
Tangible Faith

Faith
Constancy
Commitment
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Wisdom

Faith

I can't remember a time when I didn't believe in God. In fact, I often thought that I was born into a family of saints. At least that is what everyone else said about us. Instead of calling us "holy rollers," people called us the "holy Werners." My father was a minister and it seemed that he never stopped preaching. And my mother sang about Jesus day and night. She was an amazing woman.

As a child, I was forced to go to Sunday School but at a certain point I developed my own desire to know more about God. When I was four or five years old I had already built an intimate relationship with Jesus, and had a great longing to be with him. When I was older, I often read the Bible and found a few things that did not make sense to me. Yet at the time, I wrote them off thinking that I would understand eventually. I just thought that they were part of God's secret and still a big mystery to me, but I never really questioned what I read.

In a sense, that was probably my biggest problem when I was first introduced to the Principle. The concept that Jesus would come on the clouds was firmly rooted in my mind and I found that difficult to abandon. But I never ever doubted in God. To me, it is unthinkable for a person who has met God to try to live without Him. I received Jesus as my savior when I was twenty-one years old. At that point I went through a rebirth and focused all my waking thoughts on him. And his presence in my life suddenly changed all my plans. Even from that time, I had great zeal to become a missionary.

I felt literally turned inside out and began an entirely new life. Everything was different. / was different—a new person, a new creation. I know what a "conversion" or "rebirth" experience feels like. And I realize it is something I have in common with many others. Even today many people give their lives to Jesus in much the same way.

Yet when I was introduced to the Principle in 1963, I faced a big dilemma. I was very much in love with Jesus and prayed to him every day. I wanted to serve him with my life. But the word that Christ had returned, hit me hard. Within myself I heard one voice say, "Yes! Yes! Please let it be!" I had been awaiting the return of Christ; every Christian who loves Jesus hopes and prays that this will happen during his own lifetime. But there was another voice inside me that cried, "Impossible."

Even at that time I knew the Bible intimately. I knew that in the book of Revelation it says that Christ will have a new name and will sing a new song. But I was in love with my personal savior, and one way or the other I

had to know if the Principle was true. It was extremely hard for me to believe that the Christ who had returned was not Jesus of Nazareth, but rather someone who came to fulfill what Jesus began.

Although I had been baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran faith, after meeting the Principle I received the baptism of fire through the Holy Spirit. I prayed to God, "My Heavenly Father, You have to tell me if this is Your truth or not. I do not want to go to hell. Is he the antichrist? If he is really Your son and You are calling me to this work, I want to be the first one to proclaim his identity."

I struggled with many points, but received one confirmation after the other. I prayed continually—for days and weeks. I studied the Bible *and* the Principle. And then a breakthrough came: I heard the voice of God. For many days I received revelations—God explained countless points. He told me when Jesus lived among the Israelites, they had the same problems with faith that I faced.

I ultimately decided that the Principle was true. Since that time, I have devoted myself to proclaiming it. And I have never looked back. I have met Him numerous times; through my personal experiences I can definitely testify that there is a God, a Messiah, and a heaven. I know there is a spirit world where so-called "dead" people are extremely alive! And it is not unusual for me to meet God and perceive the spirit world in prayer. When a person has solid faith, it may be quite normal for him to experience spiritual phenomena. In fact, *anyone* can have such experiences. I *know* that God's Heaven is a beautiful place! And I pray that we all have the faith to live there someday.

Faith has to be developed through experience. We can more easily believe in something once we have had an encounter with it. Unificationists believe in the Principle because we *know* it is true; we have tested it by putting it into practice. And we believe True Parents to be the son and daughter of God. This faith is not simply a blind faith, but rather something substantiated through personal experience.

Unfortunately, we lack a great many encounters with God. Yet through gathering experiences our faith can increase and become concrete to us. Incidents which show how real faith is can succeed in building up our faith, giving us a positive outlook, and strengthening our self-confidence.

Have adventures—especially with God. They will only enhance your faith.

If a salesman loves and believes in his product, he can sell it to anybody. I believe we have the best product in the world—God. But faith is believing in something—whether you can see it or not. If we are intent on sharing our belief with others, let us make our episodes with God very substantial and something we experience every day.

Our relationships to God, True Parents, and even heaven develop and are nurtured by an ongoing string of experiences. It is through many ordeals weathered over a period of time that our faith in God is substantiated. Eventually it will become secure and reliable.

There is such assurance to be found in the presence of God. And as we are His children, we are able to meet Him anytime, anywhere. Those are the things which result in living a life of faith.

Faith in God is necessary for spiritual growth. Yet it is also important to believe in yourself. And if you should find yourself alone, your faith need not wane. If you invite God to work with you and live within your heart every day, then it will not matter what you do, where you are, and how many or how few people are with you. It is your level of faith that is the crucial and determining point.

A person who does not have faith lives in emotional and spiritual turmoil. But we Unificationists have been given so much to substantiate our theology. Renew and strengthen your faith. Be confident in what you believe!

After the war many people asked, "How can there be a God?" They lost faith seeing so many people dead—including members of their families, as well as their neighbors. Those who survived knew that those who had died were good people, innocent people. Yet being surrounded by so much carnage caused many of those survivors to lose faith, feeling that a God of love could never allow something like that to happen.

