
Self-Respect

If you are able to spiritually embrace humanity, you will feel on top of the world for the rest of your physical life and throughout eternity. Yet if you do not work on overcoming your present difficulties, but allow your weaknesses to overpower you and then simply hang on, you might be ineffectual for the rest of your life. If you straighten up and fulfill now, you can build a beautiful life with your spouse and children. Most important, you will create a beautiful life with God. You will live in love, and become a successful partner, parent, and friend. But if you are vulnerable in character and do little to strengthen yourself, you could potentially remain spiritually immature.

If you willingly overcome your personal problems, not only will God and humanity benefit, you will, too. You surely want to be respected not just by God, but by your fellow man. Ask yourself whether or not *you* respect yourself. Do you respect yourself enough to love others? To love yourself? Are you the type of person who has worked to refine his personality, and honed some of the rough edges of your nature? People are more naturally drawn to a person who has such self-command. If people feel that they can gain spiritual elements from you because you are known as a person who loves and respects others, then they will seek to be with you. Yet if you do not respect yourself enough to work on overcoming the ugly points of your character, people will feel those negative vibrations within you, and may even go out of their way to avoid you. Respect for yourself, and even what effect you have on others is a critical point, one which has definite impact upon whether you will be a lonely person or one who is constantly surrounded by admirers.

Even though we Unificationists have the great goal of restoring the world, we also want to be loved as people. Much of life is still ahead of us. Certain social obligations are a part of our lives now, but many are yet to come. How we deal with them will partially determine how we will be treated and looked upon by others. I urge you to prepare for these eventualities by becoming an upright, truthful person. Become a person you would be glad to know, one you could respect. If you view yourself through the eyes of others, you will know how to behave in such a way that is attractive, not repulsive, to them. Make yourself the kind of person that other people *want* to be around. Then you are sure to develop many friendships. If people cannot rely upon or trust you, they may not want to have anything to do with you. If you are moody and weak and you need to be uplifted all the time, they may lose respect and interest. Yet if you are the one who always helps out, their esteem for you can only increase. That kind of feeling is catching!

If a woman gets a "make over" —a new hairdo, new makeup, and new clothes—but she is not allowed to look at herself until the transformation is finished, she may have a hard time to recognize that gorgeous creature staring back in the mirror. She might be amazed at how beautiful she really is! Wouldn't that automatically make her feel better and give her more self-confidence? She would become a different person in many ways —behavior, speech, manner of walking, etc. She would accept herself more, and therefore feel greater spiritual stability. Dressed in old clothes and little make-up, and with the same old hairdo may make her sigh and feel somewhat hopeless when she looks in the mirror. She may lack self-respect or self love. Make overs of either a physical or spiritual nature do a great deal to boost self-respect. Have you tried one of your own lately?

If a person is weak and unmotivated, he may always lag behind other people in terms of spiritual growth. While his peers might tolerate his ways, God might be upset with him because He knows the person could be doing more with his life.

Although we were not given the same abilities and talents, God gave each of us the same possibility to grow spiritually and ultimately reach perfection. One of the five basic needs of life is self-esteem, but how should we go about fulfilling it? If we are able to muster up enough self-respect, we will start believing what God has been telling us all along.

Do we really respect the people we meet and look upon them as sons or daughters of God? Too often we do not realize that the "God" in us should be communicating with the "God" in them, and that when we don't allow that to happen, we tend to treat everybody with a certain disdain. Such disrespect is unwarranted. Sometimes we like to talk big. We might even want to act big. But when it comes right down to actually closing the gaps that exist between ourselves and others, we have problems. Big ones.

It is important that each of us becomes a "total" person through achieving a oneness between spirit and body, as we simultaneously work on building a solid relationship with God. We must reflect Him in our personality and through our character traits. Each human being is so unique —physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. What a wonderful chance we have to get to know the part of God within others that is uniquely "them!" But the real question is: can we *respect* them? And then can we learn to love them?

