
Perfection

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The Nature of Perfection

When we think about reaching perfection, we have to think like God. We have to attain God's viewpoint, adopting it as our own. He is very public-minded. Of course He is concerned with the individual, but focuses much more on the purpose of the whole. It is not necessary to understand all the intricacies of world politics, economic systems, and the like. Just think and feel as God does, and act accordingly. You will consider every person as your brother. You will willingly live, and if necessary even die, for the world.

Father has started a chain reaction of good deeds and good thoughts, injecting a new tradition into the world. He is not concerned with bringing all five billion people back to God at this time. He knows that it will not happen all at once, but as a matter of course. He wants to leave the imprint of God's tradition for the family, society, nation, and the world. The light of God's love will have great influence over the darkness of Satan's world now that the Messiah has lit the first candle.

If our heart and intellect were governed by God's love, then we would naturally act accordingly, quite unlike the way we presently behave. If we were totally ruled by the love of God, we would view other people with much different eyes, eyes of genuine compassion and empathy. Yet even though we have not yet reached perfection, if we pray before judging a person or a certain situation, everything will appear different. After we pray and receive an infusion of the love of God, things which at one time seemed important, suddenly become quite unimportant, and some that were nearly meaningless, take on great significance.

God has commissioned us to change ourselves. We have to shed the skin of our satanic nature and metamorphose into a divine-natured person. We must oust Satan from our lives, and bid God welcome. We have embarked upon a great quest—to mirror our God. While resembling God has something to do with outer appearance, it has *everything* to do with perfection of heart, love, and character. That key unlocks the door to true life.

We will be truly joyful once we reach perfection. Unless we are united with God, it is difficult to perceive true joy. If we want to be loved and give love, we have to be with God. There is no joy living life apart from God because no love is possible.

A little girl who is learning to play the violin squeaks away in ardent longing to create a beautiful tune. You know it is supposed to be music, but somehow it just doesn't sound like it. Yet if you were to hear the orchestra of heaven, you would know the meaning of beautiful music. A fallen man who is trying to reach perfection works with fervor to overcome his weak points and personal problems. He knows he should be a loving and magnanimous human being, but recognizes that he has not yet made it and still has a long way to go. However, once the world is perfect, he will understand the glory and majesty of God's ideal.

Personal perfection involves cultivating a perfect parent-child relationship. You can tell whether or not you have perfected your heart. You don't need to consult with someone or be cross-examined. You can answer the questions yourself: am I totally united with God and True Parents? Do I love them unconditionally? Am I unconditionally obedient and sacrificial? If you can answer "yes" across the board, then you can be sure you have reached perfection. Father reveals to us that it is possible through a deep understanding of parental heart and by practicing unconditional love.

A jewel is somehow "unfinished" before it receives its last polish. Carbon put under pressure creates a diamond. It is the hardest stone which perhaps shines with a brilliance unmatched by any other gem. We too are "pressurized" by the trials we must undergo during the process of reaching perfection. Yet unless we are polished, we will never be a jewel able to totally delight God.

We catch a glimpse of what perfection is like by meeting God and the Messiah. We become harmonious and well-rounded people through perfecting our actions, words, and feelings. Truly loving people don't have sharp corners.

Since my childhood I have had a strong and steadfast belief in Jesus, and yet until I heard and understood the Principle, I could never actually understand how to become "perfect" as our Father in heaven is perfect, even though Jesus asked us to do so. I learned that perfection does not involve doing everything "perfectly" —without making mistakes. Neither

does it necessitate acquiring total knowledge of a certain subject. Rather, perfection involves purifying and cultivating a heart of unconditional love. To me, perfecting ourselves can be regarded as the process of becoming a true human being, and the fulfillment of our quest to be the true image of God.

I believe that our true nature and personality will emerge if we develop the uniqueness of our character endowed by God, and then use our God-given capabilities and talents. If we no longer cover up our deficiencies or discrepancies, we will be different people. If we no longer pretend to be someone else by putting on a mask, and instead express our true nature, other people will also be much more natural with us.

The majority of people in this world have not yet discovered themselves or their own true nature. They have built up insurmountable barriers, and felt they did not have the resources to cross those frontiers.

The meaning of perfection is to become the incarnation of the truth and love of God. It means that at all times we should act and feel as God does. If we could successfully do this, we would not have any problems surviving in society, but rather would steer this society into an entirely new direction.

