

## Generation Peace Academy Peru: Our First Divine Principle Seminar

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¡Hola a todos! ¡Buenos días!

On Saturday we had our first Divine Principle Seminar! Guests were invited to come from 9-5 pm and hear three lectures, Introduction, Purpose of Creation, and the Fall (of man). In The morning we started making some preparations, waking up and eating breakfast earlier than usual so that we would have enough time to clean the CARP (collegiate association research principles) center before anyone arrived. Then the song team started preparing the atmosphere by singing a ton of different holy songs, and it put everyone in a good mood. Those who were on the welcoming committee waited by the door ready to greet anyone that walked through the door. Everyone felt bundles of nerves and anxiousness, waiting and hoping to see if we were going to reach our 21 person goal for the seminar. In the end, two guests showed up: Christopher and Rosanna. While they were receiving lectures, those that wanted to join the Jeongseong (sincere devotion) team.



They made different bowing, reading Divine Principle, and singing holy song conditions in order to help our guests receive the lectures well. Many left the prayer room in tears, after pouring their entire hearts

out for these two guests. Nobody had expected that it would take so much effort to raise two people up and give them the truth, a lot of respect for our CIG (Cheon Il Guk) and CARP members for doing this all day in and day out. "It was hard. From past experiences when I had done seminars lots of people came, so seeing only two guests was a little discouraging. But now I realize how much effort needs to be put into every person in order to gain a spiritual child, how precious every person is, and I want to invest even more this week for the next Saturday seminar." Shae Wright, 2nd Year Participant. Elvis was able to give a wonderful testimony about what he had learned as he was on GPA, it was inspiring to hear from one of our older brothers how doing GPA had helped him in his life, and gave him new perspective and purpose. The seminar finally ended with a few hours of fellowship, playing volleyball outside, playing cards, chess, board games, it was just a time to have some fun after investing so much the past three days for this event. Everyone was exhausted by the end, but also had felt a lot of gratitude for the seminar and experiences gained from it.



We were able to receive a Sunday service by Rev. Thompson from the Bay Area church that has been recorded a week prior. It was a great service stressing the importance of getting rid of our ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts) and the positive impact it can have on our lives. We were ready to start the day full of positivity after hearing that message, and for some of our Bay Area members it was a pleasant taste of home all the way across the ocean.



After service, we went on a bit of a walk down to the beach to see the Pacific Ocean. The walk turned out

to be a little more intense than anyone expected, walking down what must have been at least 100 stairs. The beach was not at all sandy, rather it was covered in smooth rocks. It was a great massage for our feet, but every step felt like surfing as we'd slide down the hill a few inches. The waves were large and intense, crashing onto the beach. The water was surprisingly warm, much warmer than either the Atlantic or Pacific is up in America. We spent our time either wandering the rocky pier, watching the waves while talking, or taking an impromptu swim as waves knocked a few people off their feet. Wading in the water, rocks would get picked up and swirled around, knocking into our ankles as the wave rushed back out. Spiky sea urchins also dotted the beach, and you could hear the screech of seagulls overhead as they searched for the little purple crabs to pick up and smash on the rocks, breaking the shells open in search of food. The hike back up the hill we had walked down was a great opportunity for some exercises, much the complaint of our already sore legs from all the jeongseong conditions.

We were finally able to visit the heart of Lima- it's colonial district. Most of the buildings and plaza were made by the conquistadores from Spain, but some earthquakes had destroyed them. Now mostly the wooden balconies are the only real part of history that is left behind. Still, the main square was beautiful, with the presidents home and a massive cathedral taking up two sides. Everything looked delicate and we could see the effort that had to be put into all the carving in order to make it look perfect. The people are especially concerned with being able to preserve the architecture and not lose any more than they already had. We ended with another stop to buy souvenirs, a craft market that was all in one building. Different than other craft markets we had visited, this one just had multiple floors going up full of people's different shops and items. We also had tried to make it in time to see the changing of the guards in front of the presidents house, but sadly we had just missed it.

The first years were finally given another chance to take ownership of their experience in Peru. In preparation for a cultural festival seminar that we plan to host on Saturday, we were given the opportunity to agree on and create our own condition that we wanted to do as a nation. It was a great exercise in learning about unity, and how to take everyone's thoughts and perspectives into consideration when making a plan. Unity requires agreement and sacrifice, but it also requires to be able to meet people where they are at in order to fully and joyfully unite with them. We agreed on doing a small condition of one holy song, twelve bows- one for each attendee we hope to have, and a four minute prayer all before we do our morning greeting. It definitely took some time for everyone to come to agreement, and as a first practice in unity we all learned a lot.



Tuesday we again went witnessing, although this time without our fellow CIG members. Each time we go out, we learn more and more about God's heart of patience and excitement that he had towards the other people that we are meeting. New realizations and connections are made every time we go to talk to people. Now that we understand what to expect a little bit more when we are witnessing, everyone is getting a little bit more confident when they do go out.

Our last few days will be spent exploring, doing a final service project, and preparing ourselves to say goodbye to our CARP brothers and sisters before leaving again for America.