

Loving What Our Heavenly Parent Loves

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Matthew 22:34-40 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said unto him, " 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind'. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

1 Corinthians 8:6 There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist.

Divine Principle, Part I, Chapter 1 Section 3 God's purpose in creating the universe was to feel happiness when He saw the purpose of goodness fulfilled in the Heavenly Kingdom which the whole creation, including man could have established...The purpose of the universe's existence centered on man is to return joy to God, the Creator. Sun Myung Moon (paraphrased) *If you want to express your love to someone, you should love what they love.*

The first chapter of the Divine Principle is titled "The Nature of God" and in that chapter, we see that God has expressed himself in creation as plus and minus, positive and negative, masculine and feminine. We know therefore that God must exist with the characteristics of positivity and negativity, masculinity and femininity. Therefore, we properly refer to God as our Heavenly Parent rather than simply Heavenly Father. It makes sense.

INSIDE OUT

When you study the Gospel and the Divine Principle, you commonly find ideas that are sort of inverted from the way we may tend to think. Such as:

- Those who seek to gain their life will lose it, those who seek to lose their life will gain it...
- The first will be last, the last will be first...
- You must hate your mother and father to be worthy of me...
- You must be like a child to enter the Kingdom of heaven...

The Sermon on the Mount, which are perhaps the most well known of Jesus words, are a list of these "inverted" teachings. It seems that Messiah or spokesmen for God comes into the world to completely turn things upside down on God's behalf. It is like the Messiah comes into a big room filled with people, takes a look around and then yells out the most obvious conclusion with complete confidence: "Ok everybody, your attention please. "I've got good news and bad news. "The good news is that the colorful shirts you are all wearing are truly beautiful. "But, the bad news is, you have all put your shirts on inside out. "The shirt is not designed to be worn that way. "The shirt is much more beautiful if you wear it the way it was originally designed, with the colors on the outside, rather than on the inside "Now, everybody take your shirt off, and put it back on outside out. "OK?"

The words of the Messiah are the obvious truth, but they are the opposite of what people are thinking, the opposite of the way people have been living. Just about everybody in the room thinks they look fine just the way they are, so they say: "Hey, the heck with you."Some just don't believe him. Others don't want to make the effort and suffer the humility of admitting they have been dressing incorrectly and changing the way they have always worn their shirt. A few turn their shirts around, but then look different than everybody else! That's us!

Of course, what we are talking about here is love. The Messiah comes into the world to tell people to completely change the way they love. Father Moon has been teaching the way of true love: Rather than living a self-centered life – living for the sake of others Rather than practicing liberal sexuality – practicing sexual morality Rather than criticizing and attacking those who oppose us – loving our enemy Yes, just like the shirt analogy, these principles are actually obviously true to most people, but this is not the way people are living and loving, and they don't like being told to change their life.

TRANSITIVE PROPERTY OF LOVE

I once received some simple advice from Father Moon, in one of his speeches, which explained principled love in a different way. Once again, sort of inverted thinking...this advice has stuck with me and proven to be very valuable. He said: "To love someone, you must love what they love." "To love someone, you must love what they love." It's simple, and it makes complete sense. This is an aspect of living for the sake of others.

If A wants to love B And B loves C Then, to love B, A must love C Or, more simply, A must love C for the sake of B We could call this "The Transitive Property of Love". You love C, but not for your own benefit, but because of your love for B. Therefore, you love C for a more significant and higher purpose.

An example would be that my daughter has learned to love watch football on TV, not because she really cares about football, but for the sake of her marriage! Now she is even playing fantasy football! Actually, it sounds like a joke, but underneath it is principled behavior. I can assure you that she would NEVER have become interested in professional football unless there was a higher purpose!

STOP & THINK

Stop to think...what it is that is loved by someone you love? Then sincerely love that very thing because of your love that person. Of course, if someone you love loves something that is not principled, this principle would not apply. This is why I became very interested in what my children were doing or in what a friend is doing, perhaps even offering to do it together with them. My interest is a way of expressing my love to them.

One of my children became devoted to a club at school that organized a service project in Costa Rica. I became as involved as I could in that activity – Attending the parents meetings, reading all the information that was provided, reading up on the counterpart organization in Costa Rica, asking about each organizational meeting, bringing her to and from the airport at the time of the trip, discussing the project with her when she was back at home. I expressed my love to my daughter by loving what she loved. In fact, the only thing that qualified me to have anything to do with this Costa Rica project was my love for my daughter.

I think the opposite is also true. If there is someone we love, like a spouse or a child, and we do not love what they love, or if we criticize or ignore what they love, that person will naturally feel that we do not love them.

GOD CENTERED LOVE

This is the way "God Centered Love" works. If you love God, then you must love what God loves. Jesus, in what is called the Great Commandment (which we read earlier), and Rev Moon in the Divine Principle have both taught us that the center of our life, the first love of our life, should be God. Then the motivation behind other loves in our life would be our love for God, our Heavenly Parent. Everything else in our life is an expression of God's love.

We call that the "God Centered Life". Our love for God is the center or context for everything we do in our life. This is the natural and healthy way for us to live, based on the original design of our Heavenly Parent.

THE COMPLETED GREAT COMMANDMENT

Again, as we heard in our scripture reading this morning, Jesus taught the greatest commandment is to first love God (with all thy heart, soul and mind) and then love our neighbor. Having been a student and follower of Rev Moon for forty years, I believe he has expanded the great commandment as follows: 'Love God Love your spouse, Love your neighbor and Love creation.' Rev. Moon also taught us to love our country.