Perfection means to fulfill one's purpose. Once a cow is fully grown, conceives calves, and gives milk, it could be considered a "perfect" cow. God had a certain vision before creating mankind and the universe. He desired that man fulfill a certain purpose, grow into maturity, and finally reach perfection. God bestowed three blessings to Adam and Eve which all mankind is also meant to fulfill. We don't need to be glamorous or acquire super-human strength. Rather, we should be pure and live according to the Principle—being fruitful, multiplying, and subduing the earth. That is our purpose of creation.

You might have originally thought that even though the world is a bad place, *you* were a nice person, and you did God and True Parents a favor when you joined our movement. I think this is quite a common feeling for Unificationists when they first join. Yet suddenly we find that we cannot be true people without reaching perfection, and that there can

be no perfection without a total reversal of our way of thinking and behavior. It is quite a shock to realize that no matter how relatively "nice" we consider ourselves to be, we all fall short of perfection. Unless we reach perfection, however, there can also be no true happiness—for God or any of us.

God is not just a feeling or a vision; He is a substantial being. We can try to analyze and draw conclusions about His nature, just as we can about human nature. Scientists and theologians alike have tried their hand at this almost impossible task. Scrutinizing God may take amazing amounts of brain power, and no doubt it would help us attain sharper minds and keener insight, yet what we really need is not faultless intellect, but unblemished heart as well as flawless and unconditional love. We are to become the image of God, to be His true son or daughter, and live under His direct sovereignty. Reaching perfection is not a voluntary thing; it is a must for each of us. Until we reach that goal, we will never fulfill our God-given purpose.

I believe the expression of a person's character changes as he comes closer to God. If a person is closer to Satan, he will project his words and deeds to both the environment and people, but they will not be in accordance with his original mind. Rather, they will be influenced by his personality and formed by the environment. If we allow our God-given original nature to express itself, our natural divinity can emerge. If we no longer have to cover up our deficiencies and discrepancies and pretend to be someone else, we will express what we really feel and think. Those are steps enabling you to come closer to God, and to become purified.

Once we are no longer artificial but more natural and people of true character, others will enjoy being around us. If you have not worked on discovering yourself, perhaps this is the time to cross the border and step into the land of freedom. Develop your original character and uniqueness. Self-actualize—it is one of life's basic needs. Strive to be the most "perfect" you possible!

Temperament is not necessarily something evil. The elements in nature provide a scan of God's spectrum of emotions. And we have thunderstorms, rains, and winds within ourselves, too. Perhaps you envision that life in the "perfect lane" will be all bliss and calm and serenity. I

believe something different. While we surely will be less anxious, suspicious, fearful, and cynical, I do not think emotional outpourings will be limited exclusively to smiles and laughter. Life would be boring if we talked and walked in monotones. Even if our emotions erupt, they can work for our benefit if we stay positive and use them for God, not Satan. Jesus was a perfect man, yet he got angry and chased people out of the temple. He did it out of a sense of righteousness. Perfection, to me, does not mean all people will be formal or stiff. In God's perfected world, there is room for a lot of expression. God is the most expressive being of all, and we should pattern ourselves after His image of perfection.

We have a hard time reaching perfection because something interferes with our efforts. It is a force which pulls us in the direction opposite to the one God pulls us. As long as we are still hoodwinked and able to be lured by Satan, we cannot perfect ourselves. Perfection entails separating ourselves from Satan and connecting only with God. To receive all the life elements necessary to survive and multiply, from God rather than Satan, we have to completely change ourselves.

Once we have reached perfection, we will encase a perfected heart, possess a perfected character, and manifest true love. The purification process is not easy. If we are purified in character and totally attuned to God, we will naturally develop the uniqueness of God's characteristics within us. Yet perfection does *not* mean that we will all be able to be "perfect" electricians, engineers, plumbers—or that we will do everything without mistake. That is the wrong view of perfection.

Father and Mother have both perfected their hearts. The True Children are born without original sin, but still must grow to perfect their love, heart, and character. Through the Blessing we become "engrafted" into the True Parents' lineage. Once our original sin is cleansed, God and spirit world then view us as flesh and blood of True Parents. Of course, we too have the responsibility to mature to perfection.

What a glorious position we occupy! We are on the brink of discovering the new world, and we know that that world is certainly not "flat," because Satan has not been able to touch it, to steamroll it as he has this world. Rather, it is "round" with possibilities and potential humanity has never even dreamed of. This soiled world is not very pretty from the abuse and mishandling it has gone through. The reconstruction is not easy, but does it really matter what people or Satan think of those of us who are working on restoration? We represent the gleam in our Heavenly Father's eye—and He is "conceiving" us with His perfect love, urging us to re-create and perfect ourselves.

By perfecting our character, we become the incarnation of God—His word and love. We should not only study the truth, but also act upon it. We should become the doers of truth.