What they failed to understand is that man made those wars, not God. They failed to perceive that those wars resulted ultimately because of the failure of the people to unite with God. And all of the advantages of today's secularized world—TV, movies, videos, etc.—simply add to the list of things that makes people lose their faith.

Yet when a person has faith in God, he can more easily identify himself with everything that God represents. The will of God then becomes his will. But for that to be substantiated certainly takes faith.

In one sense I feel that becoming a Unificationist is the most difficult job in the world. But my personal experience led me to another discovery: I grew with the times and the demands. The longer I lived my life of faith, the more I understood God, True Parents, the Principle, and human nature. I began to love more. I began to grow stronger. I overcame more. I witnessed that slowly but surely I grew spiritually. I could handle more—from responsibility to pain. I found that I became able to cope with situations, and realized that God never demanded more than I could fulfill at any particular time.

God does not give us a cross we cannot bear. Yes, things we go through may hurt. And we surely will experience pain and suffering by living a life of faith, but He knows the limits and the magnitude of our faith as well as our talents. And through the tests and trials which God gives us, He also nurtures and develops our faith.

Do all you can to make your faith unchanging; constancy is one attribute of God. We may all continue to fluctuate because we are still imperfect, but we must do whatever we can to attach ourselves to God. What good would it do to give up? If He sees that even in difficult circumstances we can continue to persevere.. He can bless that condition of faith. Even at the times we don't see or feel Him, we must believe that He is there, and go on anyway. That is faith.

If we are not able to break through and look at situations objectively in accordance with the Principle, then we should follow with blind faith. Yet that is a tough proposition. If you do not see the purpose behind doing something, it is hard to follow a direction with unconditional surrender.

Blind faith is relevant to a certain extent, but ultimately our belief has to be substantiated. In order to become a co-creator with God, you have to know that God is real; you have to search for and meet Him. You have to discover the spirit world and know it is real. If you have never experienced it, how can you be sure? How long can you keep going or growing only on the basis of blind faith? But even if you have not had a spiritual experience, I urge you to keep going—in faith.

Our faith has to be unchanging—that is definitely part of God's nature. All of us are still imperfect and although we may vacillate, we must be connected with Him and cling fast to our goals.

God will give us abundant blessings if He sees that even in difficult circumstances—even at times we don't experience Him—we are steadfast and persistent in our faith and in our loyalty.

In my own conversion experience, I suddenly was struck by the spirit of God. The Principle ignited something within me. It seemed as if God Himself just melted all my fears and doubts. Something was added. Something came over me—something which made me feel warm, uplifted, and full of love. I felt as if God introduced Himself to me. I was absolutely convinced that He had called me for a special mission. I cannot explain it in so many words, but even today I am sure it was the spirit of God.

I became free spiritually. From that point on, my whole life changed. And an experience with living faith permeated the very core of me.

We may never have seen God personally, yet we can learn many things about him. The Messiah reveals the Principle and many secrets about God. Unificationists believe what he says because we are confident that he is the Messiah.

One person may relate a personal testimony of meeting God. Others may express they never experienced anything like that, but they do not doubt that the person actually experienced it. They do not feel that his glimpse into heaven and at the face of God, Jesus, or even Moses was something he conjured up in his imagination. John, who authored the book of Revelation, claims that he met Jesus. And he goes on to testify that many things were revealed to him. He wrote about that personal experience and it is "documented" in the Bible. Millions of people since that time have clung to those words. On the other hand, many people doubt them. Yet the majority of Christians today expect Jesus to return to the world according to the vision which John shared.

If you have not experienced certain things yourself, listen to the testimonies of others. Even though you personally did not experience something, you can relate to their adventure.

Chemical formulas discovered years ago are still used today by pharmaceutical manufacturers, chemists, pharmacists, and others. Even though you may never have used a certain recipe does not mean it does not work. If it has been written down, you have the opportunity to refer to it and to test it yourself. Not every teacher of mathematics, physics, or chemistry went through the actual process of analyzing steel or platinum. But they found the formula recorded somewhere and might have taught it to others based on their belief that it is accurate.

An architect designs a bridge which is then built by engineers and construction workers. And after it is completed, many people use it. Some very long bridges are elevated quite high above the ground. Thousands of cars cross them every day. Nobody, thinks twice about whether the bridge is going to hold or collapse. It is an accepted fact that somebody who knew what he was doing constructed it.

Why shouldn't you trust that the Messiah's formula for restoration will work? What about when an elder brother or even a younger sister tells you some experience. It takes a certain amount of trust and faith to believe what another says and then accept it as fact.

I remember driving in the woods and coming across an old, rotting bridge. It was night and we had no choice but to cross that bridge to get out of the woods. I decided I had better test it before driving the car over it. It had lots of holes and whole boards were even missing. But I jumped on the boards and walked the length of the bridge to check whether it could hold the car. Once I was satisfied that we would make it, slowly but surely, we ventured across.

The Messiah has done the same for us. He has tested out many things about this world. And he tells us that it is safe to cross the line from the fallen world into God's world. It will take a summoning of our courage and our faith to jump on the boards and start across, but he urges us to do it.

