reputation comes first. Living is for nothing if not for the sake of one's reputation, because it's more important than anything else. If a person loses their reputation, they lose all their dignity. So you can't tell it like it is, you have to pretend, you have to cover things up, otherwise you will lose your reputation and dignity, and your life will be worthless. If no one respects you, then you're just worthless, cheap trash." Is it possible to comport yourself as an honest person by practicing this way? Is it possible to be completely open and dissect yourself? (No, it isn't.) Obviously, by doing this you are adhering to the saying "People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark" that your family has conditioned into you. However, if you let go of this saying in order to pursue the truth and practice the truth, it will cease to affect you, and it will cease to be your motto or your principle for doing things, and instead what you do will be precisely the opposite of this saying "People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark." You won't be living for the sake of your reputation, nor for the sake of your dignity, but rather, you will be living for the sake of pursuing the truth, and comporting yourself as an honest person, and seeking to satisfy God and live as a true created being. If you adhere to this principle, you will have let go of the conditioning effects that your family exerts on you.

Family conditions people not just with one or two sayings, but with a whole host of well-known quotations and aphorisms. For example, do your family elders and parents often mention the saying "A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies"? (Yes.) They are telling you: "People must live for

the sake of their reputation. People seek nothing else in their lifetime, other than to forge a good reputation among others and make a good impression. Wherever you go, be more generous in giving out greetings, pleasantries, and compliments, and say more kind words. Don't offend people, but instead do more good deeds and kind acts." This particular conditioning effect exerted by family has a certain impact on people's behavior or principles of conduct, with the inevitable consequence that they attach great importance to fame and gain. That is, they attach great importance to their own reputation, prestige, the impression they create in people's minds, and others' estimation of everything they do and every opinion they express. By placing great importance on fame and gain, you unwittingly place little importance on whether the duty you fulfill accords with the truth and principles, whether you are satisfying God, and whether you are fulfilling your duty adequately. You see these things as being of lesser importance and lower priority, whereas the saying "A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies," which your family has conditioned into you, becomes extremely important to you. It makes you pay great attention to how every detail of yourself comes across in people's minds. In particular, some people pay special attention to what other people really think of them behind their backs, to the point of eavesdropping through walls, listening through half-open doors, and even stealing a glance at what other people write about them. As soon as someone mentions their name, they think, "I have to hurry up and listen to what they're saying about me, and whether they have a good opinion of me. Oh dear, they said that I'm lazy and that I like to eat nice food. Then I have to change, I can't be lazy in the future, I must be diligent." After being diligent for a while, they think to themselves, "I've been listening to whether everyone is saying that I'm lazy, and no one seems to have said it lately." But still they are uneasy, so they casually drop it into their conversations with those around them, saying: "I am a bit lazy." And others reply: "You're not lazy, you're much more diligent now than you used to be." At this they instantly feel reassured, overjoyed, and comforted. "Look at that, everyone's opinions of me have changed. It seems that everyone has noticed the improvement in my behavior." Everything you do is not for the sake of practicing the truth, nor in order to satisfy God, but rather, it is for the sake of your own reputation. In this way, what has everything that you do effectively become? It has effectively become a religious act. What has become of your essence? You have become the archetype of a Pharisee. What has become of your path? It has become the path of antichrists. That is how God defines it. So, the essence of everything you do has become tainted, it's no longer the same; you are not practicing the truth or pursuing it, but instead you are pursuing fame and gain. Ultimately as far as God is concerned, the performance of your duty is—in a word—inadequate. Why is that? Because you are devoted only to your own reputation, rather than to that which God has entrusted to you, or to your duty as a created being. What do you feel in your heart when God comes up with such a definition? That your belief in God all these years has been in vain? So does

that mean you haven't been pursuing the truth at all? You haven't been pursuing the truth, instead you have been paying special attention to your own reputation, and at the root of this are the conditioning effects that come from your family. Which is the most dominant saying that you have been conditioned with? The saying, "A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies," has taken deep root in your heart and become your motto. You have been influenced and conditioned by this saying since you were young, and even after growing up you often keep repeating this saying to influence the next generation of your family and the people around you. Of course, what is even more serious is that you have adopted it as your method and principle for conducting yourself and dealing with things, and even as the goal and direction that you pursue in life. Your goal and direction are wrong, and so the final outcome is certain to be negative. Because the essence of everything you do is solely for the sake of your reputation, and solely in order to put into practice the saying "A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies." You are not pursuing the truth, and yet you yourself don't know that. You think there is nothing wrong with this saying, because shouldn't people live for the sake of their reputation? As the common saying goes, "A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies." This saying seems very positive and legitimate, so you unconsciously accept its conditioning effect and regard it as a positive thing. Once you regard this saying as a positive thing, you are unknowingly pursuing it and putting it into practice. At the same time, you unknowingly and confusedly misconstrue it as the truth and as a criterion of the truth. When you regard it as a criterion of the truth, you no longer listen to what God says, nor can you understand it. You blindly put into practice this motto, "A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies," and act in accordance with it, and what you ultimately get out of that is a good reputation. You have gained what you wanted to gain, but in doing so you have violated and abandoned the truth, and lost the chance to be saved. Given that this is the final outcome, you should let go of and abandon the idea that "A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies," which your family conditioned into you. It is not something that you should hold onto, nor is it a saying or idea that you should spend a lifetime of effort and energy putting into practice. This idea and view that you are being inculcated and conditioned with is wrong, so you should let go of it. The reason why you should let go of it is not only because it is not the truth, but also because it will lead you astray and ultimately lead to your destruction, so the consequences are very serious. For you, it is not just a simple saying, but a cancer—a means and method that corrupts people. Because in God's words, among all of His requirements for people, God has never asked people to pursue a good reputation, or to seek prestige, or to make a good impression on people, or to win people's approval, or to get a thumbs-up from people, nor has He ever made people live for the sake of fame or in order to leave behind a good

reputation. God only wants people to perform their duty well, and to submit to Him and obey the truth. Therefore, as far as you are concerned, this saying is a type of conditioning from your family that you should let go of.

There is another conditioning effect that your family exerts on you. For example, when parents or elders encourage you, they often say “You have to endure great suffering in order to come out on top.” In saying this, their aim is to teach you to endure suffering, be diligent and persevere, and not be afraid of suffering in whatever you do, because only those who endure suffering, resist hardship, work hard, and possess fighting spirit can come out on top. What does “come out on top” mean? It means not being bullied, or looked down upon, or discriminated against; it means having high prestige and status among people, having the authority to speak and be heard, and the authority to make decisions; it means being able to lead a better and higher-quality life among others, and having people look up to you, admire you, and envy you. It essentially means that you are in the upper echelon of the entire human race. What does “upper echelon” mean? It means that there are many people at your feet and you needn’t put up with any mistreatment from them—this is what it is to “come out on top.” In order to come out on top, you have to “endure great suffering,” which means that you must be able to endure suffering that others cannot. So before you can come out on top, you must be able to endure people’s disdainful looks, sneers, sarcasm, slander, as well as others’ lack of understanding, and even their scorn, and so on. In addition to physical suffering, you must be able to put up with the sarcasm and ridicule of public opinion. Only by learning to be this kind of person can you stand out among people, and earn a niche for yourself in society. The aim of this saying is to make people become a top dog rather than an underling, because being an underling is so hard—you have to put up with mistreatment, you feel useless, and you have no dignity or face. This is also a conditioning effect that your family exerts on you, with the aim of acting in your best interests. Your family does this so that you don’t have to put up with mistreatment from others, and so that you have fame and authority, eat well and enjoy yourself, and so that wherever you go, no one will dare bully you and you can instead act like a tyrant and call the shots, and everyone will bow and scrape to you. In one sense, by seeking to be a cut above, you are doing it for your own benefit, and in another sense, you are also doing it to boost the family’s social status and bring honor to your ancestors, so that your parents and family members can also benefit from being associated with you and not suffer mistreatment. If you have endured great suffering and come out on top by becoming a high-ranking official with a nice car, a luxury house and a retinue of people buzzing around you, your family will likewise benefit from being associated with you, and your family members will also be able to drive nice cars, eat well, and live the high life. You will be able to eat the most expensive delicacies if you want, and go wherever you like, and have everyone at your beck and call, and do as you please, and live willfully and arrogantly without needing to keep a low profile or live with your tail between your

legs, and do whatever you want, even if it's above the law, and live boldly and recklessly—this is your family's aim in conditioning you this way, to prevent you from being wronged, and to make you come out on top. To put it bluntly, their aim is to make you into someone who leads others, directs others, and orders others, and to turn you into someone who is only capable of bullying others and who is never on the receiving end, and to make you into someone who comes out on top, rather than someone who is led. Is this not the case? (Yes.) Does this conditioning effect from your family benefit you? (No.) Why do you say that it doesn't benefit you? If every family educated the next generation this way, would it increase social conflict and make society more competitive and unfair? Everyone would want to be at the top of the pile, no one would want to be at the bottom of the pile, or to be an ordinary person—they would all want to be the person who governs and bullies others. Do you think society could still be good if that were the case? Society would clearly not be oriented in a positive direction, and it would only intensify social conflicts, increase competitiveness between people, and exacerbate disputes between people. Take school, for instance. Students try to get one up on each other, by expending great effort studying when no one is around, but when they meet up they would say, "Oh, yet again I didn't study last weekend. Instead I went to a great place and had fun all day. Where did you go?" And someone else would chime in: "I slept in all weekend and didn't study either." They actually both know full well that the other spent all weekend studying to the point of exhaustion, but neither admits to having studied or put in great effort when no one was watching, because everyone wants to come out on top and doesn't want anyone else to outdo them. They say that they haven't been studying, because they don't want others to know that in fact they have. What's the use of lying like that? You study for your own sake, not for others. If you can lie at such a young age, can you walk the correct path after you enter society? (No.) Entering society entails personal interests, money, and status, so the competition would only get fiercer. People would stop at nothing and use every means at their disposal in order to achieve their goals. They would be willing and able to do whatever it took to achieve their goal, at any cost, even if it meant enduring humiliation to get there. If things kept going like this, how could society turn out well? If everyone did this, how could the human race turn out well? (It couldn't.) The root of all kinds of improper social mores and evil trends comes from the conditioning that family exerts on people. What, then, does God require in this respect? Does God require people to come out on top and not to be mediocre, mundane, unremarkable, or ordinary, but instead to be great, famous, and lofty? Is this what God requires of people? (No.) It is very clear that the saying which your family has conditioned into you—"You have to endure great suffering in order to come out on top"—doesn't guide you in a positive direction, and of course, it also has no connection to the truth. Your family's aims in making you endure suffering are less than innocent, underpinned by scheming, and so despicable and underhand. God makes people endure suffering because they have corrupt dispositions. If people wish to be purified of

their corrupt dispositions, they must undergo suffering—this is an objective fact. In addition, God requires people to endure suffering: This is what a created being should do, and it is also what a normal person should bear, and the attitude that a normal person should have. However, God does not require you to come out on top. He only requires you to be an ordinary, normal person who understands the truth, listens to His words, obeys Him, and that is all. God never demands that you surprise Him, or do anything earth-shattering, nor does He need you to be a celebrity or a great person. He just needs you to be an ordinary, normal, and real person, and no matter how much suffering you can endure, or whether you can endure suffering at all, if in the end you are able to fear God and shun evil, then this is the best person you can be. What God wants is not for you to come out on top, but to be a true created being, a person who can perform the duty of a created being. This person is someone unremarkable and ordinary, someone with normal humanity, conscience and reason, not someone who is lofty or great in the eyes of unbelievers or corrupt humans. We have fellowshiped a great deal on this aspect before, so we won't discuss it further now. This saying "You have to endure great suffering in order to come out on top" is clearly something you should let go of. What is it exactly that you should let go of? It is the direction that your family has conditioned you into pursuing. That is, you should change the direction of your pursuit. Don't do anything just for the sake of coming out on top, standing out from the crowd and being noteworthy, or being admired by others. Instead, you should let go of these intentions, aims, and motives and do everything in a down-to-earth manner in order to be a true created being. What do I mean by "in a down-to-earth manner"? The most basic principle is to do everything in accordance with the ways and principles that God has taught people. Supposing that what you do doesn't blow everyone away or impress them, or isn't even praised or valued by anyone. However, if this is something that you ought to do, then you should persist and keep at it, treating it as the duty that a created being should perform. If you do that, you will be an acceptable created being in God's eyes—it's as simple as that. What you need to change is your pursuit with regard to your comportment and your outlook on life.

Family conditions and influences you in other ways, for instance with the saying "Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance." Family members often teach you: "Be kind and don't argue with others or make enemies, because if you make too many enemies, you won't be able to gain a foothold in society, and if there are too many people who hate you and are out to get you, then you won't be safe in society. You will always be under threat, and your survival, status, family, personal safety, and even your career promotion prospects will be jeopardized and impeded by nasty people. So you must learn that 'Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance.' Be kind to everyone, don't damage good relationships, don't say anything that you can't take back later, avoid hurting people's pride, and don't expose their shortcomings. Avoid or stop saying things that people don't want to listen to. Just give compliments, because it never hurts to

compliment somebody. You must learn to show forbearance and compromise in both big and small matters, because ‘Compromise will make a conflict much easier to resolve.’” Think about it, your family instills two ideas and views into you at once. In one sense, they say that you need to be kind to others; in another sense, they need you to be forbearing, not speak out of turn, and if you have something to say, you should button your lip until you get home and then tell your family. Or better still, don’t even tell your family at all, because walls have ears—if ever the secret leaks out, things will not go well for you. To gain a foothold and survive in this society, people must learn one thing, which is to be a fence-straddler. In colloquial terms, you must be slippery and cunning. You can’t just say what’s on your mind. If you go ahead and say what’s on your mind, that’s called being stupid, it’s not called being smart. Some people are loose cannons who say whatever they want. Imagine a guy who does that and ends up offending his boss. The boss then makes life difficult for him, cancels his bonus, and is always looking to pick a quarrel with him. In the end, he can’t bear to stay in the job any longer. If he quits his job, he has no other means to earn a living. But if he doesn’t quit, all he can do is put up with a job that he can’t bear to do any longer. What’s that called, when you are between a rock and a hard place? “Stuck,” in a fix. His family then tells him off, saying: “You deserve to be mistreated, you should have remembered that ‘Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance’! It serves you right for being a loose cannon and shooting your mouth off! We told you to be tactful and think carefully about what you say, but you didn’t want to, you had to go and be direct. Did you think your boss was that easy to mess with? Did you think it was that easy to survive in society? You always reckon you are just being straightforward. Well, now you must reap the painful consequences. Let this be a lesson to you! In future, you’ll do well to remember the saying ‘Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance’!” Once he has been taught this lesson, he remembers it, thinking, “My parents really were right to educate me. This is an insightful bit of life experience, a real nugget of wisdom, I can’t keep on ignoring it. I ignore my elders at my peril, so I’ll remember it in future.” After he comes to believe in God and joins God’s house, he still remembers this saying, “Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance,” and so he greets his brothers and sisters whenever he sees them, and does his best to speak nice words to them. The leader says: “I’ve been a leader for a while, but I don’t have enough work experience.” So he interjects with a compliment: “You’re doing a great job. If you weren’t leading us, we’d feel like we had nowhere to turn.” Someone else says: “I’ve gained an understanding of myself, and I think that I am quite deceitful.” So he replies, “You aren’t deceitful, you are really honest, I’m the one who’s deceitful.” Someone else makes a nasty remark to him, and he thinks to himself, “No need to fear nasty remarks like that, I can put up with much worse. No matter how nasty your remarks get, I’ll just pretend that I didn’t hear them, and I’ll keep on complimenting you, and trying my best to curry favor with you, because it never hurts to compliment you.” Whenever anyone asks him to give his opinion or open up during fellowship, he doesn’t talk frankly,

and maintains this cheerful and jolly facade in front of everyone. Someone asks him: “How come you are always so cheerful and jolly? Are you really a smiling tiger?” And he thinks to himself: “I’ve been a smiling tiger for years, and in all that time I’ve never been taken advantage of, so it has become my overriding principle for dealing with the world.” Is he not like a slippery stone? (Yes.) Some people have drifted along in society like this for many years, and continue to do so after they come into God’s house. They never say one honest word, they never speak from the heart, and they don’t talk about their own understanding of themselves. Even when a brother or sister lays their own heart bare to them, they don’t speak frankly, and no one can work out what’s really going on in their minds. They never reveal what they think or what their views are, they maintain really good relations with everyone, and you don’t know what kind of people or what type of personality they actually like, or what they really think about others. If anyone asks them what kind of person so-and-so is, they answer, “He has been a believer for over ten years, and he’s just fine.” Whoever you ask them about, they will reply that the person is just fine or pretty good. If someone asks them, “Have you discovered any shortcomings or flaws in him?” They will reply, “I haven’t found any so far, I’ll keep a closer eye out in future,” but deep down they are thinking: “You’re asking me to offend that person, which I most certainly won’t do! If I tell you the truth and he finds out about it, won’t he just become my enemy? My family has long been telling me not to make enemies, I haven’t forgotten their words. Do you think I’m stupid? Do you think I’d forget the education and conditioning I’ve received from my family just because you’ve fellowshiped two sentences of truth? It won’t happen! These sayings, ‘Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance’ and ‘Compromise will make a conflict much easier to resolve,’ have never let me down yet and they are my talismans. I don’t talk about anyone’s flaws, and if anyone provokes me, I show them forbearance. Haven’t you seen that character imprinted on my forehead? It’s the Chinese character for ‘forbearance,’ which consists of the character of a knife above that of a heart. Whoever says nasty remarks, I show them forbearance. Whoever deals with and prunes me, I show them forbearance. My aim is to stay on good terms with everyone, to keep relations at this level. Don’t stick to principles, don’t be so stupid, don’t be inflexible, you must learn to yield according to the circumstances! Why do you think tortoises live for so long? It’s because they hide inside their shell whenever the going gets tough, is it not? That way they can protect themselves and live for thousands of years. That’s how to live a long life, and also how to deal with the world.” You don’t hear such people utter anything truthful or genuine, and their true viewpoints and the bottom line for their comportment are never revealed. They only think about these things and contemplate them in their heart, but no one else knows about them. This kind of person is outwardly kind to everyone, appears good-natured, and doesn’t hurt or harm anyone. But in fact, what they really are is a fence-straddler and a slippery stone. This kind of person is always liked by some people in the church, because they never make big mistakes, they never

give themselves away, and the evaluation from church leaders and brothers and sisters is that they get on just fine with everyone. They are lukewarm about their duty, they do just what is asked of them. They are especially obedient and well-behaved, they never hurt others in conversation or when dealing with matters, and they never take unfair advantage of anyone. They never speak ill of others, and they never judge people behind their backs. However, no one knows whether they are sincere in performing their duty, and no one knows what they think of others or what opinion they hold about them. After careful thought, you even feel that this kind of person really is a bit weird and difficult to fathom, and that keeping them on might lead to trouble. What should you do? It's a tough call, isn't it? When they are performing their duty, you can see them going about their business, but they never care about the principles that God's house has communicated to them. They do things however they like, going through the motions and leaving it at that, trying only to avoid making any big mistakes. Consequently, you can't find any fault with them, or identify any defects. They do things flawlessly, but what are they thinking inside? Do they want to perform their duty? If there were no church administrative decrees, or supervision from the church leader or their brothers and sisters, might this person associate with wicked people? Might they do bad things and commit evil together with wicked people? It is highly possible, and they are capable of doing it, but they haven't done it yet. This kind of person is the most troublesome kind, and they are the archetypal slippery stone or sly old fox. They don't hold grudges against anyone. If someone says something to hurt them, or reveals a corrupt disposition that infringes on their dignity, what do they think? "I will show forbearance, I won't hold it against you, but a day will come when you'll make a fool of yourself!" When that person really is dealt with or makes a fool of themselves, they secretly laugh about it. They readily make fun of other people, leaders, and God's house, but they don't make fun of themselves. They just don't know what problems or flaws they have themselves. People like this are careful not to reveal anything that can hurt others, or anything that enables others to see through them, although they think about these things in their heart. Whereas, when it comes to things that can benumb or deceive others, they freely express them and let people see them. People like this are the most insidious and difficult to deal with. So what attitude does God's house take toward people like this? Use them if they can be used, and clear them out if they can't—this is the principle. Why is that? The reason is that people like this are destined not to pursue the truth. They are nonbelievers who make fun of God's house, brothers and sisters, and leaders when things go wrong. What role do they play? Is it the role of Satan and devils? (Yes.) When they show patience toward their brothers and sisters, it constitutes neither genuine tolerance nor genuine love. They do it to protect themselves and to avoid attracting any enemies or danger their way. They don't tolerate their brothers and sisters to protect them, nor do they do it out of love, and less still do they do it because they are pursuing the truth and practicing in accordance with the truth principles. Theirs is entirely an attitude that centers on drifting along and

deceiving others. Such people are fence-straddlers and slippery stones. They don't like the truth and they don't pursue it, instead they just drift along. It is clear that the conditioning which such people receive from their family greatly affects the methods by which they comport themselves and deal with things. Of course, it must be said that these methods and principles of dealing with the world are inseparable from their humanity essence. On top of this, the conditioning effects from their family only serve to make their actions even more pronounced and concrete, and reveal their nature essence even more completely. Therefore, when faced with cardinal issues of right and wrong, and in matters that have a bearing on the interests of God's house, if such people can make some appropriate choices and let go of the philosophies for dealing with the world that they harbor in their hearts, such as "Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance," in order to uphold the interests of God's house, reduce their transgressions, and lessen their evil deeds before God—how will this benefit them? At the very least, when in the future God determines each person's outcome, it will alleviate their punishment and lessen God's chastening of them. By practicing this way, such people have nothing to lose and everything to gain, do they not? If they are made to entirely let go of their philosophies for dealing with the world, it won't be easy for them, because it involves their humanity essence, and these slippery stones and fence-straddlers don't accept the truth at all. It's not so simple and easy for them to let go of the satanic philosophies conditioned into them by their families, because—even leaving aside these conditioning effects from their families—they themselves are obsessive believers in satanic philosophies, and they like this approach toward dealing with the world, which is a very individual, subjective approach. But if such people are smart—if they let go of some of these practices to appropriately defend the interests of God's house, as long as their own interests are not threatened or damaged—then that is actually a good thing for them, because at the very least it could alleviate their guilt, lessen God's chastening of them, and even turn the tables so that instead of chastening them, God rewards and remembers them. How wonderful that would be! Would that not be a good thing? (Yes.) That concludes our fellowship on this aspect.

How else has your family conditioned you? For instance, your parents often tell you: "If you have a big mouth and talk rashly, sooner or later it will get you into trouble! You must remember that 'He who talks a lot errs a lot'! What does this mean? It means that if you say too much, you will definitely end up putting your foot in your mouth. Whatever the occasion, don't speak rashly—see what everyone else says first before you say anything. If you go along with the majority, you'll be just fine. But if you always try to stand out, and constantly speak rashly and reveal your point of view without knowing what your chief, boss, or everyone around you is thinking, and then it turns out that your chief or boss doesn't think the same way, then they will give you a hard time. Can any good come from that? Silly child, you must be careful in future. He who talks a lot errs a lot. Just remember that, and don't speak rashly! Mouths are for eating and breathing,

sweet-talking your superiors, and trying to please others, they're not for telling the truth. You must choose your words wisely, you must employ tricks and methods, and you must use your brain. Just before the words escape your mouth, swallow them and run through them repeatedly in your mind, waiting until the time is right before saying them. What you actually say should also depend on the situation. If you start sharing your opinion, but then notice that people don't take kindly to it, or their reaction isn't so good, stop right there and think about how to say it in a way that can keep everyone happy before continuing. That's what a smart kid would do. If you do that, you'll keep out of trouble and everyone will like you. And if everyone likes you, won't that work in your favor? Won't that create more opportunities for you in future?" Your family conditions you by telling you not only how to gain a good reputation, how to come out on top, and how to establish a stable foothold among others, but also how to deceive others through outward appearances and not tell the truth, much less pour forth everything that is on your mind. Some people who have come to grief after speaking the truth recall their family telling them the saying "He who talks a lot errs a lot," and draw a lesson from it. Thereafter they become more and more willing to practice this saying and turn it into their motto. Other people haven't come to grief but earnestly accept the conditioning of their family in this regard, and continually put this saying into practice whatever the occasion. The more they put it into practice, the more they feel that "My parents and grandparents are so good to me, they are all sincere toward me and want the best for me. I'm so fortunate that they told me this saying, 'He who talks a lot errs a lot,' otherwise I'd come to grief so often due to my big mouth, and so many people would give me a hard time, or cast me disdainful looks, or ridicule and mock me. This saying is so useful and beneficial!" They gain a great deal of tangible benefits from putting this saying into practice. Of course, when they then come before God, they still think that this saying is a most useful and beneficial thing. Whenever a brother or sister openly fellowships about his or her personal state, corruption, or experience and knowledge, they too want to fellowship and to be a forthright and open person, and they too want to honestly talk about what they think or know in their heart, so as to temporarily relieve their state of mind, which has been stifled for so many years, or to gain some degree of freedom and release. But as soon as they recall what their parents keep drumming into them, namely, "'He who talks a lot errs a lot.' Don't speak rashly, be a listener rather than a talker, and learn to listen to others," they swallow whatever it is they wanted to say. When everyone else finishes talking, they say nothing and instead think to themselves: "This is great, it's just as well I didn't say anything this time, because once I'd said my piece everyone might have formed opinions about me, and I might have lost something. It's great to say nothing, maybe that way everyone will keep thinking that I'm honest and not so deceitful, but just a naturally taciturn person, and therefore not someone who is scheming, or someone who is so corrupt, and particularly not someone who has notions about God, but instead someone who is simple and open. It's not a bad thing for people to think of me this way,

so why should I have to say anything? I'm actually seeing some results by adhering to this saying 'He who talks a lot errs a lot,' so I'll keep on acting like this." Adhering to this saying gives them a nice, rewarding feeling, and so they stay silent once, twice, and on it goes until one day, when they have so many words pent up inside them and want to open up to their brothers and sisters, but their mouth feels like it's sealed and bandaged shut, and they can't get a single sentence out. Since they can't tell their brothers and sisters, they decide to try talking to God instead, so they kneel before Him and say, "God, I have something to tell You. I am…." But although they have thought it through in their heart, they don't know how to say it, they can't express it, it's as if they have become well and truly mute. They don't know how to pick the right words or even how to string a sentence together. So many years of pent-up feelings make them feel completely stifled, and that they are living a dark and sordid life, and when they make up their mind to tell God what is in their heart and unload their feelings, they are lost for words and don't know where to start, or how to say it. Are they not wretched? (Yes, they are.) Why, then, do they have nothing to say to God? They just introduce themselves. They want to tell God what is in their heart, but they don't have the words, and in the end all that comes out is: "God, please give me the words I ought to say!" And God replies: "There is so much that you ought to say, but you don't want to say it, and you don't say it when you are given the chance, so I am taking back everything that I have given you. I won't give it to you, you don't deserve it." Only then do they feel that they have lost out on so much these past years. Although they feel that they have led a very dignified life, and wrapped themselves up tightly and packaged themselves perfectly, when they see that their brothers and sisters have been making gains all this time, and when they see their brothers and sisters talking about their experiences without any qualms and opening up about their corruption, these people come to the realization that they themselves cannot say a single sentence, and don't know how to. They have believed in God for so many years, and want to talk about knowledge of themselves, and to discuss their experience of and exposure to God's words, and to get some enlightenment and a bit of light from God, and to gain something. But unfortunately, because they all too frequently cling to the opinion that "He who talks a lot errs a lot," and are often bound and controlled by this idea, they have lived for this saying for so many years, they have not received any enlightenment or illumination from God, and they are still poor, pitiful, and empty-handed when it comes to life entry. They have practiced this saying and idea to perfection and obeyed it to the letter, but despite having believed in God for so many years, they have not gained anything of the truth, and remain poor and blind. God gave them mouths, but they have no ability whatsoever to fellowship on the truth, nor any ability to talk about their feelings and knowledge, let alone the ability to communicate with their brothers and sisters. What is more pitiful is that they don't even have the ability to talk to God, and have lost such an ability. Are they not wretched? (Yes, they are.) Wretched and lamentable. Do you not dislike talking? Are you not always afraid that he who talks a lot

errs a lot? Then you should never say anything. You wrap up your innermost thoughts and that which God has given you, suppressing them, sealing them away and preventing them from escaping. You are constantly afraid of losing face, afraid of feeling threatened, afraid that others will see through you, and constantly afraid that you will no longer be a perfect, honest, and good person in the eyes of others, so you wrap yourself up, and say nothing about your true thoughts. And what happens in the end? You become a mute person in every sense of the word. Who did such harm to you? At the root, it was being conditioned by your family that harmed you. But from your own personal perspective, it is also because you like living by satanic philosophies, so you choose to believe that the conditioning of your family is correct, and don't believe that God's requirements for you are positive. You choose to regard the conditioning effect that your family exerts on you as a positive thing, and to regard God's words, His requirements, and His provision, help, and teaching as things to guard against, as negative things. Therefore, no matter how much God bestowed upon you at the outset, because of your guardedness and refusal all these years, the end result is that God takes back everything and gives you nothing, because you are not worthy of it. So before it comes to that, you should let go of the conditioning effect that your family exerts on you in this regard, and don't accept the erroneous idea that "He who talks a lot errs a lot." This saying makes you more closed, more insidious, and more hypocritical. It is completely antithetical and contrary to God's requirement for people to be honest, and His demand that they be forthright and open. As a believer in God and a follower of God, you should be absolutely determined to pursue the truth. And when you are absolutely determined to pursue the truth, you should be absolutely determined to let go of what you imagine to be the good conditioning effects that your family exerts on you—there should be no choosing. No matter what conditioning effects your family exerts on you, no matter how good or beneficial they are for you, no matter how much they protect you, they come from people and Satan, and you should let go of them. Even though God's words and His requirements for people may conflict with the conditioning effects of your family, or even hurt your interests, and strip away your rights, and even if you think that they don't protect you and are instead intended to show you up and make you look a fool, you should still regard them as positive things, because they come from God, they are the truth, and you should accept them. If the things that your family has conditioned into you have a bearing on your thinking and comportment, your outlook on existence, and the path you take, then you should let go of them and not hold fast to them. Instead, you should replace them with the corresponding truths from God, and in doing so, you should also constantly discern and recognize the inherent problems and essence of these things that your family conditioned into you, and then act and practice by following God's words more precisely, practically, and truly. Accepting ideas, views on people and things, and principles of practice that come from God—this is the duty-bound responsibility of a created being, and what a created being should do, and this is also the idea and view that a created being should possess.

Parents in some families, in addition to instilling things that people think are positive and beneficial to their survival, prospects, and future, also instill some relatively extreme and distorted ideas and views into their children. For example, such parents say: “Better to be a true villain than a fake gentleman.” This is a saying that tells you how to comport yourself. This saying, “Better to be a true villain than a fake gentleman,” makes you choose between one or the other. It makes you choose to be a true villain, that is to say, to be openly bad, rather than doing it behind people’s backs. That way, even if people think that the things you do aren’t so good, they will still admire you and approve of you. It means that, no matter what bad things you do, you must do them to people’s faces, out in the open and candidly. Some families condition and educate their children this way. Not only do they not despise those people in society who have contemptible and vile ideas and behaviors, they even educate their children by telling them: “Don’t underestimate these people. In actual fact, they are not necessarily bad people—they might even be better than fake gentlemen.” In one sense, they tell you what kind of person to be, and in another sense, they also tell you how to discern people, what kind of people to regard as positive, and what kind of people to regard as negative, teaching you to discern positive things from negative things, and also teaching you how to comport yourself—this is the kind of education and conditioning they give you. So, what kind of impact does such conditioning imperceptibly have on people? (Not distinguishing between good and evil.) That’s right, not distinguishing between good and evil, right and wrong. Let’s first take a look at how human beings view so-called villains and fake gentlemen. First of all, humans think that true villains are not bad people, and that those who truly are fake gentlemen are bad people. The kind of people who do bad things behind others’ backs while outwardly pretending to be good are called fake gentlemen. They talk all about benevolence, righteousness, and morality to people’s faces, but get up to all sorts of bad things behind their backs. They do all this bad stuff while at the same time saying all sorts of nice things—people like this are objects of scorn. As for true villains, they are just as bad to people’s faces as they are behind their backs, and yet they have become role models to be championed and studied, rather than becoming objects of people’s scorn. This kind of saying and view tends to confuse people’s concepts of what exactly a good person is and what exactly a bad person is. And so people are not sure and do not know, and their concepts become very vague. When family conditions people in this way, some of them even think, “By being a true villain I am being upstanding. I’m doing things out in the open. If I have something to say I tell it to your face. If I harm you, or don’t like you, or want to take advantage of you, I must also do it to your face and let you know about it.” Just what kind of logic is this? Just what kind of nature essence is this? When wicked people do bad things and commit evil deeds, they need to find a theoretical basis for it, and this is the logic they come up with. They say: “Look, this thing I’m doing isn’t so good, but it’s better than being a fake gentleman. I do it to people’s faces, and everyone knows about it—that’s called being

upstanding!" Thus, villains make themselves out to be upstanding people. With this kind of thinking in people's minds, their concepts of true integrity and true evil are imperceptibly blurred. They don't know what it is to be upstanding, and they think, "It doesn't matter whether what I say hurts others or whether it is right or not, whether it is reasonable or not, or whether it accords with principles and the truth or not. As long as I dare to speak, and don't care about the consequences, and as long as I have a true disposition, a straightforward nature, and am as straight as a die, and as long as I don't harbor any insidious aims, then it's appropriate." Is this not a case of inverting right and wrong? (Yes.) This way, negative things are turned into positive things. Some people therefore use this as a basis and comport themselves according to this saying, and even assume that justice is on their side, thinking, "In any case, I'm not taking advantage of you, nor playing tricks behind your back. I'm doing things candidly and out in the open. You think what you like. To me this is being upstanding! As the saying goes, 'One needn't worry about rumors if one is upright,' so think whatever you want!" Is this not the logic of Satan? Is it not the logic of robbers? (Yes.) Is it justified for you to do bad things, make trouble for no reason, act like a tyrant, and commit evil? Committing evil is committing evil: If the essence of what you do is committing evil, then evil is what it is. What are your actions measured by? They are not measured by whether you had your motives, or whether you did them out in the open, or whether you have a true disposition. They are measured by the truth and by God's words. The truth is the criterion for measuring everything, and that sentence applies perfectly in this case. According to the measure of the truth, if something is evil, then it is evil; if something is positive, then it is positive; if something is not positive, then it is not positive. And what are these things that people think of as upstanding, and having a true disposition and a straightforward nature? That's called twisting words and forcing logic, confusing concepts, and talking nonsense, it's called misleading people, and if you mislead people then you are committing evil. Regardless of whether it is committed behind people's backs or to their faces, evil is evil. Evil committed behind someone's back is wickedness, whereas evil committed in front of someone's face is truly malicious and vicious, but they all relate to evil. So tell Me, should people accept this saying "Better to be a true villain than a fake gentleman"? (No, they shouldn't.) Which is positive—the behavioral principles of a fake gentleman, or the behavioral principles of a true villain? (Neither.) That's right, they are all negative. So, don't be a fake gentleman, nor a true villain, and don't listen to your parents' nonsense. Why do parents always spout nonsense? Because this is exactly how your parents comport themselves. They constantly feel that "I have a true disposition, I'm a true person, I'm forthright, I'm honest about my feelings, I'm a chivalrous person, I am upright and needn't worry about rumors, I behave decently and walk the right path, what do I have to fear? I don't do anything wrong, so I'm not afraid of demons knocking on my door!" Demons aren't knocking on your door right now, but you have committed no shortage of evil deeds and will be punished sooner or later. You are upright and fear no

rumors, but what does being upright represent? Is it the truth? Does being upright mean conforming to the truth? Do you understand the truth? Don't think up excuses and pretexts for your own evildoing, it's pointless! As long as it doesn't conform to the truth, it is evil! You even feel that you have a true disposition. Just because you have a true disposition, does it mean that you can take advantage of others? Or that you can harm others? What logic is this? (The logic of Satan.) This is called the logic of robbers and devils! You commit evil and yet you make out that it is something right and proper, and make excuses for it and seek to justify it. Is this not shameless? (Yes.) I tell you again that in God's words, there is never any mention of letting people be a true villain or a fake gentleman, nor any such requirement to be a true villain or a fake gentleman. These sayings are all blatant lies to deceive and confuse people. They can confuse people who do not understand the truth, but if you understand the truth today, you should no longer hold fast to such sayings or be influenced by them. Whether people are fake gentlemen or true villains, they are all devils, beasts, and scoundrels, they are all no good, they are all wicked, and they are all associated with evil. If they're not wicked then they are vicious, and the only difference between a fake gentleman and a true villain lies in the manner of their performance: One performs in public, and the other in secret. Also, they have different ways of conducting themselves. One does evil openly, while the other plays dirty tricks behind people's backs; one is more insidious and treacherous, while the other is more overbearing, domineering, and bares their fangs; one is more sordid and stealthy, while the other is more despicable and arrogant. They happen to be two satanic ways of doing things, one open and one covert. If you act openly you are a true villain, and if you act covertly you are a fake gentleman. What is there to brag about? If you regard this saying as your motto, are you not foolish? So, if you have been deeply harmed by the things that your family has conditioned or instilled into you in this regard, or if you are holding fast to such things, I hope you can let go of them, discern and see through them as soon as possible. Stop clinging to this saying, and thinking that it is protecting you, or making you into a genuine person or someone with character, humanity and a true disposition. This saying is not a standard for how one should comport oneself. From where I stand, I strongly condemn this saying, which disgusts Me more than anything. I am disgusted not only by fake gentlemen, but also by true villains—both kinds of people are objects of disgust to Me. So, if you are a fake gentleman, then from My perspective you are no good, and you are beyond remedy. But if you are a true villain then you are even worse off. You are well aware of the true way and yet deliberately sin, you clearly know the truth yet blatantly violate it and fail to practice it, and instead you openly oppose the truth, so you will die faster. Don't think, "I have a straightforward nature, I am not a fake gentleman. Although I am a villain, I am a true villain." How are you true? Your "trueness" is not the truth, nor is it a positive thing. Your "trueness" is the manifestation of the essence of your arrogant and vicious dispositions. You are "true" as in true Satan, true devils, and true viciousness, rather than true as in

the truth or something that is truly real. So, when it comes to this saying “Better to be a true villain than a fake gentleman” that your family conditions into you, you should also let go of it, because it has no connection whatsoever with the principles of comportment that God teaches people, nor does it even come anywhere close to them. Therefore, you should let go of it as soon as possible, rather than continuing to cling onto it.

Family exerts another kind of conditioning effect. For example, your family members always tell you: “Don’t be someone who stands out too much from the crowd, you must rein yourself in and exercise a little restraint in your words and actions, as well as in your personal talents, abilities, IQ, and so on. Don’t be that person who stands out. It’s like the sayings go, ‘The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot,’ and ‘The rafter that sticks out is the first to rot.’ If you want to protect yourself, and have a long-term and stable place in the group you belong to, don’t be the bird that sticks its neck out, you should rein yourself in and not aspire to rise above everyone. Think about the lightning rod, which is the first thing to be struck in a storm, because lightning strikes the highest point; and when the wind is blowing a gale, the tallest tree is the first to take its brunt and get blown over; and when the weather is cold, the tallest mountain is the first to freeze over. It’s the same with people—if you always stick out among others and draw attention, and the Party notices you, it will seriously consider punishing you. Don’t be the bird that sticks its neck out, don’t fly solo. You should stay inside the flock. Otherwise, if any social protest movement formed around you, you would be the one who gets punished first, because you are the bird that sticks out. Don’t be a leader or a group head in the church. Otherwise, in the event of any work-related losses or problems in God’s house, as the leader or supervisor, you will be the first to be singled out. So, don’t be the bird that sticks its neck out, because the bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot. You must learn to tuck in your head and cower like a tortoise.” You remember these words from your parents, and when the time comes to choose a leader, you decline the position, saying, “Oh, I cannot do it! I have a family and children, I’m too tied up with them. I can’t be a leader. You guys should do it, don’t choose me.” Supposing you are elected as leader anyway, you are still reluctant to do it. “I’m afraid I must resign,” you say. “You guys be the leader, I’m giving you all the opportunity. I’m letting you take the position, I’m stepping aside.” You ponder in your heart, “Huh! The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot. The higher you climb, the harder you fall, and it’s lonely at the top. I’ll let you be the leader, and after you get chosen, a day will come when you will make a spectacle of yourself. I never want to be a leader, I don’t want to climb the ladder, which means that I won’t fall from a great height. Think about it, wasn’t so-and-so dismissed as leader? After being dismissed he was expelled—he didn’t even get the chance to be an ordinary believer. It’s a perfect example of those sayings ‘The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot’ and ‘The rafter that sticks out is the first to rot.’ Am I not right? Was he not punished? People must learn to protect themselves, otherwise what do people have brains for? If you have a brain in your head, you must

use it to protect yourself. Some people can't see this issue clearly, but that's how it is in society and in any group of people—'The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot.' You'll be very well-regarded while you are sticking your neck out, right up until the moment you get shot. Then you'll realize that people who put themselves in the firing line get their comeuppance sooner or later." These are the earnest teachings of your parents and family, and also the voice of experience, the distilled wisdom of their lifetime, which they whisper into your ear without reservation. What do I mean by "whisper into your ear"? I mean that one day, your mother says in your ear, "Let me tell you, if there's one thing I've learned in this life, it's that 'The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot,' which means that if someone sticks out too much or draws too much attention, they're likely to be punished for it. See how subdued and guileless your dad is now, it's because he was punished in some campaign of suppression. Your dad has literary talent, he can write and give speeches, he has leadership skills, but he stood out from the crowd too much, and ended up being punished in the campaign. How come, ever since then, your dad never talks about being a government official and a high-profile figure? It's because of that. I'm speaking to you from the heart and telling you the truth. You must listen and remember it well. Don't forget, you must keep it in mind wherever you go. This is the best thing I can give you as your mother." Thereafter you remember her words, and whenever you recall the saying "The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot," it reminds you of your father, and whenever you think of him, you think of this saying. Your father was once the bird that stuck its neck out and got shot, and now his downbeat and dispirited look has left a deep impression on your mind. So, whenever you want to stick your neck out, whenever you want to speak your mind, whenever you want to sincerely perform your duty in God's house, your mother's heartfelt advice in your ear—"The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot"—comes to mind again. So, once again you shrink back, thinking, "I cannot show any talents or special abilities, I must restrain myself and stifle them. And as for God's exhortation for people to put all their heart, mind, and strength into performing their duty, I must practice these words in moderation, and not stand out by trying too hard. If I stand out by trying too hard, and stick my neck out by leading the church's work, what if something goes wrong with the work of God's house and I am held responsible? How should I bear this responsibility? Will I be cleared out? Will I become the scapegoat, the bird that stuck its neck out? In God's house, it's hard to say how these matters will turn out. So, regardless of what I do, I absolutely must leave myself an escape route, I absolutely must learn to protect myself, and ensure that I cover all my bases before I speak and act. This is the wisest course of action, because as my mother says, 'The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot.'" This saying is deeply implanted in your heart and also has a profound influence on your daily life. More seriously of course, it affects your attitude toward performing your duty. Are there not serious problems here? Therefore, whenever you perform your duty and want to expend yourself sincerely, and

to wholeheartedly utilize all your strength, this saying—“The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot”—always stops you in your tracks, and in the end you always choose to leave yourself some leeway and room for maneuver, and only do your duty in a measured way after leaving an escape route for yourself. Am I not right? Does your family’s conditioning in this regard protect you to the greatest extent from being exposed and dealt with? For you it is another talisman, is it not? (Yes.)

Based on all that we have fellowshiped on thus far, how many talismans do people have as a result of their family’s conditioning? (Seven.) With so many talismans, is it true that no ordinary devils and demons dare encroach on you? All these talismans make you feel so safe, so comforted, and so happy living in this human world. At the same time, they make you feel how important family is to you, and how timely and important the protection and talismans that your family gives to you are. Whenever you obtain tangible benefits and protection as a result of these talismans, you feel more than ever that family is important, and that you will always depend on it. Whenever you encounter difficulties and are wracked by indecision and bewilderment, you collect yourself for a moment and think, “What did my mother and father tell me? What skills did my elders teach me? What was the motto they passed on to me?” You quickly, instinctively, and subconsciously fall back on the various ideas and environments instilled into you by your family, seeking and demanding their protection. At such times, family becomes your safe haven, an anchor, a support and a driving force that is always strong, unshakable, and unchanging, a psychological crutch that enables you to keep on living and stops you from being bewildered and indecisive. At times like these, you are filled with deep feeling: “Family is so very important to me, it gives me such immense mental strength, as well as being a source of spiritual support.” You often congratulate yourself by thinking, “It’s fortunate that I listened to what my parents told me, otherwise I would have ended up in a very embarrassing situation by now, being either bullied or hurt. Fortunately, I have this trump card, I have a talisman. So, even in God’s house and in the church, even during the course of performing my duties, I will not be bullied by anyone, and I will not run the risk of being cleared out or handled by the church. These things might never happen to me, thanks to the protection that the conditioning of my family gives me.” But you have forgotten something. You have been living in what you imagine to be an environment with talismans and in which you can protect yourself, but you don’t know whether you have fulfilled God’s commission or not. You have ignored God’s commission to you, and ignored your identity as a created being, and the duty you should fulfill as a created being. You have also ignored the attitude you should adopt and all that you should offer up in performing your duty, while the true outlook on life and values that you ought to cherish have been replaced with the views that your family has conditioned into you, and your chances of salvation are also impacted and influenced by your family’s conditioning. Therefore, it is very important for everyone to let go of the various conditioning effects of their family. This is one aspect of the truth that must be

practiced, and it is also a reality that should be entered into without delay. Because if society tells you something, you are likely to make a rational or subconscious decision to reject it; if a stranger or someone unrelated to you tells you something, you tend to make a rational or measured decision to accept it or not; but if your family tells you something, you tend to accept it entirely without hesitation or discernment, and this is actually a dangerous thing for you. Because you think that the family can never do any harm to a person, and that everything your family does for you is for your own good, to protect you, and for your own sake. Based on this assumed principle, people are easily disturbed and influenced by these intangible and tangible things that are one's family. The tangible things are one's family members and all the family's affairs, while the intangible things are the various ideas and education that come from family, as well as some conditioning to do with how you should comport yourself and conduct your own affairs. Is it not so? (Yes.)

There is a lot to discuss as regards the conditioning effects of family. After we finish fellowshiping on these things today, you should contemplate them all and summarize them, thinking about which ideas and views—besides those that I mentioned today—might afflict you in your daily life. Most of what we have fellowshiped on just now relates to people's principles and ways of dealing with the world, and there are a small number of topics that relate to how people view others and things. The scope of the conditioning effects that family exerts on people basically encompasses these things. There are also some issues that don't relate to people's outlook on life or ways of dealing with the world, so we won't say any more about those. Here ends our fellowship for today, then. Until next time!

February 11, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (13)

For a while now we have been fellowshiping on the topic of “letting go” in “How to Pursue the Truth.” Have you given any thought to the various aspects involved in this topic? Regarding the things we fellowshiped on that people need to let go of, is it easy for people to let go of them? After listening to the fellowships, did you contemplate and reflect on yourselves based on their content? Did you draw any comparisons between this content and your outpourings and manifestations in daily life? (I usually give it some thought. The last time God fellowshiped about letting go of the conditioning effects that family exerts on us, I realized that in my life I usually adhere to these satanic philosophies for dealing with the world, such as the saying “People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark,” which my family instilled into me. After accepting these ideas, I attached importance to dignity and status in everything I did, afraid of losing face, and was unable to be an honest person.) All this content that we fellowshiped on regarding letting go of various things mainly addresses people’s thoughts and views on various matters. By exposing their incorrect thoughts and views on such matters, it enables people to discern them and have a clear knowledge of them, and then be able to let go of them in a positive way and not be constricted by them. The most important thing is not to be bound by these thoughts and views, but to be able to live and exist by correctly adopting God’s words and the truth as one’s criteria. If people want to enter into the reality of the various truths, they must have knowledge and experience from all perspectives. In particular, they must have a clear understanding of passive and negative ideas and views about various things. Only if they have discernment of them can they proactively let go of them and no longer be deceived and bound by them. Therefore, in order to enter into the reality of the various truths and achieve the result of pursuing the truth, people should often reflect on themselves and think about how they are bound and controlled in everyday life by various ideas and views, or often try to figure out what thoughts and views they hold about various things in everyday life, and discern whether or not these thoughts and views are correct and consistent with the truth, whether they are positive and come from God, or whether they come from human intentions or Satan. This is a very important lesson, and it is an aspect of reality that people must enter into every day in their daily lives. That is, in everyday life, no matter whether or not you encounter various people, matters and things you must always examine what thoughts and views you hold, and whether these thoughts and views are correct and consistent with the truth—this is a very important lesson. In your daily life, outside of the normal time you spend performing your duties, your entry in this aspect should occupy 80 to 90 percent of your life. Only in this way can you hope to get rid of all kinds of thoughts and views about negative things, and enter into the truth reality. It may also be said that you can only have hope when you view people and things, comport yourself, and act based on God’s words, and taking the truth as your criterion; only then can you hope to attain

salvation in the end. If in your daily life, outside of the normal time spent performing your duties, your mind is blank for the remaining 80 to 90 percent of the time, or you just think and ponder about your physical life, status and reputation, then it will not be easy for you to enter into the truth reality, nor to achieve the result of pursuing the truth. If neither of these things is easy for you to achieve, the chances of you attaining salvation will be very slim. What, therefore, does attaining salvation depend on? In one sense, it depends on how God works and whether the Holy Spirit works in you; in another sense, it depends on your subjective diligence, how much of a price you pay, and how much energy and time you spend on pursuing the truth and achieving salvation. If what you think and do most of the time has nothing to do with pursuing the truth, then what you do has nothing to do with being saved—this is an inevitable fact and an inevitable result. So what should you do, going forward? One aspect is that you should closely follow every topic that is being fellowshiped on, and then afterward proactively try to contemplate and understand the topic, that is, once we have finished a topic, you should strike while the iron is hot by reflecting on yourself, in order to achieve a true and accurate knowledge and true repentance. The purpose of being able to know this aspect of the truth as soon as possible after we have finished fellowshiping on it, or after you have come to understand some part of what we fellowshiped on, is to allow you to have the most basic awareness in your own thoughts and views, so that later when you encounter related matters in daily life, your previous knowledge and understanding of the truth principles will become the basic ideas and views that guide your experience of this matter. At the very least, once you gain awareness and have an accurate and correct knowledge, your attitude and understanding with respect to this matter will be positive and proactive. That is to say, before this event happens, you will have already been vaccinated and have a certain degree of immunity, so that when it actually happens, your chances of failure will be reduced, as will the likelihood of you betraying God, and the probability of you entering into the truth reality will be greatly increased. It’s just like when a pandemic occurs: If you don’t get vaccinated, all you can do is stay shut indoors and not go out, which reduces the risk of infection to zero. But if you go out and circulate, and come into contact with the outside world, you must get vaccinated. Does this vaccine eliminate the possibility of infection? No, it doesn’t, but it does reduce the probability of infection. Suffice it to say that you will have antibodies. The process of pursuing truth begins with knowledge of the various truths. If you know correct and positive statements and principles from within the various truths, and at the same time, you also have a certain knowledge of the various negative and bad thoughts and views revealed by each truth, then whenever a similar event happens again, your choices will no longer be based on the criteria of the negative and bad ideas and opinions that Satan has inculcated in you, and you will no longer have an attitude that clings to such ideas and views. Although at this stage you have not yet entered into this aspect of the truth reality and your views may be neutral, nevertheless, after accepting these positive ideas and views, you will

have a certain knowledge of negative ideas and views, so that when you face a similar matter in future, at the very least you will be able to distinguish between the positive and negative ideas and views that relate to this type of matter, and have certain criteria for dealing with it. On the basis of these criteria, people who love the truth and have humanity tend to be more inclined to practice the truth and to view people and things, and to comport themselves and act in accordance with the criterion of the truth. To a certain extent, this will greatly help you to enter into the truth reality and to practice according to the truth principles, obey God according to His requirements, and accept the people, matters, and things that God arranges for you. From this point of view, can it be said that the more truths a person understands, the greater the likelihood that they will enter into the truth reality, and that the more thoroughly they understand negative things, the greater the probability that they will turn their back on these negative things? (Yes, it can.) Therefore, no matter whether or not you are willing to pursue the truth, or whether or not you have made up your mind to pursue the truth, or whether or not you are on the path of pursuing the truth, and no matter your caliber or how you understand the truth, in short, if people want to pursue the truth, if they want to understand the criteria of the truth, and practice and enter into the truth, it is necessary to discern and understand all kinds of negative things. These are the prerequisites for pursuing the truth and entering into the truth reality.

Some people do not understand the truth, and when it comes to the various topics that we are fellowshiping on now, they always feel: “I have never thought about these topics, nor have I experienced them. I cannot see the correlation between what You are saying about these topics and my own various problems, corrupt dispositions, and outpourings of corruption, so what does Your talking about these topics have to do with my pursuit of the truth? It doesn’t seem to have much at all to do with me entering into the truth reality, does it? Why don’t You talk about some lofty and profound topics that concern people’s positive entry? Why always expose these negative trivial matters of everyday life?” Is this opinion right or wrong? (Wrong.) Whenever people who have these ideas hear about such trivial matters of everyday life, especially when some examples of these matters are given, they feel disgusted and don’t want to listen. They think, “This content is too commonplace and shallow. There’s nothing grand about this, it’s too simple. As soon as I’ve listened to it, I understand it immediately. It’s all too easy. The truth shouldn’t be like this, it should be more profound than this, and people need to listen to it several times before they are able to understand it and remember one or two sentences. What You are talking about now are trivial matters of everyday life, as well as some manifestations of normal humanity in everyday life. Is this not just a bit too shallow for us?” Do you think that people who hold these views are correct in their thinking? (No, they are wrong.) Why are they wrong? What’s wrong with them? First and foremost, are people’s thoughts and views disconnected from their everyday lives? (No, they are not.) Are their various manifestations and attitudes disconnected from their

everyday lives? (No, they are not.) No, none of these things are disconnected. People's corrupt dispositions, thoughts, and views, their ideas and intentions with respect to various matters, their specific ways of doing things, as well as the thoughts and ideas that emerge from their minds, are all inseparable from their various manifestations and outpourings in everyday life. Furthermore, these various manifestations and outpourings in everyday life, as well as people's thoughts, views, and attitudes toward the various matters that befall them, are more specific things that concern people's corrupt dispositions. The purpose of pursuing the truth is to change people's erroneous thoughts and views and, by changing people's thoughts and views, and by changing their attitudes toward all kinds of people, matters, and things, to cast off people's corrupt dispositions, and cast off their disobedience and betrayal with respect to the truth and God, as well as their nature essence that is opposed to God. Thus, if you want to pursue the truth, isn't it absolutely necessary to cast off and change your various erroneous thoughts and views in everyday life? Isn't it the most important thing? (Yes, it is.) Therefore, no matter how shallow or quotidian the things I talk about may seem to be, don't have a rebellious mentality about them. These things are definitely not of petty importance. They occupy your heart and mind, and they control your thoughts and views about every person, matter, and thing that you face. If you don't change or cast off these erroneous thoughts and views in everyday life, then your claim that you accept the truth and have the truth reality will just be empty words. It's like when you have cancer—it must be treated proactively. No matter which organ the cancer cells are present in, whether they are in your blood or on your skin, or whether they are on the surface or hidden deep down, suffice it to say that the first thing that must be dealt with is the cancer cells in your body. Only after the cancer cells are eliminated, can the various nutrients you take in be absorbed and work inside you. In this way, all the organs in your body can then function normally. Once the disease is eliminated, your body will become healthier and more normal. And people like this are completely cured of the disease. People's pursuit of the truth is the process of casting off corrupt dispositions, and it is also the process of entering into the truth reality. The process of casting off corrupt dispositions is the process of people changing and ridding themselves of various erroneous and negative thoughts and views. It is also the process of people equipping themselves with various correct and positive ideas and views. What are positive ideas and views? They are things that involve the reality, principles, and criteria of the truth. In order to enter the truth reality, people must dissect and understand their various erroneous ideas and views about life, survival, and dealing with others one by one by seeking the truth, and then resolve them and cast them off one by one. In short, pursuing the truth is about making people cast off all their erroneous and incorrect thoughts and views, and having correct thoughts and views regarding all sorts of things, thoughts and views that are in line with the truth principles. Only in this way can people achieve the goal of viewing people and things, comporting themselves, and acting wholly based on God's words and with the

truth as their criterion. This is the final result that people achieve by pursuing the truth, and it is also the truth reality that people can finally live out after attaining salvation. Do you understand this? (Yes.)

At the last gathering, we fellowshiped on the topic of “letting go” with regard to family. What did we fellowship about last time on the topic of family? (We fellowshiped about the inconveniences and obstructions that family puts in the way of our pursuit of the truth, as well as what pursuits, ideals, and desires we should let go of when it comes to the issue of family. God mentioned two things, one being to let go of the identity that we inherit from our family, and the other being to let go of the conditioning effects that family has on us.) It was indeed those two things. The first is to let go of the identity that you inherit from your family. Do you know what the truth principles are that people should understand in this respect? After listening to My fellowships, if I don’t provide a specific summary, do you know how to summarize things yourselves? After I fellowshiped about these things and the specific details concerning them, did you summarize the principles involved that people should abide by when it comes to this aspect of the truth? If you know how to summarize them, then you will be able to put them into practice; if you don’t know how to summarize them, and linger on some scattered areas of light, and you do not know what the truth principles involved are, then you won’t be able to put them into practice. If you don’t know how to put them into practice, then you will never enter into this aspect of the truth reality. Even if you discover what your own problems are, you still won’t be able to correlate them to My words, and you won’t be able to find corresponding principles to put into practice. The main purpose of fellowshiping on the issue about letting go of the identity that you inherit from your family is so that you can view people and things, and comport yourself and act without being affected by the various influences associated with that identity. If the identity you inherit from your family is distinguished, then you should approach this identity correctly. You should not feel that you are distinguished, or that you are more worthy than others, or that your identity is special. When amongst others, you should be able to interact correctly with them according to the principles by which God admonishes people, and treat everyone correctly, rather than using your distinguished family background as capital to show off in all circumstances, and make others think highly of you in every situation. Supposing that you cannot let go of the identity that you inherit from your family, and always use your family background as capital, and comport yourself as someone who is extremely conceited, willful, and high-sounding. And supposing you always show off and exhibit yourself around others, and constantly flaunt your family background and the special identity that you inherit from your family. And in addition, supposing that deep down you are also particularly haughty and overbearing, and especially domineering and insolent when talking to others, and you often use your identity as capital to chide people and suppress them—in other words, people think that you are devoid of normal reason—and you regard everyone as commoners, and especially when you come into contact and deal with people, you think

nothing of people who are more humble or lowly than you, and when speaking with them you are particularly aggressive, high-handed, and really bare your fangs. And supposing you constantly want to chide others, and always treat others like slaves to be ordered around and shouted at, and always believe that your identity is distinguished, and you are unable to get along harmoniously with others, and unable to treat people of lower status than you in a correct manner—these are all corrupt dispositions, and they are all things that people should cast off. Such corrupt dispositions occur and are caused when a person has a distinguished family background and social status. Therefore, this type of person should reflect on their words and deeds, and reflect on their own thoughts and views, especially those regarding family identity. They should let go of such thoughts and views and backtrack on the various humanities they are living out as a result of their special social status. In other words, this type of person should let go of the identity they have inherited from their family. Most people think that their own social status is inferior. In particular, the type of people who are looked down upon, discriminated against, and bullied in society often feel that their identity is lowly, and the shame caused by their special family environment makes them feel particularly humble. This feeling makes them often feel inferior and unable to get along with others in a harmonious and equitable way. Of course, people of this type also manifest themselves in various ways. Some people particularly look up to those with distinguished status and identity, fawning over them, flattering them, sweet-talking them and licking their boots. They always blindly echo those people and have no principles or dignity, and are willing to be those people's hangers-on and be ordered about and manipulated by them like slaves. Such people's principles for doing things also do not accord with the truth, because deep down in their minds, they believe that their identity is lowly and that they were born to be wretches, and they are not worthy of standing on an equal footing with those who are rich or who have a noble social identity, and that instead they were born to be treated as those people's slaves, and they must take their cue from those people and be ordered around by them. They do not feel servile. Rather, they think that this is normal, and that this is how things should be done. Just what kind of ideas and views are these? Are these thoughts and views not a kind of self-degradation? (Yes.) There is also a type of people who see rich people living in their conceited, willful, impudent, and domineering ways, and who even greatly envy and chase after such people, and who hope that if they had the chance to turn things around, they could live as willfully and conceitedly as these rich people. They think that there is nothing wrong with being willful and conceited; on the contrary, they regard these as charming and romantic traits. The thoughts and views of such people are also incorrect and should be let go of. No matter what your identity or status, it is all preordained by God. No matter what kind of family or family background God has preordained for you, the identity you inherit from it is neither shameful nor honorable. The principle for how you treat your identity should not be based on the principle of honor and shame. No matter what kind of family God puts you in, no matter

what kind of family He allows you to come from, you have only one identity before God, and that is the identity of a created being. Before God, you are a created being, so in the eyes of God, you are equal to anyone in society who has a different identity and social status. You are all members of corrupt mankind, and you are all people whom God wants to save. And of course, before God, you all have the same opportunity to perform your duties as created beings, and you all have the same opportunity to pursue the truth and attain salvation. On this level, based on the identity of a created being as given to you by God, you should not think highly of your own identity, nor should you look down on it. Instead, you should treat your identity as a creature of God correctly, and be able to get along harmoniously with anyone on an equal footing, and according to the principles that God teaches to people and admonishes them with. No matter what other people's social status or social identity is, and no matter what your own social status or social identity is, whoever comes into God's house and comes before God has only one identity, which is that of a created being. Therefore, those with a lowly social status and identity should not feel inferior. No matter whether or not you have talent, no matter how high your caliber is, and no matter whether or not you have ability, you should let go of your social status. You should also let go of ideas or views about ranking and grading people or classifying them as distinguished or humble based on their family background and family history. You should not feel inferior because of your own lowly social identity and status. You should be glad that although your family background is not so powerful and spectacular, and the status you have inherited is lowly, God has not abandoned you. God raises humble people up from the dunghill and the dust, and gives you the same identity, that of a created being, as other people. In God's house and before God, your identity and status are equal to those of all the other people who have been chosen by God. Once you realize this, you should let go of your inferiority complex and stop clinging to it. When faced with those who have a distinguished and great social status, or those who have a higher social status than you, you do not need to bow down to them or be all smiles around them, let alone have any admiration for them. Instead, you should regard them as equals, look them right in the eye, and treat them correctly. Even if they are often domineering or inflated with pride, and regard themselves as having a high social status, you must treat them correctly and refuse to be coerced by them or intimidated by any of their grandeur. No matter what their behavior or how they treat you, you should know that before God, you and they are the same, insofar as you are all created beings, you are all human beings chosen by God to be saved. There is nothing special about them compared with you. Their so-called special identity and status do not exist in God's eyes, and are not recognized by Him. Therefore, there is no need for you to be constricted by the matter of the identity you inherit from your family, nor is there any need to feel inferior because of it. There is even less need to give up any opportunity to interact with other people on an equal footing just because of your lowly social status, or to give up any of the rights, responsibilities, and obligations that God has bestowed

on you in God's house and before God. And of course, you certainly should not give up your right to be saved or the hope of attaining salvation. In God's house, before God, there is no distinction between rich and poor, no distinction between high and low social status, and no one with a special family background deserves special treatment or particular privileges. Before God, all people have only one identity, which is that of a created being. Also, before God, the nature essences of all people are the same. There is only one kind of human being that God wants to save, and that is corrupt human beings. Therefore, no matter whether your identity or social status is noble or humble, you are all human beings that God wants to save.

Imagine that someone said to you, "Look at your family, they are so poor that you don't even have decent clothes; your family is so poor that you only went to elementary school and never went to high school; your family is so poor that you only ever get to eat soup and vegetables, and haven't even tried chocolate, pizza, or cola." How should you handle this situation? Would you feel inferior or despondent? Would you inwardly complain about God? Would you be intimidated by what the person said? (I wouldn't now.) You wouldn't now, but you would before, right? In the past, whenever you noticed whose family was rich, or who was wealthy and distinguished, you would say, "Huh! They live in a villa and own a car. They've been abroad countless times. I've never even been out of my village, and I've never even seen a train before. They take high-speed rail journeys, travel in first-class, go on luxury cruises, and wear French designer brands and Italian jewelry. How come I haven't heard of any of these things?" Whenever you're around such people, you feel smaller than them. You're somewhat confident when you're fellowshiping on the truth and believing in God. But when you talk to those people about your family and family life, you want to run away and escape, you feel like you're not as good as them, and that it would be better to die than to live. You think, "Why do I live in such a family? I haven't seen anything of the world. Others use hand cream on their hands, whereas I still use Vaseline on mine; others don't even apply any cream on their faces, but instead go straight to the beauty salon, whereas I don't even know where the beauty salon is; others ride around in sedans, but that's too good for me, I'm lucky if I get to ride a bicycle, and sometimes I have to ride on a cart driven by an ox or donkey." So every time you talk with such people, you feel unsure of yourself and ashamed to bring up your identity and daren't mention it. In your heart, you feel somewhat resentful and a little angry toward God, "They are all created beings like me," you think. "So why does God allow them to enjoy life so much? Why has He preordained them to have that kind of family and social status? Why is my family so abjectly poor? Why are my parents at the bottom of society, with no abilities or skills? Just thinking about it makes me angry. Whenever I talk about this matter, I don't want to mention my parents, they're so incapable and incompetent! Never mind riding around in a sedan and living in a villa, I'd be content with being taken to the city to ride on the buses and high-speed trains, or to play in the city parks, but they haven't taken me there, not even once! I have no life

experience whatsoever. I haven't eaten nice food, or ridden in nice cars, and I can only dream of flying." Thinking about all this makes you feel inferior, and you are often constricted by this matter, so you regularly hang out with brothers and sisters whose identity and status are not significantly different from your own, thinking to yourself: "It's true what they say, birds of a feather flock together. Look at that bunch of people, they are all rich folk, including senior government officials, millionaires, people with super-rich parents, business tycoons, and returnees from study abroad and postgraduates, as well as corporate executives and hotel managers. Compare them with us, this rabble. We are all either peasants or unemployed. Our families live in rural backwaters, we only have an elementary school education, and we've seen nothing of the world. We've herded cattle, set up street stalls, and repaired shoes. What kind of people are we? Are we not just a ragtag mob? Look at that band of people, they're all classy and stylish. When I think about the rabble that we are, it makes me feel useless and aggrieved." Even after believing in God for so many years, you have never let go of this matter, and often feel particularly inferior and depressed. These people's ideas and views on things are obviously wrong, and seriously affect the correctness of their views regarding people and things, and the ways in which they comport themselves and act. These ideas and views are influenced by social trends and social mores. Of course, to be more exact, they are ideas and views that result from the conditioning effects of evil humans and traditional culture. Since they are corrupt and belong to evil trends, you should let go of them and not be troubled or constricted by such ideas and views. Some people say: "I was born into such a family, and this fact cannot be changed. These kinds of ideas and views constantly weigh on my mind, and are difficult to let go of." It is indeed a fact that they are difficult to let go of, but if you constantly dwell on a mistaken idea and view, you will never let go of it. If you accept correct ideas and views, you will gradually let go of mistaken ones. What do I mean by this? I mean that it's not possible for you to let go of them all at once, so that you can interact with rich people or those with high status and worth on an equal and normal basis. It's impossible to do this in one go, but at the very least you can be liberated from this matter. Even if you still have an inferiority complex, even if you are still vaguely disturbed by it deep down in your heart, you have already gained some freedom from it to a certain extent. Of course, in your subsequent pursuit of the truth, you will gradually gain even more freedom and liberation. When all the various facts are exposed, you will see more and more clearly the essence of various people, matters, and things, and your understanding of the truth will become more and more profound. When you have more penetrating insight into such matters, your life experience and knowledge of such matters will increase. At the same time, your attitude toward the truth will become more proactive and positive, and you will be less and less constricted by negative things. Will you not then have changed? When you next meet someone with a vastly different identity and status from yours and talk to and associate with them, at the very least you will no longer be inwardly fearful, nor run away, but

instead you will be able to treat them correctly, and you will no longer be subject to their restrictions, or think about how great and distinguished they are. Once you understand people's corrupt essences, you will be able to handle all kinds of people precisely, and get along, interact and associate with all manner of people according to principles, without looking up to them or belittling them, and without discriminating against them or thinking highly of them. In this way, will you gradually achieve the result that comes from pursuing the truth? (Yes.) Achieving this result will make you love the truth more, more inclined toward positive things, more inclined toward the truth, and more inclined to admire God and the truth, instead of admiring anyone in society or in the world for their distinguished identity and status. The objects you admire and look up to, as well as the objects you follow and worship will be different, and will gradually change from negative things into positive things, and into the truth or—to be more precise—into God, God's words, and God's identity and status. In this way, you will gradually enter into the truth reality in this respect. That is to say, you will gradually cast off your corrupt disposition and the bonds of Satan in this regard, and gradually attain salvation—this is what the process involves. It's not difficult; the road is laid out before you. As long as you pursue the truth, you can enter into the truth reality. And what reality will you ultimately enter into? No matter what kind of status you inherit from your family, you will no longer be preoccupied or troubled by whether it is noble or lowly. Instead, you will be able to perform your duty well as a created being, view people and things, and comport yourself and act as a created being, live before God as a created being, and live every day in the present, all with the identity of a created being—this is the result you will be pursuing. Is this a good result? (Yes, it is.) When people enter this aspect of reality, their hearts are liberated and freed. At the very least, you will no longer be troubled by the matter of the identity you inherit from your family, and you won't care whether your status is high or low. If your identity is distinguished and some people look up to you, you will feel disgusted; if your identity is lowly and some people discriminate against you, you will not be constricted or troubled by it, nor will you be sad or negative about it. You will no longer have to feel worried, anguished, or inferior based on whether or not you have ever ridden in a high-speed train, been to a beauty salon, traveled abroad, eaten Western food, or enjoyed exclusive material comforts like rich people do. You will no longer be constricted and troubled by such matters, and you will be able to treat all kinds of people, things, and matters correctly and fulfill your duties normally. Will you not then be free and liberated? (Yes.) This way your heart will be liberated. When you have entered into the reality of this aspect of truth, and broken free from Satan's bonds, you will truly have become a created being living before God, and a created being that God wants. By now, you should be clearer as regards the path of letting go of the identity and status that you inherit from family.

Last time we also discussed another topic—that of letting go of the conditioning effects that your family exerts on you. The conditioning effects of a person's family begin

right from when the person is young. As the person reaches adulthood, they gradually start applying these conditioned thoughts and views in their life. By the time they have gained a certain amount of life experience, they are freely putting into practice these various thoughts and views that have been conditioned into them by their family, and on this basis they have accumulated various principles, ways, and tricks for dealing with things that are even more sophisticated, more specific, and more beneficial to themselves. It could be said that the conditioning effects exerted by family serve as a person's primer as they make the transition into society and into their communal groups, and which enables them to freely use various ways and tricks for dealing with things when living among others. Since these conditioning effects exerted by family are a primer, they are ingrained and deeply rooted in the heart of each person. These things influence people's lives, the way they comport themselves and act, and also their outlook on life. But as these conditioning effects are not positive, they are also things that people should let go of in the process of pursuing the truth. It doesn't matter whether or not the thoughts and views that such conditioning instills into you are formed in the innermost depths of your heart, or whether or not they occupy a dominant position deep within—and it certainly doesn't matter whether such thoughts and views have already been confirmed to be true or practiced by you in the course of your existence—these conditioning effects will affect your life to varying degrees, both now and in the future, influencing your choice of life path, and affecting your attitude and principles by which you deal with things. It can be said that the vast majority of families provide people with the most basic tricks and philosophies for dealing with the world, so that they can live and survive in society. For example, we fellowshiped last time about things that parents always say, such as "People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark" and "A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies," as well as "You have to endure great suffering in order to come out on top" and "The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot." What else was there? "Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance," and "He who talks a lot errs a lot." These various ideas and views that are conditioned into you by your family, no matter whether you explicitly apply them or practice them in your life, are your primer. What do I mean by "primer"? I mean something that inspires and pushes you to accept Satan's philosophies for dealing with the world. These sayings from your family have instilled into you a most basic way of dealing with the world and a most basic way of surviving, so that after entering this society, you will work hard to pursue fame, gain, and status, endeavor to disguise and package yourself better, and to protect yourself better, and strive to become preeminent among people, and to come out on top, and to stay at the top of the pile. For you, these things that your family conditions into you are rules and tricks for dealing with the world that push you to enter into society and assimilate into evil trends.

Last time we fellowshiped on the conditioning effects that family exerts on people. There are far more conditioning effects than these, so let us continue fellowshiping on

them. For example, some parents tell their children, “Among any three people walking together, there is at least one who can be my teacher.” Who said this? (Confucius.) This is indeed what Confucius said. Some parents tell their children: “You must learn skills wherever you go. Once you learn them, you will have a skill in a specialized field, and you’ll never have to worry about not having a job, and you will be the go-to authority in any situation. One of the ancient sages said it well, ‘Among any three people walking together, there is at least one who can be my teacher.’ Whenever you are around others, look to see who has a skill in a specialized field. Learn it secretly without letting them find out, then once you have mastered it, it will become your skill, and you will be able to earn money to support yourself, and you will never want for life’s basic necessities.” What is your parents’ aim in making you learn skills when you are among others? (To get ahead in the world.) The aim of learning skills is to strengthen yourself, come out on top, learn to secretly pick up skills from others, and gradually bolster your own strength. If you have great strength among people, you will have a livelihood and also fame and fortune. And when you have both fame and fortune, people will think highly of you. If you don’t have real skills, no one will think highly of you, so you must learn to secretly pick up skills from others, learn other people’s strong points and skills, and gradually become stronger than them—only then can you come out on top. Some parents tell their children, “If you want to appear dignified when people are looking, you have to suffer when they aren’t,” still with the aim of making their children earn the appreciation and high regard of others. If you work hard and diligently and endure great hardships to learn skills when others aren’t looking, then once you have acquired them, you can impress everyone with your brilliance, and whenever people look down on you or bully you, you can show off your talents, and no one will dare to bully you anymore. Even though you might look ordinary and unremarkable, and don’t say much, you will have some skills, in the form of technical abilities that are beyond the grasp of ordinary people, so others will admire you for this and feel smaller in your presence, and look to you as someone who can help them. In this way, is your worth among people not increased? And as your worth increases, does it not make you appear dignified? If you want to strive to earn distinguished status among others, you have to endure hardship and suffering when they aren’t looking. No matter how much hardship you endure, just suck it up and keep going, and all of your suffering will prove worthwhile once people see how capable you are. What is your parents’ aim in telling you this saying, “If you want to appear dignified when people are looking, you have to suffer when they aren’t”? Their aim is for you to gain distinguished status among others and earn their high regard, rather than being discriminated against or bullied, so that not only will you be able to enjoy the nice things in life, but you will also win respect and support from others. Not only are people with this kind of status in society not bullied by others, but for them things go smoothly wherever they go. Whenever people see you coming, they will say, “Oh it’s you, to what do we owe the pleasure of your visit? It’s such an honor to see you! Do you have some

business to take care of? I'll sort it for you. Oh, you've come to buy tickets? Well, there's no need to queue. I'll get the best seat for you. We are buddies after all!" You take this on board and think, "Wow, this celebrity label I have really does work wonders. Elders are right when they say, 'If you want to appear dignified when people are looking, you have to suffer when they aren't.' Society really is like that, it's so reality-centered! If I didn't have this reputation, who would pay me any attention? If you queue up like a normal person, others might look down on you and put the boot in, and might not even sell to you when you get to the front of the line." When you are queuing up to see a doctor at the hospital, someone spots you from across the hall and says, "Aren't you so-and-so? What are you waiting in line for? I'll find you a specialist straight away so you don't have to queue." You reply: "I haven't paid yet." And they say, "No need to, I'll foot the bill." You ponder on this and think, "It's good being a celebrity. Enduring all that suffering when no one was looking wasn't in vain after all. I really can enjoy special treatment in society. This society is so reality-centered, you only have to be a celebrity to be well-received. It's great!" Once again, you rejoice that your suffering wasn't all in vain, and think that it was worth going through all that hardship and suffering when others weren't looking! You constantly marvel at this: "I needn't queue up to see a doctor at the hospital," you think. "I can get good seats whenever I buy plane tickets, and special treatment wherever I go. My influence can even get me in through the backdoor. It's great! This is how society should be, there's no need for equality. People should get back as much as they put in. If you don't suffer when others aren't looking, can you appear dignified when they are? Look at me, for instance. I suffered when others weren't looking, so that when they are I can get special treatment like this, because I deserve to." This being the case, what do people depend on if they want to associate with others and get things done in society? They rely on their talents and skills to support their ability to do things. Whether or not someone succeeds in their endeavors or how good they are at getting things done in society is not based on that person's talent or humanity, nor on whether they have the truth. There is no fairness or equality in society. And as long as you are diligent enough, can endure suffering when others aren't looking, and are sufficiently tyrannical and fierce, you can earn high status among others. Just like in the past when people competed to become master of the martial arts world, they would endure great suffering and practice for days and nights on end, until finally they had mastered all the styles of the different martial arts schools and come up with a unique style of their own, which they practiced to perfection until they became invulnerable. And what happened in the end? In the martial arts tournament, they defeated fighters from all the major schools and earned the status of master of the martial arts world. In order to appear dignified in front of others, they were prepared to endure any kind of suffering, and would even practice some dark arts behind closed doors. After eight to ten years of practice, they became so expert that no one in the martial arts world could defeat them in the ring, or assassinate them outside of it, and even if they drank poison, they could

expel it from their body. Thus they cemented their position as master of the martial arts world and no one could threaten their position—this is what appearing dignified to others is all about. In order to appear dignified in front of others, people in ancient times took imperial exams and won scholarly honors. Nowadays, people go to college, take postgraduate entrance exams, and study for a Ph.D.—they too persevere in their studies despite hardships, and slave away learning useless knowledge from dawn to late at night, year after year. Sometimes they are so tired that they don't want to study any more, and long to take a break, but are scolded by their parents who say, "When are you ever going to show an ounce of promise? Do you still want to appear dignified in front of others? If that's the case, how can you do it without suffering when they aren't looking? It's not like you'll drop dead if you miss out on a short break, is it? Go study! Go do your homework!" They say, "I've finished my homework and reviewed today's lessons. Can you let me relax a while?" But their parents reply: "Absolutely not! If you want to appear dignified when people are looking, you have to suffer when they aren't!" They ponder on this and think, "My parents are doing all this for my own good, so why am I so headstrong and preoccupied with having fun? I must do as I'm told. It is said that you ignore your elders at your peril, so I must listen to my parents. They will be like this for the rest of their lives. If I don't do them credit, I'll be letting them down. Besides, I still have a long way to go in life, so what's a little suffering in the long run?" At this thought, they put all their energy into studying, reviewing their lessons, and doing their homework. They stay up past midnight studying and no matter how tired they feel, they manage to overcome it. On their life's path, people are constantly indoctrinated by the conditioning effects of their family, in the form of ideas and expressions such as "If you want to appear dignified when people are looking, you have to suffer when they aren't," which keep encouraging and motivating them. For the sake of their future and prospects and to appear dignified around others, they constantly learn skills and knowledge when people aren't looking. They arm themselves with knowledge and various skills to make themselves stronger. They also look to the exploits of various ancient figures or successful people to give themselves a boost and rouse their fighting spirit. They do all this with the aim of casting off poverty, mediocrity, and lowliness in their future, and changing their destiny of being discriminated against, so that they become a superior person, a member of the elite, and someone that others look up to. These conditioning effects from their family keep running through their mind over and over again, until gradually, these remarks and sayings become their entrenched ideas and views, their set ways of dealing with the world, and also become their intrinsic outlook on existence and the goal they pursue.

Some parents tell their children, "You must learn to make friends with others. It's like the saying goes, 'Just as a fence needs the support of three stakes, an able man needs the support of three other people.' Even the reviled Song dynasty politician Qin Hui[a] had

a. The original text does not contain the phrase "the reviled Song dynasty politician."

three friends. Wherever you go, learn to get along with others and maintain good interpersonal relationships. At the very least, you must get yourself some close friends. Once you enter society, you will encounter all kinds of difficulties in life, work, and when going about your business. If you don't have friends to help you, you will have to face all kinds of difficulties and awkward situations alone. If you know some tricks for making a few close friends, then when you come up against these awkward situations and difficulties, those friends will step forward to get you out of trouble and help you succeed in your endeavors. If you want to achieve great things, you should get off your high horse and make friends. You should be able to keep all sorts of powerful people on your side in order to support your endeavors and your future life and existence. You must be able to take advantage of various people to help you get things done and to serve you." Parents generally won't explicitly communicate this kind of idea or view, or tell their children directly that they need to learn to make friends, take advantage of people, and be able to find friends to help them succeed in their endeavors. However, there are some parents with status and standing in society, or who are particularly artful and scheming, and who influence their children through both their words and their conduct. Besides, whenever their children see and hear their ideas, views, and ways of dealing with the world through the things they say and do in everyday life, this exerts a conditioning effect on the children. Under the condition that you do not correctly judge and discern between positive things and negative things, you are inadvertently influenced by your parents' words and actions and accept their ideas and views, or these ideas and views are inadvertently implanted deep within your heart, and become the most basic foundation and principle by which you do things. Your parents may not directly tell you to "make more friends, learn to get people to do things for you, and to leverage people's strengths, and learn to take advantage of those around you." Nevertheless, they infect and condition you by practicing through their actions the ideas and views that they preach. Thus your parents become your first teachers in this matter, initiating you as regards how to deal with things, how to get along with people, and how to make friends in this society, and also initiating you as regards the purpose behind making friends, why you should make friends, what kind of friends you should make, how to gain a foothold in society, the basics and methods for gaining a foothold, and so on. Thus, your parents condition you by practicing what they preach. Unwittingly, as you grow from childhood to adulthood, these ideas and views gradually take shape, from a simple consciousness to concrete thoughts, views, and actions so that, step by step, they become deeply implanted in your heart and soul and become your way of and philosophy for dealing with the world. What do you think of the saying "Just as a fence needs the support of three stakes, an able man needs the support of three other people" as a way of dealing with the world? (It's bad.) Is there such a thing as a true friend in this world? (No.) Why then does a fence need the support of three stakes? What's the point of having three stakes? Just to make it more stable. It wouldn't be stable with two stakes, and one stake

wouldn't do at all. So what is the principle for dealing with the world involved here? Even an able man, no matter how capable he is, cannot clap with one hand, and will get nowhere. If you want to achieve something, you need people to help you. And if you want people to help you, you need to learn how to conduct yourself and deal with the world, and to make friends widely and assemble a force in order to get things done. In order to achieve anything, great or small, whether it be carving out a career, or gaining a foothold in society, or accomplishing something even greater, you must have people around you whom you trust or think highly of, and whom you can use to help you achieve the endeavors you want to undertake, otherwise it will be like trying to clap with one hand. Of course these are the rules for doing anything in this world, because there is no fairness in society, only scheming and struggle. If you walk the correct path and undertake just causes, no one will approve, it won't work in this society. No matter what kind of endeavor you undertake, you must have some people to help you and to accumulate a force in society. Wherever you go, if there are people who yield to you and are afraid of you, then you will have a firm foothold in society, it will be much easier for you to undertake your endeavors, and there will be people who give you the green light. This is an attitude and a way of dealing with the world. No matter what you want to do, your parents will always tell you "Just as a fence needs the support of three stakes, an able man needs the support of three other people." So, is this principle for dealing with the world right or wrong? (Wrong.) What's wrong with it? (Whether a person can accomplish things depends not on their power or talent, but on God's sovereignty and arrangements.) It depends on God's sovereignty and arrangements, this is one aspect. In addition, what is people's aim in wanting others to help them in society? (To enable themselves to rise above the rest.) That's right. The aim behind having these three stakes to support you is to carve out a place for yourself and gain a firm foothold. That way, no one can kick you down, and even if one stake does get kicked over, the other two stakes will be there to support you. People who have a certain degree of power can do things with ease in this society, without worrying about the law, people's feelings, or public opinion. Is this not people's aim? (Yes.) That way, you can become someone who calls the shots and has a voice in society, and neither the law nor any public opinion can shake your footing or unsettle you. You will have the final say in the trends of this society and in any social group. You will be the go-to authority. So then, can you not do as you please? You can rise above the law, rise above people's feelings, rise above public opinion, rise above morality, and rise above the condemnation of conscience. Is this the aim that people want to achieve? (Yes.) This is the aim that people want to achieve. This is a basic foundation for people's actions that enables them to achieve their ambitions and desires. You see, some people become sworn brothers in society. Among them, an elder brother is the CEO of some corporation, a younger brother is the president of some group, and some others are politicians or underworld bosses. Some people have friends who are hospital directors or chief surgeons or head nurses, and some people make

some good friends in their own line of work. Do people really make these friends because they share the same views and interests? Or because they truly want to uphold just causes together? (No.) Then why do they do it? They do it because they want to accumulate a kind of force, and expand and enhance this force, and ultimately rely on it to gain a foothold and survive in society, live at the top of the pile, and enjoy a life of luxury and indulgence; no one will dare to bully them, and even if they have committed crimes, the law will not dare to punish them. And if they do commit crimes, their buddies will step forward to help them. One friend will speak on their behalf, another friend will help smooth things over in court and lobby senior politicians for clemency, so they will be out of the police station in less than 24 hours. No matter how serious the crime they committed, nothing will come of it and they won't even have to pay a fine. Eventually, common folk will say: "Dear me, that person is really something. How did they get themselves off the hook so quickly after committing such a serious crime? If that were us, we'd be done for, wouldn't we? We'd end up in jail, wouldn't we? Look at the friends they have. Why can't we make friends like that? How come people like that are beyond our reach?" And people will be envious. These matters are all caused by social injustice and the continuous emergence of evil trends in society. People do not have any sense of security in this society. They always want to curry favor with certain forces and compare each other's forces. Particularly for those living at the bottom of society, even if they have some means of making a living, they don't know when they will encounter danger or difficulty, and are most afraid of meeting with some unexpected disaster, or encountering some mishap, especially when it comes to anything that involves the law, so they go through life never wanting to have anything to do with the police or the courts. Because people have no sense of security in this society, they constantly have to make friends and find powerful allies to rely on. You see, when young children are in school, they have to make two or three friends to play with. Otherwise, they always end up getting bullied when they're on their own. And they daren't tell the teacher about getting bullied, because once they do that, they will definitely be beaten up on their way home from school. Even if the teachers are nice to you and your academic performance is fairly good, if you don't know how to make friends or gang up with the thugs around you, you'll end up in hot water if you get on the wrong side of them. And sometimes, even if you don't get on the wrong side of them, they will try to lead you astray when they see you studying well, and if you don't listen to them, you will get beaten up or bullied. Even school environments make people feel insecure, so this world is really scary, don't you think? Therefore, the conditioning effects of family on you in this respect come in one sense from the influence of your parents setting an example, and in another sense, also from people's insecurities about society. Because there is no fairness in this society, nor any force or advantage that can protect your human rights and interests, people are often beset with dread and fear of this society. As a result, they naturally accept the conditioning effects of the idea that "Just as a fence needs the support of three stakes,

an able man needs the support of three other people." Because in the real environments in which people exist, ideas and views like this are needed to support their survival, enabling them to switch from a life of solitude and loneliness to one of reliance and a sense of security. Therefore, people regard reliance on a force and reliance on friends in this world as something very important.

Regarding the ways in which people are conditioned by their family, in addition to the saying we mentioned just now, which was "Just as a fence needs the support of three stakes, an able man needs the support of three other people," there are some more specific ways in which people are educated by their family. For example, parents tend to educate their daughters by saying things like: "'A lady will make herself beautiful for those who admire her, while a gentleman will sacrifice his life for those who understand him.' Also, 'There are no ugly women in the world, only lazy women.' Women must learn to love themselves, and dress themselves up, and make themselves all pretty. That way, wherever you go, people will like you, and more people will do things for you and give you the green light. If people like you, then naturally they won't give you a hard time or make things difficult for you." Some parents tell their daughters: "Girls must learn to dress up well, put on makeup, and even more importantly, they must learn to be gentle." What they are really saying is that you need to learn to show yourself off. They also say things like: "Don't be a strong woman. What use is it for a woman to be so strong and independent? Such women never dress themselves up, but live like men, and hurriedly bustle around all day long, and they're not gentle either. Women are born to be doted on by men. They don't need to be independent or learn any skills. They just need to learn to dress themselves up, learn how to please men, and do what a woman should do well. A woman who is liked and cherished by men will be happy all her life." Some women are conditioned by their parents in this respect. In one regard, they look at how their mothers behave as women. In another regard, after being conditioned by their parents they turn themselves into women who are truly pleasing to the eye, by constantly dressing up and beautifying themselves. Do people like this exist? (Yes.) Women who grow up in this kind of family environment attach great importance to their appearance, their clothing, and their feminine identity. They won't leave the house without first putting on makeup and changing their clothes. Some women, no matter how busy they are with work, absolutely must wash their hair, take a shower, and spray on some perfume before leaving the house, otherwise, they just won't go out, and when they have nothing to do, all they do is look in the mirror and fix their hair. Who knows how many times these women look in the mirror each day! They are profoundly conditioned by ideas and views such as "A lady will make herself beautiful for those who admire her, while a gentleman will sacrifice his life for those who understand him," so they pay great attention to their figure and how their face looks. They won't go out if their complexion looks even slightly the worse for wear, and they won't show their face in public if there is acne on it. If one day they aren't in the mood to put on makeup, they

won’t go out. Or, if they’ve had a haircut but it doesn’t look that nice, and they don’t look so pleasing to the eye, they won’t go out to work, in case people think less of them. Such women spend all day long living for the sake of these things. If they have a mosquito bite on their hand, they’ll keep their hand hidden out of view, or if it’s on their leg they’ll keep their leg covered up because they won’t look pretty in a skirt, and also they won’t go out, and can’t perform their duty. Every little thing is liable to put them off and stop them in their tracks, so life then becomes extremely hard and tiring for them. In order to maintain the dignity of a lady and avoid becoming ugly women, they take great pains and effort to look after their face, figure, and hairstyle, and in order to avoid becoming ugly women, they cast off their previous bad habits and laziness. No matter how busy they are at work, they must dress up and adorn themselves meticulously and exquisitely. If their eyebrows aren’t drawn well, they redo them. If their blusher isn’t applied evenly, they reapply it. Unless they’ve spent at least an hour or two putting on makeup, they won’t go out the front door. Some women, as soon as they get up in the morning, start this whole charade of showering, dressing up, and changing clothes. They think and rethink, trying on this and that, until it gets to midday and they still haven’t left the house. It must be so difficult for them, having their limited time and energy taken up by these senseless things. They don’t get around to doing anything serious at all, and as soon as they open their eyes, all they think about is dressing themselves up and making themselves beautiful. Some of these people are influenced by their mother’s ideas and views, while others are explicitly told by their mother what they should be doing, and some learn from the example that their mother sets by her actions. In short, these are all ways in which people are conditioned by their family.

Some families hold the view that “Daughters should be raised like rich children, and sons like poor children.” Have you heard this saying? (Yes, I have.) What does this saying mean? They are all children, so why should girls be raised like rich kids, and boys like poor kids? Traditional culture generally values males and attaches less importance to females, so why does this saying seem to value girls over boys? If a daughter is raised like a rich kid, what kind of daughter will she become? What kind of thing will she become? (Someone who is rather spoiled, conceited, and domineering.) One who is willful, fragile, unable to bear any hardship, incapable of caring, irrational, unreasonable, and unable to differentiate between good and bad—what can such a person amount to? Is this the right way to educate someone? (No.) Raising someone this way will ruin them. If you raise your daughter like a rich kid, although she will grow up in a family environment that meets her every basic need, and she will have a modicum of sophistication, will she understand the real principles of comportment? If she doesn’t understand, then this kind of parenting approach is hurting her and harming her, rather than protecting her. What is parents’ motivation for raising their daughters based on this principle? A daughter raised this way will be sophisticated and won’t easily fall for men who buy her nice dresses, give her a bit of spending money, or ply her with paltry gifts

and favors. Therefore, the average man won't sweep her off her feet. He would have to be extremely rich, and a perfect gentleman, and extremely sophisticated, and extremely scheming and calculating, and extremely shrewd in order to win her heart, and to sweep her off her feet, and to earn her hand in marriage. Do you think it's good or bad to marry off your daughter to someone like that? It's surely not a good thing, is it? Besides, if you raise your daughter like a rich kid, then besides knowing how to enjoy herself, dress up, and eat nice food, will she be able to discern people for who they really are? Will she have any survival skills? Will she be able to live alongside others for a long time? Not necessarily. It may be that she will have trouble keeping her own life in order, in which case, people like this are useless. They are spoiled, imperious and domineering, willful and impudent, self-indulgent and overbearing, uncompromising and insistent, and they only know about eating, drinking, and having fun. Besides all that, she won't even have the basic common sense needed to get by in life, which will imperceptibly cause trouble for her future survival and family life. It is not a good thing for her parents to educate their daughter in this way. They didn't teach her principles of comportment, but only how to enjoy life. So if she can't earn enough money in the future, won't she have to endure hardship? Won't she then find it difficult to get by? Will she be able to endure that? Won't she be fragile whenever she encounters difficulties in the future? Will she have the perseverance needed to face all these hardships? Don't bet on it. When it comes to people who enjoy the material life too much, and who are overly accustomed to a life of ease and luxury, and who have never suffered at all, what is the biggest problem with their humanity? It's that they are fragile and don't have the will to endure hardship, and people like this will come to ruin. So, the education that children receive from their family, whether via their parents or through social trends, essentially comes from among human beings. Whether these multifarious sayings form into an idea or viewpoint, or become a way of life or survival for people, they make people look at these issues from an extreme, prejudiced, and absurd perspective. In short, these sayings from family influence, to a greater or lesser degree, the way in which people view people and things, and the way in which they comport themselves and act. And since these things influence you, they will also influence your pursuit of the truth. Therefore, regardless of whether these sayings, ideas and views from one's parents are noble and high-minded, or lowbrow and idiotic, everyone should re-examine them, reassess them, and learn to discern them for what they really are. If they come to exert a certain influence on you, or cause a disturbance in your life and in your pursuit of the truth, or make your life a total mess, or impede you from seeking the truth and accepting the truth whenever you face people, events, and things, then you should just let them go.

There are also claims circulating in society regarding the concepts of emotional quotient, or EQ, and intelligence quotient, or IQ. These claims suggest that people don't need to have a high IQ, but only need to have a high EQ. IQ is more to do with a person's caliber, whereas EQ is more to do with the tricks by which a person deals with the world.

This is My basic understanding of these two terms. Maybe your intelligence quotient is quite high, and you are really academic, really knowledgeable, and a great communicator, and your ability to survive is quite strong, but your emotional intelligence is not high, and you have no tricks for dealing with the world, or even if you are a bit tricky, your means are not very sophisticated. In cases like this, your knowledge, skills, and proficiency in a specialized field only enable you to scrape by in society and earn a basic livelihood. People with high emotional intelligence are particularly good at being crafty. They will make use of various forces in society, advantageous geographical environments or favorable opportunities, and advantageous information to create hype and manipulate things, exaggerating something that is unremarkable into something with a certain impact in society or within a community, so that they themselves become famous, and ultimately stand out from the crowd and become a person of fame and status. This type of person has high emotional intelligence and tricks. Tricky people are essentially cunning demon kings. Today's society advocates high emotional intelligence, and some families may often condition their children in this way, by saying: "It's a good thing that you have a high IQ, but you also need to have a high emotional intelligence. You need it when interacting with your classmates, colleagues, relatives, and friends. What this society advocates most is not your strength, but being tricky, knowing how to package yourself, knowing how to promote yourself, and how to take advantage of all the various forces and advantageous conditions in society and make them work in your own favor and serve you—whether you do this in order to seize the opportunity to make a fortune, or to become famous. Such people are all people with high emotional intelligence." Some particular families or some parents with fame and prestige in society often educate their children this way, by saying: "A man with emotional intelligence is liked by both men and women, whereas a man without emotional intelligence is disliked by everyone. A woman with emotional intelligence will be liked by a whole host of men and women, and many males will pursue her. Whereas, if a woman has no emotional intelligence, few will pursue her no matter how beautiful she is." Living in today's society, if people don't have any discernment of these claims by their families, they will become unwittingly influenced by these ideas and views, and will often measure their own IQ, and more especially, often check themselves against certain standards to determine whether they have emotional intelligence, and how high their EQ actually is. Regardless of whether or not you have a strong or clear awareness of these things, suffice it to say that the conditioning effects from your family in this regard will have already begun to influence you. They might be imperceptible, and they might not occupy a prominent place in your thoughts. But when you hear these things and have no discernment of them, you will already have begun to be conditioned by them to a certain extent.

There are other conditioning effects that come from one's family. For example, parents will often tell their children, "Whenever you're around others, you don't know how to keep your wits about you and you're always stupid and clueless. As the saying

goes, ‘When someone beats a gong, listen to its sound; when someone speaks, listen to their voice.’ So whenever people are talking to you, you must learn to listen to what they’re saying, otherwise you’ll end up being betrayed and paying for the privilege!” Do some parents often say this? What are they really trying to say? Don’t be an honest person, be more calculating. That is to say, always read between the lines of what the other person is saying, always listen out for the extra layer of meaning in their words that they aren’t saying, learn to guess what others actually mean, and then adopt corresponding measures or tricks based on this unspoken meaning. Don’t be passive, otherwise you’ll end up being betrayed and paying for the privilege. From your parents’ perspective, these words are all well-intentioned, and meant to protect you from doing stupid things, or from being sold down the river by others in this evil community, and to protect you from being taken for a ride or doing something foolish. But is this saying consistent with the truth? (No, it isn’t.) No, it isn’t. Sometimes people are able to listen out for the hidden meanings in what others say. Even if you don’t pay attention, you can still listen out for hidden meanings. So what should you do? According to this saying that your parents tell you—“When someone beats a gong, listen to its sound; when someone speaks, listen to their voice”—you should guard against others and be vigilant of them at all times, and at the same time as guarding against them, you should take protective measures before they harm you or trick you. Even more importantly, you should strike first and not put yourself in a passive situation or dilemma. Is this the ultimate goal that parents want to achieve by telling you this saying? (Yes.) It is that whenever you interact with others, no matter whether they harm you or not, you shouldn’t be passive. You should take the initiative in your own hands, and grasp the knife handle in your own hands, so that whenever someone wants to harm you, not only can you protect yourself, but you can also take the initiative by striking them and harming them, and being more formidable and ruthless than them. This is actually the aim and root meaning of your parents’ words. If analyzed in this way, it is obvious that this saying does not accord with the truth, and that it is completely inconsistent with what God meant when He told people “be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” The principles and wise ways that God tells people are to help them discern others’ cunning schemes, and protect themselves from falling into temptation and associating with wicked people, and refrain from using evil ways to deal with evil, and instead use the truth principles to deal with any evildoing and any wicked person. Whereas the method that parents tell their children—“When someone beats a gong, listen to its sound; when someone speaks, listen to their voice”—is about repaying evil with evil. So if the other person is evil, you should be even more evil than them. If their words harbor a hidden meaning, you are superior to them and can identify it, and at the same time, based on this hidden meaning, you can use corresponding methods and tricks to deal with them, counteract them, subdue them, and to make them fear you, submit to you, and to let them know that you are not to be bullied or messed with. This is what countering evil with evil means.

Obviously, the path of practice and the criterion of practice that are communicated to you and the result that is achieved through this saying will lead you to do evil and to deviate from the true way. When your parents tell you to behave like this, they aren't asking you to be someone with the truth or someone who obeys the truth, nor are they asking you to be a genuine created being. They are asking you to counteract and overpower evil using ways that are even more evil than those of the wicked person facing you. This is what your parents mean to say. Is there any parent who says the following? "If a wicked person attacks you, exercise restraint. You should ignore him and discern him for what he really is. Firstly, identify the essence of the wicked person within him, and discern him for what he is. Secondly, recognize the evil deeds and corrupt dispositions in yourself that are similar to or the same as his, and then seek the truth to resolve them." Do any parents tell their children this? (No.) When your parents tell you, "When someone beats a gong, listen to its sound; when someone speaks, listen to their voice. You must beware, otherwise you'll end up being betrayed by others and paying for the privilege, and you must learn to strike first," no matter your parents' original intention in saying this, or the ultimate effect that is achieved, it makes you even more formidable, more powerful, more imperious, more domineering, and more vicious, so that wicked people are afraid of you and they even avoid you when they see you, and dare not mess with you. Is this not the case? (Yes.) So, could it be said that your parents' aim in telling you this saying is not to turn you into a person with a sense of righteousness, or someone who possesses the truth, and not to make you a wise person who is as "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"? Their aim is to tell you that you have to be a powerful person in society, to be even more evil than others, and to be someone who uses evil to protect yourself, right? (Yes.) When your parents tell you "When someone beats a gong, listen to its sound; when someone speaks, listen to their voice," whether it is their original intention or the ultimate effect that is achieved, and whether your parents tell you the principles and methods of practice for doing such things, or instead tell you their thoughts and views on such things, obviously none of this is in line with the truth, and it runs counter to God's words. Your parents make you become a wicked person, not an upright person, nor a wise person who fears God and shuns evil. Obviously, the teaching and conditioning given to you by your parents are not positive things, nor are they a correct path. Although your parents meant to protect you, and had the best of intentions in doing so, the effect they achieved is malignant. Not only did they fail to protect you, but they pointed you toward an incorrect path, causing you to do evil and become a wicked person. Not only did they fail to protect you, but they actually harmed you by causing you to fall into temptation and unrighteousness, and to stray from God's care and protection. From this point of view, the conditioning effects exerted on you by your family are more likely to make you selfish, hypocritical, and greedy for fame, gain, and social status, and to better assimilate you into evil trends, and to give you more sophisticated ruses for interacting with others, and to make you

slippery, vicious, imperious, and domineering around others, so that no one will dare to mess with you or lay a hand on you. From your parents' point of view, they have used these methods to condition you so that you are protected in society, or, to a certain extent, so that you become a dignified person. But from the perspective of the truth, they don't allow you to be a true created being. They make you stray from God's teachings and the methods by which God admonishes you to comport yourself, and they also make you stray further and further away from the goal that God tells you to pursue. No matter your parents' original intentions in conditioning and educating you, ultimately these ideas that they conditioned into you have only brought you fame, gain, and emptiness, as well as all the evil deeds that you have lived out and revealed, and they have also provided you with further confirmation of the practicality of these conditioning effects in society, and nothing else.

As regards these sayings that come from the conditioning which your family exerts on you—such as "When someone beats a gong, listen to its sound; when someone speaks, listen to their voice"—if considered in isolation, you would think nothing of them. You would feel that these sayings are common and widespread, and that there are no major issues with such sayings, ideas, and views. However, if you compare them with the truth and use the truth to dissect them in detail, it becomes apparent that there are indeed major issues with these sayings. For example, if your parents always tell you "When someone beats a gong, listen to its sound; when someone speaks, listen to their voice," and you utilize this mode of existence skillfully, then whenever you meet people you will constantly and subconsciously speculate without realizing it, about things like "What does he mean by this? Why did he say that?" And you will naturally speculate on other people's thoughts, constantly listening to what they say and interacting with them in this habitual mode of thinking, so you will not be contemplating the truth, or how to get along with others, or what the principles are for interacting with others, or what the principles are for communicating with others, or how to deal with the implications that you identify in people's words, or what the way is that God teaches, or how to discern people of this type, or how to handle them, and other such principles of practice that your parents never communicated to you. What your parents told you was to learn how to second-guess other people's thoughts, and you have carried out this way of practicing very well; you have already reached the point where you have mastered it and can no longer stop yourself from doing it. Therefore, these issues require people to regularly settle themselves down, think carefully, and invest effort into figuring things out. In one sense, you should dissect and discern these issues clearly. In another sense, whenever these things occur, you should make an effort to change your way of thinking and also your way of viewing people and things. That is to say, you should change your thoughts and views on dealing with such matters. The next time you listen to someone speaking, and try to speculate on what they really mean to say, let go of this way of thinking and this way of handling people, and think it through: "What does he mean by saying this?

He doesn’t speak directly and always beats around the bush. This person is deceitful. What on earth was that thing he was talking about? What is the essence of this thing? Can I perceive it clearly? If I can perceive it clearly, I will fellowship with him using arguments and views that are consistent with the truth, explaining the matter clearly, and making him understand the truth of this aspect. I will help him and correct his wrong thoughts and views. In addition, the way he speaks is deceitful. I don’t want to know what he means by that, or why he talks in such a roundabout way. I don’t want to spend effort and energy trying to speculate on what he really means. I don’t want to pay that price, and I don’t want to do anything in this regard. I just need to recognize that he is a deceitful person. Though he is deceitful, I won’t engage in deception with him. No matter how much he beats around the bush, I will be straight up with him, say whatever should be said, and tell it like it is. As the Lord Jesus said, ‘But let your communication be, Yes, yes; No, no’ (Matthew 5:37). Addressing deceit with honesty is the highest criterion for practicing the truth.” If you practice in this way, you will let go of the ways your parents conditioned you and taught you, and your principles of practice will also change. Then you will be a person who pursues the truth. No matter which aspects of your parents’ conditioning you let go of, whenever related things happen again, you will change your wrong thoughts and views about them, by taking God’s words as the basis and using the truth as the criterion, and turning them into thoughts and views that are wholly correct and positive. That is to say, if you judge, view, and handle this matter with God’s words and the truth as your basis and as your criteria for practicing, then you are practicing the truth. On the contrary, if you still adopt the ways your parents taught you—or the ideas and views they instilled in you—as the criterion, basis, and practice principles for handling this matter, then this way of practicing is not practicing the truth, nor is it pursuing the truth. In the end, what people gain from pursuing the truth is appreciation and experience of the truth. If you don’t pursue the truth, you won’t gain an appreciation or experience of the truth. What you will gain is just an appreciation and experience of putting into practice this saying that your parents conditioned into you. So, while others talk about their experience and appreciation of God’s words, you can’t bring yourself to say anything, because you have nothing to say. All you have is a practical appreciation and experience of the ideas and views conditioned into you by your family. It’s just that you can’t bring yourself to say anything about them, and have no way to share them. Therefore, whatever you put into practice is what you will ultimately appreciate. If what you practice is the truth, then what you will gain is an appreciation and experience of God’s words and of the truth. If you put into practice the education and instructions given to you by your parents, then what you will appreciate is the experience of your family’s conditioning and traditional education, and what you will gain is only the ideas that Satan instills into you, and Satan’s corruption of you. The more profoundly you appreciate these things, the more you will feel that Satan’s corrupting ideas and views are useful and practical, and the more profoundly you will be corrupted by Satan. What if you practice

the truth? You will have more and more of an appreciation and experience of the truth, and of the words and principles that God tells you, and you will feel that the truth is the most valuable thing, and that God is the source of human life, and that God's words are people's life.

In addition to raising you and providing you with food, clothing, and education, what has your family given you? All it has given you is trouble, right? (Yes.) If you were not born into such a family, all the various conditioning effects that your family has on you may not have existed. The conditioning of your family would not have existed, but the conditioning effects of society would still exist—you cannot escape them. No matter from which perspective you look at it, whether these conditioning effects come from family or from society, these ideas and views basically originate from Satan. It's just that each family accepts these various sayings from society with different degrees of conviction and placing emphasis on different points. They then use corresponding methods to educate and condition the next generation of their family. Everyone receives all sorts of conditioning to varying degrees, depending on the family they come from. But in fact, these conditioning effects originate from society and from Satan. It's just that these conditioning effects are instilled deep in people's minds through the medium of parents' more concrete words and actions, using more direct methods that make people more amenable to them, so that people accept this conditioning and it becomes their principles and ways of dealing with the world, and it also becomes the basis on which they view people and matters, and comport themselves and act. For example, the idea and view that we just talked about—"When someone beats a gong, listen to its sound; when someone speaks, listen to their voice"—is also a conditioning effect that comes from your family. No matter what kind of conditioning effect their family exerts on them, people view it from the perspective of family members and therefore accept it as a positive thing, and as their own personal talisman, which they use to protect themselves. This is because people think that everything that comes from their parents is the result of their parents' practice and experience. Of everyone in the world, only their parents would never harm them, and only their parents want them to live a better life and to protect them. Therefore, people accept various ideas and views from their parents without any discernment. In this way, they naturally accept the conditioning of these various ideas and views. Once people have been conditioned by these various ideas and views, they never doubt them or discern them for what they really are, because they often hear their parents say such things. For example, "The parent is always right." So what does this saying mean? It means that no matter whether your parents are right or wrong, basically because your parents gave birth to you and raised you, as far as you are concerned everything your parents do is right. You cannot judge whether they are right or wrong, nor can you reject them, let alone resist them. This is called filial piety. Even if your parents have done wrong, and even if some of their ideas and views are outdated or mistaken, or the way they educate you and their ideas and views they educate you with

are not correct or positive, you mustn't doubt or reject them, because there is a saying about that—"The parent is always right." When it comes to parents, you should never discern or evaluate whether they are right or wrong, because as far as children are concerned, their lives and everything they possess come from their parents. No one stands above your parents, so if you have a conscience, you should not criticize them. No matter how wrong, incorrect, or imperfect your parents are, they are still your parents. They are the people who are closest to you, who raised you, the people who treat you best, and the people who gave you life. Does everyone not accept this saying? And precisely because this mentality exists, your parents think they can treat you unscrupulously, and use various methods to steer you toward doing all manner of things, and instill various ideas into you. From their point of view, they think, "My motives are correct, this is for your own good. Everything you have was given to you by me. You were born and raised by me, so however I treat you I cannot be in the wrong, because everything I do is for your own good and I wouldn't hurt you or harm you." From children's perspective, is it right that their attitude toward their parents should be based on this saying, "The parent is always right"? (No, it's wrong.) It certainly is wrong. So how should you discern this saying? From how many aspects can we dissect the incorrectness of this saying? If we look at it from the perspective of children, their lives and bodies come from their parents, who also have the kindness to raise and educate them, so children should obey their every word, fulfill their filial obligation, and not find fault with their parents. The hidden import of these words is that you should not discern your parents for who they really are. If we analyze it from this perspective, is this view correct? (No, it's wrong.) How should we treat this matter according to the truth? What would be the correct way of putting it? Are children's bodies and lives given to them by their parents? (No.) A person's fleshly body is born of their parents, but where does the parents' ability to have children come from? (It is given by God and comes from God.) What about a person's soul? Where does it come from? It also comes from God. So at the root, people are created by God, and all of this was preordained by Him. It was God who preordained you to be born into this family. God sent a soul to this family, and then you were born of this family, and you have this predestined relationship with your parents—this was preordained by God. Because of God's sovereignty and preordination, your parents were able to have you and you were born into this family. This is looking at it from the root. But what if God didn't preordain things this way? Then your parents would never have had you, and you would never have had this parent-child relationship with them. There would have been no blood relationship, no family affection, and no connection whatsoever. Therefore, it is wrong to say that a person's life is given to them by their parents. Another aspect is that, looking at it from the child's perspective, their parents are one generation older than them. But as far as all human beings are concerned, parents are like everyone else, insofar as they are all members of the corrupt human race, and all have the corrupt dispositions of Satan. They are no different from anyone

else, and no different from you. Although they physically gave birth to you, and in terms of your flesh-and-blood relationship, they are one generation older than you, nevertheless in terms of the essence of your human dispositions, you are all living under Satan's power, and you have all been corrupted by Satan and possess corrupt, satanic dispositions. In view of the fact that people all have corrupt, satanic dispositions, the essences of all people are the same. Regardless of differences in seniority, or one's age, or how early or late one came into this world, in terms of essence, people essentially have the same corrupt dispositions, they are all human beings who have been corrupted by Satan, and are no different in this respect. Regardless of whether their humanity is good or evil, because they have corrupt dispositions, they adopt the same perspectives and standpoints when it comes to viewing people and matters, and approaching the truth. In this sense, there is no difference between them. Also, everyone who lives among this evil human race accepts the various ideas and views that abound in this evil world, whether in terms of words or thoughts, or whether in form or ideology, and accepts all kinds of ideas from Satan, whether through state education or the conditioning of social mores. These things are not in line with the truth at all. There is no truth in them, and people certainly do not understand what the truth is. From this point of view, parents and their children are equal and have the same ideas and views. It's just that your parents accepted these ideas and views 20 or 30 years previously, whereas you accepted them slightly later. That is to say, given the same social background, as long as you are a normal person, both you and your parents have accepted the same corruption from Satan, the conditioning of social mores, and the same ideas and views that stem from the various evil trends in society. From this point of view, children are the same type as their parents. From God's point of view, leaving aside the premise that He preordains, predestines, and selects, in God's eyes, both parents and their children are similar in that they are created beings, and whether they are created beings that worship God or not, they are all collectively known as created beings, and are all accepting of God's sovereignty, orchestrations, and arrangements. From this point of view, parents and their children actually have equal status in the eyes of God, and they all accept God's sovereignty and arrangements similarly and equally. This is an objective fact. If they are all chosen by God, they all have equal opportunities to pursue the truth. Of course, they also have equal opportunities to accept God's chastisement and judgment, and equal opportunities to be saved. Apart from the above similarities, there is only one difference between parents and their children, which is that the parents' ranking in the so-called family hierarchy is greater than that of their children. What does their ranking in the family hierarchy mean? It means that they are only a generation older, by 20 or 30 years—it's nothing more than a big age difference. And because of parents' special status, children must be filial and fulfill their obligations to their parents. This is the only responsibility a person has toward their parents. But because children and parents are all part of the same corrupt human race, parents are not moral exemplars for their children, nor are

they a benchmark or role model for their children's pursuit of the truth, nor are they a role model for their children in terms of worshiping and obeying God. Of course, parents are not the incarnation of truth. People have no obligation or responsibility to regard their parents as moral exemplars and figures who should be obeyed unconditionally. Children should not be afraid to discern their parents' conduct, actions, and disposition essence. That is to say, when it comes to handling their own parents, people should not abide by such ideas and views as "The parent is always right." This view is based on the fact that parents have a special status, in that they gave birth to you under God's preordination, and are 20, 30 or even 40 or 50 years older than you. It is only from the perspective of this flesh-and-blood relationship, in terms of their status and their ranking in the family hierarchy, that they are different from their children. But because of this difference, people regard their parents as having no faults whatsoever. Is this right? This is wrong, irrational, and does not accord with the truth. Some people wonder how one should treat one's parents, given that parents and children have this flesh-and-blood relationship. If parents believe in God, they should be treated accordingly as believers; if they do not believe in God, they should be treated accordingly as unbelievers. Whatever kind of people the parents are, they should be treated according to the corresponding truth principles. If they are devils, you should say that they are devils. If they have no humanity, you should say that they have no humanity. If the ideas and views they teach you are not in line with the truth, you don't have to listen to these things or accept them, and you can even discern them for what they are and expose them. If your parents say, "I'm doing it for your own good," and throw a tantrum and kick up a fuss, will you care? (No, I won't care.) If your parents don't believe, just don't pay them any mind, and leave it at that. If they make such a big fuss, you will see that they are devils and nothing less. These truths concerning faith in God are the ideas and views that people most need to accept. They can't accept them or take them on board, so just what kind of things are they? They don't understand God's words, so they're subhuman, right? You have to think like this: "Although you are my parents, you have no humanity. Having been born to you, I truly feel ashamed! Now I can discern you for who you really are. You don't have human spirit within you, you don't understand the truth, you can't even listen to such obvious and simple doctrines, and yet you still make thoughtless comments and say slanderous things. I understand that now, and I have made a clean break with you in my heart. But on the outside, I still have to humor you, and I still have to fulfill some of my responsibilities and obligations as your child. If I have the means to do so, I will buy you some healthcare products, but if I don't have the means, I will come back to visit you, and that is all. I will not refute your opinions, whatever you say. You are absurd, and I'll just let you be that way. What is there to say to devils such as you, who are impervious to reason? Out of consideration for the fact that you gave birth to me and all the years you spent raising me, I will keep coming to visit you and take care of you. Otherwise, I wouldn't pay attention to you at all, and I wouldn't want to see you for as

long as I live.” Why don’t you want to see them again or have anything to do with them? Because you understand the truth, and you have seen through to their essence, and seen through all the various mistaken ideas and views that they have, and from these mistaken ideas and views you perceive their stupidity, intransigence, and wickedness, and see clearly that they are devils, and so you feel sick of them and disgusted by them, and don’t want to see them. It’s only because of that little bit of conscience inside you that you feel compelled to fulfill some of your responsibilities and filial duties as a son or daughter, so you visit them during the New Year and on bank holidays, and leave it at that. As long as they haven’t impeded you from believing in God or doing your duty, go visit them when you have time. If you really don’t want to see them, just call them to ask how they are, send them some money through the mail every now and then, and buy them a few useful things. Whether it be taking care of them, visiting them, buying them clothes, showing concern for their wellbeing, or looking after them when they are sick—all this is just fulfilling one’s filial obligations and satisfying one’s own needs in terms of one’s feelings and conscience. That’s all it is, and it does not count as practicing the truth. No matter how disgusted you are with them, or how well you can see through to their essence, as long as they are alive, you must fulfill your necessary obligations as a son or daughter and bear the necessary responsibilities. Your parents took care of you when you were young, and when they get old, you must take care of them as long as you have the means to. Let them nag you if they want to. As long as you don’t listen to the ideas and views they try to instill in you, and don’t accept what they say, and don’t let them disturb or constrain you, then it’s totally fine, and proves that you have grown in stature and that you are already standing firm in your testimony before God. He will not condemn you because you are caring for them and He will not say, “Why are you so sentimental? You have accepted the truth and are pursuing it, so how can you still take care of them?” This is the most basic responsibility and obligation by which you should comport yourself, which is to fulfill your obligations as long as conditions permit. This does not mean that you are being sentimental, and God will not condemn you for it. Of course, in this world, aside from your parents, who are the people to whom you should fulfill your obligations and responsibilities, you have no responsibilities and obligations to anyone else—not to your siblings, your buddies, or to your various aunts and uncles. You have no obligation or responsibility to do anything to please them, or cotton up to them, or help them. Is this not so? (Yes.)