The Principle explains that all entities, including man, have an "inherent directive nature" and are governed by autonomous laws. When a flower receives moisture and sun, it grows to maturation and blooms. It is up to each person whether or not he will blossom into perfection. Is our desire great enough to feel the warmth of our "sun"—the love of God? The science of botany reveals that many plants and flowers have reactions to various stimuli and many behave in similar ways to human beings. Certain exotic flowers even slightly resemble man. What makes a flower "tick?" Why do they instinctively turn toward the sun and absorb the right amount of moisture to help them grow to perfection? They act in a certain way because God endowed that instinct to them.

While we human beings do have a thread which connects us to God—our original mind—we have a much greater responsibility to perfect ourselves than any other entity of the creation. We have to use our sense of responsibility—our desire, our drive, our sincerity, our attitude, and all our faculties. We have to be aware of our goal to reach God and personal perfection; it will take hard work, but no matter how many obstacles are in our path, they must be overcome and we must reach our goal.

A flower is rooted in the ground and unable to move about freely. Most cows live in fenced-in areas. While most deer run wild, waterways become like a natural border, difficult for them to cross. All entities of the creation do have certain limitations, but think of how unlimited man's vistas are! Conquering the seas and the plains was not an easy task. We used ships and "iron horses" to cross what years ago was unknown territory. But now man can lift himself off the earth, encircle it, and even blast off into space. And man is currently in the process of pioneering other planets!

The amazing developments in technology are also quite fantastic, but through the Principle we understand that the spirit world has no limitations at all. No time, no space. Once we live there, we will be absolutely free. We will travel faster than the speed of light and no longer need to consider any sound barrier.

It is thought that heaven is a much more beautiful place than earth. Likewise, we imagine that living in perfection is far superior and more glorious than living in imperfection. We already know for sure that love is much more beautiful than hatred. The visions we conjure up in our imagination can motivate us to reach those levels. It is a question of becom-

ing determined enough to do it. Man is not confined by the limitations of his physical body. We can think and feel in far different realms than exist on this physical plane. But we often ignore this fact. If we would become more conscious of it, we would strive to experience meeting God every day. We would strive to explore new areas of this world, and to search for a better life. Thinking about living in the perfect realm of love and the haven of perfection seems much more appealing. It makes the search and the fight to reach them easier to pursue.

Sometimes our fallen nature "erupts." It expresses itself and feelings of self-importance might then dominate our words and deeds. Yet when the divine nature within us is able to emerge, we are reminded that it is actually everybody *else* who is important, not us. When a person works on restoring his own nature, he is naturally humble to everyone, loves everybody, and in fact is content to be the last one to reach Heaven. Even if he personally does not elevate in position or stature, he sheds many tears of joy when he sees another person is able to do that.

Fallen nature is the opposite. In the same situation, someone exhibiting fallen nature may shed tears of anger because he is not "number one." We fallen people have the tendency to use others to advance our own cause and sacrifice other people for our own good. People who have reached perfection are the opposite, sacrificing themselves for others.

A person is much more mature when he understands the Principle and lives by it without compromise. A person with an immature nature has the tendency to look for holes through which he can escape, and might be much more "irresponsible"—both in terms of his own restoration and his mission.

Perfection indicates a divine personality and a purified heart, not a perfect physique. What do you see when you look at someone? What do you think makes a "real" person? In many senses, Unificationists live in a world so different from secular society. The distinction is the internal makeup. A person's heart and personality are constantly changing—sometimes growing, sometimes stagnating, sometimes even regressing. Yet when we talk about perfection, we refer to something much more sophisticated and with a great many subtle nuances. If we feel with God's heart and think with a mind like God's, and are able to see with His eyes, we will be able to perceive perfection more clearly. We cannot measure situations and people by the standards of Satan's world. If we viewed things with our heart,

everything would look different. People wage war with one another on the intellectual level. People feel competitive in the battle of the brains, but do people look for a person who is champion in the realm of heart, or try to find someone with the greatest capacity to love? That is the *real* contest. Look at things with the eyes of God, and with His heart. Love should be used to measure all things.

The person maturing in heart is the one who understands the heart of God and then acts according to his or her feeling. Once he really understands, he then does something about it. He is not the one who always sits in the background and has a good time, or prays a little in order to experience spiritual upliftment. He is the one who understands what goes on in the battle of worldwide restoration and willingly goes to the frontline on behalf of God, to bring the people from hell home to Him. He is the one who becomes a co-creator, and with God, actively helps "re-create" people. He is the person definitely on the road to perfection.