It is most important to develop wisdom and use your head, not just dive into everything blindly. In order to actualize your faith, you need to use your intellect. But there is a difference between immature and mature faith. Doing every little thing which someone tells us is a beautiful first step of faith, but is rather child-like and innocent. Yet as we mature, we should rise to higher levels by beginning to accept and fulfill responsibility. That takes thought and reflection. And even that entails mobilizing faith.

Go through suffering; cope with the problems you have. If you are able to do that without becoming totally disillusioned, know that your faith is viable. Such experiences can't help but solidify it. If you are exposed to poverty and tragedy, your faith and conviction that all people need salvation will grow stronger. This world has to be saved. Too many people are suffering; we must resurrect it from death. Let that become our personal desire and let us develop the faith that it can be done!

I received Jesus as my savior through an experience with the Holy

Spirit. But when I was confronted with the Principle, I had yet another baptism—through fire. That conversion experience was very phenomenal and supernatural. And it lasted over a period of days and weeks.

The second experience can in no way be compared to the first. The first one was a personal one with Jesus; it changed my personality and uplifted my heart. But the rebirth I had through True Parents seemed to open all of heaven. I experienced spiritual manifestations that I could never before have imagined. All of my senses opened and my intuition sharpened.

The rebirth through True Parents was an overwhelming and total encounter. I would say that my experience with Jesus was more of a one-time event. Although the metaphysical was certainly a part of it, over the months and years, eventually the spark I initially felt, waned. But my second conversion opened up much more of the spirit world to me.

I felt that it was up to me what I would do with the experience of my rebirth through Jesus. I searched to satisfy my longing, soothe my heart, and experience more love from Jesus. But the rebirth through True Parents was entirely different. That time I immediately felt driven out into the world with the desire to do something. During the second experience I was given continuous support from spirit world and God, whereas my first experience was like being near and then far away from a flashlight that is turned off. Once you are close to the flashlight, you can definitely see its brightness but when the person holding the flashlight walks away from you, that little beam of light becomes fainter and at some point, just seems to disappear. Although my experience with Jesus did not disappear completely, it did seem to fade. I still prayed to Jesus and kept connected to him, but during my second rebirth, I just walked into intense spiritual heat, and felt constantly "on fire."

If we are vertically attuned, we will not have much problem sustaining our faith. A Unificationist's vision of God is different from the one held by the majority of other people in the world. If we look up to and keep connected to God, it may seem as if the whole cosmos unfolds before us. If we hungrily consume our experiences of faith but don't refurbish them through prayer and conditions of indemnity, we will soon have an empty reservoir. Therefore, in order to be life-giving and inspirational, we should always be united with the Source. You can run a one-man show for only so long without being connected to God or being nourished by the spirit world. Without enlisting their assistance, you become dry and hollow.

If our words do not come from God, they are empty. And if we use only our own words, it will be difficult to adequately convey the heart of God

or develop our spirituality in general. It is an absolute necessity for any person who represents True Parents to sustain his vertical connection. It is not merely to activate the cooperation of spirit world. That is just a by-product. We have to connect with Him in order to receive revelations and maintain a continuous confirmation that our faith is valid and that God is standing beside us.

I don't think about faith in abstract terms. To me it is either there or not there, real or false. I believe in God. I believe in True Parents. And I believe in myself. In my life I have had many experiences with God and True Parents. It is not just a *faith*, or a system of beliefs that I have developed; it is knowledge which I am sure of. It is reality; it is my life. I am sure "faith" is quite similar for you.

Sometimes the consciousness sways back and forth a bit. We see a few dark clouds and then we think we are far away from God or that He left us. But God never leaves us. According to His own law, He cannot. He is still connected with each and every person who is alive now or who has ever been born. It is we who abandon God when we do not secure our connection strongly enough.

Some people embrace a faith, while others *know*. If you *know*, then you don't have to have blind faith anymore. You are more than convinced of the existence of God.

Father does not just want people to believe in his identity and keep their faith on a childlike level for the rest of their lives. To help shoulder the burdens of worldwide restoration, He needs mature people. On the basis of the truth, such people must think for themselves, make suggestions, and assume full responsibility. It is quite different from just abiding by a certain creed. But faith alone is not enough. You need other ingredients as well. One thing you need is self-confidence.

Faith is something which must be developed. It is natural for children to have faith in their parents. But as children grow older, they will discover for themselves if what they believed about their parents is actually true.

At some point, faith must become real. The next step entails that we act accordingly, becoming co-creators with God. We may believe that

Father can do anything and that our faith is so strong we will never leave him, but we must do something more. To take the next step, we cannot just continue on in blind faith like a child, watching the wagon roll forward. We must grab hold of a spoke and begin to turn that wheel ourselves. That is a much higher stage—that is faith substantiated.

Constancy

Become unchanging in your faith. Live with God and True Parents no matter what anybody else may think or do. The world's response just does not matter. Many people may look at our faith or religion as something temporary. But what should you care? You know differently.

When I began my pioneer mission well over twenty years ago, Satan plagued me day and night. He had absolute conviction to defeat me. But I always told myself to just keep going. Yet Satan was rampant and did quite a few things to try and stop me. He knew better than I what God had in mind for me and therefore did whatever he could to bar me from winning a victory. But I just had to persevere.

