

A Letter from Andrew Yu's to a Brother (1)

Dear Brother X:

For a long time I have been burdened to write to fellowship with you concerning how to live a God-man living practically. Especially for people as busy as you, how can they live out Christ, that is, live out the life of a God-man on earth in their daily living? The Lord Jesus said in John 6:57, "As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me." This speaks of the Lord's living on earth as well as the living that His believers, His followers, should have. Our living should be exactly the same as the Lord's. The Lord's living is not only a moral one, a holy one, but also one that is "because of the Father". His will is that every one of us believers would be like Him, "living because of the Lord." This is the standard of a believer and the living that God has ordained for every child of His.

Speaking of living, many brothers and sisters do not have much feeling for this matter. They treasure the Bible and regard the truths in it as maxims full of wisdom. They know that as Christians they need to fulfill certain requirements such as reading the Bible, praying, attending meetings, and so forth. They also try their best to fulfill these requirements faithfully as good Christians. However, they do not feel that their living is the totality of their Christian experience. If a person does not have the proper Christian living, neither does he have the real Christian experience. Christian experience is not found in the doctrines, the creeds, or the religious rites, but found in the daily living. What the whole New Testament describes is a kind of living. First, it describes the living of an individual. Then, it

describes the living of a group of people, whose gospel is actually their living. To the people around them, their living is the gospel. So when Paul was in Thessalonica, he did not preach the gospel “in word only”, but also by “what kind of men we were among you for your sake” (1 Thes. 1:5). His person became his gospel. Now, to the people around us, is our living a “gospel” or a “stumbling block”? The Chinese also makes the distinction between “teaching by verbal instruction” and “teaching by personal examples”. Is our gospel preaching done “by verbal instruction” or “by personal examples”? We say we are the Lord’s witnesses. All witnesses should witness something through their living that causes people to know that the Lord is real and living. Our testimony is not just the words in our mouth but the kind of living we live out. This living is one that testifies that the Lord is real and living. If some live in this way, the Lord will be magnified and shown as real through them. In the prison of Philippi, Paul lived such a life of magnifying Christ (Phil. 1:20), a life that caused people to see Christ through him. If we remove this from the New Testament, the New Testament would be empty. A faith without living is a faith in theory. God regards this matter so much that He sent His Son purposely to show us a kind of living. Christ could have bypassed human living. He could have gone to the cross to accomplish redemption right away. But He didn’t do that. Instead, He took ample time, that is, thirty three and a half years, to show us how God lives as a man. He spent only six hours on the cross and three days in the tomb, but He spent thirty three and a half years to live the human life on earth. Actually, He came so that man can see how man should live the human life.

Here I have to ask a question: Do we have two kinds of living or one? Do we have one kind of living in the meetings and another kind of living in our daily life? Do we have one kind of living during prayer time and another kind of living after we finish praying? Is our daily life the extension of our meeting life? Is our living outside prayer time the same as the one during our

prayer time? The God-man living should not be expressed only during our meetings and prayer time but also in our daily life. We should not have two kinds of living but only one kind of living, the God-man living. This living should include our living during the meetings and prayer time, but it should not be confined only during these times. The God-man living should be the totality of our entire living.

Some Christians live an amphibious life. An amphibious life is to live in two different kinds of environments, sometimes in water and sometimes on land, sometimes in one environment and sometimes in another. When in water, they find companionship with fish and crabs; when on land, they find companionship with land animals and beasts. When they are with one circle of friends, the other circle is kept outside the door; when they are with the other, the first is never invited. Sometimes they come out of water unto the land, and sometimes they jump from the land right back to the water. These Christians divide their living clearly into two realms: one heavenly and the other earthly, one for God and the other for themselves. These two realms comprise two kinds of environments, two kinds of friends, two kinds of conversations, and two kinds of atmospheres. In prayer meetings, they are with one group of people, in one kind of atmosphere; when the meeting is over, they quickly join a different group of people, assume a different tone and conversation, and even put on different clothing. At one time they are in the Lord; at other time, they are in the world. Some even boast how quickly they could switch roles and aptly deal with two kinds of people in two kinds of environments. They can be divine and human, spiritual and earthly, living in the Lord and living in the world. They do not understand that the God-man living revealed in the Bible is only one kind of living. It is not one living divided into two, but two living mingled as one. Just as Christ's divinity and humanity are not divided into two but mingled as one, His living is not divided into a divine part and a human part, but one that is divine yet human and human yet divine simultaneously. Christ

did not make friends with sinners at one moment and then change an environment to fellowship with the Father and the angels. But while He feasted with sinners and tax-collectors, He did so with His heavenly life, and while He fellowshiped with the Father alone in wilderness, He did so fully as a man. He was a man living in God and God living in a man. His living was the living of a God-man. This is the prototype of the first God-man and also the kind of living that all God-men should live.

