

Let's Embody God's Word - Part 2

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Mrs. Haruko Kanari joined our church in 1963 and received the Blessing with her husband in 1975. She ascended to the spirit world in September 1985.

Synthesizing what I hear

One of Father's sayings really changed my life: "Challenge your limitations," he instructed us. I felt that this meant to assimilate everything I have heard. One elder Korean brother once told me, "Mrs. Kanari, you are still wasting so many things: spiritually, mentally, your use of time, etc." I felt this was true: in so many ways I could have tightened up and done more. So I tried to practice a stricter schedule: going to bed at 2:00 a.m. and rising at 5:00 a.m.; also I would take a cold shower before going to bed.

Another of Father's mottos that I have tried to embody is to "forgive, love, and unite." This is very important, because it contains a wealth of meaning for our personality and heart, teaching us how to relate with brothers and sisters.

Father once told the leaders, "Speak words that will not fall down to the earth and disappear, but speak words that Heaven can receive. Talk about what you have experienced with Heavenly Father—something which is really living; don't speak words which Satan can snatch away." This means that every moment we have to study Father's course and Father's life.

Father also said, "Devote yourself 120 percent, to the point where you can give your life in every second." This doesn't mean that Father said we should wish to die, or any such thing, but that our devotion and dedication should reach 120 percent. This saying was fearful to me, for I still don't feel I have devoted myself enough to serving Heavenly Father, True Parents, central figures, and all the brothers and sisters. We really have to serve more.

Regarding the torture Father experienced, one spiritualist said, "From the spiritual point of view, Father faced life and death situations 430 times." But in the midst of all this, Father never forgot the heart of challenging every situation. Because he wanted to save all of humankind, and because he wanted to serve all people, he was able overcome the most critical and dangerous moments.

Beginning our prayers

My attitude about prayer has changed since my early days in the church. While Father was still striving to complete his 21-year course, he said that we should begin our prayers with gratitude that we were able to join the Unification Church. Thus, each of us would recall in prayer our deep and tearful encounter with God, the deep feelings and impressions we had when we first joined the church.

"Please never forget these early experiences in the church," Father had said; "Begin your prayers by expressing these feelings."

But now, after finishing his 21-year course, Father says we should begin our prayers by recounting to Heavenly Father how our True Father carried out his course and focusing on the heart and determination which Father maintained throughout those 21 years. "Father has been carrying such a cosmic burden up until now," we can tell God, "so please let me now carry this burden too."

Father prays for former members

In the early years of the church, there was one member who for three days refused to have any relationship with the brothers and sisters. Father pleaded with him and wept. "Please talk to me," he repeated, over and over. Because of Father's tears, that person's resistance melted, his heart opened, and he began to talk with the others. This is the standard of love Father has set.

Father's concern extends even to those who are no longer in the church - those that could not maintain the standard of Unification Church life and eventually left. In Korea, whenever he had time, he would go to such a person's door and say a prayer for that person. "This person is now out of the church," he would tell God, "but he contributed so much. Heavenly Father, please remember the great contribution this person made. Right now, I don't have enough time to take care of him, so please take care of him." This is the kind of prayer Father offers for former members, and I think that we as well should carry that kind of heart for each person.

Centers I have been in have sometimes included members with very difficult personalities; other brothers and sisters occasionally wanted to ask such a person to leave, or in some way cut off the relationship, for the benefit of the center. Then I would remind them of Father's standard.

Once I asked Father about a person who was causing difficulties. "Don't cut off the relationship," he replied. "Rather, you should love him more than Satan loves him; if you can do that, the person will stay and automatically begin to change." Again I had to think of Father's standard of loving every brother and sister. "If you cannot give someone enough care," he said, "at least face him with tears and share with him; plead with him." Some of these members have stayed with us and are now blessed and raising families.

We must remember the importance of practicing Father's words. If we cannot change ourselves, we cannot lead others. Father has often talked about the heavenly law and emphasized its importance. Actually, we still don't know clearly the content of the heavenly law; only Father does. Eventually, we will have to live by its standard.

Don't postpone today's tasks

In 1981 I attended Father in Gloucester while he was tuna fishing. Every morning at 2:30, without fail, he set out for the ocean. The night before the opening of the tuna tournament, he checked all the preparations with great seriousness. It was almost 1:00 am when he finished. "Let's go to bed," he said, and everyone left the boats. Suddenly he thought of one boat and asked its captain, "How about your boat? Is it all right?"

"Yes, Father," was the reply. "Last year it was prepared, and tomorrow morning I will check it again."

But Father spoke very strongly: "No, you need to check it now. You have to finish today what you must do today. Don't put things off until tomorrow. Satan can invade if you procrastinate." Father himself went back and checked the boat and its lines. "There is no time for joking now," he told all present. "This is a time for fighting. Don't put things off until tomorrow; do today what you have to do today."

I was startled by this serious attitude, and I repented internally. So many times I have postponed things until the following day!

I really hope each of us can challenge ourselves to live up to Father's standard and put into practice the words which he has given us with so much heart and love. Even though we cannot be as perfect as he, still we should try our best and not offer excuses such as, "I know I can't do it, so I won't try." Satan can invade a person with such an attitude. My motto is, "Even though I cannot do it, I will try my best; even though I cannot do it perfectly, I will still take up the challenge."

Internal faith is the basis for everything, and when that foundation is solid, so many external things can be built upon it. Father said, "A loving person is tolerant of others, but strict with himself." All I can do is pray for each of you.... I challenge you to embody Father's words and inherit his heart and personality.