We will breed self-esteem only if we feel whole inside, and content with our appearance and our abilities—with ourselves. If our spirit and body are unified, we will be at peace internally and have the self-confidence necessary to do anything God asks of us. But most of the time people who are unsuccessful suffer because of personality problems and inferiority complexes. They are not satisfied with themselves, with others, or even with life. And they have major difficulties to respect *others, and* themselves. Since they don't have this inner harmony, they tend to overcompensate and pretend, acting out life rather than living life. But sooner or later, others discern that they are acting. If they keep it up, they could begin to feel guilty and then start to accuse themselves. For this reason, I think it is crucial that each of us cultivate self-respect and gain the self-confidence necessary to face up to life.

To do this we need a source of energy—God. If love flows between God and ourselves, we will be able to laugh even at the bad things that happen to us, because we will be secure. Insecurity comes about when we feel inferior and insufficient, not knowing who, if anybody, loves us. This doubt becomes such a heavy burden to carry around; these feelings even have the power to change someone's personality. The light within that person then becomes hidden under his own "bushel" of *self-disrespect*. It cannot shine because it is dimmed by both a lack of faith and self-confidence. That light is from God, and it can only be illuminated when we allow God to love through us. We can do this by administering preventive medicine to our psyche. It is not easy, but we can start by taking small steps.

Look into a mirror and say, "I like myself! I am satisfied with what I see. I'm a beautiful person. Really! At least where it counts—in the heart." Look into the mirror again tomorrow. You will probably see something more than you did yesterday! Say again, "I like myself." And then repeat this every day. Don't fall into a trap by admitting, "I don't like myself much today. I wasn't very loving to my co-worker. I guess I'm actually a pretty terrible person." Stop berating yourself! If you don't like certain things about yourself, work on discovering things it *is* possible to respect. Did you ever pray or cry for someone who was struggling? Did you ever pray for the starving people in this world? Respect that point! Realize that not everyone does that. Recognize your value and believe that you are a pretty wonderful person after all. -

You must come to resemble a son or daughter of God in order for the light of God's love to luminesce through your eyes, your face, and your smile, and for your heart of love to touch the hearts of others. Start by harmonizing yourself. Know who you are. Embark on a course of self-discovery; look into the mirror and take inventory. Learn what you should

adjust and then just start doing that, but always expect that people like you. That feeling in itself gives you more positivism, optimism, confidence, and self-respect.

Doing these little things takes a matter of only a few minutes a day, so take those few minutes. Communicate with yourself, that God "self" within you. Then even your mirror can become a great friend. It can help you face yourself and face life. That can be the point when you begin to change yourself, and just the push you need to go forward toward perfection.

We are children of God, extensions of His heart. Sometimes it takes a long while for us to understand that God is within us, or to become aware of the presence of God in our life. Satan is an old acquaintance, and he has been hanging around us for so long, we might even be quite comfortable when he enters our heart because we are so used to him. Of course when he does, he continues to harp on the fact that we are a "nobody" and no good. This is one tendency which we *must* overcome. We have to respect ourselves as children of God. We must come to like what we see. What we are is what we got!—but in the unlimited reservoir of our God exist amazing amounts of raw materials available for any reconstruction of ourselves that we might want to make. God gave us certain features and talents, and I think generally we each want to be the *true* image of God that we can be, not fashion ourselves according to somebody else's pattern!

The longer you live with yourself, the more you will come to know about "you." You consciously confront yourself by practicing the Principle. If you just claim that you are a member of the Unification movement and then do what everybody else does, eventually you may run into some problems. You could do this for years, but what would be better is to re-evaluate your position every day. Analyze what you want to achieve daily. Reflect upon things you have done right, and the things you have done wrong. If you do this every day, you are sure to improve and come to respect your personal progress. Curb the desire to compare your growth with someone else's. Respect the other person for all that he is able to achieve, but also esteem yourself for your own rate of growth. No two of us are alike, therefore we should not try to become a carbon copy of someone else. God is so frustrated because it seems so hard for us to remember that and not compare.