God desires that we develop a constant faith. There are many things we may not understand at this time, but if we continue in faith, we will eventually reach our goal of perfection. A fly which can withstand the constant pressure of sitting on a 747 jet in flight, will reach the next stop the plane makes. There is no doubt about it: we have to withstand tremendous spiritual pressure in living a life of faith. But if we never let go of the rope of salvation which the Messiah hands us, we will eventually reach the goal.

Have a constant prayer life—continuous in both intensity and depth. It is up to each one of us to discipline ourselves and not to live primarily for the sake of fulfilling our personal desires. We have to think about God. Once we compromise and procrastinate, putting off our personal restoration, we will find ourselves in spiritual turmoil. But once we really start to live life so that prayer becomes second nature to us, our problems will begin to dissipate.

When I think of my first years as a Unificationist, what comes to mind is that I communicated with God at all times. But through that experience, I felt tremendous spiritual power at my command. My prayer life nourished me so that I felt full and well-satisfied. Of course I cannot deny that sometimes

I was sad, working all alone and constantly rejected. But I did not give in to Satan. I knew then as I know now that a total surrender to God's will is our salvation. I did not worry about my wife and son but was always thinking about how to win the people for God. And as a result, God showered His blessings upon me.

We each have to make a decision whether we will totally go with God and ultimately receive His grace, or fulfill our own desires and receive very little benefit in comparison. If we do just the minimum, our offering becomes like a burden because we wait for heaven's response but it just does not come.

The responsibility we are given to accomplish is only five percent of the whole; the rest is done by God. But that small five percent takes every ounce of our strength to fulfill. If we are successful, the reply from God and spirit world will be forthcoming. However if we do only sixty or seventy percent, we do not even receive that much in return. If ten kilograms are needed to balance a scale but only eight kilograms are put on, one of the scales just will not go down. A life of faith should be lived all the way. We must be "all the way" people. If we aren't, we risk living in a spiritual vacuum.

If you personally want an inner liberation, pray without ceasing. Constancy. *That* is sure to create a breakthrough. Shed tears for God and humanity. You will become a different person. *Stay* a different person; be constantly with your God.

If you develop steadfastness in your life of faith, the world and most especially heaven will take on a whole different look. Our fluctuations bring us into the predicament of always struggling just to meet God.

There is a reason why we are stable and secure once we feel a harmony with God. When we are with Him—talking with Him, laughing and crying with Him—our hearts are filled with joy. It is when we leave that realm through even a small thought or unprincipled feeling, that we disassociate ourselves from God. In other words, He is rendered powerless to reach us, and we have to exert the effort to climb back up in order to be with Him again.

When you realize you have made such a mistake, do not let it become a total defeat. Indemnify the situation; remedy it immediately. Why stay distant from God? All of us are happiest when we find that peace in consonance with God.

We can find reason enough to repent without ceasing, but unless we do something to stop vacillating, even repentance may lose its effect. Stability does not come from spirit world—it actually comes from us. You are the commander of your body, mind, and heart. Nothing descends from heaven automatically and spiritual stability does not just "happen" without some payment. You can become stable when you are resolute in your connection with God.

But you are the master sculptor who molds your own character. If you allow your fears to consume you, how can you be constant in your faith? You are the one who must exercise control over your thoughts or feelings. That power is within you, and it **is** up to you to exert it. If you decide not to, evil spirits could influence you and you might be at their mercy and whim. Unless you become strong-willed, they **will** do with you as they please. And they will certainly try with constancy to separate you from God.

To combat their efforts, we must trust in God, for it is in that bond that we discover the greatest security. We need to trust in God, in True Parents, and also ourselves. Have you ever thought about how much you can trust yourself? How much do you know about yourself? You surely know many of your abilities, and you feel you are aware of many of your limitations and weaknesses. But in a certain way, you don't really know what your limits are. Analyze yourself and write down both your strong and your weak points. If you begin to strengthen those characteristics which are your most vulnerable, you will find that your faith will become more durable.

If you are physically tired, go to sleep. If you overdo it and exhaust yourself, you may become sick and it could take you a much longer time to recover. But that is when you could feel tremendous self-pity and begin to blame other people and other circumstances, ignoring that your feelings actually stem from physical exhaustion.

Use your head! In order to be constant in living your faith, you need to be in good shape physically. Rejuvenate yourself and bring yourself back into balance. Sometimes you need to sleep more; you'll feel better and in the long run, you'll be able to do more. Sometimes you need to eat more. Even that will better anchor you. Taking care of yourself physically will help develop your faith and your ability to deal with the situations you confront. Finding the right spiritual equilibrium is one way of pacing yourself, and cultivating a constant or steady faith.

One of our biggest problems is that we fluctuate. We want to nurture

a tangible faith. Sometimes our heart flies on wings; we meet God and feel on top of the world. Yet one hour later we are depressed and melancholic. God's main quality is unchangeability. If we want to be the children of God, we need to reach the point of being constant.

The aspect of constancy is actually the centerpiece in a life of faith. It is the momentum that can spur us on toward reaching God and perfecting our heart. But neither goal is reached overnight. We have to be cleansed of sin; we have to work on our personal restoration and receive God's saving grace. But doing so will better help us reflect the image of God.