Was I clear in what I said about the claim that “The parent is always right”? (Yes.) Who are parents? (Corrupt humans.) That’s right, parents are corrupt humans. If you sometimes miss your parents, and think, “How have my parents been getting on these past two years? Have they missed me? Have they retired? Do they have any difficulties in life? Do they have anyone to take care of them when they are sick?” Let’s say you are thinking these things and you also ponder, “The parent is always right. My parents used to beat me and scold me because they were exasperated that I couldn’t live up to their

expectations, and because they loved me with such zeal. My parents are better than anyone, they are the ones who love me the most in the world. Now that I think about my parents' bad qualities, I no longer see them as bad qualities, because the parent is always right." And the more you think about this, the more you want to see them. Is it good to think like this? (No, it isn't.) No, it isn't. How should you think? You ponder on it: "My parents beat me, scolded me, and hurt my self-esteem when I was a child. They never said a kind word or encouraged me. They forced me to study, and also forced me to learn dancing and singing, and to study for Math Olympiads—all things that I don't like. My parents really were annoying. Now I believe in God and I am set free. I left home to perform my duty before I'd even finished college. It's God who is good. I don't miss my parents. They prevented me from believing in God. My parents are devils." Then you ponder again, "That's not right. The parent is always right. My parents are the people who are closest to me, so it's only right to miss them." Is it right to think this? (No, it's wrong.) So what's the right way to think? (We used to think that no matter what our parents do, they do it out of consideration for us, and that they are good to us in everything they do, and that they will never harm us. God's fellowshiping just now has made me realize that my parents are also corrupt humans, who have accepted various ideas and views from Satan. Unwittingly, our parents have instilled many satanic views into us, causing us to deviate too far from the truth in our comportment and actions, and to live by satanic philosophies. Now that I have some discernment about what is in my parents' hearts, I will miss them and think about them much less.) In dealing with your parents, you should first rationally step outside of this blood relationship and discern your parents using the truths you have already accepted and understood. Discern your parents based on their thoughts, views, and motives regarding conduct, and on their principles and methods of conduct, which will confirm that they too are people corrupted by Satan. View them and discern them from the perspective of truth, rather than always thinking that your parents are lofty, selfless, and kind to you, and if you look at them that way, you will never discover what issues they have. Don't view your parents from the perspective of your family ties, or your role as a son or daughter. Step outside of this sphere and look at how they deal with the world, with the truth, and with people, matters, and things. Also, more specifically, look at the ideas and views that your parents have conditioned into you as regards how you should view people and things, and how you should comport yourself and act—this is how you should recognize and discern them. In this way, their human qualities and the fact that they have been corrupted by Satan will become clear little by little. What kind of people are they? If they aren't believers, what is their attitude toward people who do believe in God? If they are believers, what is their attitude toward the truth? Are they people who pursue the truth? Do they love the truth? Do they like positive things? What is their outlook on life and the world? And so on. If you can discern your parents based on these things, you will have a clear idea. Once these matters are clear, the lofty, noble, and unshakable status of your parents in your

mind will change. And when it changes, the motherly and fatherly love shown by your parents—along with their specific words and actions, and those lofty images you hold of them—will no longer be so deeply imprinted in your mind. The selflessness and greatness of your parents' love for you, as well as their devotion in taking care of you, protecting you, and even doting on you, will imperceptibly cease to occupy an important position in your mind. People often say, "My parents love me so much. Whenever I'm away from home, my mom always asks me, 'Have you eaten? Are you eating at regular times?' Dad always asks, 'Have you got enough money? If you don't have any money, I'll send you a bit more.' And I say, 'I have money, there's no need,' and Dad replies, 'No, that won't do, even though you say you have money, I will send you some anyway.'" The fact is that your parents live frugally and are reluctant to spend money on themselves. They use their money to support you, so that you have a bit more spending money when you are away from home. Your mom and dad always say, "Be frugal at home but carry some extra money while traveling. Take a bit more with you when you're out and about. If you don't have enough money, just tell me, and I'll send you some or add it onto your card." Your parents' selfless concern, consideration, care, and even smothering and pampering will always be an indelible mark of their selfless dedication in your eyes. This selfless dedication has become a powerful, warm feeling deep in your heart that bonds the relationship between you and them. It makes you unable to let go of them, and it makes you worry about them, keep fretting about them, constantly miss them, and it even makes you constantly willing to be trapped in this sentiment and blackmailed by their affections. Just what kind of phenomenon is this? Your parents' love is indeed selfless. No matter how much your parents care for you, or no matter whether they scrimp and save just to give you money to spend, or buy you all the things you need, it may be a blessing for you now, but it won't be a good thing for you in the long run. The more selfless they are, and the better they treat you, and the more they care about you, the less able you are to detach yourself from this affection and to let it go or forget it, and the more you miss them. When you fail to do your filial duty or fulfill any obligations to them, you will feel even more sorry for them. Under these circumstances, you don't have the heart to discern them, or to forget their love and dedication and everything they have done for you, or to deem all of that unworthy of mention—this is the effect of your conscience. Does your conscience represent the truth? (No, it does not.) Why are your parents like this toward you? Because they have affections for you. So can their kindness to you represent their humanity essence? Can it represent their attitude toward the truth? No, it cannot. It's just like mothers who always say, "You are my own flesh and blood, I sweated and slaved to raise you. How can I not know what you are thinking in your heart?" They are good to you due to these close family ties and this flesh-and-blood relationship, but are they really being good to you? Is this really their true face? Is it a true expression of their humanity essence? Not necessarily. Because you are related to them by blood, they think that they should be good to you out of a

sense of duty. But you, as their child, think that they are good to you out of kindness, and feel unable to ever repay them. If you cannot repay their kindness in full, or even the tiniest fraction of it, your conscience will condemn you. Does the feeling you get when your conscience condemns you accord with the truth? In other words, if they were not your parents, but were instead ordinary people interacting with you normally within a group, would they treat you this way? (No.) They most certainly would not. If they were not your parents and had no blood relationship with you, their manner and attitude toward you would be different in various ways. They would definitely not care for you, protect you, smother you, look after you, or selflessly dedicate anything to you. So how would they treat you? Maybe they would bully you because you are young and have no social experience, or discriminate against you because of your low standing and status, and always speak to you in a bureaucratic tone and try to educate you; or maybe they would think you are average-looking, and if you talked to them, they wouldn't pay you any attention, and you couldn't measure up to them; or maybe they wouldn't see you as being of any use, and they wouldn't socialize with you or have anything to do with you; or maybe they would think you are guileless, so if they wanted to know about some matter, they would always start by asking you and trying to get the answers out of you; or maybe they would want to take unfair advantage of you somehow, such as whenever you buy some bargain, they would always want you to share it with them, or want to take some of it; or maybe, when you fall over in the street and need their hand to help you up, they wouldn't even look at you, and would instead kick out at you; or maybe when you get on the bus, if you don't give up your seat to them, they would say, "I'm so old, why won't you give up your seat for me? Why are you such an ignorant youngster? Didn't your parents teach you any manners!" And they would even give you a telling-off. If this is the case, you need to explore whether the maternal love and fatherly love hidden deep in your heart are a true revelation of their humanity. You are often moved by their selfless devotion to you and by their great maternal love and fatherly love, and you are greatly attached to them, miss them, and constantly want to repay them with your own life. What is the reason for this? If it's just born out of conscience, then the problem is not that deep and can be remedied. But if it's born out of affection for them, then it's very troublesome. You'll get stuck deeper and deeper in it and won't be able to pull yourself out. You will often be stuck in this affection and miss your parents, and sometimes you will even betray God in order to repay your parents' kindness. For example, what would you do if you heard that your parents were severely ill in hospital, or that something serious had happened to them and they were in some difficulty that they couldn't get out of and were anguished and brokenhearted, or if you heard news that your parents were about to pass away? At that time, there's no way of knowing whether your affections would dominate your conscience, or whether the truth and God's words that He has taught you would steer your conscience into making a decision of some sort. The outcome of these matters depends on how you tend to view the relationship between parents and children, how

much you have entered into the truth of how to treat parents, how much you can see through them, how much of an understanding you have as regards the nature essence of humankind, and how much of an understanding you have as regards the quality and essence of your parents' humanity, as well as their corrupt dispositions. Most importantly, the outcome of these matters depends on how you treat relationships at family level, and the correct views you should hold—these are the various truths you should equip yourself with before any of these matters befall you. Everyone else—relatives and friends, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and other outsiders—can be easily let go of, as they do not occupy an important position in one's affections. These people can easily be let go of, but parents are the exception. Parents alone are one's closest relatives in the world. They are the people who play an important role in one's life and have a significant impact during one's lifetime, so it's not easy to let go of them. If today you have gained some clear understanding of the various thoughts that the conditioning of your family gives rise to, it may help you let go of your affections toward your parents, because the conditioning effects exerted on you by your family as a whole only amount to intangible claims, whereas the most specific conditioning actually comes from your parents. One sentence from your parents, or their attitude toward doing something, or the ways and means by which they handle something—these are the most accurate ways to describe how you are conditioned. Once you have variously discerned and recognized in a specific way the ideas, actions, and sayings that your parents have conditioned into you, you will have an accurate evaluation and knowledge of the essence of your parents' role, character, outlook on life, and ways of doing things. Once you have this accurate evaluation and knowledge, imperceptibly your perception of your parents' role will gradually change from positive to negative in your mind. Once you perceive your parents' role to be wholly negative, then you can gradually let go of your sentimental crutches, spiritual attachment, and the various kinds of great love they have for you. By that time, you will feel that the image you had of your parents deep within your heart used to be so lofty, rather like that in the essay "My Father's Back," which you studied in your school textbook, as well as in that popular song from many years ago, "Mom Is the Best in the World," which was a Taiwanese movie theme song and caught on throughout Chinese-speaking society—these are ways in which society and the world educate humankind. When you don't realize the essence or the true face behind these things, you feel that these methods of education are positive. Based on your existing humanity, they give you a greater recognition of and belief in the greatness of your parents' love for you, and consequently they leave you with an impression deep in your heart that your parents' love is selfless, great, and sacrosanct. Therefore, no matter how bad your parents are, their love is still selfless and great. To you this is an indisputable fact that no one can deny, and no one can say a bad word about your parents. Consequently, you don't want to discern or expose them, and at the same time, you also want to keep a certain place for them deep in your heart, because you believe that parental love is

forever above all else, flawless, great, and sacrosanct, and that no one can deny that. This is the baseline of your conscience and comportment. If someone says that parental love is not great or flawless, you will put up a desperate fight against them—this is irrational. Before people understand the truth, the influence of their conscience will prompt them to hold on to some traditional ideas and views, or also give rise to some new ideas and views. However, looking at it from the perspective of truth, these ideas and views are often irrational. Once you understand the truth, you can deal with these things within the scope of normal rationality. Therefore, humanity is possessed of both conscience and reason. If conscience cannot reach or measure up to these things, or they are not regulated or positive under the effects of conscience, then people can use rationality to regulate and correct them. So how do people achieve rationality? People have to understand the truth. Once people understand the truth, they will treat everything, choose everything, and discern everything more precisely and accurately. Thus they will achieve true rationality, and reach the point where reason transcends conscience. This is a manifestation of what happens after a person has entered into the truth reality. You may not really understand these words now, but you will understand them once you have real experience and understand the truth. Does this saying “The parent is always right” come from rationality or conscience? It is not rational, it originates from one’s affections under the influence of conscience. So is this saying rational? No, it is irrational. Why is it irrational? Because it originates from one’s affections, and it is not in accordance with the truth. So, at what point are you able to view and treat parents rationally? When you understand the truth and you have seen through to the essence and root of this matter. Once you have done that, you will no longer treat your parents according to the influence of conscience, affections will no longer play a role, neither will conscience, and you will be able to view and treat your parents according to the truth—this is being rational.

Have I been clear in fellowshiping on the problem of how to treat parents? (Yes.) This is an important matter. Family members all say, “The parent is always right,” and you don’t know whether it’s right or not, so you just accept it. Then whenever your parents do something that is out of line, you ponder and think, “People say ‘The parent is always right,’ so how can I say that my parents are not right? What happens in the family stays in the family, don’t tell others about it, just put up with it.” In addition to the conditioning effects of this incorrect saying—“The parent is always right”—there is another saying: “What happens in the family stays in the family.” So you think, “Who is there to blame for my own parents? I can’t tell outsiders about this shameful thing. I must keep it under wraps. What’s the point in being serious with my parents?” These conditioning effects from family are ever-present in people’s daily lives, in their life path, and in the course of their existence. Before people understand the truth and gain the truth, they view people and things, and comport themselves and act based on these various ideas and views that are conditioned into them by their family. They are often

swayed, disturbed, constrained, and bound hand and foot by these thoughts. They are even guided by these thoughts, and often misjudge people and do the wrong things, as well as frequently violating God's words and the truth. Even if people have listened to many of God's words, and even if they often pray-read God's words and fellowship on them, because these views that their family has conditioned into them are deeply rooted in their thoughts and in their hearts, they have no discernment of these views, nor any ability to resist them. Even while they are receiving the teachings and provision of God's words, they are still swayed by these thoughts, which also guide their words, deeds, and way of living. Therefore, under the unconscious guidance of these thoughts that are conditioned into them by their family, people often cannot stop themselves from violating God's words and the truth principles. And yet, they still think that they are practicing the truth and pursuing the truth. Little do they know that these various sayings that are conditioned into them by their family simply do not accord with the truth. What is even more serious is that these sayings conditioned into people by their family lead them to the path of violating the truth over and over again, and yet they don't even know it. Therefore, if you want to pursue the truth and enter into the truth reality, you should first clearly discern and recognize the various conditioning effects that come from your family, and then make an effort to rid yourself of these various thoughts that are conditioned into you by your family. Of course, it can definitely be said that you must break with your family's conditioning. Don't think that because you come from that family, you have to do this or live that way. You have no responsibility or obligation to inherit your family's traditions or inherit its various ways and means of doing things and acting. Your life comes from God. Today you have been chosen by God, and the goal you want to pursue is that of salvation, so you cannot use the various ideas conditioned into you by your family as the basis for your views on people and things, your comportment, and your actions. Instead, you must view people and things, and comport yourself and act based on God's words and His various teachings. Only in this way can you achieve salvation in the end. Of course, the conditioning effects exerted by family are not limited to the ones listed here. I have mentioned just a few of them. There are many different kinds of family education that come from different families, different clans, different societies, different races, and different religions, and which condition the thoughts of human beings in all sorts of ways. No matter what race or religious culture this various thought conditioning comes from, as long as it does not accord with the truth, and as long as it does not come from God but from people, then it should be let go of, and it is something that people should break away from. They should not adhere to it, let alone inherit it. These things are all things that people should abandon and cast off. Only this way can people truly embark on the path of pursuing the truth and enter into the truth reality.

These sayings we have fellowshiped on that come from the conditioning of one's family are in one sense representative, and in another sense, they are often talked about among people. As for some special and non-representative sayings, we will not talk

about those now. What do you think about our fellowshiping on the topic of family? Has it been beneficial in some way? (Yes, it has.) Is it necessary to fellowship on this topic? (Yes.) Everyone has a family and is conditioned by their family. The things that family instills into you are all poison and spiritual opium, and make you suffer quite bitterly. When your parents instilled these things into you, you felt really wonderful at the time, rather like taking opium. You felt comfortable all over, as if you had entered into a blissful world. But after a while the effects wore off, so you have to keep looking for this kind of stimulation. This spiritual opium brings you no end of trouble and disturbance. To this day, it is really difficult for you to get rid of, and is not something that can be cast off in a short time. If people want to let go of these conditioned ideas and views, they must spend some time and energy identifying them, peeling back the layers to recognize them clearly and see through them. Then, whenever related matters crop up, they must be able to let go of these things, forsake them, and not act according to the principles of such ideas and views, but rather, practice and do things according to the way that God teaches people. These few words sound simple, but they may take 20 or 30 years, or even a lifetime for people to put into practice. It may be that you will spend your whole lifetime fighting against the ideas and views produced by those sayings that are instilled into you by your family, and cutting yourself off from these ideas and views, and breaking away from them. To do this, you must expend your feelings and energy, and also undergo some physical hardships. You must also have a tremendous desire for God and a will that thirsts for and pursues the truth. Only by possessing these things can you gradually achieve change and gradually enter into the truth reality. This is how difficult it is to gain the truth and life. When people have listened to many sermons, they understand some doctrines regarding faith in God, but it is not easy for them to truly achieve understanding of the truth and be able to discern the conditioning effects of family and the ideas and views of unbelievers. Even if you can understand the truth after listening to sermons, entering into the truth reality is not something that happens overnight, right? (Right.) Okay, here ends our fellowship for today. Goodbye!

February 25, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (14)

Last time, we fellowshiped about things involving family within the broader topic of letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires—which section in the topic of family was our fellowship about? (Last time, God fellowshiped on some sayings that come from family conditioning, such as "Among any three people walking together, there is at least one who can be my teacher," "If you want to appear dignified when people are looking, you have to suffer when they aren't," "Just as a fence needs the support of three stakes, an able man needs the support of three other people," "A lady will make herself beautiful for those who admire her, while a gentleman will sacrifice his life for those who understand him," "Daughters should be raised like rich children, and sons like poor children," "People don't need to have a high IQ, but only need to have a high EQ," "When someone beats a gong, listen to its sound; when someone speaks, listen to their voice," and "The parent is always right." In total, these eight sayings were discussed.) We fellowshiped about letting go of family conditioning, which subject matter covered family conditioning and education toward a person's thoughts. Certain sayings were fellowshiped about in detail, while others were only briefly mentioned and not specifically fellowshiped about. Family holds great importance in every individual's life. It is a place where people create memories, grow, and where their various thoughts begin to form. How people conduct themselves, behave, deal with things, interact with others, face different situations, and when faced with those situations, how to make judgments and from which perspectives and stances they should handle these matters, etc., regardless of whether their thoughts and viewpoints are preliminary or more concrete, all of these are based largely in family conditioning. That is, before people formally enter society and join social groups, the embryonic stages of their thoughts and viewpoints all come from their families. Therefore, the family is highly important to everyone. Its significance goes beyond physical growth; more importantly, before people enter society, at home they learn a lot of thoughts and viewpoints that ought to be applied to how they approach society, social groups, and their future life. Although these thoughts and viewpoints aren't specifically or accurately defined as a person matures, these various thoughts and viewpoints, and these various methods, rules, and even means for dealing with the world, are already fundamentally and primarily instilled, influenced, and conditioned into people by their parents, elders, or other family members before they enter society. This practice of instilling, influencing, and conditioning is carried out during the time when people are growing up among their families; that is why the family is so important to every person. Of course, this importance is merely targeted at the level at which individuals enter society and join social groups, and enter the life and existence of adulthood—it is limited to the level of physical existence. This demonstrates how crucial family conditioning is for a person entering society and adult life. That is to say, when people reach adulthood and enter society, most of their philosophy for dealing with the

world originates from their parents' heritage and the influence of their family. From this perspective, it can also be said that the family, as the smallest unit in society, first and foremost plays a formative role in shaping a person's thoughts as well as various methods and principles for dealing with the world, and even their outlook on life. Given that these various thoughts, viewpoints, methods for dealing with the world, and outlook on existence are negative, not aligned with the truth, unrelated to the truth, or it can even be said, run contrary to the truth, and they do not originate from God, it therefore becomes necessary for people to let go of the conditioning of their family. When considering the consequences of family conditioning, we see that it contradicts and does not align with the truth, opposes God, and essentially, it can be said that families are places where Satan corrupts humanity, leading people to deny God, resist Him, and follow the wrong path in life. From this perspective, can it be said that the family, as the smallest unit in society, is where people are initially corrupted? While saying that Satan and social trends corrupt people is a broad perspective, when it comes to specifics, the family should be regarded as the place where people initially accept corruption and negative thoughts, evil trends, and Satan's viewpoints. More specifically, the corruption individuals accept originates from their parents, elders, other family members, and the customs, values, traditions, etc., of their entire family. In any case, the family is a starting point where people encounter corruption, accept Satan's evil thoughts and trends, and it is where people begin to accept various corrupt and evil thoughts during their formative years. The family plays a role that neither society as a whole, social trends, nor Satan can play in corrupting people, which is that it introduces individuals to various thoughts and viewpoints from the evil trends of Satan before they enter society and join social groups. Regardless of how it's framed, the family is the primary source of your thoughts and viewpoints that belong to Satan. Therefore, to help people let go of various erroneous thoughts and viewpoints, it is necessary to discern and dissect not only the widespread erroneous thoughts and viewpoints from society but also the various thoughts and viewpoints, as well as principles for dealing with the world that come from family conditioning. Family is itself part of the whole of human society, it is not the church or God's house, and it certainly isn't the kingdom of heaven. It is merely the smallest unit within society created among corrupt humanity, and this smallest unity is also formed by corrupt humanity. Therefore, if a person wants to free themselves from the constraints, bindings, and troubles of various erroneous thoughts and viewpoints, they should first reflect upon, understand, and dissect the various thoughts and viewpoints they received from family conditioning, until they reach a point where they can let them go. This is an accurate principle of practice for letting go of people's family conditioning.

Previously, we fellowshiped on people's family conditioning, which has to do with such matters as their outlook on life, rules for survival, principles and methods for behaving and dealing with the world, and some unwritten rules of the game when entering society. What are some of the outlooks on life involved in this subject matter?

For example, “A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies,” and “People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark.” What are some of the principles for dealing with the world that families instill in people? Examples include: “Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance,” and “Compromise will make a conflict much easier to resolve.” What else? (“Just as a fence needs the support of three stakes, an able man needs the support of three other people,” and “When someone beats a gong, listen to its sound; when someone speaks, listen to their voice.” These are also methods and principles for dealing with the world.) Are there any social rules of the game? Such as, “The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot”? (Yes.) “He who talks a lot errs a lot.” What else? (Here’s a taste of your own medicine.) That’s also one, but we didn’t fellowship about it last time. Moreover, your parents often told you, “Out in the world your judgment should be keen, your talk smooth, and your eyes sharp. You should ‘keep your eyes open to every road, and your ears to all directions.’ Don’t be so set in your ways.” There’s also, “It never hurts to compliment somebody,” and “You have to go with the flow wherever you are. The law cannot be enforced when everyone is an offender. When in doubt, follow the crowd.” These are all types of game rules. Then there are sayings like, “A lady will make herself beautiful for those who admire her, while a gentleman will sacrifice his life for those who understand him,” and “There are no ugly women, only lazy ones.” What category do these belong to? These belong to the category of everyday life; they tell you how to live and how to treat your physical body. Then there are sayings like, “The parent is always right,” “Mom is the best in the world,” “A wise goose never lays a tame egg,” and “To feed without teaching is the father’s fault.” These pertain to the thoughts and viewpoints of family affection and feeling. Also, people often say, “The dead are great in the eyes of the living”—after a person dies, they become great. If you want a higher status, if you want people to speak well of you and respect you, then you must die. Once you die, you will become great. “The dead are great in the eyes of the living”—is this logic ridiculous or what? They say, “Don’t say anything bad about a person after they die. The dead are great in the eyes of the living. Give them some respect!” Regardless of how many bad things this person did, they become great after they die. Doesn’t this show a complete lack of discernment between good and evil and a lack of principles in how people conduct themselves? (Yes.) “The parent is always right.” We fellowshiped on this in detail last time. These other sayings, like “To feed without teaching is the father’s fault,” and “A wise goose never lays a tame egg,” weren’t part of the fellowship, but aren’t they easy to discern? Is the saying “To feed without teaching is the father’s fault” correct? It makes it look like a father’s education is very important. What kind of path can a father lead people down? Can he lead you down the right path? Can he lead you to worship God and become a genuinely good person? (No.) Your father tells you, “Men do not shed tears easily,” but you are young, and you cry when you feel wronged. Your father scolds you, saying, “Hold it in! Be a real man. You cry over every little thing, good-for-nothing!”

After this happens, you think, “I can’t shed any tears; if I cry then I’m a good-for-nothing.” You hold back your tears, not daring to cry, and secretly cry under the covers at night. As a male, you don’t even have the right to express or convey your emotions naturally; you don’t have the right to choose to cry, you have to hold it in whenever you feel wronged. This is the education you received from your father, and it’s the true meaning of “To feed without teaching is the father’s fault.” Your father, your mother, and the older generation all stick to this education, saying, “You, a boy, cry over anything, cry whenever you feel wronged, and when you were beaten up outside. Good-for-nothing! They hit you, why didn’t you hit them back? They hit you, so don’t play with them anymore. When you see them again, and see that you can beat them up then you do it; if you can’t then you run away. Look at how Han Xin[a] endured the humiliation of being forced to crawl between another’s legs. He didn’t cry; that’s what a real man is!” This is how fathers educate their sons and instill the thought of being a real man into them. Men can’t speak of their troubles and can’t shed any tears; they have to hold it in. Tell Me, how much injustice must men endure? In this society, men must support their families, show filial piety to their elders, and they don’t dare complain no matter how tired they are. They can’t vent no matter how much injustice they’ve endured. Isn’t this unfair to men? (Yes, it is.) When your fathers educated you like this, how did you feel? When you wanted to cry on occasion, what did your father say? “I, so-and-so, have been wise and eager to excel all my life. How could I have raised such a weakling like you? When I was your age, I was already supporting the family by myself. Look at you, pampered and spoiled, you good-for-nothing!” How did you feel? Your parents and grandparents educated you, saying: “A man is the pillar of the family. Why do we support you? Why do we send you to college? It’s to help you support the family, not for you to cry or feel wronged whenever something comes up.” How did you feel when your fathers and elders said these things? Did you feel wronged or take it in stride? (I felt depressed, I felt wronged.) Did you have no choice but to accept it, or did you feel resentment in your heart? (I felt resentment, but I had to accept it.) Why did you do this? (Because I felt that under such a circumstance or social system, I had no other choice.) This is how society positions men. They are born into this kind of social circumstance, and nobody has a choice. The education you received from your father and elders originated from society; after they received this ideological education, they then instilled these thoughts from society into you. In reality, when they accepted these thoughts and viewpoints during their formative years, they did so reluctantly as well. As they grew older, they passed these thoughts onto the next generation. They didn’t consider whether the next generation should accept these thoughts and viewpoints or whether they were correct, because this is how they grew up. They thought people should live this way; what does

a. Han Xin was a famous general of the Han dynasty, who was once forced to crawl between the legs of a butcher who mocked him for his cowardice before he became famous.

it matter if you're wronged, the important thing is that accepting these thoughts will help you find your footing in society and not get bullied by other people. Why did they also endure these grievances, and feel depressed and resentful just like you, yet still pass these thoughts and viewpoints onto you? One reason is that they naturally accepted various thoughts and viewpoints from society that allowed them to assimilate into the social trends, helping them find their footing in society. Everyone follows these thoughts and viewpoints as guidelines and criteria for living, without anyone questioning them or wishing to break or forsake them. This is one aspect—in order to survive. The other aspect, the main one, is that people lack the ability to distinguish between positive and negative things. Why is that? It's because people don't understand the truth, and they lack the correct thoughts and viewpoints regarding survival, dealing with the world, or the path that they should follow. In order to adapt to society, fit in, and survive within this society and in social groups, people must actively or passively accept the various principles for dealing with the world and game rules set by society. The purpose of adaptation is for people to establish themselves in society and to stay alive. However, because people don't understand the truth, they have no choice but to choose these principles for dealing with the world and game rules set by society. Therefore, as a male, when your father taught you, "Men do not shed tears easily," although you felt wronged and wanted to vent your frustrations, you had no way to refute him, nor could you discern what he was saying. Ultimately, the reason you accepted this in your heart was that, "Although my father's words are somewhat harsh and difficult to hear, and even though accepting these words goes against my will, he's doing it for my own good, so I should accept them." Due to their conscience and filial piety as a child, people have to make concessions and accept these thoughts and viewpoints. Regardless of which aspect of people's family conditioning, they are constantly in such a state, continuously being instilled through these methods until they eventually accept them in spite of themselves. Throughout this process of continual acceptance, these incorrect and negative thoughts and viewpoints gradually seep into a person's innermost being, or they slowly and steadily infiltrate into their thoughts and viewpoints, becoming various different bases for how they behave and deal with the world. This process can be aptly described as a person undergoing corruption, for the process of accepting erroneous thoughts and viewpoints is also the process of corruption. So, who corrupted people? In an abstract sense, they were corrupted by Satan, by evil trends; more specifically, they were corrupted by their family, and even more specifically, by their parents. If I had said this ten years ago, none of you might have been able to accept it, and you all may have felt hostile toward Me. Now, however, most of you can rationally accept this statement as correct, and say "amen" to it, isn't that right? (Yes.) Why is this statement correct? To understand that, people need to gradually come to appreciate it throughout their experience. The more specific and profound your appreciation is, and the more your experiences come to reflect this, the more you can agree with this statement.

Family conditioning most likely involves many more rules of the game for behaving and dealing with the world. For example, parents often say, “One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him; you’re too foolish and credulous.” Parents often repeat these kinds of words, and even elders often nag you, saying, “Be a good person, don’t harm others, but you must always guard against the harm others might do to you. All people are wicked. You might see that someone says nice things to you on the outside, but you don’t know what they’re thinking. People’s hearts are hidden beneath their skin, and in drawing a tiger, you show its skin, but not its bones; in knowing a person, you may know their face, but not their heart.” Is there a correct side to these phrases? Looking at each of them literally, there’s nothing wrong with such phrases. What a person is truly thinking deep down, whether their heart is vicious or kind, cannot be known. It’s impossible to see into a person’s soul. The meaning behind these phrases is ostensibly correct, but they’re only a kind of doctrine. What is the principle for dealing with the world that people ultimately derive from these two phrases? It’s that “One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him.” This is what the older generation says. Parents and elders often say this, and they constantly advise you by saying, “Be cautious, don’t be foolish and reveal everything in your heart. Learn to guard yourself and be vigilant. Even with good friends, don’t reveal your true self or lay your heart bare. Don’t risk your life for them.” Is this admonishment from your elders correct? (No, it teaches people deceitful ways.) In theory, it has a good primary aim: To protect you, to prevent you from falling into dangerous situations, to protect you from being harmed or cheated by others, to safeguard your physical interests, your personal safety, and your life. It’s to keep you out of trouble, lawsuits, and temptations, and to allow you to live every day peacefully, smoothly, and happily. The primary aim of parents and elders is simply to protect you. However, the way they protect you, the principles they advise you to follow, and the thoughts they instill in you are not at all correct. While their primary aim is correct, the thoughts they instill in you unconsciously lead you to an extreme. The thoughts they instill in you become the principles and bases for how you deal with the world. When you interact with classmates, colleagues, work partners, superiors, and every type of person in society, people from all walks of life, these protective thoughts instilled by your parents unconsciously become your most basic talisman and principle whenever you handle matters involving interpersonal relationships. What principle is this? It is: I won’t harm you, but I have to be on guard against you at all times to prevent you from deceiving or cheating me, to avoid getting into trouble or lawsuits, to prevent my family fortune from going under and the people in my family from meeting their end, and to prevent me from ending up in prison. Living under the control of such thoughts and viewpoints, living among this social group with such an attitude toward dealing with the world, you can only become more depressed, more exhausted, fatigued in both mind and body. Subsequently, you become more resistant and averse

to this world and humanity, despising them more. While despising others, you begin to think less of yourself, feeling like you're not living in a way that resembles a person, but rather, you're living a tired and depressed life. In order to avoid being harmed by others, you have to be constantly on your guard, doing and saying things against your will. In the pursuit of protecting your own interests and personal safety, you wear a false mask in every aspect of your life and disguise yourself, never daring to speak a word of truth. In this situation, in these survival conditions, your inner self cannot find release or freedom. You often need someone who poses no harm to you and will never threaten your interests, someone with whom you can share your innermost thoughts and vent your frustrations, without bearing any responsibility for your words, incurring ridicules, digs, mockery, or taking any consequences. In a situation where the thought and viewpoint of "One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him" is your principle for dealing with the world, your inner self is filled with fear and insecurity. Naturally, you feel depressed, unable to find release, and you need someone to comfort you, someone to confide in. Therefore, judging from these aspects, although the principle for dealing with the world that your parents taught you, "One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him," can succeed in protecting you, it is a double-edged sword. While it protects your physical interests and personal safety to a certain extent, it also makes you feel depressed and miserable, unable to find release, and even makes you more disenchanted with this world and humanity. At the same time, deep inside, you also faintly begin to feel fed up with having been born in such a wicked era, among such a wicked group of people. You can't understand why people have to live, why life is so exhausting, why they must wear a mask and disguise themselves everywhere they go, or why you must always be on guard against others for the sake of your own interests. You wish you could speak the truth, but you can't because of the consequences. You want to be a real person, speak and comport yourself openly, and avoid being a base person or doing vile and shameful deeds in secret, living exclusively in darkness, but you cannot do any of this. Why can't you live uprightly? As you reflect on your past actions, you feel a faint contempt. You hate and abhor this wicked trend and this wicked world, and at the same time, you loathe yourself deeply and despise the person you've become. Yet, there's nothing you can do. Although your parents, through their words and actions, passed this talisman along to you, it still makes you feel like your life lacks happiness or a sense of security. When you feel this lack of happiness, security, integrity and dignity, you find yourself both grateful to your parents for giving you this talisman and resentful of the chains they've placed upon you. You don't understand why your parents told you to comport yourself in this way, why you must comport yourself like this in order to gain a footing in society, to assimilate into this social group, and to protect yourself. Although it is a talisman, it is also a kind of shackle that makes you feel both love and hatred in your heart. But what can you do? You don't have

the right path in life, no one tells you how to live or how to deal with things that come your way, and no one tells you whether what you're doing is right or wrong, or how you should walk the path that lies before you. You can only pass through confusion, vacillation, pain, and unease. These are the consequences of the philosophy of dealing with the world that was instilled in you by your parents and family, making it so that your simplest wish to be a simple person, namely your desire to be able to comport yourself uprightly without resorting to these means of dealing with the world, cannot be realized. You can only live in a debased manner, making compromises and living for the sake of your reputation, making yourself especially fierce to guard against other people, pretending to be fierce, tall and mighty, and powerful and extraordinary to avoid being bullied. You can only live like this against your will, which makes you feel disgusted with yourself, but you have no choice. Because you don't have the ability or the path to escape these ways and strategies for dealing with the world, you can only let yourself be manipulated by the thoughts conditioned into you by your family and parents. People are fooled and controlled by the thoughts instilled in them by their families and parents during this unconscious process, because they do not understand the truth or how they should live, so they can only leave it to fate. Even if their conscience still has a little bit of feeling, or they have even a small desire to live with human likeness, to get along and compete with others fairly, no matter what their wishes may be, they cannot escape the conditioning and control of various thoughts and viewpoints that come from their family, and in the end, they can only return to the thought and viewpoint conditioned into them by their family that "One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him," because they have no other path to take—they have no choice. All of this is caused by people's lack of understanding the truth and their failure to obtain the truth. Of course, parents also tell you, "In drawing a tiger, you show its skin, but not its bones; in knowing a person, you may know their face, but not their heart"; they tell you about the art of guarding against others, and tell you to do this because everyone is cunning; it's easy to get tricked if you can't see through people, their inner thoughts may not be the same as their outward appearance, a person may appear righteous and kind on the surface, but their heart is as venomous as a snake or scorpion; or a person may speak of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness on the surface, saying all the right things, their speech full of righteousness and morality, but deep down in their heart and soul, they are particularly filthy, despicable, lowly, and evil. Therefore, you can only approach and interact with others based on the thoughts and viewpoints instilled in you by your parents.

"One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him," and "In drawing a tiger, you show its skin, but not its bones; in knowing a person, you may know their face, but not their heart" are the most basic principles for dealing with the world that parents instill in you, as well as the most fundamental criteria for viewing people and being on guard against them. The primary

aim of parents is to protect you and help you protect yourself. However, from another angle, these words, thoughts, and viewpoints may make you feel even more so that the world is dangerous and people are untrustworthy, leading to an entire lack of positive feelings toward others. But how can you actually discern people and view others? Which people can you get along with, and what should be the proper relationship between people? How should one interact with others based on principles, and how can one interact fairly and harmoniously with others? Parents do not know anything about these matters. They only know how to use tricks, schemes, and various game rules and strategies for dealing with the world to guard against people, and to take advantage of and control others, in order to protect themselves from being harmed by others, no matter how much they harm others. While teaching these thoughts and viewpoints to their children, the things that parents instill into them are merely certain strategies for dealing with the world. They are nothing more than strategies. What do these strategies include? All kinds of tricks, game rules, how to please others, how to protect one's own interests, and how to maximize personal gain. Are these principles the truth? (No, they're not.) Are they the right path for people to follow? (No.) None of them are the right path. So, what is the essence of these thoughts that parents instill in you? They do not conform to the truth, they are not the right path, and they are not positive things. Then, what are they? (They are entirely the philosophy of Satan that corrupts us.) Looking at the results, they corrupt people. So, what is the essence of these thoughts? Like, "One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him"—is this the correct principle for interacting with others? (No, they are wholly negative things that come from Satan.) They are negative things that come from Satan—so what is their essence and nature? Aren't they tricks? Aren't they strategies? Aren't they tactics to win others over? (Yes.) They are not the practice principles for entering the truth, or positive principles and directions with which God teaches people how to comport themselves; they are strategies for dealing with the world, they are tricks. Moreover, is the nature of phrases like "In drawing a tiger, you show its skin, but not its bones; in knowing a person, you may know their face, but not their heart" also the same? (Yes.) Don't these phrases tell you to become cunning, to not be simple, straightforward, or upright, to be difficult to read, and make it difficult for others to see through you? Don't the specific principles for dealing with the world, brought to you by these thoughts and viewpoints, tell you to use strategies when interacting with others, to learn how to win others over, and to learn the game rules that circulate among people in every era? (Yes.) Some people say, "Parents tell people these phrases in order to instruct them to guard against others and learn how to view people." Did they tell you how to view others? They didn't tell you how to view others, they didn't tell you to approach different people according to the correct principles, but rather to use corresponding tricks and schemes to cater to the needs and strategies of different people. For example, your boss or superior is vile and a skirt-chaser. You think, "The boss looks respectable on the surface,

he seems upright, but beneath it all he is actually a skirt-chaser. That's the kind of wretch he is deep down in his soul. That's fine, I'll cater to his preferences, see which woman looks good, approach her, and introduce her to the boss to please him." Is this a strategy for dealing with the world? (Yes.) For example, when you see someone who has value to exploit and is worth your interaction, but they aren't easy to mess with, you think, "I have to say flattering words to them, whatever they like to hear." That person says, "The weather is nice today." You say, "The weather is really nice today, tomorrow will be nice too." They say, "The weather is really cold today." You say, "Yes, it's cold. Why don't you wear something warmer? My coat is warm, go ahead and put it on." As soon as they yawn, you hurry to hand them a pillow; when they take out a medicine bottle, you quickly pour water for them; when they sit down after eating, you quickly brew tea for them. Aren't these strategies for dealing with the world? (Yes.) They are strategies for dealing with the world. Why are you able to use these strategies? Why do you want to flatter them? If you didn't need them and they presented no benefit to you, would you treat them like this? (No.) No, it's like what people tend to say, "Never lift a finger without a reward." It's like carrying a water pot to the vegetable garden—you only water the useful ones. You actively go and flatter those who are useful to you. Once they step down or are removed from their position, your enthusiasm toward them immediately cools and you ignore them. When they call you, either you turn your phone off or you pretend that the line is busy and don't answer. When you see them, they greet you and say, "The weather is nice today." You blow them off, saying, "Ah, yes. Goodbye, let's chat later if anything comes up, I'll treat you to a meal sometime." Empty promises, and then you ignore them, don't contact them, and even block them. The various thoughts and viewpoints that parents instill in people establish an invisible protective wall over their hearts. At the same time, they also instill some basic ways of dealing with the world or surviving, teaching people how to play both sides and how to assimilate into a social group, how to establish themselves in society, and how not to be bullied in a group of people. Although, before you entered society, your parents did not specifically guide you on how to deal with specific situations, the conditioning of parents or family in terms of these ways and principles of dealing with the world has given you basic views and principles of dealing with the world. What are these basic views and principles for dealing with the world? They teach you how to wear a mask whenever you interact with people, how to live with a mask in every social group, and ultimately achieve the goal of protecting your fame and profit from suffering loss, and simultaneously obtaining the fame and profit that you want, or achieving a basic guarantee of personal safety. From the thoughts and viewpoints and various strategies for dealing with the world instilled in you by your parents, it can be seen that parents have not taught you how to be a more dignified person, how to be a real person, how to be a good created being, or how to be a person who possesses the truth. On the contrary, they told you how to deceive others, how to be on guard against others, how to use strategies to interact with different people,

as well as what people's hearts are like and what mankind is like. Under the conditioning of these thoughts and viewpoints from your parents, your inner self continually grows more sinister, and you develop a dislike for people. In your young heart, even before you have any strategies for dealing with the world, you already have a rudimentary and basic definition of humanity, as well as a rudimentary and basic principle of how to deal with the world. So, what role do parents play in your dealing with the world? They undoubtedly play the role of guiding you along the wrong path; they do not lead you to walk the good path, or guide you toward the right path of human life in a positive and proactive way, but instead lead you astray.

Apart from conditioning them with sayings like "Men do not shed tears easily," parents often tell boys: "'A good rooster doesn't fight dogs; a good man doesn't fight women'; don't play around with or fight girls; don't stoop to their level; they're girls, and you should go easy on them." Why should you go easy on them? If they've done something wrong, you shouldn't go easy on them or spoil them. Men and women are equal. They were born and raised by mom and dad just like you, so why should you go easy on them? Just because they're women? They should be punished when they do wrong, be educated about it, admit their mistake, apologize, understand what they did wrong, and that they shouldn't repeat the same mistake next time they meet with such matters. You should learn how to help them, instead of following the principle "A good man doesn't fight women" that your parents taught you to approach the situation. All people make mistakes at some time or another, men and women both. When they do, they should admit their mistakes and repent from them. Both men and women should walk the right path and live with dignity, instead of adhering to what their parents said: "A good rooster doesn't fight dogs; a good man doesn't fight women." A good man does not show himself by not fighting women, nor does he show himself by not stooping to their level. You see, parents often say: "Women have long hair but are short of insight. They have no prospects, don't be like them, don't get serious with them or pay attention to them." What do you mean "don't pay attention to them"? The issue of principles needs to be clarified and explained. Who made the mistake, who said the positive or the negative thing, whose mention of a path was correct—matters involving principles, paths, and self-comportment must be clarified. Don't blur the line between right and wrong; even for a woman, you ought to make things clear. If you really are taking her into consideration, then you should tell her the truth that people should understand, help her walk the right path, don't indulge her, and don't avoid getting serious or clarifying things just because she's a woman. Women, too, should live with dignity and should not indulge themselves or refuse to be reasonable just because men are compromising with them. Men and women are different only in terms of their physiology, but in the eyes of God, their identity and status are the same. They are both created beings, and apart from their gender differences, there isn't much that sets them apart. They both experience corruption and share the same principles of self-comportment. God's

required standards are identical for both men and women, without distinction. So, does the parental teaching of “A good man doesn’t fight women” hold true? (It doesn’t.) What is the correct approach then? It’s not about engaging in fights but aligning your practice to principles. What do parents mean by such remarks? Is this not favoring sons over daughters? They seem to be saying, “Women have long hair but are short of insight. They are naive, their intellect is negligible. Why even reason with them? They wouldn’t get it. As the saying goes, ‘Women with big breasts have no brains, they have long hair but are short of insight.’ Why would you bother about women or get serious with them?” Are women not human? Does God not save women? Does He not share the truth with them, or give them life? Is that the case? (No, it’s not.) If God doesn’t do this, if He doesn’t treat women unfairly, then how should you act? Treat women according to the principles God teaches you; don’t accept your parents’ thoughts or foster chauvinistic tendencies. While your bones and muscles might be a bit sturdier than women, you might have a larger build and greater physical strength, you might consume more food, yet your corrupt disposition, rebelliousness, and the extent to which you do not understand the truth is no different from women. The life skills in which you excel may be different from those of women: You are skilled with electronics and machinery, while women are good at embroidery, tailoring, and mending. Can you do those things? While men are adept builders, women excel in beauty treatment. While men can operate various machinery and equipment, women aren’t lacking either. Where exactly do women fall short? All such comparisons are pointless. The point here is for you to let go of your chauvinism. Don’t accept thoughts like “A good man doesn’t fight women”; the things parents say are not the truth, they are harmful to you. Don’t ever say these things that are degrading to women—this goes blatantly against reason and propriety. What sort of issue is that of disrespecting women? Do people who do things like this even possess humanity? (They do not.) They are devoid of humanity. If you disrespect women, remember that your mother, both your grandmothers, and your sisters are all women. Are they willing to accept such disrespect? Certain mothers even tell their sons, “A good man doesn’t fight women.” Aren’t these mothers fools? Mothers like this are simple-minded, and being women themselves, they diminish their own worth; clearly they are muddlers who have no idea what they’re saying. The statement “A good man doesn’t fight women” goes blatantly against reason and propriety. God has never defined women in this way, nor has He ever admonished men, saying, “Women are fragile, they have long hair but are short of insight, and they lack common sense. Don’t fight them. Even if you do, you will be unable to work things out clearly. In everything, be forgiving and accommodating, don’t get serious with them; men should be broad-minded and all-embracing.” Has God ever said anything like this? (He hasn’t.) Since God has never said such things, don’t do them or look at women with such viewpoints. This is discrimination and disrespect toward women. You can fill in where women lack the necessary skills, but you also need them to do the same where your skills are found lacking. Mutual

dependency and complementing each other is the correct viewpoint. Why is this the correct viewpoint? Because the strengths of both men and women are ordained by God. What thoughts and viewpoints should you adopt to approach the fact that the strengths of both men and women are ordained by God? It is to complement each other—this is the principle of practice. Men should not discriminate against women, and women should not be overly deferential to men, thinking, “Finally, we have a brother in our church, a pillar of strength. Now our church is complete, there is someone to back us up and handle things on our behalf, to take the lead for us.” Are you inferior? Is your faith placed in men? If a church consisted solely of sisters, would it mean that you don’t have faith in God anymore? That you can’t be saved or understand the truth? When someone makes the off-handed comment, “Why doesn’t your church have any brothers?” you feel as if you’d been stabbed in the heart, saying, “Don’t bring it up, it’s the one shortcoming of our church. We don’t want it to be pointed out; you’ve touched on our only regret,” and you pray, “God, when will You prepare a brother for our church?” Is the church sustained by brothers? Can it not stand without brothers? Has God ever said this? (No, He hasn’t.) God never said this, nor did He ever say that a church must have both genders before it can be founded, or that it cannot be founded with only one gender. Did He ever say this? (No.) These are all consequences of family-conditioned chauvinism. You rely on men for everything, and as soon as something comes up you say, “I need to wait to discuss it when my husband returns,” or “Our church brothers have been busy recently, so no one is taking the lead to handle this matter.” So what are women for? Are you unable to handle these tasks? Do you not have any mouths or legs? You lack nothing: You understand the truth principles, and you should act accordingly. Men are not your heads, nor are they your masters; they are just ordinary people, members of corrupt humanity. Learn to rely on God and His words in everything you do. This is the principle and way you should follow, instead of depending on any one person. While I don’t advocate chauvinism, of course I do this not in order to elevate women’s rights or vindicate them, but rather to help people understand a facet of the truth. Which facet of the truth? That the saying instilled in you by your parents, “A good man doesn’t fight women,” is incorrect; it’s instilling and guiding a wrong thought. You shouldn’t be led by this thought and viewpoint in your role as a man or in how you treat women. This is an aspect of the truth that you should understand. Don’t always think, “I am a man, I should consider issues from a man’s perspective, I should show consideration for these sisters and protect, tolerate, and forgive them from the stance of a man, not getting serious with any of them. If a sister wants to run for election to be a leader in the church, I’ll treat her with courtesy, and let her lead.” On what grounds? Just because you’re a man, you think you’re all-embracing? Can you be tolerant of them? You can’t even tolerate yourself. Church leadership should be determined by who is fit for the role. If brothers and sisters choose you, you ought to shoulder this burden. It’s both your responsibility and your duty. Why are you declining so casually? To show how noble you are? Is that the

principle of practice? Is it in line with the truth? (It isn't.) It's wrong to decline and wrong to fight for it; so, what's the right way to act? The right way is to base your actions on God's words and take the truth as your criteria. Your parents taught you that "A good man doesn't fight women." How many years have you lived with this chauvinistic thought and viewpoint? Many people think, "Washing and mending are all women's work. Let women handle them. I feel exasperated when I have to do these tasks; I feel like less of a man." So, what happens if you do this work? Are you no longer a man? Some people say, "My clothes were always washed by my mother, sister, or grandmother. I've never done 'women's work.'" Now, you're performing your duty, and you have to be independent. This is what you should do; it's what God demands of people. Will you do it? (Yes.) If your heart is resistant, you're unwilling and you're always thinking of your mother due to this matter, then you really are a good-for-nothing. Men have these chauvinistic thoughts, and they look down upon certain tasks like taking care of children, tidying up the house, doing the washing, and cleaning. Some have strong chauvinistic tendencies, and disdain these chores, are unwilling to do them, or if they do them, they do so begrudgingly, fearing that others may think less of them. They think, "If I'm always doing these chores, won't I become effeminate?" What thought and viewpoint is this governed by? Isn't there a problem with their thought? (Yes, there is.) Their thought is problematic. Look at certain regions where men are always wearing aprons and cooking. When the woman returns home from work, the man serves her food, saying, "Here, have a bite to eat. It's really tasty; I made all your favorites today." The woman rightfully eats the ready-made meal, and the man rightfully prepares it, never feeling like a housewife. Once he steps outside and removes his apron, isn't he still a man? In certain regions where chauvinism is particularly strong, they are undeniably spoiled by family conditioning and influence. Has this conditioning saved them or harmed them? (It has harmed them.) It has been detrimental to them. Some men in their thirties, forties, or even fifties can't wash their own socks. They wear an undershirt for half a month, it's already dirty but they don't want to wash it; they are clueless about how to wash it, about how much water or detergent to use, and how to get it clean. They just wear it like that and think to themselves, "In the future, I'll have my mother or my wife buy me more undershirts and socks so that I can wash them once every two months. It'd be great if there are chances for my mom or wife to come and wash them for me!" The root of their aversion to doing these tasks has a certain relation to the education they received at the hands of their family and parents. The thoughts and viewpoints parents instill touch on the most basic and simplest rules for living, as well as certain incorrect views about people. In summary, all these constitute family conditioning of people's thoughts. Regardless of how much impact they have on a person's life over the course of their faith in God and existence, or how much trouble and inconvenience they bring, intrinsically they have a certain relation to the ideological education of parents. If you are an adult now and have lived according to these thoughts and viewpoints for many years,

then they won't change overnight—it takes time. If these thoughts and viewpoints pertain to fulfilling one's duty or to principles of behaving and dealing with the world, and if you are pursuing the truth, you should strive to change these issues and enter into the truth reality as soon as possible. If they only relate to aspects of one's personal life, it would be better if you were willing to change. If you can't achieve this, if it seems a bit too taxing or difficult, or you're even already accustomed to this lifestyle and cannot change, then no one is forcing you. I'm merely pointing these out so you know what's right and what's wrong. As for these personal lifestyle issues, weigh them out yourself—we won't force the matter. As for how often you wash your socks, and whether you mend them or throw them away when they tear, that's your business. Base it on your circumstances—we won't set any specific rules.

In some families, due to their privileged background, parents often tell their children, "When you go out, remember who you are descended from and who your ancestors are. You should act in a way among social groups that brings honor and glory to our family name. Never tarnish our ancestor's reputation. Always remember the teachings of our ancestors and do not bring shame to our lineage. If one day you make a mistake, people will say, 'Aren't you from a prominent and respectable family? How could you do something like this?' They'll laugh at you, but they won't just be laughing at you, but at our entire family. In that case, you would be smearing our family's name and causing shame to our ancestors, which is unacceptable." Some parents also tell their children, "Our country is a great nation and an ancient civilization. Our current life didn't come easily, so cherish it. Especially when you're abroad, you must win glory and honor for the Chinese people. Don't do anything that might disgrace our nation or hurt the reputation of the Chinese people." In one respect, parents tell you to win glory and honor for your family and ancestors, and in another, for your nation and ethnicity, urging you not to bring shame to your country. From a young age, children are educated in this manner by their parents, and when they go to school their teachers educate them the same way, saying, "Win glory for our class, our school, our city, and our country. Don't let foreigners mock us, saying we lack caliber or have poor character." Some in the church even say, "We Chinese believed first. When we interact with foreign brothers and sisters, we should win glory for the Chinese people and uphold their reputation." All these sayings are directly related to what families instill into people. Is this kind of instilling correct? (No, it's not.) Why isn't it? What glory are they seeking? Is there any use in seeking such glory? (No, there isn't.) There was an incident where a guy from Northeast China was visiting different churches; he took 10,000 yuan of the church's offering money, and ran off back home to spend his days. When the brothers and sisters from the Northeast found out, some said, "This guy is detestable! He even dared to take the church's offering money. He has completely tarnished the reputation of people from the Northeast! If we ever see him again, we should teach him a lesson!" After this incident, people from the Northeast felt as though they had lost their honor. Whenever they were

talking around brothers and sisters from other provinces, they dared not bring up this matter. They felt embarrassed, and were afraid that others might say, “So-and-so from your Northeast region ran off with the offering money.” They were afraid of others talking about it, and didn’t dare to bring it up themselves. Is this behavior right? (No, it isn’t.) Why is it wrong? (Who takes the offering money has nothing to do with others; everyone represents themselves.) That’s right. That person taking the offering money is his own business. If you discovered it and stopped him, thereby salvaging the loss to the house of God and preserving its interests, you would have performed your duty. If you had no opportunity to prevent it and couldn’t salvage the loss, then you should have recognized what sort of wretch he is, admonished yourself, prayed to God to protect you from such an incident and ensure that you don’t fall into similar temptation. You should address this issue correctly. Although he’s from your region, his actions only represent him as an individual. It’s not that the people of that region taught or encouraged him to act this way. It has no connection to anyone else. Others may at most be accountable for inadequate supervision or direction, but no one is obligated to bear the consequences of his wrongdoing. He acted against God and offended the administrative decrees, no one else is obligated to bear the consequences for him. His disreputability is his own affair. Moreover, this matter isn’t about losing face or gaining glory; it concerns one person’s nature essence and the path he has taken. It can only be said that, initially, people failed to discern his true character, but after this incident his true colors were revealed. This has nothing to do with the reputation or dignity of other brothers and sisters in that region. If you feel that because he’s from the same region as you, he has disgraced you, then such a view and understanding is entirely misguided. God’s house never punishes an entire family for the sins of a single person; God views each individual as a separate entity. No matter where you come from, even if you’re from the same family or parents, God sees every person as a unique entity. God never implicates any related individual because of one person’s mistakes. This is the principle, and it aligns with the truth. However, if you think that someone from your region doing wrong harms your reputation and implicates you too, this is due to your erroneous understanding, and has nothing to do with the truth. Hence, when parents tell you, “Win glory for our country, family, or surname,” is this correct? (No.) Why not? Which phrase does it share the same nature with? Doesn’t it share the same nature as the thought we discussed earlier, namely, “A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies”? In a person’s life, doing positive deeds, walking the right path, embracing positive things and the truth—none of this is done in order to do themselves credit. Instead, people should comport themselves like this: This is their responsibility, the path they should walk, and their duty. Walking the right path, embracing positive things and the truth, and submitting to God are people’s obligation and duty. They’re also for the sake of attaining salvation, not in order to earn face for oneself or God, not, of course, to earn face for the people of your country, and certainly not for a particular surname,

race, or clan. You don’t become saved in order to win glory for the people of your country, and certainly not to win glory for your family. The idea of “winning glory” is just a theory. Your salvation has nothing to do with those people. What benefit can they derive from your salvation? If you receive salvation, what can they gain from this? They do not follow the right path, and God, with His righteous disposition, will treat them accordingly. He will treat them as they ought to be treated. What does this so-called “winning glory” bring them? It has nothing to do with them. You accept the consequences for the path that you take, and they accept the consequences of their own path. God treats every individual according to His righteous disposition. Winning glory for one’s nation, family, or surname isn’t the responsibility of any one person. Naturally, you shouldn’t bear this responsibility alone, and in fact, you can’t. The rise or decline of a family or clan, its course, and its fate have nothing to do with whether you win them glory. And of course, it has nothing to do with the path you take. If you comport yourself well and are able to submit to God, it isn’t to win glory for them or do them credit, nor is it to claim any rewards from God on their behalf or to secure any exemption from punishment for them. Their rise, their fall, and their fate have nothing to do with you. Especially concerning whether or not they feel honored, and whether or not you win glory for them—these have no relevance to you. You cannot bear them on your shoulders, and you have no responsibility or obligation to do so. Therefore, when your parents tell you, “You must win glory for our nation, family, or surname, and you must not tarnish the reputation of our ancestors or let others reproach us behind our backs,” these words only serve to apply negative psychological pressure on you. You can’t live up to them, nor do you have any obligation to do so. Why? Because God only requires you to fulfill your duty as a created being before Him. He doesn’t ask you to do anything or bear any obligation for your country, family, or surname. Therefore, winning glory for your country or family, or winning glory and honor or doing anything for your surname is not your obligation. It has nothing to do with you. Their fate is solely in the hands of God, and you don’t need to shoulder any burdens at all. If you make any mistakes, you shouldn’t feel any guilt toward them. If you do any good deeds, you shouldn’t have the mindset that you were lucky or think that you’ve won glory for your country, family, or surname. Do not rejoice over these things. And if you fail, don’t feel frightened or weighed down by grief. Don’t blame yourself. Because it has nothing to do with you at all. Don’t even think about it—it’s as simple as that. So, concerning people of different nationalities, Chinese people are chosen by God; they come before God and are created beings. Westerners come before God, and they are created beings too. Asians, Europeans, North and South Americans, those in Oceania, and Africans, come before God and accept His work, and they are also His created beings. No matter which country a person is from, the only thing they should do is to fulfill their duty as a created being, accept God’s words, submit to God’s words, and attain salvation. They shouldn’t form various clan groups based on their own nationality, dividing themselves into groups or races. Everything that takes racial glory

as the objective of its struggle or as its fundamental principle is wrong. This is not the path people should walk, and it is a phenomenon that should not appear within the church. There will come a day, as people from different countries interact more widely and have access to a broader area of the globe, when an Asian might encounter a European, a European might meet an American, and an American might come into contact with an Asian or African, etc. When different races gather together, if there are groups formed on the basis of race, all striving for their own racial glory and doing things for their race, what will the church begin to face? It will face division. This is something that God detests and condemns. Whoever does this is cursed, whoever acts this way is a servant of Satan, and whoever acts in such a manner will be an object of punishment. Why will they be punished? Because this is a violation of the administrative decrees. Never do this. If you can act this way, it proves you haven't let go of this aspect of your parents' conditioning. You haven't accepted the identity that God gave you as a created being, and you still see yourself as Chinese, or as a white, black, or brown person—as someone from a different race, surname, or nationality. If you wish to bring glory to your nation, race, or family, and you act with this thought in your mind, the consequences will be dire. Today, we solemnly declare and earnestly clarify this matter here. If one day anyone goes against this aspect of the administrative decrees, they will bear the consequences. At that time, do not complain, saying, "You didn't tell me, I didn't know, I didn't understand." You've long known your identity as a created being, yet you can still act this way: This means that you weren't ignorant, but did it deliberately, knowingly committing the offense. You should face punishment. The consequences of going against the administrative decrees are unimaginable. Do you understand? (Yes, we understand.)

Some parents tell their children, "No matter where we go, we must not forget our roots. We can't forget where we were born and raised, or who we are. Wherever you go, when you meet your townsmen, you should take care of them. When choosing church leaders or supervisors, prioritize people from your hometown. When the church has any material benefit, let the folks from your hometown enjoy them first. If you're selecting members for a group, choose people from your hometown first. When fellow townsmen work together, you share a common language and a familiarity." What is this called? "When fellow townsmen meet, tears well up in their eyes." There's also the saying, "Uncles and aunts are kin, generation after generation: Though the bones may be broken, the sinews are still connected." Some people, due to their parents' and elders' instruction, as soon as they hear that someone comes from the same province or town, or if they hear the person speaking with the accent of their hometown, they grow very fond of them. They eat together, sit together at gatherings, and do everything together. They are especially close. Some people, upon meeting a fellow townsman, might say, "You know what they say, 'When fellow townsmen meet, tears well up in their eyes.' When I meet a fellow townsman, I feel close to them: When I met you it felt as though you were family." They take special care of their fellow townsmen. If their townsmen

encounter difficulties in life or work, or if they are ill, they take special care of them. Is this good? (No, it's not good.) Why isn't it good? (Treating people like this lacks principles.) It lacks principles, and this person is a muddler. They show affection to whomever is a fellow townsman, but what are fellow townsmen? Are they good people? Are they true brothers and sisters? Is your promotion of them in accordance with principles? Does your recommendation of them align with the principles? Are they suitable for the job? Is your care for them and your closeness to them fair? Does it conform to the truth and to principles? If not, then what you're doing for them is inappropriate, and it is detestable to God. Do you understand? (I understand.) Therefore, when your parents tell you, "Take care of fellow townsmen when you meet them," this is a fallacy, and you should put it at the back of your mind and ignore it. In the future, if your parents ask you, "That fellow townsman of ours is in the same church as you. Did you take care of him?" how should you respond? (In God's house, we treat everyone equally.) You should say, "I'm not obligated to do that. Forget townsman, I wouldn't even take care of you if you stand in opposition to God." There are some people who are heavily influenced by these kinds of traditional family notions. As soon as they meet anybody who is somewhat related to them, or shares the same last name, or belongs to the same clan, they can't get around them. As soon as they hear that someone shares their last name, they say, "Oh goodness, we're all family here. Based on my current position in the family, I should call her my great-aunt. I'm one of the grandchildren compared to her." They willingly refer to themselves as grandchildren, and when they see her they dare not address her as sister or anything else; they always call her "great-aunt." When some people meet someone with the same surname, they feel especially close to them, regardless of what kind of person they are. Is this right? (No.) In particular, some families have a tradition of taking special care of those who are from the same clan, and they are often courteous with them and interact closely with these people. Thus, it seems like their home is always bustling with people and activity, and the family appears to be especially lively and prosperous. When something happens, distant relatives all come to lend a hand and help out, giving advice and suggestions. Influenced by this family culture, some feel that comporting themselves like this is a good thing to do; at the very least, they're not isolated or lonely, and have people to help when matters arise. What notions do other people have? "To live among people, one must act personably." Though this saying is difficult to explain, everyone can understand its meaning. "One must live with human sentiments. Can someone still be called a human if they don't have human sentiments? If you're always serious and in earnest, if you're always concerned with principles and stances, in the end, you'll be left without any relatives or friends. You need to have human sentiments while living among social groups. People who have nothing to do with our surname are another story, but among those with the same surname or clan, isn't everyone close? You cannot leave any of them. When you face matters such as illness, marriage, funerals, or other major and

minor events, don’t you need someone to discuss it with? When you buy a house, a car, or land, anyone can lend a helping hand. You can’t leave these people; you have to rely on them in life.” Because you are deeply influenced by this family culture, when you are out, and especially in the church, and see someone from the same clan, you subconsciously gravitate toward them, having a particular fondness for them, often giving them special care and treatment, and getting along with them in a special way. Even when they make mistakes, you are often lenient with them. For those not related by blood, you treat them impartially. But for those from your clan, you tend to be protective and favor them, which in plain terms is called “being partial to relatives.” Some people are often guided by these thoughts, not treating people or handling affairs in life based on the principles God teaches but based on the influence of family culture. Isn’t this wrong? (Yes.) For example, someone with the surname Zhang might address another person with the same surname who is a few years older as “older sister.” Others might think they are real sisters, but in fact, they’re unrelated people sharing the same surname, and have no blood relation at all. Why does she address her this way? It’s the influence of family culture. Wherever they go the two are inseparable, she shares everything with her “older sister” and not with outsiders. Why? “Because she’s a Zhang, just like me. We’re family. I have to tell her everything. If not her, then who? If I didn’t trust my family, but I trusted strangers instead, wouldn’t that be silly? However you approach it, outsiders are unreliable; only family can be trusted.” When choosing church leaders, she chooses her, and when people ask, “Why did you choose her?” she says, “Because she shares the same surname as me. Wouldn’t it be against all reason and propriety if I didn’t choose her? If I didn’t choose her, would I even be human?” Whenever the church has material benefits or good things to offer, she thinks of her first. “Why did you think of her first?” “Because she has the same surname as me, she is a part of my family. If I didn’t take care of her, who would? Would I even be human if I didn’t have this basic human sentiment?” Regardless of whether these things arise from affection or selfish motives, in short, if you are influenced and conditioned by these thoughts from your family, you should immediately turn back and stop behaving, dealing with things, and treating people using these methods. No matter how narrow or broad these methods may be, they are not the principles and methods God has taught you. At the very least, they are the thoughts and viewpoints you ought to let go of. In short, any family conditioning that does not align with the principles God teaches you should be let go of. You shouldn’t treat others or interact with them using these methods, nor should you handle matters this way. Some might argue, “If I don’t handle things this way, I won’t know how to handle them at all.” That’s easily managed. God’s words provide principles for handling various matters. If you can’t find a path of practice in God’s words, look for a brother or sister who understands this truth and ask them. They will clarify things so that you will understand. These are the things people should let go of when it comes to treating issues related to clan, surname, and the ways of the world.

Some parents often nag their daughters, saying, “As a woman, you should follow the man you marry, whether he be a cock or a dog. If you marry into a cock family, you must act like a cock; if you marry into a dog family, you must act like a dog.” The implication is that you shouldn’t strive to be a good human being but rather resign yourself to being like a cock or a dog. Is this a good path? Clearly, upon hearing it anyone would discern that it’s not, right? The phrase “follow the man you marry” is definitely directed at women—their fate is just that tragic. Under the influence and conditioning of family, women abandon themselves to depravity: They really do follow a cock if they marry a cock or a dog if they marry a dog, without striving to walk a good path, doing whatever their parents tell them to do. Although your parents instill this thought, you should discern whether such a thought is right or wrong, beneficial or harmful to how you comport yourself. Of course, we already fellowshiped on this aspect within the topic of letting go of marriage, so we won’t dissect and analyze them specifically here. In short, all these erroneous, biased, fallacious, superficial, foolish, and even evil and degenerate thoughts and viewpoints from parents are what you should let go of. Especially sayings like “Follow the man you marry, whether he be a cock or a dog,” which we just discussed, and “Marry a man for clothing and food”—you should discern these statements, and not be misguided by such thoughts instilled by your parents, believing that “I’m sold to the man that I marry: He’s my master, I should be whoever he wants me to be and do everything he says, and my fate is tied to him. Once we get married, both of us are bound together like two grasshoppers tied to one rope. If he prospers, so do I; if he doesn’t prosper, neither do I. Therefore, my parents’ saying, ‘Follow the man you marry, whether he be a cock or a dog’ will always be right. Women shouldn’t be independent or have any pursuits, and they certainly shouldn’t have any ideas or wishes about setting the right outlook on life and walking the right path in life. They should just submissively follow the words of their parents, ‘Follow the man you marry, whether he be a cock or a dog.’” Is this the right thought to have? (No.) Why is it wrong? “Follow the man you marry, whether he be a cock or a dog”—there is another phrase with similar meaning, that is, “Two grasshoppers tied to one rope,” which means that once you marry him, your fate is tied to his. If he prospers, so do you; if he doesn’t prosper, neither do you. Is that the case? (No.) Let’s first discuss the saying “If he prospers, so do you.” Is this a fact? (No.) Can anyone give a counter-example to refute this matter? Can’t think of one? Let Me provide an example. For instance, when a certain woman marries a man, she becomes hell-bent on following him. This is like what women tend to say, “From this day forth, I belong to you,” implying that “I’m sold to you, and my destiny is tied to yours.” Leaving out the woman abandoning herself to depravity, let’s focus for now on whether the phrase “If he prospers, so do you” is correct or not. Is it true that if he prospers, you will automatically prosper too? Suppose he starts a business and finds himself in a predicament, facing numerous challenges, encountering difficulties everywhere, lacking funds, connections, a suitable location to open a shop, a market in which to do business,

and people to help. You, as his wife, are hell-bent on following him; regardless of what he does, you never detest him, but support him unconditionally. As time goes on, his business thrives, opening one store after another, yielding increasingly better economic benefits and greater income. Your husband becomes a boss, and from a boss he turns into a wealthy tycoon. He's prospering, isn't he? As the saying goes, "Any man with money turns bad," which of course is a fact of this society and of this wicked world. Once your husband becomes a boss and eventually a tycoon, how easy is it for him to become corrupted? It happens in a matter of moments. After he becomes a boss and starts prospering, your good days will have come to an end. Why? Your worries will start creeping in, "Does he have another woman on the outside? Will he cheat on me? Is someone seducing him? Will he grow tired of me? Will he fall out of love?" Have your good days ended? After all these years of sharing hardship with him, you feel miserable and tired. Your living conditions have been poor, your health has deteriorated, and you've lost your looks. You've become a sallow-faced old woman. In his eyes, you may no longer have the charm of the young lady he once fell for. He might think, "Now that I am wealthy and influential, I can find someone better." As he grows distant, he starts to have active thoughts, he starts to change. Aren't you in danger then? He becomes a big boss, while you are a sallow-faced old lady—isn't there a kind of disparity and inequality between you? During these times, aren't you unworthy of him? Doesn't he feel that he's above your station? Doesn't he detest you more and more? If so, your difficult days are just starting. Eventually, he may act upon his wishes and find another woman, and spend less and less time at home. When he does return, it's mostly to argue with you, and he slams the door and leaves right after, sometimes going days without any contact. The best you can hope for, considering your past relationship, is that he might give you money and provide for your daily needs. If you really make a fuss, he might even withhold your living expenses. So, how is it? Just because he begins to prosper, has your fate improved at all? Are you happier or unhappier? (Unhappier.) You're unhappier. Your days of misfortune have arrived. When faced with such situations, most of the time women will cry their hearts out, and due to what their parents told them: "Don't air your dirty laundry in public," they will bear with it, thinking, "I'll endure it until my son grows up and can back me up. Then I'll get rid of my husband!" Some women are fortunate enough to see the day their son becomes their pillar of strength, while others don't get that far. When their son is still young, the husband decides to keep the child and tell his wife, "Get going, you sallow-faced old woman!" and she might be taken for a beggar and thrown out of her own home. So, when he's prospering, do you necessarily prosper as well? Are your fates really tied together? (No.) If his business continually struggles or goes contrary to his wishes, then while he needs your support, encouragement, companionship, and care, and lacks the qualification and opportunity to become corrupted, he might still cherish you. While he isn't prospering, you might feel safer and have somebody to accompany you, and will be able to experience the warmth and

happiness of marriage. Because when he's not prospering, no one on the outside pays attention to or values him, and you become the only person he can rely on, he treasures you. In that case, you will feel secure and relatively better and happier. But if he prospers and spreads his wings, then he will fly, but will he take you along? Is the saying from parents, "Follow the man you marry, whether he be a cock or a dog," correct? (No, it isn't.) This clearly pushes women into an abyss of suffering. How about the principle, "I'll follow him if he walks the right path, and if he doesn't, I'll leave him"? This principle is also mistaken. Marrying him doesn't mean you've sold yourself to him, nor should you treat him as an outsider. It's enough for you to fulfill your responsibilities in the marriage. If things work out, great; if not, part ways. You've fulfilled your obligations with a clear conscience. If he needs you to fulfill your responsibilities in accompanying him, do so; if not, part ways. That's the principle. The phrase "Follow the man you marry, whether he be a cock or a dog" is nonsense—it's harmful. Why is it nonsense? It lacks principles: Regardless of what kind of person a man is, you follow him indiscriminately. If you follow a good man, then life might be worthwhile. But if you follow a bad man, aren't you dooming yourself? Thus, no matter what kind of person he is, you should have an accurate stance on marriage. You need to understand that only the truth offers genuine protection and provides a path and principles for a dignified life. What parents offer are just small pieces of experience or strategies based on their affections or self-interests. Such advice can't protect you at all, nor can it provide you with the right principles for practice. Take the saying, "Follow the man you marry, whether he be a cock or a dog," for example. It can only lead you to become ignorant about marriage, making you lose your dignity and the opportunity to choose the right life path. More importantly, it may also make you lose the chance of salvation. So, no matter the intent behind parents' words, whether out of concern, protection, affection, self-interest, or any other motive, you should be discerning of their various sayings. Even if their initial intention is for your well-being and protection, you shouldn't accept them carelessly and foolishly. Instead, you should discern them and then find accurate principles for practice based on God's words, not practicing or comporting yourself according to their words. Especially "Marry a man for clothing and food," which previous generations often said—that is even more mistaken. Do women lack hands or feet? Can they not earn their own living or what? Why must they rely on men for clothing and food? Are women simple-minded? Compared to men, what do women lack? (Nothing at all.) That's right, they lack nothing. Women have the ability to exist independently, which is bestowed on them by God. Since women have the ability to live independently, why should they rely on men for sustenance? Isn't this an erroneous thought? (Yes.) This is the instilling of an erroneous thought. Women should not devalue or degrade themselves because of this saying, depending on men for their basic needs. Of course, it's the man's obligation to provide all the living expenses for his wife and family, ensuring his woman has enough to eat and wear. However, women should not marry solely for food and clothing or harbor such

thoughts and viewpoints. Since you have the ability to live independently, why would you rely on a man for basic needs? Isn't this, to some extent, due to the influence of their parents and the conditioning of family thoughts? If a woman receives this conditioning of family education, then she is either lazy, not wanting to do anything but just wishing to rely on someone else for issues of food and clothing, or she's accepted her parents' thoughts, believing women are worthless and they cannot and should not resolve these issues of food and clothing themselves, but should just rely on men for them. Isn't this abandoning herself to depravity? (Yes.) Why is it wrong to adopt such thoughts and viewpoints? What do they impact? Why should one let go of such degraded thoughts? If a man provides for your food and clothing, and then you see him as your master, your superior, the one in charge of everything, wouldn't you consult him for every big or small matter? (Yes.) For instance, if you believe in God, you might think, "I'll ask the one in charge if I'm allowed to believe in God; if he says yes, I'll believe, if not, then I won't." Even when God's house asks people to fulfill their duties, you still have to ask for his approval; if he's happy and agrees, you can fulfill your duty, but if not, you can't. As a believer in God, whether or not you can follow Him is subject to your husband's attitude and treatment of you. Can your husband discern whether this way is true or false? Will listening to him ensure salvation and entry into the kingdom of heaven? If your husband is wise and can hear God's voice, if he is one of God's sheep, then you may benefit along with him, but you are merely benefiting along with him. However, if he's a rogue and an antichrist and cannot understand the truth, what will you do? Will you still believe? Don't you have ears or a brain? Can't you listen to God's words? After hearing them, can't you discern for yourself? Can your husband determine your fate? Does he control and orchestrate your destiny? Have you sold yourself to him? Everyone is clear about these doctrines, but when it comes to certain problems involving principles, people tend to unconsciously be influenced by their family's conditioning of these thoughts and viewpoints. When these thoughts and viewpoints influence you, you often make incorrect judgments, and guided by the thoughts behind these erroneous judgments, you make the wrong choices, which then lead you down the wrong path, ultimately leading to ruin. You missed the opportunity to fulfill your duty, the chance to gain the truth, and the opportunity for salvation. What led to your demise? On the surface, it seems you were deceived and influenced by a man, ruined by him. But in reality, it was your own deep-rooted thought that led to your demise. That is to say, the root cause of this outcome is the thought of "Follow the man you marry, whether he be a cock or a dog." Therefore, letting go of this thought is crucial.

Now, looking back at the thoughts and viewpoints from parents and families we fellowshiped about that involve principles and strategies for dealing with the world, game rules, the ways of the world, race, males and females, marriage, and so on—is there any among these that is positive? Is there any that can guide you to some extent down the path of pursuing the truth? (No.) Not a single one helps you become a true or qualified

created being. On the contrary, each one of them harms you deeply, corrupting you through the conditioning of such thoughts and viewpoints, leading to people today being bound, controlled, influenced, and troubled by various fallacious thoughts and viewpoints in their innermost being. While deep in people's hearts, the family is a place of warmth, a place filled with childhood memories and a haven for the soul, the various negative influences family gives people should not be underestimated. The warmth of family cannot dissolve these wrong thoughts. The warmth of family and the beautiful memories it brings only provide some solace and satisfaction at the level of physical affection. However, regarding things like how to comport oneself and deal with the world, the path one should take, or what kind of outlook on life and values to establish, family conditioning is entirely detrimental. From this perspective, even before entering society, one has already been corrupted by various thoughts and viewpoints in their family—they have already undergone the conditioning, control, and influence of various erroneous thoughts and viewpoints. One can say that the family is the place where all erroneous thoughts and viewpoints are first received and the place where these begin to be brought into play and freely applied. Families play this type of role in everyone's life and their everyday life. Our fellowship on this subject matter isn't about asking people to let go of family in terms of affection or formally break away or sever ties with their family. It's merely about requiring people to specifically recognize, discern, and of course, more accurately and practically let go of the various erroneous thoughts and viewpoints instilled by their family. This is the specific practice one who pursues the truth should adopt when addressing family-related topics.

There are many more topics related to family. Isn't it true that these sayings which family conditions into people, the ones we've fellowshiped on, are quite common? (Yes, it is.) We often hear them spoken among families—if not in one family, then in another. Aren't these sayings widespread and representative? The vast majority of families have instilled these thoughts and viewpoints to varying degrees. Every saying we've fellowshiped on appears in different ways in the majority of families and is instilled at various stages of a person's growth. From the day one is instilled with these thoughts, they begin to accept them, gaining a certain awareness and acceptance toward them, and then, without the ability to defend themselves, they adopt these thoughts and viewpoints as their strategies and ways of dealing with the world in order to live and survive in the future. Of course, many also take them as their baseline to gain a foothold in society. Thus, these thoughts and viewpoints not only pervade people's daily lives but also their inner world and the various problems they encounter on their path of survival. When different issues arise, the various thoughts and viewpoints stored within people's hearts guide how people handle these matters; when these different issues arise, they are dominated and governed by different thoughts and viewpoints, as well as principles and strategies for dealing with the world. People can deftly apply these erroneous thoughts and viewpoints in real life. Under the guidance of various wrong thoughts and

viewpoints, they naturally tread an incorrect path. As their actions, behavior, lives, and existence are dictated by wrong thoughts, it's inevitable that the paths they take in life are also misguided. Since the root of their guiding thoughts is wrong, their path is naturally wrong. The direction of their path is skewed, making the eventual outcome quite clear. People, conditioned by the various thoughts of their family, take the wrong path, and then they are led astray by this wrong path. Consequently, they are headed toward hell, toward destruction. In the end, the root cause of their doom lies in the various wrong thoughts conditioned by their families. Given the severe consequences, people should let go of the conditioning of various thoughts their family gave to them. At present, the influence of the conditioning of various erroneous thoughts on people is to prevent them from accepting the truth. Guided by these wrong thoughts and due to their existence, people often can't grasp the truth and even reject and resist it in their hearts. Even worse, of course, some people might make the decision to betray God. This is how it is now, but looking long-term, under the circumstances that people cannot accept the truth or they betray the truth, these erroneous thoughts lead them to walk a misguided path in opposition to the truth, betraying and rejecting God. Under the guidance of such an erroneous path, even if they appear to listen to God speaking and accept His work, they ultimately cannot be truly saved due to the wrong path they're on. It's truly regrettable. Therefore, given that the influence of your family can lead to such severe consequences, one shouldn't trivialize these thoughts. If you have been conditioned by corresponding wrong thoughts from your family on different issues, then you should examine and let go of them—do not hold onto them any longer. No matter the thought, if it is wrong and goes against the truth, the only correct path you should choose is to let it go. The accurate practice of letting go is this: The criteria or basis on which you view, do, or handle this matter should no longer be the erroneous thoughts instilled by your family, but should be based on God's words instead. Although this process may require you to pay some price, making you feel like you are acting against your will, that you are losing face, and may even result in suffering a loss to your fleshly interests, no matter what you face, you should persistently align your practice with God's words and the principles He tells you, and you shouldn't give up. The process of this transformation will surely be challenging, it won't be smooth sailing. Why won't it be smooth? It's a contest between negative and positive things, a contest between evil thoughts from Satan and the truth, and also a contest between your will and desire to accept the truth and positive things versus the erroneous thoughts and viewpoints in your heart. Since there is a contest, one may suffer and should pay a price—this is what you must do. If someone wants to walk the path of pursuing the truth and attain salvation, they must accept these facts and experience these contests. Of course, during these contests, you will definitely pay some price, suffer some pain, and give up certain things. Regardless of what the process looks like, ultimately being able to achieve fearing God and shunning evil, gaining the truth, and attaining salvation—that is the ultimate goal. Thus, any price paid for this goal is

worth it because it's the most correct goal and is what you should pursue to become a qualified created being. To achieve this goal, regardless of how much effort or price you must pay, you shouldn't compromise, evade, or be afraid, because as long as you pursue the truth and aim to fear God, shun evil, and be saved, then when you face any contest or battle, you're not alone. God's words will accompany you; you have God and His words as your support, so you shouldn't be afraid, right? (Yes.) So, from these few points, whether it's wrong thought conditioning from family or from any other source, one should choose to let it go. For instance, as we just fellowshiped, your family often tells you, "One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him." In reality, the practice of letting go of this thought is simple: Just act according to the principles God tells people. "The principles God tells people"—this phrase is quite broad. How is it specifically practiced? You don't need to dissect whether you have an intention to do harm to others, nor do you need to guard yourself against others. So, what should you do? In one respect, you should be able to properly maintain harmonious relationships with others; in another, when dealing with various people, you should use God's words as a basis and the truth as a criterion to discern what kind of person they are, and then treat them based on the corresponding principles. It's that simple. If they are brothers and sisters, treat them as such; if they are earnest in their pursuit, and make sacrifices and expend themselves, then treat them as brothers and sisters who sincerely perform their duty. If they are nonbelievers, unwilling to perform their duty, just wishing to live their lives, then you shouldn't treat them as brothers and sisters but as unbelievers. When you view people, you should look at what type of person they are, their disposition, humanity, and their attitude toward God and the truth. If they can accept the truth and are willing to practice it, treat them as true brothers and sisters, as family. If their humanity is bad, and they only pay lip service to willingly practicing the truth, having the ability to discuss doctrine but never practicing the truth, then treat them as mere service-doers, not as family. What do these principles tell you? They tell you the principle with which to treat different types of people—this is a principle we have often discussed, that is, treating people with wisdom. Wisdom is a general term, but specifically, it means having distinct methods and principles for dealing with different types of people—all based on the truth, not on personal feelings, personal preferences, personal views, on the advantages and disadvantages they present for you, or on their age, but solely on God's words. Therefore, in dealing with people, you don't need to examine whether you have an intention to do harm to others or guard yourself against others. If you treat people with the principles and methods God has given you, all temptations will be avoided, and you won't fall into any temptations or conflicts. It's that simple. This principle is also appropriate when dealing with the world of unbelievers. When you see someone, you will think, "He is evil, a devil, a demon, a thug, or a rogue. I don't need to guard against him; I won't pay attention to him or provoke him. If work necessitates interaction, then I'll handle it in an official and impartial manner. If it's

unnecessary, I'll avoid contact or association, and neither will I defend him nor fawn over him. He won't be able to find fault with me. If he wants to bully me, I have God. I'll rely on God. If God allows him to bully me, I'll accept this and submit. If God doesn't allow it, he won't be able to harm a hair on my head." Isn't this genuine faith? (Yes.) You must have this genuine faith and not be afraid of him. Don't say he's just a local thug or a small fry: Even when facing the great red dragon, we abide by this principle. If the great red dragon forbids you from believing in God, do you reason with it? Do you preach to it? (No.) Why not? (Preaching to it is pointless.) It is a devil, not worthy of listening to sermons. Pearls must not be cast before swine. The truth isn't spoken for beasts or devils; it's meant for humans. Even if the devils or beasts could understand, it wouldn't be preached to them. They aren't deserving! How's this principle? (Good.) How do you treat those with bad humanity, the wicked, the muddled, and the unreasoning bullies in the church, or those in society with some power, who come from big families, or possess some prominence? Treat them as they should be treated. If they're brothers and sisters, associate with them. If not, ignore them and treat them as nonbelievers. If they fit the principles for sharing the gospel, share it with them. If they aren't the object of the gospel, don't meet or associate with them in this lifetime. It's that simple. With the devils and Satan, there's no need for guarding yourself, framing a case against them, or for revenge. Just ignore them. Don't provoke them, and don't associate with them. If, for some reason, interacting or dealing with them is unavoidable, then deal with matters in an official and impartial manner and based on principles. It's that simple. The principles and methods God teaches for people to act and behave help you comport yourself with dignity, allowing you to live with increasing human likeness. Whereas the way your parents teach you, while appearing on the surface to protect you and look out for you, actually misleads you and pushes you into an abyss of suffering. What they teach isn't the right way or a wise approach to comport oneself, but a sly and despicable way that's contradictory and unrelated to the truth. So, if you only accept the thoughts conditioned into you by your parents, it becomes hard and laborious for you to accept the truth, and practicing the truth becomes challenging. However, if you genuinely have the heart to let go of the thoughts concerning self-comportment and principles for dealing with the world that come from your family, accepting the truth becomes easier, and so does practicing it.

As regards family conditioning, apart from the thoughts and viewpoints we've mentioned, is there anything else? Please summarize. There are many things that come from family, and in China, people call this "dining table culture." For example, at the dining table, a child might say, "Our class monitor, that girl with the three stripes on her sleeve, always checks my homework and says I haven't finished it, even though I have. She's always picking on me." The parents might respond, "You're a boy, and she's a girl. Why are you bothering about her? Focus on your studies and make your mother proud. When you become the class monitor, you can check her homework, and that will settle things, won't it?" Upon hearing this, the child might think, "That makes sense. I'm a boy,

and even if she's the class monitor, she's still a girl. I shouldn't bother with her. If she starts bothering me again, I'll just ignore her and that will be the end of it. The more she bothers me, the harder I'll study. I'll surpass her, and in the next term, I'll become the class monitor and be in charge of her. That should settle things." This is an example of dining table culture. At the dining table, if a boy starts to cry, parents might say, "Hold it in! Why are you crying? Good-for-nothing!" Does crying mean that you're good for nothing? Does that mean people who don't cry are promising? Is every boy who has never cried an individual who is promising? Take a look at those up-and-coming people—did they or did they not cry and shed tears when they were young? Did they have emotions? Did they experience joy, anger, grief, and happiness? They experienced all of these. Regardless of whether someone is a prominent figure or an ordinary person, everyone has a side of human fragility or human instinct. Due to parental education and social background, people often perceive this side as weak, cowardly, incompetent, or easily bullied. They never dare to reveal it openly; instead, they secretly express it in a corner. Some prominent figures, when facing the most challenging times in their careers, with no one to help or support them, might wait until all the soldiers, subordinates, and servants around them have withdrawn. Then, they vent their emotions by howling like wolves in the bathtub. After shouting, they think about it, "Did anyone hear that? Was I too unrestrained? I'd better tone it down a bit!" But toning it down seems insufficient, so they cover their mouths with a towel and continue howling like wolves. Normal humanity requires the release and expression of various emotions. However, under the immense pressures of this society and the oppression of various public opinions, no one dares to express their emotions normally. Because, starting from family teaching and conditioning, every individual has been instilled with certain erroneous beliefs, like "A man should be self-reliant," "To forge iron, one must be strong," "One needn't worry about rumors if one is upright," and "If you have a clear conscience, you need not fear ghosts knocking at your door." There is also "The nice person gets bullied, just as the gentle horse gets ridden," which conveys the message that one should avoid being an easy target, but should bully others instead. What does "nice" mean in the context of "The nice person gets bullied, just as the gentle horse gets ridden"? It means guileless, simple, loyal, kind, and upright. That is, it suggests that you should avoid being this type of person, because such people are easy targets. So, what should you become instead? You should become a ruffian, a rogue, a scoundrel, a villain, an evildoer, a hoodlum—then no one will dare mess with you. Wherever you go, if reasoning doesn't work, you must act like a scoundrel, and be able to make a scene, throw tantrums, be unreasonable, and create chaos. People thrive who behave in this way. In any workplace or social group, most people fear individuals like this, and no one dares to provoke them. They're like stinking dog excrement or annoying insects, and once you get them on you, it's hard to shake them off. You have to become this type of person. Don't let people think you're an easy target or easily provoked. There should be thorns all over your body. If you don't have

any thorns, you won't be able to establish yourself in this society. There will always be someone to bully you. Family education serves as a guide for your life's path, as well as a specific teaching and instillation of principles on how to comport yourself. That is, parents use these thoughts and sayings to educate you on how to comport yourself, behave, and deal with things. What kind of person do they tell you to be? On the surface, some parents may say things that sound good, like, "My child doesn't need to rise to prominence or become a celebrity; being a good person is enough." However, they also tell their children phrases like, "One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him," "The nice person gets bullied, just as the gentle horse gets ridden," and "A man should be self-reliant." So, after so much talking, are they telling their children to be good people or something else? (They are encouraging them to be fierce, or at least capable of protecting themselves.) Tell Me, are most parents willing to see their children bully others or would they rather see them be particularly upright and walk the right path but frequently get bullied and be subject to some exclusion? Which type of person should the child become to make their parents the happiest, the proudest, and their faces glow most radiantly? (Parents feel proud when their children are able to bully others, but they consider it shameful if their children are often mistreated while walking the right path.) If you walk the right path but are frequently mistreated, your parents will feel sorrow, sadness, heartache, and won't be willing to let it happen. What lies at the root of this? Regardless of the reasons, every thought and viewpoint that parents teach their children about how to comport themselves and act is incorrect and runs contrary to the truth. In short, these thoughts and viewpoints parents instill in you will never lead you to the presence of God, nor will they guide you onto the path of pursuing the truth. Of course, people will never attain salvation under the guidance of such thoughts and viewpoints. This is an undeniable fact. So, no matter what your parents' intentions or motivations are, no matter what influence they have on you, if what you live out contradicts the truth, opposes the truth, and prevents you from submitting to God and the truth, then you should let go of it.

Concerning the various thoughts from family conditioning that have constituted these last few fellowship sessions, although these thoughts are widely used and promoted among people, regardless of how widely accepted they are or how many people embrace them, and no matter how much people rely on them, considering the harm they bring to individuals, it is imperative for people to let go of these thoughts and viewpoints. They must reexamine or confront various matters corresponding to these thoughts and viewpoints, searching for the correct paths of practice and truth principles in God's words, and enter the truth realities under the premise of letting go of this thought conditioning, thereby gaining hope for salvation. Through these sessions of fellowship on the thoughts and viewpoints and various specific sayings conditioned into you by family, I wonder to what extent you have recognized the various thoughts and viewpoints that exist deep within your souls. In short, no matter what, these fellowship sessions

should serve as a wake-up call, providing people with a fresh understanding of the concept of family, as well as a brand new understanding and comprehension of the conditioning of family relatives, family thoughts, and family culture, giving them a brand new method of approach as well as the ability to adopt the correct perspective and stance in how they approach their family. No matter the outward manner in which you approach your family, in short, regarding the erroneous thoughts and viewpoints about how to view people and things, comport oneself, and act, with which your family influenced you, you should discern each of them, then let go of these thoughts one by one, in order to embrace with a pure understanding the viewpoints and methods that God teaches people, and accept the various correct viewpoints and methods God imparts to people for how to view people and things, comport oneself, and act. This is what individuals genuinely pursuing the truth should do.

One significant thought and viewpoint instilled into people by families is that they should be fierce and use various means to protect themselves. Considering how people protect their interests, flesh, and personal safety after deriving means and methods for dealing with the world from the conditioning of various thoughts and viewpoints, what is the primary purpose behind families instilling these thoughts? It is to protect individuals from being bullied. Now, let's examine the essence of being bullied. Is it a good thing to be bullied? Can it be avoided? Does anyone exist who has never been bullied? What does being bullied entail? Apart from hoping their children can integrate into society and establish themselves normally, parents also have a constant fear that their children will be bullied. Therefore, your parents often share certain hacks and means with you for dealing with the world, using these methods to protect you and prevent you from being bullied. Because your parents cannot accompany or protect you all the time, when you spread your wings and have to fly on your own, they arm you with certain thoughts and viewpoints to ensure that you're not bullied. Are these thoughts and viewpoints correct? Do you fear being bullied? Do you hold this thought and viewpoint: "When I arrive in society and social groups, and especially when I interact with unbelievers, I'm afraid that I'll be bullied—this is what concerns me most. If I encounter someone roughly equal to me, I can still stand up for myself. But if I encounter someone more fierce than I am, I won't dare to resist. I'll just accept whatever bullying comes my way. I can't do anything about it. They have backers and people behind the scenes, and I'll have to endure it." Is this the prevailing thought and viewpoint for most people? (I used to have such viewpoints. After putting my faith in God, I began to get along harmoniously with my brothers and sisters. When interacting with unbelievers, even if faced with bullying and persecution, I know that this is permitted by God, and there is a lesson I need to learn. So, I am less afraid and instead have learned to rely on God to experience it.) What type of person is particularly fearful? (Those who lack faith in God.) Apart from these individuals, there are also those who are especially timid, who are introverted and have low self-esteem, who are weak and feeble, who are physically less attractive or of a

smaller stature, who come from impoverished backgrounds—especially those whose family backgrounds are mocked or discriminated against—who carry a low social status, lack skills or expertise, and work as manual laborers, and those with physical disabilities, among others. All of these people are more susceptible to being bullied and are afraid of it. Is bullying a prevalent issue in society? (Yes.) Wherever there are people, these things will happen there. How does bullying come about? (Because, after humankind was corrupted by Satan, they became very evil, desiring to bully others while not being bullied themselves. So, these instances of oppression are everywhere.) This is one aspect. Some people don't want to be bullied by others, so they take the initiative, bullying others first and intimidating them so that no one dares to bully them. In fact, deep down, they don't want to comport themselves like this; it's tiring for them too. When you knock everyone else down, aren't you tired as well? There's a saying, "Kill a thousand enemies, lose eight hundred of your own." Take a hedgehog, for example: After it shoots out its quills, isn't its nervous system exhausted? It hurts people when it pokes them, and it's tired too. So, why do it if it's so tiring? It's for self-preservation—the hedgehog has to put in some effort to protect itself. Because this evil world lacks any positive or accurate principles for treating various people, and people are classified based on Satan's philosophy of dealing with the world and the social hierarchy, divergence and hierarchies arise among people based on these principles and criteria of unequal division. When this happens, people can't interact fairly and harmoniously. They compete to be in the upper echelons, to be the best of the best. Those at the top can lord over others, and bully and control them at will. Because this society is unfair, the principles for treating people are unfair. Thus, interactions between people will certainly not be harmonious, and the principles, methods, and means for people to interact with each other all become unfair. This unfairness specifically speaks to people comparing power, family background, skills, abilities, physical appearance, height, as well as tactics, schemes, and strategies. Where do all these things come from? They don't come from the truth or from God—they come from Satan. These things from Satan become instilled in people, and they live by them, so how do you think people will interact with each other? Will they treat everyone fairly? (No, they won't.) Absolutely not. Can even the simplest principle of election in God's house function in the evil world dominated by Satan? (It can't.) What's the essence of why it doesn't work? It's that this evil world isn't ruled by the truth; it's governed by evil trends, as well as Satan's various thoughts and its philosophies. So, it can only be that people bully and control one another—this is the only possible state of affairs. It's impossible to avoid bullying—it's quite normal. Because the world isn't under the rule of the truth, in this evil world, when people interact with each other, if you're not someone who bullies others, then you're the one who gets bullied. Your role can only consist of these two things. In reality, every person both bullies others and gets bullied. This is because there are always people above and below you. You bully others because you have a higher status than they do, but at the same time,

while you're bullying them, there are people with even higher status and standing than you, and they'll bully you, and you'll have to endure their bullying. One class of people bullies another class: This is the relationship between people, that of bullying and being bullied. It is the only relationship. There is no genuine familial affection, no love, no tolerance, no patience, and no possibility of treating every person justly and fairly according to principles. Because this world is not ruled by the truth, but by Satan, the relationships that form between people can only be those of bullying and being bullied, of using and being used. This is inevitable, and no one can escape it. You may say you are a boss in the underworld, and have many henchmen and lackeys, all of whom you bully and control. But even an underworld boss has superiors, and there's also the government. While it's said that officials and bandits are one family, sometimes the government intentionally looks for trouble, gets leverage, and won't let you off the hook. You'll have to pay a sum to the police station and cozy up to them. You see, even though an underworld boss seems grand, when they go to the police station, they still have to bow and scrape—they dare not be arrogant. As the sayings of unbelievers go, "While the priest climbs a post, the devil climbs ten," and "There's always a bigger fish." This means that every person bullies others and is bullied, and this is the essence and phenomenon of bullying.

Concerning the matter of bullying, since it's something that nobody can avoid, how should a person handle it? In the church, even though you might not fear being bullied, does this kind of thing exist? Can it happen? When you interact with unbelievers, you may be bullied by them. So, does this not occur within the church? (It does occur.) It does, to varying degrees, because all people are corrupted by Satan. Before people attain salvation, they often reveal corruption, and one aspect of those revelations of corruption is treating others according to their own will, not dealing with them fairly. When this unfair treatment of others arises, bullying and being bullied also occur. So, these things do happen occasionally, and people can't escape or avoid them. What's the correct principle for handling and dealing with this matter? (According to God's words, according to principles.) In theory, that's how it's said. What about the specific way to practice it? How do you understand the matter of bullying and being bullied? For example, say that you write a letter to report problems with a false leader, and the false leader wants to bully you, saying, "If you don't behave yourself, if you continue reporting my problems to the higher-ups, snitching on me, or writing something negative in my evaluations, I'll kill you! I have the power to expel you. Aren't you afraid?" How would you handle this situation? They're threatening you; to put it specifically, they're bullying you. They have the power, and you're an ordinary believer, so they arbitrarily torment you without any principles or baseline. They treat you the way Satan treats people. To put this in concrete terms, aren't they bullying you? Aren't they trying to torment you? (Yes.) So, how would you handle this? Would you compromise or stand by the principles? (Stand by the principles.) In theory, people should stand by the principles

and not be afraid of this false leader. What's the basis for this? Why shouldn't you be afraid of them? If they really expel you, will you be frightened? Because they really can expel you, you might not dare to stand by the principles, and you might be scared. Where does this matter get stuck? How can you be scared? (Because I don't believe that the house of God is under the rule of the truth.) That's one aspect of it. You need to have this faith and say, "You're a wicked person. Don't think that just because you're a leader now you have the power to expel me. Expelling me would be wrong. This matter will be exposed sooner or later. The house of God is not under your sole authority. If you expel me today, you'll be punished eventually. If you don't believe it, just wait and see. The house of God is ruled by the truth, by God. People can't punish you, but God can reveal you and cast you out. When your wrongdoings are exposed, that's when you'll face your punishment." Do you have this faith? (Yes.) You do? Then why can't you say this? It seems like you'll be in danger if you encounter such situations; you lack courage and genuine faith. When you really face these matters, when you encounter wicked individuals and antichrists who are this fierce, whose methods of tormenting people are comparable to those of the great red dragon, what will you do then? You'll start crying, saying, "Oh, I'm small in stature, I'm timid, I've always been afraid of trouble, I'm even afraid of a falling leaf hitting my head. I really hope that I don't have to face such people. What would I do if they bullied me?" Are they bullying you? They're not bullying you; that's Satan tormenting you. Looking at it from a human perspective, you would say, "This person is formidable, has status, and bullies guileless people with no status." Is that what's happening? From the standpoint of the truth, that's not bullying; it's Satan making people suffer, tormenting them, fooling them, corrupting them, and trampling on them. How should you deal with and handle these actions from Satan? Should you be afraid? (I shouldn't; I should report them and expose them.) In your heart, you shouldn't be afraid of them. If reporting their issues and contending against them isn't appropriate at the moment, you should temporarily endure them and find a suitable time to report them later. If there are discerning individuals like you among your brothers and sisters, you should unite to report and expose their evil deeds. If no one else has discernment, and when you step forward to report them, everyone rejects you, exercise patience for the time being. When the higher-level leaders come to your church to check and follow up on the work, find an appropriate time to report their issues to those leaders, clearly stating their evil deeds in full detail and letting the leaders remove them. Is this wise? (Yes.) In one respect, you must have faith and not fear wicked individuals, antichrists, or Satan. In another, you shouldn't see their actions toward you as one person bullying another; you should see the essence of this as Satan fooling, tormenting, and trampling over people. Then, depending on the situation, you should exercise wisdom to deal with their tormenting, find the right time to expose and report them, and safeguard the interests of the house of God and the church's work. This is the testimony in which you should stand firm and the duty and obligation you should fulfill as a person. No matter

how they bully you or treat you unfairly, don't see it as bullying. It's not them bullying you; it's Satan fooling, trampling over, and tormenting people. Would you say that the great red dragon is bullying you when it persecutes believers in God? (No.) It's not bullying you. Why does it persecute you? (Because its essence is to resist God.) Its essence is to resist God. It regards God as an enemy and sees all of God's work as a nail in its eye and a thorn in its side. It also regards the people selected by God as enemies. If you follow God, it will hate you, just as it says in the Bible: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18). The great red dragon hates people, hates God, regards God as an enemy, and even more so regards those who follow God, especially the ones who practice the truth, as enemies. That's why it wants to persecute you, to kill you, to prevent you from following God, to make you worship and follow it, and to make you curse God. You might say, "I won't curse Him." Then it will threaten you, "If you don't curse God, you will die!" It will try to compel you to say, "The Communist Party is good," and you will respond, "I won't say that." Then it will say, "If you don't say it, I will give you a hard time, I'll treat you and answer you with cruel torture!" Is that bullying you? No, that's Satan abusing people. Do you understand? (I understand.) You must have the correct understanding when dealing with the matter of bullying. In society and among groups of people, if you look at it from a human perspective, every person takes on roles of both being a bully and being bullied. But if you look at it from the perspective of the truth, you shouldn't see it this way. The essence of the behavior of any person who wants to bully you and control you is not considered bullying. Rather, it's Satan's fooling, abuse, manipulations, trampling, and corruption. To be specific, it means they are not treating you according to rational and humane methods, they are not treating you fairly, but rather, they are adopting Satan's perspective and stance, and using Satan's thoughts as their guide in how they treat you, talk to you, and interact with you. For instance, suppose you and a wicked person share a room. You arrive first, so you should pick a suitable location first, and you choose the lower bunk. As soon as they arrive and see this, they say, "Was it right for you to choose the lower bunk? I haven't even chosen yet, is it your turn? You dare to sleep on the lower bunk in spite of me? The audacity! You didn't even discuss it with me and just went ahead and chose the lower bunk to sleep. Get on the top bunk!" You respond, "Why shouldn't you sleep on the top bunk? You arrived after me; according to that order, you should sleep on the top bunk." They say: "Order? I've never followed any order! I don't line up anywhere; I wouldn't even line up to meet the president! Did you even bother to find out who I am? You dare to talk to me about lining up—the audacity! You want to die? Get on the top bunk!" So, you have to obediently go up to sleep on the top bunk. Is this bullying you? From a human perspective, this appears to be bullying. They see you as guileless, as someone they can manipulate. They give you an intimidating show of power first and teach you a lesson to make you understand who they are. This is looking at it from a human perspective or from the perspective of human feelings or flesh. But, if you view this from

the perspective of the truth, can you see it the same way? You picked the lower bunk first, everything was in order, but they insisted that you move, bothering you to switch to the top bunk. Isn't this unreasonable? Isn't this them tormenting you? Aren't they not treating you like a human? Aren't they being disrespectful to you? Aren't they acting like they're the boss, and treating you as a servant or a slave? What's the logic of their thoughts? Every person who isn't as formidable as they are is their servant, someone they can command, someone they can torment. From the perspective of the truth, this cannot be called bullying; it's about tormenting people. Who is able to torment people? Wicked people, demons, thugs, hooligans, scoundrels, people who are unreasonable, lack humanity, and have no respect for anyone. They don't follow rules anywhere they go. They act like they're the boss, like anything good, advantageous, or beneficial belongs only to them. Others are not allowed to have any share in such things or even think about taking them. Isn't this a scoundrel? (Yes.) This is what scoundrels and demons do. They are tormenting you like this, so wouldn't you feel afraid? You would think, "Oh goodness, so there are people this formidable after all. They even think it's wrong for me to sleep on the bottom bunk. What's going on?" You would get frightened, and from then on, when you talked to them, you'd have to be selective. You'd have to ponder on it, thinking: "I can't upset them, and I can't provoke them. If I provoke them, they'll give me a hard time." If you have this kind of mindset, then they've achieved their goal. What's their goal? They want to scare you, make you fear them, create a hierarchical difference between you and them, where they're the boss, and you're the servant, and wherever you go, you have to listen to them and yield to them. Isn't this the principle of how Satan does things? They have to be your boss, and you have to be their servant. You have to be arbitrarily disciplined, bossed around, and toyed with by them; you must yield to them in everything. You can't stand as equals with them; if you want to be equal to them, the only situation where you can will be when they're dead—you only deserve to be equals with a dead person. Tell Me, to what extent have you been bullied by them? Deep down in your heart, have their evil deeds and imposing manner frightened you? (Yes.) You've accepted this fact, you've compromised, so can we say that as a consequence you've been corrupted by them? They have you firmly in their grip; when they do evil things and violate principles, you won't dare to speak up because back then they sent you from the lower bunk to the top bunk with a single kick. You won't dare provoke them again; when you see them, you'll walk around them, and the mere mention of them will make you break out in a cold sweat. Isn't this being frightened by them? You do not dare to treat them fairly according to principles; they have you firmly in their grip. What's the essence of them having you firmly in their grip? It means they possess you and control you. Isn't that the case? (Yes.) So, how should people approach this situation to avoid being controlled by them? You should regard the matter of evil individuals bullying people as a phenomenon of Satan corrupting and abusing people. After you have seen through to this essence, how should you approach it? Deep in your

heart, you should abhor and reject the evil individuals, not fear them. You should think, “Oh, you want me to sleep on the top bunk? Fine, I’ll sleep on the top bunk. But today I’ve seen another wicked person’s actions, I’ve recognized the essence of one more wicked person, and from now on I’ll be able to discern one more kind of behavior that wicked people engage in during their daily lives and behind people’s backs. Starting today, I’ll closely watch what they say and do, and whether they engage in deception. If God’s house uses them, I’ll see whether they act according to principles, whether they uphold the interests of God’s house, whether they squander offerings, and whether they still torment others.” Deep within your heart, you should pray: “God, please expose this wicked person, enable me to discern their evil deeds and their essence. Help me gather evidence of their evil deeds, and grant me courage, enable me to not fear wicked people, to have faith and strength to fight against them.” Although you’ll still share the same room with them, and nothing will have changed on the surface, deep within your heart, you won’t fear them because everything they do to you isn’t bullying; it’s a revelation and exposure of their satanic nature. When you view them like this, will you still be afraid of them? With every evil deed they reveal and every absurd word they utter, you will curse them in your heart, saying, “You are a devil, you are Satan, you do evil and resist God, and sooner or later, you will be cursed. God will not let you escape; you will eventually be exposed!” This is how you should deal with wicked people. You must have the faith and strength to fight with them, and you must pray to God, then your heart will have strength, and you won’t fear them. How about this? Aren’t these tactics effective? (They are effective.) When you discern them like this from the standpoint of the truth, isn’t it more practical than what your parents taught you: “One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him”? What’s the use of guarding? You can’t guard against Satan abusing and corrupting you. Satan corrupting and abusing you are not things that can be guarded against—they’re everywhere. Satan’s corruption of people isn’t just on the surface, it isn’t just external; it also corrupts you in your thoughts. Can you guard against that? The most important thing is for you to equip yourself with the truth and rely on God. Not only should you discern the actions of wicked people, but also the essence of wicked people, and at the same time, you should discern the various thoughts and viewpoints expressed by wicked people. Then, equip yourself with the truth, using God’s words and the truth to expose and dissect them, so that your brothers and sisters can also gain discernment. Then, everyone can rise up to reject them together. How wonderful is that? If you’re always on the defense, always on guard, always refusing or avoiding, that’s being a coward, that’s not the manifestation of an overcomer.

Having fellowshiped about all of this, do you now have a new view of the matter of people being bullied? Is bullying right? (No, it’s not.) What is the nature of bullying? (It’s wicked people tormenting others.) In essence, it’s wicked people and Satan tormenting others and fooling them. Now, what’s the nature of being bullied? (It’s being weak, not

practicing the truth, not daring to rise up and resist.) That's right, fearing wicked people, fearing evil forces, lacking the faith to fight with Satan, lacking the faith to recognize, discern, and see through the ugly face of Satan, and lacking the faith to resist Satan's trampling and abuse of you—isn't this the nature of it? (Yes.) Those without faith always have a knot in their hearts; they're always afraid, thinking, "I mustn't be bullied by others. I don't bully others, and I mustn't be bullied by others, just like my mom said, 'One should never intend to do harm to others, but should always guard against the harm others might do to him.'" They pray to God, saying, "Oh God, please don't let me encounter wicked people; I'm timid, I've always been guileless and simple. I believe in You and follow You; You must protect me!" This is being spineless. You've heard so many truths, and you understand so many truths. You're not afraid of the devils and Satan, so are you afraid of a wicked person? Are you afraid of the great red dragon? (If caught, I'll be afraid, but I can pray to God and rely on Him.) That means you haven't been frightened by its wickedness. This is also a manifestation that only comes with a certain foundation of faith. Some people say, "You say I'm afraid of the great red dragon. If I were afraid of the great red dragon, could I have come this far? Isn't that a fact? But if you ask me to say that I'm not afraid of the great red dragon, I still feel a little afraid to do so. What if the great red dragon hears about it?" There's still some fear there. Such people are a bit afraid to publicly say that the great red dragon is evil and cruel; they lack that faith and their stature is still too small. I'm not asking you to openly contend with the great red dragon or to provoke it. But deep in your heart, at the very least, you should know that the great red dragon, this demon, treats people with abuse, corruption, fooling, trampling, and then devours them. This isn't bullying; it's not as if it bullies and torments believers because they are guileless, rule-following, and law-abiding. That's nonsense, it's a statement that lacks spiritual understanding. The great red dragon is abusing you. How does it abuse you? It threatens, intimidates, persecutes, and tortures you. What's the purpose of it abusing you? To make you give up your faith, to make you deny God, to abandon God, then to compromise with it, and ultimately, to make you worship it, follow it, be subjugated by it, accept its various thoughts, and kneel in worship before it. It delights in this; this is its purpose for persecuting you. Because it sees that you follow God and not it, it becomes jealous, and it won't let you go. Of course, if you don't follow God, will it let you go? (No, it also abuses those who don't believe in God.) That's right, in colloquial terms, that's just the kind of thing it is; more accurately, this is its nature essence. Even those who follow it, those who sing its praises, are still abused, fooled, and trampled upon by it, and after using them, it throws them away, even killing some of them to shut their mouths, ultimately devouring them completely. In any case, it does not end well for them. No matter what, people should see clearly that the ultimate purpose of families conditioning and instilling various thoughts and viewpoints into people is not really to protect them or lead them onto the right path. Instead, it's to steer people away from God, to make them live by Satan's philosophies, and to make people repeatedly

and cyclically accept the trampling of various thoughts and the conditioning of various evil trends that come from society and Satan. Regardless of the initial intentions or purposes behind families doing this, in the end, this cannot guide people onto the right path or lead them to enter into the truth reality and ultimately attain salvation. Therefore, the various thoughts and viewpoints that come from families are something people must let go of, something that they should let go of in the process of and on the path of pursuing the truth. Well, let’s conclude our fellowship here for today. Goodbye!

March 4, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (15)

Have you fellowshiped during your gatherings about the topics we've been covering recently? (God, we have fellowshiped about these topics during our gatherings.) What came of your fellowship? Did you encounter any new discoveries or understanding? Do these topics that we've fellowshiped about exist in people's daily lives? (All of them exist. After listening a few times to God's fellowship on these topics, I discovered that our parents' education and our families' conditioning from generation to generation have corrupted us quite deeply. Since childhood, our parents have instilled these thoughts into us bit by bit, such as, "A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies." After having this thought instilled into me, I believed that in order to avoid being bullied and looked down upon, one must be a cut above the rest and stand out from the crowd in life. In the past, I thought that these thoughts our parents taught us to have were for our own good and protection. Through a few times of God's fellowship and dissection, I have come to realize that these thoughts are negative and are Satan's means of corrupting people. They distance us further and further from God and lead us deeper into Satan's corruption, drawing us further and further away from salvation.) In short, it is necessary to fellowship about these topics, isn't it? (Yes, it is.) After fellowshiping a few times about these things, people gain a deeper understanding of the thoughts and viewpoints instilled in them by their families, and they understand them more accurately. After fellowshiping about these things, won't people's relationships with their families and their parents grow more distant? (No, we won't. Formerly, I always felt that my parents had shown me kindness, but after hearing God's fellowship, I realized that it was my parents' mission to give birth to me and raise me. Moreover, the thoughts they had instilled in me from a young age were corrupting me. Having recognized this, I don't have as much of an affectionate attachment to them.) First and foremost, with regard to their thoughts, people now have an accurate understanding of their parents' responsibilities and the grace shown them by their parents' raising them; they no longer rely on affections, hotheadedness, or physical blood ties to deal with them. Instead, they can approach their family and parents rationally from the correct perspective and position. This way, people undergo a significant transformation in how they treat these issues, and this transformation allows them to make a huge leap in terms of their life entry and God's requirements for them. Therefore, fellowshiping about these topics is beneficial and necessary for people, because these are all things that humans need and are lacking within them.

The topics we previously fellowshiped on concerning a person's family conditioning primarily revolved around goals and principles for self-comportment, ways and means of dealing with the world, and one's outlook on life and existence, and survival methods and rules, among other things. These are all topics that involve the conditioning of thoughts in individuals and their thoughts and viewpoints. Overall, none of the various

thoughts and viewpoints instilled by families and parents are positive, and none of them can truly guide a person onto the right path or help them establish a correct outlook on life, enabling them to fulfill their responsibilities and obligations as a created being in the presence of their Creator. Everything that parents and family teach you is to lead you in the direction of the world and its evil trends. Their purpose in conditioning you with these thoughts and viewpoints is to help you integrate more seamlessly into society and evil trends, and be better able to adapt to evil trends and to the various demands of society. While these teachings may provide you with certain means and methods of protection as well as certain methods of attaining better status, reputation, material enjoyment, and other things in society and among groups of people, these very thoughts instilled in you by your family lead you into one evil trend after another, causing you to be rooted in the world, society, and evil trends, until you can no longer extricate yourself. They bring you one trouble after another and repeatedly place you in dilemmas, leaving you unsure about how to face the human world and how to be a genuine person, a person living in the light, being upright, kind-hearted, and possessing a sense of justice. Therefore, your family conditioning does not enable you to live in this world with more dignity, character, and human likeness. Instead, it causes you to live in the midst of various intricate conflicts and struggles, in various complex interpersonal relationships, and subjects you to numerous worldly entanglements, bondage, and even perplexities. When you turn to your parents and confide in them about all this, they will employ various tactics to advise you on how to be more sly, crafty, worldly-wise, and hard to read as you live among people, instead of pointing you in the right direction, helping you let go of all these things and liberate yourself, come before the Creator and obey His arrangements, and recognize clearly that people’s destinies and their everything are in God’s hands, that they should obey every requirement that comes from God, His sovereignty and orchestrations. This is the living situation of people whose families conditioned them with these various thoughts. In short, whether the thoughts conditioned by your family emphasize fame or profit, competing with others or being friendly with them, regardless of their focus, ultimately they can only lead your means, methods, and rules for survival in the human world to become increasingly sophisticated, ruthless, cunning, and malicious, rather than making you more honest, kind, and upright, or helping you better understand how to submit to the Creator’s arrangements. Therefore, your family conditioning can only distance you from God, from the truth, and from positive things, leaving you unsure about how to live in a way that humans truly ought to live, in a way that is dignified. Moreover, the thoughts you acquired from your family conditioning will make you progressively more numb, obtuse, or to put it colloquially, thick-skinned. At the beginning, lying to your colleagues, classmates, and friends would make your face blush, your heart race, and your conscience feel guilty. Over time, these conscious reactions will all fade away: Your face won’t blush, your heart won’t race, and your conscience will trouble you no longer. In order to survive, you will resort to any means, even deceiving

the people closest to you, including your parents, your siblings, and your best friends. You will seek to profit from them in order to improve your own life and enhance your honor and enjoyment—this is numbness. Initially, you might feel a tiny bit of self-blame and your conscience may tremble slightly. Over time, these sensations will disappear, and you will use more convincing reasons to soothe yourself, saying, “That’s just how people are. You can’t be soft-hearted in this world. Being soft-hearted to others is being cruel to yourself. In this world the weak are prey for the strong. The strong thrive and the weak perish, the winners become kings and the losers become criminals. If you succeed, no one will investigate how you succeeded, but if you fail, you will have nothing left.” In the end, people will employ these thoughts and viewpoints to persuade themselves, making these the basis for how they pursue everything, and, of course, a means to an end. So, where do you all find yourselves right now? Have you reached the point of numbness, or not yet? Suppose you were to engage in business, and this business related to your future, your quality of life, and your reputation in society. If your methods were cunning enough, and you could deceive anyone, then you would live a life above the rest, you would have piles and piles of cash, and you wouldn’t need to bow to anyone’s wishes anymore. What would you do then? Would you become so numb, so unfeeling, that you could deceive anyone and make money from anyone? (I probably would.) You probably would. This needs to change; this is the corrupt disposition existing deep within humanity. When humanity is absent, what remains is a life lived according to one’s corrupt disposition, as well as various thoughts and viewpoints instilled by Satan. Without conscience, reason, and a sense of shame, a person’s life is reduced to a mere shell, an empty vessel, and it loses its value. If you still have some sense of shame, and when you lie, cheat, or harm others you are able to choose who is on the receiving end, you don’t harm just anyone, then you still possess some conscience and humanity. But if you can deceive or harm anyone without reservation, then you are truly a living Satan through and through. If you say, “I can’t deceive my parents, relatives, friends, guileless people, and especially not my brothers and sisters in God’s house, and I can’t cheat God’s offerings,” then you still have some moral boundaries, and you can still be considered a person with some conscience. However, if you lack even this small measure of conscience and boundaries, then you don’t deserve to be called human. So, what point have you reached? Do you have boundaries? If you had the opportunity or an actual need, could you deceive your parents, your siblings, and your closest friends? Could you deceive your brothers and sisters, exploit them, or even cheat God’s offerings? If such an opportunity were presented to you, and no one would ever find out, could you do it? (Now it feels like I can’t do that anymore.) Why can’t you do it anymore? (Because I am afraid of God, I have something of a God-fearing heart, and also because my conscience wouldn’t allow it.) Your attitude is that you feel afraid in your heart and have a God-fearing heart, and your conscience wouldn’t allow it. Let other people speak. Do you have an attitude regarding this? If you don’t, if you’ve never considered this issue

and feel nothing when you see others doing it, then you are in danger. If you see someone doing such things and feel no hatred, don't have an attitude toward it, and feel numb, then you are no different from them and might act similarly. However, if your attitude toward this is clear, if you can hate and rebuke such people, then you might not commit such actions. So, what is your attitude? (I ought to have something of a God-fearing heart. God's offerings are set apart as holy and absolutely cannot be tampered with or taken for personal use.) Offerings must not be taken for personal use: This is done out of fear of punishment. But what about other matters? If you were involved in a pyramid scheme, could you bring yourself to profit from your closest friends, deceive them with flowery language, and make them join, making profit and earning money from this? Could you do this to your closest friends, relatives, even your parents or brothers and sisters? If it's hard for you to say, then when you say you wouldn't take God's offerings for personal use, that might not be possible for you, would it? Let somebody else speak. (In one respect, we should understand the righteous disposition of God in this matter. God's offerings must never be touched. In another, we feel that doing something like this lacks humanity. At the very least, the lowest baseline one should have should be that their conscience allows it.) Your attitude is that doing such things lacks humanity and that one should act in ways their conscience allows. Is there anybody else? (I think that, as a human being, even if one doesn't believe in God, if they are a person in the world who has a conscience and a moral baseline, they should not do things that harm their own family. Now that we believe in God and understand some truths, if anyone can still do things that harm their brothers and sisters, harm their friends, or cheat God's offerings, then such a person is even worse than the unbeliever. Additionally, sometimes people may reveal certain thoughts and ideas, but when they think about God's essence and disposition, and realize that even if no one around is watching, or if no one knows about these actions, God still examines everything, and they dare not do such things—they will have something of a God-fearing heart.) In one respect, acting like this shows people lack a God-fearing heart; in another, people who are capable of doing these things lack even the most basic humanity. This is because as a human being, even if you don't believe in God, you shouldn't commit such actions. This is a quality that a person with a conscience and humanity should have. Cheating, harming, and stealing are inherently things that a good and normal person should not do. Even people who don't believe in God still have some boundaries in how they comport themselves, let alone you who believe in God and have heard so many sermons: If you are still capable of doing these things, then you are beyond redemption. This is someone who lacks humanity—a devil. You've listened to so many sermons, and yet, you can still commit all sorts of bad deeds related to cheating and swindling—this is what it means to be a nonbeliever. What is a nonbeliever? It is someone who does not believe in God's observation or that He is righteous. If you don't believe in God's observation, doesn't that mean you don't believe in His existence? You say, "God is

observing me, but where is God? Why haven't I seen Him? Why don't I feel Him? I've been cheating and swindling people for so many years; why haven't I been punished? I'm still living a more comfortable life than others." This is one aspect of the behavior of a nonbeliever. Another aspect is that no matter how much truth has been fellowshiped, they reject every bit. They never accept the truth, so what do they accept? They accept thoughts and viewpoints that benefit them. Whatever benefits them and protects their interests, that's what they do. They only believe in immediate self-interest, not in God's observation, nor in the concept of retribution. This is what it means to be a nonbeliever. What's the point of believing in God for a nonbeliever? Nonbelievers in God's house are characterized by one thing: Doing evil. But let's not discuss the ultimate end of these people; let's return to the topic we were fellowshiping about.