The blueprint for a perfected heart is found in the heart of God: Therefore, through prayer we should dig into the heart of God and investigate what it looks like. Every day we should check and recheck the details of this masterplan. If you want to build a house, you cannot look at the set of blueprints only once. You have to refer to them continually.

Likewise, we cannot comprehend God all at once. Each day we must look at the details of how we have been constructed, and try to rebuild ourselves accordingly. We have to learn how to fine-tune our heart. The building inspector, Satan, will inspect you someday. If you are not up to code, your whole "house" will be condemned. But the chief engineer, God, also comes to inspect you. He may make you rip a hole in one wall and replace it. Or point out that one of your internal doors is not planed properly. The restoration process of a human being is quite precise and scientific, therefore we should connect with the "Master Builder" as often as possible as we work on our personal perfection.

The time will come when prayer is no longer necessary, and neither will we need church buildings or temples. Man will no longer need to formulate his desires because he will simply live his feelings and thoughts.

Once you are perfected, you will "pray" without ceasing. At that time, your life, breath, thoughts, feelings, and actions will all be

considered "prayers." Everything you do will glorify God. You will even "eat and sleep" God because He will truly live inside you. That is when you will breathe the quality of love. But perfection does not mean we will be idle; it involves activity. Every feeling will be principled. Every thought, loving. Every action, divine.

The goal of all the work God has done throughout history has been for man to fulfill his intended purpose. Every entity within the universe achieves its purpose by fulfilling its responsibility. Although man made a mistake, God originally purposed man to reach perfection, and endowed him with human responsibility. God will never abandon His kidnapped children; rather He awaits with patience and perseverance until each human being reflects His image. Once humanity comes to that point, the thousands of years of human history will just be "history" and the restoration of the world will be completed.

Fallen man must follow Jacob's course. Even Jesus had to win victory as "Israel." Unificationists are going Jacob's course today on the individual level as well as other levels. Although we are not yet perfected, we have such a prime example of perfection in our True Parents. They have won victory, and are raising us to someday occupy positions of true parents to our own children. This is the ultimate meaning of perfection.

The Process of Perfection

Every human being has a past, whether pure or impure. We Unificationists have committed our lives to the Messiah, and are creating a new present and future. These days will eventually be left behind, forming yet a new part of our past.

The secret of making progress toward perfection is to create no bases for Satan. It takes only one evil thought for Satan or one of his workers to dash to your side. The way to lessen that possibility from happening is to have good thoughts and feelings, and to force yourself to do something good. Sitting idle and dwelling on negative thoughts or evil feelings are ways you succumb to Satan's tricks. If you can successfully be public-minded rather than selfish, you will defeat him. This is easier said than done, but the best way is to rush to the aid of someone else. If you serve somebody else, and even help them with their problems, you shut out

Satan. You allow no time for yourself, but overcome your own personal problems by serving another person.

"You" are the biggest problem you have. This is true for all of us. We give in so readily to fulfilling the needs and desires of "self." Ultimately, doing that does not really make us any happier or satisfied. Yet the thought of helping others sometimes becomes a hardship. We wonder if they will accept our help, and if it is all worth it. The *thought* of it is often what keeps us back. Once we go beyond that, we might really enjoy ourselves and the rewards such service brings. We might come to love and respect our fellow human beings, learning something about them which, even comes as a revelation to us. Learning something about ourselves that starts a revolution—a turn-around from *self-orientation* to public-orientation. And doing that is like stepping on the highway to Heaven, the road toward perfection.

Perfection—being one with God and being pure in heart—is what we strive for. We are to fulfill our purpose given by God. We want to be temples of God, channels allowing Him to govern this world through us. Yet although this idea strikes us as being right, at the same time, we seem to resist it. We cannot become the temple of God if we don't create that temple. God can never abide inside us if we do not clean our "house."

We must not be narrow-minded, becoming stuck in the small things of life—being *perfectionist* rather than perfect. There are a million small but temporal matters we could get caught up in, but our goal here on earth is extremely far-reaching: we are to reach perfection—spiritually and physically.

Perfecting our character is a question of overcoming our problems and of paying enough indemnity to reach perfection. Indemnity is necessary for perfection to occur on the individual, family, tribal, societal, national, worldwide, and cosmic levels, but the problem at hand is how to reach individual perfection.

There is a certain process that brings us to salvation. We should follow our conscience as well as the directions given by Father. We can never be sure on what level the indemnity we pay will be used. That is a decision made by God. We confront one test after another in our life of faith. God *wants* to trust us, but He can only trust us if we overcome our fallen nature.