A man who lives the God-man living is a man who lives for God's will in everything. His birth, like John 1:13, was "begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." In the same way, his human living after this birth should also not be of "blood", the "will of the flesh", or "the will of man". He should care for God's will in everything, fellowship with God in all things, and take every aspect of his living as part of his service to God. Every little detail of his living should be done in the Lord's name and for God's glory. For him, to "grow up into Him in all things" in Ephesians 4:15 means not only to grow up into Him in spiritual things such as prayer and meetings, but also to let Christ be the Head in everything in his daily living so that he may grow up into Him.

We all admit that in prayer and meetings, we need to live absolutely for God and according to God, and that only this kind of prayer is the prayer according to God's heart, the prayer that He wants. Yet, have we ever thought that such a requirement is fitting and necessary not only in prayer time but also in every aspect of our daily living outside prayer time? We know that God does not listen to prayer contrary to His will, and that if we want our prayer answered, we need to live absolutely for God and according to God in our attitude. Since God has such a requirement for prayer, wouldn't He have the same requirement for everything else? If a prayer contrary to His will or not absolutely for Him cannot be accepted by Him, how can a living contrary to His will and not absolutely for Him be accepted by

Him? Can such a living be approved by Him? Since the requirement for our prayer is so high, can the requirement for our living be lower? Since the requirement for our prayer is so strict, can the requirement for our living be looser? Since we need to depend on Him and trust in Him helplessly in our prayer, we also need to depend on Him and trust in Him helplessly in our living. Just as any prayer uttered not according to this principle is meaningless, absurd, and offensive to the Lord, any detail of our living not done according to this principle—including our handling of money, managing of time, utilizing of resource, and exercising of capability—is also meaningless, absurd, and offensive to the Lord. What reason there is for us to believe that the Lord would have one kind of requirement for our prayer and another for our living? What the Lord requires from our prayer is what He requires from our living. In fact, why our prayer needs to reach God's standard is so that our living may also reach God's standard. If our living does not reach the standard of our prayer, isn't our prayer vain? A godly prayer is for a godly living. No one wants to lose temper in prayer, so why can one lose temper in daily living? No man thinks that he can scold his wife or subordinate in prayer, so why can he scold his wife or subordinate in daily living? In John 15:7, the Lord links the answering of our prayer with our abiding in the Lord. If we pray but do not abide in the Lord in our living, will this kind of prayer be answered by the Lord? The answering of prayer is found not only in the things prayed for but more so in our abiding in the Lord and the Lord's word abiding in us in our daily living. This is the proper issue of prayer. A prayer that comes out of the abiding in the Lord should produce a living abiding in the Lord. Without this living, prayer is not up to the standard and has not been answered. The spirit of our prayer should be the spirit of our living. If our living does not match the spirit of our prayer, our prayer is futile. If we pray to be filled with the Spirit but do not desire to be filled with the Spirit in daily living, this is like asking wings from the Lord but not desiring to fly. Will God answer such a prayer? This is what the Bible called "asking evilly", which cannot be answered.

What is to ask evilly? It is to ask for something you do not want or hope to happen. If one prays to be filled with the Spirit but do not desire to be filled with the Spirit in daily living, isn't this to ask evilly?

Because many Christians do not have such an understanding, they have two kinds of living: one before God and the other before man, one in the church and the other in the world. They live in such a contradiction. As such, their conscience condemns them, and others also criticize them rightly. The book of Leviticus in the Old Testament says that two kinds of seed should not be sown in the field, and neither should two kinds of material be made into a garment (Lev. 19:19). But these Christians think that they can mix two kinds of living together. Not only do they sense contradiction and difficulty, others also see conflict and hypocrisy in them. On the one hand, they act as if they revere God very much in meetings and prayer time; on the other hand, they are exactly the same as worldly people in their spending of money and time, and in their consideration, worries, feasts, labor, and entertainment. In the church they appear to be sober, but as soon as they walk out the meetings, they put on a worldly face, haggling over every ounce with people and talking loudly over politics and economics. This kind of behavior causes the worldly people around them to mock and sneer at them. They think that believing in Jesus is so superficial and hypocritical, because believers' living and spirituality are two different things. When prayer time comes, they act pious and reserved, but in daily life, they joke and make fun freely just as the worldly people do. Thus they become the laughingstock for the people around them, not because they are not spiritual but because they are only spiritual in certain occasions. They are only spiritual when they want to in their chosen times and places. But in all other times and places, they are the same as worldly people and are even worse than them.

