

## **New Educational Curriculum: Creating a Life You Love**

Joshua Cotter

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The vision of the Unification church is to *inherit the true love of God*. This is an amazing vision statement and goal for all of humanity. This true love is already out there; God is fully loving all of humanity unconditionally, yet humanity has a limited capacity to be able to receive it or be a channel for God's love to others. When looking at this statement, I wondered, "How do we help people inherit God's true love? How can we help people find this in their lives in a substantial way?" In order for this to take place, we need to support people by helping them develop their capacity to both receive and give God's true love.

### **New Educational Curriculum**



In the past, our educational system has tried to respond to this need to help people grow by laying out what was called the "formula course." When people joined the Unification Church, they became full-time missionaries and went on a course of fundraising and witnessing, which culminated in receiving the Blessing and becoming a Tribal Messiah. That system was not just about the activity of fundraising and witnessing; it was actually about growing people's capacity to both receive and give God's love, learning how to love as God loves. Understanding the Divine Principle was integral in developing their capacity to understand our Heavenly Parent and receive true love.

However, today we are living in the settlement age, the gate is much broader. Prior to this time, in order to receive the Blessing there was a very narrow gate and a strict course people needed to go through. God wants to reach all people across America. Therefore, we have to provide a path for people, suitable for this day and age, so that they can learn and grow, find and connect deeply with True Parents, and inherit the True Love of God. They have to be able to walk this path in the context of their everyday life, work, family responsibilities, or school.

Thanks to In Jin Nim's leadership, we now have the possibility to do this. Her practical weekly sermons are only the tip of the iceberg. It's her vision and deep understanding of who True Parents are and their teaching

that is enabling us to begin to understand what it means to live as God's eternal sons and daughters. We have been liberated to seek excellence as an expression of what we can give back to God. We are discovering the deeper meaning of what had sometimes become an empty mantra, "Live for the sake of others." In Jin Nim has opened up a new realm of understanding of True Parents, and their teaching, and now our task is to discern how to design an educational curriculum that can unpack this treasure trove. In order to design this, we brought together a team of 1st and 2nd Generation members who are very invested in education. We wrestled with this challenge together. Through our team discussions, we realized that we need to be able to share all that we have with people in a way that unfolds naturally, step-by-step, in a sequential way, so that people are growing over time in the context of their own lives. We have an incredible truth, but we need to offer it in a way that people can receive according to where they are at when they meet our church.

Recognizing that the Divine Principle, the family pledge, and the eight textbooks given to us by True Parents represent the most groundbreaking, awesome content both in quality and quantity, we concluded that our education system needs a model that recreates the original experience that people were meant to have if the Fall had not taken place, while still incorporating the essential steps of restoration that lay before us as not-yet-perfect people, often coming out of broken families and a very confusing culture. Consequently, our educational system is structured around helping people to develop the Four Great Realms of Heart in their lives.

#### **Four Great Realms of Heart: Children's love, Sibling's love, Conjugal love, Parental love**



When people take the Vision Class (membership), we share with them the reason that humanity could never inherit the True Love of God, despite our longing to do so. Even though people have tried very hard to understand the heart of God and to grow spiritually, there was always a ceiling. The reason for this ceiling is because we didn't have True Parents. But now that we do, people are able to be connected to God's lineage and grow in a way that was not possible previously. Therefore, the Vision Class (membership) clearly shares the breaking news with people: "We have True Parents." It then invites them to take a journey with us to develop their ability to fully give and receive the true love of God through developing the Four Great Realms of Heart in their lives.

The first series of classes, the "100 series," is represented by the anchor class, "Lovin' Life 101," where we help people focus on their relationship with God: receiving His love as a child would from his or her parents.

A child's heart is characterized by an ability to be open and receive – it's characterized by openness and innocence. This is what we are trying to encourage in people. Obviously, we are not going to be children again. However, in our relationship with God, we want to find that child's heart.

The anchor class, "Lovin' Life 101: A Heart for God," is all about understanding your spiritual temperament and how you individually connect to God. It's very practical, and it enables people to contemplate this connection. For instance, many may ask themselves, "Am I a traditionalist? Do I find God in ritual?", "Or am I perhaps a naturalist? I relate best to God when I go out into nature." Or, "Maybe I'm a sensor; I find God through my senses," perhaps in music. It might be for some that in listening to uplifting music, they totally connect and resonate with the heart of God and are filled with emotion as they encounter the Divine. So we guide people through a series of activities where they can begin to identify how they most naturally relate to God and learn how to take responsibility to nurture their spiritual life and connection to God in an everyday way.

### **Five Commitments as a Member of the Unification Church**



As members of the Unification Church, and as people seeking to develop the four realms of heart in our own lives, so that we can inherit the true love of God, all of us are committing to five practices. These practices—Inspire, Empower, Connect, Contribute and Inherit—enable us to build a **life we love!** The first is to Inspire, which means to attend church on Sunday in order to receive God's word through our Senior Pastor, Rev In Jin Moon – to feel the spirit and connect with our Heavenly Parent.

The second is Empower, which means to commit to learning and studying; learning the Divine Principle, learning the eight texts, learning all the incredible insights that God is giving us through True Parents.

The next is Connect, where we commit to fellowship with our brothers and sisters and nurture life-giving relationships with the people God sends our way. God has not only given us True Parents but also a family – the True Children, True Family and the extended family of our church, and we need to be honest and caring with each other. We can be brothers and sisters, we can love, support, and raise each other up in the context of one family. We make one family under God substantial through Connect.

Via Contribute, our fourth practice, we commit to volunteer and tithe because we want to be owners and

multiply ministry. This needs to be our church and not someone else's. This is our faith community and we encourage people to tithe, to volunteer, to invest, and to involve themselves and their families.