Why is it so difficult to overcome things while we walk the road

toward perfection? Why do we still sometimes stagnate? The biggest difficulty is to be "perfect" in the everyday things of life. We tend to make big leaps without too much difficulty, but in the process, we miss many of the details. We overlook the need to purify our attitude at different points during the day, and forget the need to make an offering of each day. We may be conscious of pledging our life to God and to love Him always, but then turn around and yell at the person who forgot to do something we asked. Little things. They are the tiny steps that make the difference in how quickly we will reach perfection.

If you love your spouse, you come to the point of "reading" things from the language he or she "speaks" with his or her eyes, or even the vibration he or she communicates to you. You come to know what he or she likes and what he or she dislikes. If you strive to provide those seemingly "invisible" things for him or her, your actions of love and care can make small advances toward your personal perfection. Those little things make life exciting. They teach us about love and much more about how to make even a life of restoration worth living.

We achieve perfection by doing the will of God, and by refusing to give in to the influence of Satan's forces. There is no question: perfecting ourselves takes a great deal of time. Since it is so time-consuming, many of us may wonder: When will it ever end? How far am I today? Why do I still not feel the heart of God? Why do I sometimes feel so close to Him, and sometimes so distant? Why is it that at times I feel the heart of God and want to shed tears, yet other times I feel numb, even dead inside, and could care *less* about the suffering people of the world?

What can wake us up to the true predicament of God? How can we feel the urgency of this time? We must know and see that the whole world is in danger, and that disaster is impending: we must realize that this is the time Christ must restore and rectify the problems of the world. All of this can spur us on to work on our own personal perfection. We know that the Messiah works to perfect the world—to bring peace, to unite the nations of the world, to unite the physical and spiritual worlds, to unite mind and body, brother and sister, husband and wife, and reunite families through the love of God. If the Messiah is working on such a level to perfect this world, should we not become just as serious about assuming responsibility to perfect ourselves?

When I joined the Unification movement and realized the ramifications of the Blessing and our goal as members, I figured that since I am a fast learner, I should be perfect in about a year. But after five years had passed, I realized I had not yet become perfect: I thought then that another year should do it. But soon enough, I found that I had to prepare a little longer for the march to the new Jerusalem. Once I began to see the light radiating from that beautiful city and illuminating this dark and lonely world, my hope became ever greater, and I certainly don't want to stop now!

Some members may feel that they must be perfect by tomorrow. They do everything possible to simultaneously work on every difficulty at the same time, and feel that they *have* to be perfect the next morning. They become disappointed and depressed when they awake and realize that they don't seem any more "perfect" than they did the day before. I must tell you that it takes more than a few days to reach perfection. Nothing happens so quickly. It is a process—a long and hard one, but one well worth the effort!

Father has told us that it takes seven times as much effort to live a religious life than to live in secular society, because there is a type of "gravity" that holds us back from doing that. We fall back to "earth" and become secularized by the demands put upon us. That "gravity" is Satan, and he pulls us down from Heaven. We may want to jump back up, but to do so we need tremendous power. If we do not apply the right amount of energy, we descend so quickly that we can almost feel ourselves become coated with the filth of Satan's world. We see all the dirt and dust and often get bogged down; life becomes tough and perfection seems a million miles away. Yet if we could get away from the pull of this "gravity" and go toward God, we would acquire His viewpoint. As soon as we descend from "heaven," we only see the walls in front of us; we are then backed into a corner by Satan. It takes tremendous energy to live a life of faith, and walk the path that leads to perfection. Yet once a person has perfected his heart, he no longer needs to pray, go to church, study the word of God, etc. A person who has reached perfection does not face the struggles that accompany a religious life. It takes no extra energy to live a life that is powered by perfected love and heart.

The process of purification helps us acquire a divine character. A pure person is without sin—a divine and godly being. Our concept of

perfection may not match God's, but it ultimately does not matter what we think; what is important is God's perception. We might feel that certain things we do in our movement are unusual—and perhaps they are according to the secular viewpoint. Throughout history, so many symbolic—and seemingly "unusual" —actions were performed according to directions given by God. Yet because certain ones were performed incorrectly, the people of Israel went into captivity. These seem like such insignificant mistakes to us, who know so little of God's way of reasoning. Often symbolism is separated from reality by a very fine line. The process of perfection involves the workings of purification and restoration; certain steps must be taken to reach perfection, whatever the hardship involved.