The various thoughts conditioned and instilled into people by their families are not meant to bring them before God, nor do they instill positive thoughts in them. Instead, they instill various negative thoughts, negative means, principles, and methods of comporting themselves, ultimately leading people down a path of no return. In short, the various thoughts that families instill in people do not even meet the basic standards of humanity, reason, and conscience that a person should possess. If a person possesses even the slightest bit of conscience and reason, it is only the tiny bit that remains and has yet to be corrupted or eroded by Satan. The rest of their various means and methods for comporting themselves come from their family, and even from society. Therefore, before a person is saved, any thought or viewpoint that their family conditions into them, no matter what it is, contradicts what God teaches people. It cannot make them understand the truth, nor can it lead them down the path of salvation; it can only lead them down the path of destruction. So, when a person comes into God's house, no matter how old they are, what kind of education they've received, what their family background is, and how noble they think their status is, they must start from scratch to learn how to comport themselves, how to interact with others, how to handle various matters, and how to deal with various people and things. This learning process involves receiving and understanding various positive, truth-aligned thoughts and viewpoints from God, as well as principles for practicing and handling various matters. This is solely based on your acceptance of the truth. If you do not accept the truth, your original thoughts and viewpoints will remain unchanged. Because you do not accept the positive and correct thoughts and viewpoints that come from God, your principles, means, and methods of dealing with the world will remain old and unchanged. People begin to learn how to be a real person, a normal person, a person with reason and conscience when they start accepting positive thoughts and viewpoints, the truth, and God's teachings. Some people say, "I have believed in God for ten, twenty, or thirty years, and I have yet to accept a single thought or viewpoint from God, nor have I accepted any truth from God's words." This is enough to show that your belief in God is not sincere, you still do not know what the truth is, and you have not learned how to comport yourself. If you say,

“From the moment I started believing in God, I formally began accepting God’s teachings regarding various requirements for humans and the thoughts, viewpoints, principles, and sayings that humans should possess,” then you have been learning how to be a real person from the day you started believing in God, and from the time you began learning how to be a real person, you began walking down the path of salvation. From the moment you start accepting thoughts and viewpoints that come from God, that’s when you begin to walk down the path to salvation, isn’t that so? (Yes, it is.) So, have you started? Did you already start, have you not yet started, or did you start a long time ago? (Through God’s fellowship and dissection over the past two years of the incorrect thoughts and viewpoints that exist in people, including family conditioning, etc., I have begun reflecting on myself and slowly repudiating those satanic philosophies I held, and pondering over how I should strive toward God’s words. I hadn’t paid much attention to such deep introspection before.) This statement is quite realistic. You only started within the past two years; it’s hard to pinpoint the exact year or day, but regardless, it was in the last year or two. This is relatively objective. What about others? (I hadn’t really thought about how to put effort into changing the thoughts and viewpoints conditioned by my family. Recently, after listening to God’s fellowship in this regard, my thoughts have gradually started to change somewhat, but I haven’t specifically focused on pursuing change in this area.) Your consciousness has grown more perceptive. In your daily life, if you continue to seek and enter more deeply, if you can be more meticulous and exacting in specific matters, if you enter into it with more accuracy, then you’ll have hope for a change. Isn’t that the case? (Yes, it is.) If you have hope to shed old thoughts and viewpoints, then be able to view people and things, comport yourself, and act from the correct stance and with the correct viewpoint, in this way, you’ll be able to attain salvation. In the long run, you can attain salvation, but speaking more practically from the here and now, you can be fit to fulfill your duty, and especially fit to be a leader and worker; but this depends on whether you yourself are willing to put in effort for each part of the truth, and whether you are willing to put in effort and pay the price for positive things and various matters related to principles. If you only want to change yourself in your consciousness but don’t put effort into and are not serious about truths in your daily life, if you don’t have a heart which thirsts for positive things, then this consciousness will quickly fade and disappear. Every thought and viewpoint involved in each topic I fellowship about is inseparable from people’s real lives. It’s not a kind of theory or slogan; it’s about what your thoughts and viewpoints are in dealing with things in your daily life. Your thoughts and viewpoints determine the direction you lean toward when taking action. If your thoughts and viewpoints are positive, your methods and principles in handling things will tend to be positive, and the result of handling such matters will be relatively good and in accordance with God’s will. But if your thoughts and viewpoints are opposed to the truth and positive things or run counter to these things, then the impetus for how you handle something will be negative, and the ultimate result of

handling that matter will definitely not prove good. Regardless of how much of a price you pay or how much thought you put into handling this matter, regardless of your intentions, how will God view the result? How will God characterize this matter? If God characterizes this matter as disruptive, causing a disturbance, destructive, or leading to loss within God's house, then your actions are evil. If your evil deeds are minor they might lead to chastisement, judgment, rebuke, pruning, and dealing with, while heavier evil deeds could result in punishment. If you fail to act based on the truth principles and instead lean toward the incorrect thoughts and viewpoints of unbelievers, basing your actions on these things, then your efforts will be in vain. Even if you paid a high price and invested a lot of effort, your final result will still be in vain. How does God view this matter? How does He characterize it? How does He deal with it? At the very least, your deeds are not good, they do not bear testimony to God or bring glory to Him, and the price you paid and the mental effort you put in will not be remembered; it is all in vain. Do you understand? (Yes.) Before you do anything, take the time to think carefully, fellowship with others more, seek clarity on principles before acting, and don't act hotheadedly or impulsively, driven by your own selfishness and desires. Regardless of the outcome, in the end you'll have to bear it by yourself, and no matter the result, there will be a verdict from God. If you hope that your actions will not be in vain, that they will be remembered by God, or even better, that they will become good deeds that God is pleased with, then you should seek the principles more often. If you don't care about these things, if it doesn't matter to you whether your deeds are good or whether God is pleased with them, and you don't even care about whether you'll be punished, but you think, "It doesn't matter, I won't be able to see or feel it now anyway," if you have these thoughts and viewpoints, then when you act you will not have a God-fearing heart. You'll be bold, unrestrained, and reckless, with no concern or restraint with anything. Without a God-fearing heart, the direction you take when you act is very likely to deviate. According to human nature and instincts, the final result is likely to be that your actions not only fail to gain God's pleasure or remembrance, but they also become disruptions, disturbances, and evil deeds. So, it is quite evident what your ultimate outcome will be, and how it will be treated and handled by God. Therefore, before you do anything, before you handle any matter, you should first reflect on what you want, consider thoroughly what the ultimate result of this matter will be, and only then proceed. So, what does this issue involve? It involves your attitude and the principles you follow when you do anything. The best attitude is to seek the principles more often and not base your judgment on your own feelings, preferences, intentions, desires, or immediate interests; instead, you must seek the principles, pray and seek before God more often, bringing matters before the brothers and sisters more often, and fellowshiping with and seeking those brothers and sisters who are working together with you to fulfill duties. Get the principles right before you act; don't act impulsively, don't be muddled. Why do you believe in God? You do not do it to score a meal, pass the time, keep up with the fashion,

or satisfy your spiritual needs. You do it in order to be saved. So, how can you be saved? When you do anything, it should be connected to salvation, to God's requirements, and to the truth, shouldn't it?

Regarding the topic of letting go of one's family conditioning, our previous fellowship involved rules and various thoughts and viewpoints related to self-comportment, which are thoughts conditioned into people by their families. However, apart from families having various kinds of teaching and influence toward people, there is even more conditioning apart from this. That is, family conditioning includes far more than just the conditioning of thoughts. In addition to what we just discussed, it also includes traditional, superstitious, and religious conditioning, which is what we are about to fellowship on. These matters involve lifestyles, customs, habits, and the everyday details of life. Regarding family conditioning in people's daily lives, we will now turn our discussion to tradition. What are some examples of tradition? For instance, a family may cling to certain particulars, sayings, or taboos related to the details of daily life. Does this involve tradition? (Yes.) Tradition is somewhat connected and related to superstition, so we'll discuss both of them together. Some aspects within tradition may be considered superstition, and there are things within superstition that are not very traditional and are only habits or ways of life belonging to individual families or ethnic groups. Let's start by exploring what traditions and superstitions entail. You are already familiar with a lot of traditions and superstitions because there are many aspects of your daily life involving them. Go ahead, list a few. (Fortune-telling, palm-reading, and drawing lots.) Drawing lots, fortune-telling, telling the future, palm-reading, face-reading, telling fortunes through birth times, and holding séances—these things aren't called superstitions; they all constitute superstitious activities. Superstition refers to specific explanations that exist within these activities. For example, checking a calendar before leaving home to determine what activities are auspicious or inauspicious for today, if all activities are inauspicious, if moving, getting married, and arranging a funeral are all inauspicious, or if all activities are auspicious today—that's superstition. Do you understand? (Yes, I understand.) List a few more examples. (The belief that twitching on the left eye forecasts fortune but twitching on the right eye forecasts disaster.) "Twitching on the left eye forecasts fortune but twitching on the right eye forecasts disaster"—what is this? (A superstition.) It is a superstition. Everything I just mentioned, like telling the future, drawing lots, palm-reading, etc., falls under superstitious activities. "Twitching on the left eye forecasts fortune but twitching on the right eye forecasts disaster" is a specific saying related to a superstitious activity. It is a superstition. Where do these sayings come from? They basically all come from the older generations. Some are passed down by parents, others come from grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on. Anything else? (God, do holiday customs count?) Yes, holiday customs count as well: Some belong to tradition, while others are both traditions and superstitious sayings. From the south to the north of China, and from the East to the West, there are numerous holiday customs.

Consider a specific holiday custom, for instance, in southern China: People often eat rice cakes during the Chinese New Year. What does this symbolize? What's the purpose behind people eating rice cakes? (They believe that eating rice cakes will bring them promotion year after year.) The purpose of eating rice cakes is to ensure promotion year after year. The word "promotion" here is a homophone of the Chinese word for "cake." So, the purpose of eating rice cakes is to ensure that you get promoted every year. Now, has there ever been a year when you didn't eat rice cakes and didn't get promoted? Is there anyone who gets promoted every year because they eat rice cakes every year? Can you really "get promoted"? People are aware that this doesn't necessarily lead to getting promoted, but even if it doesn't, at least it will keep them from failing. So, they must eat them. Eating them makes them feel at ease, while not eating them makes them feel uneasy. This is superstition and tradition. In short, these habits and traditions from your family have formed an influence over you, and you've unconsciously approved of and accepted these traditions and habits to a certain degree; thus, you've also approved of and accepted the superstitions or thoughts and viewpoints that these traditions promote. When you come to live on your own, you may continue these traditions and habits. This cannot be denied. Now, let's discuss some sayings related to traditions. Some people frequently engage in such matters: If someone is going on a long journey, they make dumplings for them to eat, and when the traveler returns, they prepare noodles. Isn't this a tradition? (Yes.) This is a tradition, and it's an unwritten custom. Let's not discuss the purpose of doing this just yet. First, let's examine the accurate statement for this action. ("Dumplings out the door, noodles in the door." Or you can also say, "Dumplings for departing, noodles for returning.") What does "Dumplings for departing, noodles for returning" mean? That is, if someone is leaving today, you must give them dumplings to eat; what is the significance of this? Dumplings are enveloped in a wrapper, and the word "wrap" sounds similar to the Chinese word for "protect." So, it means to protect their life, to ensure that they do not meet with any accidents after they depart, that they don't die while they're away, and that they definitely will come back. It signifies a safe departure. "Dumplings for departing, noodles for returning" means that they return safely and everything goes smoothly for them—that's more or less the significance. In general, certain families follow this tradition. If a member of the family is departing, they make dumplings for them, and upon their return, they serve them noodles. Regardless of whether you're the one eating or preparing these dishes, it's done to bring good luck, both for the present and the future, for the well-being of everyone. Do you agree that this tradition is a positive thing and something people should do and continue in their lives? (I don't agree.) Some brothers and sisters have to depart, and the person in charge of food makes them dumplings, to which I say, "What does their leaving have to do with making dumplings?" And they say, "Well, when someone departs, we have to make dumplings." I reply, "You make dumplings when they depart; then, what if they're coming back?" They say, "They have to eat noodles when they return." I say, "This is the first

time I've heard of this. Where does this tradition come from?" They say, "It's like this where I come from. If someone is departing, we make dumplings for them, and when they return, we serve noodles." After this, what impression did it leave in my heart? I thought: These people have put their belief in God, but they don't base their actions on God's words. Instead, they rely on tradition and what was passed down by their ancestors. They believe that a person's life can be protected by a dumpling wrapper, that if something happens to a person, it is not in God's hands; it's in human hands. They believe that by wrapping a dumpling, the departing person will be made safe, and if they don't wrap that dumpling, that person won't be safe and they might die somewhere on the journey and never return. In their thoughts and viewpoints, a person's life is like the filling inside a dumpling, with the same value as dumpling filling. Their life is not in God's hands, and God is not able to control that person's destiny. Only by using a dumpling wrapper can they control a person's fate. What kind of people are they? (Nonbelievers.) They are nonbelievers. There are many such people in the church. They don't consider this a superstition. They regard it as a part of their habits, something they should naturally uphold as a positive thing. They do it openly and act like they are reasonable and have a basis for doing so. You can't stop them: If you prevent them from doing it, they feel uneasy and say, "I'm the one cooking. Someone is departing today: If I don't make dumplings for them, who will be responsible if they happen to die? Won't it be my fault?" They believe that their ancestors' traditions are the most reliable: "If you don't follow tradition and violate this taboo, your life is at risk, and you might die because of it." Is this not the viewpoint of a nonbeliever? (Yes, it is.) With thoughts and viewpoints like these deeply rooted in people's hearts, can they still accept the truth? (No, they can't.) You say you follow God, you say you believe in God as the truth, but where's the evidence? You say with your mouth, "I believe God is sovereign, and a person's destiny is in God's hands." However, when someone is leaving, you rush to make dumplings for them, and even if you don't have time to buy any meat, you still have to make dumplings with vegetable filling—not making them is out of the question. Do these actions and this behavior bear witness to God? Are they glorifying God? (No.) Clearly, they are not. They are humiliating to God and His name. Whether you accept the truth or not is a minor issue. The key point is that you claim to believe in God and follow Him, but you still adhere to the traditions instilled in you by Satan. In these small matters in your daily life, you strictly follow the thoughts and habits instilled in you by your ancestors, and no one can change them. Is this the attitude of someone who accepts the truth? This is humiliating to God; this is betraying God. Who are your ancestors? Where did their traditions come from? Whom do these traditions represent? Do they represent the truth? Do they represent positive things? Who invented these traditions? Was it God? God provides people with the truth not to restore traditions but to abolish all traditions. But not only do you refuse to abandon them, you treat them as the truth and as something positive to uphold. Isn't this a death wish? Is this not openly opposing the truth and God?

(Yes, it is.) This is openly clamoring against and opposing God. Some people might say, “What if I don’t make dumplings or noodles for my brothers and sisters but do it for my own family members? When my family members leave, I’ll make dumplings for them, and when they return, I’ll cook noodles for them. Is that okay?” Do you think that’s okay? What if you say this: “If I deceive someone, it won’t be my brothers and sisters, but my own family members. Is that okay?” Would that be okay? (It wouldn’t be.) It doesn’t matter who is on the receiving end of your actions; it matters what you are living out and revealing about yourself, and it matters what viewpoints you uphold. It doesn’t matter whom you deceive; it matters what your actions and principles are, isn’t that so? (Yes, it is.)

There are some people who, during the Chinese New Year, spend their days flipping through almanacs, starting the traditional holiday from the 30th day of the twelfth month of the lunar calendar, adhering strictly to the lifestyle and taboos passed down through these traditional customs in what they eat, what they wear, and what they abstain from doing each day. Whatever it is taboo to say or do they make sure to avoid saying or doing that thing, and whatever it is lucky to eat or say, okay, they’ll eat and say that thing. For example, some believe that during the New Year, they must eat rice cakes to ensure a promotion in the coming year. For the sake of promotion in the coming year, they’ll make sure to eat rice cakes, regardless of any significant matters they have to deal with, how busy or exhausted they are, or any special circumstances regarding their fulfillment of duty or whether they can carve out enough time to attend to it. If they don’t have the time to make rice cakes at home, then they’ll go out and buy some just to ensure good luck. And some people have to eat fish during the New Year, as it symbolizes abundance year after year. If they don’t eat fish one year, they believe they will face poverty over the next twelve months. If they are unable to buy fish, they might even place a wooden fish on the dining table as a symbolic gesture. They eat rice cakes and fish to ensure both promotion and abundance in the coming year. In one respect, they do this in order to make this year go more smoothly, to make their life better and more prosperous, and in another respect, they hope for success in their career or to make a lot of money from their business. Furthermore, during the New Year, they also make sure to use lucky phrases. For instance, they avoid saying the numbers four and five because “four” sounds like “death,” and “five” sounds like “nothing” in Chinese. Instead, they prefer to use numbers like six and eight, where the word “six” represents smooth sailing, and “eight” represents making a fortune. They not only use auspicious words and phrases but also give red envelopes to employees, family members, relatives, and friends. Giving red envelopes symbolizes making a fortune, and the more red envelopes they give, the more it signifies that they will be prosperous. Not only do they give red envelopes to people, but also to their pets, symbolizing that they can make a fortune off of anyone, and the next year will be full of a thriving business and massive fortune. Everything, from what they eat to what they do, from what they say to how they act, is all about continuing

the habits and sayings passed down through tradition, and they practice them with painstaking precision. Even if their living environment or the community in which they live changes, these traditional customs and lifestyles cannot change. Because these traditions carry a certain meaning within them, encompassing both positive sayings and taboos passed down by people's ancestors, they must continue them. If these traditions are violated or taboos broken, then the upcoming year might not go favorably, leading to obstacles everywhere, a downturn in business, or bankruptcy. That's why it's crucial to uphold these traditions. There are traditions that must be followed during festive occasions, and there are traditions that must be followed in one's daily life as well. For example, getting a haircut—if one checks the calendar and sees that it is inauspicious to get a haircut or leave the house today, then they will not dare go out. If they didn't check the calendar and went ahead and got a haircut anyway, then both taboos of leaving the house and getting a haircut would be violated, and they might face unforeseen consequences—so these things must be followed. They belong to both tradition and superstition. If someone needs to go out, but they check the calendar and see that all things are inauspicious today, meaning it is a day to rest, be at leisure, relax, and avoid doing anything, then even if they're told they need to go out and spread the gospel today, they might worry what might become of them if they violate the taboo and something unexpected happens to them, like a car accident or getting robbed. They won't dare go out, and they say, "Let's go tomorrow! We can't ignore what our ancestors tell us. They say that we must always consult the calendar before going out. If the calendar says all things are inauspicious, then we shouldn't go out. If you do go out and something happens, you must bear the consequences yourself. Who told you not to look at the calendar and obey what it says?" This pertains both to tradition and superstition, doesn't it? (Yes, it does.)

Some people say, "I'm 24 this year; it's my zodiac year." Others say, "I'm 36 this year; it's my zodiac year." What do you have to do during your zodiac year? (Wear red underwear and a red belt.) Who has worn red underwear before? Who has worn a red belt? How did it feel to wear red underwear and a red belt? Did you feel that your year went well? Did it ward off bad luck? (When it was my zodiac year, I wore red socks. However, that year, my exam results were particularly bad. Wearing red didn't bring good luck as people said it would.) Wearing them brought you bad luck, didn't it? Would you have possibly done better if you didn't wear red? (It had no effect whether I wore them or not.) That's an accurate view of the question—it had no effect. This is both a tradition and a superstition. Regardless of whether you currently accept this idea of the zodiac year or whether you want to continue this tradition, the traditional thoughts and sayings associated with it have left an imprint on people's minds. For example, when it comes time for your zodiac year, if you meet with unexpected events or special circumstances that make your year go roughly and contrary to your wishes, you won't help thinking, "This year has really been rough. Come to think of it, it's my zodiac year, and people say

that during your zodiac year, you need to be careful because it's easier to break taboos. According to tradition, I should wear red, but because I believe in God, I haven't been. I don't believe in those sayings, but when I think about the challenges I faced this year, things haven't been going smoothly. How can I avoid these issues? Maybe next year will be better." You'll unconsciously link the exceptional and unfavorable events you met with during the year to the traditional sayings about zodiac year that your ancestors and family conditioned into you. You'll use these sayings to validate the exceptional events you encountered during this year and, in doing so, you set aside the facts and essence behind them. You also set aside the attitude you should have toward these situations and the lessons you should learn from them. You'll instinctively think of this year as a special one, unconsciously linking all the events that happened within it to your zodiac year. You will feel, "This year has brought me some misfortunes, or this year has brought me some blessings." These ideas have a definite relation to the conditioning from your family. Regardless of whether they are correct or not, are they related to your zodiac year? (No, they aren't.) They are not related. So, are your perspectives and viewpoints on these matters correct? (No, they are not.) Why are they not correct? Is it because you have been influenced to some extent by the traditional thoughts instilled in you by your family? (Yes.) These traditional thoughts took precedence and occupied your mind. Then, when faced with these matters, your immediate reaction is to view them from the perspective of these traditional thoughts and viewpoints, while setting aside the perspective that God wants you to have or the thoughts and viewpoints that you should have. What will be the ultimate result of how you view these matters? You will feel that this year has not been favorable, that it has been unlucky and contrary to your wishes, and then you will adopt depression and negativity as a means to evade, oppose, resist, and reject these things. So, is the reason for you giving rise to these emotions, thoughts, and viewpoints related to those traditional thoughts instilled in you by your family? (Yes.) In such matters, what should people let go of? They should let go of the perspective and stance from which they measure them. They shouldn't view these matters from the perspective that they encountered these situations because this year is unlucky, unfavorable, contrary to their wishes, or they broke some taboo or didn't follow traditional practices. Instead, you should take up each of these matters one by one, and first and foremost, you should at the very least view them from the perspective of a created being. Say that these matters, whether good or bad, whether in line with or against your wishes, whether favorable or unlucky to human eyes, are arranged by God, under God's sovereignty, and come from God. Is there an advantage to adopting this type of perspective and stance on these matters? (Yes.) What is the first advantage? You can accept these matters from God, which means to some extent, you can adopt a mentality of submission. The second advantage is that you can learn a lesson and gain something from these disappointing matters. The third advantage is that from these disappointing matters, you can recognize your own shortcomings and deficiencies, as well as your own

corrupt disposition. The fourth advantage is that in these disappointing matters, you can repent and turn back, let go of your previous thoughts and viewpoints, of your previous way of living, of your various misunderstandings about God, and return before God, accepting His orchestrations with an attitude of submission, even if they pertain to God's chastisement and judgment, His chastening and disciplining of you, or His punishment. You will be willing to submit to it all and not blame Heaven and other people, nor tie everything back to the viewpoint and stance instilled in you by traditional thoughts, but instead view each matter from the perspective of a created being. This is beneficial to you in many ways. Aren't all these things beneficial? (Yes, they are.) On the other hand, if you view these matters based on the traditional thoughts instilled in you by your family, you will try every possible means to evade them. What does evading them mean? It means finding various ways to avoid these misfortunes, to avoid these disappointing, unfavorable, unlucky matters. Someone says, "It's the little demons messing with you. If you wear red clothes, you can avoid them. Wearing red clothes is like when you are given a talisman in Buddhism. A talisman is a piece of yellow paper with a few red characters written upon it. You can stick it on your forehead, sew it into your clothes, or put it under your pillow, and it will help you steer clear of these things." When people don't have a positive path of practice, their only recourse is to seek help from these crooked and evil paths, because no one wants to be unlucky or face any misfortune. Everyone wants things to go smoothly. This is an instinctual reaction on the part of corrupted humankind when facing worldly matters. You want to evade these matters or use various human means to resolve them because you have neither the correct path to address them nor the right thoughts and viewpoints to face them. You can only view these things from the perspective of an unbeliever, so your first reaction is to avoid them, not wanting to encounter these things. You say, "Why are things so unfavorable for me? Why am I so unlucky? Why do I face being dealt with and pruned every day? Why do I keep hitting the wall and making mistakes in everything I do? Why are my actions always exposed? Why do people around me always go against my wishes? Why do they target me, look down on me, and go against my will in everything?" As some people say, "When you're unlucky, even cold water can get stuck in your teeth." Can cold water get stuck in your teeth? Do you chew cold water with your teeth? Isn't this nonsense? Isn't this blaming Heaven and other people? (Yes, it is.) What does it mean to be unlucky? Does that kind of thing really exist? (No, it doesn't.) It doesn't exist. If you truly recognized that everything is in God's hands, that everything is under God's sovereignty and arrangement, you wouldn't use words like "unlucky," and you wouldn't try to evade matters. When people encounter matters that go contrary to their wishes, their first reaction is to evade them, and then they refuse them. If they can't refuse, evade, or hide from these matters, they start to resist them. Resistance isn't just contemplating in one's thoughts or going over it in one's mind; it involves taking action. In private, people engage in petty maneuvering, uttering provocative, self-justifying, self-preserving, self-glorifying,

or self-embellishing statements to make themselves look good, so as to avoid being impacted by or dragged into an unlucky event. Once a person starts resisting, it can turn dangerous for them, can't it? (Yes, it can.) Tell Me, when a person reaches the point where they start resisting, is there any function of the conscience and reason of normal humanity left in them? They have already moved from thoughts and viewpoints to real action, and reason and conscience can no longer restrain them. What does this mean? It means that a person's actions and thoughts evolve into the reality of resisting God. They are not simply rejecting, being unwilling, or feeling unhappy in their heart; they are using their actions and actual deeds to resist. When it comes to resisting through real action, isn't this person basically done for? When the realities of rebelling against God, resisting God, and opposing Him have taken shape, it's no longer a problem of the path people are on—this has already produced a result. Isn't this very dangerous? (Yes, it is.) So, even a tiny, insignificant traditional cultural idea, traditional thought, or superstitious saying can lead to very serious consequences. It's not just a simple lifestyle habit, a matter of what to eat, what to wear, or what to say or not say. It can go as far as what kind of attitude a person adopts when facing the environments that God has orchestrated. Therefore, these are also issues that people should let go of.

In addition to upholding certain traditional ways of life and thoughts and viewpoints during major festivals, people also uphold them during certain minor festivals. For example, they eat sweet dumplings on the 15th day of the Lunar New Year. Why do people eat sweet dumplings? (They symbolize that a family is reunited.) A family is reunited. Have you eaten sweet dumplings during the past few years? (I've eaten them at home, never at church.) Is being reunited with one's family a good thing? (No, it isn't.) Are there any good people in your family? Either they ask you for money or to repay a debt; if you possess fame and profit, they fawn over you and ask for a cut, and if you don't, they look down on you. There's eating sweet dumplings on the 15th day of the Lunar New Year, as well as other customs on various dates like the second day of the second lunar month, the third day of the third month, the fourth of the fourth month, the fifth of the fifth month…. There's a mess of different things, and all kinds of food associated with them. These things that the world of unbelievers and demons do are all ridiculous. If you want to celebrate during a festival and enjoy some good food, then just say you're going to enjoy some good food and that's it. As long as your living conditions permit it, you can eat whatever you like. Enough with all these tricks, like eating rice cakes for promotion year after year, eating fish for abundance, or sweet dumplings for the family to be reunited. Chinese people also make rice dumplings, but for what purpose? Every year during various festivals, there are some dedicated individuals in the church who buy various items corresponding to each of the festivals, such as rice dumplings. I asked some of them, "Why do you eat rice dumplings?" They said, "It's for the Dragon Boat Festival on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month." Rice dumplings are quite tasty, but I don't know why there's a festival associated with them or how it relates

to people's lives and fortunes. I never did any research or put out a survey on it, so I don't know. Supposedly, it's to commemorate someone. But why should we eat these things in his memory? The rice dumplings should be given to that person. Whoever seeks to commemorate him should place rice dumplings in front of his grave or picture. They shouldn't be given to living people: This is not the business of the living. The living eat them on that person's behalf—that's absurd. The knowledge concerning these festivals as well as what to eat during them was obtained from unbelievers: I don't know the specific details, and certain details were later passed along through people in the church—rice dumplings are eaten during the Dragon Boat Festival and rice cakes during the Lunar New Year. In the West, people eat turkey on Thanksgiving: Why do they eat turkey? According to news reports, they eat turkey on Thanksgiving in order to give thanks—this is a tradition. There is another holiday in the West called Christmas, where people set up Christmas trees and wear new clothes—this is also a tradition. During this holiday Westerners also must exchange pleasant words and good wishes, as well as blessings. They are not allowed to say bad words or curse words. All this is equivalent to the auspicious sayings of Eastern cultures, and their purpose is to prevent people from breaking taboos, or else the following year won't be favorable. Western holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas involve eating special delicious foods, and stories were created to justify eating these foods. In the end, I summarize what happens: People look for an excuse to indulge in these delicious foods, allowing them to justify taking a few days off to feast at home, eating until they have a pot belly. When it's time to donate blood, the nurse says, "Your blood lipid levels are too high, they're not up to standard and disqualify you from donating." This is due to consuming excessive amounts of meat. The primary purpose of celebrating these traditional holidays is to enjoy good food and drink. It's passed down from one generation to the next, from the old to the young, and becomes a tradition. The underlying thoughts and viewpoints instilled by these traditions, as well as certain superstitious sayings, are also passed down from elders to the younger generation.

What other superstitious sayings are there? Does the eye twitching I just mentioned occur often? (Yes.) You say, "My eye keeps twitching." Someone asks, "Which eye is twitching?" You reply, "The left eye." They say, "No problem, twitching on the left eye forecasts fortune but twitching on the right eye forecasts disaster." Does this hold true? Did you get rich when your left eye twitched? Did you get money? (No.) Then did any disaster occur when your right eye twitched? (Also no.) Has there been any situation where disaster occurred when your left eye twitched, where something bad happened, or where something good happened when the right eye twitched? Do you believe in these things? (No.) How can you not believe in these things? Why does your eye twitch? Are there any remedies in folk culture to stop eye twitching? Are there any methods? (I've seen some people stick a piece of white paper on their eyelid.) They look for a white piece of paper to stick on. Regardless of which eye is twitching, they tear off a piece of

white paper from the calendar or a small notebook and stick it on their eyelid—it cannot be any other color than white. What does white paper signify? It means the twitch is “in vain,” indicating that nothing bad will be allowed to happen. Is this a brilliant method? It’s pretty brilliant, isn’t it? But does it mean that it’s twitching “in vain”? (It has nothing to do with whether one sticks the paper on their eyelid or not.) Can you clarify this matter? “Twitching on the left eye forecasts fortune but twitching on the right eye forecasts disaster”—whether it means fortune or disaster, are there any explanations for eye twitching? Is there a situation where when your right eye twitches, you feel like something bad is going to happen, you have a premonition, and after a while it stops twitching, you forget all about it, and then something bad happens after several more days, and after handling this matter, you suddenly remember, thinking, “Wow, the saying about eye twitching is accurate. Why? Because a few days ago, my right eye indeed started twitching, and after it stopped, this incident happened. After it happened, my eye hasn’t twitched since.” Does this ever happen? When you can’t comprehend something, you don’t dare say anything, you neither dare deny it nor admit it as true; you can’t avoid the topic, you can’t articulate it clearly, but you still think that it’s plausible. With your mouth, you say, “That’s a superstition, I can’t believe in that, everything is in God’s hands.” You don’t believe it, but this matter came true; it’s just so accurate, how do you explain it? You don’t understand the truth and essence here, so you can’t articulate it clearly. You deny it with your mouth, calling it superstition, but deep down, you’re still afraid of it because sometimes it really comes true. For example, someone gets in a car accident and passes away. Before the accident, that person’s wife gets a bad twitch in her right eye: It keeps twitching day and night—how bad is the twitching going to get? Even other people can see her eye twitching. After a few days, her husband gets into a car accident and dies. After handling the funeral, she sits down and slowly begins to think, “Oh my, those few days my eye was twitching so badly that I couldn’t even hold it down with my hand. I didn’t expect it to come true like this.” Later, she starts to believe this saying, thinking, “Oh my, things really do happen when my eye twitches. They may not necessarily be good or bad things, but something is bound to happen. It’s a kind of projection or premonition.” Does this ever happen? Some people say, “I don’t believe in it, it’s a superstition.” But it comes just at the right time, and it really is that accurate. The things mentioned in folk culture are not baseless rumors; superstition is different from tradition. To some extent it exists in people’s lives, and it also influences and controls people’s living environments and the events that occur in their lives. Some people say, “Well, isn’t this a sign from God, not a superstition? As it isn’t a superstition, we should treat and accept it properly. This didn’t come from Satan, it could be from God—a hint from God. We shouldn’t condemn it.” How do we view this matter correctly? This tests your ability to view things and your understanding of the truth. If you treat everything uniformly, believing that, “All of it is superstition, there’s no such thing and I don’t believe any of it,” is this a correct way to view things? For example, when unbelievers want to

move house, they see on their almanac that it says, “Today is inauspicious for moving,” so they follow this taboo and don’t dare to move on that day. They check for a day where it says “It is auspicious for moving” or “All matters are auspicious” before they move. After moving, nothing bad happens, and it doesn’t affect their fortunes in the future. Does this happen? Some people see “inauspicious for moving” but don’t believe it; they move anyway. As a result, after moving, something goes wrong: there is misfortune in the family, their fortunes decline, someone in their family dies, and another gets sick. Everything, from farming, work, and doing business to their children’s schooling, becomes difficult. They don’t know what’s happening. They consult a fortune-teller, who says, “You broke a major taboo during that time. The day you moved was inauspicious for moving, and in doing so you offended Tai Sui.”[a] What’s happening here? Do you know? If you can’t comprehend this, then you won’t know how to handle such situations when they arise. If an unbeliever says, “Let me tell you, I moved on the day it was inauspicious for moving, and after moving, my family kept experiencing problems day after day, getting more and more unlucky, and we haven’t had a good day since,” your heart may skip a beat when you hear it. You get scared, thinking, “Oh my, if I don’t follow the taboo, will the same happen to me?” You turn it over in your mind, thinking, “I believe in God, I’m not afraid!” But doubt still lingers in your mind, and you dare not break the taboo.

How should we view these superstitious sayings? Let’s start with the matter of eye twitching. Do we all know what eye twitching is all about? The most basic understanding people have is that it predicts what might happen in the future, whether that thing will be good or bad. But is this superstition or not? Go ahead. (It is superstition.) It’s superstition. Next question, should people who have faith in God believe in this saying? (They should not.) Why shouldn’t they believe? (Because our fortunes and misfortunes are managed and orchestrated in the hands of God and have nothing to do with whether your eye twitches or not. Everything we face is under God’s sovereignty and arrangement, and we should submit to it.) Let’s say one day your eye twitches badly for a whole day, and it continues into the next morning. Afterward, something happens, and you are dealt with. After being dealt with, your eye twitch stops. What would you think? “My eye twitch was a sign that I was going to be dealt with.” Is this just a coincidence? Is it superstition? Sometimes it is just a coincidence; sometimes such things happen. What’s going on? (God, it feels like eye twitching might be part of normal bodily rhythm, and it shouldn’t be associated with being pruned or dealt with.) Eye twitching should be understood like this: No matter whether people believe that one eye twitching indicates fortune and another indicates disaster, God created the human body with many mysteries. How deep these mysteries go, what specific details are involved in it, what instincts, abilities, and potential the human body has—humans don’t possess this knowledge on their own. Whether the

a. Tai Sui is short for Tai Sui God. In Chinese astrology, Tai Sui means the Guardian God of the Year. Tai Sui governs all the fortunes of a particular year.

human body can perceive the spiritual realm, whether it possesses what some call a sixth sense—people don't know. Should people bother to understand these unknown aspects of the human body? (No, they shouldn't.) There's no need—people don't need to understand what mysteries exist within the human body. Even though they don't need to understand, they should have a basic understanding that the human body is not simple. It is fundamentally different from any thing or object not created by God, such as a table, a chair, or a computer. The nature of these things is entirely different from that of the human body: These lifeless objects have no perception of the spiritual realm, while the human body, a living thing that comes from God, that is created by God, can sense how to perceive its immediate environment, atmosphere, and certain special objects, as well as how to react to the surrounding environment and upcoming events. It's not simple—these things are all a mystery. Not only can the human body sense things that are cold, hot, pleasant or disagreeable to smell, sweet, sour, and spicy, but there are also certain mysteries that the objective consciousness of the individual is not aware of. Humans do not know about these things. So, specifically speaking, whether eye twitching is related to someone's nerves, to their sixth sense, or to something involving the spiritual realm—we won't delve into this. In any case, this phenomenon exists, and we won't investigate its purpose and meaning for existing. Regardless, there are certain sayings about eye twitching both in the family and in folk culture. Whether these sayings consist of superstition or not, at the end of the day, it is a sign that manifests in the human body in advance of certain events taking place in a living environment. Now, does this manner of manifestation belong to superstition, to tradition, or to science? It is something that cannot be researched—it is a mystery. In short, within real life, over thousands of years from ancient times to the present, humanity has concluded that someone's eye twitching is somehow connected to events that are going to happen around them. Whether this connection is related to wealth, luck, or some other aspect of a person's life, is impossible to research. This is also a mystery. Why is it considered a mystery? Many things involve the spiritual realm beyond the material world, which you can't see or feel even if they were told to you. That's why it is considered a mystery. Since these matters are mysteries and people can't see or feel them, but certain feelings of foreboding and prescience still exist in humans, how should people deal with them? The simplest rule is to just ignore them. Don't believe that they have anything to do with your wealth or luck. Don't worry that bad things might happen when your right eye twitches, and certainly don't rejoice when your left eye twitches, thinking you'll become wealthy. Don't let these things affect you. The main reason is that you don't have the ability to foresee the future. Everything is orchestrated and governed by God; whether what is going to happen will be good or bad, it is all in God's hands. The only attitude you should hold is submission to God's orchestration and arrangement. Don't make predictions or any unnecessary sacrifices, preparations, or struggles. Whatever is going to happen will happen, because it is all in God's hands. No one can change God's thoughts, His plans,

or what He is determined to make happen. Whether you stick white paper to your eyelid, press on your eyelid with your hand, or rely on science or superstition, none of it will make a difference. What is going to happen will happen, will come true, and you can't change it because it's all in God's hands. Any attempt to avoid it is foolish, a futile sacrifice, and unnecessary. Doing so would only show that you are rebellious and stubborn, lacking a submissive attitude toward God. Do you understand? (Yes, I understand.) So, whether eye twitching is considered superstition or science, your attitude should be this: Don't feel happy when your left eye twitches, and don't be fearful, terrified, worried, rejecting, or resistant when your right eye twitches. Even if something does happen after your eye twitches, you should face it calmly because everything is in God's hands. You don't need to fear or worry. If something good happens, thank God for His blessing—this is the grace of God; if something bad happens, pray for God to lead you, to protect you, and to not let you fall into temptation. In whatever environment that may follow, be able to submit to God's orchestration and arrangement. Don't abandon God, don't complain to Him, no matter how great the disaster that befalls you, or how severe the misfortune that you experience, don't blame God. Be willing to submit to God's orchestration. Won't this issue then be resolved? (Yes.) Regarding matters like this, people should have this thought and viewpoint: "No matter what happens in the future, I am prepared, and I have a submissive attitude toward God. Whether my left eye twitches, my right eye twitches, or both eyes twitch simultaneously, I am not afraid. I know something might happen in the future, but I believe that everything is in God's hands. It could be a way God is informing me about something that is going to happen, or it could be an instinctive reaction of my physical body. No matter what, I am prepared, and I have a submissive attitude toward God. No matter how great the harm or loss I suffer after this thing occurs, I won't blame God. I am willing to submit." This is the attitude people should have. Once they adopt this attitude, they will no longer care whether the sayings about eye twitching conditioned into them by their family constitute superstition or science. They say, "It doesn't matter if it's superstition or science. What you believe is your business. If you ask me to stick a piece of paper on my eyelid, I won't do it. If the twitching gets uncomfortable, I'll just do it for a little bit." If someone tells you, "Your eye is twitching so much, be careful over the next couple of days!" Can being careful help you avoid anything? (No, you can't avoid what's meant to happen.) If it's a blessing then it can't be a disaster, if it's a disaster then you can't avoid it; whether it's a blessing or a disaster you accept it either way. This is having the same attitude as Job. If you accept it as long as it's a blessing, and you're happy when your left eye twitches, but you get angry when your right eye twitches, saying, "Why is it twitching? It keeps twitching, it never stops! I will pray and I will curse to make my right eye stop twitching and keep misfortune far away from me"—this isn't the attitude a person who believes in God and follows Him should have. Without God's permission, without God determining for it to happen, would misfortune or demons dare approach you? (No.) Both the material

and spiritual worlds are under God's control, sovereignty, and arrangement. No matter what a little demon wants to do, without God's permission, would it dare harm even a single hair on you? It wouldn't dare, would it? (No, it wouldn't.) It wants to touch you and harm you, but if God doesn't allow it, it won't dare. If God allows it, saying, "Stir up a few circumstances around them and bring them ill fortune and problems," then the little demon will be happy and start acting against you. If you have faith in God and you overcome it, standing firm in your testimony, not denying or betraying God, not letting it succeed, then when the little demon comes before God, it won't be able to accuse you anymore, God will gain glory from you, and He'll lock up the little demon. It won't dare to harm you again, and you will be safe. This is the genuine faith you should have, believing that everything is in God's hands. Without God's permission, no unlucky or bad thing will come to you. God can do more than just bless people; He can arrange various circumstances to test you and temper you, teach you lessons from among them, and He can set up various circumstances to chastise and judge you. Sometimes the circumstances God arranges may not align with your notions and certainly not your imaginings. But don't forget what Job said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10). This should be the source of your genuine faith in God. Believe that God is in control of everything, and you won't be afraid of a simple eye twitch, isn't that right? (Yes, it is.)

Just now, we fellowshiped on how to deal with eye twitching. Eye twitching—a common occurrence in daily life—is something people often try human methods to resolve. However, these methods usually don't achieve the desired results, and in the end, what is meant to happen will happen, and no one can escape it. Whether it's a good or bad thing, whether it's something people want to see or not, what is meant to happen will definitely happen. This further confirms that whether it's a person's destiny or the trivial matters of daily life, they are all orchestrated and managed by God, and no one can escape from them. Therefore, wise individuals should approach these things with the correct, positive attitude, viewing them and resolving things like this based on the truth principles and God's word, rather than resorting to human methods to make any futile sacrifices or struggles, or in the end, they will be the ones to suffer loss. This is because, when it comes to the sovereignty of the Creator, there is no second path for humanity to choose. This is the only path that should be chosen and followed. Submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements, learn lessons in the environments God orchestrates, learn to submit to God, to understand God's deeds, to understand oneself, and what path a created being should choose and walk, and learn how to walk well the life path that people should walk, instead of resisting God's orchestrations and arrangements with superstitious or human methods.

We've concluded our fellowship on how to deal with eye twitching, but how should people handle the matter of dreaming in their daily lives? For instance, if you dream one night that your teeth fall out, your mother might ask, "Did it bleed when your teeth fell

out?” If you ask, “What will happen if it did?” your mother might tell you that it could mean that someone in the family will die, or some other unfortunate event might occur. I do not know what the specific saying behind this detail may be, one family will say one thing, another family a different thing. Some might say it predicts the death of a close relative, like grandparents or parents, while others might say it signifies the death of a friend. In any case, dreaming about losing teeth is generally considered a bad thing. Because it is bad, and it relates to matters of life and death, this makes people very concerned. Whenever people dream about losing teeth, they wake up feeling uneasy. They have an underlying sense that misfortune or something bad is about to happen, which makes them anxious, fearful, and terrified. They want to rid themselves of the feeling but can’t, they want to find people to address this matter or smooth it over, but there is no way of doing it. They are, in short, held captive by this dream. Especially when the dream involves their teeth bleeding, their worry intensifies. After having such a dream, people are often in a bad mood for many days, they feel uneasy, and don’t know how to cope. For those who aren’t familiar with these things, they might remain unaffected, but for those who have already adopted certain thoughts and viewpoints or have heard more alarming and sensational sayings related to this matter passed down from their ancestors, they tend to be even more concerned. They fear having such dreams and whenever they do, they quickly resort to prayers like, “Oh God, please protect me, comfort me, give me strength, and prevent such things from happening. If this is meant for my parents, please keep them safe and free from any accidents.” Clearly, these attitudes are influenced by their thoughts and viewpoints or by traditional sayings. Regarding traditions, certain families or individuals might have special ways to alleviate such things, or might eat and drink certain things, recite certain incantations, or do certain things to resolve or prevent bad outcomes. There are certainly such practices in folk traditions, but we won’t delve into them. What we are going to fellowship about is how to approach and understand the matter of dreaming. Dreaming is a human instinct in the flesh or a part of the phenomena of the survival of the flesh. In any case, it is a mysterious occurrence. People often say, “The day has its thoughts, the night its dreams.” However, people do not usually think about things like losing their teeth in the daytime, nor are these things that people envision in their desires. No one wants to encounter such matters, and no one obsesses over these things day and night. Nevertheless, these occurrences often happen when people least expect them. So, this has nothing to do with the saying, “The day has its thoughts, the night its dreams.” It’s not something that happens because you think about it. No matter what interpretations Freud in the West or the Duke of Zhou in China have about dreams, or whether the dreams ultimately come true or not, in short, the matter of dreaming is related to certain unconscious sensations and awareness in the human body, and constitutes a part of its mysteries. Scientists who study biology and neuroscience in the West have been researching this, and ultimately, they have failed to fully understand the origins of human dreams. They can’t

figure it out, so should we try to do research on it? (We shouldn't.) Why shouldn't we? (Researching these things is pointless, and we won't understand them either.) It's not that it's pointless or that we won't understand; it's because it doesn't involve the truth, it's that simple. What can you achieve by studying and understanding it? Does it involve the truth? (No, it doesn't.) It's just a phenomenon that occurs over the course of the body's survival, and it frequently takes place in people's lives. However, people don't know what it means. This is a part of the mystery. There's no need for people to research or explore it because it doesn't involve the truth, and it doesn't pertain to the paths people take. Whether you dream at night about losing your teeth or not, whether you dream about having a grand feast or going on a rollercoaster, does it have anything to do with how your life is during the day? (No, it doesn't.) If one night you dream about fighting someone, does it mean you'll definitely fight someone during the day? If one night you have a pleasant dream, a happy dream, and wake up from happiness, does that guarantee everything will go smoothly and as desired during the day? Does it mean that during the day you can understand the truth and find the truth principles when you are doing things? (No, it doesn't.) So, dreaming has nothing to do with the truth. There's no need to research it. Does dreaming about losing your teeth and bleeding have any connection to the death of a close relative? (No, it doesn't.) Why do you always say such ignorant things? You're being ignorant again, aren't you? You lack insight. The human body is a mystery, and there are many things you can't explain. Can you resolve it all with a simple "no"? In the past, prophets and people chosen by God also had prophetic dreams. These dreams had significance. How do you explain that God used dreams to reveal things to people? Then how did God enter their dreams? These are all mysteries. God also used dreams to tell people certain things and enlighten them about certain matters, allowing them to foresee certain events before they happened. How do you explain this? Are you ignorant of these things? (Yes.) Now, the point is not to have you blindly deny various unexplainable phenomena that occur in everyday life involving mysteries you cannot unravel, but to understand and approach them accurately. It's not about constantly negating these things, saying they don't exist, there's no such thing, or they're impossible, but rather to have you treat them correctly. What does it mean to treat them correctly? It means not to approach these matters with superstitious or extreme thoughts and viewpoints like worldly people do, nor to approach them like those who are atheists or lack any faith. It's not to have you go to these two extremes, but to take the correct position and viewpoint to consider these things that happen in everyday life, not the viewpoint of worldly people, nor that of nonbelievers—but the viewpoint that a believer in God should have. So, what viewpoint should you have regarding these matters? (No matter what happens, submit to God's sovereignty and arrangement—don't research it.) You shouldn't research it, but should you have some understanding in this regard? Suppose someone says, "So-and-so dreamed that their teeth fell out and there was blood, and within a few days, I heard that their father passed away." If you

immediately deny it and say, “Impossible! That’s just superstition, a coincidence. Superstition is believing in something because you’re obsessed with it; if you weren’t obsessed with it, it wouldn’t exist,” is this a foolish thing to say? (Yes.) How should you view this matter then? (We should recognize that there are many mysteries of the physical body, and dreaming about teeth falling out and bleeding might indicate something unpleasant happening. But regardless of whether it happens or not, we should submit to God’s sovereignty and arrangement.) You just learned something from eye twitching, so how should you deal with dreaming about teeth falling out and bleeding? You should say, “This matter is beyond our comprehension. In real life, this phenomenon indeed exists. We cannot determine whether it will come true or whether it forebodes something bad will happen, but bad things like this really do happen in real life. Spiritual matters are beyond our comprehension, and we dare not make random claims. If I have such a dream, what should my attitude be? Regardless of the dream, I won’t be constrained by it. If this dream genuinely comes true as people say it will, then I thank God for giving me mental preparedness, for letting me know that such a thing may happen. I’ve never thought about whether I would be affected if a family member died, if my parents passed away: whether I would feel struck, whether my fulfillment of duty might be affected, whether I would feel weak or complain against God—I’ve never thought about it. But today, this occurrence gave me a hint of it, making me see my actual stature. When I think about my parents’ death, I feel a deep pain inside; I would be constrained by it and feel depressed. Suddenly, I realize my stature is still very small. I have too little of a God-obeying heart, and too little faith in God. From today onward, I feel that I should equip myself with more truth, submit to God, and not be constrained by this matter. If there really is a close relative who dies or departs, I won’t be constrained by it. I’m prepared and I ask God for guidance and to increase my strength. No matter what lies ahead, I won’t regret choosing to fulfill my duty, nor will I give up on choosing to expend myself with my whole body and mind for God. I will persist, and I will continue just as before to willingly submit to God’s orchestrations and arrangements.” Next, you should pray often in your heart, seeking God’s guidance and asking for Him to increase your strength so that you are no longer constrained by this matter. Whether a close relative will die or not, you should equip your stature for it, ensuring that when such an event occurs, you won’t become weak, won’t complain against God, and won’t change your determination and desire to expend yourself for God with your body and mind. Isn’t this the attitude you should have? (Yes.) When it comes to things like dreaming about your teeth falling out, you shouldn’t deny their existence or set them aside and ignore them, and you certainly shouldn’t use any strange or defensive methods to deal with them. Instead, you should seek the truth, come before God accepting His orchestrations; don’t make pointless sacrifices or foolish choices. Ignorant and stubborn people, when faced with something they haven’t experienced before and cannot comprehend, tend to say, “There’s no such thing,” “It’s nothing,” “It doesn’t exist,” or “It’s just superstition.”

Some people who believe in God even say, “I believe in God, I don’t believe in ghosts,” or “I believe in God, I don’t believe in Satan. There’s no Satan!” They use these statements to prove their genuine faith in God, saying they believe in God but not in ghosts, evil spirits, possession, or even the existence of the spiritual realm. Aren’t they just nonbelievers? (Yes, they are.) They don’t accept those sayings of traditional thoughts of the world of unbelievers, nor do they accept superstitious explanations or any facts associated with superstitions. Not believing in these things doesn’t mean they don’t exist. Right now, it’s not about asking you not to believe, or to escape or deny these things. Rather, it’s about teaching you to have the correct thoughts and viewpoints when facing these matters, to make the right choices and have the right attitude. This will be your true stature, and this is what you should enter in. For example, someone dreams about losing their hair. Losing one’s hair in a dream is also considered inauspicious. Regardless of the corresponding interpretations or fulfilled events, in short, people have negative explanations regarding such dreams, and believe that they indicate something bad or unfortunate will happen. Except for the ordinary dreams that don’t involve significant issues, there are certain interpretations for those special dreams, and these interpretations forecast certain events, providing people with certain foresight, warnings, or predictions, letting them know what’s going to happen in the future or giving them a certain awareness, which tells people what is going to happen so that they can prepare themselves mentally. Regardless of what might happen, for you, you shouldn’t adopt attitudes of avoidance, rejection, defense, or resistance, or even an attitude of using human methods to resolve these situations. When you face such situations you should come before God even more readily and ask Him to lead you, so that in the face of impending events you may be able to stand firm in your testimony and align your practice with God’s will, rather than rejecting and resisting it. Asking you to practice this way does not mean you are required to focus on these things; it teaches you what kind of attitude, when they inevitably occur, you should adopt to face them, and what kind of approach you should use to resolve them. This is what you should understand. Tell Me, you’ve been asked to not focus on these things, but don’t these things happen in everyday life? (Yes.) If you say they don’t exist, and then they do happen, you might consider it and think, “Oh no, I have to believe this, it really did come true!” Without prior preparation and the right attitude, when these things occur, you’ll be caught off guard, you won’t be prepared in any way, you won’t know how to pray to God or how to face the situation, and you won’t have genuine faith in God or genuine obedience. All you’ll feel in the end is fear. The more afraid you become, the more you’ll lose the presence of God; when you lose God’s presence, you can only seek help from other people and you’ll think of every human method imaginable to escape. When you can’t escape, you’ll start to believe that God is no longer trustworthy or reliable; instead, you feel that people are reliable. Things will continue to deteriorate; not only will you no longer believe it to be superstition, but you’ll see it as something terrible, a situation that is out of your control.

At that point, you might say, “No wonder unbelievers and those who believe in Buddhism and burn incense to worship Buddha are constantly going to temples, burning incense, praying for blessings, fulfilling vows, being vegetarian, and chanting Buddhist scriptures. It turns out these things really work!” Not only will you lack genuine obedience and faith in God, but you’ll develop instead a fear of evil spirits and Satan. After that, you’ll feel obligated to obey them to some extent and you’ll say, “These evil spirits are nothing to mess with; it’s no good for you not to believe in them, you have to tread carefully around them. You can’t say whatever you want behind their backs: There are taboos. These evil spirits are not to be trifled with!” Behind these events, you’ll suddenly realize that there are powers at work beyond the material world that you hadn’t anticipated. When you start to sense these things, your heart will be filled with fear and an avoidance of God, and your faith in God will diminish. So, when it comes to matters like dreaming about teeth or hair falling out, you should adopt the right attitude. Regardless of the specific interpretations or predictions associated with these events when they happen to you, you only have to do this much: Believe that everything is in God’s hands and be willing to obey God’s orchestrations and arrangements—this is the attitude you should adopt when facing all these matters. This is the stance you should take and the testimony you should bear as someone who follows God, isn’t it? (Yes, it is.) Believe that all these things may happen and that everything is in God’s hands; this is the attitude you should uphold.

Some people have taboos about certain numbers or special days. For example, some people who are engaged in business for many years attach great importance to making a fortune, so they particularly like and value numbers related to making a fortune in business, and abstain from numbers that they believe will bring bad luck to their business. For example, the numbers 6 and 8 are particularly favored by a certain person, the door number of their shop is 168, and the shop is called “Yi Lu Fa,” meaning getting rich all the way, the pronunciation of which in Mandarin is similar to the numbers 1, 6, and 8,[a] which are lucky numbers in Chinese folklore. On the other hand, the numbers 4 and 5 are considered bad in Chinese tradition, as 4 means death and 5 means nothing, lack, or emptiness, which implies that one may fail to recover their original investment or to make money. Even the license plates of some Chinese people’s cars have all 6s, and if you see a row of 6s, it’s basically always going to be a Chinese person. Who knows how much wealth they might have accumulated using so many 6s? One time in a parking lot, almost all parking spaces were occupied except for one, which carried the number 64. Do you know why no one parked in that space? (64 may mean death and is considered unlucky.) 64 means death on the road. At that time, I didn’t know why no one parked in that space, but later I heard about it from unbelievers and understood. 6 sounds like “road” and 4 sounds like “death,” 64 sounds like “death on the road” in

a. The original text does not contain the phrase “meaning getting rich all the way, the pronunciation of which in Mandarin is similar to the numbers 1, 6, and 8.”

Mandarin, so people didn't park there. I guess they probably changed the number of that parking space later to 68, which sounds like "getting rich all the way" in Mandarin. People are so obsessed with money that they are completely fixated on money. Can a number really change anything? Chinese people's sayings about these numbers have even influenced foreigners. When we were looking at houses, a real estate agent asked us, "Do you have any taboos about certain numbers? For example, if the house's door number is 14, is that bad because of the 4?" I said, "I've never thought about it. I didn't know about this saying." He said, "Many Chinese people refuse to consider a house because it has a 4 in the door number." I said, "We don't have any taboos about numbers. We only consider the positioning, location, lighting, ventilation, house structure, quality, and other things like that. We don't care about the numbers; we don't have any taboos." So, do you think that something bad will definitely happen if unbelievers have taboos about certain numbers? (Not necessarily.) We don't know about other countries outside of China, such as South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, or some Southeast Asian countries, what their particulars about numbers may be. In short, every country's people are particular about certain numbers. For example, Americans are very uninterested in the number 6. Westerners don't like 6 due to a kind of religious culture, as the number 6 mentioned in the Book of Revelation in the Bible has negative connotations. There is also 13, which Westerners do not like either. Many elevators do not have that floor because they consider the number unlucky. Chinese people, on the other hand, believe that 6 and 8 are lucky numbers. So, which saying is the truth? (Neither of them.) Do you care about any specific numbers? Do you have your own lucky number? (No, we don't.) Well, that's good. Southern Chinese people pay particular attention to things like whether a number is lucky or not, choosing the right date for whatever they do, and following dietary restrictions during festivals—they are especially particular about this. But the matter of numbers certainly cannot explain anything. People's avoidance of certain numbers is to some extent related to their beliefs, imaginings, and thoughts and notions. These are all foolish thoughts and viewpoints. If your family has instilled such thoughts and viewpoints in you, you should let go of them and not believe in them. These ideas are even more absurd—they aren't even superstitions—and they constitute the ridiculous and nonsensical sayings of those money-crazed people in society.

Some people attach great importance to zodiac signs, and this matter involves superstition. Nowadays, even Westerners talk about zodiac signs, so don't think that only Asians know about them. Westerners also know about the rabbit, ox, rat, and horse. What else? Snake, dragon, rooster, and sheep, isn't that right? For example, ancestors and parents pass down the belief that people with the Sheep zodiac sign have doomed lives. If you are a Sheep, you might think, "My life is doomed, I always encounter misfortune. I have a bad partner, disobedient children, and my job is not going well. I never get promoted, and I don't receive any bonuses. I am always unlucky. If I have

another child, it won't be in the Year of the Sheep. There is already one family member with the sheep zodiac sign whose life is doomed enough; if I gave birth to another with a Sheep zodiac sign, that would make two of us. How could we live like that?" You consider the matter, thinking, "I definitely can't have a child in the Year of the Sheep, so which year should I aim for? Dragon? Snake? Tiger?" If you were born in the Year of the Dragon, does that mean you are actually a dragon? Can you really become an emperor? Isn't that nonsense? Do you want to have these zodiac signs? Some people say, "People born in the Year of the Rabbit and the Year of the Rooster don't get along with each other. I am a Rabbit, so I should avoid interacting with someone who is a Rooster. Our zodiac signs are incompatible, and our destinies clash. My parents say that people like us are not compatible to marry and won't get along with each other. It's best to have minimal contact with them, to not talk or interact. Our destinies clash, and if we are together, I won't be able to overcome them, and my life will be shortened, won't it? I need to stay away from such people." These people are influenced by these sayings. Isn't that foolish? (Yes, it is.) In short, regardless of whether your destiny clashes with someone of a certain zodiac sign, will it really have an impact on your fate? Will it affect you walking the correct path in life? (No, it won't.) Some people are only willing to work, collaborate and even live with someone who is compatible with their zodiac sign. Subconsciously, deep down they are affected by these sayings, and these sayings passed down by their parents or ancestors hold a definite place in their hearts. You see, Eastern people care about zodiac signs, while Western people care about astrological signs. Now, Eastern people keeping up with the times have also started talking about astrological signs, such as Scorpio, Virgo, Sagittarius, and so on. For example, a Sagittarius person learns what their personality is like and that they tend to get along with people who have a certain astrological sign. When they find out that someone has that astrological sign, they are willing to interact with them, they think that they're pretty great and have a good impression of them. They have also been influenced by the traditions of family conditioning. Whether it's Eastern zodiac signs or Western astrology, whether clashes in destiny or the compatibility of signs have a factual existence, and whether these have any impact on you, you should understand what viewpoint to hold concerning them. What should you understand? A person's birth time, the decade they were born in, the month and time they were born—these are all related to a person's destiny. No matter what fortune tellers or face readers say about your destiny, your astrological sign, or if your zodiac sign is good or not, no matter how accurate they are—so what? What does this explain? Doesn't it further prove that your destiny has already been arranged by God? (Yes.) What your marriage will be like, where you will live, what kind of people you will be surrounded by, how much material wealth you will enjoy in your life, whether you will be rich or poor, how much suffering you will endure, how many children you will have, and what your financial fortune will be—all of this has already been ordained. Whether you believe it or not, whether fortune tellers calculate it for you or not, it will be the same.

Is it important to know these things? Some people are particularly eager to know, “What will my future fortune be like? Will I be poor or rich? Will I meet advantageous people? Are there any people whose destinies will clash with mine? Will I encounter any contrary people in my life? At what age will I die? Will I die from illness, exhaustion, thirst, or hunger? How will I die? Will it be painful or embarrassing?” Is it useful to know these things? (No.) In summary, you just need to be certain about one thing regarding this matter: Everything is ordained by God. Regardless of your zodiac or astrological sign, or the time and date of your birth, everything has already been determined by God. Precisely because everything has been ordained, the prosperity and wealth you will experience in your life, as well as the environment you will live in, were already determined by God before you were born, you don’t need to approach these matters with superstition or from the perspective of worldly people, adopting certain methods to avoid unlucky moments or taking certain measures to preserve and maintain lucky moments. This is not the way you should deal with destiny. For example, if it is destined for you to contract a serious illness at a certain age, and face readers point it out to you based on your astrological sign, zodiac sign, or birth time, what will you do then? Will you feel afraid, or will you try to find a way to resolve the matter? (Let nature take its course and submit to God’s orchestration.) This is the attitude that people should adopt. Regardless of what is or isn’t in your destiny, all of it has already been predetermined by God. Whether you like it or not, whether you are willing to accept it or not, whether you have the ability to face it or not, in any case, all of this has already been ordained by God. The attitude you should uphold is that of accepting these facts as a created being. Whether it has happened or not, whether you are willing to face it or not, you should accept and face it as a created being, rather than putting effort or seeking advice from others concerning things like astrology, zodiac signs, or face-reading, or searching for various resources in order to know what will happen in your future and avoid it as soon as possible. It is wrong to treat the fate and life that God arranged for you with such an attitude. Some people’s parents find them a fortune-teller, who tells them, “According to your astrological sign, as well as your Chinese zodiac sign and birth time, you cannot allow fire into your life.” After hearing this, they remember it and believe in it, and later it becomes a normal taboo in their daily life. For example, if someone’s name contains the character for “fire,” they will not interact with that person, and even if they do, they will not get close to them or have any close contact with them. They will be afraid of this and avoid it. For example, if someone’s name is Li Can, they will turn this over in their mind, thinking, “The character ‘Can’ contains one ‘fire’ radical and one ‘mountain’: That’s bad, there’s the ‘fire’ radical in it, so I can’t interact with them—I have to keep my distance.” They will be afraid to interact with this person. As far as they are able, they will avoid the kitchen stove at home, they won’t participate in candlelit dinners, attend bonfire parties, or go to houses with a fireplace, because these all involve fire. If they want to go on a trip, and they hear that a certain place has a volcano, they won’t go there. When they go

somewhere to spread the gospel, they have to inquire about the surname and name of the person with whom they are sharing the gospel, and make sure their name does not have the character for “fire” in it, but if that person is a blacksmith who casts iron at home, they absolutely won’t go. Although they believe in their consciousness that everything is in God’s hands and they know they shouldn’t be afraid, as soon as they encounter such taboo matters, they begin to feel concerned and fearful, and they dare not break the taboo. They are always afraid of accidents and disasters happening that they would not be able to bear. They do not have true faith in God. They can be obedient, endure hardship, and pay the price in other aspects, but this matter is the one thing they cannot tolerate. For example, if someone tells them, “You can never cross a bridge during your entire life. If you cross a bridge, an accident will happen. If you cross several bridges, that will be even more dangerous, and your life will be at risk,” they will remember these words, and afterward, whether going to work or meeting up with friends, or even attending gatherings, they will avoid bridges and take a detour, fearing that they might break the taboo. They don’t believe that they will necessarily die just like that, but they are troubled by this matter. Occasionally, they have no choice but to cross a bridge, and after crossing, they say, “I believe everything is in God’s hands. If God doesn’t allow me to die, I won’t die.” However, their heart is still troubled by this saying, and they can’t shake it off. Some people say that water runs contrary to their fate, so they avoid going near streams or wells. There was a sister who had a swimming pool in her yard, so they didn’t go to her house for gatherings, and when they changed to another host who had a fish tank at home, they didn’t go there either. They wouldn’t go to any place with water and wouldn’t touch water whether it was flowing or stagnant. In daily life, these absurd sayings from family conditioning involve traditional culture and superstition. To some extent, these sayings affect people’s views on certain matters and impact their daily customs or lifestyles. This, to a certain extent, binds people’s thoughts and controls their principles and correct methods of doing things.

Some people say, “If these traditions and superstitions belong to certain traditional thoughts and superstitions outside of Christianity, then we should criticize and let go of them. But when it comes to certain thoughts, viewpoints, traditions, or superstitions of orthodox religions, do people not need to let go of them? Shouldn’t they be considered as a holiday or a lifestyle to commemorate and uphold in our daily lives?” (No, we should let go of both because they are not from God.) For example, the biggest holiday that comes from Christianity is Christmas—do you know anything about it? Nowadays, some major cities in the East also celebrate Christmas, plan Christmas parties, and celebrate Christmas Eve. In addition to Christmas, there are also Easter and Passover, which are both major religious holidays. Some holidays involve eating turkey and barbecue, while others involve eating candy canes, which are red and white, symbolizing the precious blood of the Lord Jesus as a sin offering for people, making them holy. The red represents the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, the white represents holiness, and

people eat this type of candy. There is also the tradition of eating Easter eggs during Easter. These holidays are all related to Christianity. There are also certain Christian icons, such as the images of Mary, Jesus, and the cross. These things have evolved out of Christianity and, in My opinion, they are also a kind of tradition. Behind these traditions, there must be some superstitions involved. Regardless of the content of these superstitious sayings, in short, as long as they do not involve the truth, the path that people take, or God's requirements for created beings, they have nothing to do with what you should enter into now, and you should let go of them. They shouldn't be considered sacred and inviolable, of course there is also no need to despise them—just treat them correctly. Do these holidays have anything to do with us? (No.) They have nothing to do with us. A foreigner once asked Me, "Do you celebrate Christmas?" I said, "No." "Then do you celebrate Chinese New Year? Spring Festival?" I said, "No." "Then what holidays do you celebrate?" I said, "We don't have holidays. Every day is the same for us. We eat whatever we want on any given day, not because of holidays. I don't have traditions." He asked, "Why?" I said, "No reason. This way of life is very free, without any constraints. We live without any formalities, just following the rules, eating, resting, working, and moving according to the time and measure given by God, naturally and freely, without any formalities." Of course, when it comes to a special religious item, the cross, some people believe that it is sacred. Is the cross sacred? Can it be described as sacred? Is the image of Mary sacred? (No, it is not sacred.) Is the image of Jesus sacred? You don't very much dare to say it. Why is the image of Jesus not sacred? Because it was painted by humans, it is not the true likeness of God and has nothing to do with God. It is just a painting. Not to mention the image of Mary. No one knows what Jesus looks like, so they just draw Him blindly, and when the painting is finished, they ask you to worship facing it. Wouldn't you be foolish to worship that? God is the One you should worship. You shouldn't make a formal show of bowing down to some idol, portrait or picture; it's not about bowing before an object. You should worship God and look up to Him in your heart. People should prostrate themselves before the words of God and His real person, not before the cross or the images of Mary or Jesus, which are all idols. The cross is just a symbol of the second step in God's work. It has nothing to do with God's disposition, essence, or requirements for mankind. It does not represent God's image, let alone His essence. Therefore, wearing a cross does not represent your fear of God, or that you have an amulet of protection. I have never represented the cross. I don't have any cross symbols in My home, none of these things. So, when it comes to not celebrating Christmas and Easter, people may easily let these things go, but if it involves religious aspects such as the cross, the images of Mary and Jesus, or even the Bible, when you tell them to throw away a cross or an image of Mary or Jesus, they'll think, "Oh, that is so irreverent, so irreverent. Quickly, ask God for forgiveness, for forgiveness…." People feel that there will be consequences. Of course, you don't need to deliberately do anything destructive to these objects, nor do you need to have any

respect for them. They are just objects and have nothing to do with God's essence or identity. This is something you ought to know. Of course, when it comes to the Christmas and Easter holidays designated by humans, these have nothing to do with God's identity or essence, His work, or His requirements for people. Even if you celebrate a hundred or ten thousand Christmases, no matter how many lifetimes you celebrate Christmas or Easter, this is not a substitute for understanding the truth. You don't have to admire these things and say, "I must travel to the West. In the West I can celebrate Christmas. Christmas is sacred. Christmas is a day to commemorate God's work. It is also a day that we should commemorate. We should be solemn on that day. Easter is more so a day that attracts everyone's attention. It is a day to commemorate the resurrection of God incarnate from the dead. We should rejoice together, celebrate and congratulate one another on such a day, commemorating this day forever." These are all human imaginings, God does not need them. If God needed people to commemorate these days, He would tell you the exact year, month, day, hour, minute, and second. If He hasn't told you the exact year, month, and day, this communicates to you that God does not need people to commemorate these days. If you do commemorate them, you will violate God's restrictions and He will not like it. God doesn't like it but you insist on doing this, and claim that you are worshiping God. Then God becomes even more disgusted with you, and you deserve to die. Do you understand? (I understand.) If you want to celebrate these holidays now, God will not pay attention to you, and sooner or later you will pay the price and bear the responsibility for your wrong actions. Therefore, I tell you, it is more important for you to truly understand one of God's words and obey His words than to prostrate yourself and bow your head however many times before the cross. No matter how many times you do this, it is useless and does not mean that you are following God's way, accepting His words, or doing things according to the principles that He requires. God will not remember it. So, if you feel that the cross is particularly sacred, from this day forth, you should let go of this thought and viewpoint and throw your cherished cross out of the depths of your heart. It does not represent God, and worshiping it does not mean you are devout. Treasuring it, cherishing it, or even carrying it on your shoulders all day does not mean you are worshiping God. The cross was just a tool used in one step of God's work, and it has no connection to God's essence, disposition, or identity. If you insist on worshiping the cross as if it were God, this is what God detests. Not only will you not receive God's remembrance, but you will be detested and rejected by Him. If you insist on it and say, "I won't listen to You. The cross is sacred and inviolable in my eyes. I don't believe or accept Your words that the cross is not important and doesn't represent God," then you can act as you see fit and see what it will ultimately get you. God has long since come down from the cross. It was the most inconspicuous tool used in one step of God's work. It is merely an object and has no value in the eyes of God to be kept. Of course, there is no need for you to cherish, love, or even look up to or respect it. This is all unnecessary. The Bible is also highly cherished

in people's hearts. Although they do not read the Bible anymore, it still holds a definite place in their hearts. They still cannot completely let go of their views on the Bible which were passed down through their family or ancestors. For example, sometimes when you put the Bible aside, you may think, "Oh, what am I doing? That is the Bible. People should cherish it! The Bible is sacred and should not be treated so indifferently as if it were just an ordinary book. It's gathered so much dust and no one has bothered to clean it. The book corners are bent and no one has straightened them." People should let go of this sort of thought and viewpoint of treating the Bible as if it were something sacred and inviolable.

These traditions and superstitions from family that we have just discussed, as well as various thoughts, viewpoints, and lifestyles related to religion, as well as objects about which people are superstitious, or that they admire or cherish, all instill certain incorrect lifestyles, thoughts, and viewpoints into people, and intangibly mislead them in their lives, their livelihoods, and survival. In daily life, this resulting misdirection will unknowingly disrupt people in their attempts to accept correct things, positive thoughts, and positive matters, and they will then unknowingly do certain foolish, irrational, and childish things. Precisely because of this, it is necessary for individuals to have an accurate view, and accurate thoughts and viewpoints on these matters. If something involves the truth and aligns with it, you need to accept, practice and submit to it as a principle to follow for your life and survival. However, if it does not involve the truth and is merely tradition or superstition, or it merely comes from religion, then you should let go of it. Lastly, the subject matter we fellowshiped about today is distinctive in that these things related to traditions, superstitions, and religion, regardless of whether you acknowledge them or not, have experienced them or not, or how great your recognition of them is, in short, there are certain sayings in tradition and superstition that exist in terms of the objective facts and, to some extent, affect and disturb the daily lives of humankind. So how should you view this matter? Some people say, "You have to believe in it. If you don't follow what it says, there will be consequences—what will you do then?" Do you know the biggest difference between believers and nonbelievers? (The biggest difference is that believers trust that everything is in God's hands, while nonbelievers always try to change their fate by themselves.) Another point is that believers have God's presence and protection, so these various superstitious phenomena which exist in real life will not affect them. But nonbelievers, because they lack God's protection and do not believe in either His protection or sovereignty, are controlled by various unclean demons and evil spirits in their daily lives. Therefore, they have to pay attention to taboos in everything they do. Where do these taboos come from? Are they from God? (No, they are not.) Why do they have to abstain from these things? How do they know they should abstain from them? It is because certain people have experienced these things, gained certain experiences and lessons from them, and then spread them out among people. These experiences and lessons are then widely circulated, creating a kind of trend among

people, and everyone starts to live and act accordingly. How did this trend come about? If you don't follow the rules set by evil spirits and unclean demons, they will disturb you, disrupt, and upset your normal life, forcing you to believe in the existence of these taboos and that there will be consequences if you violate them. Over thousands of years, people have accumulated these experiences in their daily lives, passing them on from one generation to the next, and have come to know that there is an invisible force controlling them in the background, and they must listen to it. For example, if you don't set off firecrackers during the Chinese New Year, your business will not go smoothly this year. Another example is that if you light the first incense stick during the New Year, everything will go smoothly for your entire year. These experiences tell people that they must believe in these superstitions and these sayings that come from folk culture, and generation after generation, people live like this. What do these phenomena tell people? They tell people that these prohibitions and taboos are all experiences that people have accumulated in life over time, and that they are things people have to do, things they must do because there are certain invisible forces controlling everything behind the scenes. In the end, from generation to generation, people follow these rules. People who do not believe in God must follow these superstitions and traditions in order to live relatively smooth lives in social groups. They live seeking peace, ease, and joy. So why don't people who believe in God have to follow these superstitions and traditions? (Because they are protected by God.) They are protected by God. People who believe in God follow Him, and God brings these people into His presence and His house. Without God's permission, Satan dare not harm you. Even if you don't abide by its rules, it won't dare touch you. However, for those who do not believe in God and do not follow Him, Satan can manipulate them at will. Satan's way of manipulating people is to establish various sayings and strange rules for you to follow. If you don't follow them, it will punish you. For example, if you don't worship the kitchen god on the 23rd day of the twelfth lunar month, won't there be consequences? (Yes.) There will be consequences, and unbelievers dare not skip this ritual. On that day, they also have to eat sesame candy to seal the kitchen god's mouth and prevent him from telling on them in heaven. How did these rules and superstitious sayings come about? It is Satan who does certain things that are passed down through oral tradition. At the root, they originate from Satan and various unclean demons, evil spirits, and demon leaders. They establish these rules and control people using these superstitious sayings and rules, making people listen to them. If you don't listen to them, they hit you with something fierce—they punish you. Some people don't believe in these superstitious sayings, and their homes are always a mess. When they go to a Buddhist temple to have their fortune told, they're told, "My goodness, you've violated such-and-such taboo. You need to break soil underneath your house, adjust the chimney, change the furnishings in your house, and put a talisman on the lintel of the door. Then those little demons won't dare come around." It is actually a bigger demon that has subdued the little one, so the little demon won't bother you anymore. In

this way, life becomes much more peaceful. At first, this person didn't believe it, but now when they see it, they say, "Oh my, there really was a little demon causing so much trouble!" They have no choice but to believe in it. Those who do not believe in God and try to get by and survive in this world are completely controlled by the evil ones, without the right or any room to choose for themselves—they have to believe. On the other hand, those of you who believe in God, if you persist in these superstitious or traditional thoughts, viewpoints, or things of religion, if you celebrate their festivals, believe in their sayings, and continue their traditions, ways of life, and attitudes toward life, and the source of your joy in life is based on these sayings, then you are telling God using a kind of silent language, "I don't believe in Your orchestrations, nor do I want to accept them," and you are also telling evil spirits, unclean demons, and Satan using a silent language, "Come on, I believe in your sayings, and I am willing to cooperate with you." Because in terms of the various attitudes you uphold, and your thoughts, viewpoints, and practices, you do not accept the truth, but rather conform to the thoughts and viewpoints of evil spirits, unclean demons, and Satan, and you are carrying out their thoughts and viewpoints as you comport yourself and act, you are therefore living under their power. Since you are willing to live under their power, making dumplings when you go out and eating noodles when you come home, and having to eat rice cakes and fish during the Chinese New Year, then just go along with them. You don't need to believe in God, and you don't need to proclaim that you believe in God. Everywhere you go and in everything you do, you follow the way of life and thoughts and viewpoints that Satan has instilled in you, you view people and things, comport yourself and act, and live and survive according to religious notions, and what you do has nothing to do with what God has taught you, it has nothing to do with the truth. So you are truly a follower of Satan. Since you follow Satan in your heart, why are you still sitting here? Why are you still listening to the sermon? Isn't this engaging in deception? Isn't this blasphemy against God? Since you are so obsessed with the traditions, superstitions and religious notions instilled by Satan, are tangled up in them, and still have lingering ties with them, you should not believe in God anymore. You should stay at the Buddhist temple, burn incense, kowtow, draw lots, and chant scripture. You should not remain in God's house, you are not worthy of listening to God's words or accepting God's guidance. Therefore, since you proclaim that you are a follower of God, you should let go of these family traditions, superstitions, and religious notions. Even your basic ways of life: As long as they involve tradition and superstition, you should let go and not hold on to them. What God detests the most is human tradition, festival days, customs, and certain rules for living that come from folk culture and from family, behind which there are certain interpretations. For example, certain people have to place a mirror on the door lintel when building a house, saying it is used to ward off evil spirits. You believe in God, yet you still fear demons? You believe in God, so how are demons still able to harass you so easily? Are you really a true believer in God? During the Chinese New Year, if some child says something unlucky like "if I die" or "if my mom dies," they quickly follow up by saying, "Pah,

pah, pah, a child's words can't break taboo, a child's words can't break taboo." They're scared to death, afraid that their words will come true. What are you afraid of? Even if it does come true, could you not accept this reality? Could you resist it? Shouldn't you accept it from God? There are no taboos with God, only things that do or do not align with the truth. As a believer in God, you should not adhere to any taboos, but instead handle these matters according to God's words and the truth principles.

Today's fellowship involves topics related to how families condition traditions, superstitions, and religion into people. Although we may not know much about these topics, it is enough to tell you through fellowship what kind of attitude you should uphold, and how you should approach them according to God's words and the principles. At the very least, the practice you should uphold is to let go of that which is related to these topics, and to not hold them in your heart or maintain them as a normal way of life. What you should do most is let go and not be disturbed or bound by them. You should not judge your life and death, fortune and calamity based on them, and of course you certainly should not face or choose your future path based on them. If you see a black cat when you go out, and you say, "Is today going to be unfortunate? Will something unlucky happen?" how's this viewpoint? (It's not correct.) What can a cat do to you? Even if there are superstitious sayings about it, these have nothing to do with you, so there's no need to be afraid. Don't even be afraid of a black tiger, let alone a black cat. Everything is in God's hands, and you should not fear Satan or any evil spirits, not to mention a black cat. If you have no taboos in your heart, only pursue the truth, and believe that everything is in God's hands, even if there are certain sayings about it or it may bring you misfortune, you don't need to worry. For example, one day you suddenly hear an owl hooting at your bedside. In Chinese folklore, it is said, "Don't be afraid of the owl's hoot, be afraid of the owl's laughter." This owl is both hooting and laughing, which scares you to death and affects you a little in your heart. But consider for a minute, "What is meant to happen will happen, and what is not meant to happen, God will not allow. I am in God's hands, and so is everything else. I am not afraid or affected by this. I will live as I should, pursue the truth, practice God's words, and submit to all of God's orchestrations. This can never change!" When nothing can disturb you, then that is correct. If one day you have a bad dream, you lose your teeth, your hair falls out, you break a bowl, see yourself dead, and every other bad thing happens simultaneously in one dream, none of these scenes being good omens for you—how will you react? Will you feel depressed? Will you be upset? Will you be affected? In the past, you might have felt upset for a month or two, and finally nothing happened, so you could breathe a sigh of relief. But now, you are only slightly disturbed, and as soon as you think that everything is in God's hands, your heart quickly calms down. You come before God with a submissive attitude, and this is correct. Even if these bad omens really lead to something bad happening, there is a way to resolve it. How can you resolve it? Aren't bad things also in God's hands? Without God's permission, Satan and the devils cannot harm even

one hair on your body. Especially in matters involving life and death, it is not up to it to decide. Without God's permission, these big and small matters will not take place. So, no matter what bad phenomena you witness in a dream one night, or anything unusual you may feel in your body, don't worry, don't feel uneasy, and certainly don't consider avoiding, rejecting, or resisting. Don't try to use human methods like voodoo dolls, holding séances, drawing lots, fortune telling, or seeking information online to avoid these risks. There's no need for any of that. It is possible that your dream indicates that something bad really will happen, such as going bankrupt, your stocks falling, your business being taken over by others, being arrested by the government during a gathering, being reported while spreading the gospel, and so on. So what? Everything is in God's hands; don't be afraid. Don't be concerned, don't grieve, and don't fear any bad things that have not yet happened, and of course don't resist or oppose the occurrence of any bad things. Do what a created being should do, fulfill your responsibilities and obligations as a created being, and take the position and perspective that a created being should have—this is the attitude that everyone should have when facing things; that is, accepting and obeying, submitting to His orchestrations without complaints. In this way, any religious, traditional, or superstitious sayings or consequences will not be a problem for you, and will not cause any disturbance; you will truly come out from under Satan's power and from the influence of darkness, not being controlled by the influence of darkness or by any thoughts of Satan. Your thoughts, your soul, your whole being will be conquered and gained by God's words. Isn't this freedom? (Yes.) This is complete freedom, living in liberation and freedom, and having the likeness of a human. How great is that!

The content involved in today's fellowship is basically this. As for certain taboos in the habits of daily life, for example, what food not to eat when experiencing certain illnesses, and some people can't eat spicy food because they tend to have excessive internal heat, these do not involve how one comports themselves or any thoughts and viewpoints, much less do they involve the path one takes. These are not within the scope of our fellowship. The subject matter of our fellowship involving family conditioning has to do with people's thoughts and viewpoints, their normal way of life and rules for living, as well as their thoughts, viewpoints, positions, and perspectives toward various things. By resolving these incorrect thoughts, viewpoints and attitudes in every respect, the next thing for individuals to enter into is to seek and accept correct thoughts, viewpoints, attitudes, and perspectives toward things. Alright, that's all for the fellowship on today's topic. Goodbye!

March 25, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (16)

What was fellowshiped on at the last gathering? (At the last gathering, God mainly fellowshiped about letting go of the conditioning of one's family with respect to tradition, superstition, and religion. God fellowshiped in detail on some superstitious sayings such as "Dumplings for departing, noodles for returning," and "Twitching on the left eye forecasts fortune but twitching on the right eye forecasts disaster," as well as the effect that some traditional customs related to Chinese New Year and other holidays have on people. At the same time, God fellowshiped on the correct way for us to approach these traditional and superstitious sayings and practices, which is to believe that some events will indeed occur, while also believing that everything is in God's hands. Regardless of what these sayings may indicate or what events may occur, we all must adopt an accepting and submissive attitude and be able to put ourselves at the mercy of God's orchestration and arrangement.) These were the basic elements of our fellowship at the last gathering. In terms of the content relating to the traditions, superstitions, and religions that families condition into people, we fellowshiped in detail on some things that people encounter in their daily lives. Although the content of our fellowship only covered the traditions, superstitions, and religions involved in the daily lives of Chinese people that we are all familiar with, and it isn't representative of every nation and race, the traditions, superstitions, and religions clung to by people who live in different regions and among different races are the same as these in nature—they all observe some traditions, living habits, and superstitious sayings that have been passed down from their ancestors. Regardless of whether these superstitious things are a psychological effect of people's minds or if they are objectively real, in short, your attitude toward them should be to clearly recognize the primary thought or essence behind these superstitions. At the same time, you should not be influenced or disturbed by them. Instead, you should believe that everything about people is in the hands of God, that it is not superstitions that manipulate people, and that it certainly is not superstitions that dictate people's fates or their everyday lives. Regardless of whether superstitions are real or not, regardless of whether they are efficacious or true, in any case, when dealing with such matters, people should have a principle that aligns with the truth. They should not be enchanted or controlled by these superstitions, and they certainly should not let them interfere with the normal goals of their pursuit or their practice of the principles. Among the topics of tradition, superstition, and religion, superstition creates the greatest interference and exerts the greatest influence on people's lives, thoughts, and viewpoints on various matters. People generally dare not give up these superstitious sayings and definitions, and the life problems that these superstitions create are never solved. The fact that people dare not break through the shackles of these superstitious statements in their daily lives proves that they do not have enough faith in God yet. They still have not truly seen through to or accurately understood the fact of God's sovereignty over all things

and His sovereignty over the fate of mankind. Therefore, when people encounter a superstitious saying or some feelings that relate to superstition, they will be bound hand and foot. Especially when major events relating to life and death, their fortunes, or the life and death of their loved ones are involved, people are shackled by these so-called superstitious taboos and statements even more, and, to a considerable degree, they are incapable of freeing themselves. They are constantly afraid that they will break a taboo and it will come true, that some misfortune might find them, and that something bad might happen to them. When it comes to superstition, people are always unable to see through to the essence of the issue, and they are even less capable of breaking free from the shackles of all kinds of superstitious statements. Of course, they are also unable to see through to the influence that superstition has on people's lives. From the perspective of human behavior and from people's thoughts and views on superstitions, the consciousness and perspectives of their thoughts are still plagued by Satan to a great extent, and controlled by a kind of invisible force from outside of the material world. Therefore, while people follow God and accept His words, they are still controlled by superstitious sayings that relate to their fortunes, to life and death, and to their existences. That is to say, deep within their thoughts, they still believe that these superstitious statements are truly real. What does it mean for them to believe this? It means that people are still being controlled by the invisible claws behind these superstitions, rather than truly recognizing that their fates are ruled over and orchestrated by God's hand. It also means that they are not perfectly happy or at ease putting their fates in God's hands, but rather they are being involuntarily controlled by Satan. For example, the daily lives, rules of survival, notions, and so on of people who regularly do business, people who often travel, and people who used to somewhat believe in superstitious activities and sayings such as face-reading, the eight trigrams and the I Ching, the studies of yin and yang, and the like, are deeply influenced, controlled, and manipulated by these superstitions. That is to say, no matter what they do, it needs to have a theoretical basis that derives from superstition. For example, when they go out, they have to see what is said on the calendar, and whether there are any taboos. When conducting business, signing contracts, buying or selling houses, and so on, they absolutely have to consult the calendar that day. If they don't, they feel uncertain and they don't know what might happen. They only feel certain and have peace of mind when they act and make decisions after consulting the calendar. Furthermore, because a few bad things happen as a result of them breaking some taboos, their knowledge and belief that these superstitions are real subsequently becomes more definitive, and they become bound by these superstitions. They believe more strongly that people's fates, fortunes, and life and death are controlled by superstitious sayings and that in the unseen, mystical world there is an invisible, big hand controlling their own fortunes and controlling their own life and death. Therefore, they fervently believe in all superstitious sayings, particularly those closely related to their lives and survival, to the extent that

after believing in God, although they verbally admit and believe that people's fates are in the hands of God, they are often involuntarily disturbed and controlled by various superstitious statements in the depths of their hearts. Some people even mix up these so-called life taboos—what conflicts with what, what is doomed to happen in one's fate, and other such superstitious statements—with the truth principles, and abide by them. These attitudes that people harbor toward superstitions severely impact the attitudes that they hold toward the truth and God's words in the presence of God. They also severely affect the attitudes that people hold as created beings toward the Creator, and, of course, they affect God's attitude toward those people. This is because while people follow God, they are still willingly and involuntarily being controlled and disturbed by various thoughts and sayings that involve superstition, which were instilled in them by Satan. At the same time, it is also difficult for people to let go of these different thoughts and sayings that relate to superstition.

Among the things that families condition into people, superstitions, in fact, interfere with people to the most severe degree, and form the most profound and lasting effects on them. Therefore, when it comes to superstitions, people should investigate and come to know them one by one in their real lives, and see whether they have received any kind of conditioning or influence from their close families, extended families, or clans with regard to superstition. If they have, they should let go of these superstitions one by one, instead of clinging to them, as these things have no connection to the truth. When the practice of a traditional way of living frequently reveals itself in a person's daily life, it can make them obediently and involuntarily come under Satan's control. What's more, superstitious sayings that influence people's thoughts are even more capable of keeping people firmly controlled under the power of Satan. Therefore, besides traditions and religions, any thoughts, views, sayings, or rules related to superstition should be promptly let go of, and not clung to. With God, there are no taboos. God's words, requirements of humanity, and will are clearly expressed in the word of God. Moreover, everything that God tells people or demands of them in His words pertains to the truth and does not contain any strange elements. God only tells people clearly and straightforwardly how to act and what principles to abide by in what matters. There aren't any taboos and there aren't any finicky details or sayings. What people should abide by is to act based on the truth principles according to their own actual circumstances. To practice God's words and abide by the truth principles, you do not need to look at the date or time; there are no taboos. There's also no need to consult a calendar, much less a horoscope, or whether it is a full moon or a new moon that day; you do not need to worry about these things. Under God's dominion and within God's sovereignty, people are free and liberated. Their hearts are calm, joyful, and at peace, and not filled with panic or fear, and certainly not repression. Panic, fear, and repression are just feelings that are brought about by various superstitious sayings. The truth, God's words, God's requirements, and the work of the Holy Spirit bring people peace and joy, freedom and

liberation, relaxation and happiness. Yet, superstition brings people the exact opposite. It binds you hand and foot, preventing you from doing this or that, stopping you from eating this or that. Whatever you do is wrong and whatever you do involves a taboo, and everything must be in accordance with the sayings of the old almanac. What time it is in the lunar calendar, what can be done on which day, whether you can go out—even haircuts, bathing, changing clothes, and seeing people all involve their own taboos. In particular, weddings and funerals, moving house, going out on errands, and looking for a job depend even more on the almanac. Satan uses all kinds of superstitious and bizarre sayings to tightly bind people's hands and feet. What is its purpose in doing so? (To control people.) To put it in modern terms, it's making its presence felt. What does that mean? It means to let people know of its presence, to let them know that these claims about taboos that it puts forward are real, that it has the final say, that it can do these things, and that if you don't listen it will give you something to look at. How does that allegory go? It goes: "An old lady puts on lipstick—to give you something to look at." It means that if you don't listen or if you violate this taboo, then you will just have to wait and see, and you will have to bear the consequences. If people do not believe in God, they are afraid of these taboos, because after all, people are of the flesh, and they cannot fight all of the various forms of devils and Satan in the spiritual world. But now that you have returned before God, everything about you, including your thoughts and every day of your life, is under God's control. God watches over you and protects you. You live and exist under God's dominion, and you are not in Satan's grasp. Therefore, you no longer need to abide by these taboos. On the contrary, if you still fear that Satan can harm you, or that bad things will happen to you if you don't listen to Satan or believe in the taboo things spoken of in superstitions, this proves that you still believe that Satan can control your fate. At the same time, it also proves that you are willing to submit to Satan's manipulation and are unwilling to accept God's sovereignty. Satan does all this to let people know that it really exists. It wants to use its magical powers to control humanity, to control every living thing. The purpose of controlling these living things is to ruin them, and the purpose and final result of it ruining them is for it to devour them. Of course, the purpose of controlling them is also to make people worship it. If the devil Satan wants to make its presence felt, it needs to demonstrate some effectiveness. For example, it can turn an egg into feces. This egg is given to an evil spirit's altar, and if you are hungry and want to eat it, and you try to snatch it from the devil, it will turn the egg into feces to let you know its power. You will become afraid of it and dare not compete with it for food. If one thing makes you afraid of it, and then another thing makes you afraid of it, over time you will begin to blindly believe in it. If you blindly believe in it for long enough, you will start to worship it from the depths of your heart. Aren't these the goals of Satan's actions? Satan acts precisely for these goals. Regardless of whether it is in the south or the north, and regardless of which race of humans it is, they all worship evil and unclean spirits on bended knee. Why do they worship them on bended knee? Why can those evil and

unclean spirits that they worship on bended knee continuously have incense burned for them, from one generation to the next? If you say they aren't real, then why do so many people believe in them and continue to burn incense for them, to kowtow to them, to make vows to them and then fulfill their vows, generation after generation? Isn't it because those evil and unclean spirits have done something? If you don't listen to the words of the evil spirits, they will make you fall ill, make things go wrong for you, cause disasters to befall you, and make your family's cows sick and unable to plow the fields, and even cause car accidents to happen to your family. They will look for ways to trouble you, and the more they do, the more troubles you will have. You can't refuse to comply, and, in the end, you will have no choice but to worship them on bended knee, and you will willingly bow your head to submit to them, at which point, they will be happy. From then on, you will belong to them. Look at those people in society being controlled by fox spirits or by the various figures in the spirit world who appear on altars. What do we call this? We call it being possessed by evil spirits and being inhabited by evil spirits. Among the common people this is called being controlled by a spirit or having one's body taken over by something. When evil spirits start looking for bodies to take over, their targets are unwilling to let them do so, so the evil spirits interfere with and disturb them, causing accidents and trouble to come about in their families. Those who are in business are made to suffer losses and never have any customers; they are obstructed to the point that they can't get by and making any progress is very difficult for them. In the end, they submit and agree. After they agree, the evil spirits use their physical bodies to do things, to perform some signs and wonders, to draw other people in, to treat illnesses, to read fortunes, to even help summon spirits of the dead, and so on. Aren't evil spirits using these means to deceive, corrupt, and control people?

If believers in God hold the same views and opinions as unbelievers regarding these superstitious sayings, what is the nature of this? (It is defying and blaspheming God.) That's right, this response is very accurate, it is a serious blasphemy against God! You follow God and say that you believe in Him, but at the same time, you are being controlled and disturbed by superstitions. You are even capable of following the thoughts instilled in people by superstitions, and even more seriously, some of you are afraid of these thoughts and facts that involve superstitions. This is the greatest blasphemy against God. Not only are you unable to bear witness for God, but you are also following Satan in resisting God's sovereignty—this is a blasphemy against God. Do you understand? (Yes.) The essence of people believing in superstitions or following superstitions is to blaspheme against God, so shouldn't you let go of the various kinds of conditioning that superstitions have on you? (Yes.) The simplest way to practice letting go of them is to not let yourself be disturbed by them, regardless of if those superstitions are real or not, and no matter what they are going to bring about. Even if the statements made by superstitions about a certain thing are objectively real, you should not be disturbed or controlled by them. Why? Because everything is orchestrated by God. Even

if Satan can accomplish something, it is done with God's permission. Without God's permission, as God has said, Satan does not even dare to touch a single hair on your head. This is a fact, and it is a truth that people should believe in. Therefore, no matter which of your eyelids twitch, or if you have dreams about your teeth falling out, losing your hair, or death, or any kind of nightmare, you should believe that these things are in the hands of God, and you should not be influenced or disturbed by them. No one can change the things that God wants to accomplish, and no one can change the things that God has ordained. Things that are ordained and planned by God are facts that have already been accomplished. Regardless of whether you have a premonition or what kind of omens these devils and Satan of the spiritual world give you, you should not be disturbed by them. Just believe that all of this is in God's hands, and that people should submit to God's orchestration and arrangement. The things that are about to happen or things that cannot happen are all within God's control and within His ordination. No one can change them, and less still can anyone interfere with them. This is a fact. It is the Creator that people should worship on bended knee, not any force in the spiritual world that can make superstitions come true or be restored. No matter how vast the magic powers that the devils and Satan possess are, no matter what miracles they can perform, or whatever things they can make come true, or what person's premonitions and what superstitious sayings they can turn into reality, none of this means that they hold people's fates in their hands. What people worship on bended knee and believe in should not be the devils and Satan, but the Creator. These are the things that people should understand when it comes to the topic of family conditioning involving traditions, superstitions, and religions. In short, whether it involves tradition, superstition, or religion, as long as something has nothing to do with God's words, the truth, or God's requirements for people, then people should abandon it and let it go. Regardless of whether it is a lifestyle or a kind of thinking, or whether it is a rule or a theory, as long as it does not involve the truth, it is something that people should discard. For example, in people's notions, things to do with religion, such as Christianity, Catholicism, Judaism, and so on, are considered to be relatively noble and sacred in comparison to superstition, tradition, or idolatry. People feel some admiration or favor for them in their notions and in the depths of their minds, but even so, people should let go of symbols, holidays, and tokens related to religion and should not overly cherish them or treat them the same as the truth, worshiping them on bended knee, or even reserving a place for them in their hearts. This should not be done. Religious symbols, religious activities, religious holidays, some iconic religious things, as well as some relatively noble sayings in religion, and so on, all fall within the scope of the topic of religion that we have spoken about. In short, the purpose of saying all this is to make you understand one fact: When it comes to things involving superstition, tradition, and religion, no matter whether they are noble or relatively strange, as long as they do not involve the truth, as long as they have nothing to do with the truth, they should all be let go of, and people should not cling

to them. Of course, topics that violate the truth principles should especially be abandoned and they absolutely must not be kept. People should categorically let go of all these things that come from the conditioning and influence of their families, one by one, and not allow themselves to be affected by them. For example, when you meet some brothers and sisters at Christmastime, as soon as you see them you say, “Merry Christmas! Happy Christmas!” Is it good to say: “Merry Christmas”? (No, it’s not.) Is it appropriate to say, “Since it commemorates the day when Jesus was born, shouldn’t we take the day off and do nothing at all, and no matter how busy we are with our work and duties, shouldn’t we stop and concentrate on commemorating the most memorable day in that past period of God’s work?” (No, it is not appropriate.) Why is it not appropriate? (Because it is work that God did in the past, and it is something that has nothing to do with the truth.) Doctrinally, this is the case. In theory, you have grasped the root of this issue, but what about in reality? This is the simplest matter, and you can’t give Me an answer. God does not like it when people do such things; He detests seeing it. It’s as simple as that. During the holiday celebrations, unbelievers say, “Happy New Year! Happy Christmas!” If they greet Me, I just nod and say, “You too!” meaning “Merry Christmas to you too.” I go through the motions of this greeting, and that’s it. But I never say this when I meet brothers and sisters. Why is that? Because it is a holiday of unbelievers, a commercial holiday. In the West, almost every holiday, whether traditional or man-made, is actually related to commerce and linked to the economy. Even for some nations with long histories, their holidays are merely related to tradition and have gradually evolved into various commercial activities since the 20th century, and are excellent business opportunities for merchants. Regardless of whether these holidays are commercial or traditional, in any case, they have nothing to do with people who believe in God. No matter how enthusiastic unbelievers or even religious individuals may be about these holidays or how grand and magnificent these holidays are in whichever country or nation, they don’t have anything to do with those of us who follow God and they are not holidays that we should observe, let alone celebrate or commemorate. Let alone the traditional holidays that come from unbelievers, no matter from what race, ethnic group, or time period, they have nothing to do with us. Even anniversaries that relate to each period and each segment of the three stages of God’s work have nothing to do with us. For example, the holidays from the Age of Law have nothing to do with us, and Easter, Christmas, and so on from the Age of Grace certainly have nothing to do with us. By fellowshiping about these things, what is it that I want to make people understand? That God does not observe holidays or any regulations in the things that He does. He acts freely and liberated, without any taboos, and He never commemorates any holidays. Even if it is the beginning, the end, or a special day of God’s past work, God never commemorates it. God does not commemorate and does not pointedly make people aware of these dates, days, or times. In one respect, this tells people that God does not commemorate these days, that God does not care about these days. In another

respect, it tells people that there is no need for them to commemorate or celebrate these days, that they should not keep these days. People don't need to remember any days or times that relate to God's work, let alone commemorate them. What do people need to do? They need to submit to God's orchestration and accept God's sovereignty under His guidance. They need to accept the truth and obey the truth in their daily lives. It's as simple as that. In this way, won't life be easier and more pleasant for people? (Yes.) Therefore, fellowshiping on these matters actually brings liberation and freedom to every person, and not bondage. Because in one respect, these topics are objective facts and true things that people should understand, and in another respect, they also free people and allow them to let go of these things they should not adhere to. At the same time, they also let people know that these things do not represent the truth, and that there is only one way of God that people should adhere to, and that is the truth. Do you understand? (Yes.)

When it comes to the topic of family, in addition to letting go of the conditioning of one's family, there are other aspects that people should let go of. We previously fellowshiped on the conditioning that family has on one's thinking, and then we fellowshiped on the various sayings about life that are conditioned into people by their families. All families provide people with a stable life and room for growth. They also provide people with a sense of security, something to depend on, and a source of basic necessities during the process of their growth. In addition to the fulfillment of their emotional needs, people also get their material needs fulfilled by their families. Of course, they also receive life necessities and some general life knowledge that they need while growing up. There are many things that people get from their families, so for each individual, family is a part of life that is difficult to cut off. The benefits that family brings people are numerous, but looking at it from the perspective of the content of our fellowship, the various negative influences, and the negative life attitudes and perspectives that family brings upon people are also numerous. That is to say, while your family brings you many essential things for your physical life, providing for your basic needs, and giving you an emotional anchor and support, at the same time, it also brings you some unnecessary troubles. Of course, it is difficult for people to escape from and let go of these troubles before they understand the truth. To a certain extent, your family brings both great and small disturbances into your daily life and existence, which makes your feelings toward your family often complex and contradictory. Since your family satisfies your emotional needs while also interfering with your life on an emotional level, the term "family" evokes complex and difficult-to-articulate thoughts for most people. You feel full of nostalgia, attachment, and, of course, gratitude toward your family. But at the same time, the entanglements brought upon you by your family make you feel that it is a great source of trouble. That is to say, after a person becomes an adult, their concept, thoughts, and perspectives on their family become relatively complex. If they completely let go, abandon, or stop thinking about their family, their

conscience will not be able to bear it. If they do think about their family, reminisce, and wholeheartedly throw themselves into it like when they were a child, they will feel unwilling to do so. People often experience this kind of state, this kind of thought, view, or condition when dealing with their families, and these thoughts and views or conditions also come from the conditioning of their families. This is the topic that we will fellowship on today: the burden that families bring upon people.

Just now, we fellowshiped about how family often makes a person feel conflicted and discomforted. They want to let go completely, but feel a sense of blame in their conscience and do not have the heart. If they don't let go, but rather wholeheartedly invest in their family and integrate with them, they often feel at a loss on what to do since some of their views are at odds with their family. So, people feel that it is particularly difficult to deal with their family; they cannot reach total compatibility with them, but they also cannot completely cut them out. Today, then, let us fellowship on how a person should handle their relationship with their family. This topic involves some burdens that come from their family, which is the third topic in the content of letting go of family—letting go of the burdens that come from one's family. This is an important topic. What are some of the things you are able to understand related to burdens coming from the family? Are they concerned with one's responsibilities, obligations, filial piety, and so on? (Yes.) Burdens coming from family involve the responsibilities, obligations, and filial piety that a person should fulfill for their family. On one hand, these are the responsibilities and obligations that a person should fulfill, but on the other hand—in certain circumstances and with certain individuals—they become disturbances in a person's life, and these disturbances are what we call burdens. When it comes to burdens from the family, we can discuss it from two aspects. One aspect is parental expectations. Every parent or elder has varying expectations, large and small, for their children. They hope their children will study hard, act well-behaved, excel in school, and be straight-A students, and not slack off. They want their children to be respected by teachers and classmates, and for their grades to regularly be above 80. If the child scores a 60, they will be beaten, and if they score below 60, they must face the wall and think about their mistakes, or are made to stand still as punishment. They will not be allowed to eat, sleep, watch TV, or play on the computer, and the nice clothes and toys that were promised before will no longer be bought for them. Every set of parents has various expectations for their children and places great hopes on them. They hope their children will be successful in life, make rapid advances in their careers, and bring honor and glory to their ancestors and family. No parents want their children to become beggars, farmers, or even robbers and bandits. Parents also don't want their children to become second-class citizens after entering society, to pick through garbage, hawk wares on sidewalks, be a peddler, or be looked down upon by others. Regardless of whether these expectations of parents can be realized by their children, in any case, parents have all kinds of expectations for their children. Their expectations are the projection of what they think are good and noble

things or pursuits onto their children, vesting them with hope, hoping that they can fulfill these parental wishes. So what do these desires from parents inadvertently create for their children? (Pressure.) They create pressure, and what else? (Burdens.) They become pressure and they also become shackles. Since parents have expectations for their children, they will discipline, guide, and educate their children according to those expectations; they will even invest in their children to fulfill their expectations, or pay any price for them. For example, parents hope that their children will excel in school, be at the top of the class, score above 90 on every test, always be number one—or, at the very worst, never rank below fifth place. After expressing these expectations, aren't parents also making certain sacrifices at the same time to help their children reach these goals? (Yes.) In order for their children to achieve these goals, the children will wake up early in the morning to review lessons and memorize texts, and their parents will also get up early to accompany them. On hot days they will help fan their children, make them cold drinks, or buy ice cream for them to eat. They will get up first thing in the morning to prepare soy milk, fried dough sticks, and eggs for their children. Especially during exams, parents will have their children eat a fried dough stick and two eggs, hoping that this will help them score a 100. If you say, "I can't eat all this, just one egg is enough," they'll say, "Silly child, you'll only score ten points if you eat one egg. Eat another one for Mommy. Try your best; if you manage to eat this one, you'll score a hundred points." The child says, "I just got up, I can't eat yet." "No, you have to eat! Be good and listen to your mother. Mommy is doing this for your own good, so go ahead and eat it for your mother." The child contemplates, "Mom cares so much. Everything she does is for my own good, so I'll eat it." What is eaten is an egg, but what is actually swallowed? It's pressure; it's reluctance and unwillingness. The eating is good and their mother's expectations are high, and from the standpoint of humanity and conscience one should accept them, but based on reason, one should resist this kind of love and not accept this way of doing things. But, alas, there is nothing you can do. If you don't eat, she will get angry, and you will get beaten, scolded, or even cursed. Some parents say, "Look at you, so useless that even eating an egg takes so much effort. One fried dough stick and two eggs, isn't that a hundred points? Isn't this all for your own good? But you still can't eat it—if you can't eat it you'll be begging for food in the future. Suit yourself!" There are also some children who really can't eat, but their parents force them to eat, and afterward they throw it all up. The vomiting itself isn't a big deal, but their parents get even angrier, and the children not only don't receive sympathy or understanding, they also get reproached. Along with getting reproached, they feel even more like they let their parents down and blame themselves even more. Life's not easy for these children, is it? (It's not easy.) After vomiting, you secretly cry in the bathroom, pretending to still be vomiting. When you come out of the bathroom, you quickly wipe away your tears, making sure your mother doesn't see. Why? If she sees, you'll be scolded and even cursed: "Look at you, so useless; what are you crying for? You good-for-nothing, you can't even eat such

a nice meal. What do you want to eat? If you had to go without your next meal, then you'd be able to eat this one, wouldn't you? You were born to suffer! If you don't study hard, if you don't do well on exams, you'll end up begging for food!" Every word spoken by your mother seems like it's meant to educate, yet it also seems like reproach—but what is it that you feel? You feel your parents' expectations and love. So, in this situation, no matter how harshly your mother speaks, you have to accept and swallow her words with tears in your eyes. Even if you can't eat, you have to endure eating, and if you feel nauseous, you still have to eat. Is this life easy to endure? (No, it's not.) Why is it not? What kind of education do you receive from your parents' expectations? (The need to perform well in exams and have a successful future.) You have to show promise, you have to live up to your mother's love and her hard work and sacrifices, and you have to fulfill your parents' expectations and not let them down. They love you so much, they have given everything for you, and they are doing everything for you with their very lives. So, what have all their sacrifices, their education, and even their love become? They become something you must repay, and at the same time, they become your burden. This is how the burden comes about. Regardless of whether parents do these things out of instinct, out of love, or due to societal imperatives, in the end, using these methods to educate and treat you, and even instilling all kinds of ideas in you, does not bring your soul freedom, liberation, comfort, or joy. What is it they bring you? It is pressure, it is fear, it is the condemnation and uneasiness of your conscience. What else? (Shackles and constraints.) Shackles and constraints. What's more, under such expectations from your parents, you can't help but live for their hopes. In order to meet their expectations, in order to not fail their expectations, and in order not to let them lose hope in you, you study every subject diligently and conscientiously every day, and do everything they ask you to do. They don't let you watch TV, so you obediently resist watching it, even though you really want to. Why are you able to resist? (For fear of disappointing my parents.) You're afraid that if you don't listen to your parents, your academic performance will really decline, and you won't be able to get into a prestigious university. You are uncertain about your own future. It's as if without the control, reproach, and suppression from your parents, you don't know what lies ahead on your path. You dare not break free from their constraints, and you dare not break free from their shackles. You can only let them lay down all kinds of rules for you, let them manipulate you, and you dare not defy them. In one sense, you have no certainty about your future; in another, out of conscience and humanity, you are unwilling to defy them and you are unwilling to hurt them. As their child, you feel that you should listen to them because everything they do is for your own good, for your future and for your prospects. So, when they set all kinds of rules for you, you just silently obey them. Even if a hundred times over you're unwilling in your heart, you still can't help but take orders from them. They don't allow you to watch TV or read recreational books, so you don't watch or read them. They don't let you make friends with this or that classmate, so you don't befriend them. They tell you what time

to get up, so you get up at that time. They tell you what time to rest, so you rest at that time. They tell you how long to study, so you study for that long. They tell you how many books to read, how many extracurricular skills you should learn, and as long as they provide the financial means for you to learn, you let them dictate and control you. In particular, some parents place some special expectations on their children, hoping that their children can surpass them, even more hoping that their children can fulfill a wish that they were unable to complete. For example, some parents may have wanted to become dancers themselves, but due to various reasons—such as the era they grew up in or family circumstances—they were unable to fulfill that wish in the end. So, they project that wish onto you. On top of already requiring you to be among the best in your studies and get into a prestigious university, they also enroll you in dance classes. They make you learn various dance styles outside of school, learn more in dance class, practice more at home, and be the absolute best in your class. In the end, not only do they demand that you get admitted to a prestigious university, but they also demand that you become a dancer. Your choices are either to become a dancer or go to a prestigious university, followed by going to graduate school and then getting a Ph.D. You only have these two paths to choose from. In their expectations, in one aspect, they hope you will study hard in school, get into a prestigious university, stand out among your peers, and have a prosperous and glorious future. In another, they project their unfulfilled wishes onto you, hoping that you can fulfill them on their behalf. In this way, in terms of academics or your future career, you bear two burdens at the same time. In one sense, you have to live up to their expectations and repay them for everything they have done for you, striving to eventually stand out among your peers so they can enjoy a good life. In another sense, you have to fulfill the dreams that they couldn't accomplish in their youth and help them realize their wishes. It's exhausting, isn't it? (Yes.) Either one of these burdens is already more than enough for you to bear; either one would weigh on you and have you gasping for air. Especially in today's era of extremely fierce competition, the variety of demands parents place on their children are simply unbearable and inhuman; they're downright unreasonable. What do unbelievers call this? Emotional blackmail. No matter what unbelievers call it, they cannot solve this problem, and they cannot clearly explain the essence of this problem. They call it emotional blackmail, but what do we call it? (Shackles and burdens.) We call it burdens. When it comes to burdens, is it something a person should carry? (No.) It is something additional, something extra that you take up. It is not a part of you. It is not something that your body, heart, and soul have or need, but something added on. It comes from the outside, not from within yourself.