There is a brother Chang, who never misses any meeting of the church. If you don't see him in a weekly meeting, he must either

be sick or have gone on a business trip. He is such a good believer who makes to every church meeting regardless of rain or wind. But such a good brother jokes freely like others and goes about doing silly things with silly people, fooling around and gossiping. For him, entertainment and amusement are important; social activities and parties are necessary. He befriends with worldly people and chats about politics. If you ask him why he lives this way, he would give you the same answer as worldly people do: to go along with everyone else. He does not fall into obvious sins, but quite often he walks on the borderline. He needs to know that the Bible condemns this kind of living just as a fully corrupted and adulterous one. He is the same as a most heinous sinner living a godless life in a godless culture. He cannot assume that just because he often attends church meetings, his living can be the same as the worldly people. Nor can he think that just because he participates in some church services, he can be loose in his friendship with people. If you ask him why he likes certain people while dislikes others, his answer to you is the same as that from unbelievers.

But when it comes to spiritual matters, this brother still has a strong view. If you suggest that it's ok to miss a meeting or that man can live without faith, he would do his best to argue with you. He would insist that Christians must attend meetings and pray, and he can also prove persuasively to you that the Christian faith is reasonable. He would not even be afraid to preach a little gospel and share a little testimony with people. But he would do so only when he is in a good mood, and he would be done as soon as he finishes speaking. He does not care about others' souls and would not pray for them seriously. If others advise him to spend more time taking care of his career, money, entertainment, and amusement, or to pay more attention to his family and children, he would not think there is anything to be cautious of or this would present any threat or danger to his spiritual life. He never thinks that this is to be anxious for the things of this life which the Lord Jesus in the Gospels has warned his believers to guard against. He cannot agree with

people and talks that condemn such anxious seeking, and think that they are too extreme. But consider this: isn't it a contradiction for a person to sound very spiritual in prayer meetings yet live a life full of anxieties and worries like the worldly people? Are these two utterly incompatible? If his meetings and prayer do not affect his living, his choice of profession, his handling of finance, his management of family and raising up of children, you may say his spiritual activities do not affect him at all. If a person follows all the rules and considers himself as following the Lord, yet does not express the Lord and live by Him, how pitiful is this? While pious behavior and holy living alone cannot please the Lord, merely calling Him Lord by the lips and sanctifying His name in prayer cannot either. If our failing to pray is offensive to the Lord, our failing to live a holy life is offensive to Him too. If something is not fitting to be brought up in prayer, it should not be brought up in daily living either. If a person takes heed to himself only in prayer but is loose in his living, financing, parenting, speaking, giving up of the self, and managing of personal affairs, he is a weak and powerless Christian with no testimony. His spirituality at best can only affect himself, but it can never affect others nor produce any impact on others.

Let us look again at the New Testament. The verses related to the way to pray and meet are far less than those related to the way to live. The teachings of the Lord Jesus in the four Gospels are almost all related to our living. Even the mingling of God and man and the dwelling of God in man and man in God that He spoke of in the Gospel of John are not doctrines but a kind of living. He is the bread of life and the light of life to man so that man may live by Him. This is to live a life different from that lived by man in the old creation, to live a life that takes God as the unique source. The sanctification that Paul talks about in the book of Romans is also not a doctrine but a living, which is related to our every act, "the practices of the body". In other words, it is related to our living. The words in the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens from Matthew chapter five to seven

are also not some teachings merely but the expression of our living. Not to be anxious for our life is related to our living; to be peacemakers is related to our living; entering in through the narrow gate and walking on the constricted way are also related to our living. Teachings regarding taking heed to our criticizing of others, considering the beam in our eyes, loving our enemies and so forth are all related to our living. If you remove the matter of living from the New Testament, there won't be many doctrines left. The doctrines of the New Testament cannot be separated from the living of the believers. Rather, they are part of their living. But quite strangely, many Christians today do not see this in the Bible. On the contrary, they see many doctrines and teachings that are separated from and have nothing to do with their living. They like to hear those "spiritual" messages, and the higher and deeper, the better. Yet they never consider that these doctrines and teachings should be applied to their living.