Every person must contend with both the joy and pain of human relationships. To reach perfection, one must perfect his relationships; he does that by living in accordance with the Principle. Each of us must restore the mistakes made in history. The archangel did not see Adam and Eve with the eyes of God. He was jealous of the love which he felt God gave to Adam and Eve, but which he felt he did not receive. Jealousy is prevalent in today's world, too. Even if there is no cause for someone to feel envy, that feeling is embedded within the "lining" of our hearts. "Human nature" is a problem, a deterrent to our reaching perfection. If anyone is put on a pedestal, everyone else asks why that person is so admired while they are not. This is exactly the kind of emotion which must be resolved and overcome.

It takes effort, perseverance, and time to reach perfection. Trusting in God is a must. If we trust in God, we also naturally develop a certain amount of trust in ourselves. If we believe that God can do anything and that as His children, we too can do many things, Satan will have a hard time interfering. The more we live in accordance with the Principle, the more our character will be strengthened, solid, and perfected.

How do we attain perfected hearts and live according to perfected love?—by discovering the will of God and then acting on it. It is not enough just to know the will of God; we may be accused if we don't work on fulfilling it. Prayer is not enough. Meditation is not enough. Neither is studying. Action is the crucial factor. Applying the Principle in our daily life—enacting the will of God—makes all the difference. Being beautiful,

wearing expensive clothes, and being popular will never succeed in perfecting us or bringing us closer to God. Silent service. That is what uplifts us—close to God, and closer to perfection.

One element necessary to reach perfection is time. You cannot expect to reach perfection overnight. Be patient with yourself. Yet you have to face the fact that you will have to make a great many efforts to reach perfection—being unchangeable, being uncompromising, being highly spiritual. But the point to understand is that any time you withdraw from working on this goal, you lose power.

We are striving to expand our container of heart to enable us to hold an even greater amount of God's love. Until we reach perfection, we do this through give and take with God, the Messiah, and the truth. We walk the way of truth until we perfect our love. And our container of love grows ever larger during our walk toward perfection.

Reaching perfection entails putting our own problems aside and focusing upon solving the universal problems. This is impossible if we stop relating to others. Hermits who go to live by themselves can never perfect themselves. Perfect love is only formed by the rounding off of the many corners of our hearts, so misshapened and deformed. If a person faces something he sees as insurmountable and goes around it, or worse yet, stops altogether and withdraws, he will be confronted with the same situation again later. But we should see the trials God sends us as the way He helps us to reach perfection.

All of us want to overcome our problem "self." But the reality of doing this feels all too real to us! We must deal with our emotions. We have self-concerns, and an overpowering desire to survive. Every day we find ourselves confronting problems, as well as feeling and thinking about solutions. We are confronted with the evils of the world, and the "evils" of one another. We. We. We.—Yes, *we* do have to cope with the world and therefore automatically concern ourselves *with* ourselves. Our suffering. Our problems. But we advance in perfecting ourselves once we can go beyond the point where we focus our energy, love, and concern upon ourselves and steer it toward other people and toward the accomplishment of our mission.

The divine nature of God and the evil nature of Satan exist within each of us simultaneously. And these two opposite natures clash with one another. War breaks out and it is not easy to allow the everyday skirmishes and even major battles to be fought on the makeshift battlefield of our heart. Who will conquer who? It depends upon us; we look for the war to end someday; we look for the time when the evil troops surrender and God can fly the flag of perfection within us. The problem we confront is overcoming our satanic nature. That involves a process, a difficult one.

We need to recognize that there is a process involved in reaching perfection. Once we start, we need to go all the way. It is not possible to earn a Master's degree or Ph.D. if you stop your studies before graduating from university. Age does not matter; the formula is the same for all of us. We are crossing the threshold to a brand new life. We want to become a new creation—designed and manufactured by God. If we are serious about the goal, we can never go back from where we came. We have to leave behind our old concepts of life, of death, of love, and hate. We have to relinquish our past, even though the new concepts we adopt are so contrary to those found in secular society. We are the new-age pilgrims, stepping into Shangri-la—the world of good, the world of perfection.

Perfection and Our Relationship with God

Even though we may be close to God, we still do not necessarily understand everything about how to perfect our character. As our sensitivity develops, we cannot help but notice that two forces—God and Satan—are at war within us. Even though God has revealed more of His nature to mankind throughout the centuries, as a whole, we human beings still have not been able to make a substantial breakthrough or bridge the distance between ourselves and God by conquering the evil forces within ourselves. We struggle constantly, fighting to get away from those forces which make us go in the direction opposite from Him. The inherent forces of goodness which are within the human heart, help in pulling us toward Him, but at the same time, the forces of Satan work very hard to turn us around. It is up to us to make the decision to go toward either God or Satan.