Your parents have all kinds of expectations for your studies and career choices. Meanwhile they've made various sacrifices, and invested a great deal of time and energy, so as to let you fulfill their expectations. For one thing, this is to help you fulfill their wishes; for another, it's also to satisfy their own expectations. Regardless of

whether your parents' expectations are reasonable or not, in short, these behaviors from parents, along with their views, attitudes, and methods, serve as invisible shackles for every individual. No matter if their pretext is that it's out of love for you, your future prospects, or for you to be able to live a nice life in the future, no matter what their pretexts are, in short, the objective of these demands, the methods of these demands, and the starting point in their thinking are a kind of burden for any individual. They are not a need of humanity. Since they are not a need of humanity, the consequences these burdens bring can only be to distort, pervert, and fragment one's humanity; they persecute, harm, and suppress one's humanity. These consequences are not benign, but malignant, and even affect a person's life. In their roles as parents, they require you to do various things that go against the needs of humanity, or some things that go against or transcend the instincts of humanity. For example, they may only allow their children to sleep for five or six hours a night as they are growing up. The children are not allowed to rest before 11 p.m., and they must get up at 5 a.m. They can't do any recreational activities, nor can they rest on Sundays. They must complete a certain amount of homework and do a certain amount of extracurricular reading, and some parents even insist that their children must learn a foreign language. In short, in addition to the courses taught in school, you must also study a number of additional skills and knowledge. If you don't study, you are not a good, obedient, hardworking, or sensible child; instead you are a worthless thing, a good-for-nothing, and a fool. Under the premise of hoping the best for their children, parents deprive you of the freedom to sleep, the freedom of your childhood, and also the happy moments of your childhood, while at the same time depriving you of all kinds of rights that you should have as a minor. At the very least, when your body needs rest—for example, you need seven to eight hours of sleep for your body to recover—they only let you rest for five to six hours, or sometimes you do sleep seven to eight hours, but there's one thing you cannot stand, which is your parents will incessantly nag you, or they'll tell you things like, "From now on, you don't have to go to school. Just stay home and sleep! Since you love sleeping, you can sleep your entire life away at home. Since you don't want to go to school, you'll be begging for food in the future!" Just this one time you didn't get up early and you're treated like this; isn't this inhumane treatment? (Yes.) So, in order to avoid such an awkward situation, you can only compromise and restrain yourself; you make sure to wake up at 5 a.m., and you only go to bed after 11 p.m. Do you willingly restrain yourself like this? Are you content to do it? No. You have no other choice. If you don't do what your parents ask, they might give you dirty looks or scold you. They won't beat you, they'll just tell you, "We threw your schoolbag in the trash. You don't have to go to school anymore. Just stay like this. When you turn 18, you can go be a trash picker!" With this deluge of criticism, they neither beat you nor scold you, but just provoke you like this, and you can't stand it. What can't you stand? You can't stand it when your parents say, "If you sleep an extra hour or two you will have to beg for food as a bum in the future." Deep down,

you feel particularly uneasy and sad about sleeping those extra two hours. You feel that you owe your parents for those two extra hours of sleep, that you've let them down after all the hard work they invested in you over so many years, as well as their earnest concerns for you. You hate yourself, thinking, "Why am I so worthless? What can I do with those two extra hours of sleep? Will it improve my grades or help me get into a prestigious university? How can I be so unmindful? When the alarm rings, I should just get up. Why did I snooze for a while longer?" You think it over: "I really am tired. I truly need to rest!" Then you ponder some more: "I can't think like this. Isn't thinking like this defying my parents? If I think like this, won't I really become a beggar in the future? To think this way is to let down my parents. I should listen to them and not be so willful." Under the various punishments and rules set by your parents, as well as their various demands—both reasonable and unreasonable—you become more and more compliant, but at the same time, everything your parents do for you unknowingly becomes shackles and a burden for you. Try as you might, you can't shake it off or hide from it; you can only carry this burden wherever you go. What burden is that? "Everything my parents do is for the sake of my future. I'm young and ignorant, so I must listen to my parents. Everything they do is right and good. They have suffered too much and invested too much for me. I should work hard for their sake, study hard, find a good job in the future and earn money to support them, give them a good life, and repay them. That's what I should do and what I should think." However, when you think about the ways your parents treated you, when you remember the difficult years you experienced, the happy childhood you lost, and especially the emotional blackmail by your parents, deep down you still feel that everything they did was not for the needs of your humanity, nor for the needs of your soul. It was a burden. Although you think this way, you never dared to hate, never dared to properly and squarely face it, and never dared to rationally examine everything your parents did or their attitude toward you in the way God told you. You never dared to treat your parents in the most proper way; isn't that so? (Yes.) Until now, in the matters of studying and choosing a career, have you discerned the effort and price your parents have paid for you, and what they ask you to do and what they claim you should pursue? (I didn't discern these things before and thought that what my parents did was out of love for me and for my future betterment. Now with God's fellowship I have a little discernment, so I don't see it that way.) So, what's behind this love? (It is shackles, bondage, and a burden.) In fact, it is the deprivation of human freedom and the deprivation of childhood happiness; it is inhumane suppression. If it were called abuse, you might not be able to accept this term from the standpoint of your conscience. So it can only be described as the deprivation of human freedom and childhood happiness, as well as a form of suppression of minors. If we were to say it's bullying, that wouldn't be quite apt. It's just that you are young and ignorant, and they have the final say in everything. They have complete control over your world and you unwittingly become their puppet. They tell you what to do so you do it. If they want you to study

dance, you need to study it. If you say, “I don’t like studying dance; I don’t enjoy it, I can’t keep up with the rhythm, and I have bad balance,” they will say, “Too bad. You have to study it because I like it. You have to do it for me!” You have to study even if you’re in tears. Sometimes your mother will even say, “Study dance for Mommy, listen to what your mother says. You’re young now and don’t understand, but when you grow up, you will get it. I’m doing this for your own good; you see, I didn’t have the resources when I was young, nobody paid for dance lessons for me. Mommy did not have a happy childhood. But you have it so good now. Your father and I earn and save money so you can study dance. You are like a little princess, a little prince. You are so fortunate! Mommy and Daddy are doing this because we love you.” How do you respond when you hear this? You’re speechless, right? (Yes.) Parents often believe that children don’t understand anything, and that whatever adults say is true; they think children cannot discern right from wrong or scrutinize what is correct for themselves. So, before their children have come of age, parents often say things that even they themselves don’t have much confidence in to mislead their children and numb their young hearts, forcing their children, willingly or unwillingly, to comply with their arrangements without any choice. Many more parents, when it comes to education, instilling ideas, and some things they demand their children do, often justify themselves, saying whatever they want. Moreover, basically 99.9 percent of parents do not use correct and positive methods to guide their children on how to do and understand everything. Instead, they forcefully instill their own one-sided preferences and things they think are good in their children and force them to accept it. Of course, 99.9 percent of the things that children accept not only do not align with the truth, but they are also not the thoughts and views that people ought to have. At the same time, they also do not align with the humanity needs for children at this age. For example, some five- or six-year-old children play with dolls, skip rope, or watch cartoons. Isn’t this normal? What are the parents’ only responsibilities in this situation? To supervise, regulate, provide positive guidance, help their children to not accept negative things during this period, and let them accept positive things that should be accepted by this age group. For instance, at this age, they should learn to get along with other children, love their family, and love their mother and father. Parents should educate them better, letting them understand that man comes from God, that they should be good children, and learn to listen to God’s words, and to pray when they are troubled or reluctant to obey, and other such positive aspects of education—the rest is about satisfying their childish interests. For example, children should not be blamed for wanting to watch cartoons and play with dolls. Some parents see their five- or six-year-old child watching cartoons and playing with dolls and reprimand them: “You’re useless! You don’t focus on studying or doing proper work at this age. What’s the use of watching cartoons? It’s all just mice and cats, can’t you do something better? Those cartoons are all about animals, can’t you watch something with people in it? When will you grow up? Throw that doll away! You’re too old to be playing with dolls. You’re so

useless!” Do you think children can understand what adults mean when they hear this? What would a child this age be doing if not playing with dolls or mud? Should they be building the atomic bomb? Writing software? Are they capable of that? At this age they should be playing with such things as blocks, toy cars, and dolls; that’s normal. When they are tired from playing, they should rest and be healthy and happy. When they act willfully or become impervious to reason, or when they deliberately cause trouble, adults should educate them: “You’re being thoughtless. This is not how a good child should act. God doesn’t like it, and Mommy and Daddy don’t like it either.” It is the responsibility of parents to counsel their children, not to use their own adult methods and insights, along with an adult’s desires and ambitions, to instill or impose something upon them. Regardless of the children’s age, the responsibilities parents should fulfill toward their children are simply to provide positive guidance, education, supervision, and then counseling. When parents see their children exhibiting some extreme thoughts, practices, and behaviors, they should give positive advisement and guidance to correct them, letting them know what is good and what is bad, what is positive and what is negative. This is the responsibility that parents should fulfill. In this way, under the proper methods of education and guidance of their parents, children will unconsciously learn many things they didn’t know before. Thus, when people accept many positive things and learn a bit about right and wrong from a young age, their soul and humanity will be normal and free—their soul will not be subjected to any damage or suppression. Regardless of their physical health, at least the mind is healthy and not distorted, because they grew up in a benign educational environment, not suppressed within a malignant one. As their children grow, the responsibilities and obligations that parents should fulfill are to not put pressure on their children, bind them, or interfere with their choices, adding one burden after another. Instead, as their children are growing, regardless of their children’s personality and caliber, the responsibility of the parents is to guide them in a positive and benign direction. When peculiar and improper language, behavior, or thoughts emerge from their children, parents should provide timely spiritual advisement and behavioral guidance and rectification. As for whether their children are willing to study, how well they study, how much interest they have in learning knowledge and skills, and what they can do when they grow up, these should be tailored to their natural endowments and preferences, and the orientation of their interests, thus allowing them to grow up healthily, freely and robustly during the process of their upbringing—this is the responsibility that parents should fulfill. Moreover, this is the attitude parents should have toward their children’s growth, studies, and career, rather than forcing their own wishes, aspirations, preferences, and even desires on their children for them to realize. In this way, for one thing, parents don’t have to make additional sacrifices; and for another, children can grow freely and acquire what they ought to learn from the correct and proper education of their parents. The most crucial point is for parents to treat their children correctly according to their talents, interests, and humanity; if they

treat their children according to the principle that “people’s fates are in God’s hands,” then the ultimate result will undoubtedly be good. Treating children according to the principle that “people’s fates are in God’s hands” is not about preventing you from managing your children; you should discipline them when they need to be disciplined, and be strict as necessary. Whether strict or lenient, the principle of treating children is, as we just said, allowing them to follow their natural course, giving some positive guidance and help, and then, according to the children’s actual circumstances, giving some assistance and support in terms of skills, knowledge or resources to the best of your ability. This is the responsibility that parents should fulfill, rather than forcing their children to do what they are unwilling to do, or to do anything that goes against humanity. In short, expectations for children should not be based on current social competition and needs, societal trends or claims, or various ideas about how people treat their children in society. They should above all else be based on God’s words and the principle that “everything is in God’s hands.” This is what people should do the most. As for what kind of people one’s children will become in the future, what kind of job they will choose, and what their material life will be like, in whose hands are these things? (God’s hands.) They are in God’s hands, not in the hands of parents, nor anyone else. If parents cannot control their own fate, can they control the fate of their children? If people cannot control their own fate, can their parents control it? So, as parents, people should not do foolish things when it comes to dealing with their children’s studies and careers. They should treat their children in a sensible way, not turning their own expectations into burdens for their children; not turning their own sacrifices, costs, and hardships into burdens for their children; and not turning the family into a purgatory for their children. This is a fact that parents should understand. Some of you may ask, “What kind of relationship should children have with their parents, then? Should they treat them as friends, colleagues, or maintain an elder-junior relationship?” You can handle it as you see fit. Let the children choose what they like and do what you think is best. These are all trivial matters.

How should children handle their parents’ expectations? If you encountered parents who emotionally blackmail their children, if you encountered such unreasonable and demonic parents, what would you do? (I would stop listening to their teachings; I would view things according to the word of God.) In one respect, you must perceive that their education methods, in terms of principles, are wrong, and the way they treat you is harmful to your humanity and also deprives you of your human rights. In another, you yourself should believe that people’s fates are in God’s hands. What you like to study, what you excel at, or what your human caliber is capable of achieving—these are all predestined by God, and no one can change them. Although your parents gave birth to you, they cannot change any of these things either. Therefore, no matter what your parents demand you to do, if it’s something you are unable to do, cannot achieve, or do not want to do, you can refuse. You can also reason with them and then make up for it in other aspects, assuaging their worries about you. You say: “Relax; people’s fates are

in God's hands. I will absolutely not walk the wrong path; I will definitely walk the right path. With God's guidance, I will surely be a genuine person, a good person. I will not disappoint your expectations for me, nor will I forget your kindness in raising me." How would parents react after hearing these words? If the parents are unbelievers or belong to the devil, they will become furious. Because when you say, "I will not forget your kindness in raising me and I will not disappoint you," they are just empty words. Have you accomplished this? Did you do what they asked? Are you able to stand out among your peers? Can you become a high-ranking official or make a fortune so that they can live a good life? Can you help them gain tangible benefits? (No.) It's unknown; these are all uncertainties. Regardless of whether they are angry, happy, or silently endure, what attitude should you have? People come into this world to fulfill the mission that God has entrusted to them. People should not live in order to satisfy their parents' expectations, to make them happy, to bring glory to them, or to let them have a prestigious life in front of others. This is not your responsibility. They raised you; no matter what it cost, they did so willingly. It was their responsibility and their obligation to raise you. As for how many expectations they placed on you, how much they suffered due to these expectations, how much money they spent, how many people rejected and looked down on them, and how much they sacrificed, it was all voluntary. You didn't ask for it; you didn't make them do it, and neither did God. They had their own motives for doing this. From their point of view, they only did it for themselves. On the outside, it was for you to have a good life and good prospects, but in fact it was to bring glory to them and not to disgrace them. Therefore, you are not obligated to repay them, nor are you obligated to fulfill their wishes and expectations of you. Why do you not have this obligation? Because this is not what God has you do; it is not an obligation He has given you. Your responsibility to them is to do what children should do when they need you, doing your best to fulfill your responsibilities as a child. Even though they are the ones who gave birth to you and raised you, your responsibilities toward them are only to do laundry, cook, and clean when they need you to wait on them, and to accompany them at their bedside when they are sick. That's all. You are not obligated to act upon whatever they say, and you are not obligated to be their slave. Furthermore, you are not obligated to undertake their unfulfilled wishes, right? (Right.)

There is another aspect of parents' expectations for their children, which is to inherit the family business or ancestral trade. For example, some families are families of painters; the rule passed down from their ancestors is that each generation must have someone who inherits this family enterprise and continues the family tradition. Let's say, in your generation, this role falls to you, but you don't like painting and have no interest in it; you prefer studying simpler subjects. In such a situation, you have the right to refuse. You are not obligated to inherit your family's traditions, and you have no obligation to inherit the family business or ancestral trade, such as martial arts, a particular craft or skill, and so on. You are not obligated to carry on what they ask you to inherit. In some

other families, every generation sings opera. In your generation, your parents make you learn to sing opera from a young age. You did learn it, but deep down in your heart you don't like it. Thus, if you were asked to choose a career, you would absolutely not engage in any career related to opera. You dislike this profession from the bottom of your heart; in such a case, you have the right to refuse. Because your fate is not in the hands of your parents—your choice of a career, the orientation of your interests, what you want to do, and what kind of path you want to take, are all in God's hands. All of this is orchestrated by God, not by any member of your family and certainly not by your parents. The role that parents play in any child's life is only to provide guardianship, care, and companionship as the child ages. In better cases, parents are able to provide positive guidance, education, and direction to their children. This is the only role they can fulfill. Once you grow up and become independent, the role of your parents is only to be an emotional pillar and emotional reliance. The day you become independent in thought and in lifestyle is the day your parents' responsibilities and obligations toward you are fulfilled; your relationship with them has thus moved on from that of educator and student, guardian and ward. Isn't this how it actually is? (Yes.) Some people's parents, relatives and friends do not believe in God; only they themselves believe in God. What's going on here? This has to do with God's ordaining. God has chosen you, not them; God makes use of their hands to raise you into adulthood and then brings you into God's family. As a child, the attitude you should hold toward the expectations of your parents is to discern between right and wrong. If the way they treat you is not in line with God's words or the fact that "people's fates are in God's hands," you can refuse their expectations and reason with your parents to make them understand. If you are still a minor and they forcefully suppress you, making you do what they demand, you can only silently pray to God and let Him open a way out for you. But if you are an adult, you can absolutely say to them: "No, I don't have to live according to the way you have set for me. I don't have to choose my path in life, my way of existence, and my goal of pursuit according to the way you have set for me. Your obligation to raise me has already been fulfilled. If we can get along with each other and have common pursuits and goals, then our relationship can stay as it was; but if we no longer share the same aspirations and goals, then we can just say goodbye to each other for now." How does that sound? Would you dare say this? Of course, there's no need to formally break off relations with your parents like this, but at the very least, in the depths of your heart, you should clearly see this point: Although your parents are the people closest to you, it is not they who truly gave you life, enabled you to walk the right path of life, and made you understand all the principles of conducting yourself. It is God. Your parents cannot provide you with the truth or give you any correct advice involving the truth. So, as for your relationship with your parents, no matter how much they have invested in you, or how much money and effort they have spent on you, you don't need to burden yourself with any feelings of guilt. Why? (Because this is the responsibility and obligation that parents have. If

parents do all of this so that their children can stand out among their peers and for the sake of fulfilling the parents' own wishes, these are their own intentions and motives; it is not what God ordained them to do. Therefore, there is no need to feel any guilt.) This is just one aspect. The other aspect is that you are currently walking the right path, you are pursuing the truth, and you are coming before the Creator to perform the duties of a created being; therefore, you should not have any feelings of guilt toward them. The responsibility toward you that they supposedly fulfilled was simply part of God's arrangements. If you were happy during the time they raised you, that was your good fortune. If you were unhappy, of course that was also God's arrangement. You should be thankful that today God has allowed you to leave and for letting you clearly see your parents' essence and what kind of people they are. You should have an accurate understanding of all this from deep within your heart, as well as an accurate solution and way to handle it. In this way, don't you feel more calm deep down? (Yes.) If you are more tranquil, then that is wonderful. In any case, in these matters, regardless of what demands your parents had for you before or what demands they have now, since you understand the truth and God's will, and since you understand what it is that God demands people should do—as well as what consequences your parents' expectations bring you—you should no longer feel burdened about this matter in any way. There is no need to feel you have disappointed your parents, or feel that because you chose to believe in God and perform your duties, you have failed to provide a better life for your parents and failed to accompany them and fulfill your filial responsibility to them, which left them feeling emotionally empty. There is no need for you to feel guilty about it. These are the burdens that parents bring to their children, and these are all things you should let go. If you truly believe that everything is in God's hands, then you should believe that the issue of how much hardship they suffer and how much happiness they enjoy throughout their lives is also in God's hands. Whether or not you are filial will not change anything—your parents will not suffer less because you are filial, and they will not suffer more because you are not filial. God preordained their fate long ago, and none of this will change because of your attitude toward them or the depth of feeling between you. They have their own fate. Regardless of whether they are poor or rich their entire lives, whether or not things go smoothly for them, or what kind of quality of life, material benefits, social status, and living conditions they enjoy, none of this has much to do with you. If you feel guilty toward them, if you feel you owe them something, and that you should be by their side, what would change even if you were by their side? (Nothing would change.) Your conscience might be clear and free of guilt. But if you are by their side every day, seeing them not believing in God, pursuing worldly things, and engaging in trivial conversations and gossip, how would you feel? Would you be comfortable in your heart? (No.) Can you change them? Can you save them? (No.) If they fall ill, and you have the means to care for them at their bedside and ease their suffering a bit, providing them some comfort as their child, then once they recover, they will feel

physically comforted as well. But if you mention one thing about believing in God, they can come back at you with eight or ten counterarguments, uttering fallacies repugnant enough to sicken you for two lifetimes. Outwardly, your conscience may be at peace, and you may feel that they didn't raise you in vain, that you're not an uncaring ingrate, and that you haven't given your neighbors anything to laugh at. But just because your conscience is at peace, does that mean you truly accept their various ideas, views, outlooks on life, and ways of living from deep within your heart? Are you truly compatible with them? (No.) Two types of people who walk different paths and hold different views, regardless of any physical or emotional relationship or connection they have, cannot change either side's point of view. It's fine if the two sides don't discuss things together, but as soon as they discuss things they start arguing, conflicts arise, and they will hate each other and become sick of each other. Though on the outside they are related by blood, on the inside they are enemies, two types of people as incompatible as water and fire. In that case, if you are still by their side, what on earth are you doing this for? Are you just looking for something to get upset about, or is it some other reason? You will feel regret each time you meet them, and this is called self-inflicted misery. Some people think: "It's been so many years since I saw my parents. In the past, they did some detestable things, blaspheming God, and opposing my belief in God. They're so much older now; they must have changed by now. So I shouldn't fuss over the bad things they did; they're all mostly forgotten anyway. Moreover, both emotionally and out of conscience, I miss them, and I wonder how they're doing. So I think I'll go back to check on them." But within a day of returning home, the disgust you felt toward them in the past comes back, and you regret it: "Is this called family? Are these my parents? Aren't they enemies? They were like that before, and they've still got the same character now; they haven't changed a bit!" How could they have changed? What they originally were is what they always will be. You thought they would have changed as they got older and you could have gotten along? There's no getting along with them. As soon as you enter the house upon returning, they'll look at what you're carrying in your hands to see if it's something expensive like abalone, sea cucumber, shark fin, or fish maw, or perhaps a designer bag and clothes, or gold and silver jewelry. As soon as they see you carrying two plastic bags, one with steamed buns and the other with a couple of bananas, they'll see that you're still poor and start nagging: "So-and-so's daughter went abroad and married a foreigner. The bracelets she buys them are pure gold and they show them off whenever they have the chance. So-and-so's son bought a car and takes his parents traveling and on trips overseas whenever he's free. They're all basking in the glory of their children! So-and-so's daughter never comes home empty-handed. She buys foot baths and massage chairs for her parents, and the clothes she buys are either silk or wool. They've got such filial children; all their caring wasn't for nothing! All we've raised are uncaring ingrates in this family!" Isn't this a slap in the face? (Yes.) Your steamed buns and bananas don't even register with them, and you still think about fulfilling your

responsibilities as a child and filial piety. Your parents love steamed buns and bananas and you haven't seen them in many years, so you buy these things to move them and make up for your guilty conscience. But upon returning, not only do you not get to make up for this guilt, but you also suffer criticism; overcome with dejection, you run out of the house. Was there any point in you going home to visit your parents? (No.) You haven't returned home in so long, but they don't miss you; they don't say: "It's enough just for you to come back. You don't need to buy anything. It's good to see that you're on the right path, living a healthy life, and safe in all respects. Being able to see each other and have a heartfelt conversation is satisfying enough." They don't care whether or not you've been doing well these years, or whether you've faced any difficulties or troubling matters for which you need your parents' help. They don't offer a single comforting word. But if they really did say such things, wouldn't you then be unable to leave? After they scold you, you straighten up and feel completely justified, without any guilt, thinking to yourself: "I've got to get out of here, this is truly a purgatory! They'll skin me, eat my flesh, and still want to drink my blood." The parental relationship is the most difficult relationship for someone to handle emotionally, but in fact, it's not entirely unmanageable. Only on the basis of understanding the truth can people treat this matter correctly and rationally. Do not start from the perspective of feelings, and do not start from the insights or the perspectives of worldly people. Instead, treat your parents in the proper manner according to God's words. What role do parents actually play, what do children actually mean to their parents, what attitude should children have toward their parents, and how should people handle and resolve the relationship between parents and children? People should not view these things based on feelings, nor should they be influenced by any wrong ideas or prevailing sentiments; they should be approached correctly based on God's words. If you fail to fulfill any of your responsibilities to your parents in the environment ordained by God, or if you do not play any role in their lives whatsoever, is that being unfilial? Will your conscience accuse you? Your neighbors, classmates, and relatives will all berate you and criticize you behind your back. They will call you an unfilial child, saying: "Your parents sacrificed so much for you, invested so much painstaking effort in you, and did so much for you ever since you were little, and you, being the ungrateful child you are, just disappear without a trace, not even sending word back that you're safe. Not only do you not come back for New Year, you don't even give a phone call or send a greeting to your parents." Every time you hear such words, your conscience bleeds and weeps, and you feel condemned. "Oh, they're right." Your face flushes with heat, and your heart trembles as if being pricked by needles. Have you had these types of feelings? (Yes, before.) Are the neighbors and your relatives right in saying that you are unfilial? (No. I'm not unfilial.) Explain your reasoning. (Although I haven't been by my parents' side during these years, or been able to satisfy their wishes like worldly people do, our walking this path of believing in God was preordained by God. It is the right path in life, and it is a righteous thing. That's why I say I wasn't being unfilial.)

Your reasoning is still based on the doctrines that people understood in the past; you lack an actual explanation and actual understanding. Who else wants to share their thoughts? (I remember when I first went abroad, every time I thought about how my family didn't know what I was doing overseas, how they probably criticized me and said I wasn't filial, that I was an unfilial daughter for not being there to take care of my parents—I felt bound and constricted by these thoughts. Each time I considered this, I felt that I owed my parents. But through God's fellowship today, I feel that my parents caring for me before was them fulfilling their parental responsibilities, that their kindness toward me was preordained by God, and that I should be thankful to God and repay His love. Now that I believe in God and walk the right path in life, which is a righteous thing, I should not feel indebted to my parents. Besides, whether or not my parents can enjoy the care of their children being by their side is also preordained by God. After understanding these things, I can somewhat let go of the sense of debt I felt in my heart.) Very good. First of all, most people choose to leave home to perform their duties in part because of the overarching objective circumstances, which necessitate them leaving their parents; they cannot stay by their parents' side to take care of them and accompany them. It's not that they willingly choose to leave their parents; this is the objective reason. For another thing, subjectively speaking, you go out to perform your duties not because you wanted to leave your parents and escape your responsibilities, but because of God's calling. In order to cooperate with God's work, accept His calling, and perform the duties of a created being, you had no choice but to leave your parents; you could not stay by their side to accompany them and take care of them. You didn't leave them to avoid responsibilities, right? Leaving them to avoid your responsibilities and having to leave them to answer God's calling and perform your duties—aren't these of two different natures? (Yes.) In your heart, you do have emotional attachments and thoughts for your parents; your feelings are not empty. If objective circumstances allow, and you are able to stay by their side while also performing your duties, then you would be willing to stay by their side, regularly taking care of them and fulfilling your responsibilities. But because of objective circumstances, you must leave them; you cannot remain at their side. It's not that you don't want to fulfill your responsibilities as their child, but that you can't. Isn't this different in nature? (Yes.) If you left home to avoid being filial and fulfilling your responsibilities, that is unfilial and lacks humanity. Your parents raised you, but you can't wait to spread your wings and quickly go off on your own. You don't want to see your parents, and you don't pay any regard when you hear about some difficulty they've encountered. Even if you have the means to help, you don't; you just pretend not to hear and let others say whatever they want about you—you simply don't want to fulfill your responsibilities. This is being unfilial. But is this the case now? (No.) Many people have left their counties, cities, provinces, or even their countries to perform their duties; they are already far away from their hometowns. Furthermore, it's not convenient for them to stay in touch with their families for various reasons. Occasionally, they inquire about their

parents' current situation from people who came from the same hometown and feel relieved when they hear that their parents are still healthy and getting by okay. In fact, you are not unfilial; you haven't reached the point of lacking humanity, where you don't even want to care about your parents or fulfill your responsibilities toward them. It's because of various objective reasons that you have to make this choice, so you're not unfilial. These are the two reasons. And there's one more, too: If your parents are not the type of people who particularly persecute you or obstruct your belief in God, if they support your belief in God, or if they are brothers and sisters who believe in God like you, members of God's house themselves, then which of you doesn't silently pray to God when thinking about your parents deep down? Which of you doesn't entrust your parents—along with their health, safety, and all their life's needs—to God's hands? Entrusting your parents to God's hands is the best way to show filial respect to them. You don't hope they face all kinds of difficulties in their lives, and you don't hope they live a bad life, eat poorly, or suffer poor health. Deep down in your heart, you certainly hope that God will protect them and keep them safe. If they are believers in God, you hope that they can perform their own duties and you also hope they can stand firm in their testimony. This is fulfilling one's human responsibilities; people can only achieve this much with their own humanity. Moreover, what's most important is that after years of believing in God and listening to so many truths, at the very least people have this little bit of understanding and comprehension: Man's fate is determined by Heaven, man lives in the hands of God, and having God's care and protection is far more important than the concerns, filial piety, or companionship of one's children. Don't you feel relieved that your parents are under God's care and protection? You don't need to worry about them. If you do worry, that means you do not trust God; your faith in Him is too small. If you are genuinely worried and concerned about your parents, then you should pray to God often, entrust them to God's hands, and let God orchestrate and arrange everything. God rules over the fate of humankind and He rules over their every day and everything that happens to them, so what are you still worried about? You can't even control your own life,[a] you yourself have a ton of difficulties; what could you do to let your parents live happily every day? All you can do is entrust everything to God's hands. If they are believers, ask God to lead them onto the right path so they can ultimately be saved. If they are not believers, let them walk whatever path they want. For parents that are kinder and have some humanity, you can pray to God to bless them so they can spend their remaining years in happiness. As for how God works, He has His arrangements, and people should submit to them. So, overall, people have an awareness in their conscience of the responsibilities they fulfill toward their parents. Regardless of the attitude toward one's parents this awareness brings, whether it's concern or choosing to be present by their side, in any case, people should not feel guilty or have a burdened conscience

a. The original text reads "You can't even control yourself."

because they could not fulfill their responsibilities toward their parents due to being affected by objective circumstances. These issues, and others like them, should not become troubles in people's life of belief in God; they should be let go. When it comes to these topics related to fulfilling responsibilities toward one's parents, people should have these accurate understandings and should no longer feel restrained. For one thing, from the bottom of your heart you know that you are not unfilial, and you are not shirking or avoiding your responsibilities. For another thing, your parents are in God's hands, so what is there still to worry about? Any worries one might have are superfluous. Each person will smoothly live according to God's sovereignty and arrangements until the end, reaching the end of their path, without any deviation. So, people don't need to worry themselves about this matter anymore. Whether you are filial, whether you have fulfilled your responsibilities toward your parents, or whether you should repay your parents' kindness—these are not things you should think about; they are things you should let go of. Isn't that right? (Yes.)

Regarding the topic of parents' expectations for their children, we fellowshiped on the aspects of studies and work. What are the facts people should understand in this regard? If you listen to your parents and study especially hard in accordance with their expectations, does that mean you're certain to achieve great success? Can doing this really change your fate? (No.) Then what awaits you in the future? It is that which God has arranged for you—the fate you should have, the position you should have among people, the path you should walk, and the living environment you should have. God has already arranged these for you long ago. So, when it comes to your parents' expectations, you should not carry any burdens. If you do as your parents ask, your fate stays the same; if you don't follow your parents' expectations and you disappoint them, your fate still remains the same. However the path ahead of you is meant to be, that's how it will be; it has already been ordained by God. Similarly, if you meet your parents' expectations, satisfy your parents, and don't let them down, does that mean they get to live a better life? Can it change their fate of suffering and mistreatment? (No.) Some people think that their parents have given them too much kindness in raising them, and that their parents suffered so much during that time. So they want to find a good job, then endure hardship, undergo toil, be diligent, and work hard to earn a lot of money and make a fortune. Their aim is to provide their parents with a privileged life in the future, living in a villa, driving a nice car, and eating and drinking well. But after years of hustling, although their living conditions and circumstances have improved, their parents pass away without enjoying a single day of that prosperity. Who is to blame for this? If you let things take their own course, let God orchestrate, and don't carry this burden, then you won't feel guilty when your parents pass away. But if you work yourself to the bone to earn money to repay your parents and help them live a better life, but then they die, how would you feel? If you delayed performing your duty and you delayed obtaining the truth, will you still be able to live comfortably for the rest of your lifetime? (No.) Your life will be affected,

and you will always carry the burden of “having failed your parents” for the rest of your life. Some people make great efforts to work, strive, and earn money in order to not disappoint their parents and repay their parents for the kindness of raising them. Afterward, when they become wealthy and have the means to afford good food, they invite their parents to a meal and order a table full of nice dishes, saying: “Help yourselves. I remember when I was little these were your favorite; dig in!” However, as their parents have gotten older, they’ve lost most of their teeth and now have little appetite, so they choose soft and easily digestible foods like vegetables and noodles and become full after taking only a few bites. You feel sad when you see such a large table full of uneaten food. But your parents feel quite good. At such an advanced age, this is how much they should eat; it’s normal, they do not ask for much. You feel unhappy inside, but unhappy about what? It was superfluous for you to do these things. It has long been determined how much happiness and hardship your parents would experience in their lifetime. It cannot be changed because of your wish and it cannot be changed to satisfy your feelings. God has long since ordained it, so anything people do is superfluous. What do these facts tell people? What parents ought to do is raise you and let you grow up healthily and smoothly, embark on the right path, and fulfill the responsibilities and obligations you should fulfill as a created being. All of this is not for the purpose of changing your fate, and indeed it cannot change your fate; they merely serve as a supplementary and guiding role, raising you to adulthood and steering you onto the right path of life. What you should not be doing is using your own hands to create happiness for your parents, change their fate, or let them enjoy great fortune and good food and drink. These are foolish thoughts. This burden is not one you should carry, it is one you should let go of. You should not make any pointless sacrifices or do any pointless things to repay your parents, change their fate, and enable them to receive more blessings and suffer less, for the sake of satisfying the personal needs of your conscience or feelings, and to avoid disappointing them. This is not your responsibility, and it is not what you should be thinking about. Parents should fulfill their responsibilities to their children according to their own conditions and according to the conditions and environment prepared by God. What children should do for their parents is also based on the conditions they can achieve and according to the environment they are in; that is all. Everything parents or children do should not be for the purpose of changing the fate of the other party through one’s own power or selfish desires, so that the other party can live a better, happier, and more ideal life because of their own efforts. Whether it’s parents or children, everyone should let things take their natural course within the environments arranged by God, rather than trying to change things through their own efforts or any personal aspirations. The fate of your parents will not be changed because you have these kinds of thoughts concerning them—their fate has long since been ordained by God. God ordained for you to live within the scope of their lives, to be born from them, to be raised by them, and to have this relationship with them. So, your

responsibility to them is only to accompany them according to your own conditions and to perform some obligations. As for wanting to change your parents' current situation, or wanting them to have a better life, that's all superfluous. Or, to make your neighbors and relatives look up to you, to bring honor to your parents, to secure prestige for your parents within the family—this is even more unnecessary. There are also single mothers or fathers who were left by their spouse and raised you to adulthood on their own. You feel even more how it was difficult for them, and you want to use your whole life to pay them back and compensate them, even to the point of doing whatever they say. What they ask of you, what they expect from you, plus what you are willing to do yourself, all become burdens in this life of yours—this should not be the case. In the presence of the Creator, you are a created being. What you should do in this life is not just to fulfill your responsibilities to your parents, but to fulfill your responsibilities and duties as a created being. You can only fulfill your responsibilities to your parents on the basis of God's words and the truth principles, not by doing anything for them based on your emotional needs or the needs of your conscience. Of course, fulfilling your responsibilities and obligations to them according to God's words and the truth principles is also part of your duties as a created being; this is the responsibility given to man by God. The fulfillment of this responsibility is based on God's words, not on human needs. So, you can easily treat your parents according to God's words, fulfilling your responsibilities and obligations toward them. It's as simple as that. Is this easy to do? (Yes.) Why is it easy to do? The essence here, as well as the truth principles that people should adhere to, are very clear. The essence is that neither parents nor children can change each other's fate. Whether you try hard or not, whether you are willing to fulfill your responsibilities or not, none of that can change the other's fate. Whether you hold them in your heart or not is only a difference of emotional need, and it will not change any facts. So, for people, the simplest thing to do is to let go of the various burdens brought by their parents' expectations. First of all, you should look at all these things according to God's words, and second of all, you should treat and handle the relationship with your parents according to God's words. It's as simple as that. Isn't it easy? (Yes.) If you accept the truth, all these things will be easy, and in the process of your experience, you will feel more and more that this is really the case. No one can change a person's fate; one's fate is only in the hands of God. No matter how hard you try, it will not work. Of course, some people will say: "The things You've said are all facts, but I feel that acting this way is too impersonal. My conscience always feels rebuked, I can't stand it." If you can't stand it, then just satisfy your feelings; accompany your parents and stay close to their side, serve them, be filial, and do what they say whether they are right or wrong—become like their little tail and an attendant, this is all fine. This way, no one will chirp about you behind your back, and even your extended family will talk about how filial you are. However, in the end, the only one who will suffer a loss will be yourself. You have preserved your reputation as a filial child, you have satisfied your emotional needs, your conscience has never been

accused, and you've repaid your parents' kindness, but there is one thing you have neglected and lost: You did not treat and handle all these matters according to God's words, and you have lost the opportunity to perform your duty as a created being. What does this mean? It means that you have been filial to your parents but betrayed God. You demonstrated filial piety and satisfied the emotional needs of your parents' flesh, but you rebelled against God. You would rather choose to be a filial child than perform your duties as a created being. This is the greatest disrespect to God. God will not say you are someone who obeys Him or possesses humanity just because you are a filial child, you haven't disappointed your parents, you have a conscience, and you fulfill your responsibilities as a child. If you only satisfy the needs of your conscience and the emotional needs of your flesh, but do not accept God's words or the truth as the basis and principles for treating or handling this matter, then you show the greatest disobedience to God. If you want to be a qualified created being, you must first view and do everything according to God's words. This is called being qualified, having humanity, and having a conscience. Conversely, if you do not accept God's words as the principles and basis for treating or handling this matter, and you also do not accept God's calling for you to go out and perform your duties, or you'd rather delay or forfeit the opportunity to perform your duties in order to stay by your parents' side, accompany them, bring them happiness, let them enjoy their twilight years, and repay their kindness, then God will say that you are a thing without humanity or conscience. You are not a created being, and He will not recognize you.

When it comes to handling parents' expectations, is it clear what principles should be followed and what burdens should be let go? (Yes.) So, what exactly are the burdens that people carry here? They must listen to their parents and let their parents live a good life; everything their parents do is for their own good; and they must do what their parents say to be filial. Additionally, as adults, they must do things for their parents, repay their parents' kindness, be filial to them, accompany them, not make them feel sad or disappointed, not let them down, and do everything they can to minimize their suffering or even eliminate it entirely. If you can't achieve this, you are ungrateful, unfilial, you deserve to be struck down by thunder and spurned by others, and you are a bad person. Are these your burdens? (Yes.) Since these things are people's burdens, people should accept the truth and properly face them. Only by accepting the truth can these burdens and wrong thoughts and views be let go of and changed. If you don't accept the truth, is there another path for you to take? (No.) Thus, whether it's letting go of burdens of the family or of the flesh, it all starts with accepting the correct thoughts and views and accepting the truth. As you start accepting the truth, these wrong thoughts and views within you will gradually be dismantled, discerned, and seen through, and then gradually they will be rejected. During the process of dismantling, discerning, and then letting go of and rejecting these wrong thoughts and views, you will gradually change your attitude and approach toward these matters. Those thoughts that come from your human

conscience or feelings will gradually weaken; they will no longer trouble or bind you deep within your mind, control or influence your life, or interfere with your performance of duty. For example, if you have accepted the correct thoughts and views and accepted this aspect of the truth, when you hear the news of your parents' death, you will merely shed tears for them without thinking about how during these years you haven't repaid their kindness in raising you, how you made them suffer so much, how you didn't recompense them in the slightest, or how you didn't let them live a good life. You won't blame yourself for these things anymore—rather, you will exhibit normal expressions stemming from the needs of normal human feelings; you will shed tears and then experience a bit of longing for them. Soon these things will become natural and normal, and you will quickly immerse yourself in a normal life and performing your duties; you will not be troubled by this matter. But if you don't accept these truths, then when you hear the news of your parents' passing, you will cry endlessly. You will feel pity for your parents, that for their whole lives they didn't have it easy, and that they raised such an unfilial child as you; when they were sick, you didn't wait on them at their bedside, and when they died, you didn't wail at their funeral or go into mourning; you let them down, you disappointed them, and you didn't let them live a good life. You will live with this sense of guilt for a long time, and whenever you think about it you will cry and feel a dull aching in your heart. Whenever you encounter related circumstances or people, events, and things, you will have an emotional reaction; this sense of guilt may accompany you for the rest of your life. What is the reason for this? It is that you never accepted the truth or the correct thoughts and views as your life; instead, your old thoughts and views have continued to hold sway over you, influencing your life. So, you will spend the remainder of your life in pain because of your parents' passing. This continuous suffering will have consequences that go well beyond a little fleshly discomfort; it will affect your life, your attitude toward performing your duties, your attitude toward the work of the church, your attitude toward God, as well as your attitude toward any person or matter that touches your soul. You may also become disheartened and discouraged toward more matters, become despondent and passive, lose faith in life, lose enthusiasm and motivation for anything, and so on. In time, the impact will not be limited to your simple daily life; it will also affect your attitude toward performing your duties and the path you take in life. This is very dangerous. The consequence of this danger may be that you cannot perform your duties as a created being adequately, and you may even stop performing your duties halfway or harbor a resistant mood and attitude toward the duties you perform. In short, this kind of situation will inevitably worsen over time and cause your mood, emotions, and mentality to evolve in a malignant direction. Do you understand? (Yes.) The fellowship of these topics today, in one aspect, tells you to establish correct thoughts and views, the source of which is based on the essence of these matters themselves. Because the root and essence are just so, people should realize them, and they should not be deceived by these representations or by thoughts and views stemming from feelings and

impetuousness. This is one aspect. The other is, only when people do this can they avoid taking detours and deviations, and instead live life as it comes in an environment ruled over and orchestrated by God. In summary, only by accepting these correct thoughts and views and being guided by them can people cast off these burdens that come from their parents, let go of these burdens, and be able to submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements. By doing so, one can live more freely and unrestrainedly, with peace and joy, rather than constantly being driven by the effects of impetuousness, feelings, or conscience. Having discussed so much, do you now have some understanding of the burdens that parents' expectations create? (Yes.) Now that you have some accurate understanding, doesn't your spirit feel much more relaxed and liberated? (Yes.) When you have real understanding and real acceptance and submission, your spirit will be liberated. If you continue to resist and refuse, or merely treat these truths as theory, instead of regarding these matters based on facts, then it will be difficult for you to let go. You will only be able to act according to the orchestrations of the thoughts and feelings of the flesh in dealing with these matters; ultimately, you will live within the snare of these feelings, where there is only pain and sorrow, and no one will be able to save you. When facing these matters entangled in this emotional snare, people have no way out. You can only be freed from the entanglements and bindings of feelings by accepting the truth, right? (Yes.)

In addition to parents' various expectations and approaches when it comes to their children's studying and career choices, they also have various expectations regarding marriage, don't they? What are some of these expectations? Please share. (Typically, parents will tell their daughters that their future husband must at least be rich, have a house and a car, and be able to take care of them. That is, they should be able to meet the daughter's material needs and also have a sense of responsibility. These are the criteria for choosing a spouse.) Some of the things parents say come from their own experiences, and although they have your best interests in mind, there are still some issues. Parents also have their own opinions and preferences when it comes to their expectations for your marriage. They require their children to find a spouse who, at the very least, has money, status, and capability, and who is formidable so they won't be pushed around by others outside the home. And if others bully you, this person must be able to stand up to them and protect you. You might say, "I don't care. I'm not such a materialistic person. I just want to find someone who loves me and whom I love too." To this, your parents say, "Why are you such a dunce? Why are you so simple-minded? You are young and inexperienced, and you don't understand the hardships in life. Have you ever heard the saying 'Everything goes wrong for a poor couple'? In life, you need money for this and money for that; do you think you'll live a good life if you don't have money? You need to find someone who is rich and capable." You answer, "But even rich and capable people are not reliable." Your parents reply, "Even if they're not reliable, you have to get your basic needs squared away first. You'd have whatever you want to

eat and wear, and you'd be well-fed and well-dressed, something everyone would envy." You respond, "But my soul wouldn't be happy." To this, your parents say, "What even is a soul? Where is it? So what if your soul is not happy? As long as you're physically comfortable, that's all that matters!" There are some people who, based on their current life circumstances, wish to remain single. Although they are quite old, they don't want to date, let alone enter into marriage. This makes their parents anxious, so they keep urging them to marry. They arrange blind dates and introduce potential partners. They do everything possible to quickly find a well-matched and respectable person for their children to marry; even if they are not well-matched, at the very least their qualifications must be good, such as being a university graduate, having a master's or Ph.D., or otherwise having studied abroad. Some people can't stand their parents' nagging. At first, they think it's great that they are single and only have themselves to take care of. Especially after believing in God, they are very busy performing their duties every day and don't have time to think about these things, so they don't date and won't get married in the future. However, they can't get past their parents' scrutiny. Their parents disagree, always urging and pressuring them. Whenever they see their children, they start nagging: "Are you dating someone? Is there anyone you've taken a fancy to? Hurry up and bring them home so we can check them out for you. If they're suitable, just go and tie the knot already; you're not getting any younger! Women don't get married after they're thirty and men don't search for a partner after they're thirty-five. What are you trying to do, turn the world upside down? Who will take care of you when you get old if you don't get married?" Parents always worry and busy themselves with this, wanting you to seek out this or that kind of person, pushing you to get married and find a partner. And after you do get married, your parents keep pestering you: "Hurry up and have a child while I'm still young. I'll take care of them for you." You say, "I don't need you to take care of my children. Don't worry." They respond, "What do you mean, 'Don't worry'? Hurry up and have a kid! After they're born, I'll look after them for you. Once they're a bit older, then you can take over." Whatever expectations parents have for their children—regardless of the parents' attitudes or whether these expectations are correct—it always feels like a burden for the children. If they do listen to their parents, they'll feel uncomfortable and unhappy. If they don't listen to their parents, they'll have a guilty conscience: "My parents aren't wrong. They're so old and don't get to see me getting married or having kids. They feel sad, so they urge me to get married and have kids. This is also their responsibility." So, when it comes to handling parents' expectations in this regard, deep down people always have the vague sense that it's a burden. Whether they listen or not, it seems wrong, and either way they feel like disobeying their parents' demands or desires is so disgraceful and immoral. It's a matter that weighs on their conscience. Some parents even interfere with their children's lives: "Hurry up and get married and have kids. Give me a big, healthy grandson first." In this way they even try to interfere with the baby's gender. Some parents also say, "You already have a daughter,

hurry up and give me a grandson, I want both a grandson and a granddaughter. You and your spouse are busy believing in God and performing your duties all day long. You're not doing your proper job; having children is a big deal. Don't you know, 'Of the three filial impieties, having no heir is the worst'? Do you think just having a daughter is enough? You better hurry up and give me a grandson too! You're the only child in our family; if you don't give me a grandson, won't our family line come to an end?" You contemplate, "That's right, if the family line ends with me, wouldn't I be letting down my ancestors?" So, not getting married is wrong, and getting married but not having children is also wrong; but then it's also not good enough to have a daughter, you must have a son. Some people have a son first, but their parents say, "One is not enough. What if something happens? Have another one so they can keep each other company." When it comes to their children, parents' word is law and they can be utterly unreasonable, capable of articulating the most skewed logic—their children are simply at a loss as to how to deal with them. Parents interfere and criticize their children's lives, work, marriage, and attitudes toward various things. Children can only swallow their anger. They cannot hide from their parents or shake them off. They cannot scold or educate their own parents—so what can they do? They endure it, try to see them as seldom as possible, and they avoid bringing these issues up if they absolutely must meet. And if the matters do get raised, they will instantly cut them off and go hide somewhere. However, there are some people who, in order to meet their parents' expectations and not disappoint them, agree to their parents' demands. You might reluctantly rush into dating, marriage, and having kids. But it is not enough to have one child; you must have several. You do this to satisfy your parents' demands and make them happy and joyful. Regardless of whether you can satisfy your parents' wishes, their demands would be troublesome for any child. Your parents aren't doing anything against the law, and you can't criticize them, talk to anyone else about it, or reason with them. As you go back and forth like this, the matter becomes your burden. You always feel that so long as you can't meet your parents' demands for marriage and children, you will be unable to face your parents and ancestors with a clear conscience. If you haven't met your parents' demands—that is, you haven't dated, haven't entered into marriage, and haven't had kids and continued the family lineage like they asked—you will feel pressure inside. You can only relax a little if your parents say they won't interfere in these matters, giving you freedom to take things as they come. However, if the social feedback coming from your extended relatives, friends, classmates, colleagues, and everyone else is to condemn you and talk about you behind your back, then it is also a burden for you. When you are 25 and unmarried, you don't think it matters much, but when you reach 30, you start feeling like it's not so good, so you avoid these relatives and family members, and don't bring it up. And if you're still unmarried at 35, people will say, "Why aren't you married? Is there something wrong with you? You're kind of a weirdo, aren't you?" If you are married but do not want children, they will say, "Why haven't you had kids after getting

married? Other people get married and have a daughter and then a son, or they have a son and then a daughter. Why don't you want children? What's the matter with you? Don't you have any human feelings? Are you even a normal person?" Whether it comes from parents or society, these issues become a burden for you in different environments and backgrounds. You feel you are in the wrong, especially at your particular age. For example, if you are between thirty and fifty and are still unmarried, you don't dare meet people. They say, "That woman has never been married her entire life, she's an old spinster, no one wants her, no one will marry her." "That guy, he has never had a wife his whole life." "Why didn't they get married?" "Who knows, maybe something is wrong with them." You ponder, "There isn't anything wrong with me. So why haven't I gotten married then? I didn't listen to my parents and I'm letting them down." People say, "That guy isn't married, that girl isn't married. Look how pitiful their parents are now. Other parents have grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but they are still single. Their ancestors must have done something terrible, huh? Isn't this leaving the family without an heir? They won't have any descendants to continue the family line. What's the matter with that family?" No matter how adamant your current attitude is, as long as you are a mortal, ordinary person, and you do not have enough truth to understand this matter, sooner or later you will be troubled and disturbed by it. Nowadays, there are many 34- or 35-year-olds in society who are still unmarried, which is not a big deal. However, at 35 or 36 and up, there are fewer people who are unmarried. Based on the current age range of unmarried people, if you are below 35, you might think, "It's normal to not be married, no one says anything about it. If my parents want to say something, let them. I'm not scared." But once you are past the age of 35, people will look at you with different eyes. They'll say you are single, a bachelor, or a leftover woman, and you won't be able to bear it. This matter will become your burden. If you do not have a clear understanding or definite principles of practice for this matter, sooner or later, it will become a bother for you, or it will disrupt your life during a special time. Doesn't this involve some truths that people should understand? (Yes.)

In terms of getting married and having children, what truths should people understand in order to let go of the burdens these matters bring? First of all, is the choice of a marriage partner determined by human will? (No.) It's not that you can just go and meet whichever type of person it is you desire, and it's certainly not the case that God will prepare for you the exact type of person you want. Rather, God has already ordained who your marriage partner will be; whoever it is meant to be, it shall be. You don't need to be affected by any interference caused by your parents' needs or the conditions they put forward. Additionally, can the marriage partner your parents ask you to find, who is both wealthy and of high status, determine your own future wealth and status? (No.) It cannot. There are quite a few women who married into affluent families only to be driven out and reduced to picking through trash on the streets. Constantly seeking to climb the social ladder for wealth and prestige, they end up in ruins with their reputation in tatters, far

worse off than even ordinary people. They spend their days carrying around a cheap laundry bag to collect plastic bottles and aluminum cans, then exchanging them for a few bucks, and finally buying a cup of coffee at a café so they can feel like they are still living the life of a wealthy person. How miserable! Marriage is a significant event in one's life. Just like what kind of parents one is destined to have, marriage is not based on the needs of your parents or your family, nor is it based on your personal taste and preferences; it is completely within God's ordination. At the right time, you will meet the right person; at a suitable time, you will meet the one who suits you. All of these arrangements of the unseen, mystical world are under the control and sovereignty of God. In this matter, there is no need for people to heed the arrangements of others, be directed by others, or be manipulated and influenced by them. So, when it comes to marriage, no matter what expectations your parents have, and no matter what plans you have, you don't need to be influenced by your parents, nor should you be influenced by your own plans. This matter should be completely based on the word of God. It doesn't matter if you are looking for a partner or not—even if you are looking for one, it should be according to the word of God, not according to your parents' demands or needs and not according to their expectations. So, when it comes to marriage, your parents' expectations should not become your burden. Finding a marriage partner is about assuming responsibility for the remainder of your own life and for your spouse; it's about submitting to God's orchestrations and arrangements. It is not about meeting your parents' demands or fulfilling their expectations. Whether you seek a partner and what kind of partner you seek should not be based on your parents' expectations. Your parents do not have the right to control you in this matter; God has not given them the right to arrange your marriage from beginning to end. If you are seeking a partner for marriage, it must be done according to God's words; if you choose not to seek one, that's your freedom. You say: "In my whole life, whether I'm performing my duties or not, I just like being single. Being on my own is so freeing—like a bird, with one flap of my wings I can take off just like that. I'm not burdened with a family and I'm by myself wherever I go. It's great! I'm alone, but I'm not lonely. I have God with me, accompanying me; I am not often lonely. On occasion I feel like tuning out completely, which is what the body needs. Taking a moment to completely tune out isn't a bad thing. Every now and then, when I feel empty or lonely, I will come before God to have a heart-to-heart with Him and share a few words. I will read His words, learn hymns, watch testimonial videos of life experiences, and watch movies from the house of God. It's great, and I don't feel lonely anymore afterward. I don't care about whether I'll be lonely or not later on. In any case I'm not lonely now; there are many brothers and sisters around me with whom I can have heartfelt conversations. Searching for a marriage partner can be quite bothersome. There are not many normal people who can earnestly live a good life, so I don't want to look for one. If I found someone and we couldn't make it work and got divorced, what would the purpose of all that hassle have been? Having already seen through this point

now, I'm better off not seeking a partner. If the purpose of finding someone to marry is only for momentary happiness and joy, and you end up having to get divorced anyway, that's just a hassle, and I'm not willing to put up with such a hassle. As for the issue of having kids, as a human being—and not just a tool for producing heirs—it is neither my responsibility nor my obligation to carry on any family lineage. Whoever wants to carry it on can go ahead. No surname belongs to just one person." What does it matter if the family lineage is broken? Isn't it just a matter of surnames of the flesh? Souls have no relations to each other; there's no inheritance or continuation among them to speak of. Humankind shares one ancestor; everyone is a descendant of that ancestor, so there's no question of the lineage of humankind ending. Carrying on a lineage is not your responsibility. Walking the right path in life, living a free and liberated life, and being a true created being are what people should pursue. Being a machine for propagating humankind is not a burden you should carry. It is also not your responsibility to reproduce or continue a family lineage for the sake of some family. God has not given you this responsibility. Whoever wants to procreate can go ahead and procreate; whoever wants to continue their lineage can do so; whoever is willing to take on that responsibility can take it on; it has nothing to do with you. If you are not willing to take on that responsibility and you are unwilling to fulfill this obligation, that is fine, it is your right. Isn't this appropriate? (Yes.) If your parents keep nagging, you can tell them: "If you resent that I'm not reproducing and continuing the family line for you, then figure out a way to have another kid and let them continue it. Anyway, this matter is not my concern; you can delegate it to whomever you want." After saying this, won't your parents have nothing to respond with? When it comes to their children's marriages and having kids, parents, whether they believe in God or not, should know at their advanced age that a person's wealth or poverty, number of children, and marital status in life are determined by Heaven; they are all fixed in advance, and are not something that anyone can decide. Therefore, if parents forcefully demand things from their children in this way, they are undoubtedly ignorant parents, they are foolish and clueless. When dealing with foolish and clueless parents, just treat what they say like a puff of air and let it go in one ear and out the other, and that's the end of it. If they nag too much, you can say, "Alright, I promise you, I will get married tomorrow, have a child the day after tomorrow, and let you hold a great-grandchild the day after that. How does that sound?" Just placate them and then turn around and walk away. Isn't that a composed way to handle it? In any case, you have to perceive this matter thoroughly. As far as marriage goes, let's first put aside the fact that marriage is ordained by God. God's attitude toward this matter is to grant people themselves the right to choose. You can choose to be single, or you can choose to enter into marriage; you can choose to live life as a couple, or you can choose to have a whole big family. This is your freedom. No matter what your basis for making these choices is or what purpose or result you want to achieve, in short, this right is given to you by God; you have the right to choose. If you say, "I am too busy with the work of

performing my duties, I am still young, and I don't want to get married. I want to be single, expend myself for God full-time, and perform my duties well. I'll deal with the big issue of marriage later—when I'm fifty years old and feeling lonely, when I have a lot to say but no outlet for my gabbing, then I'll find someone," that is also fine, and God will not condemn you. If you say, "I feel like my youth is slipping away, I have to seize the tail end of my youth. While I'm still young and have some looks and a bit of charm, I should hurry up and find a partner to accompany me and chat with, someone who cherishes and loves me, with whom I can spend my days and get married," this is also your right. Of course, there is one thing: If you decide to enter into marriage, you first need to carefully consider what duties you are currently performing within the church, if you are a leader or a worker, if you have been selected for cultivation within the house of God, whether you are undertaking important work or duties, what tasks you've currently received, and what your present circumstances are. If you enter into marriage, will it influence your performance of duties? Will it then also influence your pursuit of the truth? Will it impact your work as a leader or worker? Will it impact your attainment of salvation? These are all questions you need to consider. Although God has granted you such a right, when you exercise this right, you need to carefully consider what choice you are about to make and what consequences this choice may bring. Regardless of the consequences that may arise, you should not blame others, nor should you blame God. You should take responsibility for the consequences of your own choices. Some people say: "Not only will I get married, but I also want to have a bunch of children. After having a son, I will have a daughter, and we will live happily as a family for a lifetime, keeping each other company in joy and harmony. When I am old, my children will gather around me to care for me, and I will enjoy the bliss of family life. How wonderful that will be! As for performing my duties, pursuing the truth, and attaining salvation, those all are secondary. I'm not concerned with those things right now. I will settle the matter of having children first." That is also your right. However, no matter what consequences your choice brings you in the end, be they bitter or sweet, sour or astringent, you must bear them yourself. No one will pick up the tab for your choices or take responsibility for them, including God. Understood? (Yes.) These matters have been clearly explained. In regard to marriage, you should let go of the burdens you ought to let go of. Choosing to be single is your freedom, choosing to enter into marriage is also your freedom, and choosing to have many children is your freedom as well. Whatever your choice may be, it is your freedom. On one hand, choosing to enter into marriage does not mean you have thus repaid your parents' kindness or fulfilled your filial duty; of course, choosing to be single does not mean you are defying your parents either. On the other hand, choosing to enter into marriage or have many children is not disobeying God, nor is it defying Him. You will not be condemned for it. Choosing to be single will also not be the reason God ultimately grants you salvation. In short, whether you are single, married, or have many children, God will not determine whether you can ultimately be saved based

on these factors. God does not look at your marital background or marital status; He looks only at whether you are pursuing the truth, your attitude toward performing your duties, how much of the truth you have accepted and obeyed, and whether you act according to the truth principles. Ultimately, God will also set aside your marital status to examine the path in life, the principles by which you live, and the rules by which you survive that you have chosen to determine whether you will be saved. Of course, there is one fact we must mention. For those who are single or divorced, as in those who have not entered or who left marriage, have one thing going for them, which is that there is no need for them to be responsible for anyone or anything within the framework of marriage. They do not have to shoulder these responsibilities and obligations, so they are relatively more free. They have more freedom in terms of time, more abundance in terms of energy, and more personal freedom to some extent. For example, as an adult, when you go out to perform your duties, no one can restrict you—not even your parents have this right. You pray to God yourself, He will make arrangements for you, and you can pack your bags and leave. But if you are married and have a family, you are not as free. You have to be responsible for them. First of all, in terms of living conditions and financial resources, you have to at least provide food and clothing for them, and when your children are young you must bring them to school. You must bear these responsibilities. In these situations, married people are not free because they have social and family obligations they must fulfill. It is simpler for those who are unmarried and have no children. When performing their duties in God's house they will not go hungry or cold; they will have both food and shelter. They do not need to run around earning money and working because of the needs of family life. That's the difference. In the end, when it comes to marriage, the point remains the same: You should not carry any burdens. Whether it's your parents' expectations, traditional views from society, or your own extravagant desires, you should not bear any burdens. It is your right to choose to be single or enter into marriage, and it is also your right to decide when to leave singledom and when to enter into marriage. God makes no conclusive judgment on this matter. As for how many children you have after entering into marriage, this has been preordained by God, but you can also choose for yourself based on your actual circumstances and pursuits. God will not impose rules on you. Suppose that you are a millionaire, multimillionaire, or billionaire, and you say, "Having eight or ten children is not a problem for me. Raising a whole bunch of kids won't compromise my energy for performing my duties." If you're not afraid of the hassle, then go ahead and have them; God will not condemn you. God will not change His attitude toward your salvation because of your attitudes on marriage. That's how it is. Is this clear? (Yes.) There is another aspect, which is that if you currently choose to be single, you must not have any sense of superiority just because you are single, saying: "I am a member of the single elite and I have the right to be prioritized for salvation in God's presence." God has not given you this privilege, understood? You may say, "I'm married. Does that make me inferior?" You

are not inferior. You are still a member of corrupt humankind; you have not been degraded or trampled upon because you entered into marriage, nor have you become more corrupt, harder to save, or more hurtful to God's heart than others, causing God to not want to save you. These are all people's erroneous thoughts and views. A person's marital status has nothing to do with God's attitude toward them, nor does a person's marital status have anything to do with whether they can ultimately be saved. So what is attaining salvation related to? (It is based on one's attitude toward accepting the truth.) That's right, it is based on a person's attitude toward treating the truth and accepting the truth, and whether they are able to use God's words as a basis and the truth as a criterion to view people and things and to comport themselves and act. This is the basis for measuring a person's final outcome. Now that we have reached this point in our fellowship, are you basically able to let go of the burdens brought about by the issue of marriage? (Yes.) Being able to let go of them will benefit your pursuit of the truth. If you do not believe this, you can ask those who have gotten married what their hope of receiving salvation is like, and they wouldn't say, "I was married for so many years and got divorced because of my belief in God. I wouldn't dare to say that I will be saved." You can ask those slightly older young people in their thirties who haven't gotten married, but in the many years they have believed, they have not pursued the truth and are like unbelievers. You can ask them, "Can you be saved by believing in God in this way?" They also will not dare say they can be saved. Isn't this how it is? (Yes.)

These are the truths that people should understand about marriage. None of the topics we fellowshiped can be explained clearly in just a few words. There are many various facts that should be dissected, as well as the circumstances of various kinds of people. Based on these various circumstances, the truths that people should understand cannot be explained clearly in just a few words. For every problem, there are truths that people should understand, as well as factual realities that people should understand, and even more so the mistaken thoughts and views people harbor, which should be understood as well. Of course, these mistaken thoughts and views are the things that people should let go of. When you let go of these things, your thoughts and views on a matter will be relatively positive and relatively accurate. Then, when you are confronted with this kind of matter again, you will no longer be constrained by it; you will not be constrained and influenced by some mistaken and absurd thoughts and views. You will not be bound or disturbed by it; instead, you will be able to properly face this matter, and your evaluation of others or yourself will be relatively accurate. This is the positive result that can be embodied in people when they view people and things, comport themselves, and act according to God's words and the truth principles. Alright, let's end our fellowship here for today. Goodbye!

April 1, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (17)

At our last gathering we fellowshiped on letting go of the burdens that come from one's family. This touched on the topic of letting go of the expectations of one's parents. These expectations exert a kind of invisible pressure on every person, don't they? (Yes.) They are one of the burdens that come from people's families. Letting go of the expectations of your parents means letting go of the pressure and burdens that your parents place on your life, existence, and the path that you take. That is, when the expectations of your parents affect the path that you choose in life, the performance of your duty, your journey down the right path, and your freedom, rights, and instincts, their expectations place a kind of pressure and burden on you. These burdens are things that people should let go of in the course of their lives, existences, and belief in God. Isn't this content that we have fellowshiped on before? (It is.) Naturally, the expectations of one's parents touch on a great deal of things, for example, one's studies, work, marriage, family, and even one's career, prospects, future, and so on. From the perspective of a parent, every expectation that they have for their child is logical, fair, and reasonable. There isn't a single parent who doesn't have expectations for their child. They may have more or they may have less, they may have greater expectations or they may have smaller expectations, or they may have some different expectations for their child during particular times. They hope that their child will get good grades, that things will go well for them in their job, that they'll receive a good income, and that everything will go smoothly and happily for them when it comes to marriage. Parents even have different expectations with respect to their child's family, career, prospects, and so on. From the perspective of a parent, these expectations are all very legitimate, but from the perspective of their child, these various expectations interfere with them making the right choices to a great extent, and even interfere with their freedom, and the rights or interests that they have as a normal person. At the same time, these expectations also interfere with them putting their caliber to use in a normal way. In sum, no matter what perspective we look at this from, whether it is from the perspective of a parent, or from the perspective of their child, if parental expectations exceed the scope of what a person with normal humanity can bear, if they go past the scope of what the instincts of a person with normal humanity can achieve, or if they surpass the human rights that a person with normal humanity should possess, or the duties and obligations that God gives people, and so on, then these expectations are improper and unreasonable. Of course, it can also be said that parents should not have these expectations, and that these expectations should not exist. Based on this, children should let go of these parental expectations. That is, when parents take on the perspective or position of a parent, it seems to them that they have the right to expect that their child will do this or do that, and that their child will take a certain path, and choose a certain kind of life, learning environment, or job, marriage, family, and so on. However, as normal humans, parents shouldn't take on the perspective

or position of a parent, they shouldn't use their identity as a parent to require their child to do anything outside of the scope of their filial obligations or beyond the range of human abilities. They should not even interfere with the various choices their child makes, and they should not force their expectations, their preferences, their deficiencies and dissatisfaction, or any of their interests onto their child. These are things that parents should not do. When parents harbor expectations that they shouldn't, their child ought to approach those expectations properly. More importantly, their child should be able to discern the nature of these expectations. If you can see clearly that the expectations of your parents are depriving you of your human rights, and that these expectations are a kind of interference or disturbance when it comes to you choosing positive things and the right path, then you should let go of these expectations, and ignore them. You should do this because this is your right, it is the right that God has given every created human, and your parents shouldn't think that they are entitled to interfere with your life path and your human rights, just because they gave birth to you and are your parents. Therefore, every created being has the right to say "no" to any unreasonable, inappropriate, or even improper parental expectation. You absolutely can refuse to shoulder any of your parents' expectations. Refusing to accept or shoulder any of your parents' expectations is the way to practice letting go of their improper expectations.

When it comes to letting go of parental expectations, what truths should people understand? That is, do you know what truths letting go of the expectations of one's parents is based on, or what truth principles it adheres to? If you believe that your parents are the closest people in the world to you, that they are your bosses and your leaders, that they are the people who gave birth to you and raised you, who provided you with food, clothes, a home, and transportation, who brought you up, and that they are your benefactors, will it be easy for you to let go of their expectations? (No.) If you believe these things, you will be very likely to approach your parents' expectations from a fleshly perspective, and it will be hard for you to let go of any of their inappropriate and unreasonable expectations. You will be bound and suppressed by their expectations. Even if you feel dissatisfied and unwilling in your heart, you will not have the power to break free from these expectations, and you will have no choice but to let them take their natural course. Why will you have to let them take their natural course? Because if you were to let go of your parents' expectations, and to ignore or reject any of their expectations, you would feel that you were an unfilial child, that you were ungrateful, that you'd let your parents down, and that you weren't a good person. If you take a fleshly perspective, you'll do everything you can to utilize your conscience to repay your parents' kindness, to make sure that the suffering your parents endured for your sake wasn't endured for nothing, and you will also want to realize their expectations. You will try hard to accomplish everything they ask you to do, to avoid disappointing them, to do right by them, and you will make the decision to care for them when they're old, to ensure that their last years are happy, and you will even think a little bit further, to handling their

funerals, satisfying them at the same time as satisfying your own desire to be a filial child. While living in this world, people are influenced by various kinds of public opinion and social climates, as well as different thoughts and views that are popular in society. If people do not understand the truth, they can only view these things from the perspective of fleshly feelings, and at the same time, they can only handle these things from that perspective. During this period, you will think that your parents do many things that a parent shouldn't do, to the extent that you will even feel contempt and aversion in the depths of your heart toward some of your parents' actions and behavior, as well as toward their humanity, character, and their methods and ways of doing things, but you will still want to be a filial child to honor them and satisfy them, and you won't dare to neglect them in any way. You will do this in one respect to avoid being spurned by society, and in another respect to satisfy the needs of your conscience. These views were all impressed upon you by mankind and society, so it will be very hard for you to handle your parents' expectations and your relationship with them in a rational way. You will be forced to approach them as a filial child, to not protest against any of your parents' actions; you will have no other choice, you will only be able to do this, and as such, it will be even harder for you to let go of your parents' expectations. If you truly let go of them within your heart, then you will still need to bear another burden or pressure, which is the condemnation of society, your extended family, and your close family. You will even need to bear the condemnation, denunciation, curses, and scorn that come from the depths of your heart, which say that you are nothing, that you are not a filial child, that you are ungrateful, or even things such as, "You are an uncaring ingrate, you are a disobedient thing, your mother didn't raise you properly" that people in secular society say—in other words, all kinds of unpleasant things. If you don't understand the truth, you will fall into this kind of predicament. That is, when you let go of your parents' expectations in the depths of your heart in a rational way, or when you reluctantly let go of them, another kind of burden or pressure will arise deep within your heart; this pressure comes from society and from the effect of your conscience. So, how can you let go of your parents' expectations? There is a path for solving this problem. It is not difficult—people need to put effort into the truth, and come before God to seek and understand the truth, then the problem will be resolved. So, what aspect of the truth do you need to understand in order to not fear being burdened with the condemnation of public opinion, or the condemnation of your conscience in the depths of your heart, or the denunciation and verbal abuse of your parents when you are letting go of your parents' expectations? (That we are just created beings before God. In this world, we should not just fulfill our responsibilities toward our parents, more importantly, we must do our duties well and fulfill our obligations. If we can see through to this, perhaps we will not be too influenced by our parents or the condemnation of public opinion when we let go of our parents' expectations in the future.) Who else will speak about this? (Last time, God fellowshiped about how, when we leave our homes to perform our duties, in

one respect it is due to objective circumstances—we must leave our parents in order to do our duties, so we cannot take care of them—it is not that we are choosing to leave them because we are avoiding our responsibilities. In another respect, we leave our homes because God has called us to perform our duties, so we cannot accompany our parents, but we still worry about them—this is different from us not wanting to fulfill our responsibilities to them and not being filial.) These two reasons are truths and facts that people should understand. If people understand these things, when they let go of their parents' expectations, they will feel a little bit calmer and more at peace in the depths of their hearts, but can this resolve this problem from the root? If it weren't for the influence of greater external circumstances, would your fate be linked to that of your parents? If you didn't believe in God, and you worked and passed your days in a normal manner, would you definitely be able to accompany your parents? Would you definitely be able to be a filial child? Would you definitely be able to stay by their sides and repay their kindness? (Not necessarily.) Is there any person who acts only in order to repay their parents' kindness throughout their whole life? (No.) There are no people who are like that. Therefore, you should come to know this matter and see through to its essence from a different perspective. This is the deeper truth that you ought to understand within this matter. It is also a fact, and more than that, it is the essence of these things. What are the truths that you should understand within letting go of the expectations of your parents? In one respect, you should understand that your parents are not your creditors; in another respect, you should understand that your parents are not the masters of your life or your fate. Is this not the truth? (It is.) If you understand these two truths, will it not be easier for you to let go of your parents' expectations? (It will.)

First, we will talk about this aspect of the truth: "Your parents are not your creditors." Your parents are not your creditors—what does this refer to? Does it not refer to the kindness that your parents showed you by raising you? (Yes.) Your parents showed you kindness by raising you, so it's very hard for you to let go of your relationship with them. You think that you have to repay their kindness, otherwise, you'd be an unfilial child; you believe that you must show them filial piety, that you must obey their every word, that you must satisfy their every wish and demand, and furthermore not let them down—this, you believe, is repaying their kindness. Of course, some people have good jobs and earn good wages, and they give their parents some material pleasures and a great material life, allowing their parents to bask in their light, and enabling them to live better lives. For example, say that you buy your parents a house and a car, you take them to luxury restaurants to eat delicacies of every kind, and you bring them on trips to tourist destinations and book luxurious hotels for them, in order to make them happy and to let them enjoy these things. You do all of these things to repay your parents' kindness, to make your parents feel that they got something in return for raising you and loving you, and that you haven't let them down. In one respect, you do this for your parents to see, in another respect, you do this for the people around you to see, for society to see, and

at the same time you are doing your utmost to satisfy the needs of your conscience. No matter which way you look at it, no matter what it is you are trying to satisfy, in any case, all of these actions are done, to a great extent, to repay your parents' kindness, and the essence of these actions is to repay the kindness that your parents showed you by raising you. So, why is it that you have this idea about repaying your parents' kindness? It is because you believe that your parents gave birth to you, and that it wasn't easy for them to raise you; in this way your parents imperceptibly become your creditors. You think that you owe your parents, and that you must repay your parents. You believe that only by repaying them will you have humanity, and be a truly filial child, and that repaying them is the moral standard that a person should possess. So, these ideas, views, and actions, arise, in essence, because you believe that you owe your parents, and that you must repay them; to a great extent, your parents are your creditors, that is, you believe that you owe them a debt for the kindness that they have shown you. Now that you have the ability to pay them back and recompense them, you do so—according to your abilities, you use money and affection to recompense them. So, is doing this a display of true humanity? Is it a true principle of practice? (It isn't.) Why do I say that your parents aren't your creditors? Since "Your parents are not your creditors" is the truth, if you regard your parents as your benefactors and creditors, and if everything you do is to recompense them for their kindness, is this idea and view right? (No.) Was that "no" not spoken very reluctantly? Which of these statements is the truth: "Your parents are not your creditors" or "Your parents are your benefactors, and you must recompense them"? ("Your parents are not your creditors" is the truth.) Since "Your parents are not your creditors" is the truth, then is the statement "Your parents are your benefactors, and you must recompense them" the truth? (No.) Does it not conflict with the statement: "Your parents are not your creditors"? (It does.) It's not important which of these statements makes your conscience feel condemned—what is important? What's important is which of these statements is the truth. You must accept the statement that is the truth, even if it makes your conscience feel uncomfortable and accused, because it is the truth. Although the statement "Your parents are your benefactors, and you must recompense them" accords with man's moral standards of humanity, and with the awareness of man's conscience, it is not the truth. Even though this statement makes your conscience feel satisfied and comfortable, you must let go of it. This is the attitude that you must possess when it comes to accepting the truth. So, between "Your parents are not your creditors" and "Your parents are your benefactors, and you must recompense them," which statement sounds more comfortable, more in line with humanity and the sense of your conscience, and more in line with the moral standards of humanity? (The second statement.) Why the second statement? Because it caters to and satisfies man's emotional needs. However, it is not the truth, and it is loathed by God. So, does the statement "Your parents are not your creditors" make people feel uncomfortable? (Yes.) What do people feel and sense after hearing this statement? (That it is a bit lacking in

conscience.) They feel that it lacks a bit of human feeling, don't they? (Yes.) Some people say, "If a person doesn't have human feelings, are they still human?"—if people don't have human feelings, are they human? The statement "Your parents are not your creditors" sounds like it lacks human feeling, but it is a fact. If you approach your relationship with your parents in a rational manner, you will discover that the statement "Your parents are not your creditors" has clearly explained the relationship that every person has with their parents from the very root, and the essence and root of interpersonal relationships. Even though it makes your conscience uncomfortable, and it doesn't satisfy your emotional needs, it is still a fact, and it is still a truth. This truth can enable you to approach the kindness that your parents showed you by raising you in a rational way, and in the correct way. It can also enable you to approach any of your parents' expectations in a rational and correct way. Naturally, it is even more capable of enabling you to approach your relationship with your parents in a rational and correct way. If you can approach your relationship with your parents like that, then you can handle it in a rational way. Some people say: "These truths are very well put, and they sound very impassioned, but why is it that when people hear them, they feel a little impossible to achieve? Especially 'Your parents are not your creditors'—why is it that after hearing this truth people feel that their relationship with their parents is increasingly distant and estranged? Why do they feel that there is no affection between them and their parents?" Is the truth deliberately trying to distance people from one another? Is the truth intentionally trying to cut ties between people and their parents? (No.) So, what results can be achieved by understanding this truth? (Understanding this truth can enable us to see our relationship with our parents for what it really is—this truth tells us the true nature of this matter.) That's correct, it enables you to see the true nature of this matter, to approach and handle these things rationally, and to not live within your affections or within fleshly interpersonal relationships, right?

Let's talk about how "Your parents are not your creditors" should be interpreted. Your parents are not your creditors—isn't this a fact? (It is.) Since it is a fact, it's proper for us to explain the matters contained within it. Let's look at the matter of your parents giving birth to you. Who was it that chose for them to give birth to you: you or your parents? Who chose whom? If you look at this from God's perspective, the answer is: neither of you. Neither you nor your parents chose for them to give birth to you. If you look at the root of this matter, this was ordained by God. We'll put this topic to one side for now, as this matter is easy for people to understand. From your perspective, you were passively born to your parents, without having any choice in the matter. From the perspective of your parents, they gave birth to you through their own independent will, right? In other words, putting aside God's ordination, when it comes to the matter of giving birth to you, it was your parents who had all the power. They chose to give birth to you, and they called all the shots. You did not choose for them to give birth to you, you were passively born to them, and you didn't have any choice in the matter. So, since your parents had

all the power, and they chose to give birth to you, they have an obligation and a responsibility to bring you up, to raise you into an adult, to supply you with an education, with food, clothes, and money—this is their responsibility and obligation, and it is what they ought to do. Whereas you were always passive during the period that they were raising you, you didn't have the right to choose—you had to be raised by them. Because you were young, you didn't have the capacity to raise yourself, you had no choice but to be passively brought up by your parents. You were raised in the way that your parents chose, if they gave you nice food and drinks, then you ate and drank nice food and drinks. If your parents provided you with a living environment where you survived off chaff and wild plants, then you survived off chaff and wild plants. In any case, when you were being raised, you were passive, and your parents were fulfilling their responsibility. It's the same as your parents caring for a flower. Since they want to care for a flower, they should fertilize it, water it, and make sure that it gets sunlight. So, regarding people, no matter whether your parents looked after you meticulously or took great care of you, in any case, they were just fulfilling their responsibility and obligation. Regardless of the reason why they raised you, it was their responsibility—because they gave birth to you, they should take responsibility for you. Based on this, can everything that your parents did for you be considered kindness? It can't, right? (That's right.) Your parents fulfilling their responsibility to you doesn't count as kindness, so if they fulfill their responsibility toward a flower or a plant, watering it and fertilizing it, does that count as kindness? (No.) That is even further from being kindness. Flowers and plants grow better outside—if they're planted in the ground, with wind, sun, and rainwater, they thrive. They don't grow as well when they're planted in a pot indoors as they do outside, but wherever they are, they're living, right? No matter where they are, it has been ordained by God. You are a living person, and God takes responsibility for every life, enabling it to survive, and to follow the law that all created beings abide by. But as a person, you live in the environment that your parents raise you in, so you should grow up and exist in that environment. You living in that environment is on a larger scale due to God's ordination; on a smaller scale, it is due to your parents raising you, right? In any case, by raising you your parents are fulfilling a responsibility and an obligation. Raising you into an adult is their obligation and responsibility, and this cannot be called kindness. If it cannot be called kindness, then is it not something that you ought to enjoy? (It is.) This is a kind of right that you should enjoy. You should be raised by your parents, because before you reach adulthood, the role that you play is that of a child being brought up. Therefore, your parents are just fulfilling a kind of responsibility toward you, and you are just receiving it, but you are certainly not receiving grace or kindness from them. For any living creature, bearing and looking after children, reproducing, and raising the next generation is a kind of responsibility. For example, birds, cows, sheep, and even tigers have to take care of their offspring after they reproduce. There are no living creatures that do not raise their offspring. It's possible that there are some exceptions, but there

are not many of them. It's a natural phenomenon in the existence of living creatures, it's an instinct for living creatures, and it cannot be attributed to kindness. They are just abiding by a law that the Creator set out for animals and for mankind. Therefore, your parents raising you isn't a kind of kindness. Based on this, it can be said that your parents are not your creditors. They are fulfilling their responsibility to you. No matter how much effort and money they spend on you, they should not ask you to recompense them, because this is their responsibility as parents. Since it is a responsibility and an obligation, it should be free, and they should not ask for compensation. By raising you, your parents were just fulfilling their responsibility and obligation, and this should be unpaid, and it should not be a transaction. So, you do not need to approach your parents or handle your relationship with them according to the idea of recompensing them. If you do treat your parents, pay them back, and handle your relationship with them according to this idea, that is inhumane. At the same time, it is likely to make you restrained and bound by your fleshly feelings, and it will be hard for you to emerge from these entanglements, to the extent that you might even lose your way. Your parents are not your creditors, so you have no obligation to realize all of their expectations. You have no obligation to foot the bill for their expectations. That is to say, they can have their own expectations. You have your own choices, and the life path and destiny that God has set out for you, which have nothing to do with your parents. So, when one of your parents says: "You're an unfilial child. You haven't come back to see me for so many years, and it's been so many days since you last called me. I'm sick and there's no one to care for me. I really raised you for nothing. You truly are an uncaring ingrate, and a thankless child!" if you don't understand the truth "Your parents are not your creditors," hearing these words will be as painful as a knife piercing your heart, and your conscience will feel condemned. Every one of these words will embed itself in your heart, and make you feel ashamed to face your parent, indebted to your parent, and full of guilt toward them. When your parent says that you are an uncaring ingrate, you will really feel: "They're absolutely right. They raised me to this age, and they haven't been able to bask in any of my light. Now they're sick, and they hoped that I could stay by their bedside, serving them and accompanying them. They needed me to repay their kindness, and I wasn't there. I really am an uncaring ingrate!" You will classify yourself as an uncaring ingrate—is that reasonable? Are you an uncaring ingrate? If you hadn't left your home to perform your duty elsewhere, and you had stayed by your parent's side, could you have prevented them from getting sick? (No.) Can you control whether your parents live or die? Can you control whether they are rich or poor? (No.) Whatever illness your parents get, it won't be because they were so exhausted from raising you, or because they missed you; they especially won't contract any of those major, serious, and possibly fatal illnesses because of you. That is their fate, and it has nothing to do with you. No matter how filial you are, the most you can achieve is to reduce their fleshly suffering and burdens a little, but as for when they get sick, what illness they contract, when they die,

and where they die—do these things have anything to do with you? No, they don't. If you're filial, if you're not an uncaring ingrate, and you spend all day with them, watching over them, will they not get sick? Will they not die? If they're going to get sick, won't they get sick anyway? If they're going to die, won't they die anyway? Isn't that right? If your parents had said that you were an uncaring ingrate, that you had no conscience, and that you were a thankless child, would you have felt upset? (Yes.) What about now? (I wouldn't feel upset now.) So, how was this problem resolved? (Because God fellowshiped that whether our parents get sick or not and whether they live or die has nothing to do with us, it's all ordained by God. If we stay by their sides, we couldn't do anything, so, if they say that we are uncaring ingrates, this has nothing to do with us.) Regardless of whether your parents call you an uncaring ingrate, at least you are fulfilling the duty of a created being before the Creator. As long as you are not an uncaring ingrate in God's eyes, that's enough. It doesn't matter what people say. What your parents say about you isn't necessarily true, and what they say isn't useful. You need to take God's words as your basis. If God says that you are an adequate created being, then it doesn't matter if people call you an uncaring ingrate, they cannot accomplish anything. It is just that people will be impacted by these insults due to the effect of their consciences, or when they do not understand the truth and their stature is small, and they'll be in a bit of a bad mood, and feel a little depressed, but when they return before God, all of this will be resolved, and won't pose a problem for them anymore. Has the matter of repaying the kindness of one's parents not been resolved? Do you understand this matter? (Yes.) What is the fact that people need to understand here? Raising you is your parents' responsibility. They chose to give birth to you, so they have a responsibility and an obligation to bring you up. By raising you into an adult, they are fulfilling their responsibility and their obligation. You do not owe them anything, so you do not need to recompense them. You don't need to recompense them—this clearly shows that your parents are not your creditors, and that you do not need to do anything for them in return for their kindness. If your circumstances allow you to fulfill a bit of your responsibility to them, then do so. If your environment and your objective circumstances do not permit you to fulfill your obligation toward them, then you don't need to give it too much thought, and you shouldn't think that you are indebted to them, because your parents are not your creditors. No matter if you show filial piety to your parents, or fulfill your responsibility to them, you are just assuming the perspective of a child and fulfilling a bit of your responsibility to the people who once birthed and raised you. But you certainly cannot do this from the perspective of recompensing them, or from the perspective of "Your parents are your benefactors, and you must recompense them, you must repay their kindness."

There is a saying in the world of unbelievers: "Crows repay their mothers by feeding them, and lambs kneel to receive milk from their mothers." There's also this saying: "An unfilial person is lower than a beast." How grandiose these sayings sound! Actually, the phenomena that the first saying mentions, crows repaying their mothers by feeding them,

and lambs kneeling to receive milk from their mothers, really do exist, these are facts. However, they are simply phenomena within the animal world. They are merely a kind of law that God has established for various living creatures, and by which all kinds of living creatures, including humans, abide. The fact that all kinds of living creatures abide by this law further demonstrates that all living creatures are created by God. No living creature can break this law, and no living creature can transcend it. Even relatively ferocious carnivores like lions and tigers nurture their offspring and do not bite them before they reach adulthood. This is an animal instinct. No matter which species they are, whether they are ferocious or kind and gentle, all animals possess this instinct. All kinds of creatures, including humans, can only continue to multiply and survive by abiding by this instinct and this law. If they didn't abide by this law, or didn't have this law and this instinct, they wouldn't be able to multiply and survive. The biological chain wouldn't exist, and neither would this world. Isn't that true? (Yes.) Crows repaying their mothers by feeding them, and lambs kneeling to receive milk from their mothers demonstrates precisely that the animal world abides by this kind of law. All kinds of living creatures have this instinct. Once offspring are born, they are cared for and nurtured by the females or males of the species until they become adults. All kinds of living creatures are able to fulfill their responsibilities and obligations to their offspring, conscientiously and dutifully raising the next generation. This should be even more the case for humans. Humans are called higher animals by mankind—if they cannot abide by this law, and lack this instinct, then humans are lower than animals, aren't they? Therefore, no matter how much your parents nurtured you while they were raising you, and how much they fulfilled their responsibility to you, they were only doing what they ought to within the scope of the abilities of a created human—it was their instinct. Just look at birds, for more than a month before mating season, they are constantly looking for a safe place to make their nests. Male and female birds go out in shifts, carrying different kinds of plants, feathers, and twigs to start building their nests in relatively dense trees. The little nests built by various kinds of birds are all incredibly sturdy and intricate. For the sake of their offspring, birds expend all this effort making nests and building shelters. After they have built their nests and it comes time for incubation, there's always a bird in each nest; the male and female birds are on alternating shifts for 24 hours a day, and they are incredibly attentive—when one of them returns, the other flies away soon after. Not long after this, some chicks hatch and poke their heads out of their shells, and you can hear them start to chirp in their trees. The adult birds fly back and forth, now returning to feed their chicks some worms, now returning again to feed them something else, showing incredible attentiveness. After a couple of months, some of the baby birds have grown a little, and can stand on the brim of their nests and flap their wings; their parents fly back and forth, taking shifts feeding and guarding their chicks. One year, I saw a crow in the sky, holding a chick in its mouth. That chick cried out very miserably, more or less calling out for help. The crow was in front, flying with the chick in its mouth, and there was a pair of adult

birds chasing behind it. Those two birds were also crying out miserably, and in the end the crow flew far away. The chick probably would have died anyway, regardless of whether its parents had been able to catch up with the crow. Those two adult birds that followed behind it cried and shrieked so much that it alarmed the people on the ground—how miserable do you think their cries must have been? In fact, they surely didn't have just one baby. They must have had three or four baby birds in their nest, but when one was carried away, they chased behind it, crying and shrieking. That is how the animal and biological world is—living creatures are able to nurture their offspring tirelessly. Birds fly back and build new nests every year, they do the same things every year; they incubate their chicks, feed them, and teach them how to fly. While the chicks are practicing flying, they do not fly very high, and sometimes they fall to the ground. We've even saved them a few times, and hurried to put them back into their nests. Their parents teach them every day, and someday or another all of those chicks will leave their nests and fly away, leaving behind empty nests. The next year, new pairs of birds come to build nests, incubate their eggs, and raise their chicks. All kinds of living creatures and animals possess these instincts and laws, and they abide by them very well, carrying them out to perfection. This is something that no person can destroy. There are also some special animals, like tigers and lions. When these animals reach adulthood, they leave their parents, and some males even become rivals, biting, contending, and fighting as necessary. This is normal, it is a law. They are not very affectionate, and they do not live amid their feelings like people do, saying: "I have to repay their kindness, I have to recompense them—I have to obey my parents. If I don't show filial piety to them, other people will condemn me, berate me, and criticize me behind my back. I couldn't bear that!" Such things are not said in the animal world. Why do people say such things? Because in society and within groups of people, there are various incorrect ideas and consensuses. After people have been influenced, corroded, and rotted by these things, different ways of interpreting and dealing with the parent-child relationship arise within them, and they ultimately treat their parents as their creditors—creditors that they will never be able to repay their whole lives. There are even some people who feel guilty for their whole lives after their parents die, and think themselves unworthy of their parents' kindness, because of one thing they did that didn't make their parents happy or didn't go the way their parents wanted it to. Tell Me, is this not excessive? People live amid their feelings, so they can only be encroached upon and disturbed by various ideas stemming from these feelings. People live in an environment that is colored by the ideology of corrupt mankind, so they are encroached upon and disturbed by various erroneous ideas, which makes their lives exhausting and less simple than those of other living creatures. However, right now, because God is working, and because He is expressing the truth to tell people the true nature of all these facts, and to enable them to understand the truth, after you come to understand the truth, these erroneous ideas and views will no longer burden you, and they will no longer serve as a guide for how you handle your

relationship with your parents. At this point, your life will become more relaxed. Living a relaxed life does not mean that you will not know what your responsibilities and obligations are—you will still know these things. It just depends on which perspective and methods you choose to approach your responsibilities and obligations with. One path is to take the route of feelings, and to deal with these things based on emotional means, and the methods, ideas, and views that Satan guides man toward. The other path is to deal with these things based on the words that God has taught man. When people handle these matters according to Satan's erroneous ideas and views, they can only live within the entanglements of their feelings, and they are never able to distinguish right from wrong. Under these circumstances, they have no choice but to live in a snare, always tangled up with matters such as, "You're right, I'm wrong. You've given me more; I've given you less. You're ungrateful. You've done too much for me." Consequently, there is never a time when they speak clearly. However, after people understand the truth, and when they escape from the web of erroneous ideas, views, and feelings, these matters become simple to them. If you abide by a truth principle, idea, or view that is correct and comes from God, your life will become very relaxed. Neither public opinion, nor the awareness of your conscience, nor the burden of your feelings will impede how you handle your relationship with your parents anymore; by contrast, these things will enable you to face this relationship in a correct and rational way. If you act according to the truth principles that God has given man, even if people criticize you behind your back, you will still feel peace and calm in the depths of your heart, and it will have no effect on you. At the very least, you will not berate yourself for being an uncaring ingrate or feel the accusation of your conscience anymore in the depths of your heart. This is because you will know that all of your actions are carried out in accordance with the methods that God has taught you, and that you are listening to and obeying God's words, and following His way. Listening to God's words and following His way is the sense of conscience that people ought to possess most of all. You will only be a true person when you can do these things. If you have not accomplished these things, then you are an uncaring ingrate. Isn't that the case? (It is.) Do you see this matter clearly now? Seeing it clearly is one aspect of this; if people can gradually see through this matter and put the truth into practice, that's another. In order to see this matter clearly, people must experience things for a period of time. If people wish to see this fact and essence clearly, and to reach the point where they handle matters with principles, this cannot be accomplished in a short time, because people must first cast off the influence of all kinds of erroneous and evil ideas and views. Another, more important aspect of this is that they must be able to resolve the constraints and influence of their own conscience and feelings; in particular, they must pass the hurdle of their own feelings. Say that you acknowledge in theory that God's word is the truth and that it is correct, and you know, in theory, that the erroneous ideas and views that Satan instills in people are wrong, but you just cannot get over the hurdle of your feelings, and you always feel bad for your

parents, thinking that they have shown you too much kindness, that they have expended, and done, and suffered too much for you, that the shadows of everything your parents have done for you, everything that they have said, and even every price they have paid for you are still vivid in your mind. Each of these hurdles will be a very important juncture for you, and it will not be easy for you to get past them. In fact, the hardest hurdle for you to pass will be yourself. If you can get past hurdle after hurdle, then you will be able to thoroughly let go of the feelings you have toward your parents from your very heart. I am not fellowshiping on this to make you betray your parents, and I am certainly not doing it to make you draw boundaries between you and your parents—we're not starting a movement, there is no need to draw any boundaries. I am fellowshiping on this just to impart a correct understanding of these matters to you, and to help you to accept a correct idea and view. In addition, I am fellowshiping on this so that when these things befall you, you will not be troubled by them, or bound by them hand and foot, and more importantly, when you encounter these things, they will not impact your fulfillment of the duty of a created being. In this way, My fellowship will achieve its goal. Of course, can people, who live in the flesh, reach the point where they harbor none of these things in their minds, and where there are no emotional entanglements between them and their parents? That would be impossible. In this world, apart from their parents, people also have their children—these are the two closest fleshly relationships among people. It is impossible to completely sever the bond between a parent and a child. I am not trying to make you go through a formality of declaring that you will cut ties with your parents, and that you will never associate with them again. I am trying to help you handle your relationship with them in the correct way. These things are difficult, aren't they? As your understanding of the truth deepens, and as you grow in age, the difficulty of these things will gradually reduce and decline. When people are in their 20s, they feel a different level of attachment toward their parents compared to when they are 30 or 40 years old. This attachment becomes even more subdued after they turn 50 years old, and there's no need to speak about when people reach 60 or 70 years old. By that time the attachment is even lighter—it changes as people grow older.

The truth "Your parents are not your creditors" is the correct principle of practice that people should understand when it comes to how they approach their parents. What is the other principle of practice? (Your parents are not the masters of your life or your fate.) Isn't "Your parents are not the masters of your life or your fate" easier to understand and to let go of compared to "Your parents are not your creditors"? Outwardly, it appears that your parents gave birth to your fleshly life, and that it was your parents who gave you life. But, if we look at this from God's perspective, and from the root of this matter, your fleshly life was not given to you by your parents, because people cannot create life. In simple terms, no person can create man's breath. The reason why the flesh of each person is able to become a person is because they have that breath. Man's life lies in this breath, and it is the sign of a living person. People have this breath and life, and the

source and origin of these things are not their parents. It is just that people were produced by means of their parents giving birth to them—at the root, it is God who gives people these things. Therefore, your parents are not the masters of your life, the Master of your life is God. God created mankind, He created the lives of mankind, and He gave mankind the breath of life, which is the origin of man's life. Therefore, isn't the line "Your parents are not the masters of your life" easy to understand? Your breath was not given to you by your parents, and much less is its continuation given to you by your parents. God looks after and rules over every day of your life. Your parents cannot decide how every day of your life goes, whether each day is happy and goes smoothly, who you meet every day, or what environment you live in each day. It is merely that God looks after you through your parents—your parents are simply the people that God sent to look after you. When you were born, it was not your parents who gave you life, so was it your parents who gave you the life that allowed you to live until now? It still wasn't. The origin of your life is still God, and not your parents. Say that your parents gave birth to you, but when you were one or five years old, God decided to take away your life. Could your parents do anything about that? What would your parents do? How would they save your life? They would send you to the hospital and entrust you to the doctors, who would try to treat your illness and save your life. This is your parents' responsibility. However, if God said that this life and this person should not live, and that you should be reincarnated to another family, then your parents would have no power or means to save your life. They could only watch as your small life departed from this world. When a life is lost, they are powerless—all they can do is fulfill their responsibility as parents, and entrust you to the doctors, who would try to treat your illness and save your life, but it is not for your parents to decide whether or not your life goes on. If God says that you can go on living, then your life exists. If God says that your life should not exist, then you will lose your life. Is there anything your parents can do about that? They can only resign themselves to your fate. To put it plainly, they are just ordinary created beings. It is just that, from your perspective, they have a special identity—they gave birth to you and raised you, they are your bosses, and your parents. But from God's perspective, they are just ordinary humans, they are just members of corrupt mankind, and there's nothing special about them. They are not even masters of their own lives, so how could they be masters of yours? Although they gave birth to you, they do not know where your life came from, and they couldn't decide in what time, in what hour, and in what place your life would arrive, or how your life would be. They do not know any of these things. For them, they are just passively waiting, waiting for God's sovereignty and for His arrangements. Regardless of whether they are happy about it or not, whether they believe it or not, nevertheless, all of this is orchestrated and occurs within God's hands. Your parents are not the masters of your life—isn't this matter easy to understand? (It is.) Your parents gave birth to your flesh, but they did not give birth to the life of your flesh. This is a fact. Can your parents even control matters such as how tall you grow,

what your physical constitution is like, what color or how dense your hair is, what your hobbies are, and so on? (No.) Your parents cannot decide whether your skin is good or bad, or what your facial features are like. Some parents are fat, and they give birth to children who are thin and short, with small noses and eyes. When people see them, they think: “Who do these children look like? They certainly don’t look like their parents.” Parents can’t even decide who their children look like, can they? Some parents have very robust bodies, and they give birth to very thin and weak children; some parents have very thin and weak bodies, and they produce incredibly robust children that are as strong as oxen. Some parents are as timid as mice, and they give birth to children who are extremely daring. Some parents are careful and cautious, and they birth children who are very ambitious, and in the end, some of them become emperors, some of them become presidents, and others become ringleaders of groups of bandits and rogues. Some parents are farmers, but the children they produce become high officials. There are also some parents who are deceitful, but they give birth to children who are well-behaved and guileless. Some parents are nonbelievers, or they may even worship idols and devils, and they birth children who want to believe in God, who cannot go on living without their faith in God. Some parents tell their children, “I’m going to send you to university,” and their children say, “No, I’m a created being, I must perform my duty!” The parents then tell their children: “You’re young, you don’t need to perform a duty. We perform a bit of our duties because we’re old, and we don’t have any prospects; we’ll earn some blessings for our family in the future, so you don’t have to. You have to study hard, and after you graduate from university, you have to go and become a high official, so that I can bask in the light with you.” Their children reply: “No. I’m a created being, performing my duty is the most crucial thing.” Of course, there are some parents who believe in God and renounce their families and give up their careers, but their children refuse to ever believe in God. Their children are unbelievers, and no matter how you look at these children and their parents, they do not resemble a family. Though they resemble a family in appearance, life habits, and even some aspects of their characters, in their hobbies, interests, pursuits, and the paths that they walk, they are completely different. They are simply two different kinds of people who walk two different paths. So, there are differences between people’s lives, and these are not determined by their parents. Parents can’t decide what kind of lives their children have, or what kind of environments their children are born into. Your parents are neither the masters of your life, nor the masters of your fate. Life is not given to people by their parents—is a person’s fate a greater matter or a smaller matter than their life? For people, these are both great matters. Why is that? Because these are not things that people can grasp, accomplish, or control using their instincts, abilities, or caliber. People’s fates and life trajectories are decided by and ruled over by God. No person can make any choices with regard to these two matters. It is neither you nor your parents who choose what family you are born to, or what parents you will have in this life. Your parents were also

passive in birthing you. So, your parents cannot decide what the trajectory of your fate will be, they cannot decide whether you will be very wealthy and rich in your life, poor and lowly, or just an average person; they cannot decide where you will go in this life, what place you will live in, or what your marriage will be like, what your children will be like, or what kind of material environment you will live in, and so on. There are some people whose families thrived, had clothing and food, and more money than they could spend before giving birth to a child, but after it grew up, the child squandered their family's fortune, and no matter how much money those parents earned, they couldn't offset all the money that their spendthrift child was wasting. There are also some people who were poor, but a few years after they gave birth to a child, their family businesses started to thrive, their lives improved, things went increasingly smoothly, and their surroundings also got better and better. You see, these are all things that these parents didn't expect, aren't they? Parents can't decide the fates of their children, and, naturally, they also have nothing to do with the fates of their children. The kind of path that you walk, where you go and what people you encounter in this life, how many disasters you face, how many great things and how much wealth come your way—all of these things have no relation to your parents, or to their expectations. Every parent wishes for their child to rise up in the world, but does this wish always come true? Not necessarily. Some children do rise up in the world, like their parents wanted them to, and they become high officials, get rich, and live well, but their parents fall ill and die within a couple of years without getting to enjoy any of this good fortune, or to bask in any of this light. Does a person's fate have anything to do with their parents? No. It is not as if you can accomplish whatever your parents expect you to. A person's fate has nothing to do with their parents, and a person's parents cannot decide their fate. Even though your parents gave birth to you, and even if they did many things to lay the foundation for your prospects, your ideals, and your future fate, they cannot decide what your fate or your future life path will be like—these things have nothing to do with them. Therefore, your parents are not the masters of your fate, and they cannot change anything about you. If you are fated to be wealthy, then no matter how poor or incapable your parents are, you will gain the wealth that you are supposed to. If you are destined to be a poor person, an ordinary person, or a lowly person, then no matter how capable your parents are, they will not be able to assist you. If you are chosen by God, and you are one of God's chosen people, that is, if you have been predestined by God, then no matter how powerful or capable your parents are, they won't be able to obstruct your belief in God, even if they wish to. As you are destined to be a member of God's house and one of God's chosen people, you cannot escape from this. A person's fate is only related to God's sovereignty and God's ordination; it has nothing to do with the wishes and expectations of their parents. Naturally, it also has nothing to do with that individual's interests, hobbies, character, aspirations, caliber, or abilities. Therefore, based on the truth "Your parents are not the masters of your life or your fate," how should you approach your parents' expectations?

Should you wholly accept them, ignore them, or approach them rationally? When it comes to the matter of your life or your fate, your parents are just normal people, they can expect whatever they want, and they can say whatever they want. Let them say what they want, you just do your own things. There is no need to argue with them, because however things truly are, that is how things will be. This does not arise out of debate, and it does not shift based on man's will. You can't decide your own fate, much less your parents! Isn't that the case? (It is.) Even though your parents are your elders, they still have no relation or connection to your fate. Your parents should not try to dictate your fate just because they are so many years older than you, and because they are a generation older than you. This is irrational, and it is loathsome. Therefore, whenever your parents have something to say about the path you walk in life, or their expectations of you, you should approach it calmly and rationally, because they are not the masters of your fate. Say to them: "My fate is in God's hands—no person can change it." No person can control their own fate or that of another person, and your parents are also not qualified to do this. Your ancestors are not qualified to do this, let alone your parents. Who alone is qualified? (Only God.) Only God is qualified to rule over people's fates.

Some people admit in theory that: "My parents cannot interfere with my fate. Though they gave birth to me, my life wasn't given to me by my parents, it was given to me by God. Everything I have was given to me by God. God just raised me into an adult through them, and enabled me to live until now. In actuality, it was God who raised me." They speak these words quite well and quite clearly, but under some special circumstances, people cannot overcome their affections, or acknowledge the statement: "Your parents are not the masters of your life or your fate." Under certain special circumstances, people will be dominated by their feelings and fall into certain temptations, or become weak. Because they have suffered the persecution and condemnation of the government and religious world and been arrested and sent to jail, some believers in God resolve to never turn Judas, and to never betray any of their brothers and sisters, or any information about the church, no matter what kind of torture they suffer—they would rather die than turn Judas. As such, they are tortured and tormented to the point that they no longer resemble people, their eyes are so swollen that they become slits and cannot see clearly, their ears are deafened, their teeth are knocked out, the corners of their mouths break and bleed, their legs do not work well, their whole bodies are swollen and covered in bruises. But, no matter how they are tormented, they do not resort to betrayal—they are determined to not turn Judas, and to stand firm in their testimony for God. Up until now, they appear to be quite strong, and to possess testimony, don't they? They went through torture and intimidation without turning Judas, and they were tormented like this for many days and nights. When a devil sees a man like this, it thinks: "This guy's really tough, he's been poisoned quite deeply. He really has been Godized. He's so young, and he's been tormented into a state like this without giving up so much as a word. What am I going to do about this? It appears that this guy is an important figure, he must know a

lot about the church. If I can pry some information from his lips, we can arrest a lot of people, and make a lot of money!" Then the devil starts putting some thought into this: "How can I pry his mouth open, and make him give up some intel and inform on some people? Strong people all have their weak points—just like people who practice kung fu. No matter how good someone is at kung fu, they ultimately still have an Achilles' heel. Every person has a weak spot, so let's specifically attack his. What is his weak spot? I heard that he's an only child, and that his parents have spoiled him since he was a child. I heard that they really care for him and love him dearly, and that he is quite filial toward them. If I fetch his parents, and get them to do some psychological work on him, maybe their words will be of some use." Then the devil fetches his parents. Guess what happens as soon as he sees his parents? Before he saw them, he thought: "Oh God, I am determined to stand firm in my testimony. I absolutely will not turn Judas!" But as soon as he sees his parents, his heart comes close to breaking. The first thing he feels is, "I have let my parents down, it must be very painful for them to see me like this," and then he breaks down. He still insists in his heart that: "I will not turn Judas, I must stand firm in my witness for God. I have not taken the wrong path, I am following the right path in life. I must humiliate Satan and bear witness for God!" In his heart he is firm, and insists on this repeatedly, but he cannot bear it emotionally, and in an instant his heart is close to breaking. How do you think his parents feel when they see that their child has been tormented into a state like this? I will not speak of his father, but the heart of his mother breaks. When she sees that her child has been tormented to the point that he no longer resembles a person, she feels great distress, discomfort, and pain, and she trembles as she walks toward him. How would you react, at a time like that? You wouldn't dare to look, would you? See, you haven't said anything, your parents haven't said anything, but you would have already broken down, unable to overcome your feelings. You would think to yourself: "My parents are old, they're not very well physically, and the two of them depend on each other to get by. They gave birth to a kid like me, and up until now I haven't fulfilled any of their expectations, and I've caused so much trouble for them now, I've embarrassed them so much, and they've even had to come and see me in this state of suffering." Imperceptibly, in the depths of your heart, you would feel that you were an unfilial child, that you had hurt and disappointed your parents, and that you had made them feel concerned and let them down. Both you and your parents would feel a great deal of agony, for different reasons. For your parents, it would be because they felt bad for you, and couldn't bear seeing you suffer like that. For you, it would be because you saw how sad and pained your parents were, and you couldn't bear to see them feeling sad and worried about you. Aren't both of these the effects of feelings? Until this moment, this can all still be considered normal, and it would not have affected you standing firm in your testimony yet. Suppose that your parents were then to say: "You were so healthy and strong before, and now you've been beaten into a state like this. Since you were young, we've treated you like the apple of our eyes. We've never laid a

finger on you. How could you let this happen to you? We've never wanted to hit you; we've always cherished and loved you—'we'd cradle you in our mouths but for fear that you would melt, we'd hold you in the palm of our hands but for fear that you would break.' We cherish you so much, but it's not enough. It's alright if you don't take care of us, but now you're refusing to hand over any information, you're suffering so much, and not giving up despite being tormented into such a state because you believe in God and want to bear witness for Him. How could you be this stubborn? Why do you insist on believing in God? 'Your body was given to you by your parents.' Are you doing right by us by letting this happen to you? If something really were to happen to you, how do you expect the two of us to go on living? We don't expect you to care for us when we're old or to arrange our funerals, we just want you to be fine. You're everything to us, if you're not doing well, if you're gone, how could we go on living the rest of our lives? Who else do we have but you? What other hopes do we have?" Every word of this speech would hit you where it really hurts, both satisfying your emotional needs, and stimulating your feelings and your conscience. Before your parents said these words, you were still holding on to your conviction and your stance in the depths of your heart, but after they spoke these words of reproach, wouldn't the line of defense in the depths of your heart collapse? "'Your body was given to you by your parents.' You resigned from a good job, you abandoned your great prospects, and you gave up a good life. You insist on believing in God, and you've allowed yourself to be ruined like this—are you doing right by us?" Could any person refrain from crying after hearing this speech? Could anyone stop from rebuking themselves after hearing these words? Could they avoid feeling that they'd let their parents down? Could anyone sense that this was Satan tempting them? Could any person merely be affected emotionally by this, but still deal with it rationally? Could anyone maintain their belief in the statement, "Your parents are not the masters of your life or your fate, and they are not your creditors" after hearing this speech? Could anyone, despite feeling weak emotionally, refrain from abandoning their duty and obligation, and the testimony that a created being should stand firm in? Which of these things could you accomplish? If, in terms of your feelings, you were just a bit upset, even shedding some tears, and feeling bad for your parents, but you still had faith in God's word, and still held to the testimony that you ought to stand firm in, and still held to the duty that you ought to perform, without losing the testimony, responsibility, and duty that a created being has before the Lord of creation, then you would be standing firm. But if, when you saw your mother tearfully reproaching you, you fell deeply into your feelings, thinking that you were unfilial, that you had made the wrong choice, feeling regretful and unwilling to keep going on, wanting to abandon the testimony that a created being ought to have, and the duty, responsibility, and obligation that a created being ought to fulfill, and return to your parents' side, repay their kindness, and stop them for suffering or worrying anymore for your sake, then you would have no testimony, and you would be unworthy of following God. What did God say to those who follow Him? (Didn't He say:

“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26)? This line is in the Bible.) If your love for your parents exceeds your love for God, then you are unworthy of following God, and you are not one of His followers. If you are not one of His followers, then it can be said that you are not an overcomer, and God does not want you. Through this trial, you have been exposed, you have not stood firm in your testimony. You didn’t give in to Satan’s torture, but a few words of reproach from your parents were enough to make you yield. You are spineless and you have betrayed God. You are unworthy of following God and you are not His follower. Parents often say: “I won’t ask anything else of you, I won’t ask that you become very wealthy, I just hope that you will be healthy and safe in this life. Just seeing you be happy is enough.” So, when you’re tortured, you will feel that you have let your parents down: “My parents don’t ask much of me, but I’ve still failed them.” Is this thought right? Did you fail them? (No.) Is it your fault that Satan persecuted you? Is it your fault that you were severely beaten, tortured, and brutally persecuted? (No.) It is Satan who persecuted you, you did not ruin yourself. You are walking the right path, and you are being a true person. Your choices and all of your actions were bearing witness for God, and performing the duty of a created being. These are the choices that every created being ought to make, and the path that every created being ought to take. It is the right path; it is not ruining oneself. Though your flesh has been tortured, and suffered brutal, inhuman treatment, this is all for a just cause. It is not taking the wrong path, it is not ruining yourself. Your flesh suffering, being subjected to torture, and being tormented to the point that you no longer resemble a person, is not you letting your parents down. You do not need to give an explanation to them. This is your choice. You are on the right path in life, they just don’t understand, that’s all. They are just standing from the perspective of a parent, always wanting to protect you for the sake of their feelings, not wishing for you to suffer physical pain. What can their desire to protect you accomplish? Can they bear witness on your behalf? Can they perform the duty of a created being on your behalf? Can they follow God’s way on your behalf? (No.) You made the right choice, and you should stick to it. You should not be bewitched or misled by your parents’ words. You are not ruining yourself; you are walking the right path. In your perseverance and in all your actions you are holding to the truth, submitting to God’s orchestrations and arrangements, and bearing witness for God before Satan, bringing glory to God’s name. You have merely endured the suffering of the brutal persecution of your flesh, that is all. This is suffering that people should endure; this is what people ought to offer up to the Lord of creation, and it is the price that they should pay. Your life did not come from your parents, and your parents have no right to decide what path you walk. They have no right to decide how you treat your own body, or what price you pay in order to stand firm in your testimony. They merely do not wish for you to suffer physical pain due to the needs of their fleshly feelings, and due to the fact that they are standing from the perspective of

fleshly feelings, that is all. But as a created being, no matter how much your flesh suffers, it is something that you ought to endure. People must pay numerous prices in order to achieve salvation and perform the duty of a created being well. This is the obligation and responsibility of man, and it is what a created being ought to dedicate to the Lord of creation. Because people's lives come from God, and their bodies also come from God, this is suffering that people should endure. Therefore, when it comes to the suffering that people should endure, regardless of what kind of physical pain your body endures, you do not need to explain anything to your parents. Your parents say, "Your body was given to you by your parents," but what of it? Though people are birthed and raised by their parents, it is not as if all that they have is given to them by their parents. It does not mean that people should be subject to their parents' coercion and constraint when it comes to the path they walk and the prices they pay. It does not mean that people must obtain their parents' permission in order to walk the path of pursuing the truth, or to fulfill the duty of a created being before the Lord of creation. Therefore, you do not need to give an explanation to your parents. The One you should be giving an explanation to is God. Regardless of whether you suffer or not, you should hand everything over to God. Moreover, if you are following the right path, then God will accept and remember all of the prices you've paid. Since God will remember and recognize them, those prices will have been worth paying. Your flesh will suffer some physical pain, but these prices will enable you to stand firm in your testimony in the end, to obtain God's approval, and to attain salvation, and God will remember them. Nothing else can be traded for that. Your parents' so-called expectations, or the words of criticism they speak to you, are insignificant and not worth mentioning when compared to the duty you ought to perform, and the testimony you ought to bear before God, because the suffering you endure is so valuable and so meaningful! From the perspective of a created being, this is the most meaningful and valuable thing in life. Therefore, people should not become weak and depressed, or fall into temptation because of their parents' words, and they certainly should not feel regret, guilt, or that they have let their parents down because of their words. People should feel honored by the suffering they have endured, and say: "God chose me, and enabled my flesh to pay this kind of price, and to be violently abused by Satan, so that I could have the opportunity to bear witness for Him." It is an honor for you to have been selected by God from among His numerous chosen ones. You should not feel sad about this. If you stand firm in your witness, and humiliate Satan, then this is the greatest honor in life for a created being. No matter what kind of ailments or aftereffects your body suffers after being brutally persecuted, or how much it hurts your family and parents to see you like that, you should not feel ashamed or upset, or that you have let your parents down because of it, because everything you have done was paying a price for a just cause, and this is a good deed. No person is qualified to criticize your good deeds, no person is qualified or has the right to make irresponsible, critical remarks or judgments about you believing in God, following God, and performing your

duty. Only the Lord of creation is qualified to judge your behavior, the prices you have paid, and the choices you have made. Nobody else is qualified to judge—none of them, including your parents, are qualified to criticize you. If they are the people closest to you, they should understand, encourage, and comfort you. They should support you in persevering, standing firm in your testimony, and refraining from conceding or yielding to Satan. They should feel proud and happy for you. Since you have been able to persevere until now and not yield to Satan so that you may stand firm in your witness, they should encourage you. They shouldn't hold you back, and they certainly shouldn't reproach you. If you did something wrong, they'd be qualified to criticize you. If you took the wrong path, humiliated God, betrayed positive things and the truth, then they'd be qualified to criticize you. But since all of your actions were positive, and God accepts and remembers them, if they criticize you, it is because they cannot discern between good and bad. They're the ones who are wrong. They are upset about you believing in God, walking the right path, and being a good person—why is it that, when Satan persecutes you, they do not criticize it instead? They are criticizing you because of their own feelings—what did you do wrong? Didn't you just refrain from turning Judas? You didn't turn Judas, you refused to cooperate or compromise with Satan, and you suffered this torture and inhuman treatment in order to stand firm in your witness—what's wrong with that? You did nothing wrong. From God's perspective, He rejoices for you, He feels proud of you. And yet, your parents feel ashamed of you, and criticize your good deeds—isn't this confusing white for black? Are these good parents? Why don't they criticize Satan, and the evil people and devils that are persecuting you? Not only do you not receive any comfort, encouragement, or support from your parents, on the contrary, you are criticized and scolded by them, while no matter what evil Satan does, they do not condemn or curse it. They do not dare to say one word of verbal abuse or reproach to it. They do not say: "How could you torment a good person into this state? All they've done is believe in God and take the correct path, right? They haven't stolen anything or robbed anyone, they haven't broken any laws, so why have you tormented them like this? You should be encouraging people like them. If everyone in society believed in God and walked the right path, then this society wouldn't need laws, and there wouldn't be any crime." Why don't they criticize it like this? Why don't they dare to criticize the Satans and devils that persecuted you? They reproach you for walking the right path, but when evil people commit evil deeds, they just tacitly approve of them. What do you think of these parents? Should you feel bad for them? Should you show them filial piety? Should you love them in your heart? Are they worthy of your filial piety? (No.) They are not. They cannot distinguish right from wrong, or good from bad. They are a pair of muddled people. Aside from feelings, they don't understand anything. They don't understand what justice is, or what walking the right path means, they don't know what negative things are, or what evil forces are, they only know to safeguard their feelings and their flesh. Aside from this most superficial level of fleshly relationships, their hearts only contain the

idea that: “As long as my children are safe and well, I’ll be very happy and grateful.” That is all. When it comes to the right path in life, just causes, or the most valuable and meaningful thing a person can do in this life, they don’t understand any of these things. They do not understand these things, and they scold you for following the right path—they really are incredibly muddled. What do you think of these parents? Are they not a pair of old devils? You must ponder in your heart: “These two old devils—until now I’ve suffered so many beatings, and so much torture, over these days I’ve been praying to God all day and night, and He has been looking over me and keeping me, that is why I’ve been able to survive until now. I’ve stood firm in my witness with great difficulty, and in a few words you’ve completely denied it. Is it wrong for me to walk the right path? Is it wrong for me to perform the duty of a created being? Surely it isn’t wrong for me to have not turned Judas? These two old devils! ‘Your body was given to you by your parents’—everything I possess clearly came from God, was it you who gave it to me? It is just that God ordained that you would birth and raise me, bringing me up by your hands. You feel distressed about me, and pained and upset just to satisfy your emotional needs. You’re afraid that if I die, there’ll be no one to take care of you when you’re old or to arrange your funerals. You’re afraid that people will laugh, and think that I’ve embarrassed you.” If you went to jail because you had committed a crime, because you stole something, or you robbed, cheated, or scammed someone, they might fight for you, saying: “My child is a good kid, they haven’t done anything bad. They don’t have an evil nature, they’re good and kind. It’s just that the evil trends of this world have had a negative influence on them. I hope that the government will be lenient on them.” They’d fight for you, but because you are walking the path of belief in God, because you are walking the right path, they disdain you from the depths of their hearts. In what way do they disdain you? “Look at the state you’ve gotten yourself into. Are you doing right by us?” You should think in your heart: “What do they mean by ‘Look at the state you’ve gotten yourself into’? I am just walking the right path in life—this is called being a true person! This is called possessing good deeds and testimony; this is strength. Only people like this truly possess conscience and reason, and are not cowards, good-for-nothings, or Judases. What state have I gotten myself into? This is true human likeness! Not only are you not happy for me, you’re reproaching me—what kind of parents are you? You’re unworthy to be parents, you should be cursed!” If you think in this way, would you still cry when you heard your parents say: “Your body was given to you by your parents, how could you let yourself be ruined like this”? (No.) What would you think after hearing that speech? “What a load of nonsense. They really are a pair of old nitwits! ‘Your body was given to you by your parents’—you don’t even know who gave you your bodies, and you use these words to reproach me, how truly muddled you are! It is clearly the devils and Satans who are persecuting me. How can you confuse white for black and criticize me instead? Did I break the law? Did I steal something or rob someone, did I cheat or scam somebody? What laws did I break? I didn’t break any laws, I’ve been persecuted to a

state like this by Satan because I follow the right path. I haven't betrayed a single word until now, I haven't turned Judas—who else possesses this kind of strength? Not only do you not praise or encourage me, you reproach me. You're devils!" If you think in this way, you will not cry or become weak, will you? Your parents do not know right from wrong, they confuse white for black, because they do not believe in God, and they do not understand the truth. You understand the truth, so you should not be influenced by those devilish words and fallacies that they speak. Instead, you should continue holding to the truth. In this way, you will truly be standing firm in your testimony. Is that not the case? (It is.)