Colossians 3:2-3 say: "Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Applied to our living, don't these verses require us not to regard our daily necessities, including our time and financial management, as primary? Luke 9:23 says: "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." Shouldn't the denying of the self be applied to every choice and every decision of our daily life? Philippians 4:5 says: "Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near." Shouldn't this virtue of forbearance be manifested in our every attitude toward people, matters, and things in our living? Matthew 5:3 says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens." Shouldn't this attitude of being poor in spirit be observed in our work and family life, not just in our meetings? First Peter 1:17 says: "And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear." Shouldn't this walk in fear cause us to differ in our word and conduct from the worldly

people? Otherwise how can the world tell the difference between their father and our Father, and recognize that our Father is One who “judges according to each one’s work”? If we do not care for our own conduct, how can we make anyone believe that we believe in a God who judges according to our work? Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.” If this new creation is not manifested in our living, where else can it be manifested? If we do not manifest the newness of resurrection in our loving and hating of people and judging of affairs, where else can we manifest the newness of resurrection? The Lord says that His disciples should follow Him. If we cannot cause people to see us as those who do not follow themselves, aren’t we the same as the world? If in such a condition we still say that we are following the Lord, then those worldly people who lead a befuddled life can also say that they are following the Lord.

A God-man living is surely a living that lives together with the Lord. Ephesians 2:1 and 5 say that one who lives together with Him is opposed to those who are dead in offenses and live according to the age of the world. In other words, one who lives according to the age of the world is surely not living together with Christ. Conversely, one who lives together with Christ would surely not live according to the age of the world. In the eyes of worldly people, “When in Rome, do as the Roman do” is a common thing; whatever people do, you just do the same. What I am talking about are not sinful things but things of customs and habits practiced by worldly people, like the New Year’s Eve, celebration of festivals, or merrymaking whenever the occasion arises. But a God-man living is tested and exposed in these matters. The salvation spoken of in the Bible is the salvation not only of life but also of living. It is to be saved not only from judgment once for all, but also from “the corruption by lust” (2 Pet. 1:4) day by day, which is to be saved from worldliness, from the “flood of dissoluteness” (1 Pet. 4:4), from the living that is considered by worldly people as reasonable,

fashionable, and suitable to the taste of majority. The salvation of life is inward; the salvation of living is outward and visible. The salvation of life is in our spirit; the salvation of living is manifested in our living. The meaning of baptism is for us to have a new beginning in our living, going from one kind of living into another, putting off the living of the old man and putting on the living of the new man, so that our every act may be “in the newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). By believing in our heart and confessing with our mouth we are saved in life, but we still need to be baptized and testify to the world in order for us to be saved in our living and be delivered through water from this “crooked and perverted generation” (Phil. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:20-21). If our living does not appear to be different from that of the worldly people, wouldn't our baptism lose its rightful meaning? The testimony of a Christian shouldn't just stay in his spirit or be confined in the meeting halls, but should be expressed much more in his living. Otherwise, his testimony is not solid, lasting, and open, and a testimony that is not solid, lasting, and open in fact cannot be counted as a testimony at all.

In the eyes of the brothers and sisters, the aforementioned brother Chang is already a very good brother. He meets regularly, participates in some services, and also offers financially. In the eyes of his relatives and friends, he is a more zealous Christian. The only thing is that outside the church meetings, he is the same as unbelievers, full of the worldly flavor, worldly anxieties, worldly fear, and worldly preferences. He loves his personal image, loves the vanity of man and fashionable clothing, loves feasts and parties, and makes many worldly friends as well as worldly enemies. A good amount of his time is wasted in amusement, chitchats, and social activities. Apparently he is busy and he utilizes his time well, but actually much of his time is spent on vain things. He thinks that he is not idle all day long and is not wasting his time. He thinks that every time slot of his day is filled up. But the question is: What are the things filling up his day? Are the things that make him busy all day according to God's will? Or, do they only fulfill his own

desire? If his busyness is due to things outside the Lord, then his busyness is the same as a vagrant's killing time by standing idle all day in a park. In the Lord's eyes, they both are wasting their time. The only difference is that one fills his schedule with emptiness, while the other fills his schedule with junk.

Besides, his financial management is the same as his time management. He didn't squander all his wealth and make himself penniless like a prodigal son. On the contrary, he pinches pennies and endeavors to accumulate as much wealth as he can. However, all his managing and scheming are done completely outside the Lord's will. They are for his profit and have nothing to do with God's economy. To others, this dedicated and cautious way to manage finance is much better than squandering and trifling away one's money. But in God's eyes, squandering money for the self and accumulating money for the self are both to waste money, because any management not for God's will is a wasteful management in God's eyes. Man's squandering of wealth adds nothing to God's kingdom, and so does man's accumulating of wealth. Both ways of living are a living "having no hope and without God".

I think I would stop here for now. I hope to fellowship with you more concerning this problem in my next letter. May the Lord shine on us through these words by His Spirit so we may see whether or not we truly live the God-man living. I hope these words would not become a burden too heavy for you. But if we do not see our true condition, how can we be saved from it?

May the Lord bless you!

Brother Andrew Yu