As we grow toward perfection, we Unificationists are concerned

with the invisible world of feelings, emotions, and heart. The spiritual realms strongly influence our physical lives. Sometimes we might feel as if we are in Heaven or as though we are in hell, but nonetheless, we are masters of our own destiny. We can stay in either realm, and we alone make the decision for ourselves. If we connect with God, we will feel good because He moves our soul, uplifting us with His love. Yet when we connect to Satan, we usually experience feelings of negativity and depression, because he downgrades us and makes us feel worthless. Do you sometimes listen to the beating of your own heart? Can you feel the presence of spirit world? If we are meant to be the masters of our surroundings, why is it so difficult for us to be spiritually attuned at all times? A base must be created for God in order that His spirit of goodness can fill us. If you don't tap into God's reservoir, you *might* tap into Satan's, and he is only too happy to pour many undesirable elements into the containers of your heart and mind.

The real value in life lies in the activity of leading people home to God. Can you respect yourself enough to be a good mediator? Just being a smooth talker or a good tennis player won't count for much in the final tabulation of spiritual merit. How instrumental we have been in bringing people closer to God and True Parents *will*. If you are unsatisfied with your own results, take control over your surroundings and start to prize yourself as a child of God, and believe that He is able to do great things through you!

Why not be honest about your potential? Not only *will* you feel more free for expressing that and come to respect yourself a little more, you will also earn respect in the eyes of others at the same time. We all have inner conflicts, yet one way to clear them is when we learn to practice being honest with ourselves. In the process, you will learn that there are points you still need to develop and some which you need to ratify. There is nothing wrong with self-improvement. But even now there are many things within you that are worthy of praise; give yourself some today!

The reason that many people suffer is because their ancestors and other spiritual beings influence them in a negative way. If that is also your case, remember how important your physical life is for your spiritual growth. If spirits manipulate you, disinherit them for the time being, and give them the chance to grow later. You may not know what things must be restored in your ancestry, but if you find yourself constantly plagued by evil thoughts and feelings, through prayer and practice you will be able to discern if those emotions came from you or spiritual beings. You actually practice

self-respect when you work on ridding yourself of those influences which bother and distract you from reaching your goals.

You may have joined the Unification movement years ago, and I am sure you have worked hard since then. You believe in True Parents and may have already received the Blessing. Basically, you have probably become a much more positive thinking person, therefore when you are sometimes beset by negative feelings, can you be sure that they are always *exclusively* from you? If you love True Parents and are developing a love for other people, why listen to the voice within you which reacts negatively to the word "missionary?" That is a title to be proud of—no matter if your profession is newspaper editor, dishwasher, fisherman, whatever. You are still called to "missionize," or to spread the word of God. Satan and his cronies might have an allergic reaction to that word, and it is the evil spiritual beings who are working against you who make you feel the same way they do. But remember that the good spirit world takes delight in the activities of God. The logical conclusion then is that such antagonism is *not* from you.

Do you love and respect yourself enough to fight against those feelings? Develop that will and never again believe that it is totally *you*, but rather recognize it is the influence of spiritual beings. If you don't work to get rid of this influence, those spiritual beings could torture you for the rest of your life. Value yourself, your commitment to God, and your desire to be His son or daughter: command those spirits away. If they cannot understand that they must obey you, then inform them that their time for spiritual resurrection must come later. Be firm when you tell them. Even get angry with them if necessary. Chase them away, but make sure that you are convinced about what you say. If you have even the smallest doubt that you indeed possess that power, they will just laugh at you. To instruct them to take leave takes self-esteem and self-control, but with the right determination, you *will* succeed.

Spirits have no right to stay with you if you insist that they leave. Even though you have made mistakes, remember that repentance can begin to change your "luck." Yet if you give in and follow the whims of spirits who delight in leading you around, you just prolong your suffering as well as the agony of God. You may feel respect and gratitude for your ancestors and other spiritual beings who work with you, but make sure you esteem those who can help you do something for God, rather than those which hold you back. Respect yourself by understanding that whatever you are doing now is helping to build your future. If you die before achieving the goal of perfection, you will need to battle with the same problems in spirit world as those you will face in this world. Realize that if spiritual beings hold you

back from progress here on earth, their influence can grow so strong, they can also hold you back from growth in spirit world, from the benefits of the Blessing, and from being near to God.

You are a child of God. This is not an abstract concept; it is reality. It is your duty, therefore, to combat any evil spirit who tries to possess you or stays near you. If you respect yourself enough as a child of God, those spiritual beings will also have to respect your position. Don't be weak. And if they try to argue back, cut off communication. Then turn around and do something for God.