For generations, mankind has been ignorant of good and evil, and entrenched in the habit of serving the evil force. From God's viewpoint,

"human behavior" is satanic behavior. In fact, Satan is often called the "deceiver." We are coping with an entity, a force, a personality that has been governing mankind throughout human history. This force tries to keep us away from God. Yet it is God who wants us to reach perfection and to transform our character from evil to divine. God has sent mankind a number of central figures—great men like Noah, Moses, John the Baptist, and of course His son, Jesus—to teach us His word and help lead us back home to Him. We Unificationists believe that the Messiah has returned and brought the highest truth about God. Still, truth alone does not make the difference. We have the responsibility to use the law and live by it in order to perfect ourselves and become a true son or daughter of God. This entails doing the will of God, not just listening to it.

Even though Christians try hard to put the words of Jesus into practice, the force of Satan is so strong that it becomes nearly impossible to do so. To their dismay and especially to God's, Christians have not been able to reach perfection.

All mankind is involved in the process of restoration, whether they are conscious of it or not. Each one of us must personally overcome our satanic nature and acquire a godly one. We must become the incarnation of good, and attain more ability to love, to receive love, and to perceive love. To perfect ourselves, we need to receive the perfect love of God, and eventually return pure love to Him.

Reaching perfection through personal restoration is a lifetime job. Throughout all of history, man has tried to reach a oneness with God. Throughout history, thousands of people died as martyrs, but none of them reached the goal of perfection or saw the glory of God. Therefore, we cannot expect that in the short span of four weeks, four months, or even four years we can really inherit the whole universe, nor reach perfection.

What actually stands in the way of reaching perfection? Is the spirit willing, but the flesh weak? Analyze what weaknesses are preventing you from reaching your goal, and then work to overcome those points. It is different things for each of us. Discover what the problems are in you: Arrogance? Disobedience? Compromise? All of the above?

If it is difficult to obey your present central person, remember that you will not have the same leader forever. Central persons will enter your life, but sooner or later leave your life again. Surely there is a reason why God planned for you to work under that person for a period of time. What makes the difference to our personal perfection is what we could learn

from that central person during the time we worked under him, and how much closer we came to God and to reaching perfection.

There is a gap between our present spiritual level and the realm of perfection, one which should be overcome as quickly as possible. We will suffer until we do. We not only suffer because we make mistakes, but mainly because we are still so distant from God. We agonize because for a moment or two we smelled the perfume and caught a peek at the vividly colored flowers blooming in Heaven. We have glimpsed into that perfect world, and realize that living there will be so much better than where we live today. We agonize because we are not yet there. We are not yet in God's direct dominion, so we are still deprived of the ultimate true love He longs to bestow upon us. We are not always in total harmony within, and not completely united with those around us. The separation that comes about through our own confusion and divided actions is what causes the intense pain in our hearts and a feeling of hopelessness.

Yet this can be remedied. Disregarding our physical desires, strengthening our vertical relationship, and becoming more serious about reaching perfection and intent upon living our life for God and humanity, we shorten the intervals and lessen our absences from God. The relationship we have with God is the most critical point. We must try to keep continuous communication with Him throughout the day. Even though we may not feel embraced by Him every minute, we must know with assurance that He is near.

The closer we come to our goal of personal perfection, the more we convey the word, the image, and the heart of God. We become purified reservoirs of His love. Yet if we only concentrate on ourselves and how we can better our situation, we may live more "perfectly" in comfort, surrounded by our material belongings and steeped in knowledge, but these have little to do with living in the world of God's heart.

Until you are perfect you can only receive compassionate love from God. But even that pitying kind of love appears heavenly, and seems to feel as sweet as what we imagine true love to be like. Yet unless we are under the direct dominion of God, we are not able to receive His full and true love.

Once you become the embodiment of God's truth, it is perfectly

natural to make your own decisions and be confident that they will be righteous ones. However, you could get into a great deal of trouble if you are not close to God, yet insist on relying upon your old standard and fallen nature.

All of us live life with such dulled spiritual senses. We don't perceive much of what is actually happening around us. We don't see how God is working with us. We just persevere by plodding through the day's activities, with little regard for our position, the tremendous mission of the Messiah, how historic our lives are, and even how millions of people have turned toward God, not necessarily *because* of us, but often despite the fact that we do so little.

Father can inspire us with visions of Heaven, but too often his words go in one ear and out the other. At the moment we hear or read his speech, we become wildly enthusiastic and might even feel as though we can conquer this evil world single-handedly! But an hour later we are down to earth again, and reality sets in. Sometimes it becomes hard to even lift a finger!