This is also the way of the Four Position Foundation and the Three Blessings: Love your body centered on God's purpose Love your spouse centered on God's purpose Love your children centered on God's purpose Love creation centered on God's purpose We love our body, our spouse, our children, our country, creation not out of selfish need or for our own benefit, but motivated by higher purpose than any of that. So, because we love God, we love them on God's behalf.

In living a God-centered life, our motivation for loving others is that we love God. Because we love our Heavenly Parent, we love the things that he loves. That is a much more powerful, inspired and unchanging source of love than simply loving something or someone because it makes me feel good, or because it's fun. Motivations based my own selfish feelings may be quite temporary.

This is a natural, healthy, balanced, inspired, powerful way of living our life because it is based on the original design, the original pattern behind God's creation. This is the idea behind something very beautiful which we call "the way of filial piety". We are motivated to love because we love our parents. We do "C" because we love "B".

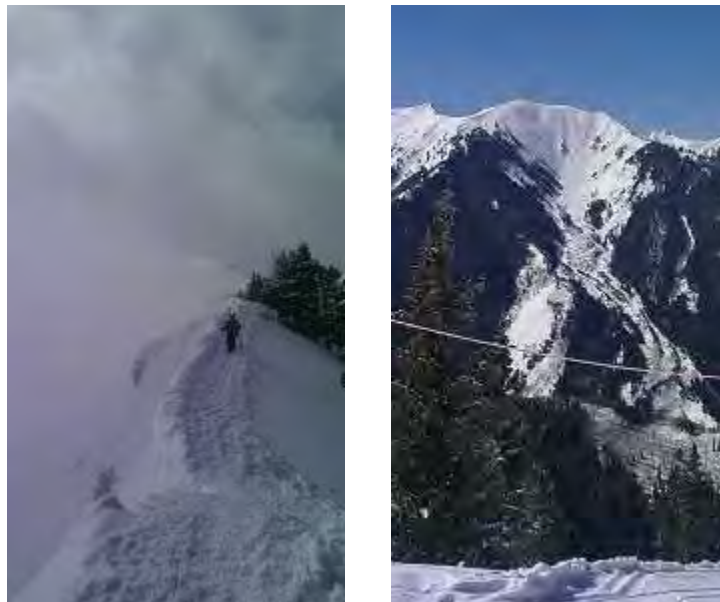
LOVING GOD'S CREATION

To illustrate this I would like to speak specifically about loving God's creation. The Divine Principle teaches us that Creation is a symbolic expression or a symbolic manifestation of God's own nature. God revealed his own internal nature symbolically in his creation. God poured a massive investment of energy, love, creativity over a 14 billion year period to create this expanding, growing, continuously evolving universe. The result of God's massive investment is this delightful Garden of Eden, a masterpiece that is a symbolic expression of God's love.

This creation is a gift that our Heavenly Parent gave his/her children for our nourishment, stimulation and development. The Divine Principle explains very clearly how we are to experience the magnificence of His creation. We have give and take with creation, centered on our love for God. That is the Third Blessing. Our experience in nature is to be centered on God, based on our love for God and God's purpose. When we are in creation, Heavenly Parent is at the center of our experience, not just myself.

SKI TRIP

I was very fortunate to have spent most of the last week in God's creation, which is way I have been thinking so much about these things. I have been thinking a lot about the principled meaning of loving God's creation. To provide a context, I would like to quickly share with you a few photographs of God's magnificent creation.



Highlands Bowl, Colorado

The photo on the left was taken from the right corner of the ridge that crosses the top of Highlands Bowl, reaching the 12,400 ft summit of Highlands Peak. When I go skiing, no one is more excited than me, no one gets more inspired and energized. "Thank you Heavenly Parent. What you created is so incredible. The sky is so beautiful. The mountains are so beautiful. Thank you." Sometimes I think I must drive the people crazy who I am skiing with.

USING CREATION, BUT IGNORING GOD

On the other hand, I hate to say it, but it seems that generally, skiers and mountaineers don't think twice about the source or purpose of the magnificence that surrounds them. That is certainly true of the people who I ski with. God is the last thing that they want to hear about when skiing. They use the creation, but are completely indifferent to the creator. They benefit from a relationship with C, without loving B.

Actually, they ignore God who is the creator and owner of everything they are enjoying. They just use it with no sense of purpose other than their own fun. Certainly they love creation and many feel a sense of responsibility. But there is no thought or conversation or discussion about purpose.

Why is this here? Why is it so beautiful and inspiring? There is no sense of humility and appreciation or even curiosity for the creator. They just experience it only for themselves. I have to ask myself: are we even qualified to use and benefit from creation if we do not first love its creator. Can we have C without

loving B? Think about this question for God's point of view. In fact, it is almost an unnatural relationship.

Curiously, these ski communities are filled with alcohol, dope, sexual promiscuity, especially among young people. Sitting right next to me on the chair lift. What? You mean, this isn't good enough for you? You need to get high to really enjoy yourself? Really? Something is very wrong with this picture. To me, it is like an insult to God. What...his design isn't quite good enough, so people need additional stimulation to really enjoy themselves? The real intoxication is getting excited about being in these mountains and constantly expressing that appreciation as a way of thanking God, praising God, worshipping God, loving God, centering the experience on God.

RESTORING THE ORDER OF LOVE

Father Moon taught us that everything needs to be "restored". That means that the original order of love that God intended must be reestablished. God wants us to love creation, not simply for our own fun, but on His behalf, to complete His purpose. We love God's creation because we love God. This is a much more powerful, fulfilling and meaningful experience of love.

Take the shirt off, turn it inside out, and put it back on again. Otherwise, it won't look right.

Romans 8:19-21 (NIV) states: "For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God."

Unificationists should love creation more than anyone. We should become the most inspired and responsible outdoorsmen and environmentalists, out of our love for God. That is how we "restore" the proper relationship with creation