Commitment

Persistence. Perseverance. I have observed that nothing in life comes without remuneration. We are on our way back home to God. But what happens if for some reason you have stopped in your tracks? You could just continue to stand there until someone running to pass you says, "Aren't you going any further?" Would you reply, "Oh, I just can't. I am so far away. I see that home is somewhere up ahead, but I feel powerless to move any further. I am completely exhausted. I don't think I have the strength to walk any further." The person may goad you on with a swift kick and command you, "Walk!" And then you just might start walking again. But do you have to stop and analyze if there might be power in your legs? The power *is* there; just walk. *You* may run out of your own steam, but your reservoir of power from God will not run dry. Yet you can never reach your goal unless you determine that you will make it. That involves commitment. And one of the secrets in leading a successful life of faith is making commitments.

Some people are a little timid, but there is no reason that any of us need to succumb to timidity; we just need to get stronger. Rather than sit back and wait for things to happen to you, become active. Put your pledge of faith into action. Unless you do, you will never know the true joy that comes with being a Unificationist.

Have you ever asked yourself why even though you work hard, so

little result seems to come? It is because you are not serious or committed enough. Your life of faith has not yet become a question of life and death. It is not yet a matter of "do or die."

Once we make our commitment to follow Father and do the will of God, we must be aware that this is a lifetime pledge. Because our lives belong to God, we cannot withdraw from active service once we have a spouse and children. If we do not consciously realize that our obligation is to Him and not ourselves, we might lose everything we have invested thus far.

If you study history, you will notice a certain pattern: those people on the frontline were the ones through whom God worked, spoke, and revealed the greatest revelations. We are in no less of a position. Unificationists have been called to assume the task of the spiritual reformers and freedom fighters. We desire to work toward the goal that all people become free of Satan, and we show them the road back home to God. That is our pledge to God, and that is our commitment to humanity.

How committed are you? How committed am I? If *we* don't succeed, it will take several thousand more years until there is another chance for the restoration of the world. This time in history is crucial and we just *have* to make it at all costs. Now is the time the commitment we made when we joined the movement must be reactivated and become something tangible for God. We are in the middle of a state of emergency and at this time we make a tragic mistake if we abandon our life of faith simply to live according to the "norm" set by society. Knowing what we know, we realize that we have to become totally involved and committed to accomplish for God, not ourselves. We have to become sincere, and we need to be sacrificial. There is no way we can simply carry on as we do now.

"Tears for man, sweat for the earth, and blood for heaven." Father set down an amazing credo for Unificationists. In our role as co-creators, we must do our best to fulfill that responsibility, especially during this time of restoration. We have to work day and night to quicken the process and shorten the time of sorrow for both God and mankind. We can see more clearly than the people in society what is satanic behavior and how we

have to commit ourselves to restoring that. And this has to motivate us into devotion. We need to be ready, willing, and able to shed even our blood for God and humanity, and to establish the Kingdom of Heaven. That is the ultimate commitment.

We are talking about total involvement. We feel the heart of God, and we relate to His suffering. We feel the anguish of all mankind and shed tears because of the poignancy of our plight. We must do anything we can during our physical lifetime, relegating both body and spirit to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. That is our goal; that is the bottom line of our faith.

It is a spiritual law that if you commit your life totally, heaven *will* respond.

We have to develop will and determination. Will is the result of thoughts and emotions centered upon God and His truth. The will to live like a child of God comes about through sincerity and the experience of meeting God.

As we grow closer to God, we become more stable. And we also become stronger. We are like a tree which continues to grow; our roots have to be thrust into the soil and burrow so deep that not even a hurricane or tornado can destroy us. Once we implant our roots, we need to make sure that we live in intimacy with our faith.

Rather than be a pine or a spruce tree that gets uprooted easily, become an oak tree. It takes many bulldozers to uproot one. Nobody should be able to move you; you must be that unwavering in commitment.

The longer you demonstrate your alliance with God, the stronger your spirit becomes. Through the years you will become unchanging. At the moment, you may sway back and forth a bit. But it might just be your leaves or small branches that oscillate, not your trunk. Perhaps you feel as if your whole spirit is moving because you sense the vibration of spiritual wind whipping around you. But you know what you believe. And if you have strong faith, then your adherence to the ground of God can be steadfast. It does not matter if your hair gets a bit windblown.

We must each establish and strengthen our own faith. One way to do

that is to make sure that we meet God in the morning. The first word we utter each week, month, and year must be committed for the purpose of God. Once that offering is made, Satan will have a much more difficult time to claim us. In fact, that is the significance of making such a promise to God.

Even if you are not fully aware of the presence of God, persevere anyway. You are on the right road; stay there. Keep on walking, no matter if it is day or night. Whether lights shine on your path or you walk through some stretches in the dark—when you commit yourself totally—you *will* come closer to the goal.

As time goes by, we may get a bit tired. Do you still have the same pep you did when you came into the movement? If not, check how solid your commitment is to God. Physical energy may diminish, but God has an unlimited supply of power and we may need to fill our container from time to time. This is especially important to remember in light of the fact that the greatest part of restoration is still ahead of us.

It is a long march. Once in awhile we need a checkup—a general inspection, a tune up, and sometimes a complete overhaul. We can have new spiritual spark plugs put in and be able to run again for another fifty thousand miles. If that does not help, we can repair the engine or even put in a new one. We cannot trade in the body, but we can certainly revamp both the interior and exterior; and we can make sure our faith becomes more solid. We especially need to be sure we are committed to God, not ourselves.