Tell Me, is it easy to stand firm in one's witness? First, you must break free from your feelings, second, you must understand the truth. Only then will you not experience any weakness, be able to stand firm in your witness, and be recognized and accepted by God under these kinds of special circumstances; only then will God acknowledge you as an overcomer and His follower. When you have prevailed, when you have not failed God, instead of not having failed your parents, you'll be able to let go of all of your parents' expectations for you, right? Your parents' expectations are not important, they do not matter; living up to God's expectations, and standing firm in your testimony for God are the most important things, they are the attitude and pursuits that a created being ought to have. Is that not the case? (It is.) When you are feeling weak, when you lose your way, especially when you are besieged and persecuted by Satans while following the right path, or spurned, mocked, and rejected by the people of the secular world, those around you—your relatives, friends, and acquaintances—will think that you have done something embarrassing, and no one will understand, encourage, support, or comfort you. Much less will anyone assist you, show you the way, or point out the path of practice. This includes your parents. Since you are not by their side, showing them filial piety, or since you are not able to help them live well or repay their kindness because you are believing in God and performing your duty, they won't understand you. Their perspective will be the same as that of people in the secular world—they will think that you have embarrassed them, that they haven't gotten anything in return for raising you, that they've received no benefits from you, that you haven't fulfilled their expectations, that you have failed them, and that you are an uncaring ingrate. Your parents will not understand you, and they will not be able to give you any positive guidance, to say nothing of your relatives and friends. While you are walking the right path, only God is tirelessly encouraging, assisting, comforting, and supplying you. When you are being tortured and tormented in jail, only God's word and the faith that He has given you will sustain you through every second, minute, and day. So, when you are enduring severe beatings, you will be able to keep wanting to stand firm in your witness for God, to keep refraining from turning Judas, and to keep wanting to bring glory to God's name and humiliate Satan, because of God's word and the faith that God has given you. You will be able to do these things in one respect because of your resolve, and in another, more

important respect, because of God's guidance, keeping, and leadership. Whereas your parents, when you most need comfort and aid, still only think of themselves, saying that you are an uncaring ingrate, that they can never count on you in this life, and that they've raised you for nothing. They still do not forget that they raised you, that they wished to count on you to help them live a good life, to bring glory to your ancestors, and to enable them to hold their heads up high and feel proud of you in front of their relatives and friends. Parents who don't believe in God never feel honored and fortunate on account of your belief. On the contrary, they often reproach you for not finding the time to visit or care for them because you believe in God and are busy performing your duty. Not only do they reproach you, they often scold you, calling you an "uncaring ingrate" and a "thankless child." Don't you feel that it is hard for you to walk the right path while bearing these bad names? Don't you feel wronged? Don't you need your parents' support, encouragement, and understanding while experiencing these things? Don't you often feel that you have failed your parents? Consequently, some people even have some foolish thoughts: "In this life, I have not been fated to show my parents filial piety or to live with them. I'll show them filial piety in my next life, then!" Isn't this thought foolish? (Yes.) You should not have these thoughts; you should resolve them from their root. You walk the right path, you have chosen to perform the duty of a created being, and to come before the Lord of creation to accept God's salvation. That is the only correct path in this world. You have made the right choice. Regardless of how much those who do not believe, including your parents, misunderstand you or feel disappointed by you, this should not impact your choice to walk the path of believing in God or your resolve to perform your duty, nor should it impact your faith in God. You should persevere, because you are walking the right path. Even more so, you should let go of your parents' expectations. They should not become burdens for you while you are walking the right path. You are following the right path, you have made the most correct choice in life; if your parents don't support you, if they always scold you for being an uncaring ingrate, then you even more so ought to have discernment of them, and let go of them on an emotional level, and not be constrained by them. If they do not support, encourage, or comfort you, you'll be okay—you won't gain or lose anything with or without these things. What's most important are God's expectations for you. God is encouraging you, supplying you, and guiding you. You are not alone. Without your parents' expectations, you can still fulfill the duty of a created being all the same, and upon this basis, you will still be a good person. Letting go of your parents' expectations does not mean that you have lost your ethics and morals, and it certainly doesn't mean that you have forsaken your humanity, or morality and justice. The reason that you haven't lived up to your parents' expectations is because you chose positive things, and you chose to perform the duty of a created being. There's nothing wrong with this, it is the most correct path. You should persevere and remain firm in your belief. It is possible that you will not obtain your parents' support, and certainly not their blessings, because you believe in God and

are performing the duty of a created being, but this doesn't matter. This is not important, you have not lost anything. The most important thing is that when you chose to walk the path of belief in God and of performing the duty of a created being, God began to have expectations and high hopes for you. While living in this world, if people stray from their friends and relatives, they can still live well. Of course, they can live normally after straying from their parents too. It is only when they stray from God's guidance and blessings that they fall into darkness. Compared to God's expectations for people and His guidance, parental expectations are simply insignificant and not worth mentioning. Regardless of what kind of person your parents expect you to be, or what kind of life they expect you to live on an emotional level, they are not guiding you along the right path, or the path of salvation. Therefore, you should reverse your point of view, and let go of your parents' expectations from the depths of your heart, and on an emotional level. You should not continue shouldering this kind of burden, or feel at all guilty toward your parents because you have chosen to perform the duty of a created being. You haven't done anything to let anyone down. You chose to follow God and to accept His salvation. This is not letting your parents down, on the contrary, your parents should feel proud and honored that you have chosen to fulfill the duty of a created being and to accept the salvation of the Creator. If they cannot do this, they are not good people. They are not worthy of your respect, they are even less worthy of your filial piety, and, of course, they are even less worthy of your concern. Is that not the case? (It is.)

In this world, what kind of people are the worthiest of respect? Is it not those who walk the right path? What does "the right path" refer to here? Does it not mean pursuing the truth and accepting God's salvation? Are those who walk the right path not people who follow and obey God? (They are.) If you are this kind of person, or you endeavor to be, and your parents do not understand you, and even always curse you—if, when you are weak, depressed, and lost, they not only fail to support, comfort, or encourage you, they often demand that you come back to show them filial piety, to earn a lot of money and take care of them, to not let them down, to enable them to bask in the light with you, and live a good life with you—should parents like this not be cast aside? (Yes.) Are parents like this worthy of your respect? Are they worthy of your filial piety? Are they worthy of you fulfilling your responsibility to them? (No.) Why not? It is because they are fed up with positive things, is this not a fact? (It is.) It is because they hate God, is that not a fact? (It is.) It is because they disdain you walking the right path, is that not a fact? (It is.) They disdain people who engage in just causes; they scorn and look down on you because you follow God and perform your duty. What kind of parents are these? Are they not despicable and vile parents? Are they not selfish parents? Are they not evil parents? (They are.) You have been chased and hunted by the great red dragon in your belief in God, you have been on the run, unable to return home, and some people have even had to go overseas. Your relatives, friends, and classmates all say that you've become a fugitive, and because of these external rumors and gossip, your parents think

that you have made them suffer unjustly, and embarrassed them. Not only do they not understand, support, or empathize with you, not only do they not reproach the people spreading those rumors, and those who despise and discriminate against you, your parents also hate you, they say the same things about you as those people who do not believe in God and those who are in power. What do you think of these parents? Are they good? (No.) Then do you still feel that you are indebted to them? (No.) If you occasionally give your family a call, they will think that it's like receiving a call from a fugitive. They will feel that it is a great humiliation, and that you do not dare to even return home, like a hunted rat. They will feel that it is embarrassing to have you as a child. Are parents like these worthy of respect? (No.) They are not worthy of respect. So, what is the nature of their expectations for you? Are they worth you keeping in mind? (No.) What is the main goal of their expectations for you? Do they really want you to walk the right path and ultimately attain salvation? They hope that you will follow the trends of society and rise up in the world, put a feather in their caps, enable them to face the world with dignity, and become their pride and joy. What else? They want to be able to bask in the light along with you, to eat and drink well, to wear nice brands and to be dripping in gold and silver. They want to go on luxury cruise ships and go traveling to every country in the world. If you were to rise up in the world, to have fame and money in this world, and enable them to bask in the light along with you, they would mention your name everywhere they went, saying: "My son, my daughter is so-and-so." Do they mention your name now? (No.) You are walking the right path, but they do not bring up your name. They think that you are penniless and destitute, an embarrassment, and that mentioning you would be equivalent to bringing shame on themselves, so they don't bring you up. Therefore, what is the aim of your parents' expectations? It is to bask in the light with you, it is not purely for your own good. They will only be happy when they can bask in your light. Now you have returned before the Lord of creation, and accepted God, His salvation, and His words, now you have taken up the duty of a created being, and embarked on the right path in life, they are not profiting or benefiting from you, and they feel that they have lost out by raising you. It is as if they are doing business, and have made a loss. Consequently, they are filled with regret. Some parents often say: "Raising you is worse than raising a dog. When you raise a dog, it's very friendly and knows to wag its tail when it sees its master. What can I expect from raising you? You spend all day believing in God and performing your duty, you don't do business, you don't go to work, you don't even want a secure livelihood, and in the end all of our neighbors have started laughing at us. What have I gained from you? I haven't gotten a single good thing from you, or basked in any light at all." If you followed the evil trends of the secular world, and strived to be successful there, your parents would probably support, encourage, and comfort you if you were to suffer, fall ill, or feel sad. And yet, they do not feel happy or rejoice at the fact that you believe in God and have a chance to be saved. On the contrary, they hate and curse you. Based on their essence, these

parents are your foes and your sworn enemies, they are not the same kind of people as you, and they are not walking the same path as you. Though you appear to be a family on the surface, based on your essences, your pursuits, your preferences, the paths that you follow, and the various attitudes with which you approach positive things, God, and the truth, they are not the same kind of people as you. Therefore, no matter how much you say, “I have hope of salvation, I have embarked upon the right path in life,” they will be unmoved, and they will not feel happy for you, or rejoice for you. Instead, they will feel ashamed. On an emotional level, these parents are your family, but based on your nature essences, they are not your family, they are your enemies. Think about it, if children bring presents and money when they go home, and enable their parents to eat well and live in nice places, their parents will be overjoyed, they will be so happy that they will not know what to say. In their hearts, they will keep saying: “My son is so great, my daughter is so great. I didn’t raise and love them for nothing. They’re sensible, they know to show filial piety to us, and we have a place in their hearts. They’re a good kid.” Say that you go home empty-handed, without buying anything, because you are believing in God and performing your duty. Suppose that you fellowship on the truth with your parents, talk about God’s word, and say that you have embarked upon the path of pursuing the truth. Your parents will immediately think: “What are you going on about? I can’t understand you. I’ve raised you for all these years, and you haven’t fulfilled any of my expectations. You’ve finally come back to visit us, you could have at least bought us a pair of socks or some fruit. You didn’t bring anything, you just came back empty-handed.” Your parents won’t say: “Hearing you say these things, I can tell that you’ve changed a lot. Before you were young and arrogant, but now you’ve really changed. I can tell that all the things you’re talking about are proper matters. You’ve made progress. You have promise, and there is hope for you—you’re able to walk the right path, and to follow God and gain salvation. You are a good kid. You’ve been suffering out there, I should make you something tasty to eat. We keep a few chickens, and usually we don’t want to kill them, we wait to eat their eggs instead. But now you’re home, I’ll kill a chicken, and brew some chicken soup for you. You were right to choose this path, you’ll be able to attain salvation. I feel so happy for you! I’ve missed you a lot over these past few years. Though we haven’t been in contact, you’ve come back to visit us now, and I feel at ease. You’ve grown up. You’re more mature and sensible than you were before. The things that you say and do are all proper things.” Through seeing their child walking the right path, and possessing the correct thoughts and views, parents can also benefit and expand their knowledge. Since their child is able to perform a duty and pursue the truth, these parents should support them. If, in the future, their child attains salvation and enters the kingdom, and is no longer harmed by their satanic, corrupt dispositions, that would be a wonderful thing. Though these parents are old, slow to comprehend the truth, and don’t quite understand these matters, they feel: “My child can walk the right path, that’s great. They’re a good kid. No high-ranking government position and no amount of

wealth are as good or as valuable as this!" Tell Me, are these good parents? (Yes.) Are they worthy of respect? (Yes.) They are worthy of your respect. So, how should you show them respect? You should pray for them in your heart. If they believe in God, you should pray for God to guide and keep them, so that they can stand firm in their witness during trials and temptation. If they do not believe in God, you should still respect their decision, and hope that their lives will be stable, that they will not do anything bad, and that they will commit fewer evil deeds, then, at best, they will suffer less punishment after their deaths; furthermore, you should do your utmost to fellowship on some positive things, thoughts, and views with them. This is called respect, and it can also be called the best kind of filial piety and the best fulfillment of your responsibilities. Can you achieve this? (Yes.) On a spiritual and psychological level, give them encouragement and support. On a physical level, while you are accompanying them at home, do your utmost to help them get some work done, and fellowship on some things that you understand and that your parents can comprehend. Help them to take it easy, to not tire themselves out so much, to not make too much of a fuss about finances and all other kinds of matters, and to let things take their course. This is called respect. Treat your parents as good, decent people, fulfill a bit of your responsibilities to them, show them a bit of filial piety, and perform some of your obligations to them. This is called respect. Only parents that understand and support your belief in God like this are worthy of respect. Apart from them, no other parents are worthy of respect. Aside from getting you to earn money, they want you to rise up in the world, to make a name for yourself, and to do this or that. These are parents who do not attend to their proper affairs, and they are unworthy of respect.

Now you all understand letting go of parental expectations, and you are able to let go of your parents' expectations. What other things are you unable to let go of? When it comes to your parents' lives or to your parents themselves, what things do you care most about? That is, what things are the hardest for you to part with or let go of on an emotional level? "Your parents are not your creditors; your parents are not the masters of your life or your fate"—haven't we basically finished fellowshiping on this topic? Do you understand it? (Yes.) Your parents are not your creditors—that is, you shouldn't always ponder on how you must repay them just because they've spent so long raising you. If you are not able to repay them, if you do not have the chance or the right circumstances to repay them, you'll always feel sad and guilty, to the extent that you will even feel sad whenever you see someone with, taking care of, or doing some things to show filial piety to their parents. God ordained that your parents would raise you, enabling you to grow into an adult, not so that you would spend your life repaying them. You have responsibilities and obligations that you must fulfill in this life, a path that you must take, and you have your own life. In this life, you should not put all of your energy into repaying your parents' kindness. This is just something that accompanies you in your life and on your life path. In terms of humanity and emotional relationships, it is something that is

unavoidable. But as for what kind of relationship you and your parents are fated to have, whether you will be able to live together for the rest of your life, or whether you will be separated, and are not linked together by fate, this depends on God's orchestrations and arrangements. If God has orchestrated and arranged that you will be in a different place to your parents during this life, that you will be very far away from them, and unable to live together often, then fulfilling your responsibilities to them is, to you, just a kind of aspiration. If God has arranged for you to live very close to your parents in this life, and to be able to stay by their side, then fulfilling a bit of your responsibilities to your parents, and showing them some filial piety are things that you should do in this life—there is nothing that can be criticized about this. But if you are in a different place from your parents, and you do not have the chance or the right circumstances to show them filial piety, then you do not need to regard this as a shameful thing. You should not feel ashamed to face your parents because you are unable to show them filial piety, it is just that your circumstances don't allow it. As a child, you should understand that your parents are not your creditors. There are many things that you must do in this life, and these are all things that a created being ought to do, that have been entrusted to you by the Lord of creation, and they have nothing to do with you repaying your parents' kindness. Showing filial piety to your parents, repaying them, returning their kindness—these things have nothing to do with your mission in life. It can also be said that it is not necessary for you to show filial piety to your parents, to repay them, or to fulfill any of your responsibilities to them. To put it plainly, you can do a bit of this and fulfill a bit of your responsibilities when your circumstances allow; when they do not, you do not need to insist upon doing so. If you cannot fulfill your responsibility to show filial piety to your parents, this is not a terrible thing, it just goes against your conscience, human morality, and human notions a little. But at the very least, it does not go against the truth, and God will not condemn you for it. When you understand the truth, your conscience will not feel rebuked on account of this. Do your hearts not feel steady now that you have understood this aspect of the truth? (Yes.) Some people say: "Though God won't condemn me, in my conscience, I still can't get past this, and I feel unsteady." If this is the case for you, then your stature is too small, and you have not understood or seen through to the essence of this matter. You do not understand man's destiny, you do not understand God's sovereignty, and you are not willing to accept God's sovereignty and arrangements. You always possess human will and your own feelings, and these things are driving and dominating you; they have become your life. If you choose human will and your feelings, then you have not chosen the truth, and you are not practicing the truth or submitting to it. If you choose human will and your feelings, then you are betraying the truth. Your circumstances and environment clearly do not permit you to show filial piety to your parents, but you always think: "I owe a debt to my parents. I haven't shown them filial piety. They haven't seen me for so many years. They raised me for nothing." In the depths of your heart, you are never able to let go of these things.

This proves one thing: You do not accept the truth. In terms of doctrine, you acknowledge that God's words are correct, but you do not accept them as the truth, or take them as the principles of your actions. So, at the very least, when it comes to the matter of how you treat your parents, you are not a person who pursues the truth. This is because, in this matter, you do not act based on the truth, you do not practice according to God's words, instead you just satisfy your emotional needs, and the needs of your conscience, wanting to show filial piety to your parents and repay their kindness. Although God does not condemn you for making this choice, and it is your choice, in the end the one who will lose out, particularly in terms of the life, is you. You are always bound by this matter, always thinking that you are too ashamed to face your parents, that you have not repaid their kindness. One day, when God sees that your desire to repay your parents' kindness is too great, He will go right ahead and orchestrate an environment for you, and you can then just go home. Don't you think that your parents are higher than everything, higher than the truth? In order to show filial piety to them and satisfy the needs of your conscience and feelings, you'd rather lose God, abandon the truth, and abandon your opportunity to attain salvation. Well, that's fine, that is your choice. God will not condemn you for it. God will orchestrate an environment for you, He will strike you from His list, and He will give up on you. If you choose to go home to show filial piety to your parents, and to not perform your duty, then you are escaping and walking away from the duty that God has entrusted to you, you are renouncing God's commission and expectations for you, you are renouncing the duty that God gave you, and abandoning your opportunity to perform a duty. If you go home to reunite with your parents, to satisfy the needs of your conscience, and to satisfy your parents' expectations, that is okay, you can choose to go home. If you really cannot let go of your parents, you can take the initiative to raise your hand and say: "I miss my parents too much. My conscience feels rebuked every day, I'm unable to satisfy my feelings, and my heart aches. I long for my parents, and I keep thinking about them. If I don't go back to show filial piety to my parents in this life, I fear that I'll never have another opportunity, I'm afraid that I'll regret it." Then you can go home. If your parents are the heavens and the earth to you, if they are greater to you than your own life, if they are everything to you, then you can choose not to let go of them. No one will force you to. You can choose to go home to show them filial piety and accompany them, to enable them to live a good life, and to repay their kindness. But you need to give this a lot of thought. If you make this choice today, and in the end lose your chance to attain salvation, then only you will have to bear this outcome. No other person can bear this kind of consequence for you, you must bear it yourself. Do you understand? (Yes.) If you would rather abandon your opportunity to perform a duty and to attain salvation, just so that your parents can be your creditors, and so that you can pay off your debts to them, this is your choice. No one is forcing you. Suppose that someone in the church makes a request, saying: "It's too tough living away from home. I miss my parents too much. I'm unable to let go of them in my heart. I often dream of them. In my

mind and in my heart, all I can think about are their shadows, and I feel more and more guilty about everything they have done for me. Now that they're getting older, I feel even more that it's so difficult for parents to raise a child, and that I should repay them, give them some joy, and comfort them with my presence for the rest of my life. I would rather give up my chance to be saved so that I can go home to show them filial piety." In that case, they can submit an application, saying: "I'm reporting in! I want to go home to show filial piety to my parents, I don't want to perform my duty." The church should then approve it, and no one needs to work on them or fellowship with them. To say anything more to them would be foolish. When people do not understand anything at all, you can speak a bit more to them, and fellowship on the truth until it is clear. If you haven't fellowshiped on it clearly, and they make the wrong choice as a result, then you are responsible for this. However, if they understand everything in terms of doctrine, then no one needs to work on them. It's like how some people say: "I understand everything, you don't need to tell me anything." That's perfect, you don't need to waste your breath on them, you can save yourself a bit of trouble. You should allow people like this to return home immediately. First, do not stop them; second, support them; third, give them a bit of comfort and encouragement, saying: "Go home and show your parents some proper filial piety. Don't make them angry or upset. If you want to show filial piety to them and to repay them, then you must be a filial child. But do not be filled with regret when you cannot achieve salvation in the end. Have a good trip, I hope everything goes well!" Alright? (Yes.) If someone wants to go home to show filial piety to their parents, that's fine, they shouldn't bottle this up. Performing a duty is voluntary, and no one will insist that you do it. You will not be condemned for not performing a duty. If you perform a duty, will you necessarily achieve salvation? Not necessarily. This is just a question of the attitude you have toward performing a duty. Then, will you be destroyed if you do not perform a duty? Nobody said that. In any case, your hope of salvation will probably be gone. Some people say: "Is it a good or bad thing to show filial piety to one's parents?" I do not know. If you want to show filial piety to your parents, then do that. We will not assess this, doing so would be meaningless. This is a matter of humanity and feelings. It is a question of choosing your method of existence. It has nothing to do with the truth. Whoever wants to go home and show filial piety to their parents can choose to do so freely. God's house will not insist upon them staying, and God's house will not interfere. The church leaders and the people around them should not stop them from going home. They should not do work on this kind of person, or fellowship on the truth with them. If you want to go home, then go. Everyone will give you a sendoff, eat some dumplings with you, and wish you a safe trip.

The biggest expectations that parents have for their children are, in one respect, hoping that their children can live a good life, and, in another respect, hoping that their children will be by their side and watch over them when they are old. For example, if a parent gets sick or encounters some difficulties in their life, they hope that their children

will be able to help dispel their worries and difficulties, and to share this burden. They hope that their children will be by their side when they leave this world, so that they can see them again, one last time. Usually, these are the two biggest expectations that parents have for their children, and it is difficult to let go of them. If a person's parents become ill or encounter difficulties, and they do not hear news of this, it is possible that these things will be resolved without their intervention. But if they do learn of these matters, they usually find it very hard to overcome them, especially when their parents become seriously and gravely ill. In those times it is even harder for people to let go. When, in the depths of your heart, you feel that your parents are still in the physical, living, or working condition that they were 10 or 20 years ago, that they can take care of themselves, and live as normal, that they are still healthy, young, and robust, and when you are under the impression that they do not need you, you will not harbor such great concern for them in your heart. But when you learn that your parents have entered into old age, that their bodies have become weak, and that they need people to care for them and accompany them, if you are elsewhere, you will probably feel upset, and be impacted by this. Some people even abandon their duties, and want to go home to visit their parents. Some emotional people make even more irrational choices, saying: "If I could, I'd give 10 years of my life to my parents." There are also some people who are intent on seeking blessings for their parents. They buy all kinds of health products and nutritional supplements for their parents, and when they learn that their parents are seriously ill, they can't help but become trapped in their feelings, wishing to speed to their parents' side immediately. Some people say, "I'd even be willing to take this illness from my parents," not considering what duty they should be performing, and disregarding God's commission. Therefore, in these circumstances, people are very likely to become weak and fall into temptation. Would you cry if you heard news that your parents had fallen seriously ill? In particular, some people receive letters from home saying that the doctor has already given their final notice. What does "given their final notice" mean? This phrase is easy to interpret. It means that the parents of those people will die in a few days. At such a time, you would think: "My parents are only in their 50s. This shouldn't be happening. What have they fallen ill with?" And when the reply is "cancer," you would immediately think: "How did they get it? I've been away for all these years, they've been missing me, and their lives are so hard—is that why they got this disease?" You would then rush to place all of the blame on yourself: "My parents' lives are so hard, and I haven't been helping to share their burdens. They've been missing me and worrying about me, and I haven't stayed by their side. I've let them down, and I've made them suffer the pain of missing me all the time. My parents spent so much time raising me, and for what? All I've done is make them suffer!" The more you'd think about it, the more you'd believe that you'd let them down, and that you were indebted to them. Then you'd think: "No, that's not right. I'm believing in God, performing the duty of a created being, and completing God's commission. I haven't let anybody down." But then you'd

think: “My parents are so old, and they don’t have any children by their side to take care of them. What was the point of them raising me then?” You’d go back and forth, unable to overcome this no matter how you thought about it. Not only would you cry, you would fall deeply into the entanglements of your feelings for your parents. Is it easy to let go, in these circumstances? You would say: “My parents gave birth to me and raised me. They didn’t expect me to become very wealthy, and they’ve never asked anything excessive of me. They just hoped that I’d be by their side when they fell ill and needed me, accompanying them, and lessening their suffering. I haven’t even done that!” You would cry from the day that you heard news that your parents were critically ill until the day that they died. Would you be sad if you encountered this kind of situation? Would you cry? Would you shed tears? (Yes.) At that moment, would your resolve and aspiration waver? Would you have the urge to rashly and recklessly hurry back to your parents’ side? Would you think, deep in your heart, that you were an uncaring ingrate, and that your parents raised you for nothing? Would you keep feeling ashamed to face your parents? Would you keep recalling the kindness that your parents showed you by raising you, and how good they’d been to you? (Yes.) Would you give up your duty? Would you try to do everything to get the most recent news about your parents from friends, or from the brothers and sisters? All people would possess these manifestations, wouldn’t they? Then, is this matter easy to resolve? How should you understand such matters? How should you view the matter of illness or some kind of great misfortune befalling your parents? If you can see through this, you will be able to let go. If you cannot, then you will not be able to let go. You always think that everything your parents have endured and faced is related to you, and that you should share those burdens; you always put the blame onto yourself, always thinking that these things have something to do with you, always wanting to get involved. Is this idea right? (No.) Why? How should you view these things? What manifestations are normal? What manifestations are abnormal, irrational, and not in accordance with the truth? We’ll speak of the normal manifestations first. People are all birthed by their parents; they are of the flesh and possess feelings. Feelings are a part of humanity, and no one can avoid them. Every person has feelings—even small animals have them, not to mention people. But some people’s feelings are a bit stronger, and some people’s feelings are a bit weaker. But no matter what the circumstances are, all people have them. Whether it comes from their feelings, humanity, or rationality, all people would feel upset upon hearing that their parents had fallen ill, encountered some great misfortune, or met with suffering. Every person would feel upset. It is very normal to feel upset, this is a human instinct, it is something that people possess in their humanity and feelings. It is very normal for this to manifest in people. When their parents fall seriously ill or encounter a great misfortune, it is very normal for people to feel sad, to cry, to feel repressed, to think of ways to resolve the problems, and to share the burden with their parents. For some people, this will even affect their bodies—they won’t be able to eat, they’ll feel a knot in their chests, and they’ll be in low

spirits all day long. These are all manifestations of emotions, and they are all very normal. People shouldn't criticize you for these normal manifestations; you shouldn't try to avoid these manifestations, and you certainly shouldn't accept anyone else's criticism of them. If you have these manifestations, it proves that your feelings for your parents are genuine, and that you are a person who possesses the awareness of conscience, and a normal, ordinary person. No one should criticize you for having these emotional outpourings, or for having these emotional needs. These manifestations all fall within the scope of rationality and conscience. So, what manifestations are not normal? Abnormal manifestations are those that go beyond rationality. They are when people become impulsive as soon as these things befall them, and want to immediately abandon everything to return to their parents' side, who rush to put all of the blame on themselves, and to abandon the ideals, aspirations, and resolve they once had, and even the oaths they swore before God. These manifestations are abnormal, and they go beyond rationality, they are too impulsive! When people choose a path, it is not as if they can choose the correct and right path in a burst of hotheadedness. You choosing to walk the path of performing a duty and choosing to fulfill the duty of a created being is no simple matter, and it is something that nothing else can replace. It certainly isn't a choice that can be made in a burst of hotheadedness. Moreover, this is the right path—you should not change your decision to walk the right path in life because of the environments, people, events, and things that surround you. This is the rationality that you ought to possess. Whether it's your parents or any kind of big change, it should not impact the most important thing, which is you performing the duty of a created being. That is one aspect of this. Another aspect is that, when it comes to how your parents get an illness, when they begin suffering from it, and what kind of consequences it can result in, are these things that you can decide? You may say: "Maybe this has happened because I wasn't a filial child. If I'd spent these years diligently earning money and working, and I were well-off financially, they could have treated this illness sooner, and it wouldn't have gotten so bad. This is because I've been unfilial." Is this thought correct? (No.) If a person has money, does it necessarily mean that they will be able to buy good health and avoid falling ill? (No.) Do the rich people in this world never get sick? From the moment that a person feels that they are falling ill, until they become ill, and until they ultimately die, it is all predestined by God. How could any person decide this? How could having or lacking money determine this? How could one's environment determine this? All of this is determined by God's sovereignty and arrangements. Therefore, you do not need to overly analyze or investigate the matter of your parents falling seriously ill or meeting with some great misfortune, and you certainly should not put energy into it—doing so will be of no use. People being born, growing old, getting sick, dying, and encountering various great and small matters in life are very normal occurrences. If you are an adult, then you should have a mature way of thinking, and you should approach this matter calmly and correctly: "My parents are ill. Some people say that it's because they missed

me so much, is that possible? They definitely missed me—how could a person not miss their own child? I missed them too, so why didn't I get sick?" Does any person get sick because they miss their children? That's not the case. So, what is going on when your parents encounter these significant matters? It can only be said that God has orchestrated this kind of matter in their lives. It has been orchestrated by God's hand—you cannot focus on objective reasons and causes—your parents were supposed to encounter this matter when they reached this age, they were supposed to be struck with this illness. Could they have avoided it if you had been there? If God had not arranged for them to fall ill as part of their fates, then nothing would have happened to them, even if you hadn't been with them. If they were destined to encounter this kind of great misfortune in their lives, what effect could you have had if you'd been by their side? They still wouldn't have been able to avoid it, right? (Right.) Think about those people who don't believe in God—aren't their families all together, year after year? When those parents encounter great misfortune, the members of their extended family and their children are all with them, right? When parents fall ill, or when their illnesses worsen, is it because their children left them? That's not the case, it is fated to happen. It's just that, as their child, because you have this blood tie with your parents, you will feel upset when you hear that they are sick, while other people won't feel anything. This is very normal. However, your parents encountering this kind of great misfortune doesn't mean that you need to analyze and investigate, or ponder on how to get rid of it or resolve it. Your parents are adults; they have encountered this more than a few times in society. If God arranges an environment to rid them of this matter, then, sooner or later, it will vanish completely. If this matter is a life hurdle for them, and they must experience it, then it is up to God how long they must experience it for. It is something that they must experience, and they cannot avoid it. If you wish to single-handedly resolve this matter, to analyze and investigate the source, causes, and consequences of this matter, that is a foolish thought. It is of no use, and it is superfluous. You should not act in this way, analyzing, investigating, and contacting your classmates and friends for help, contacting the hospital for your parents, contacting the best doctors, arranging for the best hospital bed for them—you do not need to rack your brain doing all of these things. If you really do have some excess energy, then you should do a good job at the duty you're supposed to perform now. Your parents have their own fates. No one can escape the age at which they are supposed to die. Your parents are not the masters of your fate, and in the same way, you are not the master of your parents' fates. If something is fated to happen to them, what can you do about it? What effect can you being anxious and looking for solutions achieve? It cannot achieve anything; it depends on God's will. If God wants to take them away, and enable you to perform your duty undisturbed, can you interfere with this? Can you discuss conditions with God? What should you do at this time? Racking your brain coming up with solutions, investigating, analyzing, putting the blame on yourself, and feeling ashamed to face your parents—are these the thoughts and actions

that a person ought to have? These are all manifestations of a lack of submission to God and the truth; they are irrational, unwise, and rebellious toward God. People should not have these manifestations. Do you understand? (Yes.)

Some people say: “I know that I shouldn’t analyze or investigate the matter of my parents falling ill or meeting with some great misfortune, that doing so is pointless, and that I should approach this based on the truth principles, but I cannot restrain myself from analyzing and investigating it.” So, let us resolve the problem of restraint, so that you no longer need to restrain yourself. How can this be achieved? In this life, people with healthy bodies begin experiencing symptoms of old age after they reach 50 or 60 years old—their muscles and bones deteriorate, they lose their strength, they can’t sleep well or eat a lot, and they don’t have enough energy to work, read, or do any kind of job. Various kinds of diseases burst forth within them, like high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, cardiovascular diseases, cerebrovascular diseases, and so on. For those who are a bit healthier, though they have these symptoms of old age, they can do whatever they need to do, and these symptoms don’t impact them living and working as normal. This is quite good. For those who are less healthy, these symptoms do impact them working and living as normal, and they sometimes have to go to the hospital to see the doctor. Some of these people get colds or headaches; others get enteritis or diarrhea, and need to rest in bed for two days every time they suffer from a bout of diarrhea. Some people have high blood pressure, and they get so dizzy that they can’t walk, ride in a car, or go far from their homes. There are also some who have urinary incontinence, it’s inconvenient for them to go outside, so they rarely go out and travel with their relatives and friends. There are others who always have allergic reactions when they eat. There are some people who don’t sleep well, and cannot sleep in noisy places; as soon as they move to another place, it’s even harder for them to sleep. All of these things have a severe impact on these people’s lives and work. There are even some people who cannot work for more than three to four consecutive hours. And then there are even more severe cases, where people become terminally ill at 50 or 60 years old, for example, with cancer, diabetes, rheumatic heart disease, dementia, or Parkinson’s disease, and so on. Whether these diseases are caused by the things they ate, or by polluted environments, air, or water, the law of man’s flesh is that, after women reach 45 years old and after men reach 50 years old, their bodies progressively deteriorate. Every day, they say that this part of them is uncomfortable and that part hurts, they go to the doctor to check it, and it’s terminal cancer. Ultimately, the doctor says: “Go home, it can’t be treated.” All people will encounter these fleshly illnesses. Today it’s them, tomorrow it’s you and us. According to age and in sequential order, people will all be born, grow old, fall ill, and die—from youth they enter old age, from old age they fall ill, and from illness they die—this is the law. It is just that when you hear news that your parents have become ill, because they are the people closest to you, who you worry the most about, and who raised you, you will be unable to get past this hurdle of your feelings, and you

will think: “I don’t feel anything when other people’s parents die, but my parents can’t get ill, because that would make me sad. I can’t bear it, my heart aches, I can’t get past my feelings!” Just because they are your parents, you think that they shouldn’t grow old, get sick, and that they certainly shouldn’t die—does that make sense? This doesn’t make sense, and it is not a truth. Do you understand? (Yes.) Every person will face their parents aging, getting sick, and in some serious cases people’s parents are even paralyzed in bed, and some fall into vegetative states. Some people’s parents have high blood pressure, partial paralysis, strokes, or they even get a serious illness and die. Every person will personally witness, see, or hear about the process of their parents aging, becoming sick, and then dying. It is just that some people hear of this sooner, when their parents are in their 50s; some people hear this news when their parents are in their 60s; and others only hear it when their parents are 80, 90, or 100 years old. But no matter when you hear this news, as a son or daughter, one day, sooner or later, you will accept this fact. If you are an adult, you should have a mature way of thinking, and the correct attitude toward people being born, growing old, getting sick, and dying, and not be impulsive; you shouldn’t be unable to bear it when you hear news that your parents are sick, or that they have received notice from the hospital that they are critically ill. Being born, growing old, getting sick, and dying are things that every person must accept, on what basis are you unable to bear this? This is the law that God has ordained for man’s birth and death, why do you want to violate it? Why don’t you accept it? What is your intention? You don’t want to let your parents die, you don’t want them to live by the law of being born, growing old, getting sick, and dying that God has established, you want to stop them from getting sick, and from dying—what would that make them? Wouldn’t that make them plastic people? Would they still be people, then? Therefore, you must accept this fact. Before you hear news that your parents are growing old, that they have gotten sick, and died, you should prepare yourself for this in your heart. One day, sooner or later, every person will grow old, they will weaken, and they will die. Since your parents are normal people, why can’t they experience this hurdle? They should experience this hurdle, and you should approach it correctly. Has this matter been resolved? Can you deal with such things rationally now? (Yes.) Then, when your parents become seriously ill or have some great misfortune befall them in the future, how will you approach this? It is also wrong to ignore it, and people will say: “Are you a toad or a snake? How could you be so cold-blooded?” You are a normal person, so you should have a reaction. You should ponder: “My parents have had hard lives, and they’ve contracted this illness at a young age. They haven’t enjoyed any blessings, and they haven’t been diligent in their belief in God. That’s how their lives have been. They’ve understood nothing, they haven’t walked the right path or pursued the truth. They’ve just passed their days. There’s no difference between them and animals—there’s no difference between them and old cows or old horses. Now that they’ve become seriously ill, they’ll just have to fend for themselves, but I hope that God can reduce some of their

suffering.” Pray for them in your heart, and that’s enough. What can any person do? If you’re not with your parents, you cannot do anything; even if you are by their side, what can you do? How many people have personally seen their parents going from youth to old age, from old age to contracting various illnesses, from contracting these various illnesses to their medical treatment failing, to them being declared dead, and to them being pushed to the morgue? There is no shortage of them. These children all stay with their parents, but what can they do? They cannot do anything; they can only watch. Not watching this process now will save you some trouble; it is better not to watch it, watching it happen wouldn’t be a good thing for you. Isn’t that the case? (It is.) When it comes to this matter, in one respect you must see through to the fact that people being born, growing old, falling ill, and dying is a law established by God; in another respect, you must see the responsibilities that people ought to fulfill and their fates clearly, must not be irrational, and must not do impulsive or foolish things. Why shouldn’t you do impulsive or foolish things? Because even if you do them, it won’t be of any use, instead it will reveal your foolishness. More seriously, while you are doing foolish things, you are disobeying God, and God does not like this, He loathes it. You are clear on and understand all of these truths in terms of doctrine, but you still cling to your own path, and do some things in an obstinate and contrived way, so God does not like you, He abhors you. What does He abhor about you? He abhors your stubborn foolishness and your disobedience. You think that you possess some human feeling, but God says that you are stubborn and foolish—you are stubborn, foolish, stupid, and intransigent, and you do not accept the truth or submit to God’s orchestrations and arrangements. God has clearly told you the essence, source, and specific principles of practice that are contained within this matter, but you still want to use your feelings to handle all of this, so God doesn’t like you. Ultimately, if God does not take your parents’ illness away from them, then they will become seriously ill and die, if that is what’s supposed to happen to them. No person can change this fact. If you wish to change it, this only proves that you want to use your own hands and methods to change God’s sovereignty. This is the greatest disobedience, and you are opposing God. If you do not want to oppose God, when you hear that these things have happened to your parents, you should be calm, and find a place where you can be alone to cry, think, and pray, or express your feelings of longing to the brothers and sisters around you. That’s all you need to do. You must not think about changing something, and you certainly must not do foolish things. Do not pray to God, asking Him to take away your parents’ illness, and to allow them to live for a few more years, or to take two years of your own life and give it to them, just because you believe in God, or on the basis that you have forsaken your family and abandoned your career to perform your duty for so many years. Do not do these kinds of things. God will not listen to these kinds of prayers, and He abhors these kinds of thoughts and prayers. Do not upset or anger God. God is most fed up with people wishing to manipulate someone’s fate, to change the fact of God’s sovereignty over the fate of a

person, or to change some facts that have long been established by God or the trajectories of people's fates. God loathes this the most.

I have finished fellowshiping on the attitude, thoughts, and understanding that people ought to have regarding the matter of their parents falling ill. In the same way, when it comes to their parents passing away, people should also possess a correct and rational attitude. Some people have been apart from their parents for many years, they haven't been by their parents' side or lived with them, and when they hear that their parents have suddenly passed away, it deals a big blow to them, and it all feels incredibly abrupt. Because these people haven't been with their parents or lived with them for so many years, they always harbor a kind of misconception in their thoughts and notions. What kind of misconception? When you left your parents, they were alive and well. After being away from them for so many years, in your mind, your parents remain the same age, and remain in the same physical and living condition that you remember. This makes a mess of things. Then you believe that your parents will never grow old and that they will live to celebrate a great many birthdays. That is, as soon as their faces are stored in your heart, as soon as their lives, their words, and their deportment leave an impression and an imprint on your mind and on your memory, you think that your parents will be like that forever, that they will not change, grow old, and certainly not die. What does "not die" refer to here? In one respect, it means that their physical bodies will not disappear. In another respect, it means that their faces, their feelings for you, and so on, will not disappear. This is a misconception, and it will cause you a great deal of trouble. Therefore, no matter what age your parents are, whether they die of old age, or because of an illness, or because some incidents happened, it will deal a blow to you, and it will feel very abrupt to you. Because, in your mind, your parents are still alive and well, and then they're suddenly gone, you will think: "How can they be gone? How could living people just turn to dust? In my heart, I always feel that my parents are still living, that my mom is still cooking in the kitchen, keeping very busy, and that my dad is working outside each day, only coming home in the evening." These scenes from their lives have left some impressions on your mind. So, because of your feelings, your consciousness harbors something that it shouldn't, which is the belief that your parents will live forever in your heart. As such, you believe that they shouldn't die, and no matter in what circumstances your parents pass away, you will feel that it is a huge blow to you, and you won't be able to accept it. It will take time for you to overcome this fact, right? Your parents getting sick would already be a big shock for you, so your parents passing away would be an even greater shock. Then, before this has happened, how should you resolve the unexpected blow that it will deal to you, so that it will not impact, interfere with, or affect your performance of your duty or the path that you walk? First, let's look at what exactly death is all about, and what exactly passing away is all about—doesn't it mean that a person is leaving this world? (Yes.) It means that the life a person possesses, which has a physical presence, is removed from the material world that

humans can see, and disappears. That person then goes on to live in another world, in another form. The lives of your parents departing means that the relationship you have with them in this world has dissolved, disappeared, and ended. They are living in another world, in other forms. As for how their lives will go in that other world, whether they will return to this world, meet you again, or have any kind of fleshly relationship or emotional entanglements with you, this is ordained by God, and it has nothing to do with you. In sum, their passing away means that their missions in this world are over, and a full stop has been placed behind them. Their missions in this life and in this world have ended, so your relationship with them has also ended. As for whether they will be reincarnated in the future, or if they will meet with any kind of penalty and restriction, or any kind of handling and arrangements in the other world, does this have anything to do with you? Can you decide this? It has nothing to do with you, you cannot decide this, and you will not be able to obtain any news of this. Your relationship with them in this life comes to an end at that time. That is, the fate that bound you together as you lived alongside one another for 10, 20, 30, or 40 years comes to an end then. After that, they are them, you are you, and no relationship exists between you at all. Even if you all believe in God, they performed their own duties, and you perform yours; when they no longer live in the same spatial environment, there's no longer any relationship between you. They have simply completed the missions that God entrusted to them already. So, when it comes to the responsibilities they fulfilled for you, those end the day that you begin existing independently from them—you have nothing to do with your parents anymore. If they pass away today, you will just be missing something on an emotional level, and have two less loved ones to yearn for. You will never see them again, and you will never be able to hear any news of them again. What happens to them afterward and their future has nothing to do with you, there will be no blood ties between you, you will not even be the same kind of being anymore. That's how it is. Your parents passing away will just be the last news that you hear about them in this world, and the last of the hurdles that you see or hear about when it comes to their experiences of being born, growing old, getting sick, and dying in their lives, that is all. Their deaths won't take anything away or give anything to you, they will have simply died, their journeys as people will have come to an end. So, when it comes to them passing away, it doesn't matter whether these are accidental deaths, normal deaths, deaths from illness, and so on, in any case, if not for God's sovereignty and arrangements, no person or force could take away their lives. Their passing away only means the end of their physical lives. If you miss them and yearn for them, or feel ashamed of yourself due to your feelings, you shouldn't feel any of these things, and it is not necessary to feel them. They have departed from this world, so missing them is redundant, isn't it? If you think: "Did my parents miss me over all those years? How much more did they suffer because I wasn't by their side showing filial piety to them for so many years? Over all these years, I've always been wishing that I could spend a few days with them, I never expected that they'd pass away so soon. I

feel sad and guilty." It is not necessary for you to think in this way, their deaths have nothing to do with you. Why do they have nothing to do with you? Because, even if you showed them filial piety or accompanied them, this is not the obligation or task that God has given you. God has ordained how much good fortune and how much suffering your parents will encounter from you—this has nothing at all to do with you. They will not live longer because you are with them, and they will not live shorter lives because you're far from them and couldn't be with them often. God has ordained how long they will live, and it has nothing to do with you. Therefore, if you hear news that your parents have passed away during your lifetime, you do not need to feel guilty. You should approach this matter in the correct way and accept it. If you already shed a lot of tears while they were seriously ill, you should feel happy and free when they pass away; after you send them off, there is no need to cry. You will have already fulfilled your responsibilities as their child, you will have prayed for them, felt sad for them, and shed countless tears for them, and, of course, you will have thought of many possible solutions to treat their illness, and you will have done your utmost to lessen their suffering. You will have already done everything you can as their child. When they pass away, you could only say: "You've had pretty hard lives. As your child, I hope you rest in peace. If you did many things to offend God in this life, then you will have to receive punishment in the next world. If, after you have received your punishment, God gives you the opportunity to be reincarnated as people again in this world, I hope that you'll do your best to comport yourselves well, and walk the right path. Don't do any more things to offend God, and strive to not receive any punishment in your next lives." That is all. Isn't this well-put? This is all that you can do; whether it is for your parents or for another one of your loved ones, this is all that you can do. Of course, when your parents ultimately pass away, if you cannot be with them or give them some final comfort, it is not necessary for you to feel sad. This is because every person actually leaves this world alone. Even if their children are with them, when a messenger comes to collect them, only they will be able to see it. When they leave, no person will be accompanying them, their children cannot accompany them, and neither can their significant other. When people leave this world, they are always alone. In their final moments, every person needs to face this situation, this process, and this environment. Therefore, if you are by their side, and they are looking right at you, it will still be of no use. When they have to depart, if they want to call your name, they will not be able to, and you will not be able to hear it; if they want to reach out and grab you, they won't have the strength, and you won't be able to feel it. They will be alone. This is because every person enters this world alone, and ultimately, they must leave it alone too. This is ordained by God. The existence of such things enables people to see even more clearly that their lives and fates, and them being born, growing old, falling ill, and dying, are all in God's hands, and that every person's life is independent. Even though all people have parents, siblings, and loved ones, from God's perspective, and from the perspective of life, every person's life is independent, lives are

not grouped together, and no life has a partner. From the perspective of created humans, every life is independent, but from the perspective of God, no life that He has created is alone, because God is accompanying each one of them and pulling them forward. It is just that when you are in this world, you are born to your parents, and you think that your parents are the people closest to you, but in fact, when your parents leave this world, you will realize that they are not the people closest to you. When their lives end, you will still be living, their lives ending won't take away your life, and it certainly won't impact your life. You've been away from them for all these years, and you're still living a good life. Why is that? Because God is watching over you and guiding you; you are living under His sovereignty. When your parents depart from this world, this will make you even more aware that without your parents accompanying you, caring for you, looking after you, or raising you, over these years you went from growing up, to adulthood, to middle age, to old age, and under the guidance of God, you've understood more and more in your life, and your forward direction and path have become increasingly clear. Therefore, people are able to leave their parents. The existence of their parents is only necessary during their childhoods, but after they grow up, the existence of their parents is merely a formality. Their parents are just their emotional sustenance and support, and they are not necessary. Of course, when your parents leave this world, these things will feel increasingly clear to you, and you will feel even more that people's lives come from God, and that people cannot live without leaning on God, without God as their mental and spiritual sustenance, and the sustenance for their lives. When your parents leave you, you will just miss them on an emotional level, but at the same time, you will be set free emotionally or in other respects. Why will you be set free? When your parents are around, they are both worries and burdens for you. They are people to whom you can be willful, and they make you feel as though you cannot break free from your feelings. When your parents pass away, all of this will be resolved. The people you felt were closest to you will be gone, and you won't have to worry about them, or yearn for them. When you break through this dependent relationship you have with your parents, when they depart from this world, when you thoroughly feel in the depths of your heart that your parents are already gone, and you feel that you have already transcended your blood ties with your parents, you will truly become mature and independent. Think about it: No matter how old people are, if their parents are still around, whenever they have a problem, they'll think: "I'll ask my mom, I'll ask my dad." There is always emotional sustenance for them. When people have the emotional sustenance, they feel that their existence in this world is overflowing with warmth and happiness. When you lose that feeling of happiness and that warmth, if you do not feel that you are alone, or that you have lost happiness and warmth, then you are mature, and you are truly independent in terms of your thoughts and feelings. Most of you probably haven't experienced these things yet. When you do, you will understand. Think about it: No matter how old people are, whether they are 40, 50, or 60 years old, when their parents pass away, they

immediately become much more mature. It is like they go from a naive child to a sensible adult in an instant. Overnight they come to understand things, and to be independent. Therefore, for every person, their parents passing away is a great hurdle. If you can handle and approach your relationship with your parents correctly, and at the same time correctly approach, handle, and let go of your parents' various expectations for you, or the responsibilities that you ought to perform for your parents on an emotional and ethical level, then you will have truly matured, and at the very least, you will be an adult before God. To become an adult like this is not easy, you must suffer some pain in terms of your fleshly feelings, in particular, you must endure some emotional devastation and torment, as well as the pain of things not going well, not going as you hoped, or being unfortunate, and so on. When you have experienced all of this pain, you will gain a bit more insight into these matters. If you link them to the truths that we have fellowshiped on regarding these matters, you will gain a bit more insight into people's lives and fates, which are ordained by God, as well as the affection that exists between people, in a very thorough way. When you gain insight into these things, it will be easy for you to let go of them. When you can let go of these things and handle them correctly, you will be able to approach them correctly. You will not approach them based on human doctrines or the standards of human conscience; you will approach them in accordance with the truth principles. What does it mean to be in accordance with the truth principles? It means that you can submit to God. If you can submit to God and to His orchestrations, this is a good sign and a good portent. What does it portend? That you have hope for salvation. Therefore, when it comes to the matter of your parents' expectations, no matter if you're young, middle-aged, elderly, or in your later years now, and regardless of if you haven't experienced this, if you're experiencing it right now, or if you've already experienced it, what you need to do is not merely let go of your feelings, or cut ties with your parents and disconnect yourself from them, it is to put effort into the truth, and to seek to understand these aspects of the truth. This is the most important thing. When you understand these different, complex relationships, you can be freed from them, and you will no longer be constrained by them. When you are no longer constrained by them, it will be much easier for you to submit to God's orchestrations, and you will face fewer obstacles and smaller hindrances in doing so. Then you'll be less likely to disobey God, right?

Are you now able to see through and resolve all of these major matters that relate to parents? When you have free time, ponder on the truth. If, in the future, or in the things that you are experiencing now, you can link these matters to the truth, and resolve these problems based on the truth, you'll face a lot less trouble and fewer difficulties, and you'll live a very relaxed and joyful life. If you do not approach these things based on the truth, you'll encounter a lot of trouble, and your life will be very painful. This is the outcome. I'll finish fellowshiping on the topic of parental expectations here today. Goodbye!

April 29, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (18)

A few days ago, a serious incident occurred where antichrists were disturbing the work of the gospel expansion. Do you all know about this? (Yes.) After this incident occurred, reorganization of the gospel work of God's house commenced, and some people began to be reassigned or transferred, and some matters related to the work were also adjusted, right? (Yes.) This kind of big event occurred in God's house and antichrists emerged around you—have you been able to learn some lessons from encountering such a significant event? Have you sought the truth? Have you seen the essence of some problems, and been able to draw some lessons from such a big event? When something occurs, don't most people just outwardly draw a few lessons from it, and understand a few doctrines, without digging into its essence, and without learning how to view people and things, and comport themselves and act according to the truth? There are some people who just ponder according to their own minds and calculations no matter what happens to them. They completely fall short of the truth principles, and they also fall short of intelligence and wisdom. They just summarize a few lessons, and then make a resolution: "When these things happen again in the future, I have to be careful and pay attention to what things I can't say, what things I can't do, as well as what kind of people I should guard against, and what sort of people I should keep close to." Does this count as learning a lesson and gaining experience? (No.) So, when things like this happen, regardless of whether they are major or minor events, how should people experience them, approach them, and enter deeply into them so that they may learn lessons, and understand some truths and grow in stature while encountering these environments? Most people do not ponder on these things, right? (Right.) If they do not ponder on these things, then are they people who seek the truth? Are they people who pursue the truth? (No.) Do you think that you are a person who pursues the truth? On the basis of which things do you believe that you are not a person who pursues the truth? And on the basis of which things do you occasionally think that you are a person who pursues the truth? When you endure a bit of suffering and pay a bit of a price in your duty, and are occasionally a bit more serious about your work, or contribute a little money, or abandon your family, resign from your job, give up your studies, and renounce marriage in order to expend yourself for God, or refrain from following worldly trends, or avoid evil people that you encounter, and so on—when you are able to do these things, do you feel that you are a person who pursues the truth and a true believer? Isn't that what you think? (Yes.) Now, upon what basis do you think this? Is it based on God's words and the truth? (No.) It is wishful thinking; it is you passing your own verdict. When you occasionally follow some rules and do things by the book, and possess some manifestations of good humanity, when you are able to be patient and tolerant, when you are outwardly humble, lowkey, unassuming, and not arrogant, and when you are able to have a bit of a responsible resolve or mindset in the work of God's house, you

think that you have really pursued the truth and that you are really a person who pursues the truth. So, do these manifestations constitute the pursuit of the truth? (No.) To be precise, these outward actions, behaviors, and manifestations are not the pursuit of the truth. So, why do people always think that these manifestations are the pursuit of the truth? Why do they always think that they are people who pursue the truth? (In their notions, people think that if they exert and expend a little, these are manifestations of pursuing the truth. So, when they pay a bit of a price or suffer a little in their duties, they think that they are people who pursue the truth, but they have never sought before on what God's word has to say about this matter, or how God judges whether a person is pursuing the truth. Consequently, they always live amid their notions and imaginings, thinking that they're great.) People never let go of their notions, and when it comes to the significant matter of determining whether they are people who pursue the truth, they always rely on their own notions and imaginings, and their wishful thinking. Why do they act in this way? Isn't it because they feel at ease when they think and act in this way, believing that they don't need to really pay a price in order to pursue the truth, and that they can still ultimately receive benefits and be blessed? There's another reason, which is that people's so-called good behaviors, such as their renunciations, their suffering, their paying of prices, and so on, are things that they can accomplish and achieve, right? (Right.) It is easy for people to renounce their families and jobs, but it is not easy for them to truly pursue the truth, practice the truth, or act based on the truth principles, and it is not easy for them to achieve these things. Even if you understand a bit of the truth, it will be very hard for you to forsake your own ideas, notions, or corrupt dispositions, and very difficult for you to hold to the truth principles. If you are a person who pursues the truth, why don't you seem to have made any progress with regard to various aspects of the truth in the years you've believed in God? Regardless of whether you've paid a price, or what you've renounced or abandoned, are the ultimate results that you've achieved those achieved by pursuing and practicing the truth? No matter how many prices you've paid, how much you've suffered, or how many fleshly things you've renounced, what have you ultimately obtained? Have you obtained the truth? Have you gained anything with regard to the truth? Have you made progress in your life entry? Have you changed your corrupt dispositions? Do you possess true submission to God? We will not speak of such a deep lesson or practice as submission to God, instead we'll just talk about the simplest thing. You have abandoned everything, suffered and paid prices for so many years—can you safeguard the interests of God's house? Especially when antichrists and wicked people do evil things to disturb the work of the church, do you turn a blind eye, maintaining the interests of those wicked people, and protecting yourself, or do you stand on the side of God, maintaining the interests of His house? Have you practiced according to the truth principles? If you have not, then your suffering and the prices you've paid are no different to Paul's. They are just done for the sake of gaining blessings, and they are all futile. They are the same as what Paul said about

having fought the fights and finished the courses he was supposed to, and ultimately obtaining blessings and a reward—there's no difference at all. You are walking the path of Paul; you are not pursuing the truth. You think that your renunciations, expenditures, suffering, and the prices you've paid are the practice of the truth, so how many truths have you understood over these years? How many truth realities do you possess? In how many matters have you safeguarded the interests of God's house? In how many matters have you stood on the side of the truth and God? In how many of your actions have you refrained from evildoing or following your own will because you have a God-fearing heart? These are all things that people should understand and examine. If they don't examine these things, then the longer they believe in God, and in particular, the longer they perform a duty, the more they'll think that they have made a meritorious contribution, that they are definitely going to be saved, and that they are of God. If one day they are dismissed, exposed, and cast out, they will say: "Even if I haven't rendered a meritorious service, then I've at least worked hard, and even if I haven't worked hard, then I've at least tired myself out. On the basis of me suffering and paying prices for so many years, God's house shouldn't dismiss me, or treat me this way. God's house shouldn't just throw me away after I've worked for it!" If you truly are a person who pursues the truth, you shouldn't say these things. If you're a person who pursues the truth, then how many times have you implemented the work arrangements of God's house thoroughly and to the letter? How many of them have you implemented? How many items of work have you followed up on? How many of them have you checked? Within the scope of your responsibilities and your duty, and within the range of what your caliber, comprehension ability, and understanding of the truth can achieve, how much have you done your utmost? Which duties have you done well? How many good deeds have you prepared? These are the standards for testing whether a person is a pursuer of the truth. If you've made a mess of all these things, and not gotten any results, that proves that you have been suffering and paying prices over these years in the hopes of receiving blessings, and that you are not practicing the truth and submitting to God; everything you've done has been for yourself, for status and blessings, and it is not following the way of God. So, what is everything you've done? Isn't the ultimate outcome for people like this the same as Paul's? (Yes.) These people are all walking Paul's path, naturally, their outcome will be the same as Paul's. Don't think that you've made a meritorious contribution just because you believe in God, and have renounced your job, family, or in some cases even your young children. You haven't made any meritorious contributions, you are just a created being, everything you do is for yourself, and things that you ought to do. Would you be able to suffer and pay prices if it weren't for the sake of receiving blessings? Would you be able to renounce your family and give up your job? Do not treat renouncing your family, abandoning your job, suffering, and paying prices as equal to pursuing the truth and expending yourself for God. That is just fooling yourself.

Those who do not accept the truth, or being pruned and dealt with at all, are exposed and cleared out one by one every time that God's house carries out a big cleansing. Some people, whose problems are not too serious, are allowed to remain under observation, and they are given a chance to repent after they are exposed. For others, their problems are too severe, they remain incorrigible despite repeated criticism, they do the same things and make the same mistakes again and again, and they disturb, disrupt, and destroy the church's work, so ultimately they are cleared out and expelled according to the principles, and not given any more chances. Some people say: "I feel bad for them that they're not given any more chances." Are they not given enough chances? They do not believe in God in order to listen to His words, to accept the chastisement and judgment of His words, or to accept His cleansing and salvation, they are managing their own businesses. After they start undertaking the work of the church or performing various duties, they begin engaging in all kinds of wrongdoing, disturbing and disrupting, causing serious damage to the church's work, as well as serious losses to the interests of God's house. After giving them repeated chances, and gradually casting them out from various duty performance groups, God's house arranges for them to perform their duties on the gospel team, but after those people arrive there, they don't work hard at their duties, and they still engage in various kinds of wrongdoing, without repenting or changing at all. No matter how God's house fellowships on the truth, or what kind of work arrangements it makes, and though it gives these people chances, warnings, and even deals with and prunes them, this is all to no avail. They are not too numb, they are too intransigent. Of course, this intransigence is speaking from the perspective of their corrupt dispositions. In their essence, they are not people, they are devils. In entering the church, aside from acting as Satans, they do not do anything to benefit the work of God's house and the work of the church. They only do bad things; they only come to disturb and destroy the church's work. After gaining just a few people while preaching the gospel, they feel that they have capital and that they've made a meritorious contribution, and they start resting on their laurels, thinking that they can rule as kings over God's house, that they can give orders and make decisions in any aspect of the work, and force people to practice and implement them. No matter how the Above fellowships on the truth or arranges the work, these people don't take it seriously. To your face, they say quite pleasant-sounding things: "The work arrangements of God's house are good, they're exactly what we need, they've corrected things just in time, otherwise we wouldn't know how far off we were." When they turn their heads, they change, and start spreading their own ideas. Tell Me, are people like this really human? (No.) If they're not human, what are they? On the surface, they wear a layer of human skin, but in essence, they do not do human things—they're demons! The role they play in the church is specifically to disturb the various items of work in God's house. They disturb whatever work they're doing, and they've never sought the truth or the principles, looked to the work arrangements, or acted according to them. As soon as they have a

bit of power, they show it off and throw their weight around in front of God's chosen people. They all have the faces of demons, and no human likeness. They have never upheld the interests of God's house, they just safeguard their own interests and status. No matter what level of leadership they serve as, or what item of work they supervise, as soon as the work is entrusted to them, it becomes theirs, they have the final say, and others had better not think about checking up on it, supervising it, or following up on it, and even less should they think about intervening. Aren't these veritable antichrists? (Yes.) And these people still want to obtain blessings! I have two words for these people: unreasonable and irredeemable. Those who do not pursue the truth may stumble at any hurdle, and they will not go far. In the past, I always said to you: "If you can render service until the end, and be a loyal service-doer, that's quite good too." Some people do not love the truth, and they are not willing to pursue it. What should be done about this? They should be service-doers. If you can work hard at rendering service, and not cause any disruptions or disturbances, or do any evil that leads to you being cleared out, and you can guarantee that you will not do evil, and keep rendering service until the end, then you will be able to survive. Though you won't be able to receive a great deal of blessings, at least you will have rendered service during the period of God's work, you will be a loyal service-doer, and in the end, God will not mistreat you. But right now, there are some service-doers who really cannot render service until the end. Why is that? Because they do not have human spirits. We will not examine what kind of spirit rests within them, but at the very least, looking at their behavior from beginning to end, their essence is that of a devil, not of a person. They do not accept the truth at all, and they are even further from pursuing it.

Ten years ago, when each aspect of the truth hadn't been fellowshiped on in detail, people didn't understand what it meant to pursue the truth or to handle things based on the truth principles. Some people acted based on their own wills, imaginings, and notions, or followed rules. This was excusable, because they didn't understand. But today, 10 years later, though our fellowship on the different aspects of the truth hasn't concluded yet, the various fundamental truths that relate to people working and doing duties have, at the very least, been explained clearly in terms of principles. No matter what kind of duty they are performing, people who possess hearts and spirits, who love the truth and can pursue it, should be able to practice part of the truth principles by relying on their conscience and reason. People fall short of and fail to reach higher and deeper truths, and they cannot see through to the essence of some problems, or essences that relate to the truth, but they should be able to put into practice the truths that they can reach, and that have been expressly stipulated. At the very least, they should be able to hold to, implement, and distribute the work arrangements that have been expressly stipulated by the house of God. However, those who are of demons cannot even do these things. They are the kind of people who cannot even render service to the end. When people cannot even render service until the end, this means

that they will be thrown from the carriage halfway through the journey. Why will they be thrown from the carriage? If they were sitting quietly in the carriage, sleeping, staying put, or even amusing themselves, so long as they didn't disturb everyone or the forward direction of the whole train, who would have the heart to throw them from the carriage? No one would. If they could really render service, God wouldn't throw them from the carriage either. But using these people to render service now would incur more losses than gains. The various aspects of the work of God's house have suffered too great losses due to the disturbances of these people. They are the cause of too much worry! They don't understand the truth, no matter how it is fellowshiped, and afterward, they still do bad things. Interacting with these people truly means engaging in never-ending talk, and experiencing never-ending anger. The crucial point is that these people have done too much evil, and caused too great losses to the gospel expansion work of God's house. In the little bit of duties they perform, they just cause disruptions and disturbances, and the losses they cause to the work of God's house are irreparable. These people do all kinds of bad things. While among the ordinary members of the church, they do as they please, they squander offerings, they inflate the numbers of people they've gained while spreading the gospel, and they make use of other people inappropriately. They exclusively use some evil people, muddled people, and people who run amok doing wicked things. They don't listen to anyone's suggestions, and they suppress and punish anyone who expresses an opinion. Under their purview, God's words, requirements, and work arrangements are not implemented, instead they are set aside. These people become local bullies and despots; they become tyrants. Tell Me, can people like this be kept? (No.) At present, some people have been dismissed, and after being dismissed they talk about "submitting to the arrangements of God's house," to show that they are so noble, so obedient, and such pursuers of the truth. By saying this, they mean that they have nothing to say about whatever the house of God does, and that they are willing to submit to its arrangements. They say that they are willing to submit to the arrangements of God's house—so why did they do so much evil, which led the church to dismiss them? Why do they not understand this? Why have they not given an account of this? They brought various kinds of trouble and losses upon the work of God's house while they were working—don't they have to open themselves up and lay themselves bare regarding this? Is the matter closed if they just don't mention it? They say that they want to submit to the arrangements of God's house, showing how noble and great they are—this is entirely pretense and trickery! If they are learning to submit to the arrangements of God's house, why didn't they submit to the previous work arrangements of God's house? Why didn't they implement them? What were they doing then? Who is it that they really obey? Why don't they give an account of this? Who is their master? Did they carry out each aspect of the work that was arranged by God's house? Did they achieve results? Can their work withstand careful examination? How will they make up for the losses their running amok doing evil caused to the work of

God's house? Doesn't this matter merit some comment? Can they just say that they're going to submit to the arrangements of God's house, and that's it? Tell Me, do people like this have humanity? (No.) They are devoid of humanity, reason, and conscience, and they have no shame! They don't sense that they've done so much evil, and caused such great losses to God's house. They have caused so many disruptions and disturbances without feeling any remorse, any sense of indebtedness, or any recognition of this. If you try to hold them responsible, they'll say, "I wasn't the only person who did that"—they have their excuses. What they mean is that punishments can't be enforced if everyone is an offender, and that because everyone did evil, they as individuals shouldn't be held responsible. This is wrong. They must give an account for the evil that they did—every individual must give an account for whatever evil they did. They should submit to the arrangements of God's house, and approach their own problems correctly. If they possess this attitude, they can have another chance and remain, but they cannot always do evil! If there is no awareness in their consciences, if they cannot feel that they are indebted to God in any way, and they do not repent at all, from a human perspective, they can be given a chance, allowed to keep doing their duties, and not be held responsible, but how does God see this? If people do not hold them responsible, will God not either? (No.) God treats all people and things with principles. God will not make a compromise with you and smooth things over, He will not be a people-pleaser, like you. God has principles, He has a righteous disposition. If you violate the principles and administrative decrees of God's house, the church and God's house must deal with you according to the principles and stipulations of the administrative decrees. As for the consequences of you offending God, in fact, in your heart you know how God sees you or treats you. If you really treat God as God, you ought to come before Him to confess, admit your sins, and repent. If you lack this attitude, then you are a nonbeliever, you are a devil, you are an enemy of God, and you should be cursed! What's the point of you listening to sermons then? You should get out; you do not deserve to listen to sermons! Truths are spoken for normal corrupt humans to hear; though such people have corrupt dispositions, they have the resolve and will to accept the truth, they can reflect on themselves whenever something befalls them, and they can confess, repent, and turn themselves around when they do something wrong. Such people can be saved, and it is for them that truths are spoken. People who do not have an attitude of repentance no matter what things befall them are not ordinary corrupt humans, they are something else entirely; their essence is that of a devil, not a person. Though they may not pursue the truth either, ordinary corrupt humans can usually refrain from doing bad things based on their consciences, that modicum of shame that their normal humanity possesses, and the little reason that they have, and they have no intention of deliberately causing disruptions and disturbances. Under normal circumstances, such people can render service and follow until the end, and be able to survive. However, there is a type of people, who do not possess conscience or reason, who have no sense of honor or

shame at all, who do not have remorseful hearts no matter how much evil they do, and who unashamedly hide within God's house, still hoping to receive blessings, and not knowing to repent. When somebody says, "You caused a disruption and a disturbance by doing that," they say, "Really? Then I made a mistake, I'll do better next time." That other person replies, "Then you should come to know your corrupt dispositions," and they say, "Come to know what corrupt dispositions? I was just being ignorant and foolish. I'll just do better next time." They lack a deep understanding, and they just fool people with their words. Can people with this attitude repent? They do not even have shame—they are not people! Some people say: "If they're not people, are they beasts?" They are beasts, but they are even lower than dogs. Think about it, when a dog does something bad or misbehaves, if you rebuke it once, it'll immediately feel bad, and it'll keep being nice to you, by which it means: "Please don't hate me, I'll never do it again." When something like that happens again, the dog will deliberately give you a look to tell you: "I won't do it, don't worry." No matter whether the dog is afraid of being beaten, or trying to win the favor of its master, regardless of how you look at this, when it knows that its master doesn't like or allow something, the dog won't do it. It is able to restrain itself; it has a sense of shame. Even animals have a sense of shame, but these people don't. So, are they still people? They're even less than animals, so they are inhuman and non-living things, they are veritable devils. They never reflect on themselves or confess no matter how much evil they do, and they certainly do not know to repent. There are some people who feel ashamed to face their brothers and sisters because they did a little bit of evil, and if the brothers and sisters choose them during an election, they will say: "I will not take up this duty, I am not qualified. In the past, I did some foolish things which caused some losses to the church's work. I do not deserve this post." People like this possess a sense of shame, and they have conscience and reason. But those evil people do not have a sense of shame. If you ask them to become leaders, they will immediately stand up and say: "See! What do you think of this? God's house can't do without me. I'm a big shot, I'm very capable!" Tell Me, is it not difficult to make these people feel shame? How difficult is it? It is more difficult than scaling the walls of China's Shanhai Pass—they are shameless! No matter how much evil they do, they still shamelessly laze away their days in the church. They have never been humble in their interactions with the brothers and sisters, they still live as they always have, and they even occasionally boast about their "great achievements," about their past renunciations, expenditures, suffering, and the prices that they've paid, and about their past "glory and greatness." As soon as they have the opportunity, they'll immediately stand up to flaunt and brag about themselves, talking about their capital and showing off their qualifications, and yet they never talk about how much evil they've done, how many of God's offerings they've squandered, or how many losses they've caused to the work of God's house. They do not even confess when they pray to God in private, and they never shed a tear because of the mistakes they've made or the losses they've caused to God's house. That's how

intransigent and shameless they are. Aren't they completely unreasonable and irredeemable? (Yes.) They are irredeemable, and they cannot be saved. No matter how you give them chances, it is like talking to a brick wall, or driving a duck onto a perch, or asking the devils and Satan to worship God. So, when it comes to these people, ultimately the attitude of God's house is to give up on them. If they are willing to perform duties, they can, God's house will give them a bit of a chance. If they are not willing to perform duties, and say: "I'm going to leave to work, earn money, and pass my days; I'm going to manage my own business," they can go ahead, the door of God's house is open, they can hurry up and leave! I don't want to see their faces again, they're so disgusting! What are they pretending for? The little bit of suffering they've endured, the little prices they've paid, their little renunciations and expenditures, were just preconditions that they prepared so that they could do evil. If they remain in God's house, what kind of service can they render for it? What benefits can they bring to the work of God's house? Do you have any idea how much disruption and disturbance the evil deeds and bad things done by one evil person, one antichrist, in the space of six months can create for the work of the church? Tell Me, how many brothers and sisters will need to work to make up for it? Isn't using that evil person, that antichrist, to render a bit of service not worth the trouble? (Yes.) We will not speak of the magnitude of losses that can be caused by a gang of antichrists banding together to do bad things, but how much harm can be wrought on the work of the church by one fallacy and devilish statement spoken by an antichrist, or by one absurd order issued by an antichrist? Tell Me, how many people will need to work, and for how long, to make up for it? Who will take responsibility for this loss? No one can! Can this loss be made up for? (No.) Some people say: "If we get some more people to help, and the brothers and sisters endure a bit more suffering, we may be able to make up for it." Though you may be able to make up for some of it, how much manpower and material resources will the house of God need to expend? In particular, who can make up for the lost time, and the losses that God's chosen people suffered in terms of their life entry? No one can. Therefore, the wrongs done by antichrists cannot be forgiven! Some people say: "The antichrists said, 'We'll compensate for the money lost.'" Of course they must compensate for it! "The antichrists said, 'We'll bring in more people, to make up for the ones we lost.'" That's the least they can do. They must make up for the evil they committed! But who will make up for the time lost? Can they? It is impossible to make up for it. So, the wrongs done by these people are the most heinous of sins! They cannot be forgiven. Tell Me, is that not the case? (It is.)

When some people see that the house of God handles antichrists quite severely—not giving them a chance and directly sending them away—they have some thoughts about this: "Didn't the house of God say that it gives people chances? When a person makes a small mistake, does God's house no longer want them? Does it not give them a chance? It should give them a chance, the house of God is too unloving!" Tell Me, how many chances have those people been given? How many sermons have they listened

to? Were they given too few chances? When they're working, do they not know that they are performing duties? Do they not know that they're spreading the gospel and doing the work of God's house? Do they not know these things? Are they running a business, a company, or a factory? Are they managing their own enterprises? How many chances has the house of God given these people? Every one of them has enjoyed a good deal of chances. For those who were moved from various groups to the gospel team, were any of them dismissed after being in the gospel team for only a couple of days? None of them were, unless the evil they had done was too egregious, then they were dismissed. Every one of them has been given enough chances, it is just that they do not know to cherish them or to repent. They go their own way, always walking the path of Paul. They speak very pleasant-sounding and clear words, but they do not act like humans. Should people like this still be given chances? (No.) When they were given a chance, they were being treated like humans, but they are not humans. They do not do the things that humans do, so sorry, the door of God's house is open—they can go ahead and leave. The house of God won't use them anymore. The house of God has freedom when it comes to using people, it has this right. Will it be alright if God's house doesn't use them? If they want to believe, they can do so outside of God's house. In any case, God's house won't use them—it can't, they're the cause of too much worry! They have caused too great losses to the house of God, and no one can foot the bill for this—they couldn't afford to! It's not that they're unlucky, it's not that God's house hasn't given them a chance, it's not that God's house is unloving, and has been too hard on them, and it certainly isn't that God's house is disposing of them after they've finished their work. It is that these people went too far, they could no longer be tolerated, and they couldn't give an account for the things they'd done. For every item of work, God's house has provided work principles, and the Above has personally provided guidance, checks, and correction. It's not just a matter of God's house and the Above holding a couple of gatherings, or saying a few words; they have spoken many words and held many gatherings, earnestly exhorting people, and in the end, what they got in return was trickery, and ultimately, the church's work was disrupted and disturbed, and turned into a complete mess. Tell Me, who would still be willing to give those people a chance? Who would be willing to retain them? They can run amok doing evil, but surely they do not forbid God's house from handling them according to the principles? Handling them in this way should not be called unloving, it should be called possessing principles. Love is given to people who can be loved, to ignorant people who can be forgiven; it is not given to evil people, devils, or those who deliberately cause disruptions and disturbances, it is not given to antichrists. Antichrists only deserve to be cursed! Why do they only deserve to be cursed? Because, no matter how much evil they do, they do not repent, confess, or turn themselves around, they compete with God until the very end. They come before God saying, "When I die, I'll die standing. I'm unyielding. When I come before You, I will not kneel or bow down. I will not admit defeat!" What kind of thing is this? Even when

they're about to die, they will still say, "I will keep resisting the house of God until the end. I will not confess my sins—I haven't done anything wrong!" Alright, if they haven't done anything wrong, they can leave. God's house will not use them. Will it be fine if God's house doesn't use them? It will be perfectly fine! Some people say, "If God's house won't use me, then there's no one that it can use." These people should look to see if there's really no one—does any of the work in God's house rely on people? Without the work of the Holy Spirit and without God's protection, who could have gotten to where they are today? What item of work could have been maintained until now? Do these people think that they are in the secular world? If any group in the secular world lost the safeguarding of a team of talented or gifted individuals, it wouldn't be able to complete any of its projects. The work in the house of God is different. It is God who is safeguarding, leading, and guiding the work in God's house. Do not think that the work of God's house depends on the support of any person. This is not the case, and this is the viewpoint of a nonbeliever. Do you think it is appropriate for God's house to abandon evil people like antichrists and nonbelievers? (Yes.) Why is it appropriate? Because the losses wreaked by using those people to carry out work are too great, such people squander both manpower and financial resources without restraint, and they have no principles at all. They do not listen to God's word, and they act entirely based on their own ambitions and desires. They do not respect God's words or the work arrangements of God's house at all, but when an antichrist says something, they hold it in the utmost respect, and practice according to it. I have heard that there was a fool who was located in Europe, but worked on tasks that were based in Asia. God's house said it would move him to work on spreading the gospel in Europe, to save him from dealing with the time difference, but he wouldn't consent, and he wouldn't go back to working on tasks in Europe, even when God's house arranged it, because the antichrist he worshiped was in Asia, and he was unwilling to depart from his master. Isn't he a fool? (Yes.) Tell Me, is he worthy of performing his duty? Do we want him? The work arrangements God's house made were appropriate. If you are in Europe, then you should work on tasks based in Europe and not in Asia. Whichever continent you are in, you should work on tasks there, and that way you can avoid dealing with time differences—that's a great thing! And yet, this person didn't consent. The words of God's house didn't work on him; God's house couldn't get him to transfer, he needed his master to call the shots. If his master said, "Go back to work on tasks in Europe," he would go back to work on those tasks. If his master said, "You cannot go back to work on tasks in Europe, I need you working on things here," he would say, "Then I can't go back." Who did he render service for? (For his master.) He rendered service for his master—an antichrist. Then, shouldn't he be cleansed away along with his master? Shouldn't he be kicked out? (Yes.) Why am I so angry at people like this? Because they do too much evil; anyone would be furious to hear it. These people try to trick God with their eyes wide open—that is too malicious! Tell Me, why am I so angry with people like this? (They say that they believe in God, but

in reality, they listen to their masters. They do not truly follow and submit to God.) They have devoted themselves entirely to following devils and Satans. Them saying that they follow God is just a front. They follow and serve Satan under the guise of following God and expending themselves for God, and in the end, they still want to obtain rewards and blessings from God. Isn't that completely shameless? Isn't that entirely unreasonable and irredeemable? (Yes.) Tell Me, would God's house retain people like this? (No.) Then what is the appropriate way to handle them? (To cleanse them away, alongside their masters.) They like to follow their masters, and they are dead set on working themselves to death for their masters; they don't safeguard the interests of God's house while performing their duties, they don't perform their duties while living before God, they are serving their masters within a gang of antichrists—this is the essence of their work. Therefore, no matter what they do, it will not be commemorated. People like this should be cleansed away, they are not even worthy to render service! So, do you think that people like them only turn out this way because they encounter evil people or because they do this kind of work? Are they influenced by their environments, or do evil people mislead them? (Neither.) Then why are they like this? (They are this kind of person in their nature essence.) These people have the same nature essence as their antichrist masters. They are the same kind of people. They have shared hobbies, thoughts, and views, as well as means and methods for doing things; they have a shared language and the same path of pursuit, and they share the same desires, motives, and methods of practice for betraying God and disturbing the work of God's house. Think about it, they share the same attitude concerning the work arrangements of God's house, which is lying to their superiors and hiding things from those below them. They have policies for those above them and strategies for those below them. To those above them, they act completely obedient on the outside, and to those below them, they run amok doing evil. They share the same ways and methods. When the Above deals with them, they say, "I made a mistake, I was wrong, I'm bad, I'm disobedient, I'm a devil!" And then they turn around and say: "Let's not implement the work arrangements of the Above!" After which, they just do things their own way. They are completely going through the motions when they preach the gospel, they inflate numbers, and trick the house of God. These are the methods of these gangs of antichrists. They always approach the work arrangements with their own strategies and methods—haven't their demonic faces been revealed? Are they people? No, they are not, they're demons! We do not interact with demons, so let's hurry them out of here. I do not want to see their demonic faces; they should get out! Those who are willing to render service can be sent to group B, those who are not willing to render service can be expelled. Is this course of action right? (Yes.) It is the most appropriate course of action! They have a shared essence, so when they're talking and acting together, they do so very smoothly, and when they do things together there's an incredible amount of cohesion and tacit understanding between them. As soon as those masters open their mouths, no matter what devilish things they say, their followers will

immediately echo them, and in their hearts, these followers will even feel proud, thinking, “You’re right, let’s do it that way! The work arrangements from the Above are too finicky, we can’t do things like that.” No matter how well or how specifically the work arrangements of the Above are enunciated, these people won’t implement them, and no matter how warped or absurd the things that the devils and Satans say are, they will listen to them. Who are they rendering service for, then? Can people like this render service in the house of God until the very end? (No.) They cannot render service until the very end. Whether God is showing patience toward a person, or toward the actions of a devil, there is always a limit. He shows tolerance to people to the greatest extent possible, but when a certain point is reached, He will expose those who ought to be exposed, and cast out those who ought to be cast out. When this point is reached, those people will have reached the end of the road. It is not simply that they do not pursue or love the truth, it is that their nature essence is inimical to the truth. Think about it, whenever you talk about positive things, pure understanding, or principles that are in line with the truth, they do not listen. The purer your words are, the worse they feel. As soon as you start talking about the truth principles, they can’t sit still, and they find ways to make excuses to derail the conversation, to shift the focus, or they simply go to pour themselves a drink of water. As soon as you fellowship on the truth or talk about knowing yourself, they feel repulsed, and don’t want to listen. If they don’t need to use the bathroom, then they’re thirsty or hungry, or they’re sleepy, or they need to take a phone call or take care of something. They always have an excuse, and they cannot sit still. If you use their methods, and talk about their statements and approaches that exclusively cause disruptions and disturbances, they will become energized, and be able to go on and on. If you don’t share a common language with them, they’ll feel an aversion toward you and avoid you. These are typical devils! There are some people who, until now, still cannot see through this kind of devil, and think that these people just don’t pursue the truth. How can they be so simple-minded? How can they say such ignorant things? Do those people merely not pursue the truth? No, they are evil demons, and they are extremely fed up with the truth. Those people behave quite well at gatherings, but that’s all fake. In reality, do they really listen to the content that is fellowshiped on or the words of God that are read at gatherings? How many words do they really listen to? How many do they accept? How many can they obey? They cannot even talk about the simplest and most commonly spoken doctrines. When it comes to people like that, no matter how long they work for, or what level of leader or supervisor they serve as, they can’t preach sermons, or speak about their own experiences. If somebody says, “Talk about a bit of your knowledge regarding something. You don’t need to have experience of it, just speak about the knowledge and comprehension you have of it,” they won’t be able to open their mouths, it will be as though they are sealed shut, and they won’t even be able to speak about some doctrines. If they do manage to speak some forced words about it, they will sound awkward and strange. Some brothers and sisters say: “Why is it that when some

leaders are preaching sermons, they sound like teachers reading out a text to some children? Why does it sound so awkward and strange?" This is called not being able to preach sermons. And why can't they preach sermons? It is because they lack the truth reality. Why do they lack the truth reality? Because they do not accept the truth, they are sick of it in their hearts, and they are resistant toward any principle or statement of the truth. If it is said that they are resistant, it is possible that you won't be able to see this from the outside, so how can you tell that they are resistant? No matter how God's house fellowships on the truth, they will deny and reject it in their hearts, and be incredibly repulsed by it. No matter how other people fellowship on their knowledge of the truth, they will think, "You may believe that, but I don't." How do they gauge whether something is the truth? As long as it is something that they believe to be good and right, then they will think it's the truth. If they don't like a statement, then no matter how right it is, they won't consider it the truth. Therefore, when we look at the root of this matter, in the depths of their hearts, they are resistant toward the truth, they are fed up with the truth, and they hate the truth. The truth has no place at all in their hearts—they despise it. Some people may not see through this, and say, "I don't usually see them saying anything that insults God, blasphemes against the truth, or violates the truth principles." Then, there is one fact that they can see: Every specific detail stipulated by the work arrangements of God's house is necessary, and put forward in order to protect the interests of God's work, the life progress of God's chosen people, the normal order of church life, and the normal expansion of the gospel work. The point of the work arrangements in every period of time, and the specific deployment, organization, and modification of each aspect of the work, is to protect the normal development of the work of God's house, and even more so, to help the brothers and sisters to understand and enter the truth principles. To be more precise, it can be said that these things bring the brothers and sisters before God and help them to enter the truth realities, that these things lead and pull every person forward, holding their hands while teaching, supporting, and supplying them. When it comes to the implementation of the work arrangements, regardless of whether it is carrying out specific fellowship on this during gatherings, or spreading it by word of mouth, the aim is to enable God's chosen people to experience God's work, and to gain true life entry, and it is always beneficial to the life entry of God's chosen people. There is not a single arrangement that is detrimental to the work of God's house or the life entry of God's chosen people, and none of the arrangements create disturbances or destruction. And yet, the antichrists never respect these work arrangements or implement them. Instead, they despise them, thinking that they are too simple and unremarkable, that they are not as impressive as how they themselves work, and that they will not receive greater benefits to their prestige, status, and reputation while doing this work. As a result, they never listen to the work arrangements or accept them, let alone implement them. Instead, they do things their own way. Based on this, tell Me, do antichrists merely not pursue the truth? From this

point, you can clearly see that they hate the truth. If it is said that they hate the truth, you won't be able to see through to this, but by looking at how those antichrists approach the implementation of the work arrangements, you will be able to gain insight into this. It is very clear that when it comes to how false leaders and workers approach the work arrangements, at most, they just go through the motions, talk about the work arrangements once, and that's it. They do not carry out the subsequent follow-up and monitoring, or the specific work properly. These are false leaders. False leaders, at least, can still implement the work arrangements, go through the motions, and maintain them. Antichrists can't even maintain the work arrangements, they simply refuse to accept or implement them, and instead they do things their own way. What is it they consider? Their own status, fame, and prestige. They consider whether the Above appreciates them, how many brothers and sisters support them, how many people's hearts they have a place in, how many people's hearts they rule over, controlling those people, and how many people they have in their grasp. They care about those things. They never consider how to water or supply the brothers and sisters in putting down a foundation on the true way, and they certainly do not consider how the life entry of the brothers and sisters is going, how the brothers and sisters are performing their duties, whether that be spreading the gospel or other kinds of duties, or whether they can act according to the principles, and they've never cared about how to bring the brothers and sisters before God. They do not care about those things. Aren't all these facts laid out right in front of your eyes? Aren't these the manifestations you can often see in antichrists? Aren't these facts sufficient proof that these people hate the truth? (Yes.) At all times, the only things that an antichrist cares about are status, fame, and prestige. Say that you put an antichrist in charge of the church life, to enable the brothers and sisters to live a proper church life, and to help them to come to understand the truth and lay down their foundations while living the church life, to possess true belief in God, to come before God, and to gain the ability to live independently, and the faith to perform their duties. That way, the gospel expansion work of God's house would have some backup forces, and more talented gospel workers could be constantly provided to fulfill their duties in the expansion of the gospel. Is that how the antichrist would think? They absolutely wouldn't think in this way. They would say: "What does the church life matter? If everyone lives the church life wholeheartedly, and reads God's words, and if they all understand the truth, who will listen to my orders? Who will care about me? Who will pay attention to me? I can't let everyone focus on the church life all the time or become obsessed with it. If everybody is always reading God's words, and if everyone has come before God, who will be left around me?" Isn't this the attitude of an antichrist? (Yes.) They think that if they focus on supplying the brothers and sisters in gaining the truth and life, this would be detrimental to their pursuit of prestige, profit, and status. They think to themselves: "If I spend all of my time doing things for the brothers and sisters, will I still have time to pursue prestige, profit, and status? If the brothers and sisters all praise God's name and

follow God, there'll be no one left to obey me. That would be so awkward for me!" This is the face of an antichrist. Antichrists do not simply fail to pursue the truth; they are extremely sick of the truth. In their subjective consciousnesses, they do not say: "I hate the truth, I hate God, and I hate all work arrangements, statements, and practices that benefit the brothers and sisters." They won't say this. They just use some approaches and behaviors to resist the work arrangements of God's house. So, the essence of these approaches and behaviors is doing things their own way, and making other people all heed and submit to them. Consequently, no matter what the house of God does, they will not respect it. Isn't this the case? (It is.) We have fellowshiped on these manifestations of antichrists quite a lot in the past. You are small in stature, and your understanding of the truth is shallow; antichrists have done so much evil right in front of your eyes, and yet you have failed to discern this. You are foolish and pitiful, numb and dull-witted, impoverished and blind. These are your true manifestations and your true stature. Antichrists cause so much trouble, and cause such great losses to the work of God's house, and there are still people saying that they should be used to render service. It has caused more harm than good to use them, and yet you do not know to dismiss or handle them—how many years will it take for this stature and these ideas of yours to change? Some people always boast, "I am a person who pursues the truth," but they cannot discern antichrists when they encounter them, and may even follow those antichrists—where are the manifestations of their pursuit of the truth? They've listened to so many sermons, but they still lack discernment. Alright, I'll finish our fellowship on this subject here, next we'll speak about our main topic.

At our last gathering, we fellowshiped on content relating to parental expectations within "letting go of the burdens that come from one's family." We have finished fellowshiping on the relevant principles and major topics involved in this. Next, we will fellowship on another aspect of letting go of the burdens that come from one's family—letting go of expectations for one's offspring. This time we'll change roles. Regarding the content that involves approaching parental expectations, these are some things that people ought to do from the perspective of a child. When it comes to how children should approach and handle the various expectations that their parents have for them, and the various approaches that their parents use on them, and what principles they should practice, this is about correctly approaching the different problems that come from parents from the perspective of a child. Today, we will fellowship on the topic of "letting go of expectations for one's offspring," which is about handling the various problems that people have regarding their children from the perspective of a parent. There are lessons that should be learned and principles that should be observed here. As a child, what matters most is how you should face your parents' expectations, what sort of attitude you should adopt toward these expectations, as well as what way you should follow, and what principles of practice you ought to possess in this situation. Naturally, every person has the chance to be a parent, or they may be a parent already; this touches on the

expectations and attitudes that people have toward their offspring. Whether you are the parent or the child, you ought to possess different principles for dealing with the expectations of the other side. Children have principles that they ought to observe when it comes to approaching their parents' expectations, and naturally, parents also have truth principles that they ought to observe for approaching the expectations of their children. So first have a think, what principles can you see or think of now that parents ought to observe in their treatment of their children? If we speak about principles, this might be a bit distant for you, and the topic might be a bit too broad and deep, so instead let's talk about what expectations you would have for your offspring if you were a parent. (God, if I were to become a parent one day, first of all, I would hope that my children would be healthy, and could grow up healthy. Furthermore, I'd hope that they could have their own dreams, and that they'd be ambitious about fulfilling their dreams in life, that they'd have good prospects. These are the two main things I'd hope for.) Would you hope that your children would become high-ranking officials or that they'd become very wealthy? (I'd hope for those things too. I'd hope that they could, at least, get ahead in the world, be better than other people, and be looked up to by others.) The most basic requirements that parents have for their children are that they will be physically healthy, that they'll be successful in their careers, move up in the world, and have everything go well in their lives. Are there any different expectations that parents have for their offspring? Whoever has children, speak up. (I hope that my children will be healthy, and that things will go smoothly in their lives, and that their lives will be peaceful and safe. I hope they will be in harmony with their family, and that they can respect the old and care for the young.) Anything else? (If I were to become a parent one day, aside from the expectations that have just been spoken about, I'd also hope that my children would be obedient and sensible, that they'd show filial piety to me, and that I could count on them to take care of me in my old age.) This expectation is quite crucial. Parents hoping that their children will show filial piety to them is a relatively traditional expectation that people have in their notions and subconscious. This is a fairly representative matter.

Letting go of expectations for one's offspring is a very important part of letting go of the burdens that come from one's family. All parents place certain expectations on their children. Whether they be great or small, near or distant, these expectations are an attitude that parents have toward their children's comportment, actions, lives, or how their children approach them. They are also a kind of specific requirement. These specific requirements are, from the perspective of their children, things that they ought to do, because, based on traditional notions, children cannot go against the orders of their parents—if they do, then they are unfilial. Consequently, many people carry great and heavy burdens regarding this matter. So, shouldn't people understand whether the specific expectations that parents have for their offspring are reasonable or not, and whether their parents ought to have these expectations or not, as well as which of these expectations are reasonable, which are unreasonable, which are legitimate, and which

are forced and illegitimate? Furthermore, there are truth principles that people ought to understand and observe when it comes to how they should approach parental expectations, how they should accept or reject them, and the attitude and perspective from which they should view and approach these expectations. When these things have not been resolved, parents often shoulder these kinds of burdens, thinking that it is their responsibility and obligation to have expectations for their children and offspring, and, naturally, that they are even more things that they ought to possess. They think that if they had no expectations for their offspring, it would be the same as not fulfilling their responsibilities or obligations to their offspring, and equivalent to not doing what parents ought to do. They think that this would make them bad parents, parents who do not fulfill their responsibilities. Therefore, when it comes to the matter of the expectations they have for their offspring, people involuntarily generate various requirements for their children. They have different requirements for different children at different times and under different circumstances. Since they have this kind of view and burden when it comes to their children, parents go and do the things that they ought to do according to these unwritten rules, no matter whether they are right or wrong. Parents make demands of their children while treating these approaches as a kind of obligation, and as a kind of responsibility, and at the same time, they force them upon their children, making their children achieve them. We will separate this matter into several stages in our fellowship; it will be clearer that way.

Before their children reach adulthood, parents already put forward various requirements for them. Of course, within these various requirements, they also pin various kinds of expectations on them. So, while parents are pinning different expectations on their children, they personally pay various prices and produce various kinds of approaches in order to realize these expectations. Therefore, before children reach adulthood, parents educate them in various ways, and have various requirements for them. For example, from a very young age, they tell their children: “You need to study well and study more. You will only be better than everyone else and not be looked down on by others after you’ve done well in your studies.” There are also parents who teach their children that they need to show them filial piety after they grow up, to the extent that, when their children are just two or three years old, they always ask them: “Will you take care of your dad after you grow up?” And their children say: “Yes.” They ask: “Will you take care of your mom?” “Yes.” “Do you love your dad more or your mom?” “I love my dad.” “No, you have to say that you love your mom first, then say that you love your dad.” Their children then learn these things from their parents. The education of their parents, whether by words or by example, has a deep influence on children’s young minds. Of course, it also imparts a certain amount of basic knowledge on them, teaching them that their parents are the people who love and adore them most in the world, and the people to whom they most ought to show obedience and filial piety. Naturally, the idea that “Since my parents are the people closest to me in the world, I should always obey them” is planted in their

young minds. At the same time, an idea arises in their young minds, which is that since their parents are the people closest to them, then everything their parents do must be to ensure that their children can live better lives. Consequently, they think that they should unconditionally accept the actions of their parents; no matter what kind of methods are used by them, no matter whether they are humane or inhumane, they believe that they ought to accept them. At an age where they still do not have any ability to discern between right and wrong, the education of their parents, through words or through example, plants this kind of idea within them. Under the direction of this kind of idea, parents can demand that their children do various things, under the guise of wanting the best for them. Even though some of those things are not in line with humanity, or their children's talents, caliber, or preferences, under these circumstances, where children have no right to act on their own initiative or any of their own autonomy, they have no choice and no ability to resist regarding their parents' so-called expectations and demands. All they can do is obey their parents' every word, let their parents have their way, put themselves at their parents' mercy, and be steered by their parents onto any kind of path. Therefore, before their children reach adulthood, everything that parents do, whether unintentional or stemming from good intentions, will have a bit of a positive or negative impact on their children's comportment and actions. That is, everything they do will plant various ideas and views within their children, and these ideas and views may even be buried deep in their children's subconscious, so that after they become adults, these ideas and views will still deeply influence how they view people and things, comport themselves and act, and even the paths that they walk.

Before they reach adulthood, children have no means of resistance against the living environments, inheritance, or education that their parents pass on to them, because they are not yet adults, and they do not understand things very well yet. When I speak of the period before a child reaches adulthood, I am referring to when a child cannot think or judge right from wrong independently. Under these circumstances, children can only put themselves at the mercy of their parents. It is exactly because parents call the shots about everything before their children reach adulthood, that parents will, during this evil era, adopt corresponding methods of education, ideas, and views based on social trends, to incite their children to do certain things. For example, competition in society right now is very fierce. Parents have been influenced by the climate of various societal trends and consensuses, so they accept this message that competition is fierce, and quickly pass it on to their children. What they accept is the phenomenon and trend of competition in society being very fierce, but what they feel is a kind of pressure. When they feel this pressure, they quickly think of their children, saying: "Competition is so fierce in society right now, it wasn't like this when we were young. If our children study, work, and approach society, and various people and things in the same way that we did, they will be swiftly cast out of society. So, we need to take advantage of the fact that they are still young, we need to start working on them now—we cannot let our children

lose at the starting line." Right now, competition in society is fierce, and people all pin great hopes on their children, so they quickly pass this kind of pressure that they accepted from society onto their children. Now, are their children aware of this? Because they are not yet adults, they are not aware of this at all. They do not know whether this pressure that comes from their parents is right or wrong, or whether they should reject it or accept it. When parents see their children acting like this, they rebuke them: "How could you be so stupid? Competition is so fierce in society right now, and you still don't understand anything. Hurry up and go to kindergarten!" At what age do children go to kindergarten? Some of them start at three or four years old. Why is this? In society right now, a phrase is being circulated: You can't let your children lose at the starting line, education should begin from a very early age. See, very young children suffer, and begin kindergarten at three or four years old. And what kind of kindergarten do people choose? In ordinary kindergartens, teachers often play games like "The Eagle and the Chickens" with children, so parents think that they can't choose kindergartens like that. They believe that they have to choose a fancy, bilingual kindergarten. And, to them, learning just one language isn't enough. When children still don't speak their mother tongue well, they have to learn a second language. Isn't this making things difficult for children? But what do parents say? "We can't let our child lose at the starting line. Right now, there are one-year-olds being taught by nannies at home. The children's parents speak their mother tongue, and the nannies speak a second language, teaching the children English, Spanish, or Portuguese. Our child is already four, they're already a bit too old. If we don't start teaching them now, it'll be too late. We have to start educating them as early as possible, and find a kindergarten that teaches in two languages, where the teachers have bachelor's and master's degrees." People say: "That kind of school is too expensive." They respond: "It's fine. We have a big house; we can move into a smaller one. We'll sell our three-bedroom house and swap it for a two-bedroom. We'll save that money and use it to send our child to a fancy kindergarten." Choosing a good kindergarten is not enough, they think that they have to get tutors to help their children study for the Mathematical Olympiad in their spare time. Even if their children innately dislike studying for it, they still have to do it, and if they fail at studying it, then they'll study dance. If they're no good at dance, they'll learn to sing. If they're no good at singing, and their parents see that they have a good frame, and long arms and legs, then they'll think perhaps they can become a model. Then they'll send them to art school to study modeling. In this way, children begin to be sent to boarding schools at the age of four or five, and their families' homes go from three-bedroom houses to two-bedroom houses, from two-bedroom houses to one-bedroom houses, from one-bedroom houses to rented houses. The tutoring sessions that their children attend outside of school grow increasingly in number, and their homes become progressively smaller. There are even some parents who move their whole families to the south, to the north, moving back and forth, so that their children can go to good schools, and in the end, they no longer know

where to go, their children do not know where their hometowns are, and it's all a big mess. Parents pay various prices before their children have reached adulthood for the sake of their children's futures, so that their children won't lose at the starting line, and so that their children can adapt to this increasingly competitive society, and have a good job and a stable income later on. Some parents are very capable, they run big businesses or serve as high-ranking officials, and they make high, enormous investments in their children. Some parents are not that capable, but just like other people, they want to send their children to fancy schools, various after-school classes, dance classes, art classes, to study different languages and music, putting a lot of pressure and pain on their children. Their children then think: "When will I be allowed to play a little? When will I grow up and be able to call the shots like adults do? When will I not have to go to school anymore, like an adult? When will I be able to watch a bit of TV, let my mind go black, and go for a walk somewhere by myself, without being led around by my parents?" But their parents often say: "If you don't study, you'll have to beg for food in the future. Look at how little promise you have! It's not time for you to play yet, you can play when you're older! If you play now, you won't be successful in the future; if you play later, you can have more and better fun, you can travel the world. Haven't you seen all those wealthy people in the world—did they play when they were young? They just studied." Their parents just lie to them. Did their parents see with their own eyes that those wealthy people only studied and never played? Do they understand this matter? Some of the rich and wealthiest people in the world didn't go to university—that is a fact. Sometimes when parents speak, they are just tricking their children. Before their children reach adulthood, parents tell all kinds of lies in order to get a better hold on their futures, and control their children and make them obey. Of course, they also endure all kinds of suffering, and pay all kinds of prices for this. This is the so-called "praiseworthy love of a parent."

In order to realize their expectations for their offspring, parents pin many hopes on their children. Consequently, they do not only educate, guide, and influence their children with their words, at the same time, they also use concrete actions to regulate their children, and to make their children obey them, act and live according to the trajectory that they have designated and the direction that they have established. Regardless of whether or not their children are willing to do this, ultimately parents just say one thing: "If you don't listen to me, you'll regret it! If you don't obey me or take your studies seriously now, and you regret it one day, don't come to me, don't say that I didn't tell you so!" One time, we went to a building to conduct some affairs, and saw a few movers expending a lot of effort to move some furniture up the stairs. They were faced with a mother who was leading her son down the stairs. If a normal person saw this scene, they would say: "There are people moving furniture, let's get out of their way." The people going downstairs would have to hurry to get out of the way, without bumping into something, or bothering the movers. But when the mother saw this scene, she took the opportunity to start practicing some situational teaching. I can still remember what she

said very clearly. What did she say? She said: “Look how heavy the things they’re moving are, and how tiring it is. They didn’t take their studies seriously when they were children, and now they can’t find good jobs, so they have to move furniture and work very hard. Do you see this?” The son seemed to partially understand, and believed that what his mother said was correct. A sincere expression of fear, horror, and belief appeared in his eyes, and he nodded his head, looking again at the movers. The mother took advantage of this opportunity to hurry and lecture her son, telling him: “Do you see? If you don’t take your studies seriously when you’re young, then when you grow up, you’ll have to move furniture and work very hard like this in order to make a living.” Were these statements right? (No.) In what way were they wrong? This mother took any opportunity to lecture her son—what do you think her son’s mindset was after hearing this? Was he able to discern whether these statements were right or wrong? (No.) So, what did he think? (“If I don’t take my studies seriously, I’ll have to work very hard like this in the future.”) He thought: “Oh no, all the people who have to work really hard didn’t take their studies seriously. I must listen to my mom, and do well in my studies. My mom is right, everyone who doesn’t study has to work very hard.” The ideas he receives from his mother become life-long truths in his heart. Tell Me, isn’t this parent foolish? (Yes, she is.) In what way is she foolish? If she uses this matter to compel her son to study, will her son definitely amount to something? Will it guarantee that he won’t need to work very hard or sweat in the future? Is it a good thing for her to use this matter, this scene, to scare her son? (It’s a bad thing.) It will cast a lifelong shadow over her son. This is not a good thing. Even if this child gains a bit of discernment about these words after he grows up, it will still be hard to remove this theory which his mother expressed from his heart and from his subconscious. To a certain degree, it will mislead and bind his thoughts, and orientate his views on things. Most of the expectations that parents have for their children before they become adults are that they will be able to study a lot, try hard, be diligent, and not fall short of their expectations. Therefore, before their children become adults, no matter what the cost, parents do everything for their children, they sacrifice their own youth, years, and time, as well as their own health and their normal lives, and some parents even give up their own jobs, their old aspirations, or even their own faith, in order to train their children and help them study while they are attending school. In the church, there are quite a few people who spend all of their time with their children, training them, so that they can be by their sides as they grow into adults, so that their children can be successful in their careers and have stable jobs in the future, and so that things will go smoothly in their children’s work. These parents do not go to gatherings or perform duties. They have certain demands regarding their own faith in their hearts, and they possess a little bit of resolve and aspiration, but because they cannot let go of their expectations for their children, they choose to accompany them during this period before they reach adulthood, abandoning their own duties as created beings, and their own pursuits regarding their faith. This is the most tragic thing. Some parents pay many prices

in order to train their children to become actors, artists, writers, or scientists, and to enable their children to satisfy their expectations. They leave their jobs, abandon their careers, and even more so, they abandon their own dreams and enjoyment in order to accompany their children. There are even parents who give up their married lives for their children. After they get divorced, they take on the heavy burden of raising and training their children alone, betting their lives on their children, and dedicating them to their children's futures, just so that they can realize their expectations for their children. There are also some parents who do many things that they shouldn't do, who pay many unnecessary prices, sacrifice their own time, physical health, and pursuits before their children reach adulthood, so that their children can get ahead in the world in the future, and establish themselves in society. In one respect, for the parents, these are some needless sacrifices. In another respect, for their children, these approaches place a huge pressure and burden on them before they reach adulthood. This is because their parents have paid too many prices, because, whether in terms of money, time, or energy, their parents have expended too much. However, before these children reach adulthood, and while they still lack the ability to discern right from wrong, they have no choice; they can only let their parents act like this. Even if they have some thoughts in the depths of their minds, they still comply with their parents' actions. Under these circumstances, children imperceptibly start to think that their parents have paid such great prices to train them, and that they will not be able to completely repay or recompense their parents in this life. As a result, during the time that their parents are training and accompanying them, they think that the only things they can do, the only things they can carry out in order to repay their parents, are to make their parents happy, to achieve great things to satisfy them, and to not disappoint them. As for parents, during this time before their children reach adulthood, after they have paid these prices, and as their expectations for their children grow greater and greater, their mindset gradually turns into a demand of their children. That is, after parents have paid these so-called prices and made these so-called expenditures, they demand that their children must succeed, and achieve great things to repay them. Therefore, regardless of whether we are looking at this from the perspective of a parent or a child, within this relationship of "expending for" and "being expended for," the expectations that parents have for their children grow higher and higher. "Their expectations grow higher and higher" is a nice way of saying this. Actually, in the depths of parents' hearts, the more they expend and sacrifice, the more they think that their children should repay them with success, and at the same time, the more they think that their children are indebted to them. The more parents expend, and the more hopes they have, the higher their expectations become, and the bigger their expectations about their children repaying them grow. The expectations that parents have for their offspring before they reach adulthood, from "They need to learn lots of things, they can't lose at the starting line" to "After they grow up, they need to get ahead in the world, and establish themselves in society," gradually become a kind of demand that they make of

their children. That demand is: After you grow up and establish yourself in society, don't forget your roots, don't forget your parents, your parents are the people you need to repay first, you must show them filial piety, and help them to live a good life, because they are your benefactors in this world, they are the people who trained you; you being established in society now, as well as everything that you enjoy, and everything that you possess, was bought with the painstaking efforts of your parents, so you should use the rest of your life to repay them, recompense them, and be good to them. The expectations that parents have for their children before they reach adulthood—that their children will establish themselves in society and get ahead in the world—evolve into this, gradually turning from a very normal parental expectation into a kind of demand and solicitation that parents make of their children. Suppose that in the period before they reach adulthood, their children don't get good grades; say that they rebel, that they don't want to study or obey their parents, and they disobey them. Their parents will say: "Do you think that I have it easy? Who do you think I'm doing all this for? I'm doing this for your own good, aren't I? Everything I do is for you, and you don't appreciate it. Are you stupid?" They will use these words to intimidate their children and hold them hostage. Is this kind of approach right? (No.) It's not right. This "noble" part of parents is also the despicable part of parents. What exactly is wrong with these words? (Parents having expectations for their children and training their children are one-sided endeavors. They impose certain pressure on their children, making them study this and that, so that their children will have good prospects, put a feather in their parents' caps, and show them filial piety in the future. In reality, everything that parents do is for themselves.) If we set aside the fact that parents are self-serving and selfish, and just talk about the ideas that they indoctrinate their children with before they reach adulthood, and the pressure that they pass down to them, demanding that their children study such-and-such subject, that they engage in such-and-such career after they grow up, and attain such-and-such success—what is the nature of these approaches? For now, we will not assess why parents are doing these things, or whether these approaches are appropriate or not. We will first fellowship on and analyze the nature of these approaches, and find a more accurate path of practice based on our analysis of their essence. If we fellowship on and come to understand this aspect of the truth from that perspective, it will be accurate.

First of all, are these requirements and approaches that parents have regarding their children right or wrong? (They are wrong.) So, ultimately, where does the main culprit stem from when it comes to these approaches that parents use on their children? Isn't it the parents' expectations for their children? (Yes.) Within the subjective consciousness of parents, they envisage, plan, and determine various things about their children's futures, and as a result, they produce these expectations. Under the instigation of these expectations, parents demand that their children study various skills, that they study theatre and dance, or art, and so on. They demand that their children become talented individuals, and that they are thereafter superiors, and not subordinates. They demand

that their children become high-ranking officials, and not foot soldiers; they demand that their children become managers, CEOs, and executives, working for the top global 500 companies, and so on. These are all the subjective ideas of parents. Now do children have any concept of the content of their parents' expectations before they reach adulthood? (No.) They do not have any concept of these things at all, they do not understand them. What do little children understand? They only understand going to school to learn to read, studying hard, and being good, well-behaved children. This itself is quite good. Going to school to attend classes according to their prescribed schedules, and going home to finish their homework—these are the things that children understand, the rest is just playing, food, fantasies, dreams, and so on. Before they reach adulthood, children have no concept at all of the unknown things on their life paths, and they do not envision anything about them either. All of the things that are envisioned or determined about the time after these children reach adulthood come from their parents. Therefore, the erroneous expectations that parents have for their children have nothing to do with their children. Children only need to discern the essence of their parents' expectations. What are these parental expectations based upon? Where do they come from? They come from society and the world. The point of all these parental expectations is to enable children to adapt to this world and society, to avoid being cast out by the world or by society, and to establish themselves in society, to get a secure job, a stable family, and a stable future, so parents have various subjective expectations for their offspring. For example, right now it is quite fashionable to be a computer engineer. Some people say: "My child is going to be a computer engineer in the future. They can earn a lot of money in this field, carrying around a computer all day, doing computer engineering. This will make me look good too!" In these circumstances, where children have no concept of anything at all, their parents lay down their futures. Isn't this wrong? (It is.) Their parents are pinning hopes on their children entirely on the basis of an adult's way of looking at things, as well as an adult's views, perspectives, and preferences about matters of the world. Isn't this subjective? (Yes.) If you were to put it nicely, you could say that it is subjective, but what is it really? What is another interpretation of this subjectivity? Is it not selfishness? Isn't it coercion? (It is.) You like this or that job and such-and-such career, you enjoy being established, living a glamorous life, serving as an official, or being wealthy in society, so you make your children do those things too, be that kind of person too, and walk that kind of path—but will they enjoy living in that environment and engaging in that work in the future? Are they suited to it? What are their destinies? What are God's arrangements and rulings regarding them? Do you know these things? Some people say: "I don't care about those things, what matters are the things that I, as their parent, like. I'll pin hopes on them based on my own preferences." Isn't that so selfish? (It is.) It is so selfish! To put it nicely, it's very subjective, it's calling all of the shots themselves, but what is it, in reality? It is very selfish! These parents don't consider their children's caliber or talents, they don't care about the arrangements that God has for

each person's destiny and life. They don't consider these things, they just force their own preferences, intentions, and plans onto their children through wishful thinking. Some people say: "I have to force these things onto my child. They're too young to understand them, and by the time they do, it'll be too late." Is that the case? (No.) If it really is too late, then that's their fate, it's not the responsibility of their parents. If you force the things that you understand onto your children, will they understand them quicker just because you understand them? (No.) There is no relationship between how parents educate their children and when those children come to understand matters like what kind of life path to choose, what kind of career to choose, and what their lives will be like. They have their own paths, their own pace, and their own laws. Think about it, when children are small, no matter how their parents educate them, their knowledge of society is a total blank. They will feel the competitiveness, complexity, and darkness of society, and the various unfair things in society, when their humanity matures. This is not something that parents can teach their children from a young age. Even if parents teach their children from a young age, "You must hold something back when interacting with people," they will only take it as a kind of doctrine. When they are truly able to act based on their parents' advice, they will truly understand it. When they do not understand their parents' advice, no matter how their parents try to teach them, it will still just be a kind of doctrine to them. Therefore, is the idea that parents have, that, "The world is so competitive, and people live under a great deal of pressure; if I don't start teaching my children from a very young age, they will endure suffering and pain in the future," tenable? (No.) You are making your children shoulder that pressure early on so that they might suffer less in the future, and they have to bear that pressure starting at an age where they still don't understand anything—in doing this, are you not harming your children? Are you really doing this for their own good? It is better that they do not understand these things, then they can live a few years in a comfortable, happy, pure, and simple way. If they were to understand those things early, would that be a blessing or a misfortune? (It would be a misfortune.) Yes, it would be a misfortune.

What people should do in each age-group is based on their age and the maturity of their humanity, not the education they receive from their parents. Before they reach adulthood, children should just play, learn a bit of simple knowledge and receive a bit of basic schooling, learn different things, learn how to interact with other children and how to get along with adults, and learn how to deal with some things around them that they do not understand. Before people reach adulthood, they should do non-adult things. They shouldn't bear any of the pressure, game rules, or complicated things that adults ought to bear. Such things cause psychological harm to people who haven't reached adulthood, and they are not blessings. The earlier people learn about these adult matters, the bigger blow it deals to their young minds. Not only will these things not help people at all in their lives or existences after they reach adulthood; on the contrary, because they learn about or encounter these things too early, they turn into a kind of

burden or cast an invisible shadow on their young minds, to the extent that they might haunt them all their lives. Think about it, when people are very young, if they hear about something horrible, something that they cannot accept, an adult thing that they could never imagine or understand, then that scene or that matter, or even the people, things, and words involved in it, will follow them for their whole lives. This will cast a kind of shadow on them, impacting their personalities, and their methods for conducting themselves in life. For example, children are all a bit naughty at the age of six or seven. Say that a child gets scolded by their teacher during class for whispering to a classmate, and the teacher doesn't just scold them in a matter-of-fact way, but attacks them personally, scolding them for having a face like a ferret, and eyes like a rat, even scolding them by saying: "Look at how little promise you have. You're going to be unsuccessful for your whole life! If you don't study hard, then you'll just be a laborer. In the future you'll have to beg for food! You look just like a thief; you have the makings of a thief!" Though the child doesn't understand these words, and doesn't know why their teacher would say these things, or whether these things are true or not, these words of personal attack will become a kind of invisible, evil force within their heart, piercing their self-esteem, and hurting them. "You have a face like a ferret, and eyes like a rat, and a tiny head!"—these words of personal attack spoken by their teacher will follow them for their whole life. When they choose a career, when they face their superiors and their co-workers, and when they face the brothers and sisters, those words of personal attack spoken by their teacher will burst forth from time to time, affecting their emotions, and their life. Of course, some of the improper expectations that your parents have for you, and some of the emotions, messages, words, thoughts, views, and so on that they passed on to you, have also cast a shadow over your young mind. From the perspective of your parents' subjective consciousness, they do not have any bad intentions, but because of their ignorance, because they are corrupted humans, and they do not have proper methods that are in line with the principles for how to treat you, they can only follow the trends of the world in how they treat you, and the ultimate result of this is that they pass various negative messages and emotions onto you. Under circumstances where you lack any discernment, everything your parents say, and all of the mistaken ideas that your parents indoctrinate and promote in you, become dominant in you because you are exposed to them first. They become the goal of your lifelong pursuit and struggle. Although the various expectations that your parents put forth for you before you reach adulthood are a kind of blow and devastation for your young mind, you still live under the expectations of your parents, as well as under the various prices that they pay for you, understanding their will, and accepting and giving thanks for their various acts of kindness. After you accept the various prices they pay and the various sacrifices they make for you, you feel indebted to your parents and ashamed to face them in the depths of your heart, and you think that you have to repay them after you grow up. Repay what? Repay their unreasonable expectations for you? Repay the devastation they cause to you before you

reach adulthood? Is this not confusing black and white? Actually, speaking about this from the root and essence of the matter, your parents' expectations for you are just subjective, they are just wishful thinking. They are absolutely not things that a child should possess, practice, or live out, and they are not something that a child needs. In order to follow the trends of the world, to adapt to the world, to keep up with the progress of the world, your parents make you follow them, they make you bear this pressure as they do, and they make you accept and follow these evil trends. Therefore, under the ardent expectations of their parents, many children work hard studying various skills, various courses, and various kinds of knowledge. They go from trying to satisfy their parents' expectations, to proactively pursuing the intended goals of their parents' expectations. In other words, before they reach adulthood, people passively accept their parents' expectations, and after they gradually come to be adults, they proactively accept the expectations of their parents' subjective consciousness, and willingly accept this kind of pressure and this deception, control, and binding that comes from society. In sum, they gradually go from passive to active participants in this. In that way, their parents feel satisfied. The children also feel a sense of inner peace, and that they haven't let down their parents, that they have finally given their parents what they want, and that they have grown up—not simply growing into an adult, but becoming talented individuals in the eyes of their parents, and living up to their parents' expectations. Though these people succeed in becoming talented individuals in the eyes of their parents after they become adults, and on the surface, it seems as though the prices paid by their parents have been repaid, and that their parents' expectations for them haven't come to nothing, what is the reality? These children have succeeded in becoming the puppets of their parents, they have succeeded in owing their parents a great debt, they have succeeded in using the rest of their lives to realize their parents' expectations, to put on a show for their parents, bringing credit and prestige to their parents, and they have succeeded in satisfying their parents, becoming their pride and joy. Wherever their parents go, they will mention their children: "My daughter is the manager of so-and-so company." "My daughter is a designer for such-and-such famous brand." "My daughter is at so-and-so level in this foreign language, she can speak it fluently, she's a translator for such-and-such language." "My daughter is a computer engineer." These children have succeeded in becoming their parents' pride and joy, and they have succeeded in becoming their parents' shadows. This is because they will use the same methods to educate and train their own children. They think that their parents have succeeded in training them, so they will copy their parents' methods of education to train their own children. In this way, their children have to bear the same misery, tragic suffering, and devastation from them as they did from their parents.