We know that if we are ever to reach personal perfection we must build a solid relationship with God, but even so, we do not always have the most receptive attitude toward Him. We do not always have the greatest appreciation for what God and True Parents have done. But we fool ourselves if we think we can have the Blessing for nothing. We who have been given the greatest gifts from God also have the opportunity to reach perfection, which is exactly what we should be working on.

If we would be more conscious that we are making our own bed in Heaven, and that in fact we create our own "heaven" here on earth, we would work toward that end with all our spiritual and physical might.

The more people who reach perfection, the more power God has. The more we unite with God, support and glorify Him, fight for and defend Him, the greater His power becomes, and the more "perfect" the world becomes.

It is natural to wonder when you might reach perfection and to think what life might be like then. Yet the next moment you look into the mirror and become disappointed. You don't care much for what you see. Oh, the outside may not be so bad, but you are the one who knows what

goes on *inside*, screened from everyone else's view. You know the shabbiness of your ideas and feelings. Sometimes great amounts of spiritual dust settle on your heart and mind. Sometimes you feel you are so far away from God. But sometimes you may *think* yourself away from God, yet are unaware that He is still with you. Regardless of your difficulties, you are among the people God has prepared and selected to storm this world with true love, and cleanse the hearts of mankind.

Realize that the amount of positive value you accumulate depends upon the effort you make and how conscious you are of your position. There are times when you may hear the spiritual music made in the heavens as spiritual beings declare the glory of God, or experience a beautiful meeting with God in prayer; such encounters naturally engender a close feeling with Him. You know for sure that you are His child, that God is indeed with you. But the moment you feel as if you are in a spiritual dungeon, all alone and in the dark, and even feel that nobody wants you, you may start to wonder if there really is a God. What you have to do is propel yourself close to God even if that means breaking the spiritual sound barrier.

Despite the clouds above you, perfection—Heaven—is still your goal. On dark and rainy days, it may seem like the sun just died, but the rain clouds are just temporary. The sky above them is a brilliant blue. Think yourself there. Think of yourself—your perfected self—living with God!

God purposed you to be a perfect image of Himself. He is like the potter who has a vision of what he wants to create and won't be satisfied until you become that person. In order that He can mold your "Flay" to become the replica of what He has in mind, you have to be the right "consistency." The raw material makes a big difference to what the finished product will be like. Products of the highest quality need pure ingredients, and are not made with additives or preservatives. When we reach perfection, our basic needs of life will be fulfilled. We will be the image of God, able to function as He functions; able to act as a co-creator with Him. Every human being has tremendous potential to do just about anything during his life here on earth, not to mention tapping into spiritual energies and powers.

I believe that tackling any challenge, even perfection, begins in the heart and mind. You have to become so united with that goal, you even begin to "breathe" it. Make sure that you breathe properly, and that the spiritual lifeblood of love flows through you; everything depends upon the proper flow of blood.

Whatever you do in perfecting your relationships to God and humanity, your first thought should not be of your personal popularity, but rather of becoming a true person. If others can see your perfection of heart, they will have to acquiesce before you.

Father has mentioned that it is not God but Satan who must declare you have perfected your heart. Satan must sign the affidavit in which he agrees to give you up. You have it made if Satan feels that he can no longer do anything with you.

Father wants all mankind to be forgiven of sin. That is one reason he willingly pays so much indemnity and asks us to do the same. It would probably not be so much of a problem for us to reach individual perfection. However, paying the indemnity necessary to allow humanity to be absolved of all sin, is a tremendous task.

Personal perfection does not happen just by living a life of faith. Of course it is definitely the beginning point and the foundation. Yet in order to perceive the love of God, we have to develop our vertical relationship. The need for that kind of communion with Him will never fade away, even after we have perfected our hearts. We will stay aligned with God forever.

To be the image of God and His true children, we have to overcome all the inner blocks that presently segregate us from Him and other people. We have to become natural people, people who love with true love. But we have to become pure. Impurity is always a base for inner accusation and blockage.

To come close to God it is not necessary to pray while kneeling on cold concrete or jagged stones. What is important is developing a prayerful attitude and being connected with God in heart, as well as feeling and expressing our heart according to the laws of His own. Once we become the incarnation of truth, we will naturally do what God does.

Once a person receives his degree in architecture, he knows something about how to create a structure. It is then up to him to simply do just that. Real life begins once we are perfected, for that is when we become absolute

co-creators with God. That is when we will "major" in the subject of love and ultimately receive our degree. That is when we can totally understand the laws of God, and use those laws to create the Kingdom here—by bringing Heaven down to earth.