Restoration can be accomplished through total commitment and total surrender to the will of God. That involves the payment of indemnity. But when we pledge to fulfill that, great spiritual power and authority will be ours. And we will experience the love of God as never before.

Total obedience. Total sacrifice. Total love. These qualities too are important in deciding upon and making a commitment. We are not just concerned with achieving a result, but also the development of character and heart.

Once you give your life to God, it is no longer yours. Sometimes people say, "Father, I give my life to You today." I don't understand that kind of pledge. We committed our lives when we joined. That gift was presented

to God a long time ago. We should never give our life a day here and a day there, and then take it back again. We should commit our life to Him only once. That is when we start a mutual pact with God of living for one another.

Someday the question will be asked of us what we did during our years as Unificationists. What we did with the time God gave us to perfect our hearts. We will have to answer whether we used the time totally for God or whether we made only a partial vow. At that time accusations may be hurled. There are certain people who call themselves members, yet do active church work for only a few hours a week. To me, that is token Unificationism. What are such people really doing for God? How can they experience the heart of God in a real sense or come closer to Him?

How intensely are we living for God right now? What are we doing for His sake and that of humanity? The time will come when all of us will look back and it will become clear to us who and what had the greatest impact on our lives, brought us the closest to God, and helped us seal our commitment.

Any feedback you received in prayer is a blessing for some feelings of love you projected toward God. His grace comes back to you in response. But it is granted not only on the basis of some action; it could be because of an attitude, a sincere heart.

You can love God so deeply that even at the most untimely moment you break down in tears and reiterate your commitment to do anything for Him. Even if you are walking down a crowded street, the heart of God could touch you, evoking your proclamation that you are willing to die for Him. The level of such a commitment can be totally accepted by God if your attitude is pure. So much depends upon attitude.

When you have a deep and memorable experience, your whole nervous system joins in the "festivities" and you may feel a physical tingling throughout your body. If you feel loving toward a certain person or toward the world, that quality can exude through your pores, making your feeling of ecstasy even more intense.

Think back to when you last had such an experience. I can imagine that it was when you made a total commitment to do something, a time when you completely surrendered your own ideas and followed God. For that is when you must have experienced a spiritual liberation. It is not enough

just going halfway or doing something half-heartedly. *Total* involvement and commitment for the goal makes all the difference.

If a Unificationist pushes his body just to go through the motions day after day, and even year after year, but prohibits his heart and spirit from making a commitment, he will come to feel burdened and troubled. Yet the person who becomes totally involved will discover he has the complete cooperation of God and spirit world..That is the reward.

There is an ecstasy that occurs both spiritually and physically in the unification of a God-centered husband and a God-centered wife. It is the same situation between God and man. And the same as the cooperation we feel from God and the spirit world. That is the time when the angelic and spiritual worlds become jubilant and totally committed to helping us in our task of restoration.

If we are reluctant and become spiritually dormant, we will gain little. We have to make effort. And we have to begin by asking God to discern our attitude of determination and commitment.

If we go along a straight line and don't waver, He will give us many tests one after the other, and then check our reaction. He wonders if we can accept new missions and different directions or different leaders. If we have truly given our life to God, then we will be consigned to the fact that *He* is in charge and can do whatever He desires with it.

All of us have to endure certain tests and trials, but they ultimately help us develop a strong will. Our personal conviction to reach the goal must get stronger and stronger. We need a concerted effort to drive away Satan and evil spirits from influencing us. And the first thing, is *not* to create any base for Satan.

No matter what the reason, if you quit in the middle of accomplishing your task, there is still no excuse for letting go of God. Make sure your priorities are straight, or ultimately you will be the one to suffer. When we are in trouble, who will help us? God. His commitment to us is stronger than we realize.

God reacts to a pure heart and righteous motivation. Words don't matter to Him so much, no matter how beautiful they are. But a pure heart brimming with faith is what can touch Him deeply. Be committed to what you ask for, but make sure it is for the purpose of fulfilling the will of God.

Motivation

No matter what it is you do, you have to be motivated by something or someone. Be concerned about your motivation. Who or what can prompt you to act? You can be stimulated by God. Or love. Or goodness. And when these are combined with knowledge and your conscience, you will be able to accomplish.

Motivation. We need a "why." I feel that the most basic stimulus is a love for God. Your love for God can move you to do something for Him. Likewise, you are influenced to do something for another person out of your love for him.

What can motivate a Unificationist? Certainly God and True Parents can. If we are able to hear the voice of God, we will surely feel inspired and motivated by His direction. We may even be stimulated to fulfill certain conditions of indemnity. Sometimes we need a push or thrust to muster up the desire to achieve certain goals.

If we love a person deeply, we would not knowingly aim to hurt him. And if we love God and True Parents we would not intentionally commit sin, realizing that such action pains them. Yet if we commit the same mistakes and sins over and over, we have to realize that we hurt them and that our relationships with them become somewhat impaired. It is when we feel the highest quality of love for God and True Parents that we are induced not to repeat such iniquities.

When we become aware that the central person suffers if we behave in a certain way, out of love for him we would be stirred not to act that way. We might then decide that we will overcome instead, and might even go out of our way not to commit the same offense.

How can you get the power to motivate you throughout your life? Let God work through you. You can do anything if God is with you. When you and God stand united, you become the majority.