Everything that parents do to realize their expectations for their children before they reach adulthood is contrary to conscience, reason, and natural laws. Even more so, it is contrary to God's ordination and sovereignty. Though children do not have the ability to

discern between right and wrong, or to think independently, their fates are still under God's sovereignty, they are not ruled over by their parents. Therefore, aside from having expectations for their children within their consciousness, foolish parents also carry out more actions, sacrifices, and price-paying in terms of their behavior, doing everything they want and are willing to do for their children, regardless of whether this is expending money, time, energy, or other things. Though parents do those things voluntarily, they are inhumane, and they are not the responsibilities that parents should fulfill; they have already exceeded the scope of their abilities and their proper responsibilities. Why do I say this? Because parents begin attempting to plan and control their children's futures before they reach adulthood, and also try to determine their children's futures. Isn't that foolish? (Yes.) For example, say that God has ordained that a man will be an ordinary worker, and in this life, he will only be able to earn some basic wages to feed and clothe himself, but his parents insist on him becoming a celebrity, a wealthy person, a high official, planning and arranging things for his future before he reaches adulthood, paying various kinds of so-called prices, attempting to control his life and future. Isn't that foolish? (It is.) Though their child gets quite good grades, goes to university, learns various skills after he reaches adulthood, and has some skills, when he ultimately goes to look for work, no matter how he searches, he still ends up being an ordinary worker. At most, he gets lucky and becomes a foreman, which is already good. Ultimately, he only earns a basic salary, and he is never able to earn the salary of a high official or a wealthy person like his parents have demanded. His parents always want him to rise up in the world, to earn a lot of money, to become a high official, so that they can bask in the light along with him. They never expected that, though he performed so well at school and was so obedient, though they paid so many prices for him, and though he attended university after he grew up, in this life he'd still be fated to be an ordinary worker. If they were able to anticipate this, they wouldn't have tormented themselves so much at the time. But can parents avoid tormenting themselves? (No.) Parents sell their houses, their land, their family possessions, and some even sell a kidney so that their children can go to famous universities. When the child doesn't agree with this, the mother says: "I have two kidneys. If I lose one, I'll still have another. I'm already old, I only need one kidney." What does her child feel after hearing this? "Even if it means that I won't go to university, I can't let you sell your kidney." And the mother says: "You won't go? You are a disobedient, unfilial child! Why am I selling my kidney? Isn't it so that you can succeed in the future?" The child feels moved after hearing this, and thinks, "Mom can go ahead and sell her kidney then. I won't let her down." In the end, the mother really does it—she trades a kidney for her child's future—and in the end, her child only becomes a worker, and does not end up succeeding. So, the mother sold a kidney, and all she got in exchange was a worker—is that appropriate? (No.) In the end, the mother sees this and says: "You're just fated to be a worker. If I'd known that earlier, I wouldn't have sold a kidney to send you to university. You could have just gone ahead and become a worker,

right? What was the point of you attending university?" It's too late! Who made her act so foolishly back then? Who made her enjoy the idea of her child becoming a high official and earning a lot of money? She was blinded by greed, she deserved this! She paid so many prices for her child, but does her child owe her anything? No. She paid those prices willingly, and she got what she deserved! Even if she'd sold two kidneys it would have been voluntary. To send their children to prestigious universities, some people sell their corneas, some people sell their blood, some people sacrifice everything they have and sell their family possessions, and is it worth it? It's as though they think that selling a little blood or an organ can decide a person's future and change their fate. Can it? (No.) People are so foolish! They are looking for fast returns, they are blinded by prestige and profit. They always think, "Well, this is just the way my life is," so they pin their hopes on their children. Does that mean that their children's fates will definitely be better than theirs? That their children will be able to rise up in the world? That they'll be different? How could people be so foolish? Do they think that just because they have high expectations for their children, their children will definitely be superior to others and live up to their expectations? People's fates are not decided by their parents, they are decided by God. Of course, no parent wishes to see their children become beggars. But even so, they don't have to insist that their children rise up in the world and become high officials or prominent people in the upper class of society. What's good about being in the upper class of society? What's good about rising up in the world? Those are quagmires, they are not good things. Is it a good thing to become a celebrity, a great figure, a superman, or a person with position and status? Life is the most comfortable as an ordinary person. What's wrong with living a slightly poorer, harder, tiring life, with slightly worse food and clothes? At the very least, one thing is guaranteed, since you do not live among the social trends of society's upper class, you will, at least, sin less and do fewer things to resist God. As an ordinary person, you won't face such great or frequent temptation. Though your life will be a bit tougher, at least you won't be tired in your spirit. Think about it, as a worker, all you need to worry about is making sure that you can eat three meals a day. It's different when you're an official. You have to fight, and you won't know when the day will come that your position is no longer secure. And that won't be the end of it, the people you've offended will seek you out to settle scores, and you will be punished by them. Life is very tiring for celebrities, great people, and wealthy people. Wealthy people are always afraid that they won't be so wealthy in the future, and that they won't be able to go on if that happens. Celebrities always worry that their halos will disappear, and they always want to protect their halos, fearing that they will be cast out by this era and the trends. Their lives are so tiring! Parents never see through to these things, and always want to push their children into the heart of this struggle, sending them into these lion's dens and quagmires. Do parents really have good intentions? If I say that they don't have good intentions, you won't be willing to hear it. If I say that your parents' expectations affect you negatively in many ways, are you

willing to acknowledge this? (Yes.) They harm you quite deeply, don't they? Some of you aren't willing to acknowledge this, you say: "My parents want what's good for me." You say that your parents want what's good for you—well, where are those good things? Your parents want what's good for you, but how many positive things have they enabled you to understand? Your parents want what's good for you, but how many of your incorrect and undesirable thoughts and views have they corrected? (None.) So, can you see through to these things now? You can feel that parental expectations are unrealistic, right?

Through dissecting the essence of parents' expectations for their children, we can see that these expectations are selfish, that they go against humanity, and that they furthermore have nothing to do with the responsibilities of parents. When parents impose various expectations and requirements on their children, they are not fulfilling their responsibilities. So, what are their "responsibilities"? The most basic responsibilities that parents ought to fulfill are teaching their children to speak, instructing them to be kindhearted and to not be bad people, and guiding them in a positive direction. These are their most basic responsibilities. In addition, they should assist their children in studying any kinds of knowledge, talents, and so on, that suit them, based on their ages, how much they can handle, and their caliber and interests. Slightly better parents will help their children understand that people are created by God and that God exists in this universe, leading their children to pray and read God's words, telling them some stories from the Bible, and hoping that they will follow God and fulfill the duty of a created being after they grow up, rather than chasing worldly trends, getting trapped within various complicated interpersonal relationships, and being devastated by the various trends of this world and society. The responsibilities that parents ought to fulfill have nothing to do with their expectations. The responsibilities they should fulfill in their role as parents are to provide their children with positive guidance and appropriate assistance before they reach adulthood, as well as to promptly care for them in their fleshly lives with regard to food, clothing, housing, or at times when they fall ill. If their children become sick, parents should treat whatever illness needs to be treated; they should not neglect their children or tell them, "Keep going to school, keep studying—you can't fall behind in your classes. If you fall too far behind, you won't be able to catch up." When their children need to rest, parents should let them rest; when their children are sick, parents must help them to recuperate. These are the responsibilities of parents. In one respect, they must care for the physical health of their children; in another respect, they must assist, educate, and aid their children in terms of their mental health. These are the responsibilities that parents ought to fulfill, rather than imposing any unrealistic expectations or requirements on their children. Parents must fulfill their responsibilities when it comes to both their children's mental needs and the things that their children need in their physical lives. Parents shouldn't let their children freeze in the winter, they should teach them some general life knowledge, like under what circumstances they'll catch a cold, that they

should eat warm foods, that their stomachs will hurt if they eat cold foods, and that they shouldn't casually expose themselves to the wind or undress in draughty places when the weather is cold, helping them learn to take care of their own health. In addition, when some childish, immature ideas about their futures, or some extreme thoughts arise in their children's young minds, parents must promptly provide them with correct guidance as soon as they discover this, rather than forcibly suppressing them; they should get their children to express and vent their ideas, so that the problem can truly be resolved. This is fulfilling their responsibilities. Fulfilling the responsibilities of a parent means, in one respect, caring for their children, and in another respect, directing and correcting their children, and giving them guidance regarding the correct thoughts and views. The responsibilities that parents should fulfill actually have nothing to do with their expectations for their offspring. You can hope that your children will be physically healthy and possess humanity, conscience, and reason after they grow up, or you can hope that your children will show you filial piety, but you shouldn't hope that your children will become such-and-such kind of celebrity or great person after growing up, and even less should you frequently tell your children: "Look at how obedient Xiaoming from next door is!" Your children are your children—the responsibility you ought to fulfill is not to tell your children how great their neighbor Xiaoming is, or to get them to learn from their neighbor Xiaoming. This is not something that a parent should do. Every person is different. People differ in terms of their thoughts, views, interests, hobbies, caliber, personalities, and whether their humanity essence is good or vicious. Some people are born chatterboxes, while others are innately introverted, and won't feel upset if they go an entire day without saying a single word. Therefore, if parents wish to fulfill their responsibilities, they should try to understand their children's personalities, dispositions, interests, caliber, and the needs of their humanity, rather than turning their own adult pursuits of the world, prestige, and profit into expectations for their children, imposing these things of prestige, profit, and the world that come from society onto their children. Parents call these things by the pleasant-sounding name of "expectations for their children," but in reality, that is not what they are. It is clear that they are trying to push their children into the fire pit and send them into the arms of the devil. If you really are an adequate parent, you should fulfill your responsibilities regarding your children's physical and mental health, rather than imposing your will on them before they reach adulthood, forcing their young minds to bear things that they should not have to bear. If you really love and cherish them and you really want to fulfill your responsibilities to them, then you should take care of their physical bodies and make sure that they are physically healthy. Of course, some children are born frail and in poor health. If their parents really have the conditions to do so, they can give them some more nutritional supplements, or inquire with a traditional Chinese medicine doctor or a nutritionist, showing a little bit of extra care to these children. In addition, at each age before their children reach adulthood, from infancy and childhood to adolescence, parents should

pay a bit more attention to changes in their children's personalities and interests, and their needs with regard to their exploration of their humanity, showing them a bit more concern. They should also give their children some positive and humane guidance, assistance, and provision when it comes to their psychological changes and misconceptions, and some unknown things concerning the needs of their humanity, using the practical insight, experience, and lessons that they themselves gained by going through the same things. Parents should then help their children to grow up smoothly at each age, and to avoid taking roundabout paths or wrong turns, or veering to extremes. When their young, confused minds are hurt or suffer a blow, they should receive prompt treatment, as well as concern, affection, care, and guidance from their parents. These are the responsibilities that parents should fulfill. As for whatever plans their children have for their own futures, whether they wish to be teachers, artists, or officials, and so on, if their plans are reasonable, parents can encourage them, and give them a certain amount of help and assistance based on their own circumstances, education, caliber, humanity, their family circumstances, and so on. However, parents should not go beyond the scope of their own abilities, they should not sell their cars, their houses, their kidneys, or their blood. There is no need to do this, right? (Right.) They should just give their children a certain amount of help to the best of their abilities as parents. If their children say, "I want to go to college," parents can say, "If you want to go to college, I'll support you, and I won't oppose you, but our family's not very well off. From now on, I will have to save some money each day in order to pay for a year of your college tuition. If, when the time comes, I've saved enough, you can go to college. If I haven't saved enough, you'll have to find your own solution." Parents should reach this kind of agreement with their children, agreeing and reaching a consensus together, and then resolving the problem of the needs their children have regarding their futures. Of course, if parents cannot realize the plans and intentions that their children have for their futures, they do not need to feel guilty, thinking: "I've let down my children, I'm not capable, and my children have had to suffer because of it. Other people's children eat well, wear famous brands, and drive around in cars at college, and when they go home, they travel by plane. My children have to travel by train on the hard seats—I can't even afford to send them in the sleeper cars. I've let my children down!" They do not need to feel guilty, these are their circumstances, and even if they sold a kidney, they wouldn't be able to provide those things, so they should accept their fate. God orchestrated this kind of environment for them, so these parents do not need to feel guilty toward their children in any way, saying: "I've let you down. If you don't show us filial piety in the future, I won't complain. We're incompetent, and we haven't provided you with a good living environment." There's no need for them to say this. Parents just need to fulfill their responsibilities with clear consciences, doing everything they can, and enabling their children to be healthy in both body and mind. That's enough. "Health" here just means parents doing their utmost to make sure their children have positive thoughts, as well as active, upward-facing, and

optimistic thoughts and attitudes toward their daily lives and existences. When something upsets them, children should not throw tantrums, attempt suicide, cause trouble for their parents, or scold their parents for being incapable good-for-nothings who aren't able to earn money, saying: "Look at other people's parents. They drive nice cars, live in mansions, they go on luxury cruise ships, and take trips to Europe. Now look at us, we've never even left our hometown or taken the high-speed rail!" If they do throw tantrums like this, how should you respond? You should say: "You're right, that's how incompetent we are. You were born into this family, and you should accept your fate. If you're capable, then you can earn money yourself in the future. Don't be rude to us, and don't demand that we do things for you. We have already fulfilled our responsibilities to you, and we don't owe you anything. One day in the future, you'll become a parent, and you'll have to do this too." When they have children of their own, they'll learn that it's not so easy for parents to earn money to support themselves and everyone in their family, both young and old. In sum, you should teach them some principles about how to comport themselves. If your children can accept it, you should fellowship with them on believing in God and walking the path of pursuing the truth to achieve salvation, as well as some of the correct thoughts and views that you have received from God. If your children are willing to accept God's work and believe in God along with you, that's even better. If your children don't have this kind of need, then it's enough for you to just fulfill your responsibilities to them; you don't need to keep rambling on about or bringing up some words and doctrines concerning belief in God to preach to them. There is no need to do this. Even if your children don't believe, as long as they support you, you can still be good friends, and talk about and discuss anything together. You should not become enemies, or feel resentment toward them. There is a blood tie between you, after all. If your children are willing to fulfill their responsibilities toward you, to show you filial piety, and to obey you, then you can maintain your family relationship with them, and interact with them normally. You do not need to constantly curse or scold your children because they have different opinions and views from yours regarding faith. There is no need to do that. You do not need to become hotheaded, or think that your children not believing in God is a huge matter, as if you've lost your life and soul. It's not that serious. If they don't believe, then naturally they have their own paths that they have chosen to walk. You also have a path that you should walk and a duty you should perform, and these things have nothing to do with your children. If your children don't believe, you do not need to insist on it. It may be that the right time hasn't come, or that God has simply not chosen them. If God has simply not chosen them, and you insist on forcing them to believe, then you are ignorant and disobedient. Of course, if God has chosen them, but the right time hasn't arrived, and you demand that they believe now, it'll be a little too soon. If God wishes to act, no person can escape His sovereignty. If God has arranged for your children to believe, then He can achieve this in a word or in a thought. If God hasn't arranged for them to believe, they will not be moved, and if they are not moved,

then no matter how much you talk, it will be of no use. If your children do not believe, you are not indebted to them; if your children do believe, this is not a credit to you. Isn't that the case? (It is.) Regardless of whether you have common goals with your children regarding faith or if you are like-minded in this regard, in any case, you just need to fulfill your responsibilities to them. If you have fulfilled these responsibilities, this doesn't mean that you have shown them a kindness, and if your children do not believe, this does not mean that you are indebted to them, because you have fulfilled your responsibilities, and that's the end of that. Your relationship remains unchanged, and you can continue interacting with your children as you did before. When your children encounter difficulties, you should help them as much as you are able to. If you have the material conditions to help your children, you should; if you are able to correct your children's thoughts and views on a psychological or mental level, and give them a certain amount of guidance and help, enabling them to emerge from their dilemmas, then that is quite good. In sum, what parents should do before their children reach adulthood is to fulfill the responsibilities of parents, learning about what their children want to do, and what their children's interests and aspirations are. If their children want to kill people, to set fire to things, and to commit crimes, then their parents should seriously discipline them or even punish them. But if they are obedient children, and no different from any other ordinary children, and they behave themselves at school, doing whatever their parents tell them to, then their parents just need to fulfill their responsibilities to them. Aside from fulfilling their responsibilities, those so-called expectations, requirements, and thinking about their futures are all superfluous. Why do I say that they are superfluous? Every person's fate is ordained by God, and it cannot be decided by their parents. Whatever expectations parents have for their children, it is impossible that they will all be realized in the future. These expectations cannot determine their children's futures or their lives. No matter how great parents' expectations for their children are, or how big the sacrifices or prices they offer up for those expectations are, all of it is in vain; these things cannot influence their children's futures or lives. Therefore, parents shouldn't do foolish things. They should not make needless sacrifices for their children before they reach adulthood, and naturally they shouldn't feel so stressed about this. Raising children is about a parent learning while also gaining various kinds of experience by going through different environments, and then gradually enabling their children to reap benefits from them. That's all parents need to do. As for children's futures and future life paths, these things have nothing to do with their parents' expectations. That is to say, your parents' expectations cannot decide your future. It is not as if your parents having high expectations for you, or expecting great things from you means that you will be able to prosper and live well, and it is not as if your parents not having expectations for you means that you'll become a beggar. There is no necessary relationship between these things. Tell Me, are these topics that I've fellowshiped on easy to understand? Is it easy for people to accomplish these things? Are they difficult? Parents just need to fulfill their

responsibilities to their children, bring them up, and raise them into adults. They don't need to raise their children into talented individuals. Is this easy to achieve? (It is.) This is an easy thing to do—you do not need to bear any responsibility for your children's futures or lives, or develop any plans for them, or presuppose what kind of people they'll become, what kind of lives they'll have in the future, what social circles they'll be found in later on, how their quality of life will be in this world in the future, or what kind of status they'll have among people. You don't have to presuppose or control these things; you just have to simply fulfill your responsibilities as a parent. It's as easy as that. When your children reach school-age, you should find a school and enroll them there, pay for their tuition when it is needed, and pay for whatever they need in school. It's enough to just fulfill these responsibilities. When it comes to what they eat and wear throughout the year, you just need to take care of their physical bodies based on the circumstances. Don't allow an uncured illness to remain within them during the period before they reach adulthood, when they don't understand how to care for their own bodies. Promptly correct their flaws and bad habits, help them to develop good life habits, and then counsel and guide their minds, and ensure that they do not veer to extremes. If they like some evil things in the world, but you can see that they are good children, and that they have just been influenced by the evil trends of the world, you should promptly correct them, and help them to fix their flaws and bad habits. These are the responsibilities that parents ought to fulfill and the functions that they ought to serve. Parents should not push their children toward the trends of society, and they should not make their children bear various kinds of pressure too early on, that only adults need to bear, when they still haven't reached adulthood. Parents should not do these things. These are such simple things to achieve, but some people cannot accomplish them. Because those people cannot let go of their pursuit of worldly prestige and profit, or the world's evil trends, and because they are afraid of being cast out by the world, before their children reach adulthood, they make them assimilate into society very early and adapt to society very quickly on a mental level. If children have parents like these, they're out of luck. No matter the methods or pretexts by which their parents love, cherish, and pay prices for them, for children of families like these, those are not necessarily good things—it could even be said that they are kinds of disasters. This is because, behind their parental expectations, what those parents bring upon their children's young minds is devastation. Or, in other words, the expectations of those parents are not, in fact, really about their children having healthy minds and bodies, they are just expectations that their children will be able to establish themselves in society, and avoid being cast out by society. The aim of their expectations is for their children to live the good life, or to be superior to other people, to avoid becoming beggars, to avoid being discriminated against or bullied by other people, and to assimilate into evil trends and evil groups of people. Are these good things? (No.) Therefore, you do not need to take these kinds of parental expectations to heart. If your parents once held these kinds of expectations for you, or if they paid many

prices to realize their expectations for you, so you feel indebted to them, and intend to use your whole life to repay the prices they've paid for you—if you have this kind of idea and desire, you should let go of it today. You do not owe them anything, rather, it is your parents who have devastated and crippled you. Not only have they failed to fulfill their responsibilities as parents, on the contrary, they have hurt you, inflicted various injuries on your young mind, and left behind a wide range of negative memories and imprints. In short, parents like these are not good parents. If, before you reached adulthood, in the way they educated, impacted, and spoke to you, your parents were always hoping that you'd study hard, succeed, and not end up being a laborer, that you'd definitely have good prospects in the future, become their pride and joy, and bring honor and glory to them, then as of today, you ought to make a break from their so-called kindnesses, and you no longer need to take them to heart. Isn't that right? (Yes.) These are the expectations that parents have for their offspring before they reach adulthood.

The nature of parents' expectations for their children remains the same after their children become adults. Though their adult children can think independently, and communicate, speak, and discuss things with them from the status and perspective of an adult, parents still harbor the same expectations for their children from the perspective of a parent. Their expectations turn from expectations for a child who has not reached adulthood to expectations for an adult. Though parental expectations for adults differ from those for children who haven't reached adulthood, as ordinary, corrupt people, and members of society and the world, parents still harbor the same kinds of expectations for their children. They hope that things will go smoothly for their children at work, that they'll have happy marriages and perfect families, receive salary increases and promotions, gain the recognition of their bosses, and that everything will go particularly well for them in their jobs, without them encountering any difficulties. What's the use of these expectations? (They're useless.) They're useless, they're redundant. Parents think that they can read your mind because they brought you up and supported you, and consequently they believe that they know everything about what you're thinking, what you want, and what your personality is like, even though you're an adult now. And even though you're an independent adult, and you can make money to support yourself, they feel that they can still control you, and that they still have a right to speak, get involved, decide, interfere, or even dominate when it comes to anything about you. That is, they think that they can have the final say. For example, when it comes to marriage, if you are dating someone, your parents will immediately say: "That's no good, she doesn't have the same level of education as you, she's not very good looking, and her family lives in the countryside. After you marry her, her relatives from the countryside will come in a big group, they won't know how to use the bathroom, and they'll make everything filthy. That definitely won't be a good life for you. It's no good, I don't consent to you marrying her!" Is this not interfering? (Yes.) Isn't it redundant and disgusting? (It's redundant.) Sons and daughters still have to get their parents' consent when they look

for partners. Consequently, there are some children now who don't even tell their parents that they've found partners, just to avoid their interference. When their parents ask, "Do you have a partner?" they just say, "No, it's still early, I'm still young, there's no rush," but in fact they've had partners for two or three years already, they just haven't told their parents about this. And why don't they tell their parents about it? Because their parents want to interfere in everything; they're very fussy, so they don't tell them about their partners. When they're ready to get married, they just bring their partners directly to their parents' homes and ask, "Do you give your consent? I'm getting married tomorrow. This is how I'm handling this matter, whether you consent or not. If you withhold your consent, we'll still go ahead and have children." These parents interfere too much with their children, even interfering with their marriages. As long as the partners their children find are not what they hope for, if they don't get along well with them, or if they don't like them, they'll try to break them up. If their children don't agree to this, they'll weep, make a fuss, and threaten to kill themselves, to the point that their children won't know whether to cry or laugh—they won't know what to do. There are also some sons and daughters who say they're old and don't want to get married, and their parents tell them: "That's no good. I hoped that you'd grow up, get married, and have kids. I've seen you grow up, and now I want to see you get married and have kids. Then I can die in peace. If you don't get married, I'll never be able to fulfill this wish. I won't be able to die, and if I do, I won't die in peace. You must get married, hurry up and find a partner. It's even alright if you just find a temporary partner, and let me have a look at them." Isn't this interfering? (It is.) When it comes to their adult children choosing marriage partners, parents can give suitable advice, they can prompt their children, or help to check their partners out, but they should not interfere, they should not help their children decide. Their children have their own feelings about whether they like their partners, whether they get along well, whether they have similar interests, and whether they will be happy together in the future. Parents do not necessarily know these things, and even if they do, they can only make suggestions, they must not flagrantly obstruct or seriously interfere with this. There are even some parents who say: "When my son or daughter finds a partner, they must be of equal social standing to my family. If they are not, and they have some motives regarding my son or daughter, then I won't let them marry, I'll have to disrupt their plans. If they want to enter my house, I won't let them!" Is this expectation appropriate? Is it rational? (It's not rational.) This is a significant matter in their children's lives, it's irrational for parents to interfere in it. But from these parents' perspective, there is even more cause to interfere in the significant matters of their children's lives. If their children casually find friends of the opposite sex to talk to, they won't interfere, but if it has to do with the great matter of marriage, they'll think that they must interfere. There are even parents who put a lot of effort into spying on their children, looking at which members of the opposite gender they have contact details and information for on their phones and computers, interfering and stalking their children, to the point that their children have no

recourse, where they cannot fight, argue back, or evade this hurdle. Is this an appropriate way for a parent to act? (No.) If parents make their children feel sick of them, this is called being troublesome, isn't it? What parents should do for their adult children is still to perform their responsibilities and obligations as parents, to help them in their future life paths, and to give them some reasonable and valuable advice, prompting, and admonishment, so that they can avoid being deceived at work or when they come into contact with various kinds of people, events, and things, and avoid taking roundabout paths, meeting with unnecessary trouble, or even getting sued. Parents should stand from the perspective of a person with experience, and give their children some useful and valuable advice and points of reference. As for whether their children listen to them or not, that's their own business. What parents ought to do is just to fulfill their responsibilities. Parents cannot influence how much suffering their children will experience, how much pain they will endure, or how many blessings they will enjoy. If their children must endure some tribulations in this life, and they already teach them the things they need to be taught, but when something happens to them, they are still very willful, then they are supposed to suffer, that is their fate, and they do not need to blame themselves, isn't that right? (Yes.) In some cases, people's marriages don't go well, they're not on good terms with their spouses, and they decide to get divorced, and after they get divorced, there are disputes over who will raise their children. The parents of those people hoped that everything would go well for them at their jobs, that they'd have happy, blissful marriages, and that no rifts or problems would emerge, but in the end, nothing went the way they wanted it to. Consequently, these parents worry about their children, crying, complaining to their neighbors about it, and helping their sons or daughters to find lawyers to fight for custody of their own children. There are even some parents who see that their daughters have been wronged, and stand up to fight on their behalf, going to their husbands' houses and shouting, "Why did you wrong my daughter like this? I'm not going to let this insult slide!" They even bring their extended families with them to vent anger on their daughters' behalf, and this comes to blows. As a result, they cause a huge scene. If the whole family hadn't come to make a fuss, and the tensions between the husband and wife had slowly defused, then after they had calmed down, they probably wouldn't have gotten divorced. But, because these parents made a fuss, it turned into a huge thing; their broken marriage couldn't be fixed, and a rift formed. In the end, they made so much of a fuss that their children's marriages didn't go smoothly, and these parents had to worry about this too. Tell Me, was this worth the trouble? What was the use of them getting involved in those things? Whether it has to do with their children's marriages or work, parents all think that they have a great responsibility: "I have to get involved, I need to track and observe this matter closely." They observe whether their children's marriages are happy or not, whether there are any problems in terms of their affections, and whether their sons or sons-in-law are having affairs. Some parents meddle with, criticize, or even come up with schemes regarding

various aspects of their children's lives in order to satisfy an expectation they have for their children's marriages or various other things, and this seriously impacts the normal order of their children's lives and work. Aren't parents like this detestable? (Yes.) There are even some parents who get involved in their children's lifestyles and life habits, and when they have nothing to do, they go to their children's houses to see how their daughters-in-law are doing, to check whether they're secretly sending gifts or money to their own families, or if they're hooking up with other men. Their children find these actions really repulsive and loathsome. If parents go on like this, their children will feel that it is loathsome and repulsive, so it is very clear that these actions are irrational. Of course, if we look at this from another perspective, these actions are also immoral and lacking in humanity. No matter what kind of expectations parents have for their children, after they reach adulthood parents should not get involved in their living or work circles, or their families, and even less should they try to interfere with or control the different aspects of their lives. There are even some parents who really love money, and they say to their children: "To make more money quickly, you'll need to scale up your business. Look at so-and-so's kid, they expanded their business—they turned their little shop into a big one, and they turned that big shop into a franchise, and now their parents get to eat and drink well along with them. You have to earn more money. Earn more money and open more shops, then we can bask in your glory together." Regardless of their children's difficulties or wishes, they just want to satisfy their own preferences and selfish desires; they just want to use their children to earn a lot of money in order to achieve their goal of enjoying fleshly pleasures. These are all things that parents shouldn't do. These things are immoral and lacking in humanity, and such parents are not fulfilling their responsibilities. This is not the attitude that parents should have toward their adult children. Instead, these parents are taking advantage of their seniority, interfering with their adult children's lives, work, marriages, and so on, under the guise of showing responsibility toward their children. Regardless of how capable one's adult children are, what their caliber is like, what kind of status they have in society, or what their income may be, this is the fate that God has set for them—it is under God's sovereignty. Parents should not interfere with what kind of lives their children live, unless they are not walking the right path, or they are breaking the law, in which case parents should discipline them strictly. But, under normal circumstances, where these adults are in their right minds, and have the ability to live and survive independently, their parents should back off, because their children are already adults. If their children have just become adults, and they are 20 or 21 years old, and they still don't know about the various complex situations in society, or how to conduct themselves in life, and they don't understand how to socialize, and they have poor survival skills, then these parents should give them some appropriate assistance, enabling them to gradually transition to the point where they can live independently. This is called fulfilling their responsibility. But as soon as they have put their children on the right track, and their children have the ability to survive

independently, these parents should withdraw. They shouldn't continue to treat their children as though they are not yet adults, or as though they are mentally deficient. They shouldn't have any unrealistic expectations of their children, or interfere with their children's private lives or their attitudes, viewpoints, and actions regarding work, family, marriage, people, and events, under the guise of having any expectations for them. If they do any of those things, they are not fulfilling their responsibilities.

When their sons and daughters are able to survive independently, what parents ought to do is simply to show them concern and the necessary care when it comes to their work, lives, and families, or to give them some appropriate assistance in situations where they cannot accomplish or take care of something using their own abilities. For example, say that your son or daughter has a baby, and both they and their spouse are very busy with work. The baby is still very little, and sometimes there is no one to take care of it. Under these circumstances, you can help your child to take care of their baby. This is the responsibility of a parent, because they are your flesh and blood after all, and it would be safer for you to take care of their baby than for someone else to do it. If your child trusts you to take care of their baby, then you should take care of it. If they don't feel at ease entrusting the baby to you and don't want you to take care of it, or if they won't let you take care of it because they cherish you, because they are being considerate of you, and they fear that you're not physically well enough to do it, then you shouldn't find fault with this. There are even some sons and daughters who simply don't trust their parents, they think that their parents don't have the ability to care for a baby, that they only know how to spoil little children, and not how to educate them, and that they are not careful when it comes to the food they eat. If your son or daughter doesn't trust you, and doesn't want you to take care of their baby, that's even better, then you have some more free time. This is called mutual consent: Neither parent nor child interferes with the other, and they show consideration for one another at the same time. When their children need help, solicitude, and to be taken care of, parents just need to provide them with the appropriate and necessary concern, care, and financial support on an emotional level or in other respects. For example, suppose that a parent has some savings, or they are good at their job and have a source of income. When their children need some money, they can help them a little if they are able to. If they are not able to, then it is not necessary for them to give up all of their possessions or to borrow money from a loan shark to help their children. They just need to do whatever is in the scope of their abilities to fulfill the responsibilities they have under the framework of kinship. There is no need for them to sell everything they have, or to sell their kidneys or blood, or to work themselves to death to help their children. Your life belongs to you, it was given to you by God, and you have your own missions. You possess this life so that you can fulfill those missions. Your children also possess their lives so that they can finish their life paths and complete their missions in life, not so that they can show you filial piety. Therefore, no matter whether their children are adults or not, the lives of parents belong

only to the parents themselves, they do not belong to their children. Naturally, parents are not their children's free nannies or slaves. Regardless of what expectations parents have for their children, it is not necessary for them to let their children order them around arbitrarily without any compensation, or for them to become their children's servants, maids, or slaves. No matter what feelings you have for your children, you are still an independent person. You should not take responsibility for their adult lives as though it were completely right to do so, just because they are your children. There is no need to do this. They are adults; you have already fulfilled your responsibility to raise them. As for whether they'll live well or badly in the future, whether they'll be wealthy or poor, and whether they'll live happy or unhappy lives, that's their own business. These things have nothing to do with you. You, as a parent, have no obligation to change those things. If their lives are unhappy, you are not obliged to say: "You're unhappy—I'm going to think of ways to fix this, I'll sell everything I own, I'll use up all my life's energy to make you happy." It's not necessary to do this. You just need to fulfill your responsibilities, that's all. If you want to help them, you can ask them why they're unhappy, and assist them in making sense of the problem on a theoretical and psychological level. If they accept your help, that's even better. If they don't, you just need to fulfill your responsibilities as a parent, and that's it. If your children want to suffer, then that's their business. There's no need for you to worry or to feel upset about this, or to not be able to eat properly or sleep properly. To do so would be excessive. Why would it be excessive? Because they're adults. They should learn to manage everything they encounter in their lives themselves. If you feel concern for them, that's just affection; if you don't feel concern for them, then it doesn't mean that you're heartless, or that you haven't fulfilled your responsibilities. They are adults, and adults must face adult problems and handle everything that adults ought to. They should not rely on their parents in all things. Of course, parents should not place responsibility on themselves for whether things go well with their children's jobs, careers, families, or marriages after they reach adulthood. You can feel concern about these things, and you can inquire about them, but you do not need to take complete charge of them, chaining your children to your side, taking them with you wherever you go, watching them wherever you go, and thinking about them: "Are they eating well today? Are they happy? Is their work going well? Does their boss appreciate them? Does their spouse love them? Are their children obedient? Do their children get good grades?" What do these things have to do with you? Your children can solve their own problems, you don't need to get involved. Why do I ask what these things have to do with you? By this, I mean that those things have nothing to do with you. You have fulfilled your responsibilities to your children, you have raised them into adults, so you should back off. Once you do, it won't mean that you'll have nothing to do. There are still so many things that you ought to do. When it comes to the missions that you need to complete in this life, aside from raising your children into adults, you also have other missions to complete. Aside from being a parent to your children, you are a created

being. You should come before God, and accept your duty from Him. What is your duty? Have you completed it? Have you dedicated yourself to it? Have you embarked on the path to salvation? These are the things that you should think about. As for where your children will go next after becoming adults, how their lives will be, what their circumstances will be like, if they'll feel happy and cheerful, these things have nothing to do with you. Your children are already independent, both formally and mentally. You should let them be independent, you should let go, and you shouldn't try to control them. Whether in terms of formality, or relationships of affection or fleshly kinship, you have already fulfilled your responsibilities, and there is no longer any relationship between you and your children. There is no relationship between their missions and your missions, and there is no relationship between the life paths that they walk and your expectations. Your expectations for them and your responsibilities toward them have come to an end. Naturally, you shouldn't have expectations for them. They are them, and you are you. If your children don't get married, then in terms of your fates and missions, you are completely unconnected and independent individuals. If they do get married and start families, then your families are completely unconnected families. Your children have their living habits and lifestyles, they have their needs regarding their quality of life, and you have your living habits, and your needs regarding your quality of life. You have your path in life and they have their paths in life. You have your missions, and they have their missions. Of course, you have your faith, and they have theirs. If their faith lies in money, prestige, and profit, then you are completely different people. If they have the same faith as you, if they pursue the truth and walk the path of salvation, then you are naturally still completely different individuals. You are you, and they are them. You should not intervene when it comes to the paths that they walk. You can support, help, and provide for them, you can remind and exhort them, but you do not need to interfere or get involved. No one can determine what kind of path another person will walk, what kind of person they will live to be, or what kind of pursuits they will have. Think about it, on what basis am I sitting here, chatting to you and speaking to you about all of these things? On the basis of your willingness to listen. I am speaking because you are willing to listen to My earnest exhortations. If you weren't willing to listen, or you left, I wouldn't speak anymore. The number of words I speak depends on whether or not you are willing to listen to them and whether you are willing to spend your time and energy to do so. If you were to say, "I don't understand what You're saying, could You go into more detail?" then I'd do My best to go into more detail, to enable you to understand and enter into My words. When I've put you onto the right track, brought you before God and the truth, and enabled you to understand the truth and to follow God's way, My task will be complete. However, when it comes to whether you will be willing to practice My words after you hear them, or what kind of path you will walk, what kind of life you will choose, or what you will pursue, these things are none of My business. If you were to say, "I have a question regarding that aspect of the truth, I want to seek on it," then I'd patiently answer

your question. If you never wished to seek the truth, would I deal with you because of that? I wouldn't. I wouldn't force you to seek the truth, or mock and make fun of you, and I certainly wouldn't treat you with a cold attitude. I would act as I had before. If you make a mistake in your duty or deliberately cause a disruption or a disturbance, I have My principles and My methods for handling you. You may, however, say: "I don't want to hear You speak about these things, and I'm not willing to accept those views of Yours. I'm going to keep performing my duty the way I always have." Then you must not violate the principles or the administrative decrees. If you do violate the administrative decrees, then I will handle you. But if you do not violate the administrative decrees, and you can behave yourself properly while living the church life, I won't interfere with you, even if you do not pursue the truth. I won't interfere when it comes to your personal life, what you want to eat, wear, or which people you want to interact with. I grant you freedom in these regards. Why is that? I've spoken clearly to you about all of the principles and content regarding these matters. The rest depends on your own free choices. The path that you choose to walk depends on what kind of person you are, this is obvious. If you are not a person that loves the truth, who could force you to love it? Ultimately, every person will take responsibility for the path that they walk, and the results that they come to bear. I do not need to take responsibility for this. If you pursue the truth, you do so voluntarily. If you don't pursue the truth, you also do so voluntarily—no one is holding you back. If you do pursue the truth, no one will be encouraging you and you will not be given special grace or material blessings. I am just performing and fulfilling My responsibilities, telling you all the truths that you should understand and need to enter into. As for how you live your lives in private, I've never inquired about this, or snooped into it. This is the attitude that I possess. Parents should also act like this toward their children. Adults have the ability to tell right from wrong. It is their business whether they choose right or wrong, whether they choose black or white, whether they choose positive things or negative things—this depends on their inner needs. If a person's essence is evil, they won't choose positive things. If a person strives to be good, and they possess humanity, the awareness of conscience, and a sense of shame, they will choose positive things; even if they are a bit slow to do so, eventually they will embark on the right path. This is inevitable. Therefore, parents should have this kind of attitude toward their children, and not interfere with their children's choices. The requirements that some parents have for their children are: "Our children ought to embark on the right path, they should believe in God, abandon the secular world, and give up their jobs. Otherwise, when we enter the kingdom, they won't be able to get in, and we'll be separated from them. It would be so wonderful if our whole family could enter the kingdom together! We could be together in heaven, as we are here on earth. While we're in the kingdom, we mustn't leave one another, we must stay together throughout the ages!" Then, it turns out that their children do not believe in God, and that they instead pursue worldly things, and strive to earn a lot of money and to become very wealthy; they wear whatever is

fashionable, they do and talk about whatever is trendy, and they do not fulfill their parents' wishes. As a result, these parents feel upset, they pray and fast because of this, fasting for a week, 10 days, or a fortnight, and put in a lot of effort for the sake of their children in this matter. They are often so hungry that they feel dizzy, and they often pray before God while weeping. But, no matter how they pray, or how much effort they put in, their children are unmoved, and do not know to wake up. The more their children refuse to believe, the more these parents think: "Oh no, I've failed my children, I've let them down. I haven't been able to spread the gospel to them, and I haven't brought them with me onto the path of salvation. Those fools—it's the path to salvation!" They are not fools; they just do not have this need. It is these parents who are fools, for trying to force their children onto this path, isn't it? If their children had this need, would it be necessary for these parents to speak about these things? Their children would come to believe by themselves. These parents always think: "I've let my children down. I encouraged them to go to college from a young age, and since they went to college, they haven't turned back. They won't stop pursuing worldly things, and whenever they come back, they just talk about work, making money, about who got a promotion or bought a car, who married rich, who went to Europe to do advanced studies or to be an exchange student, and say how great other people's lives are going. Whenever they come home, they talk about those things, and I don't want to hear them, but there's nothing I can do about it. No matter what I say to try and get them to believe in God, they still won't listen." Consequently, they fall out with their children. Whenever they see their children, their faces darken; whenever they talk to their children, their expressions sour. Some children don't know what to do, and they think: "I don't know what's wrong with my parents. If I don't believe in God, then I just don't believe in Him. Why do they always treat me with this attitude? I thought that the more someone believes in God, the better person they'd become. How can believers in God have so little affection for their families?" These parents are so worried about their children that they're about to burst a blood vessel, and they say: "They're not my children! I'm cutting off ties with them, I'm disowning them!" They say that, but that's not really how they feel. Aren't parents like this foolish? (Yes.) They always want to control and take hold of everything, they always wish to take hold of their children's futures, their faith, and the paths that they walk. This is so foolish! It's not appropriate. In particular, there are some children who pursue worldly things, who are promoted to managerial positions and make a lot of money. They bring huge piles of ginseng, gold earrings, and gold necklaces home to their parents as gifts, and their parents say: "I don't want these things, I just hope that you'll be healthy, and follow me in believing in God. Believing in God is such a wonderful thing!" And their children say: "Don't you start with that. I've been promoted, and you haven't even done anything to congratulate me. When other people's parents hear that their children have been promoted, they break out the champagne, they go out for big meals, but when I buy you necklaces and earrings, you're not happy. In what way have I let you down? You're just

sulking because I don't believe in God." Is it right for these parents to sulk like this? People have different pursuits, they walk different paths, and they choose these paths themselves. Parents should approach this matter correctly. If your children do not acknowledge God's existence, you should not demand that they believe in God—forcing things never works. If they do not want to believe in God, and they are not that kind of person, then the more you mention it, the more they will annoy you, and you will annoy them too—you will both feel annoyed. But you both feeling annoyed is not what's important—what's most important is that God will loathe you, and He will say that your affections are too strong. Since you are able to pay such great prices just because your children don't believe in God, and you are so upset about them pursuing worldly things, if God were to take them away one day, what would you do then? Would you complain about God? If, in your heart, your children are everything to you, if they are your future, your hope, and your life, then are you still someone who believes in God? Won't God loathe you acting like this? The way you're acting is too unwise, incompatible with the principles, and God will not be satisfied with it. Therefore, if you are wise, you will not do these kinds of things. If your children don't believe, then you should let this go. You've made all of the arguments that you ought to, and you've said what you're supposed to say, so let them make their own choices. Keep maintaining the relationship you had with your children before. If they wish to show you filial piety, if they want to cherish and care for you, you do not need to reject this. If they want to take you on a trip to Europe, but it hinders the performance of your duty, and you don't want to go, then don't go. But if you do want to go, and you have the time, then go. There's nothing wrong with expanding your horizons. Your hands will not be dirtied by this, and God will not condemn it. If your children buy some nice things for you, some nice food or clothes, and you think that it's appropriate for a saint to wear or use them, then enjoy them, and consider them grace from God. If you despise those things, if you do not enjoy them, if you think that they are troublesome and disgusting, and if you are not willing to enjoy them, you can refuse them, saying: "I'm just happy to see you, you don't need to bring me gifts or spend money on me, I don't need those things. I just want you to be safe and happy." Isn't that wonderful? If you say these words, and you believe these things in your heart, if you really don't require your children to provide you with any material comforts, or to help you to bask in their light, then your children will admire you, won't they? As for any difficulties they face in their work or lives, do your best to help them whenever you can. If helping them would impact your performance of your duty, you can refuse—that is your right. Because you no longer owe them anything, because you no longer have any responsibilities toward them, and they are already independent adults, they can manage their own lives. You do not need to serve them unconditionally or at all times. If they ask for your help, and you are not willing to assist them, or if doing so will hinder your performance of your duty, you can say no. That is your right. Though you have a blood tie to them, and you are their parent, this is only a relationship of formality, blood, and

affection—in terms of your responsibilities, you have already been freed from the relationship with them. So, if parents are wise, they won't have any expectations, requirements, or standards for their children after they reach adulthood, and they will not require that their children act in a certain way or that they do certain things from the perspective or position of a parent, because their children are already independent. When your children are independent it means that you've fulfilled all your responsibilities to them. So, no matter what you do for your children when the circumstances permit, whether you show them solicitude or care, it is merely affection, and it is superfluous. Or if your children ask you to do something, that is also superfluous, it is not something you are duty-bound to do. You should understand this. Are these things clear? (Yes.)

Suppose that one of you were to say: "I can never let go of my children. They were born with weak constitutions, and they're innately cowardly and timid. They also don't have very good caliber and they're always bullied by other people. I can't let go of them." You not being able to let go of your children does not mean that you haven't finished fulfilling your responsibilities toward them, it is merely an effect of your feelings. You may say: "I'm always worried and thinking about whether my children have been eating well, or if they're having any stomach problems. If they don't eat meals at the proper times and keep ordering takeout food on a long-term basis, will they develop stomach problems? Will they get some kind of illness? And if they're sick, will there be anyone to take care of them, to show them love? Do their spouses show concern for them and take care of them?" Your worries simply arise from your feelings and the blood tie that you have with your children, but these are not your responsibilities. The responsibilities that God has imparted upon parents are just the responsibilities of raising and caring for their children before they reach adulthood. After their children become adults, parents no longer have any responsibilities toward them. This is looking at the responsibilities that parents should fulfill from the perspective of God's ordination. Do you understand this? (Yes.) No matter how strong your feelings are, or when your parental instincts kick in, this is not fulfilling your responsibilities, it is merely the effect of your feelings. The effects of your feelings do not derive from the reason of humanity, or the principles that God has taught man, or man's submission to the truth, and they certainly do not derive from man's responsibilities, instead, they come from man's feelings—they are called feelings. There is just a little bit of parental love and kinship mixed in with this. Because they are your children, you worry about them constantly, wondering whether they are suffering out there, and whether they are being bullied. You wonder whether their work is going well, and whether they are eating their meals at the proper times. You wonder whether they have contracted an illness, and whether they will be able to afford their medical bills if they do get sick. You often think about these things, and they have nothing at all to do with your responsibilities as a parent. If you cannot let go of these concerns, it can only be said that you are living amid your feelings, and unable to extricate yourself from them. You just live amid your feelings, approaching your children according to your feelings,

rather than living by the definition of parental responsibilities given by God. You are not living according to God's words, you are just feeling, viewing, and handling all of these things according to your feelings. This means that you are not following God's way. This is obvious. Your parental responsibilities—as taught to you by God—ended the moment that your children reached adulthood. Isn't the method of practice that God taught you easy and simple? (It is.) If you practice according to God's words, you will not be engaging in pointless exercises, and you will be giving your children a certain amount of freedom, and a chance to develop themselves, without causing them any extra trouble or bother, or placing any extra burdens on them. And, since they are adults, doing so will allow them to face the world, their lives, and the various problems that they encounter in their daily lives and existences, with the perspective of an adult, an adult's independent methods for handling things and viewing things, and an adult's independent worldview. These are the freedoms and rights of your children, and even more so, they are the things that they should do as adults, and these things have nothing to do with you. If you always want to get involved with these things, then that's quite nauseating. If you always want to willfully insert yourself into these things and to interfere with them, then you will have cause a disturbance and destruction, and ultimately, not only will things turn out contrary to your wishes, even more so, you will make your children feel averse toward you, and your life will be quite tiring too. In the end, you will be full of grievances, and complain that your children are not filial, obedient, or considerate of you; you will complain that they are ungrateful, unappreciative, and uncaring ingrates. There are some rude and irrational parents who will also cry, make a fuss, and threaten to kill themselves, using any tricks that they can. This is even more disgusting, isn't it? (Yes.) If you are wise, you will allow things to take their natural course, living your life in a relaxed manner, and just fulfill your parental responsibilities. If you say that you want to care for your children and show them some concern for the sake of affection, then showing them the necessary concern is permissible. I am not saying that parents should just cut ties with their children as soon as the children become adults and the parents have fulfilled their responsibilities. Parents shouldn't completely neglect their adult children, they should not tell them to just go off by themselves, or ignore them no matter how great difficulties they face—even when those difficulties drive their children to the brink of death—or refuse to offer their children a hand when they need their parents. This is also wrong—this is extreme. When your children need to confide in you, you should lend them an ear, and after listening, you should ask them what they're thinking and what they intend to do. You can also give your own suggestions. If they have their own thoughts and plans, and they don't accept your suggestions, just say: "Alright. Since you've already made up your mind, whatever consequences come of this in the future will be yours alone to bear. This is your life. You have to walk and finish your own life path. No one else can take responsibility for your life. If you've made up your mind, then I'll support you. If you need money, I can give you a bit. If you need me to help you, I can

help you within the scope of my abilities. I'm your parent after all, so nothing more needs to be said. But if you say that you do not need my help or my money, and you just need me to lend you an ear, then that's even easier." Then you will have said what you had to say, they will have said what they had to say; all of their grievances will have been poured out, all of their anger will have been vented. They will wipe away their tears, they will go and do what they need to do, and you will have fulfilled your responsibilities as a parent. This is done for the sake of affection; this is called affection. And why is that? Because, as a parent, you do not have any malicious intentions toward your children. You will not harm them, plot against them, or mock them, and you certainly will not make fun of them for being weak and incompetent. Your children can cry, vent, and complain in front of you without restraint, as though they were little kids; they can be spoiled, sulky, or willful. However, after they are done venting their emotions and being sulky and willful, they must do what they ought to do, and handle whatever things lie before them. If they can achieve that without you doing anything for them or giving them any help, that's quite good, and you will have some more free time then, right? And since your children have said those things, you ought to have some self-awareness. Your children have grown up, they are independent. They just wanted to talk to you about that matter, they did not ask for your help. If you don't have sense, you might think: "This is a significant matter. You telling me about it shows that you respect me, so shouldn't I give you some counsel about it? Shouldn't I help you to make a decision?" This is called overestimating your own capabilities. Your children were simply talking to you about that matter, but you're really treating yourself like an important figure. This isn't appropriate. Your children told you about that matter because you're their parent, and they respect and trust you. In reality, they've had their own ideas about it for some time, but now you keep wanting to intervene in it. That's not appropriate. Your children trust you, and you must be worthy of that trust. You should respect their decision, and not get involved in the matter or interfere with it. If they want you to get involved, you can do so. And suppose that, when you do get involved, you realize: "Oh, this is so much trouble! This will impact my performance of my duty. I really can't get involved in this; as a believer in God, I can't do these things." Then you should hurry to disengage from that matter. Say that they still want you to intervene, and you think: "I'm not going to intervene. You should handle this yourself. It was kind enough of me to listen to you vent this grievance and all this garbage. I've already fulfilled my parental responsibilities. I absolutely cannot intervene in this matter. That's the fire pit, and I'm not going to jump into it. If you want to, go ahead and jump in yourself." Isn't this appropriate? This is called having a stance. You should never let go of the principles or your stance. These are the things that parents ought to do. Have you understood this? Are these things easy to accomplish? (Yes.) They are, in fact, easy to accomplish, but if you always act according to your feelings, and if you're always trapped amid your feelings, it will be very difficult for you to achieve those things. You will feel that it is very heart-wrenching to do so, that you cannot abandon this matter,

and that you cannot shoulder it either, or move forward or backward. What word can be used to describe this? “Stuck.” You will get stuck there. You wish to listen to God’s words and practice the truth, but you cannot let go of your feelings; you love your children dearly, but feel that it is not appropriate to do so, that it goes against God’s teachings and God’s words—you’re in trouble. You must make a choice. You can either let go of your expectations for your offspring, and no longer try to manage your children, letting them fly free instead, because they are independent adults, or you can follow them. You must choose one of those two options. If you choose to follow the way of God and to listen to God’s words, and you let go of your worries and feelings for your children, then you should do what a parent ought to, hold firm to your stance and your principles, and refrain from doing things that God finds loathsome and disgusting. Can you do this? (Yes.) In reality, it is easy to do these things. As soon as you let go of the bit of affection you harbor, you can accomplish these things. The simplest method is to not get involved with your children’s lives and to just let them do what they want to do. If they want to talk to you about their difficulties, listen to them. It’s enough for you to just know that’s how things are. After they finish speaking, tell them: “I hear you. Is there anything else you want to tell me? If you want something to eat, I can cook for you. If you don’t, then you can head home. If you need money, I can give you a little. If you need some help, I’ll do what I can. If I can’t help, you’ll have to find a solution yourself.” If they insist that you help them, you can say: “We’ve already fulfilled our responsibilities to you. We only have these abilities, you can see that—we’re not as skilled as you are. If you want to seek success in the world, that’s your own business, don’t try to get us involved in it. We’re already quite old, and that time has already passed for us. Our parental responsibility was just to raise you into an adult. As for what kind of path you take, and how you torment yourself, leave us out of these matters. We’re not going to torment ourselves along with you. We have already completed our mission with respect to you. We have our own matters, our own ways of living, and our own missions. Our missions are not about doing things for you, and we do not need your help to complete them. We will complete our missions by ourselves. Don’t ask us to get involved with your daily life or your existence. Those have nothing to do with us.” Express yourself clearly, and that will be the end of the matter; you can then get in touch, communicate, and catch up with them as needed. It’s just that simple! What are the benefits of acting in this way? (It makes life very easy.) At the very least, you will have handled the matter of fleshly, familial love appropriately and properly. Your mental and spiritual worlds will be at ease, you won’t be making any needless sacrifices, or paying any extra prices; you will be submitting amid God’s orchestrations and arrangements, and letting Him handle all of these things. You will be fulfilling every one of the responsibilities that people ought to, and you will not be doing any of the things that people must not do. You will not be stretching out a hand to get involved in things that people must not do, and you will be living as God tells you to. The way that God tells people to live is the best path, it can enable them to live very relaxed,

happy, joyous, and peaceful lives. But, most importantly, not only will living in this way leave you with more free time and energy to perform your duty well, and to show devotion to your duty, you will also have more energy and time to put in effort with regard to the truth. By contrast, if your energy and time are entangled with and occupied by your feelings, your flesh, your children, and your love for your family, then you won't have any extra energy to pursue the truth. Isn't that true? (It is.)

When people engage in careers in the world, all they think about is pursuing things like worldly trends, prestige and profit, and fleshly enjoyment. What's the implication of this? It is that your energy, time, and youth are all occupied and consumed by these things. Are they meaningful? What will you gain from them in the end? Even if you gain prestige and profit, it will still be hollow. What about if you change your way of living? If your time, energy, and mind are only occupied by the truth and the principles, and if you only think about positive things, like how to perform your duty well, and how to come before God, and if you expend your energy and time for these positive things, then what you gain will be different. What you gain will be the most substantive benefits. You will know how to live, how to comport yourself, how to face every kind of person, event, and thing. Once you know how to face every kind of person, event, and thing, to a large extent this will enable you to naturally submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements. When you can naturally submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements, then without even realizing it, you will become the kind of person that God accepts and loves. Think about it, isn't that a good thing? Perhaps you do not know this yet, but in the process of you living your life, and of you accepting God's words and the truth principles, you will imperceptibly come to live, to view people and things, and to comport yourself and act according to God's words. This means that you will unconsciously submit to God's words, and obey and satisfy His requirements. Then you will have already become the kind of person that God accepts, trusts, and loves, without you even knowing it. Isn't that great? (It is.) Therefore, if you expend your energy and time to pursue the truth and to perform your duty well, what you gain in the end will be the most valuable things. Conversely, if you are always living for the sake of your feelings, the flesh, your children, your work, and prestige and profit, if you are always entangled in these things, what will you gain in the end? Just a void. You won't gain anything at all, and you will stray further and further from God, and eventually be thoroughly despised and rejected by God. Then, your life will be over, and you will have lost your chance at salvation. Therefore, parents should let go of all their emotional worries, attachments, and entanglements regarding their adult children, regardless of what expectations they have for them. They shouldn't place any expectations on their children on an emotional level from the status or position of a parent. If you are able to accomplish these things, that's wonderful! At the very least, you will have fulfilled your parental responsibilities, and you will be an adequate person—who just so happens to be a parent—in the eyes of God. No matter what human perspective you view this from, there are principles for what people ought to do and the

perspective and stance that they ought to adopt, and God has standards regarding these things, isn't that right? (Yes.) Let's conclude our fellowship here on the expectations that parents have for their offspring and the principles that they ought to practice when their children reach adulthood. Goodbye!

May 21, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (19)

Do you usually relate the hymns you listen to with your own states and experiences? Do you listen to and ponder attentively certain words and subject matter which relate to your experiences and understanding, or which you are able to attain? (Sometimes, God, when going through certain things, I'll relate the hymns I hear to my own situation, while at other times I am just going through the motions.) Much of the time, you're just going through the motions, aren't you? If 95 percent of the time that you're listening to hymns you're just going through the motions, does such listening have any significance? What is the purpose of listening to hymns? At the very least, it allows people to calm down, to withdraw their hearts from various complicated matters and thoughts, and to be quiet before God, coming before God's words to carefully listen to and ponder over every sentence and paragraph. Are you now too busy with tasks that you lack the time to listen and the energy to ponder, or do you simply not know how to pray-read God's words, ponder the truth, and quiet yourselves before God? You just go about busily fulfilling your duty every day; even though it may be tough and tiring, you believe that every day is full, and you don't feel empty or spiritually helpless. You feel that the day has not been wasted; it has value. Living aimlessly every day is called muddling along. Isn't that right? (Yes.) Tell Me, if things continue like this, in another three, five, eight, or ten years, will you have anything significant to show for it? (No.) If you don't meet with any special incidents or any special circumstances arranged by God, if there is no personal guidance and leadership from the Above, to give you gatherings and fellowship, and to dissect the essence of various people, events, and things, taking you by the hand and teaching you, then a lot of the time you are actually wasting each day, your progress is slow, and you gain virtually nothing in your life entry. So, whenever something happens, your ability to discern does not increase, your experience and understanding of the truth do not progress, and you also fail to experience and progress in your faith in and submission to God. When faced with something the next time, you still don't know how to handle it according to the truth principles. In the process of fulfilling your duty and experiencing various things, you still cannot actively seek principles and practice according to the truth principles. This is wasting time. What are the ultimate consequences that wasting time leads to? Your time and energy are wasted, and the cost of your painstaking efforts is in vain. The path you have walked all these years is characterized as Paul's path. If you have been a leader or worker for many years but your life entry is shallow, your stature is small, and you do not understand any truth principles, then you are ill-suited for the role and unable to complete a task independently. Leaders and workers are unsuitable for their roles, and the ordinary brothers and sisters cannot live the church life independently, cannot eat and drink God's words independently, do not know how to experience God's work, and have no life entry. If no one supervises or guides them, they could go astray; if leaders and workers are not supervised or directed in their work, they

could deviate, establish an independent kingdom, be deceived by antichrists, and even follow antichrists without realizing it, still thinking that they are expending themselves for God. Isn't this pitiful? (It is.) Your current situation is exactly like this: both poor and pitiful. When faced with situations, you are helpless and have no way to go. When it comes to actual problems and the actual content of work, you don't know how to act or what to do; everything is tangled and you have no clue how to work them out. You feel quite happy with being so busy every day, physically you are exhausted, and mentally you feel a lot of pressure, but the results of your work are not that good. The principles of every truth and the paths of practice have all been clearly made known to you through the work arrangements of God's house, but you have no path in your work, you can't find the principles, you get into a muddle when faced with situations, not knowing how to act, and all your work is a mess. Is this not a pitiful condition? (Yes.) This is indeed a pitiful condition.

Some people say, "I've believed in God for over ten years; I'm a seasoned believer." Some say, "I've believed in God for twenty years." Others say, "What's twenty years of belief? I've believed in God for over thirty years." You have believed in God for quite a few years, and some of you have even served as leaders or workers for many years and have a good amount of experience. But how's your life entry going? How well can you grasp truth principles? You've served as a leader or worker for many years and gained some experience in your work, but when faced with all kinds of tasks, people, and things, will you base your practice on truth principles? Will you uphold God's name? Will you protect the interests of God's house? Will you safeguard God's work? Can you stand firm in your testimony? When faced with disruptions and disturbances to the church's work brought about by antichrists and evildoers, will you have the confidence and strength to fight against them? Can you protect God's chosen people and uphold the work of God's house, defending the interests of God's house and His name from being disgraced? Can you do this? From what I see, you cannot do it, nor have you done it. Every day you're quite busy—what have you been busy with? All these years you've sacrificed your family and career, endured suffering, paid the price, and invested a lot of effort, but you've gained little. Some leaders and workers have even faced similar events, people, and circumstances many times, yet they continue to make the same mistakes, leaving the same transgressions in their wake. Doesn't this show a lack of growth in their lives? Doesn't it mean they haven't gained the truth? (Yes.) Doesn't this show that they're still being controlled by Satan under its dark power and haven't attained salvation? (Yes.) When all kinds of different events arise and unfold around you in the church at different times, you're powerless to do anything. Particularly when faced with antichrists and evildoers causing disruptions and disturbances in the church's work, you don't know how to handle it. You just let things slide, or at best, you become angry and deal with those causing the disturbance, but the problem remains unresolved, and you have no alternative plan of action. Some even think, "I gave it all my strength and all my

heart—didn't God say we should give both these things? I've given my all; if there are still no results, it's not my fault. People are just too wicked: Even when you fellowship about the truth with them, they don't listen." You say you gave all your strength and all your heart, but the work didn't achieve any results. You didn't uphold the church's work or protect the interests of God's house, and you let evildoers take control of the church. You allowed Satan to run rampant and shame God's name, while you watched from the side lines, unable to do anything, incapable of handling anything even with the authority you had. You couldn't stand firm in your testimony to God, yet you think you understood the truth and gave all your heart and strength. Is this what it means to be a good steward? (No, it isn't.) When all kinds of evildoers and nonbelievers come out and play various roles as devils and Satans, going against work arrangements and doing something entirely different, lying and deceiving God's house; when they disturb and disrupt God's work, doing things that bring shame to the name of God and tarnish God's house, the church, you do nothing but get angry when you see it, yet you can't stand up to uphold justice, expose the evildoers, uphold the church's work, address and handle these evildoers, and keep them from disturbing the church's work and tarnishing God's house, the church. By not doing these things, you have failed to bear witness. Some people say, "I don't dare do these things, I'm afraid that if I handle too many people, I might anger them, and if they gang up on me to punish me and remove me from office, what will I do?" Tell Me, are they cowardly and timid, do they not have the truth and cannot distinguish people or see through Satan's disturbance, or are they disloyal in their fulfillment of duty, just trying to protect themselves? What is the real issue here? Have you ever thought about this? If you are naturally timid, fragile, cowardly, and fearful; yet, after so many years of believing in God, based on an understanding of certain truths, you develop genuine faith in God, won't you be able to overcome some of your human weakness, timidity, and fragility, and no longer be afraid of evildoers? (Yes.) Then what is the root of your inability to handle and address evildoers? Is it that your humanity is inherently cowardly, timid, and fearful? This is neither the root cause nor the essence of the problem. The essence of the problem is that people are not loyal to God; they protect themselves, their personal safety, their reputation, their status, and their way out. Their disloyalty is manifested in how they always protect themselves, retreating like a turtle into its shell whenever they face anything, and waiting until it passes before sticking their heads back out again. No matter what they meet with, they are always walking on eggshells, have a lot of anxiety, worry, and apprehension, and are unable to stand and defend the work of the church. What is the problem here? Isn't it a lack of faith? You have no real faith in God, you do not believe that God is sovereign over all things, and you do not believe that your life, your everything is in God's hands. You do not believe what God says, "Without God's permission, Satan does not dare to move a single hair on your body." You rely on your own eyes and judge the facts, you judge things based on your own calculations, always protecting yourself. You do not believe that a person's

fate is in God's hands; you are afraid of Satan, afraid of evil forces and evil people. Is this not a lack of genuine faith in God? (Yes.) Why is there no real faith in God? Is it because people's experiences are too shallow and they cannot see through these things, or is it because they understand too little of the truth? What is the reason? Does it have something to do with people's corrupt dispositions? Is it because people are too cunning? (Yes.) No matter how many things they experience, no matter how many facts are placed in front of them, they don't believe that this is the work of God, or that a person's fate is in God's hands. This is one aspect. Another mortal issue is that people care too much about themselves. They are not willing to pay any price or make any sacrifice for God, for His work, for the interests of God's house, for His name, or for His glory. They are not willing to do anything that involves even the slightest danger. People care too much about themselves! Because of their fear of death, of humiliation, of being trapped by evildoers, and of falling into any kind of predicament, people go to great lengths to preserve their own flesh, striving not to let themselves enter any dangerous situations. In one respect, this behavior shows that people are all too cunning, while in another, it reveals their self-preservation and selfishness. You are unwilling to give yourself over to God, and when you say you are willing to expend yourself for God, it's nothing more than a desire. When it comes to actually coming forward and bearing witness to God, fighting against Satan, and facing danger, death, and various difficulties and hardships, you are no longer willing. Your little desire crumbles, and you do everything possible to protect yourself first, afterward doing some superficial work that you have to do, work that can be arranged on down the line. A person's mind is still more agile than that of a machine: They know how to adapt, they know when they encounter situations which actions contribute to their self-interests and which do not, and they are quick to apply every method at their disposal. Consequently, whenever you face certain things, your slight trust in God is unable to stand firm. You act cunningly with God, engage in tactics against Him, and play tricks, and this reveals your lack of genuine faith in God. You think God is untrustworthy, that He may not be able to protect you or ensure your safety, and that God might even let you die. You feel that God is unreliable, and that only by relying on yourself can you be sure. What happens in the end? No matter what circumstances or matters you face, you approach them using these methods, tactics, and strategies, and you are unable to stand firm in your testimony to God. No matter the circumstances, you are unable to be a qualified leader or worker, unable to exhibit the qualities or actions of a steward, and unable to display full loyalty, thus losing your testimony. Regardless of how many matters you face, you are unable to rely on your faith in God to execute loyalty and your responsibility. Consequently, the final result is that you gain nothing. In every circumstance that God has orchestrated for you, and when you have battled against Satan, your choice has always been to withdraw and escape. You haven't followed the trajectory God has indicated or set for you to experience. So, in the midst of this battle, you miss out on the truth, understanding, and

experiences you should have gained. Every time you find yourself in circumstances orchestrated by God, you go through them in the same manner, and end them all the same way. In the end, the doctrine and lessons you take away are the same. You do not have any genuine understanding, you have merely absorbed a few experiences and lessons, such as: “I shouldn’t do this in the future. When I meet with similar situations I should be cautious about that, I should remind myself of this, I should be careful with that type of person, avoid this type, and be on my guard against that type.” That’s all. What is it that you’ve gained? Is it savviness and insight, or experience and lessons? If what you gain has nothing to do with the truth, then you have gained nothing, nothing that you really ought to have gained. Thus, in circumstances orchestrated by God, you have disappointed Him; you didn’t obtain what He intended for you, so you have surely let God down. In this trial or circumstance orchestrated by God, you didn’t obtain the truth He wanted you to have. Your God-fearing heart hasn’t grown, the truths you should understand remain unclear, you still lack understanding in the areas where you need understanding about yourself, the lessons you should have absorbed haven’t been acquired, and the truth principles you ought to follow have eluded you. At the same time, your faith in God hasn’t grown either; it remains where it first started. You are marching in place. So, what has increased? Perhaps you now understand some doctrines you didn’t know before, or you’ve seen the ugly side of a certain type of person that you previously didn’t understand. But the smallest iota related to the truth remains to you unseen, uncomprehended, unrecognized, and unexperienced. As you continue in your work or in the fulfillment of duty, you still don’t understand or know the principles you should follow. This is very disappointing to God. At the very least, in this particular circumstance you haven’t increased the loyalty to God or the faith that should have inherently been increasing within you. You haven’t achieved either of the two, which is just pitiful! Some might say, “You claim I haven’t gained anything, but that’s not correct. At the very least, I’ve gained self-knowledge and an understanding of people, events, and things around me. I have a clearer understanding of humanity and myself.” Does understanding these things count as genuine progress? Even if you don’t believe in God, when you live to the age of forty or fifty you will be more or less familiar with these things. People with a little caliber or average caliber can achieve this; they can have an understanding of themselves, of the advantages and disadvantages, the strengths and weaknesses of their humanity, as well as what they are good at and what they are not. By the time they reach their forties or fifties, they should more or less have an understanding of the humanity of the various types of people they frequently interact with. They should know which types of people are suitable to interact with and which are not, which are suitable to associate with and which are not, which they should keep at a distance and which they should get close to—they are more or less able to understand all these things. If someone is muddleheaded, their caliber is too poor, they are an idiot, or they are mentally challenged, then they do not have this understanding. If you’ve

believed in God for many years, heard so much truth, and experienced so many different circumstances, and your only gain is in the realm of people's humanity, in discerning people or understanding some simple matters, can this be considered a genuine gain? (No, it cannot.) So, what is a genuine gain? It is related to your stature. If you gain something, then you progress, and you grow in stature; if you don't truly gain anything, your stature doesn't grow. So, what does this gain refer to? At the very least, it is related to the truth; more specifically, to truth principles. When you understand, can follow, and can practice the truth principles that should be followed while handling various matters and people, and these become your principles and standards for self-comportment, then this is a genuine gain. When these truth principles become the principles and criteria you ought to follow for self-comportment, they become a part of your life. When this aspect of the truth is wrought into you, it becomes your life, and that's when your life grows. If you have yet to grasp the truth principles related to these kinds of matters, and you still don't know how to handle them when you encounter them, then in this regard, you haven't gained the truth. Clearly, this aspect of the truth is not your life, and your life has not grown. Being skilled at speaking is useless—it's all doctrine anyway. Can you measure this? (Yes, I can.) Have you made progress during this time? (No, I haven't.) You've merely used your human will and intellect to summarize some experiences, like saying, "This time I learned what types of things I will no longer say or do, what things I will do more or less of, and what I definitely will not do." Is this a sign of growth in your life? (No, it isn't.) This is a sign that you seriously lack spiritual understanding. All you can do is summarize rules, words, and slogans, which have nothing to do with the truth. Isn't that what you're doing? (Yes.) Every time you experience something, after every significant event, you admonish yourself, saying, "Gosh, in the future I should do it like this or like that." But the next time a similar situation arises, it still ends in failure, and you get frustrated, saying, "Why am I like this?" You get angry with yourself, thinking you failed to meet your own expectations. Is this useful? It's not that you failed to meet your own expectations, or that you're foolish, or that the circumstances God orchestrated are wrong, and it's certainly not that God is treating people unfairly. It's because you're not pursuing or seeking the truth, you're not acting in accordance with God's words, and you're not listening to God's words. You are always bringing human will into it; you are your own master, and you do not let God's words take charge. You'd rather listen to other people than to God's words. Is this not the case? (Yes, it is.) Do you think that by accumulating some experiences and lessons from a single event or in a particular circumstance, you have made progress? If you have genuinely made progress, when God tests you next time, you will be able to defend God's name, protect the interests and the work of God's house, ensure that all the work runs smoothly, and that it does not suffer any disturbance or obstruction. You will ensure that God's name remains untarnished and unblemished, that the growth of your brothers' and sisters' lives suffers no losses, and that God's offerings will be protected. This means you have made

progress, you are suitable for use, and you possess life entry. Right now, you're still not there yet; though your brains are small, they are filled with a lot of things, and you are not simple. Although you may have the sincerity to expend yourself for God and a desire to let go of and abandon everything for Him, yet when faced with matters, you are unable to forsake your various cravings, intentions, and plans. The more God's house and God's work encounter various difficulties, the more you shrink back, the more invisible you become, and the less likely you are to stand up and take charge of that work, to safeguard the interests of God's house and the work of God. So, what happened to your sincerity to expend yourself for God? Why is that little bit of sincerity so fragile and vulnerable? What happened to your little bit of willingness to offer everything and abandon all of it for God? Why is it unable to stand firm? What makes it so vulnerable? What does this confirm? It confirms that you lack real stature, that your stature is pitifully small, and a little demon can easily confound you: With just a little bit of interruption, you would turn to follow this little demon. Even if you have some stature, it is limited to your experience with certain superficial matters unrelated to your own interests, and you are still barely able to protect the interests of God's house and do a few small things that you feel you can achieve and are within the purview of your abilities. When it truly comes to standing firm in your testimony, when the church faces a large crackdown and the disturbances of evildoers and antichrists, where are you? What are you doing? What are you thinking? This clearly illustrates the problem, doesn't it? If an antichrist, while performing their duty, deceives those above and below them and acts recklessly, disrupting and disturbing the church's work, squandering offerings, and tricking brothers and sisters into following them, and not only do you fail to discern them, curb their efforts, or report them, but you even accompany and help the antichrist achieve the results they wish for in doing all these things, then tell Me, what effect is there in your little resolve to truly expend yourself for God? Isn't this your true stature? When antichrists, evildoers, and all kinds of nonbelievers come to disturb and destroy the work of God's house, especially when they tarnish the church and disgrace God's name, what are you doing? Have you stood up to speak out in defense of the work of God's house? Have you stood up to curb their efforts or restrict them? Not only have you failed to stand up and stop them, you accompanied the antichrists in doing evil, aiding and abetting them, and acting as their tools and henchmen. Moreover, when someone writes a letter to inform about a problem with antichrists, you pigeonhole the letter and choose not to handle it. So, at this crucial moment, have your resolve and desire to abandon everything in order to sincerely expend yourself for God had any effect at all? If they have had no effect, then it is quite obvious that this so-called desire and resolve are not your true stature, they are not what you've gained from believing in God so many years. They cannot replace the truth; they are neither the truth nor life entry. They are not emblematic of a person having life, they are merely a kind of wishful thinking, a longing and a yearning that people have for something beautiful—they have nothing to do with the truth. Therefore,

you have to wake up and see your true stature clearly. Don't think that just because you have a little caliber, and have abandoned many things like education, career, family, marriage, and the prospects of the flesh, your stature is somehow great. Some people have even been leaders or workers ever since they laid a foundation in their initial faith in God. Over the years, they have accumulated certain experiences and lessons, and can preach a few words and doctrines. Because of this, they feel their stature is greater than others, that they have life entry, and are pillars and columns within God's house and the ones whom God is perfecting. This is incorrect. Don't think of yourselves as good—you are still far from it! You aren't even able to discern antichrists; you have no real stature. Although you've been serving as leaders or workers for many years, there still isn't an area where you can be suitable, you're unable to do much real work, and you can only be used reluctantly. You are not a person of great talent. If any of you have a spirit of working hard and enduring hardship, at most you are a workhorse. You are not suitable. Some people become leaders or workers simply because they are enthusiastic, because they have an educational foundation and possess a certain caliber. Moreover, some churches are unable to find the ideal person to be in charge, so these people are promoted as exceptions to the rule and become subjects of training. Among these individuals, some have gradually been replaced and cast out during the process of various types of people being exposed. Although some who have continued following till now still remain, they still cannot discern anything. They have only been able to remain because they have not done anything evil. Furthermore, it is completely due to work arrangements coming from the Above, along with direct guidance, oversight, inquiry, follow-up, monitoring, and pruning and dealing with, that they are able to do some work—this does not mean they are suitable individuals. It's because you often worship others, follow them, go astray, do wrong things, and are sent into tailspins of confusion by certain heresies and fallacies, losing your sense of direction and not knowing in whom you truly believe by the end. This is your actual stature. If I were to say that you have absolutely no life entry, that would be unfair to you. I can only say that the range of your experiences is too limited. You only have some entry after being pruned, dealt with, and seriously disciplined, but when it comes to things involving significant principles, especially when facing antichrists, false leaders causing deception and disturbances, you have nothing to show for yourselves, and you lack any testimony. In terms of life experiences and life entry, your experiences are too shallow, and you lack a genuine understanding of God. You still have nothing to show in this respect. When it comes to actual church work, you do not know how to fellowship about the truth and resolve problems; here you also have nothing to show. In these aspects, you have nothing to show for yourselves. So, you are not suitable for the roles of leader and worker. However, as ordinary believers, most of you have a little bit of life entry, though it is very slight and falls short of the truth reality. Whether you can withstand tests is yet to be observed. Only when major trials, significant temptations, or serious and direct

chastisement and judgment from God actually arise, can they test whether you have a genuine stature and truth reality, whether you can stand firm in your testimony, what the answers on your test paper will be, and whether you meet God's requirements—that's when your true stature will be revealed. For now, saying that you have stature is still premature. Regarding the role of leader and worker, you don't have any real stature. When you face matters, you become confused, and when confronted with disturbances from evildoers or antichrists, you are defeated. You can't complete any important tasks independently; you always need someone to oversee, guide, and cooperate with you to get the job done. In other words, you can't steer the ship. Whether you play the lead role or a supporting one, you can't take it on by yourselves or complete a task independently; you are hopelessly unable to finish a task well without oversight and concern from the Above. If, in the end, a review of your work shows that you've done well in all aspects, that you've put your heart into every part of your work, that you've done everything well and handled it all properly and in accordance with truth principles, and that you've worked based on a clear understanding of the truth and seeking truth principles, so that you are able to resolve issues and do your work well, then you are suitable. However, up to this point, judging by everything you've experienced, you are not suitable. The key issue with your suitability is that you can't complete your assigned tasks independently—this is one aspect. In another, if there is no oversight from the Above, you might lead people astray or cause them to abandon the right path. You cannot lead them before God or bring brothers and sisters in the church into the truth reality or onto the right track of faith in God, so that all God's chosen people can perform their duty. You can't achieve any of this. If there is a period of time without inquiry from the Above, there are always many deviations and flaws within the scope of work you are responsible for, as well as problems of every shape and size; and if the Above does not correct, oversee, or personally handle them, who knows how far these deviations will go or when they will stop. This is your true stature. That is why I'm saying you are quite unsuitable. Do you want to hear this? Doesn't hearing this make you feel negative? (God, it feels quite uncomfortable in our hearts, but what God is fellowshiping about is indeed a fact. We don't have the slightest bit of stature or truth reality. When antichrists appear, we won't be able to discern them.) I have to point these things out to you; otherwise, you'll feel wronged and mistreated all the time. You don't understand the truth; you only know how to talk about some words and doctrines. During gatherings, you usually don't even prepare a draft to speak doctrine anymore, and you no longer suffer from stage fright, and so you think you have stature. If you have stature then why aren't you suitable? Why can't you fellowship about the truth and address issues? You only know how to talk about words and doctrines to make your brothers and sisters approve of you. This doesn't satisfy God, and it doesn't make you suitable. Your ability to talk about these words and doctrines cannot resolve any actual problems. God arranges a small situation that exposes you, and it becomes clear how small your stature is, that you don't understand

the truth at all, and that you can't see through anything; and it exposes that you are poor, pitiful, blind, and ignorant. Isn't this the case? (Yes.) If you can accept these things, that's good; if you can't, take your time and think over them. Consider what I'm saying: Does it make sense, is it based on reality? Does it apply to you? Even if it does apply to you, don't become negative. Being negative won't help you resolve any problems. As a believer in God, if you want to perform your duty and be a leader or worker, then you can't quit when you encounter setbacks and failures. You must get back up and continue moving forward. You need to focus on equipping yourself with certain aspects of the truth in areas where you are lacking or deficient, and where you have serious problems. Being negative or freezing up won't resolve anything. When faced with matters, stop bringing up words and doctrines as well as different kinds of objective reasoning—these won't help. When God tests you, and you say, "At that time, my health wasn't very good, I was young, and my surroundings weren't very peaceful," will He listen to this? God will ask, "Did you hear the truth when it was fellowshiped about with you?" If you say, "Yes, I did hear it," He will ask, "Do you have the work arrangements that were passed down?" Then you'll say, "Yes, I have them," and He'll keep going: "Then why didn't you follow them? Why did you fail so miserably? Why couldn't you stand firm in your testimony?" Any objective reason you emphasize does not hold water. God isn't interested in your excuses or reasoning. He doesn't look at how much doctrine you are able to speak or how good you are at defending yourself. What God wants is your true stature and for your life to grow. No matter when, no matter what level of leader you become, or how high your status, never forget who you are and what you are before God. No matter how much doctrine you are able to speak, no matter how practiced you are in speaking doctrine, no matter what you have done or what contributions you have made to God's house, none of these show that you possess real stature, nor are they signs of having life. When you enter into truth reality, grasp truth principles, stand firm in your testimony when faced with matters, are able to complete tasks independently, and are suitable for use, then you will have real stature. Alright, let's conclude this discussion here and move on to the main topic of our fellowship.

Where did we leave off in our fellowship at the last gathering? (At the last gathering, God fellowshiped about "letting go of the burdens that come from one's family." One part of this is letting go of expectations for one's offspring. God explained this to us in two stages: One had to do with parents' behavior while their children are still minors, and the other concerned their behavior when their children are adults. Regardless of the age of their children, whether they are adults or not, in reality, parents' behavior and actions go against God's sovereignty and arrangements. They always want to control their children's destiny and interfere in their lives, but the path they choose and the pursuits they have are not something their parents can determine. People's destinies are not something their parents can control. God also pointed out the correct viewpoint with which to view matters: No matter the stage of a child's life, it is enough for their parents

to fulfill their responsibilities, and the rest is about submitting to God's sovereignty, arrangements, and predestination.) Last time, we fellowshiped about the fact that people should let go of parental expectations for their offspring. Of course, these expectations are driven by human will and ideation, and they don't align with the fact that God arranges human destiny. These expectations are not a part of human responsibility; they are something people should let go of. Regardless of how great parents' expectations are for their children, and regardless of how right and proper parents may believe their expectations for their children to be, as long as these expectations go against the truth that God is sovereign over human destiny, then they are something people should let go of. It can be said that this is also a negative thing; it is neither proper nor positive. It goes against parental responsibilities and beyond the scope of those responsibilities, and constitutes unrealistic expectations and demands that run contrary to humanity. Last time, we fellowshiped about some abnormal actions and conduct, as well as some extreme behavior, displayed by parents toward their children who are not yet adults, which lead to all kinds of negative influences and pressure on their children, ruining young children's physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. These things indicate that what parents are doing is inappropriate and unsuitable. These are thoughts and actions that people pursuing the truth should let go of, because, from the perspective of humanity, they are a cruel and inhuman way to wreck a child's physical and mental well-being. Therefore, what parents should do for their children who are not yet adults is to fulfill their responsibilities, not plan, control, orchestrate, or determine their future and destiny. Didn't we bring up two major aspects of parents fulfilling their responsibilities to their underage children last time? (Yes, we did.) If these two aspects are carried out, then you have fulfilled your responsibility. If they have not been carried out, then even if you raise your children into some kind of artist or talented individual, your responsibility remains unfulfilled. No matter how much effort parents put into their children, whether it means going gray with worry, becoming exhausted to the point of illness; no matter how great a price they pay, how much they pour their heart out, or how much money they dish out, none of these can be considered a fulfillment of their responsibilities. So, what does it mean when I say parents ought to fulfill their responsibilities toward their young children? What are the two main aspects? Who remembers them? (Last time, God fellowshiped about two responsibilities. One is taking care of the child's physical health, and the other is guiding, educating, and assisting in their mental health.) It's quite simple. In reality, taking care of a child's physical health is easy; just don't let them get too many bumps or bruises or eat the wrong things, don't do anything that will negatively affect their growth, and to the greatest extent possible for parents, ensure they have enough food, that they eat well and healthily, that they get proper rest, stay free from illness or are only sick on occasion, and get them treated in a timely manner when they are sick. Can most parents achieve these standards? (Yes.) This is something people can achieve; the tasks that God gives people are easy. Because animals can meet these

standards as well, if people are unable to meet them, aren't they worse than animals? (Yes, they are.) If even animals can achieve these things, but humans can't, then they are truly pitiful. This is the responsibility parents have toward their children's physical health. Regarding their children's mental well-being, this is also one responsibility parents should fulfill while raising young children. Once their children are physically healthy, parents should also promote their mental health and that of their thoughts, ensuring that they think about problems in ways and directions that are positive, active, and optimistic, so that they can lead a better life and not be radical, misguided, or hostile. What else? They should be able to grow up to be normal, healthy, and happy. For example, when children start to understand what their parents are saying and can have simple, normal conversations with them, and when they begin to show interest in new things, parents can tell them Bible stories or share simple stories about self-comportment to guide them. This way, children can understand what it means to comport oneself, and what to do in order to be a good child and a good person. This is a form of mental guidance for children. Parents should not just tell them that they should earn a lot of money when they grow up or become high-ranking officials, which would grant them endless wealth and prevent them from suffering or doing hard manual labor, and give them the power and prestige to boss others around. They should not instill such negative things into their children, but should share positive things with them. Or, they should tell their children stories that are age-appropriate and carry a positive educational message. For instance, teaching them not to lie and not to be a child who lies, making them understand that one must bear the consequences of lying, explaining their own attitude toward lying, and emphasizing that children who lie are bad children, and people don't like children like this. At the very least they should let their children know that they must be honest. Additionally, parents should prevent their children from developing extreme or radical ideas. How can this be prevented? Parents need to teach their children to be tolerant toward others, to exercise patience and forgiveness, not to be willful or selfish when things arise, and to learn to be kind and harmonious in their interactions with others; if they encounter wicked or bad people who try to harm them, they should learn to walk away rather than addressing the situation with confrontation and violence. Parents should avoid planting the seeds or thoughts of violent tendencies in their young children's minds. They should make it clear that violence is not something parents appreciate, and children who are prone to violence are not good children. If people have violent tendencies, they may eventually turn to committing crimes and face societal restraint and punishment according to law. People with violent tendencies are not good people, they are not people who are well regarded. In another respect, parents should educate their children to become self-reliant. Children should not expect food and clothing to just be handed to them; they should learn to do things themselves whenever they are able or know how to do them, avoiding a persistent mindset of laziness. In various ways, parents should guide their children to understand these positive and

correct matters. Of course, when they see negative things happen or arise, parents should simply inform their children that such behavior is not good, that this is not what good children do, that they themselves do not like such behavior, and children who do this may face legal punishment, penalties, and retribution in the future. In short, parents should convey to their children the simplest and most fundamental principles of how to comport oneself and act. At the very least, while they are not yet adults, children should learn to practice discernment, to distinguish between good and bad, to know what actions define a good person versus a bad person, what things demonstrate the conduct of a good person, and which actions are considered evil and demonstrate the conduct of a bad person. These are the most basic things they should be taught. In addition, children should understand that some behaviors are despised by others, such as stealing or taking others' belongings without permission, using their possessions without approval, spreading gossip, and sowing discord among people. These and similar actions are all indicative of conduct of a bad person, they are negative things, and they are not pleasing to God. As children grow a little older, they should be taught not to be willful in anything they do, not to lose interest quickly, or be impulsive or rash. They should consider the consequences of whatever action they may take, and if they know that those consequences could turn out unfavorably or be disastrous, then they should stay their hand, not letting profits or desires go to their head. Parents should also educate their children about the typical words and actions of bad people, providing them with a basic understanding of bad people and standards against which to measure them. They should learn not to trust strangers or their promises too easily, and not to accept things from strangers without caution. All of these things should be taught to them, because the world and society are wicked and full of traps. Children should not lightly put their trust in just anyone; they should be taught to discern evildoers and bad people, to be cautious of and distance themselves from evildoers, so that they can avoid being framed or deceived by them. Regarding these fundamental lessons, parents should guide and direct their children with a positive perspective during their formative years. In one respect, they should strive to ensure that their children grow up healthy and strong during their upbringing, and in another, they should foster their children's healthy mental growth. What are the signs of a healthy mind? They are that a person has the right perspective on life and can take the right path. Even if they don't believe in God, they still avoid following evil trends during their formative years. If parents notice any deviation in their children, they should promptly check their behavior and correct it, and guide their children rightly. For instance, if their children are exposed to certain things that happen as a part of evil trends or certain incorrect arguments or thoughts and viewpoints during their early years, in cases where they do not have discernment they might follow or imitate them. Parents should detect these issues early on and provide immediate correction and accurate guidance. This is also their responsibility. In short, the goal is to ensure that children have a fundamental, positive, and correct direction for development

in their thoughts, self-comportment, treatment of others, and perception of various people, events, and things, so that they might develop in a constructive direction rather than a wicked one. For instance, unbelievers often say, “Life and death are preordained; wealth and honor are decided by Heaven.” The amount of suffering and enjoyment a person should experience in life is predetermined by God and cannot be changed by humans. In one respect, parents should inform their children of these objective facts, and in another, teach them that life is not just about physical needs, and it certainly isn’t about pleasure. There are more important things for people to do in this life than eating, drinking, and seeking entertainment; they should believe in God, pursue the truth, and pursue salvation from God. If people only live for pleasure, for eating, drinking, and seeking entertainment in the flesh, then they are like zombies, and their lives have no value at all. They do not create any positive or meaningful value, and they do not deserve to live or even to be human. Even if a child doesn’t believe in God, at the very least let them be a good person and one who attends to their proper duty. Of course, if they are chosen by God and are willing to participate in church life and fulfill their own duty as they grow up, that’s even better. If their children are like this, then parents should fulfill their responsibilities toward their underage children even more based on the principles God has admonished to people. If you don’t know whether they will believe in or will be chosen by God, at the very least you should fulfill the responsibilities you have to your children during their formative years. Even if you don’t know or are unable to comprehend these things, you should still perform these responsibilities. To the greatest extent possible, you should carry out what obligations and responsibilities you ought to perform, sharing what positive thoughts and things you already know with your children. At the very least, ensure that their spiritual growth follows a constructive direction, and that their minds are clean and healthy. Do not make them study all kinds of skills and knowledge from a young age under your expectations, cultivation, or even oppression. Even more seriously, some parents accompany their children when they participate in various talent shows, and academic or athletic competitions, following all kinds of social trends and going to events like press hearings, signings, and study sessions, and attending whatever competitions and acceptance speeches at award ceremonies, etc. As parents, at the very least they shouldn’t let their children follow in their footsteps by doing these things themselves. If parents bring their children to such activities, in one respect, it is clear that they have not fulfilled their responsibilities as parents. In another, they are openly leading their children down a path of no return, hindering their constructive mental development. Where have these parents led their children? They have led them into evil trends. This is something parents shouldn’t do. Furthermore, regarding the future paths their children will take and the careers that they will pursue, parents should not instill such things as, “Look at so-and-so, they’re a pianist who started playing the piano at the age of four or five. They didn’t indulge in playtime, they had no friends or toys, and they practiced the piano every day. Their parents accompanied them

to piano lessons, consulted various teachers, and entered them into piano competitions. Look at the famous person they are now, well-fed, well-dressed, surrounded by an aura of light and respected wherever they go." Is this the kind of education that promotes the healthy development of a child's mind? (No, it's not.) What kind of education is it, then? It's the education of the devil. This type of education is damaging to any young mind. It encourages them to aspire to fame, to covet various auras, honors, positions, and enjoyments. It makes them yearn for and pursue these things from a young age, driving them to anxiety, intense apprehension, and worry, and even causing them to pay every kind of price to get it, waking up early and working late to look over their homework and study different skills, and losing their childhood years, exchanging those precious years for these things. Regarding that which is promoted by evil trends, underage children do not have the ability to resist or discern it. So, as the guardians of their underage children, parents should fulfill this responsibility by helping them discern and resist various viewpoints that come from the world's evil trends and all negative things. They should provide positive guidance and education. Of course, everyone has their own aspirations, and some young children, even if their parents discourage certain pursuits, may still desire them. Let them wish for what they want; parents must fulfill their responsibilities. As a parent, you have an obligation and a responsibility to regulate your children's thoughts and guide them in a positive and constructive direction. As for whether they choose to listen to you or want to act out your teachings when they grow up, that's their personal choice, which you cannot interfere with or control. In short, during their children's formative years, parents have a responsibility and obligation to instill various healthy, proper, and positive thoughts and viewpoints, as well as life goals, in their children's minds. This is the responsibility of parents.

Some parents say, "I don't even know how to educate my children. I've been muddle-headed ever since I was a child, just doing whatever my parents told me without distinguishing right from wrong. Even now, I still don't know how to educate children." Don't worry about not knowing; it isn't necessarily a bad thing. What's worse is when you do know but don't put it into practice, still educating your children exclusively to excel, and saying, "I'm no good anymore, but I want my children to surpass me. The younger generation basks in the light of their elders, and should outshine them. I am currently serving as section chief; therefore, my child must be a mayor, a governor, or even rise to higher levels of government or become the president." There's no need to say anything more to such people. We don't engage with people like this. The parental responsibility we're talking about is positive, proactive, and relates to the truth. For those pursuing the truth, if you wish to fulfill your responsibility toward your children, but are unsure how to fulfill that responsibility, then start learning from the beginning—it's easy. Teaching adults is not easy, but teaching children is, isn't it? Learn and teach simultaneously, teaching what you've just learned. Isn't that easy? Educating your children is easy. It's even better to fulfill your responsibility concerning your children's

mental health. Even if you can't do this perfectly, it's better than not educating them at all. Children are young and naive; if you let them get their information from television and various sources, pursue whatever they like, and think and act as they please without education or regulation, you haven't fulfilled your responsibility as parents. You've failed in your duty, and you haven't completed your responsibility and obligation. If parents must fulfill their responsibility to their children, then they cannot be passive, but must actively study some knowledge and learning that can help nurture their children's mental health, or some basic principles related to the truth, starting from the beginning. These are all things parents should do: It's called fulfilling one's responsibility. Of course, your learning will not be in vain. During the process of learning and of educating your children, you will also gain something. Because, while teaching your children to develop their mental health in a constructive direction, as an adult, you will inevitably come into contact with and learn about certain positive ideas. When you approach these positive ideas or principles and criteria for self-comportment and action meticulously and seriously, you will unconsciously gain something—it will not be in vain. Fulfilling your responsibility to your own children is not something you do for the sake of others; you should do it because of your relationship to them both emotionally and by blood. Even if your children act or behave in a way that does not meet your expectations after you do this, at the very least, you've gained something. You know what it means to educate your children and to fulfill your responsibility toward them. You have already done your duty. As for the paths your children later choose to follow, how they choose to comport themselves, and the destinies that await them in life, that's no longer your concern. When they reach adulthood, you can only stand by and watch their life and destiny unfold. You no longer have the obligation or responsibility to participate. If you didn't provide timely guidance, education, and boundaries in certain matters for them when they were minors, you may regret it when, as adults, they say or do unexpected things or display thoughts and behaviors you didn't anticipate. For instance, when they were young, you constantly educated them, saying, "Study hard, go to college, pursue postgraduate studies or a Ph.D., find a good job, find a good match to marry and start a family with, and then life will be good." Through your education, encouragement, and various forms of pressure, they lived and pursued the course you set for them and achieved what you expected, just as you wished, and now they are unable to turn back. If, having come to understand certain truths and the will of God because of your faith, and having gained possession of correct thoughts and viewpoints, now you try to tell them not to pursue those things anymore, they're likely to counter instead, "Aren't I doing exactly what you wanted? Didn't you teach me these things when I was young? Didn't you demand this of me? Why are you stopping me now? Is what I'm doing wrong? I've achieved these things and I'm able to enjoy them now; you should feel happy, satisfied, and proud of me, shouldn't you?" How would you feel upon hearing this? Should you be happy or in tears? Wouldn't you feel regret? (Yes.) You can't win them back now. If you hadn't educated them this

way when they were young, if you had given them a happy childhood without any pressure, without teaching them to be a cut above the rest, to hold a high office or make a lot of money, or to pursue fame, profit, and status, if you had simply let them be good, ordinary people, without demanding that they earn a lot of money, enjoy so much, or return so much to you, merely asking that they be healthy and happy, to be a simple and happy individual, perhaps they would have been receptive to some of the thoughts and viewpoints you hold after believing in God. Then, their lives might be happy now, with less pressure from life and society. Although they didn't gain fame and profit, at least their hearts would have felt happy, quiet, and peaceful. But during their developmental years, due to your repeated instigation and urging, under your pressure, they relentlessly pursued knowledge, money, fame, and profit. In the end, they gained fame, profit, and status, their lives improved, they enjoyed more, and they earned more money, but their lives are exhausting. Every time you see them, they have a tired look on their face. Only when they return home, back to you, do they dare to take off their masks and admit they're tired and want to rest. But as soon as they step outside, they're not the same anymore—they put on the mask again. You look at their tired and pitiful expression, and you feel sorry for them, but you have no power to make them turn back. They can't anymore. How did this happen? Isn't it related to your parenting? (Yes.) None of this was something they naturally knew or pursued from a young age; it has a definite relation to your parenting. When you see their face, when you see their life in this state, don't you feel upset? (Yes.) But you are powerless; all that remains is regret and sorrow. You may feel that your child has been taken completely away by Satan, that they are unable to return, and you have no power to rescue them. This is because you did not fulfill your responsibility as parents. You are the ones who harmed them, who led them astray with your flawed ideological education and guidance. They can never return, and in the end you are left only with regret. You look on helplessly while your child suffers, corrupted by this evil society, burdened by life's pressures, and you have no way to help them. All you can say is, "Come home more often, and I'll cook you something delicious." What problems can a meal resolve? It can't solve anything. Their thoughts have already matured and taken shape, and they're not willing to let go of the fame and status they've attained. They can only forge ahead and never turn back. This is the pernicious result of parents providing the wrong guidance and instilling wrong ideas into their children during their formative years. Therefore, during these years, parents should fulfill their responsibility, guide their children's mental health, and steer their thoughts and actions in a constructive direction. This is a very important matter. You might say, "I don't know much about educating children," but can't you even fulfill your responsibility? If you truly comprehend the world and this society, if you truly grasp what fame and profit are, if you can truly abandon worldly fame and profit, then you should protect your children and not allow them to accept these incorrect ideas from society too quickly during their formative years. For example, when some children enter junior high school, they start to notice

things like how many billions of dollars in assets a certain business tycoon has, what kind of luxury cars the richest person in the locality owns, what position another person holds, how much money they have, how many cars they have parked at their house, and what kinds of things they enjoy. Their minds start to wonder: “I’m in junior high now. What if I can’t find a good job after college? Without a job, what will I do if I can’t afford a mansion and luxury cars? How can I become exceptional without money?” They begin to worry and envy those in society who have prestige and whose lives are extravagant and luxurious. When children become aware of these things, they start to take in various information, events, and phenomena from society, and in their young minds, they begin to feel pressured and anxious, and to be concerned about and plan for their future. In such a situation, shouldn’t parents fulfill their responsibility and provide comfort and guidance, helping them understand how to properly view and handle these matters? They should make sure that their children do not get caught up in these things from a young age, so that they can develop the right viewpoint toward them. Tell Me, how should parents address these matters with their children? Nowadays, aren’t children exposed to various aspects of society at a very young age? (Yes.) Don’t children know a lot these days about singers, movie stars, sports stars, as well as internet celebrities, business tycoons, rich people, and multimillionaires—how much money they earn, what they wear, what they enjoy, how many luxury cars they have, and so on? (Yes.) Therefore, parents in this complex society should fulfill their parental responsibility, protect their children, and provide them with a healthy mind. When children become aware of these matters or hear and receive any unhealthy information, parents should teach them to develop the right thoughts and viewpoints so that they are able to step away from these matters in a timely manner. At the very least, parents should impart a simple doctrine to them: “You are still young, and at your age, your responsibility is to study well and learn what you need to learn. You don’t need to think about other things; as for how much money you will earn or what you will buy, you don’t have to take care of these matters—they are for after you grow up. For now, focus on doing your schoolwork, completing the work your teachers assign, and managing things in your own life. You don’t need to think too much about anything else. It won’t be too late to consider these matters after you enter society and come into contact with them. The things happening now in society are the concern of adults. You are not an adult, so these are not things you should be thinking about or participating in. Right now, focus on doing your schoolwork well, and listen to what we tell you. We are adults and know more than you, so you should listen to us, to whatever we say. If you learn about those matters in society, and you follow and imitate them, that won’t be beneficial for your studies and schoolwork—it may affect your learning. What kind of person you become later or what kind of career you will have: These are things to consider later. Right now, your task is to attend to your studies. If you don’t excel in your studies, you won’t succeed in your education, and you won’t be a good child. Don’t think about other matters; they are not

relevant to you. When you are older, then you will understand those things." Isn't this the most fundamental doctrine that people should understand? (Yes.) Let children know: "Your task right now is to study, not to eat, drink, and have fun. If you don't study, you'll waste your own time and neglect your education. The things in society related to eating, drinking, seeking entertainment, and sundry other matters are all matters for adults. Those who are not yet adults should not engage in those activities." Are these words easy for children to accept? (Yes.) You are not depriving them of the right to know about these matters or to feel envious about them. At the same time, you are pointing out what it is they should be doing. Is this a good way to educate children? (Yes.) Is it a simple course of action? (Yes.) Parents should learn to do this and, so far as they are able, study how to educate and see to their underage children based on their own ability, conditions, and qualities; they should fulfill their responsibility to them, and do all this to the best of their ability. There are no strict or rigid standards for this; it varies from person to person. Everyone's family circumstances are different, and everyone's qualities are different. Therefore, when it comes to fulfilling the responsibility of educating one's children, each person has their own methods. You should do whatever works effectively, what yields the desired results. You should adapt to your children's personality, age, and gender: Some might need a little more sternness, while others might require a gentler approach. Some might benefit from a more demanding style, while others might thrive in a relaxed environment. Parents should adjust their methods based on their children's individual situation. In any case, the ultimate goal is to ensure their mental health, to guide them in a constructive direction both in their thoughts and in the criteria for their actions. Do not impose anything that may run contrary to humanity, anything that goes against the laws of natural development or exceeds what they can achieve in their current age range or the extent of their qualities. When parents can do all this, then they have already fulfilled their responsibility. Is this difficult to achieve? It is not a complex matter.

Parents' expectations for their offspring involve two aspects: One aspect has to do with expectations during their children's formative years, and the other involves expectations when their children become adults. Last time, our fellowship briefly touched upon expectations when children become adults. What did we fellowship about? (God, last time we fellowshiped about parents hoping that their adult children will have a smooth work environment, happy and fulfilling marriages, and successful careers.) That is roughly what we fellowshiped about. After parents raise their children to adulthood, their children become adults, and they face circumstances involving work, career, marriage, family, and living by themselves independently, even raising their own offspring. They will leave their father and mother and be independent, facing every problem they may encounter in life on their own. Because their children are now grown, parents no longer carry the responsibility of caring for their children's physical health or being directly involved in their lives, work, marriage, family, and so on. Of course, due to

emotional and familial bonds, parents can offer superficial care, provide occasional advice, give a few suggestions or assistance from the role of someone with experience, or temporarily provide necessary care. In short, once children become adults, parents have mostly fulfilled their responsibilities toward their children. Therefore, some expectations that parents may have for their adult children, at least from My perspective, are unnecessary. Why are they unnecessary? Because, regardless of what parents expect their children to become, what kind of marriage, family, work, or career they expect them to have, whether they will be rich or poor, or whatever parents' expectations may be, these are nothing more than expectations, and as adults, their children's lives are ultimately in their own hands. Of course, fundamentally speaking, the destiny of their son or daughter's entire life, and whether they are rich or poor, all of it is ordained by God. Parents have no responsibility or obligation to oversee these matters, nor do they have the right to intervene. Therefore, parental expectations are simply a kind of well-wishing founded in their affections. No parent is willing for their child to be poor, unmarried, divorced, have a dysfunctional family, or experience hardship at work. Not one of them expects these things for their child; they undoubtedly expect the best for their children. However, if parents' expectations conflict with the reality of their children's lives, or if that reality goes against their expectations, how should they approach this? This is what we need to fellowship about. As parents, when it comes to the attitude one should foster toward their adult children, apart from blessing them in silence and having good expectations for them, no matter what kind of livelihood their children lead, what kind of destiny or life they have, parents can only let it happen. No parent can change any of this, nor can they control it. Although you gave birth to your children and raised them, as we've discussed before, parents are not the masters of their children's destinies. Parents conceive their children's physical body and raise them to adulthood, but as for what kind of destiny their children will have, this is not something given or chosen by their parents, and their parents certainly don't decide it. You wish for your children to do well, but does that guarantee they will? You do not wish for them to encounter misfortune, bad luck, and all kinds of unfortunate events, but does that mean they will be able to avoid them? Regardless of what your children face, none of those things are subject to human will, nor is any of it determined by your needs or expectations. So, what does this tell you? Since children have become adults, are capable of taking care of themselves, of having independent thoughts, views on things, principles of self-comportment, and outlooks on life, and are no longer influenced, mastered, constrained, or managed by their parents, then they are truly an adult. What does it mean that they have become an adult? It means that their parents should let go. In written language, this is called "letting go," allowing children to independently explore and take their own path in life. What do we say in spoken language? "Step aside." In other words, parents should stop giving orders to their adult children, saying things like, "You should look for this job, you should work in this industry. Don't do that, it's too risky!"

Is it appropriate for parents to give orders to their adult children? (No, it's not.) They always want to keep their adult children's lives, work, marriage, and family under their control and within their line of vision, getting anxious, worried, fearful, and concerned if they don't know about something or can't control it, saying, "What if my son doesn't consider that matter carefully? Could he get into legal trouble? I don't have the money for a lawsuit! If he gets sued and there's no money, could he end up in jail? If he goes to jail, could he be falsely accused by wicked people, and serve eight or ten years? Will his wife leave him? Who will take care of the children?" The more they think about it, the more they have to worry about. "My daughter's job is not going well: People are always mistreating her, and her boss isn't good to her either. What can we do? Should we find her another job? Should we pull some strings, do some networking, spend some money, and get her a job in a government department where she can have a light load every day as a government employee? Even though the salary isn't high, at least she won't be mistreated. We couldn't bring ourselves to hit her when she was young and we pampered her like a princess; now, she's getting bullied by other people. What should we do?" They worry to the point where they can't eat or sleep, and their mouths get all blistered up from the anxiety. Whenever their children face anything they become anxious and take it to heart. They want to be involved in everything, standing in on every situation. Whenever their children become ill or encounter some difficulty, they feel agonized and miserable, saying, "I just want you to be well. Why aren't you well? I want everything to go smoothly for you, I want everything to go just as you wish, just as you plan it to go. I want you to enjoy success, not to have bad luck, to be cheated, or to be framed and get into legal trouble!" Some children take out a mortgage on a house, and their mortgage can last for thirty or even fifty years. Their parents start worrying, "When will all these loans be paid off? Isn't this the same as being a mortgage slave? Our generation didn't need a mortgage to buy a house. We lived in company-provided apartments and paid a few bucks in rent each month. Our living situation felt so relaxed. Nowadays, it's really tough for these young people; it really isn't easy for them. They have to take out a mortgage, and even though they live well, they work so hard every day—they're exhausted! They often stay up late working overtime, their eating and sleeping schedules are irregular, and they're always eating takeout. Their stomachs suffer and so does their health. I have to cook for them and clean their place. I have to tidy up for them because they don't have the time—their lives are a mess. I'm an old lady now with old bones, and I can't do much, so I'll just become their maid. If they hire an actual maid, they'll have to spend money, and they might not be trustworthy. So, I'll be their maid for free." So she becomes a servant, cleaning her children's home every day, tidying up, cooking when it's time to eat, buying vegetables and grains, and taking on endless responsibilities. She goes from being a parent to being an old servant, a maid. When her children come home and aren't in a good mood, she has to watch their expressions and speak cautiously until her children are happy again, and only then can

she be happy. She's happy when her children are happy, and worries when her children are worried. Is this a valuable way to live? It's no different from losing oneself.

Is it possible for parents to bear the cost of their children's destinies? In order to pursue fame, profit, and worldly pleasures, children are willing to endure whatever hardships come their way. Moreover, as adults, is it okay for them to face whatever hardships are necessary for their own survival? As much as they enjoy, that much should they also be prepared to suffer—this is natural. Their parents have fulfilled their responsibilities, then regardless of what their children want to enjoy, they should not foot the bill. No matter how good a life parents want their children to have, if their children want to enjoy good things, then they should bear all the pressure and suffering themselves, not their parents. Therefore, if parents always want to do everything for their children and bear the cost for their hardships, willingly becoming their slaves, then isn't this excessive? It's unnecessary because it goes beyond what parents should be expected to do. Another major reason is that, no matter what or how much you do for your children, you cannot change their destiny or alleviate their suffering. Every person trying to get by in society, whether they pursue fame and profit or take the correct path in life, as an adult they must take responsibility for their own desires and ideals, and they should pay their own way. Nobody should take on anything for them; even their parents, the people who gave birth to them and raised them, the people closest to them, are not obligated to pay their way or share their suffering. Parents are no different in this regard because they cannot change anything. Therefore, anything you do for your children is in vain. Because it's in vain, you should give up this course of action. Although the parents may be old and have already fulfilled their responsibilities and obligations to their children, although anything parents do is insignificant in their children's eyes, they should still have their own dignity, their own pursuits, and their own mission to fulfill. As someone who believes in God and pursues the truth and salvation, the energy and time you have left in your life should be spent performing your duty and on whatever God has entrusted to you; you shouldn't spend any time on your children. Your life does not belong to your children, and it should not be consumed for their lives or survival, nor to satisfy your expectations of them. Instead, it should be devoted to the duty and entrusted task that God has given you, as well as the mission you should fulfill as a created being. This is where the value and meaning of your life lie. If you are willing to lose your own dignity and become a slave to your children, to worry about them, and to do anything for them in order to satisfy your own expectations for them, then all of this is meaningless and devoid of value, and it will not be commemorated. If you persist in doing so and do not let go of these ideas and actions, it can only mean that you are not someone who pursues the truth, that you are not a qualified created being, and that you are quite rebellious. You cherish neither the life nor the time given to you by God. If your life and your time are spent only for your flesh and affections, and not for the duty God has given you, then your life is unnecessary and devoid of value. You don't deserve to live, you

don’t deserve to enjoy the life God has given you, and you don’t deserve to enjoy everything that God has given you. God gave you children only for you to enjoy the process of raising them, to gain life experience and knowledge from it as parents, to let you experience something special and extraordinary in human life, and then to let your offspring multiply…. Of course, it is also to fulfill the responsibility of a created being as a parent. It is the responsibility God ordained for you to fulfill toward the next generation, as well as the role you play as parents for the next generation. In one respect, it is to go through this extraordinary process of raising children, and in another, it is to play a role in propagating the next generation. Once this obligation is fulfilled, and your children grow up into adults, whether they become highly successful or remain plain, ordinary, and simple individuals, it has nothing to do with you, because their destiny is not determined by you, nor is it your choice, and you certainly did not give it to them—it is ordained by God. Since it is ordained by God, you should not interfere or stick your nose into their life or their survival. Their habits, daily routines, and attitude toward life, whatever survival strategies they have, whatever outlook on life, whatever their attitude toward the world—these are their own choices to make, and they are not your concern. You have no obligation to correct them or to bear any suffering on their behalf to ensure that they are happy every day. All of these things are unnecessary. Each person’s destiny is determined by God; therefore, how much blessing or suffering they experience in life, what kind of family, marriage, and children they have, what experiences they go through in society, and what events they experience in life, they themselves cannot foresee or change such things, and parents have even less of an ability to change them. Therefore, if children encounter any difficulties, parents should help positively and proactively if they have the ability to do so. If not, it is best for parents to relax and view these matters from the perspective of created beings, treating their children equally as created beings. The suffering you experience, they must also experience; the life you live, they must also live; the process you have gone through of raising young children, they will also go through; the twists and turns, fraud and deception you experience in society and among people, the emotional entanglements, and interpersonal conflicts, and every similar thing you have experienced, they will experience it too. They, like you, are all corrupted human beings, all carried away by the currents of evil, corrupted by Satan; you cannot escape it, and neither can they. Therefore, wanting to help them avoid all suffering and enjoy all the blessings in the world is a silly delusion and a foolish idea. No matter how vast the wings of an eagle may be, they cannot protect the young eaglet throughout its entire life. The young eaglet will eventually reach a point when it must grow up and fly alone. When the young eaglet chooses to fly alone, no one knows where its stretch of sky may be, or where it will choose to fly. Therefore, the most rational attitude for parents after their children grow up is to let go, to let them experience life on their own, to let them live independently, and face, handle, and resolve the various challenges in life independently. If they seek help from you and you have the ability and

conditions to do so, of course you can lend a helping hand and provide necessary aid. However, the prerequisite is that, no matter what help you provide, whether it's financial or psychological, it can only be temporary and cannot change any substantial issues. They must navigate their own path in life, and you have no obligation to shoulder any of their affairs or consequences. This is the attitude parents should have toward their adult children.

Having understood the attitude parents should have toward their adult children, should parents also let go of their expectations for their adult children? Some ignorant parents cannot comprehend life or destiny, do not recognize God's sovereignty, and tend to do ignorant things when it comes to their children. For example, after their children become independent, they may encounter certain special situations, hardships, or major incidents; some face illnesses, some get involved in lawsuits, some get divorced, some are deceived and scammed, and some are kidnapped, harmed, severely beaten, or face death. There are even some who fall into drug abuse, and so on. What should parents do in these special and significant situations? What is the typical reaction of most parents? Do they do what they ought to do as created beings with the identity of parents? Very seldom do parents hear such news and react as they would if it had happened to a stranger. A majority of parents stay up all night till their hair turns gray, they lose sleep night after night, have no appetite during the day, rack their brains with thinking, and some even weep bitterly, till their eyes turn red and their tears run dry. They pray fervently to God, for God to take their own faith into account and protect their children, show them favor and bless them, show mercy, and spare their lives. As parents in such a situation, their human weaknesses, vulnerabilities, and feelings toward their children are all exposed. What else is revealed? Their rebellion against God. They implore God and pray to Him, beseeching Him to keep their children from calamity. Even if a disaster occurs, they pray that their children won't die, that they can escape danger, they won't be harmed by evildoers, their illnesses won't grow more severe but will improve, and so on. What are they really praying for? (God, with these prayers they are making demands of God, with an undertone of complaint.) In one respect, they are extremely dissatisfied with their children's plight, complaining that God shouldn't have allowed such things to happen to their children. Their dissatisfaction is mixed with complaint, and they ask God to change His mind, not to act like this, to deliver their children from danger, to keep them safe, to heal their sickness, to help them escape lawsuits, to avert calamity when it arises, and so on—in short, to make everything go smoothly. By praying like this, in one respect, they are complaining to God, and in another, they are making demands of Him. Isn't this a manifestation of rebellion? (It is.) Implicitly, they are saying that what God is doing is not right or good, that He shouldn't act like this. Because these are their children, and they are believers, they think God shouldn't let such things happen to their children. Their children are different from others; they should receive preferential blessings from God. On account of their faith in God, He ought to bless their children,

and if He does not, they become distressed, they cry, throw a tantrum, and no longer want to follow God. If their child dies, they feel that they can't go on living either. Is that the sentiment they have in mind? (Yes.) Isn't this a form of protest against God? (It is.) This is protesting against God. It's like dogs who demand to be fed at mealtime, and throw a tantrum if it's even slightly delayed. They snatch up the bowl in their mouth and bang it against the floor—isn't this unreasonable? (Yes.) Sometimes, if you give them meat for a couple days in a row but occasionally go a day without meat, then dogs in their animal temper might dump their food on the floor, or else take the bowl in their mouth and knock it against the ground, telling you they want to be given meat, that meat is what they believe they should be given, and that it is unacceptable not to give them meat. People can be just as unreasonable. When their children face troubles, they complain to God, make demands of Him, and protest against Him. Isn't this more or less the behavior of animals? (Yes.) Animals don't understand the truth or people's so-called doctrines and human feelings. When they throw tantrums or act out, it's somewhat understandable. But when people protest against God in this way, are they being reasonable? Can they be forgiven? If animals behave like this, people might say, "This little fellow has quite the temper. It even knows how to protest; that's quite clever. I guess we shouldn't underestimate it." They find it amusing, and think this animal is anything but simple. So, when an animal throws a tantrum, people hold it in higher regard. If a person were to protest against God, should God have that same regard for them and say, "This fellow comes with such demands; they're anything but simple!" Would God hold you in high regard like this? (No.) So, how does God define this behavior? Is it not rebellion? (It is.) Do people who believe in God not know that this behavior is wrong? Hasn't the epoch of "One person's belief in the Lord brings blessings to the whole family" passed a long time ago? (Yes, it has.) Then why do people still fast and pray like this, pleading shamelessly with God to protect and bless their children? Why do they still dare to protest and contend with God, saying, "If You don't do it like this, I'll keep praying; I will fast!" What does fasting mean? It means going on a hunger strike, which in another sense is acting shamelessly and throwing a fit. When people act shamelessly toward other people, they might stamp their feet, saying, "Oh, my child is gone; I don't want to live anymore, I can't go on!" They don't do this when they're before God; they speak quite elegantly, saying, "God, I implore You to protect my child and cure their illness. God, You are the great physician who saves people—You can do all things. I beseech You to watch over and protect them. Your Spirit is everywhere, You are righteous, You are a God who shows mercy to people. You care for and cherish them." What is meant by this? Nothing of what they're saying is wrong, it's just not the right time to say such things. The implication is that if God doesn't save your child and protect them, if He doesn't fulfill your wishes, then He isn't a loving God, He is devoid of love, He isn't a merciful God, and He isn't God. Isn't this the case? Isn't this acting shamelessly? (Yes.) Do people who act shamelessly revere God as great? Do they have God-fearing hearts?

