

CHAPTER TWO

THE WAY, CONSIDERATION, PRINCIPLES, AND DETAILS OF DOING THINGS

THE WAY OF DOING THINGS

The way we do things must match the truth. Because we do things in order to serve God, our way of doing things is different from the way of the world. As long as people in the world can find a way that succeeds, they will use it. They can use any way that does not go against public opinion or the law. As the Lord's serving ones, we are not like this. We first need to be sure that our way is according to the truth. Every way must be measured according to the principles of the truth, and only those that are according to the principles of the truth can be adopted. We cannot use a way that is not according to the truth. For example, in visiting the believers, we need to care for the principles of the truth. Some religious groups use the attraction of material benefits in their visitations. We must never do this.

Although certain things may not be against the law or against what is accepted by society, we cannot adopt them if their principle is wrong and they are not according to the truth. When we visit people, we should go with the Lord and His gospel in order to bring people to the Lord and His gospel. The Lord fed five thousand people with five barley loaves and two fish not because the people asked Him to do this but because He took care of their need for food (John 6:1-13). When the people later came and asked for bread, the Lord did not give it to them but told them instead to work not for the food which perishes (vv. 22-27). If in the gospel we attract people with material benefits, many poor people will come, but they will have no heart to seek the Lord. This is not what we want. We must not disregard the principles of the truth for the sake of attracting people. No matter what we do in the service, we must examine our way by the principles of the truth.

The way we do things must also be upright; that is, there must not be anything hidden or crooked, and there must not be anything that cannot be revealed to the public. People in the world often do not care about the means as long as they achieve their goal, but we who serve the Lord cannot follow this way. Our way of doing things must be according to the truth, and it must be upright. Whatever is according to the truth tends to be upright. However, a way can be according to the truth but not upright, or a way may be according to the truth, but the means of accomplishing it is not upright. The way of doing things must be wise and just. In order to avoid misunderstanding and to take care of others, we sometimes keep certain things confidential, but we should never keep things in darkness. Something may be a secret, but there is no fear that others will find out. If there is fear, this thing is in darkness. This is not acceptable.

The way that the elders deal with a brother who goes astray, who causes trouble, or who damages the believers should be according to the truth. Their intention, purpose, and approach should be for the good of the church and of the brother. There should not be any thought of this brother suffering loss. If there is a trace of revenge and if what is done cannot be made known to the public, the way is in darkness. If it is for the preservation of the church, the edification of the brother, and the protection of the believers and if there is no thought of revenge, the way can be confidential but not in darkness. To do things in darkness is to benefit oneself at the expense of others, to be self-seeking. We cannot use such ways. We should be careful even in the way we speak so that nothing is in darkness. Our words are in darkness if we insinuate something about others, if we justify or benefit ourselves, if we diminish others, or if we mislead the hearers. The serving ones must be able to sacrifice themselves in order to perfect others.

To be according to the truth means to follow God's principles, and to be upright means to not benefit oneself at the expense of others. Paul says, "Do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then there will be praise to each from God" (1 Cor. 4:5). Will our

thoughts pass the judgment before the Lord in the future? If our thoughts cannot pass the Lord's judgment, they are in darkness.

THE CONSIDERATION IN DOING THINGS

Our greatest difficulty in doing things is our consideration. Many people do things without consideration. They do whatever they feel like doing. This may be compared to a person who wants to visit a certain place but leaves home without planning his trip. He gets in a taxi and gets on a train without knowing where the taxi or train is going. A person who does things with consideration will consider what means of transportation is convenient and which route is suitable. Before we invite others for a meal, we must first consider the time, the place, the guests, and the food. Before we do things, we must have proper consideration. Then we will know how to help others. Before the meeting of the district responsible ones, a responsible one who has proper considerations will consider the matters of the previous week. He will consider what has not been completed, what needs to be done, and the matters that should be fellowshipped in the meeting. He will also pray and seek the Lord regarding these things. The district responsible ones do not need to determine anything beforehand, but they must first have considered these matters. Then in the meeting, a matter will not need to be mentioned more than once, and any lack can be filled.

Good considerations are based on the following four points: First, the considerations must be based on facts. Some people have considerations that are based on wild, fanciful, and vain thoughts. To be based on facts means that there must be a feasible way. We should not think of ways that are not practical. When the responsible ones discuss a matter in the district meeting, the consideration must be determined based on the practical situation of the brothers and sisters. Second, our considerations should improve the feasibility of a matter. In doing things, we should not stick to old ways but should improve and advance in our ways and our study. Then our considerations can improve the feasibility of a matter. Third, our considerations must be thorough and cover all the aspects of a matter. Fourth, our considerations must take care of the crucial points. Some people's considerations lack crucial

points, so there is no way to succeed in doing things. We must know the crucial points and take care of them in our considerations.

THE PRINCIPLES OF DOING THINGS

Every time we do things, we must first determine the major principles. When we preach the gospel, we must determine whether we should go to the homes or to the meeting halls and whether we should focus on personal conversations or on speaking from the podium. The principles should determine the main direction. The greater the initial principles are, the better. The principles should be spiritual. The principle for managing the deacons' office is that the service in the deacons' office should bring others into the presence of the Lord. This is a great and spiritual principle. The deacons' office is different from a common office. Those who come in to serve need to be edified, dealt with, and learn some lessons.

THE DETAILS OF DOING THINGS

After the principles are established, we need to itemize the details. The principles are the ideal, but the details are for practicality. The principles should cover a far-reaching viewpoint. We should not fear that the principles are too high, too far-reaching, or too difficult. Without a high ideal there will not be a high attainment. The principles should be idealistic, but the details should be practical. There is a Chinese idiom that says, "Set your eyes afar, but begin the work from nearby," meaning that we should have far-reaching insight as well as a practical plan. The details must be fine and cover every aspect and every point. For example, the details of the service of the deacons' office must be thorough. There must be clear rules in the deacons' office regarding where every item should be placed and how every procedure should be arranged. If there are set rules, those who come to serve can follow the rules. In this way improper things can be dealt with and removed, and anything that is in disorder can be corrected immediately.