There are two ways to be motivated. One way is that someone could push you. The other method is that you push yourself. You may be motivated when you are able to see that certain things must be done to ultimately fulfill the will of God. Perhaps you will be motivated if you recognize the necessity for people to come back to God before Satan destroys this world.

See your work—whatever it may be—as one fragment of the entire work of restoration. See yourself as one soldier in the battle taking place on the frontline, and realize that unless you fulfill your duty, the enemy will

break our line of defense. Understanding the necessity and purpose and then falling in love with that objective is one way to motivate yourself.

Some Unificationists think that they are doing God, True Parents, and all mankind a favor by working to accomplish the will of God. Actually, we work for our own benefit. We walked away from God and it is our obligation to return. Once you know what love is, it is your responsibility to love. Once you are driven by the spirit of God, you will desire to become no less than His true child.

Ask yourself if you are presently compelled by the spirit of God out of a sense of duty even when you don't see results. What about those who may not have visible success all the time, but keep on persevering anyway? Discover what impels them to reach for success, and then learn from them.

You need to find some objective and then be motivated to reach that goal. If this does not come naturally, do whatever you can to discover it. The best motive springs from the true source, God. The first thing is to connect with Him, and then allow yourself to be touched by His word and truth. If certain words move your heart, your emotions and intellect can more easily digest them, and then you could be stirred with the determination to accomplish great things for God.

For instance if you notice some injustice, your senses communicate that to your intellect, which then begins to analyze what is happening. And then your heart responds. There is a reciprocal relationship. You feel compelled to act upon will, and want to go and defend that person.

If you depart from God, you may still have the determination to get up in the morning, but if your motivation wanes too much, then even the desire to do that may disappear. Some people who have lost all incentive become so desperate that they kill themselves.

Many people in this world are no longer motivated; they live and work in a rut, just waiting until they can take their vacation. They don't think about life or people outside their own small sphere. They might stop loving. And then they might stop caring altogether. Nothing activates them any longer.

We should examine our own motivation. As long as we keep active, we have the possibility to be motivated to do something great for God. If you just walk along the street, nothing much may happen. Yet great things can occur if you stop to talk to a person or begin to knock on doors.

Something has to propel us through the course of restoration. A cen-

tral person can be such an initiator. For instance, if you are having a hard time gaining results, as your central person, I can try to encourage you. Yet it is best if you can motivate yourself. What if you just resign yourself, smile and say that you will *try* your best. How motivated can you *really* become?

Each one of us creates bases for Satan. But we need to create another base—a landing pad for the spirit of God. We need to think good thoughts, feel good feelings. We need to negate our connection to the devil. Being selfish will only get us into trouble, and our emotions may just go out of control. But that too is a selfish attitude. Instead, we should be motivated to get away from ourselves. And it is devastating when we begin to feel sorry for ourselves. But in order to feel real value, we must absolutely be on God's side.

Discipline

If you are well organized, spirits with that same ability will surround you. If you are weak and ineffective, the same kind of spiritual beings will encircle you. It is important to be principled and orderly people, to nurture respect for our bodies and spirits, and to learn admiration for one another.

God is not just a God of heart and love but also a God of law, order, and principle. If you practice self-control, the spirits around you will be disciplined. You will naturally attract higher spirits who may inspire you in many ways, even to keep your environment clean physically as well as spiritually. Self-discipline will greatly enhance your spiritual growth, and the spirit world will have a tremendous desire to cooperate with you. If you train yourself in the art of discipline, you will be a much better organizer. And if you get into the habit of planning, you can *plan* to succeed and reach your goals.

If you are undisciplined, you can never be sure how you will perform, because your level of constancy is quite undeveloped. Will you be depressed in the morning, mentally and emotionally resigning yourself to doing a mediocre job even before you begin your daily work? Or will you approach the day with a good attitude, working diligently even if you are tired or in pain?

You may have a tendency to be sloppy and be more content to live in a physically dirty environment. We have heard that "cleanliness is next to godliness," yet disorganized and unclean surroundings are a real deterrent to our goal of living with God.

Learn and practice good organization. If you are disciplined, you will more easily be able to tackle the challenges of life in this world and the next.

When you make a promise, fulfill it. Be on time for meetings. Fulfill your responsibilities—at home and at work—without having to be constantly reminded. It is common courtesy but can even be considered a point of self-discipline.

We strive to be people of stable faith—strong, balanced, and disciplined individuals. All of these qualities blend and work together to help us be well organized people. If you are inwardly organized and work on disciplining your mind and body, you can better control and balance your intellect and emotions. Yet depression or feelings of resignation are definite signs that you are not in control of yourself or your spiritual growth.

Organize yourself and your life. Do this even in the smallest of things. Keeping a billfold or handbag clean and in order is a sign of inner training. Sort out your closets and drawers. If you keep things neat and orderly, you can be much more effective because you will know where things are, and you will know what you have.

When you have the chance, take the time to reorganize yourself. Rather than keeping things in a chaotic fashion, do whatever possible to keep your things and your environment clean and neat. Keep up your appearance; be well-groomed. If we claim to be God's sons and daughters, we must nurture our personal integrity. But if we are dirty and unkempt, our level of self-confidence will automatically decline.