(No.) People who act shamelessly are just like scoundrels—they lack God-fearing hearts. They dare to contend and protest against God, and even act in an unreasonable manner. Isn't this the same as looking for death? (Yes.) Why are your children so special? When God orchestrates or rules someone else's fate, you think it's fine as long as it has nothing to do with you. But you think He shouldn't be able to rule the fate of your children? In the eyes of God, all humanity is under God's sovereignty, and no one can escape the sovereignty and arrangements set by God's hands. Why should your children be an exception? God's sovereignty is ordained and planned out by Him. Is it okay for you to want to change it? (No, it isn't.) It isn't okay. Therefore, people must not do foolish or unreasonable things. Whatever God does is based on predetermined causes and effects—what does it have to do with you? If you resist God's sovereignty, you're looking for death. If you don't want your children to experience these things, that stems from emotion, not justice, mercy, or kindness—it is merely the result of an emotional effect. Emotion is the spokesperson of selfishness. That emotion you have isn't worth showcasing; you can't even justify it to yourself, and yet you still want to use it to blackmail God. Some people even say, "My child is sick, and if he dies, I won't go on living!" Do you really have the nerve to die? Try dying then! Is the faith of such people genuine? Will you really stop believing in God if your child dies? What can their death possibly change? If you don't believe in God, neither God's identity nor His status will change. God is still God. He is not God because you believe in Him, nor does He stop being God because of your disbelief. Even if all humanity didn't believe in God, God's identity and essence would remain unchanged. His status would remain unchanged. He will always be the One who is sovereign over the fate of all humanity and over the universe world. It has nothing to do with whether you believe or not. If you believe, you will be shown favor. If you do not believe, you won't have the opportunity for salvation, and you will not attain it. You love and protect your children, you have feelings for your children, you can't let go of them, and so you don't allow God to do anything. Does this make sense? Is this in line with the truth, with morality, or with humanity? It is not in line with anything, not even morality, isn't that right? You're not cherishing your children, you're shielding them—you're under the influence of your feelings. You even say that if your child dies, you won't go on living. Since you are so irresponsible toward your own life and don't cherish the life God has given you, if you want to live for your children, then just go ahead and die together with them. Whatever illness they come down with, you should quickly get infected with the same disease and die together; or just find a rope to hang yourself, won't that be easy? After you die, will you and your children be the same kind? Will you still have that same physical relationship? Will you still have feelings for one another? When you return to the other world, you will change. Isn't that how it will be? (Yes.) When people look at things with their eyes and judge whether they are good or bad, or what their nature is, what do they rely on? They rely on their thoughts. Just by looking at things with their eyes, they cannot see past the material world; they cannot

see into the spiritual world. What will people think in their minds? “In this world, the people who gave birth to me and raised me are the closest and dearest to me. I also love the people who gave birth to me and raised me. No matter when, my child is always the closest to me, and I always cherish my child the most.” This is the extent of their mental landscape and horizon; this is how “broad” their mental landscape is. Is this a foolish thing to say or not? (It is foolish.) Isn’t it childish? (It is childish.) So childish! Your children are only related to you by blood in this life; what about their past life, how were they related to you then? Where will they go after they die? Once they die, their body breathes its last, their soul departs, and they completely bid farewell to you. They won’t recognize you anymore, they won’t even stay for a second, they will simply return to the other world. When they return to that other world, you cry, you miss them, and feel miserable and tormented, saying, “Oh, my child is gone, and I won’t be able to see them ever again!” Does a dead person have any awareness? They have no awareness of you, they don’t miss you in the slightest. Once they leave their body, they immediately become a third party, and they have no relationship with you anymore. How do they view you? They say, “That old lady, that old man—who are they crying for? Oh, they’re crying for a body. I feel like I’ve just been separated from that body: I’m not so heavy now, and I don’t have the pain of illness anymore—I’m free.” That is what they feel. After they die and leave their body, they continue to exist in the other world, appearing in a different form, and they no longer have any relationship to you. You cry and long for them here, suffering for their sake, but they feel nothing, they know nothing. After many years, due to fate or coincidence, they may become your co-worker, or your fellow countryman, or they may live far away from you. Though you live in the same world, you will be two different people with no connection between you. Even if some people may recognize that they were so-and-so in the previous life due to special circumstances or because of something special that was said, yet they feel nothing when they see you, and you feel nothing when you see them. Even if they were your child in the previous life, you feel nothing for them now—you only think about your deceased child. They feel nothing for you either: They have their own parents, their own family, and a different surname—they have no relationship to you. But you’re still over there missing them—what are you missing? You are merely missing the physical body and the name that was once related to you by blood; it’s just an image, a shadow that lingers in your thoughts or mind—it has no actual value. They have been reincarnated, transformed into a human or any other living being—they have no relation to you. Therefore, when some parents say, “If my child dies, I won’t go on living either!”—that’s just plain ignorance! Their lifespan has reached its end, but why should you stop living? Why do you speak so irresponsibly? Their lifespan has come to an end, God has cut their thread, and they have another task—what business is it of yours? If you have another task, God will also cut your thread; but you don’t yet, so you have to keep living. If God wants you alive, you cannot die. Whether it involves one’s parents, children, or any other relatives or people related

by blood in their life, when it comes to feelings, people should have the following view and understanding: Regarding the feelings that exist between people, if they are related by blood, then fulfilling one's responsibility is enough. Apart from fulfilling their responsibilities, people have neither the obligation nor the ability to change anything. Therefore, it is irresponsible for parents to say, "If our children are gone, if we as parents must bury our own children, then we won't go on living." If children really are buried by their parents, it can only be said that their time in this world was only so long, and they had to go. But their parents are still here, so they should continue to live well. Of course, according to their humanity, it is normal for people to think about their children, but they should not squander the time they have left missing their deceased children. This is foolish. Therefore, when dealing with this matter, in one respect people should take responsibility for their own life, and in another they ought to fully comprehend familial relationships. The relationship that truly exists between people is not based on ties of flesh and blood, but it is a relationship between one living being and another created by God. This kind of relationship carries no ties of flesh and blood; it is only between two independent living beings. If you think about it from this angle, then as parents, when your children are unfortunate enough to fall sick or their lives are in danger, you ought to face these matters correctly. You should not give up the time you have left, the path you ought to take, or the responsibilities and obligations you should fulfill, because of your children's misfortunes or passing—you should face this matter correctly. If you have the right thoughts and viewpoints and can see through these things, then you will be able to quickly overcome despair, grief, and longing. But what if you can't see through them? Then it may haunt you for the rest of your life, until the day you die. However, if you can see through this circumstance, there will be a limit to this season of your life. It will not go on forever, nor will it accompany you for the latter part of your life. If you can see through this, then you can let go of a part of it, which is a good thing for you. But if you can't see through the familial ties shared with your children, then you will be unable to let go, and this will be a cruel matter for you. No parents are without emotion when their children pass away. When any parents experience having to bury their children, or when they witness their children in an unfortunate situation, they will spend the rest of their lives thinking about and worrying over them, trapped in pain. No one can escape from it: It is a scar and an indelible mark on the soul. It is not easy for people to let go of this emotional attachment while living in the flesh, so they suffer for it. However, if you can see through this emotional attachment with your children, it will become much less intense. Of course, you will suffer to a much lesser extent; it is impossible not to suffer at all, but your suffering will be greatly reduced. If you can't see through it, this matter will go cruelly with you. If you can, it will have been a special experience that caused severe emotional trauma, giving you a deeper appreciation and understanding of life, familial ties, and humanity, and enriching your life experience. Of course, this specific kind of enrichment is something that no one wants to possess or encounter. Nobody

wants to face it, but if this matter arises, you have to deal with it correctly. To prevent cruelty to yourself, you should let go of your previously held traditional, rotten, and mistaken thoughts and viewpoints. You should face your emotional and blood ties in the right way, and view the passing of your children correctly. Once you truly comprehend this, you'll be able to let go of it completely, and this matter will no longer torment you. You understand Me, don't you? (Yes, I understand.)

Some people say, "Children are assets given to parents by God, so they amount to parents' private property." Is this statement correct? (No, it isn't.) Some parents, upon hearing this, say, "This is a correct statement. Nothing else belongs to us, only our children, who are our own flesh and blood. They are what is dearest to us." Is this statement correct? (No.) What is incorrect about it? Please explain your reasoning. Is it appropriate to treat children as one's private property? (No, it is not appropriate.) Why is it not appropriate? (Because private property belongs to oneself and not to others. However, the relationship between children and parents is actually nothing more than a fleshly relationship. Human life comes from God, it is the breath given by God. If someone believes that they have given life to their children, their perspective and position are incorrect, and they also do not believe at all in God's sovereignty and arrangement.) Isn't this the case? Aside from a physical relationship, in God's eyes, the lives of children and parents are independent. They do not belong to each other, nor do they have a hierarchical relationship. Of course, they certainly do not have a relationship of owning or being owned. Their lives come from God, and God is sovereign over their destinies. It's simply that children are born from their parents, parents are older than their children, and children younger than their parents; yet, based on this relationship, this superficial phenomenon, people believe that children are the accessories and private property of their parents. This isn't looking at the matter from its roots, but only considering it based on the surface-level, the flesh, and one's affections. Therefore, this manner of consideration is itself wrong, and this perspective is wrong. Isn't that so? (Yes.) Since children are not the accessories or private property of their parents, but independent people, regardless of what manner of expectations parents have for their children after they grow up, these expectations must remain as ideas in their minds—they cannot be turned into reality. Naturally, even if parents have expectations for their adult children, they should not try to realize them, nor should they use them to make good on their own promises or make any sacrifices or pay any prices for them. So, what should parents do? They should choose to let go after their adult children have acquired independent lives and the ability to survive. Letting go is the only true way to show them respect and take responsibility for them. Always dominating their children, controlling them, or wanting to interfere and participate in their lives and survival is an ignorant and senseless behavior on the part of parents, and it is a childish way of doing things. No matter how high the expectations parents have for their children may be, they cannot change anything and will not possibly become reality. Therefore, if parents are wise, they

should let go of all these realistic or unrealistic expectations, adopt a correct perspective and stance from which to handle their relationship with their children and approach every action taken by their adult children or event that happens to them. That is the principle. Is it appropriate? (Yes, it's appropriate.) If you can accomplish it, this proves that you accept these truths. If you can't, and you insist on doing things your own way, thinking that family affection is the greatest and most important thing, and the most significant thing in the world, as if you can oversee the fate of your children and hold their destiny in your hands, then go ahead and try it—see what the final result will be. It goes without saying that it can only end in miserable defeat, with no good outcome.

In addition to having these expectations for adult children, parents also have a requirement for their own children that is common among all parents in the world, which is that they hope they can be filial children and treat their parents well. Of course, some specific ethnic groups and regions have more specific requirements for their children. For example, in addition to being filial to their parents, they also need to care for their parents till death and arrange their funerals, live with their parents after reaching adulthood, and take responsibility for their parents' livelihoods. This is the last aspect of parental expectations toward their offspring that we will discuss now—demanding that their children be filial and take care of them in their old age. Is this not the original intention of all parents in having children, as well as a basic requirement for their children? (Yes, it is.) Parents ask their children when they are still young and don't understand things: "When you grow up and earn money, who are you going to spend it on? Will you spend it on mommy and daddy?" "Yes." "Will you spend it on daddy's parents?" "Yes." "Will you spend it on mommy's parents?" "Yes." How much money can one child earn in total? They have to support their parents, both sets of grandparents, and even their distant relatives. Tell Me, isn't this a heavy burden for a child, aren't they unlucky? (Yes.) Even though they speak in the innocent, naive way that children do, and don't know what they are actually saying, this reflects a certain reality, which is that parents raise their children with a purpose, and that purpose is neither pure nor simple. When their children are still very young, the parents already start setting demands and are always testing them, asking: "When you grow up, will you support mommy and daddy?" "Yes." "Will you support daddy's parents?" "Yes." "Will you support mommy's parents?" "Yes." "Who do you like the best?" "I like mommy best." Then dad gets jealous, "What about daddy?" "I like daddy best." Mom gets jealous, "Who do you really like the best?" "Mommy and daddy." Then both parents are satisfied. They strive for their children to be filial starting when they have just barely learned to speak, and they hope that their children will treat them well when they grow up. Although these young children cannot express themselves clearly and don't understand much, parents still want to hear a promise in their children's answers. At the same time, they also want to see their own future in their children and hope the children they are raising will not be ungrateful, but filial children who will take responsibility for them, and even more so, on whom they will

be able to rely, and who will support them in their old age. Although they have been asking these questions since their children were young, they are not simple questions. They are completely requirements and hopes arising from the depths of these parents' hearts, very real requirements and very real hopes. So, as soon as their children start to gain an understanding of things, parents hope that they can show concern when their parents are sick, accompany them at their bedside and take care of them, even if it's just pouring water for them to drink. Although they can't do much, they can't provide financial or more practical help, at least their children should display this much filial piety. Parents want to be able to see this filial piety while their children are young, and verify it from time to time. For example, when the parents are not feeling well or are tired from work, they look to see if their children know to bring them drinks, to bring their shoes, to wash their clothes, or to make them a simple meal, even if it's just scrambled eggs with rice, or if they'll ask their parents, "Are you tired? If you are, let me make you something to eat." Some parents go out during holidays and deliberately do not come back at mealtimes to prepare food, just to see if their children have grown up and become sensible, if they know to cook for them, if they know to be filial and considerate, if they can share in their hardships, or if they are heartless ingrates, if they raised them for nothing. While their children are growing up, and even during adulthood, their parents are constantly testing them and prying into this matter, and at the same time, they are constantly making demands of their children, "You shouldn't be such heartless ingrates. Why did we, your parents, even raise you? It was so that you'd take care of us when we got old. Did we raise you for nothing? You should not defy us. It wasn't easy for us to raise you. It was hard work. You should be considerate and know these things." Especially during the so-called rebellious phase, that is, the transition from adolescence to adulthood, some children are not very sensible or discerning, and they often defy their parents and cause trouble. Their parents cry, make a scene, and nag them, saying, "You don't know how much we suffered to look after you when you were young! We didn't expect you to grow up like this, not at all filial, ignorant of how to share the burden of household chores or our hardships. You don't know how difficult all this is for us. You are not filial, you are defiant, you are not a good person!" Besides getting angry at their children for being disobedient or exhibiting radical behavior in their studies or in daily life, another reason for their anger is that they cannot see their own future in their children, or they see that their children will not be filial in the future, that they are neither considerate nor do they feel sorry for their parents, that they don't hold their parents in their hearts, or more precisely, that they don't know to go and be filial to their parents. So, in the eyes of their parents, they cannot place their hopes in such children: They may be ungrateful or defiant, and their parents are heartbroken, feeling that the investments and expenses they made for the sake of their children were in vain, that they made a bad deal, it wasn't worth it, and they regret it, feeling sad, distressed, and in anguish. But they are unable to get back what they spent, and the more they can't get

it back, the more regret they feel, the more they want to demand that their children be filial, saying, “Can’t you be a bit more filial? Can’t you be more sensible? Can’t we be able to count on you when you grow up?” For example, say that parents need money, and they don’t make a peep about it, but their children bring that money home for them. Suppose that parents wish to eat meat or something delicious and nutritious, and they don’t say anything about it, but their children bring that food home for them. Those children are especially considerate of their parents—no matter how busy they are with work or how heavy their own family burdens are—they always bear their parents in mind. Then their parents will think, “Ah, my child can be counted on, they are finally grown up, all the energy spent raising them was worth it, the money spent on them was worth it, we’ve seen a return on our investment.” But if their children do anything that is slightly beneath what their parents expect, they will judge it based on how filial they are, determining that they are unfilial, unreliable, ungrateful, and that they brought them up in vain.

There are also some parents who are occasionally busy with work or running errands, and they come home a bit later to find that their children made dinner without saving any for them. These young people haven’t yet reached that age, they may not think about it or have the habit of doing this, or some people may simply lack that humanity, and not be able to show consideration or care for others. They might also be influenced by their parents, or it could be that their humanity is inherently selfish, so they cook and eat themselves without leaving any for their parents or making an additional portion. When the parents come home and see this, they take it to heart and get upset. What are they upset about? They think that their children are neither filial nor sensible. Especially when it comes to single mothers: Seeing their children behave like this makes them even more upset. They start crying and shouting, “You think it was easy for me to raise you for so many years? I’ve been both a father and a mother to you, raising you all this time. I work so hard, and when I come home, you don’t even cook a meal for me. Even if it’s just a bowl of porridge, if it’s not even hot, it would still be a nice gesture of your love. How can you not understand this at your age?” They don’t understand and don’t act appropriately, but if you didn’t have this expectation of them, would you be so angry? Would you take this matter so seriously? Would you consider it as a criterion of filial piety? If they don’t cook for you, you can still cook for yourself. If they weren’t there, wouldn’t you still have to go on living? If they aren’t filial to you, shouldn’t you have just not given birth to them? If they really never learn how to cherish and take care of you their whole lives, what should you do? Should you treat this matter correctly or be angry, upset, and regretful about it, always at loggerheads with them? What is the right thing to do? (Approach the matter correctly.) All in all, you still don’t know what to do. In the end, you just tell people, “Don’t have children. You regret every child you give birth to. There is nothing good in having children, or in raising them either. They always grow up to be heartless ingrates! It’s better to be good to yourself and not to put your hopes in anyone.

No one is reliable! Everyone says that children can be relied upon, but what can you rely on? It's more like they can rely on you. You treat them well in a hundred different ways, but in return, they think that being a little bit nicer to you is an immense kindness, and that it counts as doing right by you." Is this statement wrong? Is it a kind of opinion, a kind of thought and viewpoint that exists in society? (Yes, it is.) "Everyone says that raising children helps provide for you in old age. It's not easy to get them to even make a meal for you, let alone provide for you in old age. Don't count on it!" What kind of statement is this? Isn't it just a lot of grumbling? (Yes, it is.) How does this grumbling come about? Isn't it because parents' expectations for their children are too high? They have standards and requirements for them, demanding them to be filial, considerate, obedient to every word they say, and to do whatever necessary to be filial and to do what children ought to. Once you set these demands and standards, it is impossible for your children to meet them no matter what they do, and you will be full of grumbling, and have a pile of complaints. No matter what your children do, you will regret giving birth to them, feeling that the losses outweigh the gains and that there is no return on your investment. Isn't this how it is? (Yes.) Isn't this because your goal in raising children is wrong? (Yes.) Is it right or wrong to bring such consequences about? (It's wrong.) Giving rise to such consequences is wrong, and clearly, your initial goal in raising children was also wrong. Raising children is in itself a responsibility and obligation of human beings. Originally, it was human instinct, and later it became an obligation and responsibility. Children do not need to be filial to their parents or to support their parents in their old age, and it is not as if people should only have children if they are filial. The origin of this goal is itself impure, so it ultimately leads people to voice this kind of mistaken thought and viewpoint: "Oh goodness, don't raise children, whatever you do." Since the goal is impure, its resulting thoughts and viewpoints are also incorrect. So, don't they need to be corrected and let go of? (Yes.) How should one let go of and correct them? What kind of goal is a pure one to have? What kind of thought and viewpoint is correct? In other words, what is the correct way to handle one's relationship with their children? First of all, raising children is your choice, you willingly gave birth to them, and they were passive in being born. Apart from the task and responsibility given to humans by God to produce offspring, and apart from God's ordination, for those who are parents, their subjective reason and starting point is that they were willing to give birth to their children. If you are willing to bear children, then you should raise them and nurture them into adults, allowing them to become independent. You are willing to bear children, and you have already gained much from raising them—you have benefited greatly. First of all, you have enjoyed a joyful time living together with your children, and you've also enjoyed the process of raising them. Although this process has had its ups and downs, it was mostly filled with the happiness of accompanying your children and being accompanied by them, which is a necessary process for humanity. You have enjoyed these things, and you've gained a lot already from your children, isn't that right? Children bring happiness and

companionship to their parents, and it's parents who, through paying prices and investing their time and energy, get to watch these small lives gradually grow into adults. Starting as clueless and young lives that don't know anything at all, their children gradually learn to speak, gain the ability to put words together, to learn and differentiate various types of knowledge, to have conversations and communication with their parents, and to view matters fairly. This is the kind of process parents undergo. To them, this process cannot be replaced by any other event or role. Parents have already enjoyed and gained these things from their children, which is a great comfort and reward to them. In fact, just from the act of bearing and raising children, you have already gained a lot from them. As for whether your children will be filial to you, whether you can rely on them before you die, and what you can obtain from them, these things depend on whether you are destined to live together, and it's up to God's ordination. In another respect, what kind of environment your children live in, their living conditions, whether they have the conditions to be able to take care of you, whether they are financially comfortable, and whether they have extra money to provide you with material enjoyment and assistance, also depends on God's ordination. Moreover, subjectively as parents, whether you have the fate to enjoy the material things, money, or emotional comfort that your children give you also depends on God's ordination. Isn't that so? (Yes.) These are not things that can be solicited by humans. You see, some children are not liked by their parents, and their parents are not willing to live with them, but God has ordained for them to live with their parents, so they are unable to travel far away or leave their parents. They are stuck with their parents for their entire lives—you couldn't drive them away if you tried. Some children, on the other hand, have parents who are very willing to be with them; they are inseparable, always missing each other, but for various reasons, they are unable to reside in the same city as their parents, or even in the same country. It is difficult for them to see each other's faces and talk to one another; even though communication methods have become so developed, and video chat is a possibility, it is still different from living together day in and day out. Their children for whatever reason go abroad, work or live in another place after getting married, and so on, and they are separated from their parents by a long, long distance. It is not easy to meet up even once, and making a phone or video call depends on the time. Because of the time difference or other inconveniences, they are unable to communicate with their parents very often. What are these major aspects related to? Aren't they all related to God's ordination? (Yes.) It is not something that can be decided by the subjective wishes of either parent or child; most of all, it depends on God's ordination. In another respect, parents worry about whether they can rely on their children in the future. What do you want to rely on them for? To bring tea and pour water? What kind of dependence is that? Can't you do that yourself? If you are healthy and able to move and take care of yourself, to do everything on your own, isn't that great? Why do you have to rely on others to serve you? Is it really happiness to enjoy your children's care and companionship, as well as

them serving you both at the dinner table and away from it? Not necessarily. If you are unable to move, and they really do have to serve you both at table and away from it, does that constitute happiness for you? If you were given a choice, would you choose to be healthy and not need your children's care, or would you choose to be paralyzed in bed with your children by your side? Which one would you choose? (To be healthy.) It's so much better to be healthy. Whether you live to be 80, 90, or even 100 years old, you can keep taking care of yourself. This is a good quality of life. Although you may grow old, your wits may become slow, you may have a bad memory, eat less, do things more slowly and not as well, and going out is not as convenient, it's still great that you're able to take care of your own basic needs. It's enough to occasionally receive a phone call from your children to say hello or have them come home and stay with you during the holidays. Why demand any more from them? You're always relying on your children; will you only be happy when they become your slaves? Isn't it selfish for you to think that way? You're always demanding that your children be filial and that you be able to rely on them—what is there to rely on? Did your parents rely on you? If your parents didn't even rely on you, why do you think you should rely on your own children? Isn't that being unreasonable? (Yes.)

Regarding the matter of expecting their children to be filial to them, in one respect, parents must know that everything is orchestrated by God and depends on God's ordination. In another, people have to be reasonable, and by giving birth to their children parents are inherently experiencing something special in life. They have already gained a lot from their children and come to appreciate the sorrows and joys of parenting. This process is a rich experience in their lives, and of course it is also a memorable one. It compensates for the shortcomings and ignorance that exist in their humanity. As parents, they have already gained what they ought to gain out of raising their children. If they are not content with this and demand that their children serve them as attendants or slaves, and expect their children to repay them for raising them by showing their parents filial piety, taking care of them in their old age, sending them off in burial, placing them in a coffin, keeping their body from rotting in the house, weeping bitterly for them when they pass, going into mourning and grieving them for three years, etc., letting their children use these to pay back their debt, then it becomes unreasonable and inhumane. You see, in terms of how God teaches people to treat their parents, He only requires them to be filial to their parents, and does not at all require that children support their parents until death. God does not give people this responsibility and obligation—He never said anything like this. God only advises children to be filial to their parents. Showing filial piety to parents is a general statement with a broad scope. Speaking about it in specific terms today, it means fulfilling your responsibilities within your ability and conditions—that's enough. It's that simple, that is the only requirement for children. So, how should parents understand this? God does not demand that "Children must be filial to their parents, take care of them in their old age, and send them off." Therefore, those

who are parents should let go of their selfishness and not expect everything about their children to revolve around them just because they gave birth to them. If children do not revolve around their parents and do not consider them the center of their lives, then it isn't right for parents to constantly scold them, plague their conscience, and say things like "You are ungrateful, unfilial, and disobedient, and even after raising you for so long I still can't rely on you," always scolding their children like this and putting burdens on them. Demanding that one's children be filial and accompany them, take care of them in old age and bury them, and constantly think about them wherever they go, is an inherently wrong course of action and inhumane thought and idea. This kind of thinking may exist to a greater or lesser degree in different countries or among different ethnic groups, but looking at traditional Chinese culture, Chinese people particularly emphasize filial piety. From ancient times to the present, this has always been discussed and emphasized as a part of people's humanity and a standard for measuring whether someone is good or bad. Of course, in society, there is also a common practice and public opinion that if children are not filial, their parents will also feel ashamed, and the children will feel unable to bear this mark on their reputation. Under the influence of various factors, parents are also deeply poisoned by this traditional thinking, demanding without thinking or discernment that their children be filial. What is the point of raising children? It is not for your own purposes, but a responsibility and obligation that God has given you. One aspect is that raising children belongs to human instinct, while another is that it is a part of human responsibility. You choose to give birth to children due to instinct and responsibility, not for the sake of preparing for old age and being taken care of when you're old. Isn't this viewpoint correct? (Yes.) Can people without children avoid getting old? Does getting old necessarily mean that one will be miserable? Not necessarily, right? People without children can still live to old age, and some are even healthy, enjoy their later years, and go to the grave in peace. Can people with children definitely enjoy their later years in happiness and health? (Not necessarily.) Therefore, the health, happiness, and living situation of parents who reach old age, as well as the quality of their material life, actually have little to do with their children being filial to them, and there is no direct relationship between the two. Your living situation, quality of life, and physical condition in old age are related to what God has ordained for you and the living environment He arranges for you, and they have no direct relationship to whether your children are filial or not. Your children are not obligated to bear the responsibility for your living situation in later years. Isn't that right? (Yes.) Therefore, regardless of the attitude children have toward their parents, whether they are willing to take care of them, do a rough job of it, or do not want to take care of them at all, it is their attitude to have as children. Let's put talking from the perspective of children aside for now, but speak instead only from the perspective of parents. Parents should not demand that their children must be filial, must take care of them in their old age, and must bear the burden of their parents' later life—there is no need for that. In one respect, it is an attitude that

parents should have toward their children, and in another, it is the dignity that parents should possess. Of course, there is also a more important aspect: It is the principle that parents as created beings should abide by in treating their children. If your children are attentive, filial, and willing to take care of you, you don't need to refuse them; if they are unwilling to do so, you don't need to moan and groan all day long, feel uncomfortable or dissatisfied in your heart, or hold grudges against your children. You should take responsibility and bear the burden for your own life and survival so far as you are able, and you should not put it off on others, especially your children. You should proactively and correctly face a life without the company or help of your children, and even if you are distant from your children, you can still face whatever life brings you on your own. Of course, if you require essential help from your children, you can ask them for it, but it should not be based on the idea that your children must be filial to you or that you must rely on them. Instead, both parties should approach doing things for each other from the perspective of fulfilling their responsibilities, so as to handle the relationship between parent and child rationally. Of course, if both sides are rational, give each other space, and respect each other, in the end, they will definitely be able to get along better and more harmoniously, cherish this familial affection, and cherish their care, concern, and love for each other. Of course, doing these things based on mutual respect and understanding is more humane and appropriate. Isn't that the case? (Yes.) When children can approach and carry out their responsibilities correctly, and as their parents, you no longer put any excessive or extraneous demands on your children, then you will find that everything they do is quite natural and normal, and you will think it's a pretty good thing. You won't treat them with the same critical eye as before, finding whatever they do displeasing, wrong, or insufficient to repay the debt of having raised them. On the contrary, you will face everything with the right attitude, be grateful to God for the company and filial piety your children provide, and think that your children are pretty decent, and that they are humane. Even without the company and filial piety of your children, you won't blame God, nor will you regret raising them, let alone hate them. In short, it is paramount for parents to correctly face whatever attitude their children have toward themselves. Facing this correctly means not placing any excessive demands on them, not behaving extremely toward them, and certainly not making any inhumane or negative critique or judgments about anything they do. That way, you will begin to live with dignity. As parents, according to your own ability, conditions, and of course, God's ordination, you ought to enjoy whatever God gives you, and if He doesn't give you something, then you should also thank God, and submit to Him. You shouldn't compare yourself to others, saying "Look at so-and-so's family, their child is so filial, always taking his parents out for a drive and going on vacations in the south. Every time they come back, they are loaded with bags of all sizes. That child is so filial! Just look at their kid, he's someone they can rely on. You'd have to raise a son like that to have someone to take care of you in old age. Now look at our son: He comes home empty-handed and

never buys us anything; not only is he empty-handed, but he rarely comes home at all. If I don't call him, he doesn't come home. But once he comes back home, all he wants is food and drink, and he doesn't even want to do any work." Since that's the case, just don't call him back home. If you call him back home, aren't you asking to be miserable? You know that if he comes home, he will just eat and drink for free, so why call him? If you don't have any motive for doing so, would you still call him home? Isn't it just because you are debasing yourself and being selfish? You always want to rely on him, hoping you didn't raise him in vain, hoping that the one you yourself raised may not be a heartless ingrate. You always want to prove that the one you raised is not a heartless ingrate, that your child is a filial one. What's the use of proving this? Can't you live your own life well? Can't you live without children? (Yes.) You can go on living. There are too many examples like this, aren't there?

Some people cling to a rotten and outdated notion, saying, "It doesn't matter whether people have children to be filial to them and whether their children are filial while they are still alive, but when they die, their children must carry them out in a coffin. If they don't have their children at their side, no one will know when they die, and their body will rot in their house." So what if no one will know? When you die, you're dead, and you're no longer conscious of anything anymore. When your body dies, your soul immediately leaves it. No matter where the body is or what it looks like after death, isn't it dead anyway? Even if it is carried out in a coffin at a grand funeral and buried in the ground, the body will still rot, won't it? People think, "Having children by your side to put you in a coffin, to wear burial clothes for you, to put on makeup, and to arrange a grand funeral is a glorious thing. If you die without anyone arranging a funeral for you or sending you off, it's like your whole life has had no proper conclusion." Is this idea correct? (No, it isn't.) Nowadays, young people don't pay much attention to these things, but there are still people in remote areas and older people with little insight who have the thought and viewpoint deeply planted in their heart that children must take care of their parents in old age and send them off. No matter how you fellowship about the truth, they do not accept it—what is the final consequence of this? The consequence is that they suffer greatly. This tumor has long been hidden inside of them, and they will be poisoned by it. When they dig it out and remove it, they will no longer be poisoned by it, and their lives will be free. Any wrong actions are caused by wrong thoughts. If they are afraid of dying and rotting in their house, they will always be thinking, "I have to raise a son. When my son grows up, I can't let him go very far away. What if he's not by my side when I die? Not having someone who will take care of me in old age or send me off would be my greatest regret in life! If I have someone to do this for me, then my life would not have been lived in vain. It would be a perfect life. No matter what, I cannot be the subject of ridicule by my neighbors." Isn't this a rotten ideology? (Yes, it is.) It is narrow-minded and degenerate, attaching too much importance to the physical body! In reality, the physical body is worthless: After experiencing birth, old age, sickness, and death, there is nothing

left. Only if people have gained the truth while alive, when they are saved, then they will live forever. If you haven't gained the truth, then when your body dies and decays, there will be nothing left; no matter how filial your children are to you, you won't be able to enjoy it. When a person dies and their children bury them in a coffin, can that old body feel anything? Can it perceive anything? (No, it cannot.) It has no perception at all. But in life, people attach great importance to this matter, demanding a lot from their children in whether they can send them off—which is foolish, isn't it? (Yes, it is.) Some children say to their parents, "We believe in God. While you are alive, we will be filial to you, take care of you, and serve you. But when you die, we will not arrange a funeral for you." When parents hear this, they get angry. They don't get angry about anything else you say, but as soon as you mention this, they explode, saying, "What did you say? You unfilial thing, I'll break your legs! I'd rather not have given birth to you—I'll kill you!" Nothing else you say bothers them, only this. During their lifetime, their children had many opportunities to treat them well, but they insisted that they send their parents off. Because their children started believing in God, they told them, "When you die, we won't hold a ceremony for you: We'll cremate you and find a place to store the urn. While you are still alive, we'll let you enjoy the blessing of having us around, we'll provide you with food and clothing, and spare you from being wronged." Isn't this realistic? The parents reply, "None of that matters. What I want is for you to arrange a funeral for me after I die. If you don't care for me in my old age and send me off, then I'll never let it go!" When a person is this foolish, they can't understand such simple reasoning, and no matter how you explain it to them they still won't comprehend—they are like an animal. Therefore, if you pursue the truth, as parents, you should first and foremost let go of the traditional, rotten, and degenerate thoughts and viewpoints surrounding whether children are filial, care for you in old age, and send you off with a burial, and approach this matter correctly. If your children truly are filial to you, then accept it from them correctly. But if your children don't have the conditions, energy, or desire to be filial to you, and when you grow old, they can't take care of you by your side or send you off, then you don't need to demand it or feel sad. Everything is in God's hands. Birth has its time, death has its place, and God has ordained where people are born and where they die. Even if your children make any promises to you, saying, "When you die, I will definitely be by your side; I will never let you down," God hasn't orchestrated these circumstances. When you're about to die, your children may happen not to be by your side, and no matter how hard they try to rush back, they may not make it in time—they won't get to see you for the last time. It may be three to five days since you breathed your last breath, your body has all but decayed, and only then do they come back. Are their promises good for anything? They can't even be the master of their own lives. I've already told you this, but you just don't believe it. You insist on making them promise. Are their promises good for anything? You're satisfying yourself with illusions, and you think that your children can stand by their promises. Do you really think that they can? They can't. Every single day, where

they'll be and what they'll do, as well as what their future holds—they don't even know these things themselves. Their promises are actually serving to deceive you, giving you a false sense of security, and you believe them. You still can't comprehend that a person's fate is in God's hands.

How much parents and their children are fated to be together, and how much they can gain from their children—unbelievers call this "receiving assistance" or "not receiving assistance." We don't know what it means. Ultimately, whether one can rely on their children is, in plain terms, predestined and ordained by God. It's not like everything plays out exactly how you wish. Of course, everyone wants things to go well and to reap benefits from their children. But why have you never considered whether you are fated for that, whether it is written in your destiny? How long the bond between you and your children will last, whether any job you do in life will have a connection with your children, whether God has arranged for your children to participate in the significant events of your life, and whether your children will be among those involved when you experience a major life event—all of these depend on God's ordination. If God has not ordained it, then after raising your children into adulthood, even if you don't drive them out of the house, when the time comes they will leave on their own. This is something that people need to comprehend. If you can't comprehend this matter, you will always hold on to personal desires and demands, and establish various rules and accept various ideologies for the sake of your own physical enjoyment. What will happen in the end? You'll find out when you die. You have done a lot of foolish things in your lifetime, and you have thought of many unrealistic things that do not conform to facts or to God's ordination. Won't it be too late to realize all this on your deathbed? Isn't this the case? (Yes.) Take advantage while you are still alive and your brain is not yet muddled, while you are still able to accept certain positive things, and quickly accept them. Accepting them does not mean that you turn them into an ideological theory or slogan, but that you try to do these things and put them into practice. Gradually let go of your own ideas and selfish desires, and don't think that, as parents, whatever you do is right and acceptable, or that your children ought to accept it. This kind of reasoning does not exist anywhere in the world. Parents are human beings—are their children not? Children are not your accessories or slaves; they are independent created beings—what does whether they are filial or not have to do with you? Therefore, no matter what kind of parents you are, how old your children are, or whether your children have reached the age of being filial to you or the age of living independently, as parents you should adopt these ideas and establish the correct thoughts and viewpoints on how to treat your children. You should not go to extremes, nor should you measure everything according to those wrong, decadent, or outdated thoughts and viewpoints. Those thoughts and viewpoints may align with human notions, human interests, and the physical and emotional needs of humans, but they are not the truth. Regardless of whether you think they are proper or improper, these things can only bring you various troubles and burdens in the end, trap

you in various predicaments, and make you reveal your hotheadedness to your children. You'll state your reasoning, they'll state theirs, and in the end, you'll both hate each other and blame one another. Family won't act like family anymore: You'll turn on each other and become enemies. If everyone accepts the truth and the correct thoughts and viewpoints, these matters will be easy to face, and the contradictions and disputes that arise from them will be resolved. However, if they insist on traditional notions, not only will these problems remain unresolved, but their contradictions will deepen. Traditional culture is not a criterion in itself for evaluating matters. It has to do with humanity, and things of the flesh like people's affections, selfish desires, and hotheadedness are mixed up in it. Of course, there is also something that is the most essential to traditional culture, that is, hypocrisy. People use the filialness of their own children to prove that they educated them well and their children possess humanity; similarly, children use filialness toward their parents to prove that they are not ungrateful people but humble and modest gentlemen and ladies, thereby gaining a foothold amid various races and groups in society and making it their means for survival. This is inherently the most hypocritical and essential aspect within traditional culture, and it is not a criterion for evaluating matters. Therefore, with regard to parents, they should let go of these requirements for their children and use the correct thoughts and viewpoints to treat their children and view their children's attitudes toward themselves. If you do not possess or understand the truth, you should at least look at it from the perspective of humanity. How does one look at it from the perspective of humanity? Children living in this society, in various groups, job positions, and social classes do not lead easy lives. They have things they have to face and deal with in various different environments. They have their own lives and a destiny established by God. They also have their own survival methods. Of course, in modern society, the pressures put on any independent person are very great. They face problems of survival, relationships between superiors and subordinates, and problems having to do with children, etc.—the pressure of all this is huge. To be fair, no one has it easy. Especially in today's chaotic, fast-paced living environment, full of competition and bloody conflict everywhere, nobody's life is easy—everybody's is rather difficult. I won't go into how this came about. Living in such an environment, if a person does not believe in God and does not fulfill their duty, they have no path left for them to take. Their only path is to pursue the world, to keep themselves alive, to constantly adapt to this world, and to fight for their future and survival at all costs in order to get through each day. In fact, every day is painful to them, and they are struggling through every day. Therefore, if parents go on to additionally demand that their children do this or that, it will undoubtedly add insult to injury, wrecking and tormenting their body and mind. Parents have their own social circles, lifestyles, and living environments, and children have their own living environments and spaces, as well as their own living backgrounds. If parents intervene too much or make excessive demands on their children, asking them to do this and that for them in order to repay the efforts they once put forth for the sake of their

children; if you look at it from this perspective, it is quite inhumane, isn't it? Regardless of how their children live or survive, or the difficulties they encounter in society, parents have no responsibility or obligation to do anything for them. That being said, parents should also refrain from adding any troubles or burdens to their children's complicated lives or difficult living situations. This is what parents ought to do. Don't demand too much from your children, and don't blame them too much. You should treat them fairly and equally, and consider their situation with empathy. Of course, parents should also handle their own lives. Children will respect parents like this, and they will be worthy of respect. As parents, if you believe in God and fulfill your duties, then regardless of the duties you fulfill in God's house, you won't have time to think about things like demanding that your children be filial and relying on them to support you in old age. If there are still people like this, they are not true believers, and they certainly aren't pursuers of the truth. They are all just fools and nonbelievers. Isn't that the case? (Yes.) If parents are busy, if they have duties to fulfill and are busy with work, then they certainly should not bring up whether their children are filial or not. If parents are always bringing it up, saying, "My children aren't filial: I can't rely on them, and they won't be able to support me in old age," then they are just indolent and idle, looking for trouble without a cause. Isn't that the case? What should you do if you encounter parents like this? Teach them a lesson. How should you do it? Just say, "Are you unable to live on your own? Are you to the point where you can no longer eat or drink? Are you to the point where you can no longer survive? If you're able to live, then go ahead and live; if you're not, then die!" Do you dare say something like this? Tell Me, is it inhumane to say it? (I don't dare say that.) You're unable to say it, aren't you? You can't bear to say it. (That's right.) When you get a little older, you'll be able to say it. If your parents have done too many infuriating things, then you will be able to say it. They have been really good to you and never hurt you; if they do hurt you then you'll be able to say it. Isn't that so? (Yes.) If they're always demanding that you come home, saying, "Come home and bring me money, you ungrateful child!" and scold you and curse you every day, then you will be able to say it. You'll say, "If you're able to live, then go ahead and live; if not, then die! Can't you go on living without children? Look at those elderly people who don't have children, aren't they living well and happy enough? They take care of their own lives every single day, and if they have some free time, they go out for a walk and exercise their bodies. Each day, their lives appear quite fulfilling. Look at you—you lack nothing, so why can't you go on living? You're debasing yourself and you deserve to die! Should we be filial to you? We are not your slaves, nor are we your private property. You have to walk your own path, and we are not obligated to bear this responsibility. We've given you enough to eat, to wear, and to use. Why are you messing around? If you keep messing around, we'll send you to a nursing home!" This is how one should deal with parents like that, isn't it? You can't spoil them. If their children are not there to take care of them, they cry and sob all day, as if the sky is falling, as if they can't go on living. If they can't go on living, let them

die and see for themselves—but they won't die, they cherish their lives too much. Their philosophy of living is to depend on others to live better, freer, and more willfully. They have to build their happiness and joy on the suffering of their children. Shouldn't these parents die? (Yes.) If their children pay them company and serve them every day, then they feel happy, joyful, and proud, while their children have to suffer and take it. Shouldn't these parents die? (Yes.)

Let's conclude our fellowship here today concerning the last item of parents' expectations for their offspring. Has the matter been made clear regarding parents' approach to whether their children are filial, reliable, take care of them in their old age, and send them off? (Yes.) As parents, you should not make such demands, have such thoughts and viewpoints, or place such hopes in your children. Your children do not owe you anything. It is your responsibility to raise them; whether you do this well or not is another matter. They do not owe you anything: They are good to you and take care of you purely out of fulfilling a responsibility, not to repay any debt, because they owe you nothing. Therefore, they are not obligated to be filial to you or to be someone you can depend and rely on. Do you understand? (Yes.) They take care of you, are someone you can rely on, and give you a little money to spend—this is just their responsibility as children, it is not being filial. We previously mentioned the metaphor of crows feeding their parents and lambs kneeling to suck milk. Even animals understand this doctrine and can carry it out, of course humans should too! Humans are the most advanced created beings among all living things, created by God with thoughts, humanity, and emotions. As humans, they understand this without needing to be taught. Whether children can be filial or not depends broadly on whether God has ordained a destiny to exist between you both, whether a complementary and mutually supportive relationship will exist between you, and whether you can enjoy this blessing; more minutely, it depends on whether your children possess humanity. If they truly possess conscience and reason, then you don't need to educate them—they will understand it from a young age. If they understand it all from a young age, don't you think they will understand even more as they grow up? Isn't that the case? (Yes.) From a young age they understand such doctrines as "Earning money to spend on mom and dad is what good children do," so won't they understand it even more when they grow up? Do they still need to be educated? Do parents still need to teach them such ideological lessons? There is no need. Therefore, it is a foolish course of action for parents to demand that their children must be filial, take care of them in their old age, and send them off. Are the children you give birth to not human? Are they trees or plastic flowers? Do they really not understand, do you really have to educate them? Even dogs understand this. Look, when two little dogs are with their mother, if other dogs start running at their mother and barking, they won't stand for it: They protect their mother from behind the fence and don't let other dogs bark at her. Even dogs understand this, of course humans should too! There is no need to teach them: Fulfilling responsibilities is something that humans can do, and

parents don’t need to instill such thoughts in their children—they will do it on their own. If they don’t possess humanity, then even under the right conditions, they won’t do it; if they do possess humanity and have the right conditions, then they will naturally do it. Therefore, parents don’t need to demand, prompt, or blame their children concerning whether or not they are filial. This is all unnecessary. If you can enjoy the filial piety of your children, it counts as a blessing. If you cannot enjoy it, it does not count as your loss. Everything is ordained by God, isn’t it? Okay, let’s end our fellowship here for today. Goodbye!

May 27, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (20)

The diverse topics we are fellowshiping about involve practical matters of daily life. After listening to this content, don't you feel that the truth is not empty, that it isn't a slogan, a kind of theory, or especially a kind of knowledge? What is the truth related to? (It is related to our real life.) Truth is related to real life, to various events happening in real life. It touches upon all aspects of human life, on various issues people encounter in daily life, and it especially relates to the goals people pursue and the paths they take. None of these truths are empty, and they are certainly not dispensable; they are all essential for people to have. In daily life, when it comes to certain practical issues, if you can approach, resolve, and handle these things based on the truth principles we fellowship about, then you are entering into the truth reality. If in your daily life, you stick to your original thoughts and viewpoints toward these issues involving the truth and do not change, if you approach these issues from your own human perspective, and the principles and basis for how you view these things have nothing to do with the truth, then obviously you are not someone who is entering into the truth reality, nor are you someone who pursues the truth. No matter what aspect of the truth we are fellowshiping about, the topics involved are all about correcting and reversing the erroneous thoughts, viewpoints, notions, and imaginings people have in diverse matters, so that they might have correct thoughts and viewpoints on the various matters they come into contact with in daily life, and that they might view these things that happen in real life from the correct perspectives and standpoints, then use the truth as their criterion to resolve and handle them. Listening to sermons is not about being equipped with doctrine or knowledge, it's not about broadening one's horizons or gaining insight—it's about understanding the truth. The purpose of understanding the truth is not to enrich one's thoughts or spirit, or to enrich one's humanity, but to enable people not to break away from real life while on the path of believing in God, and, whenever they encounter various things in daily life, to view people and things, comport themselves, and act with God's words as their basis and the truth as their criterion. If you have been listening to sermons for this many years and have made progress in the areas of doctrine and knowledge, and you feel spiritually enriched and your thoughts have become more elevated, but when you encounter many things in daily life, you still cannot view these issues from the right perspective, nor can you persist in practicing, viewing people and things, comporting yourself, and acting according to the truth principles, then clearly, you are not someone who pursues the truth, nor someone who is entering into the truth reality. More seriously, you have not yet reached the point of submitting to the truth, submitting to God, or fearing Him. Of course, it can be very clearly confirmed that you have not embarked on the path to salvation. Isn't that so? (Yes.)

Based on your real stature and circumstances right now, in what aspects do you feel that you have entered into the truth reality? In what aspects do you have hope for

salvation? In which areas have you yet to enter into the truth reality but fall far short of the standard for salvation? Can you measure this? (In situations where antichrists and evil people disturb the work of the church, causing harm to the interests of God's house, I lack a sense of justice and genuine loyalty to God. I am unable to stand up and defend the interests of God's house, and I do not have a testimony in these crucial matters. In this respect, I am clearly falling far short of the standard for salvation.) This is a real problem. Let everyone discuss it further. Apart from recognizing your stature involving issues of discerning and rejecting antichrists, in other respects, what things have you encountered in your daily life that make you feel that you haven't entered into the reality, that you cannot practice according to the truth principles, and although you understand doctrine, you still lack clarity in the truth, you lack a clear path, and you don't know how to align with God's will, or how to abide by the principles? (After fulfilling my duty for so many years, I thought I could leave my family, abandon my career, and let go to some extent of my emotions toward my parents and relatives. However, occasionally I have met with certain real-life situations that made me realize that there are still emotions inside of me, and I want to be by my parents' side taking care of and being filial to them. If I am unable to do this, I feel that I owe them. Through listening to God's recent fellowship about parents not being our creditors, I realized that I don't understand this aspect of the truth, and I haven't submitted to the truth or to God.) Who else would like to keep going? Do you not encounter difficulties in your daily life? Or do you live in a vacuum and never face any problems? Do you encounter difficulties when fulfilling your duties? Are you ever perfunctory? (Yes.) Do you ever indulge in fleshly ease and comfort? Do you work for fame and status? Do you often worry or feel anxious about your prospects and alternatives? (Yes.) Then how do you handle these situations when you face them? Are you able to use the truth to resolve them? You hold on to a backup plan when you are promoted, and you worry about your prospects and destination, misunderstand and blame God, or flaunt your qualifications when being let go from your position—do you have these problems? (Yes.) How do you handle and resolve these situations when you meet with them? Do you follow your selfish desires, or can you uphold the truth principles, forsake the flesh, and forsake your corrupt disposition in order to practice the truth? (God, whenever I encounter these situations, I doctrinally understand that I shouldn't act according to the preferences of my flesh or my corrupt disposition. Sometimes my conscience is stirred and feels a sense of reproach, and I make some changes in my behavior. But it's not because my viewpoints on these matters have changed, or I am able to practice the truth. Sometimes, if my selfish desires are relatively strong, and I feel that this difficulty is too great, then even if I get a burst of energy, I still can't practice it. At that point, I will follow my corrupt disposition, and not even the outward good behavior remains.) What kind of situation is this? Do you end up practicing the truth and standing firm in your testimony, or do you fail? (I fail.) Do you reflect afterward and feel remorse? Can you make improvements when facing similar

situations again? (After failing, I will feel a bit of unease in my conscience, and when I eat and drink God's words I can relate them to myself, but the next time I encounter these situations, the same corrupt disposition still reveals itself. There's relatively little progress in this aspect.) Don't most people find themselves in this state? How do you view this matter? Whenever they meet with similar situations, in the ways that people handle them, apart from their behavior improving due to the effect of their consciences, or their behavior sometimes being relatively noble and sometimes relatively base according to their situations and states at the time, and according to their differing moods—aside from these, their practice has nothing to do with the truth. What is the problem with this? Does it represent a person's stature? What kind of stature is it? Is it a small stature, or is it weakness, a deficiency in their humanity, or a manifestation of not practicing the truth? What is it? (A small stature.) When one's stature is small, they cannot practice the truth, and because they cannot practice the truth, their stature is small. How small is it? It means that you haven't yet obtained the truth in this matter. What does it mean that you haven't yet obtained the truth? It means that God's words have not yet become your life; God's words are still a kind of text, a doctrine, or an argument to you. They have not yet been wrought into you or become your life. Consequently, these so-called truths that you understand are merely a kind of doctrine or slogan. Why do I say this? Because you can't turn this doctrine into your reality. When you face things in daily life, you don't handle them according to the truth; you still handle them according to Satan's corrupt disposition and under the influence of conscience. So obviously, at the very least, you don't have the truth in this matter, and you haven't obtained life. Not obtaining life means not having life; not having life means that in this matter, you haven't been saved at all, and you are still living under Satan's power. No matter whether what is practiced under the influence of conscience is good behavior or a kind of manifestation, it does not represent life; it is merely a manifestation of normal humanity. If this manifestation has the influence of conscience thrown in, at best, it is a kind of good behavior. If conscience is not the leading factor, but rather one's corrupt disposition is, then this behavior cannot be regarded as good behavior; it is the corrupt disposition revealed. So, in which matters have you already made the truth a reality, and obtained life? In which matters have you not yet gained the truth and made it your life, and not yet made the truth your reality? In other words, in which matters are you living out God's words and taking them as your criteria, and in which matters have you still not done so? Calculate how many there are. If you have calculated them all, yet unfortunately there isn't a single matter in which you acted or lived out based on God's words, but instead acted according to your hotheadedness, to your notions, to the preferences or desires of the flesh, or to your corrupt disposition, then what will be the final result? The result will be bad, will it not? (Yes.) As of today, you have listened to sermons for many years, forsaking your family, abandoning your career, suffering hardship, and paying the price. If this is the result, is it something to be happy and

celebrate or something to be sad and worried about? (Sad and worried.) A person who doesn't make the truth a reality, who doesn't make God's words their life, what kind of person is that? Isn't it a person who lives under the complete control of Satan's corrupt disposition, who is unable to see the hope of salvation? (Yes.) Have you ever thought about these questions when you normally read God's words and examine yourselves? Most people haven't, right? Most people just think, "I started believing in God at the age of seventeen, and now I'm forty-seven. I've believed in God for so many years, and I've been hunted several times, but God has kept me safe and helped me to escape. I've lived in caves and grass huts, gone days and nights without eating, and spent so many hours without sleep. I've endured so much suffering and run so many miles, all for the sake of fulfilling my duty, doing my job, and completing my assignment. My hope for salvation is so great, I've already begun walking the path of salvation. I'm so lucky! Thanks truly be to God. This is His grace! I was worthless in the eyes of the secular world, no one thought much of me, and I never considered myself anyone special, but because of God's raising up, because He lifted me—the needy—out of the dung heap, I was put on the path of salvation, allowing me the honor to fulfill my duty in His house. He elevated me and He loves me! Now I understand so much truth and have worked for so many years. Receiving my reward in the future is a definite thing. Who could take that away?" If these were the only things you could think of when you examine yourselves, wouldn't that be troublesome? (Yes.) Tell Me, you've believed in God for so many years, you've suffered so much, traveled so far, and done so much work. Why after this much believing have some people now been moved to Group B? Why do many leaders and workers now have to repay offerings and carry the burden of debts? What's going on? Haven't they already been saved? Don't they already have the truth and haven't they obtained life? Some people considered themselves to be the pillars and cornerstones of God's house, to be rare talents here. How are things now? If this many years of suffering and paying the price had resulted in them receiving life and having the truth reality, in them submitting to God's words, having true fear of God, and faithfully fulfilling duties, would these people have been dismissed or moved to Group B? Would they have been burdened with debt or received a major demerit? Would these problems have happened? This is quite embarrassing, isn't it? (Yes.) Have you ever thought about what the issue is? How much suffering a person can endure or how much of a price they pay for their belief in God is not a sign of salvation or of entering into the truth reality, nor is it a sign that they have life. Then, what is a sign of having life and the truth reality? Broadly speaking, it's whether a person can practice the truth and handle matters according to principles; specifically, it's whether a person views people and things, comports themselves and acts with the truth principles, whether they can act according to the truth principles. If, in your fulfillment of duties, you can overcome your own self, endure suffering, and pay the price in everything you do, but unfortunately you are unable to achieve the most crucial point, that is, you cannot uphold the truth principles;

if no matter what you do, you always consider your own interests, always seek a way out for yourself, always want to preserve yourself; and if you never uphold the truth principles, and God's words to you are mere doctrine, then don't even talk about whether you are valuable, or whether your life has worth or not; at the most basic point, you do not have life. A person without life is the most pitiable. To believe in God and yet not enter into the truth reality, to not obtain life, is the most pitiful kind of person and the most lamentable thing. Isn't that so? (Yes.) I don't ask that you are able to practice according to the truth principles in everything, but at the very least, in the performance of your significant duties and in important matters in your daily life involving principles, you should be able to act according to the truth principles. You must at the very least achieve this standard in order to see the hope of salvation in yourself. But as for right now, you haven't even risen to the most fundamental requirement, you haven't achieved any of it. This is a very lamentable and deeply concerning matter.

In the first three years that they believe in God, people are happy and joyful. Every day they think about receiving blessings and having a wonderful destination. They believe that external good behaviors, such as suffering for God, running around and helping others more, doing more good deeds, and offering up more money, are things that believers in God ought to do. After believing in God for three to five years, although they understand some doctrines, people still believe in God according to their notions and imaginings. They live according to good behaviors, their consciences, and good humanity, rather than living according to the truth principles, or making God's words their life and the criterion by which they view people and things, and comport themselves and act. What path are such people following? Is it not the path that Paul followed? (It is.) Do you not currently find yourself in this state? If you find yourself in this state most of the time, then is listening to so many sermons useful? Regardless of which kind of sermons you listen to, you are not listening in order to understand the truth, or to view people and things, and comport yourself and act based on the truth principles in your daily life, instead you are listening for the sake of enriching your spiritual world and your human experiences. In that case, there is no need for you to listen to them, is there? Some people say, "Not listening to sermons won't do. If I don't listen to sermons, I lack enthusiasm in my belief in God, and I don't have enthusiasm or motivation when it comes to performing my duty. By listening to sermons every now and then, I have a bit of enthusiasm in my belief, I feel a bit more fulfilled and enriched, and then when I encounter any difficulties or negativity in my duty, I have some motivation, and I don't become negative most of the time." Is listening to sermons done for the sake of achieving this effect? Most people who have listened to sermons over the years don't leave the church, no matter how they are dealt with, disciplined, or chastened. Achieving this effect has a certain relationship with listening to sermons, but what I want to see is not merely that the dwindling fire in your heart is reignited after you listen to each sermon. It's not just about that. Mere enthusiasm is useless. Enthusiasm shouldn't be used for doing evil

or for violating the truth principles. Enthusiasm is for making you pursue the truth with more of a goal and direction—you should strive toward the truth principles and practice them. So, can listening to sermons achieve this effect? After each sermon, it is like there is a fire in your heart, it is like you have been charged with electricity or pumped full of air. You feel replete with enthusiasm again, you know which area you should push toward next, without ever slacking or being negative, and seldom being weak. However, these manifestations are not the conditions for attaining salvation. There are several conditions for attaining salvation: Firstly, you must be willing to read God's words and listen to sermons; secondly, and this is also the most important condition, no matter what big or small matters you encounter in your daily life, especially matters related to performing your duty and to the major work of God's house, you must be able to seek the truth principles, rather than acting based on your own ideas, doing whatever you wish, or being arbitrary and reckless. The purpose of Me tirelessly fellowshiping with you about the truth and explaining the principles of various matters like this is not to make you do the impossible or to force you beyond your capabilities, and it isn't merely to make you enthusiastic. Rather, it's to make you understand God's will more accurately, to understand the principles and basis for doing various things, and how people should act in order to satisfy God's will, not acting based on their corrupt dispositions, thoughts and viewpoints, and knowledge when faced with matters, but replacing these things with the truth principles. This is one of the principal ways God saves people. It's so that you can take God's words as your basis and principles in everything you encounter, and so that His words reign in every matter. In other words, it is so that you are able to handle and resolve every matter based on God's words, rather than relying on human intellect and preferences, or approaching them according to human tastes, ambitions, and desires. Through this manner of preaching and fellowshiping about the truth, God's words and the truth are wrought into people, enabling them to live with the truth as their reality. This is the mark of salvation. No matter what things you face, you should put more effort into the truth principles and God's words. This is the kind of person who pursues salvation and is wise. Those who always put effort into outward behaviors, formalities, doctrines, and slogans, are foolish people. They are not those who pursue salvation. You have never considered things like this before, or rarely considered them, so when it comes to these matters of practicing the truth principles, your mind is basically blank. You don't think that this matter is important, so whenever you face situations that involve the truth principles, especially when it comes to certain major situations, when you face antichrists or wicked people disrupting and disturbing the church's work, you are always very passive. You don't know how to handle these matters, and you approach them based on your own selfish motives and feelings. You are unable to stand up to defend the work of the church, and ultimately, you always end up failing, and carelessly and hastily wrapping up the matter. If no investigations are made into these matters, you will be able to muddle your way through. If investigations are conducted to find out who

is responsible, you might be removed from your position or reassigned to a different duty; or worse, you might be relegated to Group B, or some people might even be cleared out. Are these outcomes that you wish to see? (No.) If one day you really are removed from your position or made to stop doing your duty, or in a more severe case, if you are sent to an ordinary church or Group B, will you reflect on yourself? “Did I believe in God just to end up here? Did I give up my job, my prospects, my family, and forsake so much just to be put in Group B or cleared out? Did I believe in God in order to oppose Him? Surely that shouldn’t be the purpose of my faith in God? What am I believing in God for, then? Shouldn’t I ponder this? Setting aside believing in God in order to satisfy His will for now, at the very least, I should obtain the life and enter into the truth reality. At the very least, I should be able to sense which aspect of God’s words and the truth has become my life. I should be able to rely on the truth to live, and to triumph over Satan and over my own corrupt dispositions, and I should be able to forsake my own flesh and abandon my own notions. When things befall me, I should absolutely uphold the truth principles. I shouldn’t act according to my corrupt dispositions, I should be able to smoothly and naturally act according to God’s words, without any difficulties or obstacles. I should sense deeply that God’s words and the truth have already been wrought into me, become my life, and become a part of my humanity. This is an enjoyable thing, and it is something worth celebrating.” Do you normally feel this way? When you take stock of the suffering you’ve endured and the prices you’ve paid in your belief in God over the years, you will feel wonderful in your heart, you will feel that there is hope for your salvation, and that you have tasted the sweetness of understanding the truth and expending yourself for God. Have you felt or experienced such things? If you haven’t, what should you do? (Start pursuing the truth seriously from now on.) Start pursuing it seriously from now on—but how should you pursue it? You need to reflect upon the matters in which you often rebel against God. God has arranged circumstances for you again and again in order to teach you a lesson, to change you through these matters, to work His words into you, to make you enter into an aspect of the truth reality, and to stop you from living according to Satan’s corrupt disposition in those matters, and for you to instead live according to God’s words, for His words to be wrought into you and become your life. But you often rebel against God in these matters, neither submitting to God nor accepting the truth, not taking His words as principles that you should follow, and not living out His words. This hurts God, and time and time again, you lose your opportunity for salvation. So, how should you turn yourself around? Starting today, in matters which you can recognize through reflection and clearly sense, you should obey God’s orchestration, accept His words as the truth reality, accept His words as the life, and change the way you live. When you encounter situations like this, you should forsake your flesh and your preferences, and act according to the truth principles. Isn’t this the path of practice? (It is.) If you merely intend to earnestly pursue in the future, but lack a specific path of practice, that’s no good. If you have this specific path of practice and are willing to

forsake your flesh and start anew like this, then there is still hope for you. If you are not willing to practice in this way and instead stick to the same old paths, sticking to old ideas, and living by your corrupt dispositions, then there's nothing more for us to say. If you're content just being a service-doer, then what more is there to say? The matter of salvation has nothing to do with you, and you're not interested in it, so there's nothing more to discuss. If you really are willing to pursue the truth and salvation, then the first step is to begin with breaking away from your corrupt dispositions, from your various erroneous thoughts, notions, and actions. Accept the environments that God has arranged for you in your daily life, embrace His scrutiny, testing, chastisement, and judgment, strive to gradually practice according to the truth principles when things befall you, and progressively turn God's words into the principles and criterion for how you comport yourself and act in your daily life, and into your life. This is what should be manifested in a pursuer of the truth, and it's what should be manifested in a person pursuing salvation. It sounds easy, the steps are simple, and there is no lengthy exposition, but putting it into practice isn't so easy. This is because there are too many corrupt things within people: their pettiness, little schemes, selfishness, and baseness, their corrupt dispositions, and all kinds of tricks. On top of this, some people possess knowledge, they have learned some philosophies for living and manipulative tactics in society, and they possess some shortcomings and flaws in terms of their humanity. For example, some people are gluttonous and lazy, others are glib-tongued, some have a severely scummy nature, others are vain, or rash and impulsive in their actions, along with many other faults. There are many deficiencies and problems that people need to overcome in terms of their humanity. However, if you wish to attain salvation, if you wish to practice and experience God's words, and gain the truth and the life, you must read God's words more, attain an understanding of the truth, be able to practice and submit to His words, and start off by practicing the truth and upholding the truth principles. These are just a few simple sentences, yet people do not know how to practice or experience them. Regardless of your caliber or education, and regardless of your age or years of faith, in any case, if you're on the right path of practicing the truth, with the correct goals and direction, and if what you pursue and exert is all for the sake of practicing the truth, what you ultimately gain will undoubtedly be the truth reality and God's words becoming your life. First determine your goal, then gradually practice according to this path, and in the end, you will certainly gain something. Do you believe this? (Yes.)

What we are fellowshiping about at this stage is letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires. At our last gathering, we fellowshiped about letting go of certain burdens that come from one's family. With regard to the topic of burdens that come from one's family, we first fellowshiped about expectations that parents harbor, then about the expectations that parents have for their offspring. All of these are things that people should let go of in the process of pursuing the truth, aren't they? (Yes.) With regard to letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires, we listed four items in total. The first

item is interests and hobbies, the second is marriage, and the third is family—we've fellowshiped about these three already. What is the last, remaining item? (Careers.) The fourth item is careers; we should fellowship about this item. Have any of you pondered on this topic before? If you have, you can talk about it first. (I used to think that someone's success or failure in their career reflects their success or failure as a person. I thought that if someone lacks dedication in their career or makes a mess of their career, it signifies that they have failed as a person.) Now, when it comes to the issue of letting go of careers, what should be let go of? (People should let go of their ambitions and desires regarding their careers.) That's one way to view it. What things can you think to let go of when it comes to "careers" within the topic of letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires? Shouldn't you resolve the various troubles that a career brings upon you in the process of pursuing the truth? (In the past, when I was in the secular world, I used to believe that I needed to be successful in my career, that I needed to achieve some recognition. As a result, I desperately pursued my career, wanting to distinguish myself. Even after I came to believe in God, I still wanted to stand out in God's house, to make others look up to me. This issue became a significant obstacle to my life entry.) What you understand by career is essentially an individual pursuit; it also touches on the path that one takes. So, in our fellowship on "careers" under the topic of letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires, I won't mention any content that touches on people's pursuits for now. We will primarily speak about the literal meaning of "career." What does "career" refer to? It is the work or labor that people engage in to provide for their families while living in the world. This topic falls within the scope of "careers" under the topic of letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires, that we wish to fellowship on. It is the scope and principles for engaging in a job in order to provide for one's family, and for selecting an occupation in society, while believing in God and pursuing the truth. Naturally, this will more or less touch on part of the content about people's pursuits and on God's requirements for the work that a believer engages in. It can also be said to relate to the thoughts and viewpoints that a believer should have toward various jobs and careers in the world. The topics that touch on careers are quite extensive; we will sort them into categories, and by doing so help people to understand what standards and requirements God has for the careers engaged in by believers and pursuers of the truth, as well as what thoughts and viewpoints God requires believers and pursuers of the truth to have as they engage in or approach occupations. This will enable people to let go of the pursuits and desires related to careers that exist within their notions and wishes. At the same time, this will also rectify the incorrect viewpoints people have about the occupations they engage in or the careers they pursue in the world. We will separate the content on careers that people should let go of into four major items: The first item that people need to understand is to not engage in charity; the second item is to be content with food and clothing; the third item is to stay away from various social forces; the fourth item is to stay away from politics. We will fellowship about issues related to

letting go of careers based on the content of these four items. Have a think, does the content of these four items have any relevance to what you've been fellowshiping about? (It does not.) What have you been fellowshiping about? (Personal pursuits.) What you've been fellowshiping about doesn't involve the truth principles, it just relates to a bit of small, personal pursuits. These four points we're fellowshiping about involve various principles within the topic of careers. If people understand these various principles, it will be easy for them to let go of what they ought to let go of in relation to careers during the process of pursuing the truth. It will be easy for them to let go of these things because they comprehend these aspects of the truth. However, if you don't understand these truths, it will be very hard for you to let go of these things. Let's fellowship on these four principles for letting go of careers, one by one.

First, do not engage in charity. What does it mean to not engage in charity? It's easy to understand the literal meaning of the words. You all more or less have some conception of the matter of charity, do you not? For example, orphanages, shelters, and such and such charitable organizations in society—these are all organizations and designations related to charity work. So, when it comes to the careers that people engage in, God's first requirement is that they do not engage in charity. What does this mean? It means that people shouldn't do things involving charity or be engaged in any industry related to charity. Isn't this easy to understand? As a person who believes in God, who lives in a physical body, who has a family and a life, and needs money to support yourself and your family, you need to engage in an occupation. No matter what type of occupation you engage in, God's first requirement for people is to not engage in charity. You should not do charity because you believe in God, or do charity for the sake of your own physical livelihood. That work is not the occupation you should engage in. It's not an occupation entrusted to you by God, and it is certainly not a duty entrusted to you by God. Things like charity are not relevant to believers in God or to those pursuing the truth. Conversely, one could say that if you engage in charity, God will not commemorate it. Even if you do it well, to satisfaction, and you gain the recognition of society and even of the brothers and sisters, God will not recognize or commemorate it. God won't commemorate you, or ultimately bless you, or make an exception and allow you to attain salvation, or give you a wonderful destination because you once engaged in charity, because you were once a great philanthropist, helped many people, did numerous good deeds, benefited many people, or even saved many lives. That is, engaging in charity work is not a necessary condition for salvation. Then what do matters of charity include? In reality, to a greater or lesser extent, everyone has one or two things in their minds that can definitively be considered to be a kind of charity work. For example, adopting stray dogs. Because some countries do not have strict pet control, or due to poor economic conditions, you often see stray dogs on the streets or in certain areas. What is meant by "stray dogs"? It means that some people can't afford to keep their dogs or don't want to, so they abandon them, or maybe the dogs got lost for some

reason, and now they wander the streets. You might think, “I believe in God, so I should adopt these animals, because doing good deeds is God’s will, it is something that brings glory to God’s name, and it’s a responsibility that believers in God should take up. It’s an obligation that can’t be shirked.” So, when you see stray dogs or cats, you take them home and adopt them, living frugally in order to buy them food. Some people even invest their salaries and living expenses into this, and they ultimately adopt more and more dogs and cats, and need to rent a house. In doing so, the money for their own living expenses becomes increasingly insufficient, and their salary doesn’t cover it anymore, so they have no other option but to borrow money. But no matter how tough things get, they feel that this is an obligation they cannot shirk, a responsibility they cannot cast aside, and that they should regard it as a good deed and do it accordingly. They think that they’re practicing the truth and upholding the principles. They spend a large amount of money, energy, and time adopting these stray cats and dogs in order to engage in the work of charity, and they feel very at ease and accomplished in their hearts, they feel really good about themselves, and some people even think, “This is glorifying to God, I am adopting creatures that God has made—this is an immeasurably good deed, and God will surely commemorate it.” Are these thoughts correct? (They are not correct.) God has not entrusted you with this task. It is neither your obligation nor your responsibility. If you come across stray cats or dogs and you take a liking to them, adopting one or two is fine. However, if you treat adopting stray animals as a form of charity work, believing that charity is something that a believer in God should do, then you are greatly mistaken. This is a fallacious understanding and comprehension.

There are also people who, believing in their own capacity for survival, use the little extra money they have to relieve the poor around them. They offer them clothing, food, daily necessities, and even money, considering it a kind of obligation they should fulfill. They may even bring some poor people into their homes, share the gospel with them, and offer money for them to spend. These poor people agree to believe in God, and afterward, they supply them with food and shelter, thinking that they are fulfilling their own duty and obligation. There are also people who notice that certain orphans in society have not yet been adopted. They have a little extra spending money, so they go and help these orphans, establishing welfare homes and orphanages, and adopting the orphans. After adopting them, they provide for their food, shelter, and education, and even raise them to adulthood. Not only do they continue doing this, they also pass it on to the next generation. They believe that this is an immeasurably good deed, something that must be blessed, and an action worthy of God’s commemoration. Even during periods of spreading the gospel, some people see potential recipients of the gospel from impoverished areas who have religious convictions and feel compelled to help them and give them alms. But spreading the gospel is spreading the gospel, it isn’t charity work or providing assistance. The purpose of sharing the gospel is to bring those who can understand God’s words and accept the truth, that is God’s sheep, into His house, into

His presence, giving them an opportunity for salvation. It's not about aiding impoverished people so they can have something to eat and wear, so they can have the life of a normal person and not starve. Therefore, from any perspective and in any regard, whether it's giving aid to pets or animals, or assisting impoverished individuals or those who can't meet their basic needs, this matter of engaging in charity is not what God requires as part of the duty, responsibility, or obligation a person should fulfill. It is unrelated to people believing in God and practicing the truth. If people have a kind heart and are willing to do this, or occasionally come across particular people who need assistance, they can do it if they are able. However, you shouldn't see this as a task entrusted to you by God. If you have the ability and the conditions, you can help on occasion, but this merely represents you personally, not God's house, and certainly not God's requirements. Of course, doing this doesn't mean you've satisfied God's will, and it certainly doesn't mean that you are practicing the truth. It simply represents your personal conduct. If you do it on occasion, God won't convict you for it, but He won't commemorate it either—that's all. If you turn it into a career, opening nursing homes, welfare homes, orphanages, animal shelters, or even stepping forward during times of disaster and raising funds from the brothers and sisters in the church or from the community to donate to disaster-stricken areas or people, how well do you think you're doing? Furthermore, some people, when certain places experience earthquakes, floods, or other natural or man-made disasters, approach the church to solicit donations from the brothers and sisters. Worse still, some even use offerings to assist these disaster-stricken places and people. They believe that this is the obligation of every believer, and an obligation that the church, as a social community organization, should fulfill. They consider this a righteous cause, not only demanding contributions from the brothers and sisters but also urging the church to allocate offerings to aid these disaster-stricken areas. What do you think of this? (It is bad.) Is it merely bad? Discuss the nature of this matter. (Offerings are meant for spreading the gospel, for expanding the work of the gospel. They are not meant for disaster relief or assisting the poor.) (Disaster relief is unrelated to the truth; doing it doesn't signify that the truth is being practiced, and it certainly doesn't bear witness to a change in disposition.) Some people believe that since everyone lives on the same planet, the inhabitants of earth form one big family, and when one party is in trouble, others should band together to provide support. They think they should fully make it so people in a disaster area feel the warmth of their fellow human beings, and experience warmth and assistance from the church. They consider this an immeasurably good deed, an act that honors God, and a wonderful opportunity to bear witness to God. Some people, when you require that they stick to the principles while fulfilling duties and align their practices with God's words and work arrangements, feel unenthusiastic and unmotivated. They don't contemplate these things in their heart. But as for devoting offerings to provide aid to the people of impoverished or backward nations, buying them equipment for the fulfillment of duties, and helping them to lead a

life of sufficient food and clothing, they become particularly enthusiastic and eager to get to work, wanting to do more and more. Why are they so enthusiastic? Because they wish to become great philanthropists. As soon as a great philanthropist is mentioned, they begin to feel especially noble. They feel particularly honored to sacrifice their efforts for the sake of these poor people's lives and exercise their own light and warmth. They feel extremely excited about it, and consequently some people are especially willing to engage in these activities. But what's the purpose behind this remarkable willingness to do these things? Is it really to honor God? Does God need this kind of honor? Does God need this kind of testimony? Can it be that God's name will suffer humiliation if you don't give money or provide assistance? Will God lose His glory? Is it possible that God will be glorified when you do this? Will He be satisfied? Is this the case? (No, it isn't.) Then what's the deal? Why are these people so willing to do this? Is their intention to satisfy their own vanity? (Yes.) It's to get a thumb's-up from those they've helped, to be commended for their generosity, magnanimity, and wealth. Some people always have a heroic spirit: They wish to be saviors. Why don't you save yourself? Do you know what kind of thing you are? If you have the ability to save others, why can't you save yourself? If you're so generous, why not sell yourself and give the money to those people to help them? Why use offerings? If you have this ability, you should stop eating and drinking, or eat only one meal a day, and use the money you save to help those people, to let them eat well and dress warm. Why do you misuse God's offerings? Is this not being generous at the expense of God's house? (Yes.) Being generous at the expense of God's house, earning the title of "great philanthropist" from others, satisfying your own vain desire to be needed by others—is this not shameless? (Yes.) Since this is a shameless affair, should it or should it not be carried out? (It should not.) The nature of God's house expanding the gospel is not to do charity; it is about seeking out sheep who can understand God's words, bringing these people back into God's presence, accepting God's chastisement and judgment, and receiving God's salvation. This is cooperating with God's management plan for saving humankind, not engaging in charity, not offering assistance or preaching the gospel wherever there's poverty. That is doing charity work under the guise of spreading the gospel, in order to ensure these people are well-fed and well-clothed, use modern technology, and enjoy a modern life—can these actions save people? Such actions cannot achieve the purpose of spreading the gospel and saving people. Spreading the gospel is not engaging in charity; it's about winning hearts, bringing people before God, enabling them to accept the truth and God's salvation—it's not about providing relief. Due to the needs of work in the church, some individuals abandon their work and family to focus full-time on their duties, and God's house provides them with living expenses. But this is not relief, neither is it engaging in the work of charity. When God's house spreads the gospel and establishes the church, it does not set up welfare institutions or shelters. It's not about using these benefits or funds to buy people off or let them into God's house to bum food and drink. God's house does

not support parasites or beggars, nor does it accommodate vagrants or orphans, nor does it provide relief for people who have nothing to eat. If someone can't afford to eat, it's because they're lazy or incapable. It's their own fault, and it has nothing to do with us spreading the gospel. We spread the gospel in order to win over people, to win over those who can understand God's words and accept the truth, not to see who's poor, who's pitiable, who's oppressed, or who has no one to turn to, so that we can take them in or help them. Spreading the gospel has its own principles and standards, and there are requirements and standards for potential recipients of the gospel. It's not about seeking beggars. Therefore, if you regard spreading the gospel as a charitable endeavor, you're mistaken. Or if you believe that when you're fulfilling this duty of spreading the gospel and engaging in this work, you're engaging in charity, that's even more wrong. This direction, as well as the starting point, are both inherently wrong. If anyone holds such a viewpoint or applies such a direction to their actions, they should quickly correct and shift their point of view. God never pities the poor or those oppressed at the bottom of society. Who does God have compassion for? At the very least, it must be someone who believes in God, someone who can accept the truth. If you don't follow God, and you resist and blaspheme God, will God have compassion on you? This is impossible. Therefore, people should not mistakenly think, "God is a compassionate God. He pities those who are oppressed, who are unpopular, who are put down, who are marginalized and have no one to turn to in society. God pities them all, and God lets them enter into His house." This is wrong! This is your notion and imagining. God has never said or done things like that. It is merely your own wishful thinking, your ideas of human kindness, which are unrelated to the truth. Look at the people whom God chose and brought into His house. Regardless of their social class, did God pity or feel sorry for anyone because they had nothing to eat, and bring them into His house? Not a single one. On the contrary, those people who were chosen by God, no matter their social class—even if they were farmers—there are no instances of them being unable to eat, and no beggars among them. This is a testament to God's blessings. If God has chosen you, and you are one of God's chosen people, He will not let you become so destitute that you can't afford to eat, or get to the point where you have to beg for food. Instead, God will provide you with clothing and food in abundance. Some people who believe in God always carry certain misconceptions with them. What do they think? "The majority of believers in God come from the lowest levels of society, and some might even be beggars." Is that the case? (No, it's not.) There are even people spreading rumors that I used to be a beggar. I said, "Well then, did I ever put on sackcloth or carry a staff? If you say that I used to be a beggar, how come I didn't know about it?" I'm the one we're talking about, yet even I don't know; this is completely nonsensical! When God said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head," what does it mean? Is God saying that He became a beggar? Is He saying that He was unsupported and couldn't afford to eat? (No, He's not.) He isn't.

Then what does this statement mean? It means that the world and humankind had abandoned God; it shows that there was no place for God, and God came to save humankind, yet they did not accept Him. No one was willing to receive God. This statement points to the ugly side of corrupt humankind and reflects the suffering that God incarnate endured in the human world. When God said this, some people think, "God likes beggars, and we are much better off than beggars, so our status is more elevated in God's eyes." Consequently, they are willing to help beggars. This is a complete misunderstanding on the part of humans, it belongs to people's mistaken thoughts and viewpoints. It has absolutely no relation to God's essence, His disposition, or His compassion and love.

Some people say, "You talk about letting go of the 'career' within the topic of letting go of people's pursuits, ideals, and desires, and You tell people not to do charity. But why do You always emphasize treating animals well and not harming them? What is the meaning of this? Dogs and cats are even kept in God's house, and it isn't allowed for people to harm them." Tell Me, is there a difference between this and doing charity? Are they the same thing? (No, they're not.) What's going on here? (Not harming various types of animals is an expression of normal humanity.) This is an expression of normal humanity. Then what should the practice and manifestation of normal humanity be? (Since one chooses to keep them, they have to fulfill their responsibility.) Fulfilling one's responsibility—is there anything more specific? (They have to take care of them.) That's a specific action. What principles should be followed? This involves the truth. Let Me explain, and you listen and see if it involves the truth. Caring for the creatures God has created is an expression of normal humanity. More concretely, it means fulfilling your responsibility toward them and taking good care of them. Since you have chosen to keep them, you must fulfill your responsibility. Pets are meant to be kept and cared for by humans. They are unlike wild animals that don't need you to take care of them. The greatest respect and care you can show wild animals is to avoid intentionally destroying their habitat and to not hunt or kill them. As for the domestic fowl, livestock, or pets that people can keep in their homes, since you choose to keep them, you should fulfill your responsibility. That is, based on your circumstances, accompany them for a bit if you have time, and if you're busy, just ensure that they are fed and comfortable. In essence, you should cherish them. What does it mean to cherish them? Respect the life God has created and care for the creatures He created. Cherish them, care for them: this isn't charity, this is treating them properly. Is this a principle? (Yes.) This isn't engaging in charity. What does charity refer to? It's not about fulfilling a responsibility or cherishing life. It's about going beyond the scope of your capacity and energy and making this thing into a career. This has nothing to do with raising pets. If someone can't even muster basic love or responsibility for the pets they keep, what kind of person are they? Do they possess humanity? (They do not possess humanity.) At the very least, this person lacks humanity. In reality, dogs and cats don't place very high demands on people. Regardless

of how deeply you love them or whether you like them or not, at the very least, you should be responsible for taking care of them, you should feed them on time, and avoid mistreating them—that's enough. Depending on your economic situation, whatever food or living situation you can afford you should provide to them. That's it. Their survival conditions do not demand a lot. You should just refrain from mistreating them. If people can't even muster this little bit of love, it shows how lacking their humanity is. What does mistreatment entail? Hitting and scolding them for no reason, not feeding them when they need to be fed, not walking them when they need a walk, and not taking care of them when they're sick. If you're unhappy or in a bad mood, you take your anger out on them by hitting and scolding them. You treat them in a way that isn't human. That's mistreatment. If you avoid mistreatment and can simply fulfill your responsibility, that's enough. If you don't even have this bit of compassion to fulfill your responsibility, then you shouldn't keep a pet. You should release it, find someone who likes it and let them take care of it, give it a chance to live. Some people who keep dogs aren't even able to refrain from mistreating them. They keep dogs with the sole purpose of venting their frustrations, using these dogs as an outlet when they're in a bad mood or their spirits are low and they need to let off steam. They don't dare to hit or scold another person, they fear the consequences and liabilities they'll have to bear. They happen to have a pet at home, a dog, and so they vent their frustrations on the dog, because after all it doesn't understand and won't dare resist. Such people lack humanity. There are also people who keep dogs and cats but can't fulfill their responsibilities. If you don't like it, then don't keep a pet. But if you choose to keep it, you have to fulfill your responsibility. It has its own life and emotional needs. It needs water when it's thirsty and food when it's hungry. It also needs to be close to people and to be comforted by them. If you're in a bad mood and you say, "I don't have time to pay attention to you, go away!"—that's not good treatment for a pet. Is there conscience or reason in this? (No.) Some people say, "How long has it been since you last bathed your dog and cat? They're so dirty!" "Humph, bathe them? I don't even know who's going to bathe me. When it's been days since I last bathed no one seems to care!" Is this humane, or does it reflect any human sensibility? (No.) Regardless of whether they're in a good mood or not, when a cat or dog rubs up against them and is affectionate to them, they just kick it away with their foot, saying, "Go away, pest! Just like a debt-collector, there's always trouble when you are around. You only want something to eat or drink. I'm in no mood to play with you!" If you don't even have a little bit of compassion, then you shouldn't keep any pets. You should release them straight away. That cat or dog is suffering because of you! You're too selfish and don't deserve to have pets. Whenever you keep a cat or a dog, their food and water depend on your care. You should understand this principle. Why are you competing with animals? You say, "I have no one to give me a bath, who's going to bathe me?" Who's going to bathe you? You're a human. You should bathe yourself. You can take care of yourself, but the cats and dogs need your care because you're raising them,

and because you're raising them, you have an obligation to take care of them. If you can't even fulfill this obligation, then you don't deserve to keep them. What need is there to compete with them? You even say, "I take care of you, but who is taking care of me? When you're in low spirits, you come to me for comfort. When I'm feeling down, who comforts me?" Aren't you a human? Humans should self-regulate and self-adjust. Cats and dogs are much simpler: They can't self-regulate, so they need humans to comfort them. This is the distinction between how you treat animals and doing charity. What is the principle for how you treat animals? Cherish life, respect life, and do not mistreat them. In dealing with all things God has created, keep to their natural laws, treat various creatures created by God correctly in accordance with the laws He has set, maintain proper relationships with all kinds of creatures, and don't destroy or squander their habitats. These are the principles for respecting and cherishing life. However, the principles for respecting and cherishing life are not about doing charity. This is a principle from among the universal laws set by God that every created being should adhere to. But following this principle does not equate to performing acts of charity.

But some people ask, "Why doesn't God let us do charity with respect to a career? If He doesn't let us do charity, then what should be done in society about those people or living things that need assistance? Who will come to their aid?" Does it have anything to do with you who comes to their aid? (It has nothing to do with us.) Aren't you a member of humanity? Does it have anything to do with you? (No, it's not the mission of humans.) Exactly, it's not your mission, nor is it what God has entrusted to you. What is your mission? To fulfill the duty of a created being, listen to God's words, submit to God's words, accept the truth to attain salvation, do what God tells you to do, and stay away from the things God tells you not to do. Who will take care of matters related to charity? Who will take care of them is not your concern. In any case, you are not required to take care of or worry about them. Whether it's the government or various community organizations that handle matters of charity, this is not our topic of concern. In short, those who believe in God and pursue the truth should take following God's way and His will as their criteria, goal of practice, and direction. This is something people should understand, and it's an eternal truth that will never change. Of course, occasionally doing something to assist others is not a career; it's an occasional action, and God doesn't hold it against you. Some people ask, "Doesn't God commemorate such things?" God does not commemorate them. If you once gave money to a beggar or to someone without the fare to get home, or assisted a homeless person; if you occasionally did something like this, or even just a few times in your lifetime, then in the eyes of God, does He commemorate such things? No, God doesn't commemorate them. How then does God appraise these actions? God does not commemorate or condemn them—He does not appraise them. Why? They have nothing to do with pursuing the truth. These are personal actions that have no relevance to following God's way or carrying out His will. If you are personally willing to do them, if you do something good out of a momentary

burst of goodwill or temporary prodding of your conscience, or if you do something good in a moment of enthusiasm or impulse, whether you regret it later or not, whether you receive a reward or not, it has no relevance to following God's way or carrying out His will. God does not commemorate it, neither does He condemn you for it. What does it mean that God doesn't commemorate it? It means God won't exempt you from His chastisement and judgment over the course of your salvation because you once did this thing, neither will He make an exception and let you become saved because you did some good or charitable deeds. What does it mean that God doesn't condemn you for it? It means that these good deeds you did have nothing to do with the truth, they only represent your own good behavior, they do not go against God's administrative decrees, nor do they infringe upon anyone's interests. Of course, they don't humiliate the name of God either, let alone glorify His name. They do not violate God's requirements, nor do they involve going against God's will, and they certainly don't involve rebelling against God. Consequently, God will not condemn you for them, they merely represent a kind of personal good deed. Although such good deeds may gain praise from the world and recognition from society, in God's eyes, they have no connection to the truth. God does not commemorate them, nor does He condemn one for them, which means that before God these actions do not amount to much. However, there is one possibility, that is, if you save someone, and provide them financial assistance or some form of material aid, or even offer them emotional help, and you enable that wicked person to succeed in their efforts, allowing them to commit more crimes and pose a threat to society and humanity, resulting in certain losses, then that would be a different matter altogether. In the case of an ordinary charitable act, God's viewpoint is that He neither commemorates nor condemns it. But the fact that He neither commemorates nor condemns it doesn't mean that God supports or encourages you to engage in charity work. Regardless, it is still hoped that you won't invest your energy, time, and money into matters completely unrelated to salvation or to practicing the truth and fulfilling your duty, because you have more important things to do. Your time, energy, and life are not meant for charity work, and they're not meant to showcase your personal character and charisma through a career of charity. Especially for those who open factories, manage schools, or run a business with the purpose of providing basic needs for more impoverished people or helping them realize their ideals, they do these things to assist the poor. If you choose to assist the poor through these methods, it will undoubtedly consume a significant amount of your time and energy. You'll end up spending and using up a significant chunk of time and energy in your life on this cause, and consequently you will have little time to pursue the truth; you may even have no time to pursue the truth, and you certainly won't have the opportunity to fulfill your own duty. Instead, you'll squander your energy on people, events, and things unrelated to the truth or church work. This is foolish behavior. This foolish behavior boils down to some people always wanting to change human destiny and the world through their own good intentions and a few limited abilities.

They wish to change human destiny through their own efforts and goodwill. This is a foolish endeavor. Since it is a foolish endeavor, do not undertake it. Of course, the premise for not undertaking it is that you are someone who pursues the truth, that you wish to pursue the truth and salvation. If you say, “I’m not interested in salvation, and pursuing the truth isn’t that important to me,” then you can do as you like. Regarding the matter of charity, if it is your ideal and pursuit, if you believe that it is how your value is expressed, that charity is the only thing that can convey the value of your life, then by all means, go ahead. You can use whatever skills and abilities you have, no one is restraining you. The premise we are fellowshiping about here for not engaging in charitable affairs is that, since you wish to pursue the truth and salvation, you should let go of the ideal and desire to do charity. Don’t pursue it as your life’s ideal and desire. Do not engage in this affair on a personal level, and God’s house will not engage in it either. Of course, there is one situation in God’s house, that is, caring for the home lives of certain impoverished brothers and sisters. This comes with a premise. I think all of you are aware of this premise: It isn’t charity, it’s a work arrangement internal to God’s house with respect to the lives of brothers and sisters. It’s unrelated to engaging in charity. In God’s house, apart from not engaging in charity, there is also no involvement in any of society’s charitable activities; for example, God’s house does not build schools, open factories, or run businesses. If anyone opens factories, builds schools, runs a business, or participates in any commercial activities in the name of securing economic resources for the normal operation of church work, all of this goes against the administrative decrees of God’s house and should be checked. So, what is the financial source for the operation of the work of God’s house? Do you know? It comes from the donations of brothers and sisters, from offerings to sustain the normal operation of the work. What does this imply? The money donated by brothers and sisters, their donations to God, are offerings, and what is the use of an offering? It is to safeguard the normal operation of the church’s work. Of course, there are various expenses associated with this normal operation, and these expenses should be managed according to the principles and should not violate these principles. Consequently, when the work of the church involves financial issues, and some leaders and workers squander offerings and cause significant losses to those offerings, God’s house will impose severe punishment for them. Why will there be severe punishment? Why does no one who squanders offerings get away with it? (Because God’s offerings are given by brothers and sisters to God, and only God may enjoy them. In another respect, these offerings are meant to maintain the proper operation of the work of God’s house. If leaders or workers squander the offerings, it will directly lead to the work of God’s house being impacted and suffering loss. This disrupts and disturbs the work of God’s house, so the house of God must impose severe punishment.) Tell Me, should God’s house impose severe punishment? (Yes.) Why should it do so? Why must it impose severe punishment? (Squandering offerings is behavior belonging to antichrists. A person’s attitude toward offerings is reflective of their

attitude toward God. If this person can squander offerings, it indicates that they are entirely without a God-fearing heart.) What you have said is indeed one aspect. Today, let's fellowship for a bit about this matter of why severe punishment is necessary for those who squander offerings.

Why should people who squander offerings be severely punished? First, let's talk about where offerings come from. Offerings are given by brothers and sisters. According to biblical statutes, people should give a tenth of their earnings, though of course, many people donate more than just a tenth nowadays, and certain wealthy individuals give more than a tenth. Additionally, for certain impoverished brothers and sisters who give a tenth, where does their money come from? There is no lack of people who save it up by living frugally. Like in the countryside and in rural areas, some people give a tenth of their earnings from selling grain, some from selling chicken eggs, and some from selling goats and chickens. Many people live frugally in order to give a tenth or more—that is where this money comes from. The majority of people know this money is hard to come by. So, why do brothers and sisters donate? Is it required by God's house? Is it that without donating, salvation is impossible? Is it to comply with the statutes of the Bible? Or is it to support God's house in its work, thinking that the work of God's house is significant and can't be done without funding, and so they should give more? Is this their only reason? (No.) Then, why do brothers and sisters donate? Can it be that they're naive? Or do they have money to spare? Are they donating extra money, or money they haven't been able to spend? To whom are these donations being given? (To God.) Why do people donate? Forget the rest, the most basic reason for many people to donate is that they acknowledge God's work. God speaks and works to freely provide life and truth to people, and to lead them. Thus, people should offer a tenth of what they earn. This is the offering. Throughout history, God has blessed people with food, water, and life's necessities, and He prepared everything for them. When people are able to enjoy all this, they should offer a tenth of what God gave them back on the altar, representing a portion that humans return to God, and allowing God to enjoy their harvest. This is the token of affection that people, as created beings, should possess and offer up. Apart from this aspect, there is another. Some people say, "God's work is so great, I can't do much by myself, so I will give an offering, my portion." In this way they show their support for the work of God's house, and act as backers. Regardless of the source or amount of these donations, there is no dearth of people among them whose money is saved up through frugal living. In short, if it weren't for God and for His work, if there were only the church and these human organizations and associations, then people's donations would have no value or significance, because without God's work and His words they wouldn't have any use. But with God speaking and working, with the advancement of God's work to save humankind, these donations and offerings become particularly important. The reason they are particularly important is that this donation money is used for the church's work, and it should not be embezzled, seized, misappropriated, or even squandered by

those with wrongful intentions. Isn't that so? (Yes.) Since it is very important, every single penny should be used in key areas; nothing should be squandered or spent irresponsibly. Consequently, for those who squander, misappropriate, seize, or embezzle donations and offerings, we must handle them specially and punish them severely. Because these donations and offerings are crucial for God's work, and considering the purpose behind brothers and sisters giving this money and these offerings, these donations should be allocated to the most critical areas. Every penny should be used with the principles and achieve results; it should not be squandered, and it should certainly not be seized by wicked individuals. This is one aspect. In addition to this, regardless of whether the donation is large or small, it comes from the donation of brothers and sisters. The source of this money isn't derived from the church engaging in commercial activities, opening businesses, or running factories to earn a profit from society. It doesn't come from the dividends earned by producing something, it doesn't come from the dividends or income of the church, but from people's donations. In simple terms, a donation is something given to God by brothers and sisters; the money given to God ought to belong to God. What is God's money used for? Some say, "God's money and offerings are used for God's enjoyment." Is it all for God's enjoyment? How much of it can God enjoy? It's quite limited, isn't it? During the time when God becomes flesh, His food, clothing, shelter, and needs, as well as His three meals a day, are average, and what He enjoys is limited. Of course, that's quite normal. The principal use of the donations and offerings from brothers and sisters is to maintain the normal operation of the work of the church, not to satisfy certain people's desire to spend. Offerings are not for people to spend, nor are they for people to use. It's not that whoever manages the finances is given priority to use this money, or that whoever is a leader has the special authority to allocate funds. Regardless of which individual puts donations to use, they should be used according to the principles set by God's house. That is the principle. So, what is the nature of someone violating this principle? Haven't they transgressed against the administrative decrees? (Yes.) Why is it said that they've transgressed against the administrative decrees? The offerings people give to God are meant for God's enjoyment. So how does God use them? God uses them for the work of the church, to maintain the normal operation of its work. This is the principle by which God makes use of offerings. However, antichrists and wicked people do not use offerings in this manner. They squander, waste, or recklessly donate them, openly violating this principle in order to use the offerings. Isn't this transgressing against the administrative decrees? Did God let you use them this way? Did He give you the right to use them this way? Did He tell you to use them this way? He didn't, did He? Then why are you using them this way, so recklessly and wastefully? This is transgressing against the principle! This principle isn't an ordinary one; it is related to administrative decrees. Because these offerings are not earned through engaging in business or commercial activities, but are donations offered by brothers and sisters to God, consequently every expenditure needs to be closely

controlled and rigorously managed. There should be no squandering or wastefulness. Wasting or squandering any amount of money not only leads to significant losses in the work of God's house, but also constitutes a significant financial loss for the house of God. Squandering offerings isn't just squandering the offerings; it also shows a lack of responsibility toward the love expressed when brothers and sisters donate. Therefore, those who squander offerings must be severely punished. Admonish those with lighter offenses, and demand restitution at the same time. For those with more serious offenses, in addition to restitution, it is necessary to clear them out or expel them. There is another primary reason why severe punishment should be imposed on those who squander offerings. The church is distinct from any social organization. It is isolated in the midst of any country and any social environment, abandoned by the world and by humanity. Not only is the church unable to receive support or protection from any country, at the same time it cannot obtain any assistance or welfare from the state. At most, in Western countries, after registering and establishing a church, donations made to the church are exempt from personal taxation, or donated materials can be used to receive some tax deductions. Apart from this, the church cannot receive any welfare or assistance from any country or under any social system. If the church's congregation becomes small and it can no longer stay in operation, the state won't come to its aid. Instead, it would rather let it wither away on its own, because the church doesn't generate any income and cannot pay any taxes to the state. Hence, whether the church exists or not is inconsequential to the state. The church finds itself in such a survival state under any social system. Tell Me, is this easy? (It isn't easy.) Indeed, it really isn't easy. The church is rejected by society and humanity, not receiving any recognition or sympathy, let alone support, from any social system. The church exists under these survival conditions. If someone is still able to squander offerings, still able to be heartless, pouring money down the drain, not taking any responsibility, blowing through 100,000 yuan in a moment, spending 1,000,000 yuan as if it were just a number, without blinking an eye, without feeling any reproach, do you think such a person possesses humanity? Are such individuals not deserving of curses? (Yes.) Summing up the various circumstances listed above, for those who squander offerings, who waste them, or who even harbor ill intentions toward the offerings, wishing to embezzle them or, not daring to embezzle them, squander them instead: All should be severely punished, there should be no leniency shown to them. Tell Me, is this a right approach? (Yes.) Then, if in the future you are given the opportunity to have authority to use offerings, how will you behave? If you cannot control yourselves, if you squander the offerings, then when it comes time for the church to punish you severely, will you have any complaints or grievances? (No.) It's good that you won't have any grievances. It will be what you deserve!

As for those people who squander offerings, don't you hate them? Don't they make you angry? Are you able to supervise or stop them? This takes things up a notch—it's time for you to be tested. If there's someone around you who squanders offerings, and

insists on spending 20,000 yuan on a machine that could be bought for 2,000 yuan—who wants to buy the best, the top grade, the most modern, and the most fashionable machine, who wants to spend money on the most expensive machine, just because the money belongs to God's house and does not come out of their own pockets—are you capable of stopping them? If you can't stop them, can you warn them? Can you report them to the higher-ups? If you're in charge of managing offerings, can you refuse to sign off in this situation? If you can't do any of this, then you should also be severely punished. You're also squandering offerings; you're in league with that evil person, you're their accomplice, and you both should be severely punished. What kind of attitude does someone have toward God if they can squander and be irresponsible with offerings? Is God in their heart? (No.) In My opinion, people like this have the same attitude toward God that Satan does. Some people say, "Anything related to God, to God's name, His offerings, or His testimony—none of that concerns me. What does those people squandering offerings have to do with me?" What kind of thing are they? There are certain leaders and supervisors who sign off on everything, no matter what the church applies to purchase. They never question the applications, or examine them closely, or check them for problems; every application to purchase goods, whether the goods are expensive or cheap, practical or impractical, necessary or unnecessary—every single one gets approved with their signature. What is your approval? Is it just a signature? In My view, it's your attitude toward God. Your attitude toward God's offerings is your attitude toward God. Every stroke of your pen, every time you write your name, it's evidence of your sin of blaspheming and disrespecting God. Why shouldn't those who blaspheme and disrespect God in this way be severely punished? They must be severely punished! God supplies you with the truth, with life, with everything you have, and you approach Him and the things that belong to Him with this kind of attitude—what kind of thing are you? Each signature on an invoice is evidence of your sin of blaspheming God, and of your disrespectful attitude toward God; this is the most conclusive evidence. No matter what materials are being purchased, no matter the amount, you don't even check the approval form, you just sign away with a swipe of your pen. You're ready to sign off arbitrarily on 100,000 or 200,000 yuan purchases. Someday you will have to pay the price for your signature—whoever signs bears the responsibility! Since you behave in this way, since you can sign at random without even reviewing the applications first, and arbitrarily squander offerings, you should bear responsibility and pay the price for your own actions. If you're not afraid to face the consequences, then go ahead, sign your name. Your signature represents your attitude toward God. If you can act like this even toward God, treating Him like this in an open and brazen manner, then how do you expect God to treat you? God has already been patient enough with you, He has given you breath, and allowed you to live up until now. Instead of continuing to treat God in the same way and with the same attitude, what you should do is confess and repent to God, and reverse your attitude. Don't keep blindly contending with God. If you continue

treating God in the same way and with the same attitude, then you know what the consequences will be. If you are unable to obtain God's forgiveness, your belief will have been in vain. What use will your belief be then? You believe in God but squander His trust in you and His commission to you. Tell Me, what kind of thing are you? Some people act as leaders or supervisors in God's house. They've performed their duties for many years, and it can be said that I've interacted with them for many years. Ultimately, I've come to a conclusion about them: These people are worse than dogs. Their actions are not only heartbreaking, even more so, they are repulsive. I like raising dogs and interacting with them. The dogs I've raised over the years have all turned out quite well. The dogs I like generally don't deliberately antagonize people. If you show a dog a bit of kindness, it will return it ten-fold. As long as you are truly good to it, even if you place a newspaper or a pair of shoes in the yard, it will lie down beside them and guard them for you. Sometimes, if you throw something you don't want away, the dog will think you lost it, and guard it for you without wandering away. After a while, I summed up what I learned and said, "People are worse than dogs!" Dogs guard houses—they use their abilities and skills to guard your house with their lives. People don't even have hearts, let alone do they guard things with their lives. They won't even say a word to safeguard the work of the church. They are less than a guard dog! This is the distinction I've drawn between people and dogs. These people who squander offerings are lower than guard dogs. Do you agree that they should be severely punished? (Yes.) God puts His trust in people, and entrusts them with work and duties. This is God exalting them and thinking well of them. It's not that they deserve to do that work, or that they have good caliber and humanity, or are up to the job. And yet, people fail to recognize the favor shown to them, they always think they are capable of doing the church's work, that they've earned this through their own hard work and expenditures. Everything they have is given to them by God. What have they earned? Are they resting on their laurels? God exalts people to do their duties, but they fail to recognize the favor shown to them, or to understand what is good for them. They don't live up to His trust and His exaltation. They squander God's trust and His exaltation. In such cases, I am sorry, but they must be severely punished. God gives people opportunities, but people don't know what is good for them, they don't know to cherish the opportunities God gives them. He gives them a chance, but they do not want it. They think that God is easy to push around, that He's forgiving, that He won't see or know what's going on. Consequently, they dare to unscrupulously squander offerings, betraying God's trust, lacking even the most basic human character and conscience. What are they still believing for? They shouldn't bother believing, they ought to just go worship Satan. God doesn't need their worship. They are not worthy!

Have we not more or less fellowshiped enough on the first topic of letting go of careers—not engaging in charity? Have you understood the truth principles contained within this topic? What are the principles here? (The principles are that doing charity is not the mission given to humans by God. It has no relation at all to practicing the truth

or pursuing salvation. When a person does a few good deeds, they are merely a reflection of their individual behavior.) Engaging in charity is unrelated to the pursuit of the truth. Don't mistakenly believe that by doing charity work, you are practicing the truth, or someone who has attained salvation. This is a huge misconception. Practicing the truth does not include doing charity, nor does it include engaging in charity work. The goal of believing in God is to attain salvation. Believing in God is not about accumulating merits or doing good deeds, it is not about enjoying doing good things or philanthropy, nor is it about engaging in charity. Believing in God has no connection to engaging in charity; it is about pursuing the truth and accepting God's salvation. So, people's ideas that faith in God is about doing charity or engaging in charity work, or that doing charity is equivalent to believing in God and satisfying Him, are all horribly misguided. Whatever charity you get involved in, and whatever things you do that relate to charity, these merely represent you personally. Whether they are occasional actions or something you engage in as a career, these things merely reflect your own good behavior. This behavior may have a connection to a religion, social behavior, or moral criteria, but it absolutely has no relation to believing in God and pursuing the truth, or to following God's way, and it has absolutely nothing to do with His requirements. But then again, why should one not do charity? God is a God who takes compassion on people, who has compassion and love. He pities humanity, so why doesn't God commemorate people's charitable deeds? Why doesn't doing charity earn God's commemoration? Isn't this a problem? Is demanding that people not do charity a sign that God doesn't love humanity? Doesn't this contradict the pity that God has for humanity? (No.) Why not? (Because there are principles to God's compassion and love, and His compassion and love are directed toward specific individuals. He grants them to those who accept the truth, practice the truth, and genuinely repent. As for those nonbelievers who cannot accept the truth, they are not the ones that God intends to save.) There are principles to God's compassion and love, and His compassion and love are directed toward specific individuals. Go on, what else is there? Is there a connection between engaging in charity work and believing in God? (No.) So, does engaging in charity conflict with believing in God? When participating in any form of charity work, do people not need to invest time, energy, and even money? When you engage in charity work, you can't simply pay lip service to it without contemplating or considering the work. If you genuinely treat it as a profession, you'll certainly need to invest time, energy, and even considerable sums of money. Once you've invested time, energy, and money, won't you then be bound and controlled by the charity work you're doing? Will you still have energy to pursue the truth? Will you still have energy to fulfill your duty? (No.) When you pursue any career in life, no matter what career you engage in, if you do it full time, you will inevitably invest and sacrifice your lifetime's energy and your whole life. It will cost you your home, your feelings, your fleshly pleasures, and your time. Similarly, if you truly treat charity as a profession and carry it out accordingly, all the time and energy you have will get wrapped up in it. An individual

has a finite amount of energy. If you're controlled by charity work, and you want to give consideration to both charity work and your belief in God in an equal and balanced manner, and furthermore, wish to do both things well, this will not be an easy task. If you want to balance these two things at the same time, but you aren't able to, you will have to make a choice. If you are to choose which to keep and which to discard, how will you decide? Shouldn't you select the most meaningful and valuable endeavor to carry out? Then if both believing in God and engaging in charity appear in your life at the same time, what choice should you make? (I should choose to believe in God.) Don't most people choose to believe in God? Seeing that you all made that choice, isn't it quite normal that God doesn't let people engage in charity? (Yes.) Engaging in charity has helped many living things and provided sustenance to many people, but what will you ultimately gain from it? You will satisfy your vanity. Is this truly gaining something, and is it what you should be gaining? Your ideal will have been realized, your value will have been demonstrated, that's it—but is this the path you should walk in life? (No.) What will you eventually gain from it? (Emptiness.) You will gain nothing at all. Your vanity will be temporarily satisfied, you will receive a bit of praise from others, or medals and honors in society, but that's it, and all your energy and time will have been used up. What will you have gained? Honor, a good reputation, and accolades—these are all empty things. However, the truths that people ought to comprehend and the life paths they should take in this life cannot be understood or gained merely by engaging in charity. Believing in God is different. If you sincerely expend yourself for God and pursue the truth, then your investments of time and energy will yield good and positive results. If you know and understand the things that people should comprehend the most—how people should live, how they should worship God, how they view different matters, what viewpoints and stances they should have when they act, what the most correct way to comport oneself is, and how to comport oneself in a way that will be commemorated by the Creator, in a way that means one is walking the proper path—then this is the proper path and it is truly gaining something. Within your life, you will have gained much that unbelievers cannot learn, things that someone with humanity should possess. These things come from God, from the truth, and they will have become your life. From this, you will transform into a person who takes the truth as their life; your life will no longer be empty, and you will no longer be perplexed or waver. Are these not higher and more valuable gains? Are they not more valuable than doing some charitable work to satisfy your vanity for a moment? (Yes.) These gains that involve the truth, and the path that people should walk, will grant you a new life. There is nothing in the human world that can compare to this new life, and nothing can replace it. Of course, this new life is priceless and eternal. It is something that you attain after you have dedicated your time, energy, and youth, after you've paid a certain price and made certain sacrifices. Isn't it worth it? It is most certainly worth it. But what will you gain if you engage in charity? You won't gain anything. Those honors and medals are not gains. Others' approval and affirmation,

other people saying that you are a good person or a great philanthropist—can these be considered gains? (No.) All these are temporary things, and they will soon fade away with time. When you can no longer grasp these things, when you can no longer feel them, you will be filled with regret, and say, “What have I done in my life? I’ve cared for a few cats and dogs, adopted some orphans, helped some poor people to live good lives, to eat good food and to have nice clothes to wear, but what about me? What have I lived for? Is it possible that I lived only for them? Is that my mission? Is this the responsibility that Heaven entrusted to me? Is this the obligation that Heaven gave me? Surely not. Then, what does a person live for in this life? Where do people come from, and where do they go in the future? I don’t understand these most fundamental issues.” And so, when you reach this stage, you will feel that those honors are not gains, and that they are just external things. This is because you would have been the same person if you hadn’t been involved in charity, as after doing charity up until that day, obtaining all those accolades and honors—in either case, your inner life won’t have changed. The things you don’t understand will still be unknown to you, you’ll still be puzzled and perplexed. And at that time, not only will you be more perplexed, and more confused, but you will also feel more uneasy. At this point, it will be too late for regrets. Your life will have passed, your best times will be gone, and you will have chosen the wrong path. Therefore, before you make the decision to engage in charity work, or when you have just started doing charity work, if you wish to pursue the truth and attain salvation, you should let go of such ideas. Of course, you should also let go of all activities related to this work and throw yourself wholeheartedly onto the path of believing in God and pursuing salvation. In the end, even if what you obtain and gain is not as much or tangible as you initially imagined, at the very least, you won’t be filled with regret. No matter how little you gain, it will still be more than what those who’ve spent their whole lives in religion believing in the Lord will receive. That is a fact. Therefore, while choosing a career, in one respect, people need to let go of their ideas and plans to engage in charity. In another, they should also rectify their notions with regard to their thoughts. There’s no need for them to envy those in society who are engaged in charity work, or to think how altruistic, great, noble, and selfless they are, saying, “Look at how noble and selfless they act while assisting other people. Why can’t we be selfless? Why can’t we achieve that?” Firstly, you don’t need to envy them. Secondly, you don’t need to reprove yourself. If God hasn’t chosen them, they have their own missions and pursuits. Regardless of what they’re pursuing, whether it’s fame and profit, or realizing their own ideals and desires, you don’t need to concern yourself with that. What you should be concerned with is what you ought to pursue and what sort of path you should take. The most practical issue is that, since God has chosen you, and you’ve come into God’s house, and you are a member of the church, and furthermore, as you are in the ranks of those performing their duties, you should ponder over how to embark upon the path of salvation while fulfilling your duty, how to practice the truth, how to enter into the truth reality, and

reach the point where God's words are wrought within you and become your life through your pursuits and the various prices you pay. In the not-too-distant future, when you look back at the state you were in when you first came to believe in God, you'll find that your inner life has changed. You will no longer be a person whose life is based on their corrupt dispositions. You will no longer be an arrogant, ignorant, aggressive, and foolish person who thinks themselves second to none, as you once were. Instead, the word of God will have become your new life. You will know how to follow God's way, and you will know how to handle everything you encounter in life according to God's will, and in accordance with the truth principles. You will spend every day in such a grounded manner, and you will have a precise goal and direction in everything you do. You will know what you should and shouldn't do. All these things will be as clear in your mind as a mirror. Your daily life won't be bewildering, exhausting, or depressing. Instead, it will be filled with light, it will have goals and a direction. At the same time, you will feel a drive in your heart. You will feel that you've changed, that you've gained a new life, and that you've become a person who has made God's words their life. Isn't this good? (Yes.) We will conclude our fellowship here on not engaging in charity, which is the first principle within the topic of letting go of careers.

What is the second principle of the topic of letting go of one's career? Being content with food and clothing. In order to survive in society, people engage in various kinds of labor or jobs to sustain their livelihoods, ensuring they have a source and security for their daily meals and living expenses. Consequently, whether they belong to the lower classes or to a slightly higher tier, people maintain their livelihoods through various occupations. Since their purpose is to maintain a livelihood, it's pretty straightforward: having a place to live, eating three meals a day, affording meat on occasion if they wish to eat meat, going to work regularly, having an income, not going around in rags or unable to get sufficient nourishment—that's good enough. They are people's basic necessities in life. When one achieves these basic necessities, isn't it relatively easy to achieve food and warmth? Isn't it within the scope of their ability? (Yes.) So, if the nature of one's career is solely for the sake of food and warmth, for the sake of their livelihood, regardless of what career they are involved in, as long as it's legal, it will generally align with the standards of humanity. Why do I say that it aligns with the standards of humanity? Because the motive, intention, and purpose you have behind engaging in this profession have nothing to do with any matter or idea other than maintaining livelihoods—it is purely for the sake of having enough to eat, having enough warm clothes to wear, and being able to support your family. Isn't that so? (Yes.) These are the basic necessities. Once these basic necessities are provided for, people may enjoy a basic quality of life. When they can achieve this, they can sustain a normal existence. Is it not enough for a person to be able to sustain a normal existence? Is this not what people should achieve within the range of humanity? (Yes.) You are responsible for your own life, you bear it on your shoulders—this is a necessary manifestation of normal

humanity. It is sufficient and appropriate for you to achieve this. However, if you are not content, then whereas a normal person might eat meat once or twice a week, you insist on having it every day, and more left over. For instance, if you consume a quarter pound or half a pound of meat daily when you only need three ounces to maintain proper physical health, this excess nutrition might lead to illness. What causes such diseases as fatty liver, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol? (Eating too much meat.) What is the problem with eating too much meat? Isn't it due to a lack of control over one's diet? Isn't it due to gluttony? (Yes.) Where does this gluttony come from? Isn't it because one's appetite is excessive? Are excessive appetite and gluttony in line with the necessities of normal humanity? (No.) They exceed the necessities of normal humanity. If you constantly wish to exceed the necessities of normal humanity, it means you'll have to work more, earn more money, and work many times more than normal people. Whether through overtime or taking multiple jobs, you'll need to generate more income to afford eating meat three times a day and whenever you desire. Doesn't this go beyond the scope of normal humanity? Is it good to go beyond the scope of normal humanity? (No.) Why is it not good? (In one respect, people's bodies are prone to illness; in another, in order to satisfy their desires and appetites, people have to invest more time, energy, and cost into their work. This takes up the time and energy they could use to pursue the truth and fulfill their duties, affecting how they walk the path of believing in God and pursuing the truth.) People should be content with having basic necessities, not feeling hungry or cold, and achieving the food and warmth needed for normal humanity. You should earn enough money to keep in accordance with the normal bodily requirements for nutrition. That is enough, that is the kind of life that people with normal humanity should have. If you're always craving pleasures of the flesh, satisfying your fleshly appetite without considering your physical health, and disregarding the right path; if you always want to eat good food, enjoy good things, have a good living environment and a good quality of life, eat rare delicacies, wear brand-name clothes and gold and silver jewelry, live in mansions, and drive luxury cars—if you constantly wish to pursue this, then what kind of occupation do you need to have? If you only take an ordinary job to meet your basic needs and address food and warmth, can it fulfill all these desires? (It cannot.) Certainly not. For instance, if you want to do business, and a small business with just one stall can provide enough for the food and warmth of your whole family, you may have less than those above you, but you have much more than those below. You can eat meat on occasion, and your whole family can dress decently. You can use the remaining time to believe in God, attend gatherings, and fulfill your duties, and you can still have the energy to pursue the truth. This is good enough. Because, based on your life having assurance, while engaging in this occupation you will be able to free up time and energy to pursue faith in God and the truth. This is in alignment with God's will. However, if you are never content, you will always think, "This business has potential. I can earn this much money per month with just one stall. It can provide for my family's food and warmth. If I have

two stalls, then I can double my earnings. Not only can my family have food and warmth, we can also save a bit of money. We can eat whatever we want and even travel and buy a few luxury goods. We can eat and enjoy things that most people can't. That would be so great. Let me add another stall!" After adding another stall, you grow wealthier; you get a taste of the perks and think, "It seems that this market is quite large. I can add yet another stall, expand my business, and bring in different goods to expand it further. Not only can I save money, I can buy a car and upgrade to a bigger house. My whole family can travel both domestically and internationally!" The more you think about it, the more appealing it becomes. At this point, you're set on adding another stall. The business grows bigger and bigger, you earn more and more money, your enjoyment increases, but you go to fewer and fewer gatherings, from weekly gatherings to bi-monthly or monthly, and eventually, only once every six months. You think in your heart, "My business has grown, I've earned a lot of money, I support the work of God's house and give a large offering." You're driving a convertible, your wife and children are adorned in gold and diamond jewelry, dressed head-to-toe in brand-name clothing, and you've even traveled abroad. You think, "Having money is great! If I knew making money would be this easy, why didn't I start earlier? Having money is so great! A wealthy person's days are spent in such comfort and ease! When I eat delicious food, the taste is unparalleled. When I put on designer brands, I feel elated, and wherever I go, I receive envious and jealous looks from others. I've gained people's respect and admiration, and I feel different, my back feels like it's straightened up a bit." The desires of your flesh have been satisfied, as well as your vanity. But the dust on the cover of God's words keeps getting thicker and thicker, you haven't read them in a long time, and your prayers to God have become shorter. The gatherings have moved to a different place, and you're not even sure where they're held now. You don't even occasionally report to church anymore. Tell Me, is this getting closer to salvation or farther away? (Farther away.) Your quality of life is improving, your body is well-fed, and you've become more particular. In the past, you wouldn't even go for a medical check-up once every eight years or a decade, but now that you're wealthy, you go for a check-up every six months to see if you have high blood pressure, high blood sugar, or high cholesterol. You say, "One must take care of their body. As the saying goes, 'If you must be something, don't be sick. If you must not be something, don't be poor.'" Your thoughts and viewpoints have changed, haven't they? Now that you're rich and no longer an ordinary person, you feel that you're valuable, that your identity is honorable, and you treasure your body even more. Your attitude toward life has changed as well. Before, you didn't bother with medical check-ups, thinking, "We poor folks don't need to worry about that. Why should I get a check-up? If I'm seriously ill, I can't afford the treatment anyway. I'll just sit and bear it, and if I can't, I guess this flesh will just go ahead and die. No big deal." But now it's different. You say, "People shouldn't live with an illness. If they're sick, who will spend the money they've earned? They won't be able to enjoy life. Life is short!" It's different,

isn't it? Your attitudes toward money, toward the life of the flesh, and toward enjoyment have all changed. Similarly, your attitudes toward believing in God, pursuing the truth, and receiving salvation have also grown increasingly indifferent.