Think how much better you will feel if you clean up your workplace and clean out your car. When you show reverence for your material possessions, you will feel in greater harmony with them. The traits of being well organized and disciplined exemplify that you have faith and confidence in yourself, and that you regard yourself and your environment with dignity.

Become an organized and disciplined person in all facets of your life. No less is expected of one who desires to come close to God. Developing such traits is also a way to pay homage to God, and it is one method through which you will discover a greater harmony with Him.

I do not believe that the physical manifestation of Heaven will be erected amidst dirt and clutter. Rather, we have to attract higher level spir-

its by cleaning and organizing our surroundings. It is the impure spirits who relish living in a filthy environment, simply because they feel at home there.

If our heart is impure, that is where the unclean spirits want to live. Yet if we cleanse our heart of any spiritual contaminants, we invite God to feel at home and reside within us.

You cannot simply *want* to be organized—you have to plan *what* you are going to organize. You have to coordinate your emotions, spirit, mind, intellect, and all your possessions. You have to balance your internal self to blend well in your surroundings.

During my time as a prisoner of war, I slept in some unusual places. I remember how much I treasured a certain corner on the cement floor of my cell. I balanced my muscles in such a way that any soft or padded part of my body rested on the floor. I had no blanket, in fact nothing else to cushion myself, but through exercising discipline I managed to sleep like a baby.

I feel that no matter what our circumstances, we can learn and practice many kinds of discipline.

There is little discipline in Satan's world; in some sense, Satan himself is not a highly organized being. And he is bent on *destruction* rather than *reconstruction*. People generally follow his example—they go about life in a haphazard manner, doing as they wish.

Yet so much in this world reflects his lack of self-restraint—for example, crime is rampant and divorce statistics out of control. It seems that everything in the world is turning to anarchy. The world is not organized according to God's laws. But we who want to train ourselves according to His principles should not allow ourselves to live in spiritual turmoil. We should allow the King of Kings to lead us and rule our hearts.

Wisdom

Without going through school or a specialized training course, it is difficult to acquire certain kinds of knowledge. If we want to gain spiritual wisdom, we must attend God's school. We may have to enroll in and pass

such subjects as "Love" and "Truth." Yet on the basis of love and absolute truth, we are able to gain wisdom. It is in those classes that we meet God and then live our life by looking through His eyes. If we successfully inherit the quality of love that God exudes, we would be as wise as the sages. We should learn to intuit from the Principle view—God's view—and the standpoint of heart rather than intellect.

When we are confronted with some situation and feel horrified by the way certain people act, what do we usually do? *React*. Almost immediately our intellect takes over and causes us to respond *negatively* to something which is done in a way different from the way we would do things. But if our heart explores the situation, we would console the person who made the "mistake." While it is difficult to maintain an even temper, I would say it is spiritually wise to do so.

Wisdom is gained through the give and take between knowledge and love. As wise individuals, we will naturally handle things in a mindful way. We use all our senses—our common sense, as well as our spiritual and physical senses—to contend with all things, from people to nations.

Even though it is wisest to discern with our heart, we should never condemn our intellect, for the object of heart is intellect. But we must nurture a polarity within ourselves. Our heart is not solely dependent upon our intellect. It can determine what is right and wrong through intuition and sensitivity. Yet rationality enters the scene soon enough, therefore we must guard against the intellect totally dominating our perspective.

It is compassion, not intellect, that lives within the heart. If you look at things and your brain is immediately stimulated because you observe an impending disaster, try to let your heart take center stage. Let your heart act; forgive both the circumstance and the person. Life is short. If you make a mountain out of every little molehill, you would likely find things to judge and criticize in every person and in every situation. But people cannot survive intense attacks to their egos; such things can make them lose self-confidence and feel destroyed by inferiority complexes. And then it becomes a much more arduous task for them to grow spiritually. Be discerning and aware of their level and rate of growth. But doing that takes wisdom.

To succeed in becoming a good and wise human being you also need "smarts." People talk about the "wisdom of Solomon." Although his intellect was involved, Solomon used his heart to make decisions.

We can learn from his example that it is most prudent to develop absolute harmony between spirit and body—between heart and intellect. It is not always necessary to rationalize every detail and fantasize a number of possible scenarios. Instead just look at the situation and analyze with both your heart and intellect at the same time. But allow the voice in your heart to make the final decision.

If you are always with God and God is always with you, you will make the right decision, whether you need to have a quick reaction or a slow one. To make correct decisions, it is wise to have a constant connection with God.

I am known as a person who often makes quick decisions, and usually they have a good outcome. When I was in business, I received reports of all kinds. Many people worked for hours to bring forth certain findings and conclusions. They would present the different possibilities to me, but upon hearing their reports, I would confidently tell them which way to proceed. That takes experience and knowhow. And it takes a determined desire to be close to God and actually have *Him* enter into the decision-making process.

Wisdom is the conglomerate or result of love and truth working together. It is not necessarily the vastness of experience, or the number of years one has lived that makes a person wise. Since action coupled with love and truth brings wisdom, all of us have the potential to become wise individuals.

Wisdom does not mean that you know everything there is to know, nor is it simply derived from gathering facts and figures. I feel that wisdom is the ability to discern by using God's viewpoint and to detect by sharing God's emotions. All wisdom is in God; we must just tap His reservoir.