Once a person embarks on the path of not being content with food and clothing, they will pursue a higher quality of life and the enjoyment of better things. This is a sign of danger, it's falling into temptation, it will cause trouble, and it is a bad omen. Once someone enjoys and experiences the taste of wealth, they start worrying that one day they will lose their money and become poor. As a result, they particularly cherish the days of having money now and value the position and status of being rich. You often hear unbelievers say, "Going from bitter to sweet is easy, going from sweet to bitter is not." This means that when you have nothing, you don't mind being asked to let go; you can let go at the drop of a hat, because there's nothing worth holding on. These monetary and material possessions do not become obstacles for you, and it's easy for you to let go of them. But once you possess these things, it becomes difficult for you to let them go, more difficult than ascending to heaven. If you're poor, then when it's time to leave your house and fulfill your duties you can readily walk away. However, if you're a wealthy bigwig, your mind becomes filled with thoughts and you say, "Oh, my house is worth two million yuan, my car is worth five hundred thousand yuan. Then there are fixed assets, bank savings, stocks, funds, investments, and other things, adding up more or less to a total of ten million yuan. If I leave, how am I going to take all of this with me?" It's not easy for you to let go of these material possessions. You think, "If I give up these things and leave this house and my current family, will the place I inhabit in the future have similar conditions? Would I be able to tolerate living in a mud hut or a house of straw? Could I bear the stench of a cattle shed? Right now, I can take a hot shower every day. Could I endure a place where I can't even take one hot shower per year?" Your thoughts multiply, and you can't take it. While you have money, you pull out fistfuls of cash to buy things, buying whatever you want without hesitation, you're particularly generous, and you're never tripped up by money. But if you were to give up all this, you'd feel embarrassed every time you reached into your wallet, wondering what would happen if there's nothing there. If you wanted to eat a bowl of hot noodles, you'd have to calculate which restaurant is the cheapest and how many meals you can still eat with the money you have left. You'd have to keep to a strict budget, living the life of a poor person. Could you tolerate that? Previously, if you washed a piece of clothing twice and it lost its shape, and wearing it out would make you feel embarrassed, you'd throw it away and get a new one. Now, you wash and wear the same T-shirt over and over again, and even if the collar tears you can't bear to throw it away. You stitch it back together and keep wearing it. Could you tolerate that? Wherever you go, people would see that you're poor, and they wouldn't want to interact with you. When you're out shopping and ask for the price, no one would pay attention to you. Could you bear that? It's not an easy feeling, is it? But if you didn't have these monetary and material possessions, you wouldn't need to

let go of them, and you wouldn't need to face this challenge. It would be much easier for you to abandon everything and pursue the truth. Therefore, God has long told people they should be content with food and clothing. No matter what profession you engage in, do not treat it as a career, and don't see it as a springboard or a means to rise to prominence or accumulate wealth and live comfortably. Regardless of the work or profession you engage in, it's enough to see it solely as a means to sustain your livelihood. If it can sustain your livelihood, you should know when to stop and not pursue riches anymore. If earning two thousand yuan per month is enough to cover your three meals a day and the basic necessities of life, then you should stop there and not try to expand the scope of your job. If you have any special necessities, you can take on additional shifts part-time or a temporary job to make ends meet—that's acceptable. God's requirement for people is this: No matter what profession you engage in, regardless of whether it involves knowledge or any technical skills, or if it calls for any physical labor, as long as it is reasonable and lawful, it is within your capabilities, and this profession can sustain your livelihood, then that is enough. Do not turn the profession you engage in into a stepping stone for realizing your own ideals and desires for the sake of satisfying your life in the flesh, thereby letting yourself fall into a temptation or quagmire, or leading yourself down a path of no return. If earning two thousand yuan per month is enough to sustain your personal life or the life of your family, then you should keep that job and use the remaining time to practice faith in God, attend gatherings, fulfill your duties, and pursue the truth. This is your mission, the value and meaning of a believer's life. And any profession you engage in is merely for sustaining the basic physical necessities of a normal human life. God will not demand that you rise to prominence, become outstanding, or make a name for yourself in your profession. If your profession is related to scientific research, it will require a significant portion of your energy, but the principle of practice remains unchanged—be content with food and clothing. If your profession offers you opportunities for promotion and a substantial income based on your capabilities, and this income exceeds the range of being content with food and clothing, what should you choose to do? (Refuse the offer.) The principle you should obey is that which God has admonished—be content with food and clothing. No matter what profession you engage in, if it goes beyond the scope of being content with food and clothing, you will inevitably invest energy, time, or costs outside the range of basic necessities to earn that additional income. For instance, you might currently be a junior employee earning enough to sustain your basic needs, but due to your good performance on the job, your superiors want to promote you to a managerial position or to such-and-such senior executive with a salary several times higher. Is this income earned in vain? When your income increases, the corresponding amount of labor you invest also increases. Does investing effort not require energy and time? This is equivalent to saying that the money you earn is obtained by trading a large chunk of your energy and time. To earn more money, you need to invest more of your time and energy.

As you earn more money, a large chunk of your time and energy is then occupied, and at the same time, the time you allocate to your faith in God, attending gatherings, fulfilling duties, and pursuing the truth decreases proportionately. This is a plain fact. When your energy and time are dedicated to accumulating wealth, you lose out on the rewards of your faith in God. God will not treat you favorably, nor will His house fill you in on what you missed just because you've been promoted and a large amount of your time and energy are now occupied, causing you to have no time to fulfill your duties or attend the gatherings in God's house. Is this the kind of thing that happens? (No.) God's house won't catch you up or let you have special treatment, and God will not treat you favorably because of this. In short, if you wish to have rewards for your belief in God, if you want to attain the truth, it depends on your own efforts to secure time and energy. This is a matter of choice. God doesn't forbid you from sustaining a normal life. Your income is sufficient to cover food and warmth, sustaining your bodily survival and life activities. It's enough to support your continued existence. But you are not content; you always want to earn more. Then your energy and time will be taken away by this sum of money. What are they being taken away for? To enhance the quality of your physical life. As you improve the quality of your physical life, you gain less from believing in God, and your time for fulfilling duties is gone, it is occupied. What occupies it? It is occupied by the pursuit of a good physical life, by physical enjoyment. Is it worth it? (No.) If you're good at weighing the pros and cons, you know it's not worthwhile. You gain enjoyment in your physical life, you eat better food and keep your belly satisfied; you dress well, stylishly and comfortably. You acquire a few more designer items and luxury goods, but your job is tiring, more demanding, and it takes up your time and energy. As a believer, you have no time to attend gatherings or listen to sermons. You also lack time to ponder the truth and God's words. There's a lot of truth you still don't understand and cannot recognize, but you lack time and energy to ponder and seek after them. Your physical life improves, but your spiritual life fails to grow, and faces decline. Is this a gain or a loss? (A loss.) This loss is too great! You have to weigh the pros and cons! If you're a clever person who genuinely loves the truth, you should weigh both sides and see what is the most valuable and meaningful thing for you to gain. If promotion comes, and you have the opportunity to earn more money and provide a better physical life for yourself, what should you choose? If you're willing to pursue the truth and have the determination to pursue the truth, then you should forgo such opportunities. For example, suppose someone at your company says, "You've been doing this job for ten years. Most people in the company see their salaries rise and receive promotions in three to five years. But your compensation is the same as before. Why won't you give a better account for yourself? Why aren't you improving your performance? Look at so-and-so, she has been here for three years, and now she drives a convertible and lives in a bigger house: She switched out her 1-1 for a 3-2. When she came, she was just a poor student. Now, she's a wealthy woman, dressed head to toe in designer clothes, staying in luxury hotels, living

in a mansion, and driving a luxury vehicle." When you see how well off she is, wouldn't you begin to feel the itch? Wouldn't you feel bad? Could you withstand such temptations? Would you still stick to your original intention? Would you stick to the principles? If you genuinely love the truth, are willing to pursue the truth, and believe that gaining something in the truth is the most important thing, the most valuable thing in your life, and that you've chosen that which is the most important and valuable thing in your life, then you won't regret it, and you won't be swayed by things like promotions. You will be persistent, saying, "I am content with food and clothing; whatever occupation I take, it is for the sake of food and warmth, to allow my body to continue living, not for bodily enjoyment, and certainly not for achieving prominence. I don't pursue promotions or high salaries; I will utilize my limited lifetime to pursue the truth." If you possess this determination you won't waver, and your heart won't itch; when you see others getting promoted, receiving raises, or wearing gold and silver jewelry and brand-name clothes, enjoying a better quality of life than you, and surpassing you in style, you won't feel envious. Isn't that so? (Yes.) However, if you don't love the truth and don't pursue the truth, you won't be able to restrain yourself, and you won't persist for very long. On such an occasion and in such an environment, if people lack the truth as their lives, if they lack a bit of determination, if they lack true insight, they will frequently vacillate back and forth and feel weak. After persisting for a while, they will even grow depressed, thinking, "When will these days come to an end? If God's day doesn't come, how long will I remain a footman in the company? Others are earning more than me. Why am I only able to maintain basic food and warmth? God doesn't tell me to earn more money." Who's stopping you from earning more money? If you have the capability, you can earn more. If you choose to earn more money, to lead a wealthy lifestyle, and to enjoy living extravagantly, that's fine; no one is stopping you. However, you need to be responsible for your own choices. In the end, if you don't attain the truth, if God's words haven't become life within you, you will be the only one regretting it. You need to be responsible for your own actions and choices. No one can foot the bill or take responsibility for you. Since you chose to believe in God, walk the path of salvation, and pursue the truth, don't regret it. Since this is what you've chosen, you shouldn't see it as a rule or commandment to follow; rather, you should understand that your persistence and choices have meaning and value. Ultimately, what you gain is the truth and life, not just a rule. If your persistence and choices make you feel particularly embarrassed, uncomfortable, or unable to face people around you, then don't continue to persist. Why make things difficult for yourself? Whatever you wish for in your heart, whatever you want, pursue that thing—no one is stopping you. Right now, us fellowshiping like this is just giving you a principle. In the world, every profession that people engage in is associated with fame, profit, and physical enjoyment. The reason why people earn more money is not to achieve a certain number, but to improve their physical enjoyment through earning that money, and also to become wealthy people known to the public. This way, they will have

fame, profit, and position, all of which exceed the range of basic necessities. Any price people pay is for physical enjoyment, none of it has meaning; all of it is empty, like a dream. What they gain in the end is pure emptiness. Today you might have dumplings for your meal and find it delicious, but after careful reflection, you see that you've gained nothing. If you eat it every day, you might get tired of it, stop eating it, and switch to something else, like corn buns, rice, or pancakes. You adjust yourself like this, and your physical body grows healthier. If you eat rich foods every day, your physical body might grow unhealthy, won't it?

Being content with food and clothing, is this the correct path? (It is correct.) Why is it correct? Is the value of a person's life about food and clothing? (No.) If the value of a person's life is not about food and clothing or enjoyment in the flesh, then the profession a person engages in should only fulfill the need for food and clothing; it shouldn't go beyond this scope. What is the purpose behind having food and clothing? To ensure the body can survive normally. What is the purpose of survival? It's not for the sake of fleshly enjoyment, nor for the sake of enjoying life's course, and it certainly isn't for the sake of enjoying all the things that humans experience in life. All of these are unimportant. So what is the most important? What is the most valuable thing a person should do? (One should walk the path of believing in God and pursuing the truth, and then fulfill their own duties.) No matter what kind of person you are, you are a created being. Created beings should do what they are meant to do—this is what has value. So, what is it created beings do that has value? Every created being has a mission entrusted to them by the Creator, a mission they are meant to fulfill. God has determined the destiny of each person's life. Whatever their life's destiny is, that is what they should do. If you do it well, then when you stand before God to give an account, God will provide a satisfying answer. He will say that your life was lived valuably and fruitfully, that you turned God's words into your life, and that you are a competent created being. However, if your life is just about living, struggling, and investing for the sake of food, clothing, pleasure, and happiness, then when you finally stand before God, He will ask, "How much have you fulfilled of this life's task and mission that I gave you?" You will tally it all up and find that the energy and time of this life were spent on food, clothing, and entertainment. It seems like you haven't done much with your faith in God, you haven't fulfilled your duty, you haven't persisted to the end, and you haven't carried out your devotion. With regard to pursuing the truth, though you had some willingness to pursue it, you haven't paid much of a price, and you haven't gained anything. In the final test, God's words have not become your life, and you are still the same old Satan. Your methods for viewing things and acting are all based on human notions and imaginings, and Satan's corrupt disposition. You are still completely opposed to God, and are incompatible with Him. In that case, you will be rendered useless, and God will not want you anymore. From this point on, you will no longer be God's created being. That is a pitiful thing! Therefore, no matter what profession you engage in, as long as it's legal, it is arranged and predestined

by God. But that doesn't mean God supports or encourages you to earn more money or to rise to prominence in the career you have taken. God doesn't approve of this, and He never required it from you. God will moreover never use the profession you engage in to push you toward the world, to hand you over to Satan, or to allow you to willfully pursue fame and profit. Instead, through the profession you engage in, God allows you to address your needs for food and warmth—that is all. Additionally, within God's words He has told you such things as what your duty is, what your mission is, what you should pursue, and what you should live out. These are the values you should live out and the path you should walk throughout your life. After God has spoken and you understand what He said, what you should do? If working three days a week is enough to meet your needs for food and warmth, but you still choose to work on the other days, then you cannot fulfill your duty. When a duty requires your cooperation, you say, "I'm at work, I'm at my post," and when someone tries to contact you, you always claim to have no time. When do you have time? Only after 8 p.m., when you're worn out, tired, and drained, you have the will but not the strength. You work six days of the week, and whenever someone tries to contact you by phone you always claim that you don't have time. Only on Sundays do you have time, and even then you need to spend time with your family and your children, do household chores, and recharge yourself and relax a while. Some people even go out on vacation, spend some time on leisure activities, and go off spending money and shopping for things. Some people build on their relationships with colleagues, and network with leaders and higher-ups. What kind of belief is this? This is a nonbeliever through and through; what's the point of engaging in the formality? Don't say you believe in God; you have no relationship with believers in God. You don't belong to the church; at most, you're just a friend of the church. God's house needs someone to handle external affairs, and you may agree to help out, but it's just that you're not refusing. Whether you can fill your post, or when you can fill it, is unknown. And after you've arrived at your post, whether you can give it all of your time, and your whole heart, and strength, is uncertain—these are all unknowns. Who knows when you might get too busy with work, or go on a business trip, and disappear without a trace for two weeks or a month—no one can reach you. This is no longer genuine faith, it is a mere formality. When it comes to people like this, their books of God's words should be taken away, and then they should be cleared out and told, "If you can't let go of work, have no time for gatherings, and can't fulfill your duty, God's house won't force you. Let's part ways here. When you can come to be content with just having food and clothing, give up your demands for a high-quality life, and allocate more time to fulfilling your duty, then we'll formally accept you into the fold and count you as a member of the church. If you can't achieve this, and you just report in, help out, and build tenuous relationships with brothers and sisters in your spare time, that doesn't count as fulfilling your duty as a created being, and it certainly doesn't qualify as formally believing in God." What do we call people like this? (Friends of the church.) Church friends, good friends of the church.

“For he that is not against us is on our part” (Mark 9:40). Therefore, these kinds of people are referred to as church friends. Calling someone a friend of the church indicates that they’re still in the observation phase, they aren’t yet formal believers in God, they aren’t counted among the church members, nor are they yet considered as people fulfilling a duty; at most, they still have to be observed, as it’s still unclear whether they can fulfill their duty. However, some people, due to restrictions placed on them by family environment or conditions, must work several days a week to address making a living and support their children. We won’t make any peremptory demands on them. If they can fulfill their duties in their remaining time, then they count as members of God’s house, as formally believing in God, because they have already met the basic condition of being content with food and clothing. They have objective difficulties, and if you prevent them from working, their entire family will have no means of support, and they’ll suffer from cold and hunger. If you don’t let them work, who will support their family? Are you going to support them? Therefore, church leaders, supervisors, and anyone related to them are not justified in demanding that they quit their jobs and not worry about their families. This ought not to be done. It would be asking the impossible of people; they should be given a means to live. People don’t live in a vacuum, they are not machines. They need to survive, to sustain a livelihood. As we discussed before, if you have children and a family, then as a mainstay or a member of the family, you should take on the responsibility of supporting your family. The principle for fulfilling this responsibility is to achieve food and warmth, that is the principle. For some people, this is the condition they are in, and they can’t do anything about it. After performing their responsibilities to their family, they adjust their schedule to fulfill their duty. This is allowed and permitted by God’s house; you can’t ask the impossible of people. Is this a principle? (Yes.) No one is justified in demanding that those who have just recently believed in God and have yet to establish roots must quit their jobs, abandon their families, get divorced, neglect their children, or reject their parents. None of these are necessary. What God’s words require people to follow are the truth principles, and these principles include various situations and conditions. Based on these different situations and conditions, requirements and measures should be made according to the truth principles; only this is accurate. Therefore, in matters of a career, it is crucial to be content with food and clothing. If you can’t see this point clearly, you might lose your duty and jeopardize your chances of being saved.

The last days are also a special time. In one respect, the affairs of the church are busy and complicated; in another, facing this moment when the gospel of the kingdom of God is expanding, more people are needed to dedicate their time and energy, to contribute their efforts and fulfill their duties in order to meet the needs of various projects within the house of God. Therefore, regardless of your occupation, if outside of meeting your basic living needs, you are able to devote your time and energy to fulfill your duty in God’s house, cooperating in various projects, then in the eyes of God, this is not only

desirable but also particularly valuable. It is worthy of God's commemoration, and of course it is worth it for people to invest and spend this much too. That is because although you sacrificed the enjoyments of the flesh, what you gain is the priceless life of God's words, an everlasting life, a priceless treasure that cannot be exchanged for anything in the world, with money or any other thing. And this invaluable treasure, the thing you gain through investing time and energy, through your own efforts and pursuits: This is a special favor and something you have been lucky to receive, isn't it? God's words and the truth becoming one's life: This is a priceless treasure in exchange for which people should offer everything. So, based on your occupation allowing you to have the food and clothing, if you are able to pay the price and invest time and energy into pursuing the truth—if you choose this path—then it is a good thing worth celebrating. You shouldn't feel discouraged or confused about it; you should be certain that you made the right choice. You might have missed out on opportunities for promotions, for salary increases and a higher income, for more enjoyment of life in the flesh, or for a wealthy life, but you have seized the opportunity for salvation. The fact that you have lost or let go of those things, means that your choice has brought you hope and vitality for salvation. You haven't lost anything. On the contrary, if, after having the food and clothing, you exert extra time and energy, earn more money, acquire more material pleasures, and your flesh is satisfied, yet in doing so, you've ruined the hope of your own salvation, then this undoubtedly is not a good thing for you. You should be upset and anxious about it; you should adjust your work or your attitude about life and demands concerning physical life quality; you should let go of certain desires, plans, and agendas for life in the flesh that do not align with reality. You should pray to God, come into His presence, and resolve to fulfill your own duty, throwing your mind and body into the various tasks in God's house, striving so that in the future, on the day when God's work is concluded, when God examines the work of every person, and measures the statures of all classes of people, you will be a part of them. When God's great work is accomplished, when the gospel of God's kingdom has spread throughout the universe, when this joyous scene unfolds, there will be your toil, your investment, and your sacrifice. When God receives glory, when His work is expanded throughout the universe, when everyone is celebrating the successful accomplishment of God's great work, at the unfolding of that moment of joy, you will be the one who is connected to this joy. You will be a partaker in this joy, not the one who will weep and gnash their teeth, who will beat their breast and pound their back while everyone else is shouting and jumping for joy, not the one receiving severe punishment, who will be thoroughly despised and cast out by God. Of course, even better is that when God's great work is accomplished, you will possess God's words as life. You will be a person who has been saved, no longer rebelling against God, no longer violating principles, but someone who is compatible with God. At the same time, you will also rejoice over everything you gave up initially: the high salary, fleshly pleasures, good material treatment, a superior living environment,

and the appreciation, promotion, and elevation given by leaders. You won't regret things like not giving up opportunities for promotion, not pursuing opportunities to increase your salary and build wealth, or the chance to indulge in a luxurious lifestyle. In short, the requirements and standards for the profession one engages in, which are also principles of practice they should obey, are all summed up in this saying: "Be content with food and clothing." Pursuing the truth to attain life is what people should hold on to. They should not forsake the truth and the right path in order to satisfy their own fleshly desires and enjoyment. This constitutes the second principle people should uphold with respect to a career.

Regarding the topic of letting go of one's career, today we discussed two principles. Have you understood these two principles? (Yes.) With the principles clear, the next step is to evaluate, based on these principles, how to practice them. Ultimately, those who can uphold these principles are the ones following the way of God, while those who cannot uphold the principles are deviating from God's way. It's as simple as that. If you can uphold the principles, you will attain the truth; if you don't uphold the principles, you will lose the truth. Attaining the truth provides the hope of salvation; failing to attain the truth will lead to losing the hope of salvation—that's just how it is. Alright, let's conclude the fellowship here for today. Goodbye!

June 10, 2023

How to Pursue the Truth (21)

The topic of fellowship during this period has been quite broad. How much can you remember? How much are you able to grasp? (After God has finished fellowshiping, we can remember some of it a little bit. For other parts of it, we are able to have a slight impression due to currently experiencing similar circumstances. And for other parts, having never experienced such situations, we aren't able to remember much.) When you encounter circumstances, do you have any impression of the things that were fellowshiped about? (A bit. When faced with similar circumstances, I can recall this aspect of the truth God fellowshiped about, a corresponding sentence or two of His words, and afterward I search for these words of God to eat and drink, and I feel like I have some direction.) Have you grasped the principles? (In this regard, I am lacking quite a bit. I still can't quite grasp the principles; I can only just relate to God's words, and have a bit of understanding.) Do you know what understanding the truth and having the ability to receive the truth primarily refers to? When someone lacks the ability to receive the truth, isn't it often said that "This person doesn't understand the truth," or "They haven't grasped this aspect of the truth principles"? Don't you often say something like that? (Yes.) When it is said that someone understands the truth and has the ability to receive it, what does this refer to? Does it refer to understanding doctrine with respect to the truth? (No. My interpretation is that after listening to God's fellowship, if this person has the ability to receive the truth, they can relate it to and acquire knowledge about themselves, and find the principles for practicing the truth.) Understanding the truth and having the ability to receive it primarily refers to a person being able to understand the truth principles. That is, when a certain truth is fellowshiped about, no matter what the specific details and content are, how many examples are listed, or how many matters or states are discussed—within all of this lies a truth principle. If you can understand and grasp this truth principle, then you have the ability to receive the truth. What does having the ability to receive the truth refer to? It means being able to understand the truth principles, and, when faced with matters, being able to view people and things, and comport oneself and act based on the truth principles. This is what is called having the ability to receive the truth. Some people, no matter how the truth is fellowshiped about with them, how many examples are given, how many states are discussed, or how specific the discussion is, still don't know what truth is being discussed here, and they are not able to view people and things, comport themselves, and act based on the truth principles. That is, they can't relate to it or apply it. Even though they can talk about some words and doctrines for several hours, discussing these clearly and logically, it is a pity that they are unable to apply God's words, that they can't apply the truth principles to addressing or handling problems. This is not understanding the truth principles or having the ability to receive the truth. No matter how many doctrines they talk about, it's useless. The truth principles are the specific practice criteria for every matter and every category

of thing related to the truth. Since they are specific practice criteria, they are surely God's will. They are the standards that God requires of you in specific matters, and the specific path of practice you should take. These are the truth principles. They are not only God's will but the standards God requires of people. Suppose you've grasped the truth principles, then you have the ability to receive the truth. If you have the ability to receive the truth, when faced with matters, you will practice based on the truth principles. You'll be able to proceed in line with God's will, and you'll be able to meet God's requirements. Conversely, if you don't understand the truth principles—that is, if you lack the ability to receive the truth—then whatever you do will not be based on the truth principles or on God's words. Your actions lack a basis and criteria, that is, you have no definite standards. Therefore, you cannot meet God's requirements. To assess whether someone is capable of doing real work, look at whether they have the ability to receive the truth. If they do, they can solve real problems. If they don't have it, no matter how much doctrine they can spew out, it's all useless. One who likes discussing words and doctrines but doesn't address real issues is a textbook Pharisee. No matter how many countless passages of God's words you can memorize, it is of no use. The Pharisees could recite scriptures fluently, then they went to street corners to pray; everything they did was in order to be seen by people, to show themselves off, not to address real problems. Such people concentrate on collecting every kind of spiritual, universally praised and accepted, profound, and esoteric knowledge, doctrine, words, and slogans, and proclaim these everywhere. They even display some good behavior on the surface, deceiving people with it so that they might admire and worship them. But when it comes to real issues, apart from upholding statutes and quoting some words and doctrines, they cannot address any real problems. Regarding people's inner states or essences, and how to treat and address these matters, they fail to comprehend anything or understand any truth. They can only speak emptily about some words and doctrines. This is what is called a textbook Pharisee. The reason Pharisees can merely discuss words and doctrines, but can't address any real issues, is because they do not understand the truth, and they cannot comprehend the essence of the issue from beginning to end. So when it comes time to address issues, they resort to speaking falsehoods and promulgating ludicrous viewpoints. They are unable to see through any person or the essence of any matter. Consequently, they are unable to resolve any issues. They lack the slightest comprehension ability. Regardless of how many sermons they've heard or how much doctrine they've discussed, they don't understand what the truth principle or God's will is. Despite being poor and pathetic, they still believe that they understand the truth and pride themselves as spiritual people. Isn't this pitiful? (It is.) It is pitiful and nauseating. They can discuss so many words and doctrines, and even follow certain rules, yet they can't resolve any concrete issues. They will just resort to mimicking how others might speak, saying, "Oh, something happened here. Look at how convoluted, bizarre, and unusual the development of this affair played out. Oh, that person has no conscience

and reason, their humanity is bad and they have no self-awareness. Whenever something happens to them they behave recklessly." You ask them, "Given this behavior, how would you treat or deal with this person? Based on what principles would you handle them? What is the essence of their behavior? Is this type of person an antichrist, or following an antichrist's path? Are they a false leader, or is it simply that their humanity is bad, or their foundation of faith is shallow?" But they say, "This is hard to read." They don't know how to resolve it, and when faced with various matters, they only look at surface phenomena and conditions. When it specifically comes to certain individual behaviors, manifestations, words, and actions, they can only describe or enumerate them, or they may make some simple and preliminary determinations, but they can't comprehend the essence of the issue. They don't know how to treat or handle such people; how to fellowship about the truth in order to make them reflect, know themselves, and relate themselves to God's words; how to help them in their life entry, or how to appropriately place these people when it comes to administration and personnel. They can only talk about various behaviors and conditions of this or that category of people. When you ask them, "Have you handled these people?" they reply, "Not yet, I'm still observing them." This is the outcome. Doesn't this indicate a lack of problem-solving ability? (Yes.) Doesn't a lack of problem-solving ability indicate an inability to receive the truth? (Yes.) Without the ability to receive the truth, aren't these people unable to understand the truth principles? It is not because they haven't heard enough sermons that they do not understand the truth principles; it is because they lack the ability to receive the truth—they don't possess that quality. Then why can they usually speak and discourse so eloquently? Because they've heard a lot and experienced a lot, and they've committed all these doctrines to their memory, naturally they are able to discuss some words and doctrines. Especially those who've served as leaders or workers for several years: They've honed themselves through regular practice, they can discuss and talk about various words and doctrines, and they speak particularly smoothly, as if delivering speeches and essays. But this does not mean they have stature or reality, nor does it mean they understand the truth principles. You must be good at discernment and must not be misled by such people. When you see someone who is able to speak continually for a day or two during gatherings without repeating themselves, you're so impressed by them that you're in awe; doesn't this show a lack of discernment? Doesn't it show that you do not understand the truth? (Yes.) This shows that you do not understand the truth. If you understood the truth, you would be able to discern whether any of the content of their speech contained specific principles of practice to address certain states or problems. Suppose you listen carefully and find there isn't a single sentence addressing people's actual states or problems, that what they are saying is just a bunch of slogans, a bunch of words, a bunch of doctrines devoid of principles, specific solutions, and concrete paths of practice, and even if they speak for two or three days, it's all hollow doctrine. And suppose it seems beneficial and fruitful

at the time you hear it, but upon reflection you think, “How do I resolve this issue? They didn’t seem to address it just now,” and when you ask them again, they just spew a bunch of doctrine, which still leaves you not knowing how to proceed. Isn’t this being fooled and deceived? (Yes.) Although you still don’t know how to proceed, you still admire and look up to them: That is being fooled and deceived. Aren’t you often tricked in this way? (Yes.) Then, as leaders and workers, aren’t you often deceiving others in this way? (Yes.) Now do you have a bit more understanding of what it means to have the ability to receive the truth and what the truth principles are? (I understand them a bit more.) What are the truth principles? (The truth principles are certain criteria for practice when actually encountering matters; they contain God’s will as well as certain standards and paths that should be put into practice. If one grasps the truth principles, they have the ability to receive the truth.) Having the ability to receive the truth allows one to grasp the truth principles. This is the relationship between the two. It’s not that when you understand the truth principles, you have the ability to receive the truth. Rather, when you have the ability to receive the truth, you can understand the truth principles. Isn’t that how it works? (Yes.) So, do most of you have the ability to receive the truth? Can you understand the truth principles contained within all the subject matter I fellowship about each time? If you can understand them, then you possess the ability to receive the truth, and you have spiritual understanding. If, after listening, you only remember certain things, certain specific behaviors or ways of doing things involving certain people or categories of people discussed during fellowship, but you don’t understand what the truth principles being fellowshiped about here really are, and when facing matters you don’t know how to relate them to the specific facts fellowshiped about, or how to act based on the truth principles, then you do not have spiritual understanding. Not having spiritual understanding means to lack the ability to receive the truth. No matter how many sermons you hear, you don’t understand the truth principles, and when matters arise you feel bewildered; you can only see surface-level conditions, manifestations, and the like. You can’t see the essence of the problem, and you can’t find paths of practice or the way to address issues. This signifies a lack of understanding of the true principles and an inability to receive the truth. People like this do not have spiritual understanding. Take your time to ponder and delve into these issues, and you’ll come to conclusions. If you never ponder on these issues, if your head is muddled, then you don’t have a genuine understanding.

Let’s keep fellowshiping about the content we have been fellowshiping about continually during this time. At the previous gathering, we discussed the fourth part of letting go of people’s pursuits, ideals, and desires—the specific content of the part “careers.” Regarding the specific content included in “careers,” the correct understanding people should have about careers, or the specific paths of practice and criteria of practice God requires of people with respect to careers, we have listed four points. What are these four points? (1. Not engaging in charity; 2. Being content with food and clothing;

3. Staying away from various social forces; 4. Staying away from politics.) We have discussed two of these four points. The first point is not engaging in charity, and the second is being content with food and clothing. Doesn't the specific wording of each of these four points constitute the concrete principles of practice for letting go of careers? (Yes.) These four specific principles of practice constitute the standards God requires of humankind with respect to letting go of careers. Of course, the standards God requires of humankind are the truth principles of letting go of careers, and they are the specific paths of practice when people face these matters; that is, by doing what you ought to do within this scope, you achieve God's requirements, but if you go beyond this scope, you go against the principles, against the truth, and against God's requirements. With respect to the topic of careers, we have fellowshiped about two principles of practice: The first is not engaging in charity, and the second is being content with food and clothing. Concerning the first point of not engaging in charity, we have provided certain specific examples and discussed some special situations. What issues are primarily involved in this topic? It pertains to what people should do when choosing a profession or with respect to careers. At the very least, the first point is to not engage in matters related to charity; it is enough to only be involved in careers related to one's own life or livelihood. If there is a charitable organization where you are employed and work only because you applied to a job posting, this is not the same as you being engaged in charity—it is a special situation. You can be employed here and receive wages, but you are just a worker, nothing more than an employee receiving a salary. As for what the charitable organization engages in, whether foundations, social welfare, adopting orphaned children or animals, aiding people in disaster-stricken or impoverished areas, admitting refugees, and so on, these principal endeavors have nothing to do with you. You are not the primary person responsible, and you are not to contribute your time and energy to this charitable cause. This is a different matter altogether. You are not doing charity; you are employed by a charitable organization. Aren't they different by nature? (Yes.) Their natures are different, and this special situation has not violated the principle. Apart from this, whether it's a small-scale or large-scale charity, regardless of what domain the charity work is in, it has nothing to do with you. It is not something God requires you to do. You are not violating the truth by not doing it, and even if you do it, God does not commemorate it. Since you aim to pursue the truth and salvation, you shouldn't invest your energy and time in matters that have no connection to salvation, pursuing the truth, or submitting to God, because doing charity has no value or meaning. Why does doing this have no value or meaning? Regardless of whom you save or help, it can't change anything. It can't alter anyone's destiny or resolve problems with their destiny, and you helping people on occasion is not truly saving them. Consequently, in the end, such endeavors are futile and devoid of any value or meaning. For example, some people adopt wolves: They start with one or two and eventually raise hundreds or thousands. They take this as their career, investing all their savings, involving their entire family, and

devoting all their energy in later years. The whole of their energy and their lives revolve around this one thing, and the final result, despite successfully saving and protecting the wolves, is that they have wasted considerable time and years on this matter. They don't have extra time and energy to pursue the truth and fulfill their duties. Therefore, compared to fulfilling duties and receiving salvation, any undertaking, even if it is recognized by many people and praised by society, is not as important as people pursuing salvation, the truth, and fulfilling their duties. It is not as meaningful or valuable as pursuing these. There is another important matter: If you are chosen by God, and you are one of His chosen people, God will absolutely never entrust you with carrying out a career in charity that may be recognized by the world or society. God will absolutely never entrust such matters to you to do. If you are one of God's chosen people, what is God's greatest hope for you? It is for you to fulfill your duty as a created being, to be able to pursue the truth and return before God, and to be able to receive salvation and remain. This is what most satisfies God's will, what best satisfies His will, rather than performing actions that people in this world or society consider significant, meaningful, or lustrous. If you are a chosen person of God, what He entrusts to you is the duty you should fulfill, exclusively relating to God's work and the work of the church. Anything beyond the work of the church and God's management is not your concern. No matter what you do, even if you believe it is good and are willing to do it, it holds no value, it is not worth commemorating, and God does not commemorate it. Whether it becomes a timeless legacy, is remembered forever, or receives the praise of contemporary people, all that is unimportant. Regardless of how many people acknowledge it, that does not mean that what you do is commended by God or receives His commemoration. It does not mean that what you do is meaningful or valuable. The opinions and evaluations of this world and this society do not represent God's evaluation of you. Therefore, when it comes to careers, you shouldn't waste your limited time and precious energy on meaningless endeavors. Instead, focus your energy and time on your duty given to you by God, and on matters of pursuing the truth and salvation. This is what truly holds value and meaning. Living this way will make your life a valuable and meaningful one. Some people adopt thousands of dogs, and every day is centered on tending to and living for these dogs they adopted. They barely have enough time to eat and sleep, let alone wash their clothes or talk to people. The tasks they take on go beyond the scope of their abilities. They lead exhausting, pitiable lives. Isn't this foolish? (Yes.) You are not a savior, do not try to become one. Any idea of wanting to save the world, change the world, or use your own strength to alter the current state or this world is foolish. Of course, such attempts are even more foolish, and the eventual consequences will only put you in a terrible state, make you exhausted, give you untold misery, and make you not know whether you should laugh or cry. People do not have that much energy, nor are their capacity and abilities great enough to change anything. The little energy and time you possess should be offered and spent fulfilling your duty as a created being. More importantly of

course, it should be spent and dedicated to pursuing the truth to attain salvation and submission to God. Apart from these things, any other endeavors are meaningless. A career is something that must be done as a part of a person's physical life. It doesn't qualify as meaningful; it's merely necessary for physical life and survival. In order to live and survive, you must engage in an occupation; this occupation is merely a job that allows you to support yourself. Whether this occupation takes place in the lower or upper strata of society, it is simply a way to maintain a livelihood; its nobility and significance are out of the question. Furthermore, regardless of its significance, God's requirement for humankind is this: If you wish to pursue the truth and walk the path of salvation, then the standard for choosing an occupation to maintain a livelihood is being content with food and clothing. Don't use up excessive amounts of energy and time running around and busying yourself for your own food, clothing, shelter, and transportation—it's enough to achieve basic necessities. When your stomach is full and your body is warm and covered; when you achieve these basic conditions for survival, you should fulfill your duty as a created being, offer your precious energy and time to your duty, to what God has entrusted to you, and offer your heart. The most crucial point is that while fulfilling your duty, you must also put effort into the truth, pursue the truth and walk the path of pursuing the truth—don't just drift along. This is the principle. God doesn't require you to exert all your strength just to survive and keep living. He doesn't need you to live a glamorous life and glorify Him through it, nor does He require you to accomplish any great deeds in this world, perform any miracles, contribute anything to humankind, provide assistance to any number of people, or resolve the employment problems of any number of people. It's unnecessary for you to have a grand career, to become famous worldwide, and then use these things to glorify God's name, proclaiming to the world, "I am a Christian, I believe in Almighty God." God only hopes that you can be an ordinary person and a common individual in this world. You don't need to perform any miracles; you don't need to excel in various professions or fields, or become a famous person or a great figure. You don't need to be someone who garners people's admiration or respect, nor do you need to have any successes or accolades in various areas. There's certainly no need for you to make any contributions in various professions in order to glorify God. God's requirement for you is simply to live your life well, to have basic necessities, not to go hungry, to dress warmly in winter and suitably in summer. As long as your life is normal and you have the ability to survive, that's enough—that is God's requirement for you. Regardless of what gifts, talents, or special abilities you have, God doesn't wish for you to use them to gain worldly success. Instead, He wants you to apply whatever gifts or qualities you have to fulfilling your duty, to that which He entrusts to you, and to the pursuit of the truth, ultimately attaining salvation. This is the most important thing, and God doesn't require anything beyond that. If you live well, God won't say you're someone who glorifies Him. If your life is ordinary and you're in the lower class of society, this isn't an affront to God. If your family is relatively poor, but you meet

God's standard of being content with food and clothing, this is not an affront to Him either. As you live and survive, the goal of your pursuit is to be content with food and clothing, to have basic necessities and live normally, being able to maintain your daily meals, and covering your daily expenses—that is enough. When you're content, God is also satisfied—this is what God asks of people. He doesn't ask you to be some rich, famous, or lofty person, nor does He let you be a beggar. Beggars don't do any work; all day they beg for food, look pathetic, eat people's leftovers, dress in tattered clothes, wear clothes with patches in them or even drape a burlap sack over themselves—their quality of life is especially low. God doesn't demand that you live like a beggar. In matters regarding physical life, God doesn't require you to glorify Him, nor does He define certain situations as dishonoring to Him. God won't judge a person based on whether they're struggling or living in abundance. Instead, He evaluates you based on how you practice and whether you satisfy God's requirements in regard to the pursuit of the truth and the principles that God requires of you. Have you understood and grasped these two principles of practice related to careers? The first principle is not engaging in charity, and the second principle is being content with food and clothing. Both of these principles are easy to understand.

In the church, there are some individuals who still firmly believe that doing charity is a good thing. They think, "Wherever there's a need, we ought to lend a helping hand. As for me personally, I have donated clothes and some money, and I even go to disaster-stricken areas and volunteer." How do you evaluate this matter? Should it be stopped or interfered with? (It should not be interfered with.) There are also those who say, "When I see someone begging, especially children who are hungry, I feel pity for them." They quickly bring such people into their homes, make them some good food, and then they send them off with some clothes and nice things, and even go visit them on occasion. They are willing to perform these acts of kindness and comport themselves in this way, believing that this way of comporting oneself upholds justice, and that by doing so, they will be commemorated by God and become the most lovely people in the world. Regarding people like this, does the church stop or interfere with them? (It does not interfere.) We share the sermons that ought to be shared with them, and explain God's will and the truth principles to them. If, after understanding and having a knowledge of everything, they still insist on doing things their own way, acting according to their own will, we don't intervene. Every individual must take responsibility for their own words and actions, and people are themselves accountable for the ultimate outcome and how God labels them. Others need not bear that responsibility, they need not foot the bill. If we encounter people like this who understand everything but still insist on doing charity, we won't correct their thoughts and viewpoints, nor will we interfere, and we certainly won't condemn them. There are still some people who, after believing in God, pursue worldly things, riches, positions in government, or a career. Do we interfere with them? (We do not interfere.) Fellowship with them about the relevant truths so that they understand,

and after you finish fellowshiping, they can choose for themselves. It's up to them to decide what course to follow. What they choose, what they want to do, and how they do it—we do not intervene in these matters. Our responsibility is to fellowship with them about God's will and the truth principles. If they understand and comprehend, you may ask them, "So, what should your next step be? When will you start spreading the gospel?" Then they say, "Wait a bit, I have a shipment of goods to bring in, I have some business and a project that I need to take over, something I can make a lot of money on once it's complete. Let's circle back about spreading the gospel later." And you say, "How long should I wait?" Then they answer, "Maybe two or three years." Well, bye-bye then. You don't need to bother with such people anymore. This is how it can be addressed, isn't that easy? (It is easy.) This is what's called knowing the true way and deliberately sinning anyway. Such people will not have a sin offering. God doesn't stop or interfere with people like this; even in that moment, He does not evaluate them in any way. He lets them choose freely. You also need to learn this principle. Regardless of how much they can understand, in short, our responsibility is to clearly convey God's will to them. What they choose after that, what their next steps should be, is their own affair and their freedom. No one should interfere, and there's no need to explain the pros and cons in order to press them. Is this an appropriate approach? (It is appropriate.) If it is appropriate, then it should be done like this. Don't go against principles and don't force them against their will. These are the first two principles of letting go of one's career; these two are relatively easy to understand and readily comprehensible.

Regarding the topic of letting go of careers, what is the third principle that God requires people to practice? It is staying away from various social forces. This one is a bit harder to understand, isn't it? (Yes.) Although it might be a bit harder to understand, this is also one of the principles. It is a principle that people should faithfully observe in order to survive in this society. It is also an attitude, approach, and manner of survival that people must possess to survive in this society, and of course it may accurately be said that it is a kind of wisdom for surviving in society. Staying away from various social forces might appear on the surface to be an issue that is distant from each individual, but in fact, these various social forces are hidden around everyone. They are intangible forces, intangible entities that exist around everyone. When you choose an occupation, regardless of which social class this occupation belongs to, it is shrouded by the considerable force of the related occupation. Whether you engage in a high-end or low-end occupation, there are related groups of people within that occupation. If, within society, these groups have certain years of experience, certain qualifications, or certain social foundations, then they unquestionably form an intangible force. For example, the profession of teaching might not be considered a high-end occupation, but it isn't low-end either. It's somewhat higher than such occupations as farming or various kinds of manual labor, but somewhat lower than the truly high-end professions in society. Within this occupation, apart from the simple work you engage in, there are many other people

flooding the industry. So, in this industry, people are differentiated by their seniority and depth of experience. The upper levels of this profession constitute a class that controls things like personnel, trends, policies, regulations, and rules; it forms a corresponding force within the profession. For instance, in the profession of teaching, who is the leader, the top boss who leads and controls the profession, and who controls your livelihood and salary? In some countries, there might be a teachers' union; in China, it's the education bureau and the Ministry of Education. These institutions represent the domain of forces corresponding to the teaching profession in society. Similarly, for farmers, who is their immediate superior? It might be a team leader, a village chief, or the head of a township, and now there are even agricultural management committees being introduced. Isn't this the domain of forces corresponding to this profession? (Yes.) These different domains of forces may be said to affect and control your thoughts, your words and actions, and even your faith and the path you take in life. They don't just control your livelihood; they control everything about you. Especially in the country of the great red dragon, unbelievers are always holding ideological seminars, reporting on their thoughts, and checking if there are any problems with their thoughts, if they include any anti-party, anti-state, or anti-human elements. Regardless of which profession you engage in, whether it's a more traditional occupation or a more modern one, there will exist various corresponding forces present in the professional sphere around you. Some of the forces are your immediate superiors, those directly responsible for issuing your salary and living expenses. Others might be intangible forces. For example, suppose you are an inconspicuous employee in a workplace; there will be various forces at play within your professional sphere. Some cozy up to the manager and are always orbiting them—this is one kind of force. Then there is the group of a force that stays close to the CEO and dedicates themselves to handling matters for the CEO. Another group might be close to the director of the marketing department. All these various forces exist. What is the purpose of these forces? How do these forces come into existence? It's each individual taking what they want, as well as taking sides and sucking up to those in power in order to achieve their own purposes and survive, which then leads to the formation of various forces. Some forces advocate one approach, while others advocate a different approach. Some forces might tend to do things by the book and follow workplace norms, while others might act more despicably, disregarding both the law and professional ethics. Living in an environment where these various forces intermingle, how should you choose? How should you survive? Should you draw near to the party organization, or to a manager or CEO? Should you cozy up to a director or section chief, or should you align yourself with a bureau head or factory director? (None of them.) However, in order to survive, people often abandon their dignity, their principles of conduct, and especially their boundaries for how they comport themselves. Within the complex landscape of these forces, people will unconsciously choose to take sides, to follow the tide, and to align themselves with various forces. They look for a force that will accept and protect

them, or they look for a force that may be easier for them to accept, one they can control, and they draw near to or even assimilate into it. Isn't this human instinct? (It is.) Isn't it a type of survival skill or method? (Yes.) Whether it's an inherent instinct or a skill for people to adapt to this society and to various groups, is this a principle of practice that one should possess for conducting themselves? (No.) Some people might say, "Even though you're saying right now that it isn't, when you truly find yourself in that situation, in real life you will choose to take sides and seek refuge with any force that benefits you and allows you to survive. And deep down, you might even feel that people must rely on these forces to live, that they cannot live independently, because living independently makes them vulnerable to bullying. You can't always remain independent and aloof; you must learn to yield and stay close to various forces. You must be observant, toady up to people, and put on a show as the occasion demands. You must follow the tide, be good at flattery, gauge trends, and have a sharp intuition. You need to find out and become familiar with what your leaders like and dislike, their temperaments and personalities, their family backgrounds, what kind of things they like to hear, their ages, their birthdays, their preferred brands of suits, shoes, and leather bags, their preferred restaurants, car brands, computer and phone brands, what types of software they like installed on their computers, what kinds of entertainment they enjoy in their leisure time, whom they prefer to associate with, and what topics they discuss." For the sake of survival, you will unconsciously and naturally draw near to them, integrate with them, be excessively accommodating and do things you're reluctant to do, and say things you're unwilling to say in order to satisfy your leaders and colleagues, and to make yourself maneuver with great skill and control everything at your workplace, ensuring that your life and survival are secure. Regardless of whether your actions violate ethics and the boundaries of self-conduct, or even if it means abandoning your dignity, you don't care. But it is precisely this indifference which marks the beginning of your decline, and it is a sign that you are beyond help. Therefore, on the surface, one cannot reproach people who have no choice but to draw near to various social forces for the sake of their life and survival. However, the behaviors people exhibit, the choices they make, and the paths they choose to take, distort their humanity and character. At the same time, as people draw near or integrate into various forces, they learn continually to employ various schemes and strategies to please and satisfy these forces, to improve their own lives and make their survival conditions more favorable. The more they do this, the more energy and time they need to maintain this current state and these relationships. Therefore, within your limited time and days, every word you speak, every action you take, and every day you live through don't just lack meaning; they are rotted through. What does it mean that they are rotten? It means that every day makes you more depraved, to the point where you neither resemble human nor ghost. Against this backdrop, you lack a tranquil heart to come before God, and of course, you also lack ample time to fulfill your duty. You can't possibly invest your whole body and mind into fulfilling your duty, and at the same time you can't

possibly invest your body and mind into pursuing the truth. Thus, your prospects of salvation are bleak, your hopes dim. Because you've invested in various social forces, chosen to draw close to them, and opted to integrate with them and accept them, the consequences of this choice are that you must dedicate your whole body and mind to maintaining this current state, whiling your days away. You feel physically and mentally exhausted, as if you're spending each day in the meat grinder, and yet because of your choices, you must continue like this day after day. Within that complex environment of various forces, when you become integrated with them, every word that they say, the trends contained therein, as well as forthcoming matters, the behaviors of each individual and their innermost thoughts, and especially what your immediate superiors, the highest level of these forces, are thinking—all these things are what you must appraise and gather information about in a timely manner. You can't afford to slack off or neglect it. What they're thinking, what actions they're taking behind the scenes, what plans and intentions they have, even what they are planning and calculating for each individual, what they are deciding for them and the attitudes they have toward them—if you wish to know these things like the back of your hand, then you must have an understanding deep within your heart of that state of affairs. If you want to understand them deeply, you must dedicate all your energy to studying and mastering these things. You must dine with them, chat with them, call them on the phone, interact more with them at work, and even draw near to them during the holidays and keep tabs on their movements. As a result, regardless of what your days are like, whether they're full of joy or pain, even if you had a heart to fulfill your duty and pursue the truth, would you be able to find time to calm yourself enough to perform your duty with your whole body and mind? (We wouldn't.) In this kind of condition, your belief in God and the fulfillment of your duty would be nothing more than a kind of hobby you do in your spare time. Regardless of your requirements and desire for your faith in God, in your current condition, believing in God and fulfilling your duty are probably only the last items on your list of desires. As for pursuing the truth and receiving salvation, you might not dare to think about them, or you might not even be able to think about them—isn't that right? (Yes.) Therefore, for any of you, regardless of the work environment you find yourself in, if you wish to draw near to or integrate with various forces, or if you already have drawn near to and integrated with them, no matter your reasons or excuses, the ultimate consequence can only be that your hope for salvation evaporates into thin air. The most direct loss of this is that you'll scarcely find time to read God's words or fulfill your duty. Of course, it's impossible for you to keep a calm heart before God or pray sincerely to God—you will be unable to achieve even this bare minimum. Because the environment you find yourself in is overly complicated with people and events, once you've been assimilated into various forces, it's akin to stepping into a quagmire—once you're in, it's not easy to pull yourself back out. What is meant by it's not easy to pull yourself out? It means that once you step into the domain of various forces, you'll find yourself unable to escape the various matters

tangled up in these forces, and all kinds of disputes that arise from them. You'll find yourself constantly entangled by different people and events, and you won't be able to avoid them even if you try, because you've already become one of them. So, every event that occurs within the domain of these forces is connected to you and will involve you, unless a certain situation arises; that is, you remain indifferent here to the benefits and drawbacks as well as the disputes, and you observe everything from the perspective of a bystander. In that case, it's possible that you will stay clear of these various disputes or any potential misfortunes. However, as soon as you integrate with these forces, as soon as you draw near to them, as soon as you wholeheartedly go participate in every event that takes place among them, you'll undoubtedly become trapped. You won't be able to remain an observer; you can only be a participant. And as a participant, you will fall victim to the domain of these forces.

Some people say, "No matter in which area of occupation or in which group you exist, being pushed around by others is not a big deal—what's crucial is whether or not you can survive. If you don't align yourself with organizations or various forces, having nobody to back you up in society or within different groups, you won't be able to get by." Is this really how things are? (It's not like that.) In various social groups, the purpose behind people cozying up to different forces is to "find shade under a big tree," to find forces that will back them up. This is people's most basic demand. Aside from that, people wish to take advantage of these forces to rise through the ranks, to achieve their own goal of seeking benefits or power. If, in your professional sphere, you are simply making a living and are content with just having food and clothing, then you don't need to draw near to any forces. If you do draw near to them, it means it is not only to make a living and satisfy the basic needs of food and clothing—you certainly have other intentions, either for fame or for profit. Is there anybody who says, "Besides making a living, I also want to prove myself"? Is this necessary? (It isn't necessary.) Once you've earned your money, are able to secure three meals a day, and have clothes to wear, that's enough—what's the point of striving for pride? For whom are you striving? Is it for your country, your ancestors, your parents, or for yourself? Tell Me, is it more important to strive for pride or to be content with food and clothing? (Being content with food and clothing is more important.) Striving for pride is a disposition filled with impetuousness; whatever you do is for the sake of this pride. It's an abstract, empty concept. The most pragmatic thing is to earn money so that you can maintain a livelihood. You should think about it like this: "No matter the situation, no matter who sides with whom, or who gets close to what level of leader or official, none of it matters. Whoever gets promoted or demoted, gets a raise, or uses whatever means to become a high-ranking official, it's all irrelevant. I'm just working to put food on the table. Whatever any of you are striving for has nothing to do with me. In any case, I put in my eight hours a day, I get paid what I deserve, and as long as I can support myself and my family, I'm content. That's all there is to it; this is the little I ask for." Do what is required of your job and do it well, and receive

your salary and any bonuses with a clear conscience—that is enough. Is this attitude toward survival and one's occupation correct? (Yes.) How is it correct? (Because they live with an attitude that is in accordance with what God requires. First, it means not doing one's job in a perfunctory manner and being able to do the work of one's profession well. Second, it means not seeking refuge or currying favor with any forces; maintaining the needs of a normal life is sufficient. This is in line with God's words.) Of course this is in line with God's words. Does God require this of you in order to protect you? (Yes.) To protect you from what? (From being harmed by Satan. Otherwise, once we're entangled in such disputes, life becomes very painful, and furthermore we won't have much time left for believing in God and fulfilling our duties.) This is one aspect. What, primarily, is the other aspect? When you get involved with various forces, the ultimate result is that you yourself will be ruined. It's really not worth it! First, you won't be able to protect yourself. Second, you will not uphold and promote justice. Third, you will collude with various forces, compounding your sins. Therefore, getting close to these forces has no benefits whatsoever. Even if you do get a raise or a promotion by cozying up to various forces, how many lies will you have to join them in telling? How many bad deeds will you have to do behind the scenes? How many people will you have to punish behind closed doors? In this society, why do all kinds of people and various industries need to have these forces? It is because this society lacks fairness and justice. People can only protect themselves by relying on various forces to take action, and can only secure their place by relying on them to speak and act. Is there fairness here? (No.) There is no fairness in this; everything is based on these forces. Whoever has the greater force gets the last say, while those with no force or a lesser force have no say. Even the creation of laws works like this: If you have considerable force, the laws you create can be enacted and enforced. If you do not have much force, none of the laws and regulations you propose make it through, and they are unable to enter national legislation. This is true in any group of people: If you have considerable force, you can fight for your own interests and maximize them; if you do not have force, your interests might be stripped away from you or seized. The purpose behind the formation of various forces is to control situations using those same forces, even overriding public opinion, the law, and human morals. They can transcend the law, morality, and humanity—they can transcend everything. The greater one's force is, the greater their influence will be, and the more opportunity they will have to do as they please, to dictate matters. Is this fairness? (No.) There's no fairness. Power and force represent their identity and indicate the share of benefits they can obtain. If you are in a social group and all you want is to maintain your livelihood and have food and clothing, and your pursuit is not for status or reputation, or to satisfy your own desires, then it would appear quite unnecessary for you to draw near to various forces. If you want to devote all your time to performing your duties, if you want to walk the path of pursuing the truth and ultimately attain salvation, but you also wish to cozy up to various forces, these two things contradict each other. They cannot complement

each other because they are diametrically opposed, they're as incompatible as water and oil. Drawing near to various forces won't have any effect on assisting your belief in God or your pursuit of the truth. It won't help you identify Satan's hideous face more clearly, nor will it give you more say or let you believe in God without being rejected by the world and persecuted by the government. Some people live in a small village but hold grand designs in their hearts. They think, "I was born in the countryside. I'm a farmer. Although I get mistreated, I can still get by planting some grain and vegetables, and raising some chickens, cattle, and sheep. If I believe in God and pursue the truth, these conditions are quite good; I have the basic conditions I need for survival. But why do I always feel like something is missing from living and surviving in this society and among these people?" What's missing? They don't have a powerful backing. See how it is with people choosing a house: They always prefer one with a big mountain behind it. They consider that mountain their backing, and it makes them feel secure living there. If the house had a cliff behind it, they wouldn't feel safe living there, as if they were going to plummet down the cliffside at any moment. Similarly, living in a village, if one doesn't establish a relationship with someone who has a reputation and status, and pay them a visit every so often to win them over, they will always feel somewhat isolated living in that village and will constantly be at risk of getting pushed around and not being able to make ends meet. That's why they're always wanting to cozy up to the village chief. Is this a good idea? (No.) Especially when it comes to believing in God, in some countries where they face government persecution, some people say, "If we preach the gospel to the village chief and he doesn't believe, but his mother, grandmother, wife, or daughter believe, won't that be getting close to the chief? If a brother or sister of our church has a prominent position in the village or is a relative of the village chief, won't the church have a firm footing there? Won't it have status? Won't our brothers and sisters who believe in God be able to eat and farm in the village without it being a problem? Not only this, but when the great red dragon or the United Front Work Department comes to investigate, there will be someone backing us up. That would be great!" You're always wanting to be close to some organization or some group of forces to ensure that you don't find yourself in any dangerous circumstances, to make sure that you can believe in God safely and free from persecution—how great is that! At the same time, mingling with influential people makes you feel like someone with influence, doesn't it? It's a wonderful thought, but does the village chief even want you to get close to him? Is the village chief someone you can take advantage of? Will the village chief allow you to exploit him? You, an ordinary person, want to get close to the organization or the village chief, and you think simply preaching the gospel will do the trick? Don't you need to offer some decent gifts or accomplish some substantial tasks to get close to the village chief? What experience do you have? Is getting close to the village chief easy? Even getting close to his pet dog would be difficult! And giving a gift directly to the village chief wouldn't work; you'd need to get close to his wife, his mother, his aunt, or his grandmother, starting from relatively

easier targets. Why get close to the village chief's grandmother? The village chief has a closer relationship with her, so you start with her, and through his grandmother, an elder in the family who can put in a good word for you, you gradually get closer to the village chief. This is what's called the "indirect approach," isn't it? If you give a gift directly to the village chief, he might ask, "Who are you?" And you'll reply, "I'm so-and-so from the Li family in the east part of the village." "Which Li family? Why don't I know them?" If he doesn't even recognize you, will it be easy to get close to him? (No, it will not.) And if you give him a gift, what kind of gift will catch his attention? Gold bars, gold ingots—do you have any of those? Sea cucumbers—does he even want those? He'll see whether your sea cucumbers are imported or domestic; he has plenty of those things himself. You tighten your purse strings and spend your days frugally in order to buy it, not daring to eat it—or even touch it—yourself. You give it to him and he doesn't even glance at it. You give him a belt, and he says, "This is domestic, isn't it?" You say, "It's cowhide." And he says, "Who even wears cowhide belts nowadays? Nobody wears them. People wear genuine leather belts with European brand logos or ones with diamonds embedded. Do you have those?" You say, "What do those look like? I've never seen them." He says, "If you've never seen them, don't bother coming here. Are you trying to give this belt to a beggar?" Can you get in the good graces of such a person? You think you've got a clever little plan, that you've got it all worked out, but he simply looks down on your gifts. He looks down on your gifts, and yet you insist on cozying up to him. Is this appropriate? Even if he does think highly of your gifts, is it appropriate to cozy up to him? (It's not appropriate.) Just to have something to eat, just to have a powerful backer in the village, you'd be willing to do such degrading things. Don't you find this shameful? (Yes.) Going after the chief's grandmother, going after his wife and his sister-in-law, availing of all sorts of slapdash methods, giving gifts and trying to get close. Others tell you, "You giving these gifts is useless; it's you yourself the chief has his eyes set on." Would you still try to get close then? No gift you could give would be suitable. The chief won't give them a second glance, thinking them all beneath him. Worst of all, you'd have to throw yourself into the bargain. Would you still try to get close to him? (No.) Will you still look for this kind of backer? What kind of a character is the village chief? Is he someone who lets you casually get close to him? (No.) Even if you did establish a relationship with him and got close to him, what then? Can he control your fate, or help you attain salvation? Or when it comes time to face real persecution and situations, when God allows and orchestrates these situations, can you avoid facing them? Does the village chief have the final say in this? (No.) In the grand scheme of things orchestrated by God, there isn't any force that has the final say, let alone the village chief—no force is even worth mentioning in this regard. Therefore, being in this world, whether you are in a village, a county, a city, or any country, even down to any industry you're engaged in within any country, all the various forces that exist cannot exercise sovereignty over your fate nor can they change your fate. No single force is the master of your fate, let alone the

sovereign of your fate, nor does it frame your destiny. On the contrary, once you integrate into the various forces existing in society, that's when calamity comes to you and your misfortune starts. The closer you get to them, the more danger you are in; the more you integrate with them, the harder it becomes to extricate yourself. Not only do these various forces not bring you any benefits, but as you integrate with them they repeatedly ravage and trample you, twisting your spirit and mind, making you lose your peace, so that you no longer believe in the existence of fairness and justice in this world. They will ruin your most beautiful desire to pursue the truth and salvation. So, to survive in this society, regardless of your social class, environment, or group, or in whatever industry you find yourself, seeking a force to rely on, to act as your own protective umbrella, is an erroneous and extreme thought and view. If you're only trying to survive, you should stay far away from these forces. Even if these forces are just defending your legitimate human rights, that is not a reason or excuse for you to get involved with them. Regardless of the status of these various forces' survival in society, what their advancement goals are, or the direction of their actions, in short, as someone who believes in God, as someone who pursues the truth, you should not become one of them, nor should you become an advocate within these various forces. Instead, you should distance yourself from them, steer clear of them, avoid the various disputes that entangle them, avoid the various game rules they set, and also avoid the harmful things and harmful words they require one to do and say within the scope of one's profession or within the scope of these forces. You shouldn't become one of them, and you certainly shouldn't become one of their accomplices. This is God's requirement for you within the various industries and professions where different forces exist: to stay away from and steer clear of them, to not become their sacrificial pawn, to not become their object of exploitation, and to not become their lackey or mouthpiece.

Of course, in this society, apart from one's immediate supervisors in various industries and professions, and apart from civil organizations, there are also certain illicit social groups that people should avoid—do not get involved with these people or associate with them in any way. For example, those who practice usury. Some people lack capital for their business, and they are unable to secure a normal loan, but there's a way for them to facilitate the flow of capital, that is, through usurious lending. Usurious lending not only involves high interest rates but also carries significant risks. Some people, in order to earn a lot of money and avoid their business going bankrupt, finally resort to this step: Usurious lending. Are those who practice usury law-abiding figures in society? (No, they're not.) They are an illegal social organization, and they should be avoided at all times. Regardless of the situation your survival or current state of affairs brings you to, you should never consider this path, but stay far away from and avoid it. No matter what problems arise in your life and livelihood, don't even think about them or consider taking this path. Isn't this group of people similar to the party organization? The so-called law-abiding society and the underworld have certain similarities between them.

Don’t think they can provide your livelihood with a way out or a turning point; this is wishful thinking. Once you choose to make this move, once you go down this road, you will have a worse life ahead. Of course, there’s another kind of so-called social organization we don’t want to name which you must never get close to, especially when you encounter certain special and thorny problems, when you face special environments, or when you find yourself in particularly dangerous circumstances. Don’t think about using extreme means to protect yourself, to get out of danger, and to escape difficulties. In such situations, it’s better to be trapped by them than to ever associate with those kinds of people or get involved with them in any way. Why would you do this? Is this what it is called having integrity? Is this the kind of integrity that Christians should have? (It is not the kind of integrity Christians should have.) Then what is it? (It’s just not right to get close to them.) Why isn’t it right? (Getting close to them will lead to a worse life ahead, and greater danger in the future.) Is it merely to escape future danger? Then why don’t you break out of your immediate danger first? Why can’t you get close to these forces? In the Bible, when He was tempted, how did the Lord Jesus respond to Satan? (The Lord Jesus said, “Get you hence, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve” (Matthew 4:10).) The One whom people should worship is God, and He is the only One people should serve. At the same time, the One for whom people should live is God alone. If God permits your life to be taken away, what should you do? (Submit.) You should submit to God and praise Him. The name of God should be exalted, and people should submit to God without seeking their own lives. However, if God intends for you to live, who can take your life away? No one can take it away. So, no matter what circumstances or dangers you face, even in the face of death, if there’s a force that can save you from death, then this force isn’t a proper one but belongs to Satan. What should you say? “Go away Satan! I would rather die than have any association with you!” Is this not a matter of principle? (It is.) “It is impossible for me to live because of your forces, nor shall I die because God has forsaken me. Everything is in God’s hands. I cannot possibly rely on any force and make concessions in order to keep living.” This is the principle that people should uphold. If you find yourself in a dilemma, and someone says there’s a force in society that can save you; if this force may succeed in saving you, but it would bring disgrace upon you, upon Christians, upon the church, and upon God’s house; if it would discredit God’s house, how would you respond? Would you accept or refuse? (Refuse.) You should refuse. In principle, we don’t rely on any forces to survive. So, regardless of the circumstances or the perilous situations we face, the most fundamental thing, apart from submitting to God’s orchestrations and arrangements, is that we shouldn’t even entertain the idea of using various extreme means to escape dangerous predicaments. Once people have fulfilled the responsibilities and put forth the effort they ought to, the rest should be left to God’s orchestration. If someone said there is an illegal social organization able to save you, would you agree? (I would disagree.) Why would you disagree? Don’t you want to live?

Don’t you want to escape your predicament quickly? Even when trying to escape your predicament and stay alive, you must have principles for self-comportment. You need to know what you should and should not do. You ought to be clear in your heart and not lose your principles.

Regarding the matter of staying away from various social forces, aside from the different forces people encounter in their lives, there are also various forces that frequently appear in society: One should stay away from these as well. Whether in life or at work, avoid having any connection or interaction with them. Handle your own life and work, and at the same time don’t be intimidated by the formidable appearance of these forces. While rejecting and distancing yourself from them in your heart, exercise wisdom in handling your relationship with them and keep your distance from them. This is what you should do. Be clear in your heart that you’re only doing this job for your next meal, for your livelihood. Your purpose is simple, to have food and clothing, not to fight them for any particular outcome. Even if they say things to you or speak harshly; even if you are in a country where religious beliefs come under persecution, where Christianity is under persecution, and some people mock your belief, make sarcastic remarks, or spread rumors about it, you can only endure. Protect yourself, remain calm before God, pray frequently to Him, come into His presence regularly, and don’t let the outward enormity or fierceness of these forces intimidate you. Apart from practicing discernment toward them deep in your heart, you must also stay far away from them. Guard your words, be careful how you step, maintain a peaceful coexistence and use wisdom in your dealings with them. Aren’t these the principles of practice you should follow? (Yes.) Of course, whether you want to stay away from them, refuse them, or even despise them in your heart, you should be wise about how you appear on the outside. You shouldn’t let them sense it or see it. Be clear in your heart that you’re only working to make a living, and living among them is a last resort. First, try to stay away from them. When they’re collectively participating in any illegal behavior, you should stay away from and avoid them, and don’t have any share in their crimes. At the same time, protect yourself, and don’t let yourself fall into the awkward situation of being jointly attacked or framed. Is this easy to accomplish? Some people who are young and naive might find it difficult when they first enter this complex social environment. Or perhaps some individuals lack qualities or adaptability, and aren’t very skilled at handling interpersonal relationships, adding some difficulty to this. But in any case, one thing is clear: It is enough for you to use your personal capabilities to finish the work of the task at hand. Don’t offend anyone; don’t be too exacting toward anyone who lacks faith, moral boundaries, conscience, and reason. Do not, because of a single word or incident, preach high principles to them or talk about matters such as faith in God, how to comport oneself, or conscience and human nature. It’s not necessary; save your good advice for those who understand. Don’t even use human speech with those who are no better than beasts, let alone talk about things involving the truth. This is a foolish course of action. If they are a powerful

force, then in the way you approach them, while distancing yourself and rejecting them in your heart, outwardly, you should maintain a friendly and harmonious demeanor toward them. Strive to achieve the result of sustaining your own livelihood with food and clothing—that is enough. In such a complex living environment where various forces intertwine, God doesn't need you to take part in anything to prove that you're someone who follows God, who pursues the truth, or who is a good and honest person. Instead, He wants you to be harmless as doves and wise as serpents, at every moment to come before God, to calm yourself before Him and pray, to let God protect you, and to accomplish the goal of protecting yourself. What is the specific outcome you should achieve? It should be to avoid being swindled by wicked people, to avoid being entangled by diverse forces, and to not become their punching bag, their sacrificial pawn, their scapegoat, or the butt of their jokes. When they find out you believe in God, they'll laugh at you, saying, "Look, they are a religious believer," or "See that religious person, their God is like this or that; they're praying to their God again, and they say that the money they make is given to them by God." Therefore, don't engage in faith-related discussions with them. Don't give them any leverage. You don't need to invest any of your energy in socializing with them, maintaining a relationship with them, getting them to say how good you are, how good a person you are, or to win their approval. You don't need these things. Take care of official business in a principled manner; you are an ordinary employee, just another member of the industry. God doesn't require you to spread His words among them, to fellowship about His truth to them. He asks you to distance yourself from them, to protect yourself, to not get trapped in their quagmire or in any temptations, and especially to not be embroiled in various disputes, in the chaos of their making, in their schemes and traps, or in complicated situations. At all times you should be aware of your purpose in this profession: It's not about advancement, rising to the top, becoming a person of means, or showcasing your value to society. It's not about doing anything to impress your leaders or superiors. Your purpose is to earn your daily bread, to earn your livelihood, to be able to survive in this world and this society, and then to have the time and conditions to fulfill your duty, pursue the truth, and attain salvation. Hence, in any workplace, you don't need to strive for opportunities for advancement, further education, studies abroad, the high opinion of your superiors, or even the attention of leaders higher up. You don't need any of that. If you're trying to survive, to sustain your livelihood, then those things can be relinquished from your life. You need only to protect yourself within the scope of your profession—that is enough. God doesn't ask you to do much. The principle you ought to observe is to distance yourself from various forces, to avoid placing yourself in the meat grinder or wrecking yourself in a relatively simple environment where you can sustain your livelihood. This is a foolish course of action. You are clearly able to sustain your livelihood through the simplest work methods, yet you are often willing to join in disputes, dip your toes or participate in matters unrelated to your profession and livelihood, which as a result cause

you to fall into various complex human affairs, into the complex entanglements and conflicts of various social forces. So you can't blame God for arranging your circumstances; you have only yourself to blame, your downfall is of your own doing. You frequently say that you are too busy and exhausted at work, and that you lack the time for gathering and fulfilling your duty. No matter the reasons, if you find yourself in such circumstances, you'll soon be cast out by God's house. Your hope of salvation will disappear. That was the path you yourself took, the path you chose, and this is the outcome you'll ultimately receive. If in your environment you practice according to the principles fellowshiped about by God, you protect yourself well, and you can come before God with a quiet heart, then even while balancing work and the fulfillment of your duty, you will still have a chance at salvation. But the precondition for this is that you must distance yourself from various forces in society, calm your heart, and at the same time, within the scope of your abilities and limited means, be able to fulfill your duty and walk the path of pursuing the truth. That way, no matter how challenging your family environment may be, or how limited your individual means, under God's preservation, blessings, and guidance, you will ultimately advance step by step along the path of pursuing the truth. Then your hope of salvation will grow stronger. Perhaps due to your personal pursuit, efforts, and paying the price, you will eventually attain salvation. However, some might give up halfway. They see that this life is too monotonous, that they have become isolated by the world, that their lives are solitary and alone, and they feel they have nothing to do if they aren't mixed up in various disputes, and that they are unable to find their own worth or see their worth and their future. So, they abandon the principles God required of them, opting not to be alone or silent, but to blend in with various forces in society. They quibble over every little detail, join in struggles and entanglements, and quarrel and fight with them. They fall into various disputes, feeling their life has become full, valuable, and happy—they are no longer lonely. What is it that such people have chosen? They've chosen the path of neglecting their duties and not pursuing the truth. This is the end: When this point of the road has been reached, there is no longer any hope for salvation. Isn't that the case? Quite a few people, even after hearing these words, feel good about them and don't find it too challenging to put them into action. However, having practiced them for a while, they think, "Isn't living like this too exhausting? People often see me as unconventional, I have no friends, no companions; it's too lonely, too isolating, and my daily life feels dull. I feel that it's not really a good or happy life." They then return once again to their previous life, and such people are cast out. Their hope of salvation disappears. They cannot endure loneliness, nor can they tolerate the hardship of being ridiculed and isolated for living according to God's requirements in the midst of this group of people. Instead, they enjoy living among various forces fighting against each other, and they assimilate into different forces, get caught up in them, quarrel with them, and struggle against them. Such people, it can be said, do not belong to the chosen ones of God. Even if they feel good after hearing these

sermons, they still choose to integrate into various social forces rather than distancing themselves from them. Needless to say, such people are definitely not those for whom salvation is intended. However, if you choose the path of distancing yourself from various forces in society, and under the condition of sustaining your livelihood you fulfill your duty as a created being, then at the very least, based on this choice, you have a hope for salvation. You possess the basic prerequisites; consequently, this hope for salvation exists.

There used to be someone in the church who somehow became acquainted with a white person whose father was a member of parliament. Actually, being a member of parliament isn't that great an office, but this guy felt that it was such an honor to be on speaking terms with an overseas parliament member's son. He thought he was a person with status. Later on, he showed this parliament member's son around, introducing him to whomever they saw, saying, "This is the parliament member's son." I asked, "The parliament member's son? What level of parliament member is his father? What can he do for you?" He replied, "His dad is a parliament member!" I said, "Does his dad being a parliament member have anything to do with you? You're not a parliament member, so what's with the showing off?" That guy was so pleased with himself. Just because he had established a connection with the parliament member's son, he acted conceited wherever he went, and ignored familiar faces when he saw them on the street. People asked, "Why don't you greet us?" He responded, "I'm walking with the parliament member's son!" Can you believe how vain he was? Is this a nonbeliever or isn't it? (It is.) What's the ultimate outcome for such people in God's house? (They will be cast out.) This person must be cleared out of the church, for he is a nonbeliever and an opportunist. Whoever seems to have rank and force, he attaches himself to that person, and if he sees that there is force in God's house, he attaches himself to it. As a result, after staying in God's house for a time, he realizes there's no way to make money here, so he finds a job delivering takeout. But that job doesn't make him feel dignified enough, and later he curries favor with the parliament member's son, thinking he has status now and doesn't need to deliver takeout anymore. Tell Me, isn't this foolish? Isn't there a portion of people like this in the church? (Yes.) Some people feel proud just because they know someone with rank or force. They think they have value and are different from the rest. Some people have a small official position and a little force to go with it, yet they believe they are different from others in the church and should have the final say. Aren't these people nonbelievers? (Yes.) Then there are those who lack real influence, but they brag all the time, saying, "I know the president!" or, "I know the friend of the president's secretary's cousin!" You see, they make such convoluted associations and still have the audacity to say such things. Why are they so thick-skinned? Their story is so convoluted that no one knows who they're really talking about, and others are too uninterested to listen, because they don't care about these things. Only these individuals consider such matters to be the most important, the most significant, and the most impressive. Some people often say they are acquainted with ministers, directors or high officials. Some

even go so far as to claim, “I know people on both sides, in law-abiding society and in the underworld; I walk both paths as easily as if on flat ground.” Others might say, “I know the county chief’s sister-in-law.” And there are those who assert, “I know the mayor’s mother’s friend from church.” They use these as bragging rights. What’s the use of knowing these people? Can they help you achieve anything? Even if you’re a mayor, a director, a provincial governor, or even the governor’s mother or father, does your status have any application in the church? (It doesn’t.) Are mayors, governors, and such not part of the human race? Can they become greater than God? Isn’t the fact that these nonbelievers value such forces disgusting? (It is disgusting.) Some people even claim to know the police chief, and others say, “I used to be a community police officer and a station chief at the local station,” while others say, “I used to be a neighborhood office director and wore the red armband.” How do you feel when you hear them talk about these so-called forces? Some nonbelievers, those who don’t pursue the truth and are believers in name only, are so stupid they do not know if what those people are saying is true or not, so they take it as factual and hold them in high esteem. But for those who pursue the truth, what do they think in their hearts when they hear these things? What is their evaluation of those people? At first glance they can tell that they’re a nonbeliever, that all they talk about is various worldly forces and matters, and that they’ve come into God’s house to show these things off. Don’t even talk about the fact that they know the distant relatives of some official or celebrity; even if they are one themselves, in the house of God, they are worth nothing, their titles and positions are worth nothing, so what are they showing off? Do they possess the truth? Are they fulfilling their duty according to principles? They’re nothing, yet they have the gall to show off! Isn’t this shameless? Isn’t it nauseating? (It is.) How nauseating is it? Having contacts on both sides of the law is something they’ll even brag about—are people who brag about this stupid? Aren’t they foolish? (Yes.) They’re not even afraid of getting themselves into trouble. Associating with both sides of the law: Isn’t someone like this a thug? Thugs and slick operators are not valued in the house of God; they belong to the nonbelievers and should be expelled! Yet they still use this as bragging rights. Isn’t this dim-witted? Is this something to be proud of? They even boast about it! Some people wear large gold chains on their wrists and, when they’re drunk, show them off to people, saying, “My ancestors were tomb raiders, and their skills in this have been passed down in my family for generations. Look at this big chain on my wrist, I found it in some grand tomb late one night on such-and-such date and took it for myself. How about that? Impressive, huh?” Some people hear this and report them, and they’re arrested without even realizing what law they’ve broken. People ask them, “Is that gold chain on your wrist from this era? It’s an artifact!” They stupidly incriminate themselves. Don’t boast blindly about things that never happened; be careful you don’t attract the police and get into trouble. It’s easy to get into trouble boasting about things; if you play with fire you’re likely to get burned, and you’ll end up destroying yourself—that’s your own doing. You don’t even know what to

say, you can't make heads or tails of it—isn't this dim-witted? (Yes.) If you boast about being able to eat twenty buns in one sitting, that's fine; it's not a matter of breaking principle. At most, people will just think you're foolish and won't take you seriously, but it's not against the law. The principle of staying away from various social forces is essentially about needing to have wisdom in every corner of society and in whatever group you find yourself. It's like what God said during the Age of Grace, "Be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Protect yourself well; as long as you can sustain your livelihood, that's enough. Don't make an attempt or have delusions about taking advantage of social forces to establish yourself in society, becoming part of them, gaining their recognition and admittance. These are foolish ideas and decadent thoughts. Humans' perspectives should be corrected. No matter the social environment or community they find themselves in, if they follow God's way, it will lead to being rejected by society or by humanity. But as long as God gives you breath, you won't be left without a way to survive. You must have that kind of confidence. People's lives do not depend on various forces to ensure their safety, livelihoods, future, or everything they own. They rely on a single word from God, on His ordainment, guidance, and protection—this confidence is a must for you. Therefore, to survive in society, your fundamental means of survival should be to choose a profession to sustain your livelihood, rather than relying on any kind of force. Relying on a profession to support oneself: This principle is that people, under God's guidance and ordainment, enjoy everything that God has given them, including material possessions and money—not relying on alms or distribution from various social forces to satisfy their individual livelihood. The material things and money you rely on every day you survive, much like the breath you take, all come from God, are given by Him, and no one can take away what God has given you. Material things, anything external to your body, like your breath, aren't granted to you by anyone else's alms-giving, and of course, no one can take them away. If God has given them to you, no one can take them away. We can see this fact in Job's experiences, and you should have this confidence. With this genuine confidence, you'll have the foundational basis and motivation to uphold the principle of staying away from various social forces. Then, on this foundation, your body and mind can be calm before God, you can come before Him and offer your body, mind, and spirit, fulfill your duty, pursue the truth, and obtain the beautiful result of salvation. You should possess this knowledge and understand these truths. Therefore, while the phrase "stay away from various social forces" might sound easy, when facing matters you must weigh your decisions based on various principles and real situations. In short, the ultimate goal is not to simply distance yourself and break away from them, but to use the method and path of practice of staying away from various social forces to achieve being calm before God, to offer your body and mind to Him, and to come before God, embark on the path of pursuing the truth and ultimately attain hope for salvation and the realization of your desires. Consequently, to achieve this final salvation, you must follow the principle of

staying away from various social forces. This is a necessary path, one of the crucial paths to attaining salvation. Isn't that so? (Yes.) The principle of staying away from various social forces has been fellowshiped about clearly. Is there anything about this principle that remains unclear for you? When it comes to certain special situations, do you know how to approach them? If joining a certain force is merely a formality or a necessity of a certain profession, does this go against the principle of staying away from various social forces? If it's only a necessity or formality within your profession, then it's acceptable. The forces we speak of have no relation to this, to superficial organizations or groups; here we are discussing forces. What does "forces" refer to? It refers to authorities, strength in groups, and the strength with which these things operate or even run amok in society, isn't that so? (Yes.) If you've understood this principle of practice, let's move on to fellowshiping about the next one.

The fourth principle is to stay away from politics. Politics is a sensitive topic. Thirty years ago, discussing certain such-and-such leaders, policies, or current political affairs, even within the church, would draw criticism from a number of people. Many would find an excuse to leave as soon as politics were brought up, and dared not to discuss such topics, saying, "Bringing up politics means you are against the party and the nation; you're a counter-revolutionary and you'll get arrested. If it weren't for the sake of fellow brothers and sisters, I would report you." Back then, people were particularly sensitive about politics. Is it still the same now? If politics are discussed or exposed within the church, if the great red dragon and Satan are revealed, or topics that seem political are brought up, do most people still hold this attitude? Hasn't there been some change? (Yes.) In past gatherings, when we talked about things like which demon was opposing God or persecuting Christians, some people would cough, as if something was stuck in their throat, and they would go outside to clear their throats. After a while, they would listen for a bit and think to themselves, "Oh, the counter-revolutionary talk has stopped," and they would come back. But when they came back and saw that you were still discussing it, they would start coughing again and leave. I wondered, why do they keep coughing? We were discussing how to discern Satan, and revealing its essence and its vile face. Is this a political discussion? (No.) Some foolish people, those so-called spiritual people who lack spiritual understanding, strongly resisted these topics. They couldn't differentiate between the truth and actual political involvement or understand what the Communist Party meant by "counter-revolutionaries." They were ignorant, brainwashed by the Communist Party, and afraid that they themselves might also be considered counter-revolutionaries. They didn't dare discuss or mention the topic of exposing the great red dragon. Is exposing the great red dragon participating in politics? Is renouncing the great red dragon counter-revolutionary? (No, it isn't.) Right now you dare to say it's not, but would you dare to say the same thing in mainland China? Are those who follow God political criminals who act against the party and the state? (No.) Why do you say no? What is a political criminal? Have you participated in politics? (We

have not.) If you haven't participated in politics, then how did you become a political criminal? (The label is applied by the great red dragon.) If you participate in theft, you're a thief. If you participate in murder, you're a murderer. If you participate in a robbery, you're a robber. On what basis are these charges established? It's when you engage in these criminal activities that the charges are established, and you become the perpetrator of that criminal behavior. But if you didn't participate, this crime and this charge have nothing to do with you. If you don't follow Satan or the party, if you oppose the Communist Party, oppose the great red dragon, and hate the great red dragon, and if you follow God, are you participating in politics? (No.) Then if they convict you of being a counter-revolutionary or a political criminal, does that charge hold? (No, it doesn't.) It doesn't hold; that is absurd. It's like a farmer who doesn't have a profession, who just farms a bit of land, harvests crops, and goes to the market to sell them. Then someone with a red sleeve badge sees him and says, "Hey, do you have a work permit? Do you have a health certificate?" The farmer says, "Where would I get a work permit? I don't have a profession, I'm not employed, why would I need a work permit?" The farmer doesn't have a position or profession, yet he's asked for his work permit just to sell something—isn't that absurd? When you believe in God and follow Him, the great red dragon accuses you of participating in politics. Which article of the national constitution did you help formulate? Which political movement did you help plan? What level of government official are you? Did you participate in internal dissension at any level of government? Which national congress meetings or state conferences did you participate in? (None.) You don't even have access to information, let alone participating in politics, yet in the end you have been convicted as a political criminal—isn't this a trumped-up charge? Tell Me, isn't this country absurd? (Yes, it is.) Some people are still stupid. They think, "Oh no, being convicted as a political criminal or counter-revolutionary is a huge disgrace to believers in God!" Isn't that foolish? There are even some people who, having been convicted as counter-revolutionaries or political criminals for believing in God and sentenced to 15 or 20 years in prison, upon their release feel that it is a disgraceful affair. They think they can't show their face to anyone, including classmates, friends, and family. Especially when people are pointing fingers and whispering behind their backs, they feel they've done something shameful. Isn't that foolish? (Yes.) This era rejects you, and the great red dragon persecutes you—are they righteous? If all of humanity rises up to persecute you, does that mean the truth isn't the truth anymore? The truth is always the truth, no matter how many people rise to oppose it. The essence of the truth remains unchanged, just as the evil essence of Satan remains unchanged. Even if nobody recognizes or accepts the truth, it is still the truth, and this fact will never change. Should all of humanity rise up against God and refuse to accept His words, it would show that humanity is still evil. Satan's force of evil cannot become righteousness just because there are many people or great forces behind it. A lie repeated ten thousand times becomes the truth; that is Satan's fallacy, Satan's logic, not the truth. If believers

experience rejection from the whole world, and persecution and defamation from the great red dragon, should they feel ashamed? (No.) They should not feel ashamed. When you suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, it proves that this world is truly wicked, and it confirms God's words: The entire world lies in the power of the evil one. When you are persecuted for righteousness' sake, no matter how proper your path and righteous your actions may be, no one will stand up and applaud you. Instead, for any dirty deals that people in this world make, as long as they package them up and promote them, when they're presented to the public, they become positive things. Those people are the evil ones; their deeds are all dirty tricks.

Let's continue fellowshiping about this matter of staying away from politics. What is politics? You need to know what politics is before you can understand how to distance yourself from it. What is politics? At its most basic level, it involves a desire to hold office and to have a career as an official. This is one area of politics. Politics means holding office and having a career as an official. From high-ranking to low-ranking officials, from small department heads and section chiefs in government offices, to party branch secretaries and party committee secretaries, to directors, bureau chiefs, ministers, and heads at various levels—all of these fall under the category of politics. What does politics refer to? The most straightforward way to put it is that it is force and authority, it is a symbol for a type of authority in society. This is one facet of politics. What else falls under politics? (God, isn't politics also about the struggle to seize, establish, or consolidate the political power of the state?) Personnel conflicts and power struggles all belong to politics. What else is there? The schemes, strategies, and methods used in these struggles, as well as various elections, campaigns, and publicity efforts related to politics and power—all these fall under politics. This is the most straightforward understanding of politics that we can have. Drawing closer to the organization and to the party, and striving for progress—isn't this what politics are to ordinary people? They call this "A small person who can see the big picture." You see, although their position is lowly, they have a broad perspective. So they get close to the organization and to the party, striving for progress. They start by joining the Communist Youth League, then the Communist Party. Gradually, they draw closer to the party, listening to the party's instructions, following its guiding policies, and orientation. They strictly adhere to the guidelines indicated by the party, implementing them and fully embodying the qualities of a party member. They speak and act for the party, safeguard the party's interests, its rule, its status, and its image in the minds of the people. They safeguard everything for the party. Isn't this all a part of politics? (Yes.) You safeguard the organization, that organization being the party. Regardless of which political party or which organization formed by the party it is, as soon as you start participating, you're taking part in politics. Have any of you participated? (No.) Then you can rest assured; you aren't a political criminal, neither do you have the qualifications to call yourself one. At the very least, a political criminal would have to go overseas and establish a human rights organization or group, engage

in various human rights activities, oppose the current government's policies and rule, as well as various actions taken by the government. Additionally, they need to establish regulations, systems, rules, and a constitution, along with various clauses that members of the organization must adhere to. It must be organized and disciplined, with leaders up high and working members below, forming a complete and systematic organizational structure from top to bottom. Only then can it be called a political group, and only activities conducted within that political group can be considered participating in politics. Have any of you participated in this? If not, do you have any intention of participating, or do you plan to join a political party and at least hold a position like a legislator or an advisor? Is there anyone who fits this description? If you have such plans, it means you're already involved in politics; even if you haven't participated yet, you already have the intention to do so. But if you don't have such an intention, that's quite good. Does participating in election voting as a citizen count as being involved in politics? If a country's system is based on freedom and democracy, and citizens have the right to vote, does casting a vote for candidate so-and-so count as participating in politics? (No, it doesn't.) It doesn't, this is the policy and system of that country, where people have the right to vote. This doesn't count as participating in politics. You're just expressing your personal preference by selecting a certain person, but you aren't getting involved in their political power struggle. No political activities have any relation to you. You're simply casting a vote for so-and-so as a citizen of that country. This action is just a straightforward exercise of your citizen's rights and isn't a form of political activity or behavior.

In terms of what politics is, this subject matter has more or less been fellowshiped about, so it should be pretty clear how to stay away from politics. How do you stay away from politics? First, let's talk about how to stay away from politics, and then we'll discuss why you must do so. We've just discussed what politics is. What is politics? First and foremost, it is participating in power struggles—this is equivalent to participating in politics. We are all ordinary people, so let's not talk about people like presidents, party chairmen, or those who occupy positions in high-level national political groups. Instead, let's talk about something that ordinary people can relate to, like the party branch secretary in a government agency. Is the party branch secretary a political figure? Holding a party position within a government agency makes one a prominent political figure. So, how do you stay away from politics? What does staying away mean? (Not engaging with these political figures.) Not engaging with them? But you can't really avoid them in your workplace. If you avoid them, they might come and find fault with you, saying, "Why aren't you talking to me? Why are you hiding from me? Do you not like me, the party branch secretary? If you have any opinions about me, doesn't that mean there's an issue with your thought process? Let's have a talk." They'll want to have "tea" with you. Is that tea enjoyable? Do you dare attend? For example, the party branch secretary approaches you and asks, "Hey, Xiao Zhang, how long have you been working here?"

And you say, “A good number of years, about five.” Then they reply, “You seem like a nice fellow. Have you joined the party?” How would you respond? What’s the appropriate answer in order to distance yourself from politics? (Just say, “I don’t meet the criteria to become a party member at the moment.”) That’s wise. Is this statement true? (No.) It’s actually just a way of brushing them off. You think, “You sly fox, you old devil, what does it matter to you whether I join the party or not? You want me to join the party. Well, what does the party count for anyway?” That’s what you’re thinking, but you can’t say that to the old devil. Instead, you need to make your outward demeanor seem polite. You say, “Oh, you old party member, you don’t understand the struggles we young people face. We have limited experience and have yet to see results in our work, so we’re not qualified to join the party. The party is sacred; we can’t just join without good reason. I’ve been considering the idea of joining the party….” Just answer him in a few words. Do you want to join the party in your heart? (No.) Even if they offer you preferential terms, and after joining you receive a promotion or an official position, you’re not interested, right? The basic conditions for holding office and having a career as an official are that you must first join the organization, join the party, or get close to the party. You have to get close to the party before you can hold office or move up. To stay away from politics, the first step is to distance yourself from political parties. Some people may ask, “Does that mean only staying away from the Communist Party?” No, it means staying away from all kinds of parties. What does a party represent? It represents a political force. A group that takes the political manifesto, program, and goals of the party as its aim is called a party. Regardless of the aim and program of a party, their only goal is to form a force, and to use their force and strength to wrestle for more force and power in the political arena and landscape. This is the purpose of a political party’s existence. The purpose of any party’s existence is not for the benefit of the people, but for force and power. In other words, it is for the sake of holding power and having a force of their own. Isn’t that the case? (Yes.) Therefore, the first step to staying away from politics is to not formally join any political party. Some people may ask, “What if I used to be a member of such-and-such party?” That is a little difficult. If you are willing to quit the party, that would be best, and you formally cut ties with them. If you are unwilling to quit the party or if it’s troublesome to quit, then you should consider what to do on your own. In any case, whether formally or in spirit, you should stay away from the first major issue involving politics, which is staying away from parties. Once you distance yourself from parties, you become an independent individual. You will not be swept along by any political force, nor will you work for any political force. Not joining any party is the most fundamental specific path that should be practiced in order to stay away from politics. Additionally, when it comes to any political force, such as the party branch secretary, director, or personnel officer of a government office, the principle for dealing with them is to keep your distance. For example, if the party branch secretary says to you, “Xiao Zhang, do you have a moment? Let’s have dinner together after work. The weekend starts

tomorrow, let's go play basketball together," you can say, "Oh, as luck would have it, my child's sick. He ran a fever yesterday. Because of work, I didn't have time to take him to see a doctor. I have to take him to the hospital tomorrow." On a different occasion, the secretary says, "Xiao Zhang, it's been a while since we caught up. Let's have a little heart-to-heart, what do you say?" What's his aim? He wants to groom you as his successor. If you haven't figured it out yet, you need to contemplate what he's really after. If you have figured it out, you need to hurry up and be evasive with them, saying, "Oh, yesterday my mother said she wasn't feeling well and wanted me to take her to the hospital. Isn't that an unlucky coincidence?" Time and again you push him away, and when the secretary sees this, he'll think, "Every time I invite him, something comes up, every time I get close to him, something happens; he doesn't know how to appreciate favors, I'll find someone else!" He can look for anyone he wants, but you won't get close to him regardless. Usually, you're quite friendly with him, but when he wants to groom or promote you, you find excuses to avoid him, and you lose your enthusiasm so that he can't figure out what you're thinking. In fact, in your heart you know as clear as crystal, "I won't get close to you, devil! I have God in my heart, and God tells me to stay away from politics. You are a political person, and I'm going to stay away from you. You want to promote me to an official position and use my talents to be of service to you, but I won't even give you a chance! Even if I'm just sweeping the floor and taking out the trash in this government office, I won't become an official! I just earn enough money to support myself, I won't serve you!" But in reality, you have to say this instead, "You leaders have the nation in your hearts, you handle countless affairs, and serve the people, caring for commoners! We, the ordinary people, have little awareness, and care only about our own stomachs; we aren't in the same ballpark, and we can't do what you leaders do." You always act dumb in front of him, so that he can't figure out what you're thinking. Even if you have talents, you don't show them. Only at critical moments, you demonstrate them a little bit, and he sees you're really talented. You usually make a few small mistakes to make him think that you aren't all that capable, but he still can't do without you at work. This is called wisdom. You toy with the devil Satan, utilize him to render service, and earn his money, but you don't get close to him, and despise him in your heart, isn't that right? This is what it means to not get close. Can you do it? (Yes.) At noon, the leader drives his small sedan and looks everywhere for a well-known restaurant to eat. He calls to you, "Xiao Zhang, let's go out and eat something; what do you want to eat today?" You say, "I haven't had fried bean-sauce noodles for several days, and I haven't had steamed buns for a long time; that's what I want to eat. I'm going home for lunch, do you want some?" You answer him like this, and when he hears it, he says, "Eat what? That's pig slop, people don't eat that stuff!" He doesn't want to eat anything you tell him, and he thinks to himself, "This guy is just like what they say—he who is born a fool can't be cured. Who eats steamed buns and fried bean-sauce noodles these days? Officials eat much better than that!" These officials go to restaurants and

spend public funds, they enjoy the glory and splendor of being an official, and only eat lavish meals: A single meal costs over a thousand yuan. They eat monkey brains and hedgehog skin. These fiends and devils eat anything, there's nothing they can't eat or drink. What are you thinking in your heart? "I won't take any part in your sins, I'll stay away from you, you brood of devils, you wretches who eat human flesh and drink human blood! I'd rather go back and eat fried bean-sauce noodles and steamed buns than enjoy your extravagant lifestyle. Even if I have to eat coarse rations, I still won't get anywhere near you; I won't get caught up in your wickedness or have any part in your sins. Eating human flesh and drinking human blood is what devils do, not humans. What will be the ultimate outcome? You will definitely go to hell and face punishment! I make concessions and compromises and earn a living under your power, but my goal is to sustain my livelihood, follow God, and fulfill my duty. I'm not trying to get promoted or get involved in politics; I detest you from the bottom of my heart!" So, however the leader coaxes you to enjoy a big meal, you don't go. Over the weekend, if they invite you to sing karaoke, to be surrounded by beautiful women, and to drink fine wine; if they invite you to a teahouse for relaxation or entertainment, or to see a drag show, will you go or won't you? If you want to get close to the organization or to the party, then you'll have to go to these places. But at this moment, you say, "I practice God's words, I stay away from politics, I won't participate in any of these, I won't take part in their sins." The next day, when they gather together, they talk about how beautiful Miss So-and-so is, how she's the belle of the ball, how talented she is at singing, how delicious the wine from a certain era in France is, where to go for entertainment, where to soak in the hot springs…. They talk about these things—do you envy them? Are you jealous? You have to put on headphones, plug your ears; don't listen to these devils talking nonsense, stay away from them, keep your heart calm, don't take part in the sins of sinners, stay away from their filthy lives, and don't be caught up in their wickedness. Your purpose is to stay away from politics. Those who seek advancement, who want to get close to the organization, and wish to be promoted: Their purpose in living like that is actually to participate in politics, to walk right into politics, with the aim of obtaining a position in political circles and live a life befitting neither a human nor a fiend. However, you are exactly the opposite of them. You must stay away from such a filthy life. The purpose of staying away from this kind of life is to neither desire nor care about any political prospects. Your future is to pursue the truth and attain salvation. Therefore, you should be clear in your heart that everything you are doing now is meaningful and valuable; it is for the pursuit of the truth, for the sake of attaining salvation. It is not a meaningless sacrifice, nor are you acting in an atypical fashion. Even more, you are not alone. So, the ultimate purpose of staying away from these sinful lives is actually to separate yourself from these people, to distance yourself from what they call politics. This is the second principle of staying away from politics—do not get close.

Not getting close to politicians is the minimum that should be done, and in addition it is not to participate. For example, if there is an opportunity to be promoted to a section

chief, director, or bureau head, everyone is eager to show themselves, improve their performance, give gifts to leaders, pull strings, explore avenues, and try every means to let leaders and superiors see their talents, abilities, and value, and even their value to be taken advantage of. They would rather be flatterers, would rather toady up to leaders and superiors and do anything they ask them to do, even if they don't want to do it. Some people give money, and some even offer their bodies to participate in political struggles. In these struggles, some people network with leaders, others give leaders a lot of money and gifts, and some people offer their bodies to leaders, with the ultimate goal of being promoted or mentored by these leaders and taking the path of politics. As a believer in God, if you know that these practices involve participating in politics, then you should stay away. First, do not give gifts or network for the sake of your own political prospects or an official position. Also, do not actively reveal your strengths to leaders, and certainly do not go to any extreme measures to compete for their notice. Let others compete without you. Every time the boss nominates you, say, "I'm going to sit out on this one, I'm not qualified." You have only to say that you're not qualified and let others go ahead; there are plenty of people who'll come forward to compete. When the boss says, "Xiao Zhang, it's your turn this time," say, "I am not yet qualified, boss, please excuse me. I am not capable. Let Xiao Li go first, and if Xiao Li is not capable, then let Xiao Wang go. Let them do it." The boss will say, "Are you stupid? If they take it on, you won't receive any of the benefits: You won't get a house, or any bonuses or salary increases." Then you say, "If I don't get anything, then I don't get anything. I have enough to eat and enough spending money, so rest assured, sir. If you are still not reassured, then just give me a little more in bonuses at the end of the year." Don't participate in their struggle. Whoever wants to compete, let them do so. You don't resort to any means, use up any energy, or pay any price. You don't spend a penny, say a word, do anything extra, or go the extra mile for promotion. Even if you have the conditions, connections, and a suitable base of people, you still don't participate. This is called truly letting go, truly staying away. Those worldly people look at you with constant pity and keep saying, "You're stupid, you're simple-minded!" But you say, "Say whatever you want about me; I still won't participate." People ask, "Why won't you participate?" You say, "I earn enough money to spend. I am not qualified. You are all better than me, so you go." Are you able to refrain from participating? (Yes.) Of course, if you have the opportunity to be promoted to deputy section chief or deputy director, you can turn it down, but if you're offered the positions of bureau head or provincial governor, can you do the same? It may not be easy: The higher the position, the more enticing it becomes, and the greater its authority, the greater the temptation, because when you have more authority, you receive better treatment, your words become more influential, and your physical enjoyment grows. You see, the mayor, the governor, and the president all have their own official residences. All their expenses, whether going out or at home, are covered by the state. Therefore, the more you interact with the upper classes, the greater their temptation toward you

becomes, and the more opportunities you have to interact with them, the harder it becomes to give up these opportunities. In order to avoid temptation, you work at the grassroots level, not setting foot in upper class circles. You refrain from stepping into these circles with either foot. This is called staying away. Nothing you say or do has anything to do with politics; it's all about staying away from these things. Whoever successfully gets elected as a high-ranking official in each particular contest, whoever comes to wield great power, you don't envy them, you're not hurt, and you don't regret it, because in yet another test or circumstance orchestrated by God, you have practiced the principle of staying away from politics that God requires. You have satisfied God's requirement, and in the face of Satan, you are victorious; in the face of God, you are an overcomer, and God approves of you. Some people say, "If God approves of me, will He make my salary go up a bit?" No, God's approval and recognition of you as an overcomer means that you are one step closer to salvation, and God looks on you with more and more favor—this is a great honor. Is it easy to refrain from participating in political affairs? Whoever enjoys competition, let them compete. Whoever likes to speak up for such affairs, let them do so. Whoever loves to busy themselves with them, let them be busy. In any case, you don't care, nor do you bother yourself with these things, because you're not seeking advancement and you have no goals for an official career. This is the third principle of staying away from politics—not participating.

The fourth principle of staying away from politics is not taking sides. "Taking sides" is a kind of jargon used by political people, and it is a common phenomenon in the political world to take sides. When you participate in politics, you must make your position clear, whether you stand with Party A or Party B. As soon as you get involved in politics, you have to take sides. If you don't get involved, you don't need to take sides, or you can say that you don't take sides. If you remain neutral and don't pay attention to their disputes or to why the two sides are fighting, then you are not taking sides. Whether you support Party A or Party B, there is no result or answer from you. You say, "I don't stand on either side, I abstain. I have a good relationship with both A and B, but I do not get close to either of them. I don't participate in any of their fights." These people are puzzled: Are you on Party A or Party B after all? They always try to win you over, but no one can. The end result is that they understand that you don't take sides with any party. Finally, your immediate superior says, "You slippery fellow, why didn't you support me at such a critical moment?" You say, "Boss, I don't dare aspire to such an honor, I don't have the same intellectual depth, nor am I very competent at my job; I'm afraid of disappointing you. Boss, please spare me, I'm just an insignificant person who bends down to pick up a nickel; I'm just an ordinary person, I dare not take sides. Please go easy on me and let me off, I will definitely have your back next time." In reality, you are just blowing him off. You haven't offended him, and he can't do anything about it. They can fight and argue however they want, it has nothing to do with you, you're an outsider. Why do I say that you are an outsider? You're not pursuing an official career, officialdom, rising to

prominence, bringing glory to your ancestors, or setting foot in politics. You're not pursuing political prospects; your goal is to stay away from an official career and from these political figures. So, you deliberately choose not to take sides, not to choose Party A or Party B, and who takes what side has nothing to do with you. Whenever someone tries to persuade you, you just laugh it off and act the fool, saying, "I don't know who is right, you are all my good friends, I will be happy no matter who wins." They say, "You're a real slippery fellow!" And you say, "I'm not slippery, I'm just stupid; you guys are the experts!" You pretend to be confused with them. Is it okay not to take sides? Don't be naive, don't go along with those trying to take advantage of you. No matter at what level of politics, the water is always muddy—you can't see the bottom. It's not like a clear spring where you can see the bottom; it is muddy water, a quagmire. If a leader treats you well, you get close to him and take his side, but you don't know whether this will bring you good or ill. You can't figure out what his future will be, whether he will end up in chains or rise to prominence. Those people are all crocodiles in a swamp, there are big ones and small ones. As an insignificant person, you won't be able to tell whether every word they say is true or false, who they treat well and who they don't, and what the purpose of their daily actions is—you simply can't tell. Therefore, if you want to protect yourself, the most straightforward and highest principle is to not take sides. If they are good to you, be enthusiastic with them; if they are not, still be enthusiastic with them, but just don't take their side. When something comes up, just laugh it off and pretend to be confused; when they ask you anything, say that you don't know, you're not clear, or you haven't seen it before. Can you respond in this way? (Yes, now I can.) Is it appropriate to apply these principles in the church? (It is not appropriate.) These tricks are only suitable for places where devils reside, not to use in the midst of brothers and sisters. This is wisdom. In places where devils reside, you have to be as wise as snakes; you cannot be foolish, you must be wise. Whoever pulls you toward them, don't go and stand on their side. Whoever creates conflict with you or dislikes you, do not oppose them or stand against them. Make them believe that you are not against them. These things constitute wisdom. Do not compete with any political forces, don't get close to any of them, and don't collude with or show goodwill to any of them. This is wisdom, this is not taking sides. Isn't that so? (Yes.) Have you learned how to do this? (Yes.) At critical times, you have to pretend to be deaf and dumb, to be crazy and foolish, and let them see you as an ignorant fool. If they tell you to do something, do it, accept their advice without questioning, and let them see how obedient you are. Obedient to what extent? Like a sycophant, always listening, never talking out of turn, never inquiring about news of the boss, or about information regarding so-and-so—be especially obedient. But you should never expose your true thoughts to them; once you expose your true thoughts and intentions, they will punish you and teach you a lesson. If you're not on their side, you can't let them in on it—even if you reject them you can't let them find out. Why should you do this? Because in their eyes, if you are not their friend, then you are their opponent.

Once you become an opponent in their eyes, you will be the one they aim to punish: They will treat you as the nail in their eye, the thorn in their side, and they will have to punish you. So, you must use wisdom and pretend to be foolish. Don't show your abilities; if you express your thoughts, viewpoints, positions, or attitudes toward anything, then you are foolish. Understood? (Understood.) In the face of Satans and devils, especially when you get close to a group in the political world, you have to be extra careful, protect yourself, don't think yourself clever or act smart, don't parade around, don't try to prove your worth—you have to be low-key. If you want to ensure your survival in such a complex environment, and you also want to believe in God, fulfill your duty, pursue the truth, and attain salvation, then the first thing you ought to do is protect yourself. One of the ways to protect yourself is to not provoke any political forces and not become the target of their attacks or punishment—this is how you can stay a bit safer. If you always refuse to listen to them, obey them, or get close to them, they will dislike you and want to punish you. On the other hand, if they see that you have talent and the ability to work, and if they see that you are profitable to them, and that if you take over for them, you won't expose their secrets or damage their future reputation, then they will want to be your mentor. Is it a good thing for them to mentor you? (No.) If they have their eye on you and want to mentor you, then tell Me, isn't it the same as being possessed by an evil spirit? (Yes.) If they have their eye on you, you're in trouble. So, before they get you in their sights, you can't let them take a fancy to you; you have to pretend to be foolish, as if you can't do anything terribly well. Do a passable job on most things. Though they may be dissatisfied with this, they won't be able to pick out any faults with you or find reasons to get rid of you. That is sufficient, and it achieves the desired effect. If you do things too well, if everything is done smoothly and they are especially satisfied with you and think highly of you, that is not good. In one respect, they will see you as a threat to their political trajectory, and in another, they may want to mentor you, neither of which is good for you. So, in order to establish yourself in this society, besides avoiding and staying away from various forces, there is something even more important, which is to competently handle the relationships and affairs regarding various forces or your immediate superior. For example, if you show off too much, if you want to prove yourself too much, or if you do things without any wisdom, you may be caught in a dilemma where you are unable to push anything away or have to do what you don't want to. What can be done about this? Therefore, this matter is difficult to work through. You need to pray to God frequently, be quiet before Him, let God guide you, give you wisdom, give you the words to say, guide you in what you should do, and help you know how to work through the situation, so that you can protect yourself and be safeguarded by God in such complex circles. Only when you have received God's safeguarding and are able to protect yourself, can you then have the basic conditions to be still before God, eat and drink God's words, ponder over them, and pursue the truth. Do you understand these things? (Yes, I understand.) This is the principle of not taking sides.

There is another principle of staying away from politics, that is, not making one's position known. Whether it involves political viewpoints, attitudes, or trends, or the intention and purpose of leaders, their expressions, their thoughts, or whether they are right or wrong, you should not make your position known. When the boss asks you, "Do you agree with what I just said? What is your stance?" You say, "What did you say? My ears are not working right, I didn't hear you." The boss gets angry after hearing this and stops talking to you. In your heart, you think, "Great, I didn't want to say anything anyway!" You should pretend to be deaf and dumb, and you shouldn't always be making your position known, or showing how smart you are, saying, "Boss, I have some opinions, I have some ideas." If you always raise your hand and take a stance, that's just foolish. You shouldn't speak up when you have opinions concerning the boss, and when you have opinions about such-and-such co-worker or see your boss doing something wrong, don't make a sound. Now, what if the leader asks you about these things, what do you say? "You did a great job with this, you're on another level as us little workers. You really are considerate!" You ought to praise them, speak to them in such flattering tones that they begin to feel euphoric, and when you see that you've achieved your aim, then stop praising them, because you've nearly made yourself sick. Regardless of the policies, opinions, work for implementation from above that your boss is saying, or their attitude toward anything, you act dumb and say a few ambiguous sentences. When the boss hears you, they'll say, "This fellow has always been confused, so it's normal that they're confused about this matter too." Okay, you've succeeded in getting by under false pretenses. No matter what the boss says, you should never make your position known. If you are sharing a meal with the boss and they want you to state your position on something, you say, "Oh, look at how much rice I ate; my blood sugar is high and my head feels a bit dizzy, so I didn't hear too clearly what you just said. Hey boss, can we discuss it again next time?" Just be vague with them. If the boss sends someone to find out your views about them, the party committee, or national policies, should you express any views? (No.) Your public attitude should be that you have no views, but what about your true attitude? Even if you have views, don't tell them: This is called tricking a ghost. There is an allegorical saying, "Putting plastic flowers on someone's tomb—tricking a ghost," isn't that right? When facing major issues of right and wrong, although you have attitudes and viewpoints, you should not express them. Why? These things do not involve faith in God, they do not involve the truth, they are all matters of the devils' world, and have nothing to do with us believers. It doesn't matter what our attitudes are, what matters is that these things have nothing to do with us; though we may have an attitude, in reality it is an understanding and discernment of their essence; our attitude and our principle of practice is to stay away from them, reject them, and reject their influence and control. As for other people's attitudes, they have nothing to do with us; this is a matter of the devils' world and has nothing to do with believers in God. These things do not involve the pursuit of truth, nor do they involve salvation, let alone any attitude of God

toward you; so, you don't need to have any attitude, nor do you need to express any attitude. You may simply laugh it off and say, "Boss, my thought process is shallow, and my mind is muddy; I've studied politics for such a long time, but I've never experienced any political revolution in my thoughts, so as an ordinary person I still can't work out the policies from above or your meaning. I ask for your forgiveness." This is a sufficient answer. Is this tricking the ghost? (Yes.) Or you can also say, "The boss's eyes are bright, and the people's eyes are clear, but I'm the only one whose eyes have a confused look in them: I am unable to see or understand anything! I'm not a party member, so I don't have party spirit. I can't understand these things. Talk to us, boss, you have priority over us. Whatever you say, we'll listen and carry it out. That's good enough for me." Isn't this simple? Does it achieve the principle of not making one's position known? (Yes, it does.) This going through the motions and not making your position clear allows you to protect yourself. Does the boss know what you mean by it? They don't. They think you're just an idiot, thinking, "This fellow doesn't seek advancement. With such favorable conditions, most people would have already been promoted to a higher position, maybe even mayor. This fellow could be a provincial governor, but they just don't want to advance, they keep playing dumb, and don't get close to the organization—they're a typical fool!" What would you think in your heart? "In your eyes, I'm a fool. But in God's eyes, I'm a harmless dove. I'm more valuable than you. You old devil, you hold an official position and participate in a bit of politics, and you think that makes you superior. In my eyes, you're no better than a little locust!" Can you say that? (No, we can't.) You can't say that. Be careful because the walls have ears; you can talk to your dog at home and leave it at that. There are very few people in this world whom you can trust or confide in; so, when facing major issues of principle, whether in political circles or in any social group, you should learn not to make your position known, especially when it involves politics, power, or taking sides. You must certainly not make your position clear. If you do, it's like setting yourself over the flame to roast. What's it like to be set over the flame to roast? If you want to find out, just take a stance and see. Isn't that how it is? (Yes.) Is it possible not to make your position known? It depends on what you pursue in your heart. If you are genuinely pursuing an official career, if you want to become an official, not only will you take a stance, but you'll also express your position clearly, and do it in front of your boss, as well as making the climb upward—if that's the case, you'll wind up a pretty poor excuse for a person. You are not staying away from politics; you are participating in it. If you participate in politics, then just go ahead and get out. Don't stay in God's house. You are a nonbeliever, you belong to the world, to the devil, not to God's house—you are not among God's chosen people. Even though you are staying in God's house, you snuck into it, you wanted to grab a bite to eat, to receive a blessing—someone like this is not welcome here. But, on the other hand, if you have excellent personal qualifications and are in a position to have many opportunities to become an official and begin a career, yet you can still avoid getting close, participating, taking sides,

and taking a stance, then you're able to achieve staying away from politics. Do you remember these principles? Are they doable? (Yes, they are.) You see, everyone in political circles who always wants to showcase themselves, to stand out, as well as those who wish to express their viewpoints and attitudes, with a particularly strong desire to express themselves—all have but one goal: They want to hold an official position. To put it nicely, they want to participate in politics; but in actuality, they just want to hold office, have authority, and enjoy a good life through their position. They want to use their position to achieve various personal goals and increase their prestige. Isn't that the case? (Yes, it is.) Some people don't have very good qualities themselves; they're flawed. Yet, they still want to become officials and participate in politics. As a result, they rely on their efforts and climb upward at any cost; they toady up to their superiors, and act as personal henchmen to government officials. Eventually, they achieve their goal of participating in politics and realize their dream of having an official career.

Concerning staying away from politics, we have fellowshiped about five principles. The first principle is not joining any party. You see, the rulers of any country all belong to a political party, not to mention the leaders of authoritarian countries, who also belong to a political party. Therefore, the first principle of staying away from politics is to not join any party. Wasn't I just saying that? (Yes.) So, what is the second principle? (Not getting close to them.) Don't get close to them or to political circles. What is the third principle? (Not participating.) That's right, not participating in any of their activities, movements, or ideological discussions, that is, not taking part among them. What is the fourth principle? (Not taking sides.) Don't take sides, let them argue about who is right and wrong; in short, you don't take sides. What is the fifth principle? (Not making one's position known.) Not making one's position known. Someone says, "If you don't make your position known, aren't you just being a nuisance?" You say, "I don't have an opinion, I'm just an ordinary person, I don't have much education, my thought process isn't all that grand—what kind of opinion can I have? I'm just an average citizen, leave me alone." You never have an opinion at any time. When you're called upon to take a stance, you pretend to snore, to be asleep, and when people see that you are not interested in progress, they won't ask you to make your opinion known, which works out perfectly, doesn't it? How many principles is this in total? (Five.) If you follow these five principles, you can stay away from politics and not be influenced, affected, or held up by any political forces. Whether dealing with political circles at the top or the bottom, if you put these five principles into practice, you will be able to stay away from politics. This is a topic that applies to one's professional career. Of course, even if you have no profession, these principles remain the same, unchanged. Even if you are unemployed, you should still practice these principles to stay away from politics—the principles do not change. So why should you stay away from politics? What is politics? It is a struggle, a power game. Politics is both conspiracy and strategy. What else is politics? Politics is also those movements or activities stirred up by various forces. You see, you can't even explain

what politics is, yet the great red dragon accuses people in the church of getting involved in politics. Isn't this absurd? Isn't it easy to find fault when they want to? (Yes.) This is clearly a false accusation. Some fools and idiots, after listening to the nonsense of the great red dragon, come under its constraint and dare not apply discernment either to it or to Satan. Whenever the topic of discerning the great red dragon or Satan comes up, they hide in a corner and dare not open their mouths; they just clear their throats or pretend to be confused. What are they pretending for? They don't need to pretend: They don't even understand what politics is, so how can they participate in politics? Can an idiot like them participate in politics? Therefore, for most ordinary people, staying away from politics is achievable in reality. We've just emphasized one point in principle, which is not to do anything foolish, to avoid getting involved in politics unknowingly, being swept along into politics without even knowing it, and ultimately becoming a scapegoat or a sacrificial object without understanding what happened. So, the reason why we fellowship about these principles, in one respect is to let you know that your intelligence is simply not enough to comprehend the real essence of politics. In another, if you practice these principles, you will be able to better protect yourself and avoid being taken advantage of in any situation, or in situations where you are unaware or ignorant. By simply adhering to these principles, you can ensure your own relative safety in any group. Therefore, these principles are not only your amulet of protection but also principles that God admonishes you to follow in the area of politics. By following these principles, you can enjoy the benefits brought to you by the truth, and one might also say that you are safeguarded by God. If you feel that God's safeguarding is vague and empty, and you cannot see or feel it, then you can choose to practice these five principles. This way, you can truly experience God's safeguarding, which is a more real kind of safeguarding. It is not only using God's words to protect yourself but also protecting yourself by practicing God's words and adhering to the truth principles that God has revealed to you. In any case, the ultimate goal is achieved, and you are able through staying away from politics to keep yourself safe from evil groups of people, avoid various temptations and crises, and thus quiet your body and mind before God in a state of calm, peace, and safety, so that you can pursue the truth. However, if you are foolish and don't know how to follow the principles taught by God, and you try to stand out and showcase yourself randomly, often acting without wisdom and getting tangled up in various disputes and conflicts that stem from politics and groups; if you often fall into various traps and temptations, and your daily life is swept along and disturbed by these things, and you spend all your time handling and addressing these struggles involving disputes and disturbances, then it could be said that your heart will never come before God, and you will never truly be quiet before Him. If you cannot achieve this little bit, then there is no hope for you to figure out God's words, to deepen or understand the truth, to practice the truth, and embark on the path of pursuing the truth to be saved. If you are ensnared by these things, it is equivalent to being ensnared by the devil. If you

do not have the principles to handle these matters, your ultimate end will be swallowed up by these things. Your daily life, your heart, and your life will be entangled in these disputes and struggles. All you'll think about is how to get rid of these things, how to fight and argue with those people, and how to prove your innocence and demand justice. As a result, the more you get caught up in these affairs, the more you want to quickly prove your innocence, demand justice, and get an explanation, and the more chaotic and complicated your heart will become. The more complicated your external environment is, the more complicated your inner being will become, and the more chaotic your external environment is, the more chaotic your inner being will become. In this way, you will be completely finished, you will be controlled and taken captive by Satan. If you still want to pursue the truth and be saved, it will be impossible! You will be completely worthless, beyond redemption. By then, you will say, "I regret it all. The political circle of Satan is nothing but a quagmire! If I had known, I would have listened to God's words." I told you a long time ago, but you didn't believe Me. You insisted on getting an explanation from them, on getting a fair word, a word of praise and recognition from their mouths. You refused to abide by the principles and criteria that God told you, so you deserve to be dragged along by them until you die. In the end, Satan will be destroyed, and you will be destroyed with it, becoming its funeral offering. You deserve it! Who made you follow Satan? Who made you seek an explanation from Satan? Who made you be so foolish? God gave you wisdom, but you didn't apply it. He gave you principles, but you didn't abide by them. You insisted on going your own way, on fighting against those people with your own mind, talents, and gifts. Can you defeat the devil? Moreover, fighting against the devil is not what God entrusted you with. What God has entrusted you with is to follow His way, not to fight against the devil. It is of no value for you to fight against it. God does not commemorate this. Even if you defeat it, you won't attain salvation. Do you understand now? Therefore, in the industry and circle of politics, you must remember these principles that people ought to follow. Perhaps those of you who are currently fulfilling your duty full time may find these words unrealistic and relatively distant from you. But at the very least, they allow you to know what politics is, how you should treat politics, how to view those who live in political circles or pursue political prospects, and how to help them address their problems if they believe in God. These are the most basic things you should know. Once you fully understand and accept these principles, you will be able to help them, and when you encounter such people, you will be able to handle and resolve their issues using the corresponding principles. Well, let's stop our fellowship here regarding the topic of staying away from politics. Goodbye!

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