We believe that if you follow these practices, no matter where you are at in your spiritual life, God will speak to you and you will grow and expand your capacity to inherit the true love of God. Inheriting the true love of God internally is honored externally in our community through the pastoral ministries created by True Parents surrounding birth or rebirth, coming of age, engagement and marriage, family and community building, and passing into eternal life. At each stage, our individual lives are bound together with family and community as we inherit the true love of God.

Therefore, we need to take responsibility for our spiritual life. You may go to church on Sunday, but during the week you need to think about how all these practices can be embedded in your day-to-day life so that you can grow. The five practices are the "How" or the means by which we learn while the Divine Principle and its application is the "What" we learn.

In the 100 series, we are also encouraging people to learn more about tithing; why we tithe. People at this level are learning and understanding basic Divine Principle content, and are going deeper into their life of faith through its practical application.

Following the completion of the 100 series, students are invited to come to "Lovin' Life 201: A Heart for People."

### **Unique Gifts and Talents**



Once we are connecting with God, we want to not only love Him, but also love other people as an expression of God's love. This is a sibling's realm of heart. Lovin' Life 201 helps you explore your own divinity and contribution; what did God put uniquely inside of you that you need to share with others? Each one of us has unique gifts and talents that God gave us, but God did not give us these gifts for ourselves, but for others. So, through this class we discover how we are *wired*, what we have to give, and how we might be able to give it.

For instance, if someone in class 101 discovered that her or she were a naturalist, he or she might find out that he or she loves growing things, and perhaps decide that he or she wants to take care of all the plants in

the church and create a beautiful environment for others to worship in, through their own love of nature.

In class 201, some people may want to start a small group, or maybe they are an enthusiast and want to be part of the ushering and greeting team because they love to work with people. In the 200 series, we also look at how we can share our faith with our friends. The 200 Series corresponds with the years of maturation, when young people start asking the big questions about themselves, about life and about the universe and their place in it.

As people become more involved in the ministry during the 200 series we look at the proper relationships that should exist between people. We address purity and sexual integrity, and why we need to learn how to live as brothers and sisters, thereby developing the sibling realm of heart. With a strong foundation in this series, students become ready to take "Lovin' Life 301" and the 300 series, which focuses on the Blessing.

### **The Spiritual Path of the Blessing**



The Blessing is integral to our spiritual path and journey. Therefore, we have a whole series of classes that help people understand the value of the Blessing. The anchor class, Lovin' Life 301, begins by looking at the difference between a marriage and the Blessing. Many people may already come to our church as married couples, but we need to see the Blessing as a spiritual path that a couple journeys on together; this is something unique that our church has to offer.

Many faith traditions have a spiritual path that people can walk individually, but True Parents have introduced us to the unique role and journey that a Blessed marriage represents. This class helps people understand what the Blessing is about and the meaning of connecting to God's lineage. It is made clear that we can't inherit the true love of God without being a part of God's lineage and God's family, through

receiving the Blessing.

The Blessing is received to restore humanity from the fallen lineage and purify conjugal love, which has at best come short of its full potential, and at worst been vilely corrupted and misused, because of the Fall. We want to create beautiful, Blessed families where God's love can really dwell in the midst of conjugal love and establish a tradition that can continue from generation to generation.

Some people will be ready to prepare for the Blessing, and others (because of their age or faith stage) may not be ready yet. But when they are ready, we encourage them to take the full 300 Series classes.

### **Connecting the World to True Parents' Love**

In order to fully inherit the true love of God, people need to come into the realm of parental love. This happens through our 400 Series classes, "A Parent's Heart." This Series doesn't just relate to parental love through having physical children, but also through spiritual children and community building. We learn the heart of a parent through mentoring, and taking care of brothers and sisters in community life, from a parental position.

So, in this series, we are introducing people to the concept of what it means to be a Tribal Messiah, taking responsibility for their community, and the many complex institutions that constitute a nation and world.



In our membership classes, we look at the distinctions between our own faith and other faiths around us. One distinction is that we are not just about salvation for ourselves; a Unificationist cares about more than just, "Am I saved?" We care about if the world is saved, because God cannot be happy until the whole world is restored and realizes the original state He envisioned at the beginning.

In the 400 Series, students are looking at what it means to be a Tribal Messiah, and what it means to represent True Parents, connecting the whole world to True Parents. This is very exciting.

At the 100 level, people are studying basic Divine Principle. At the 200 level, they get involved in ministry, and are studying Divine Principle at a deeper and more thorough level. When they reach the 300 Series,

people are talking about preparing for the Blessing, which is done through what we've traditionally called 21-day content. We are committed to bringing out the fullness of the Divine Principle. We are looking at principled-life application. Then at the 400-level we are learning all the content that would have traditionally been given through a 40-day or 120-day workshop.

It would be great if people could take time out of their busy lives and attend 2-day, 7-day, 21-day, or 40-day education seminars. However, we recognize that many people, especially those who have growing families, are not able to take time out of their job or life for extended workshops. Yet, we still want to make sure that they receive all the richness of these workshops in their home and community. Excellence of local ministry fills this gap by providing enriching Principle content through Sunday service, small group ministry, perhaps a mid-week service, young adult, youth and children's ministry. The Ministry Development staff is committed to weaving full Divine Principle education into our regular church life.

Thus, in addition to coming to Sunday Service, it is healthy for everyone to belong to a small group. We call these groups "Connect Groups." Some of these groups are "Growth Groups," and have an educational goal, while others are "Affinity Groups," based on shared interest, such as hiking or cooking, or any type of activity that brings people together in fellowship.

### **Developing Educational Material**



This educational content is a large undertaking and is being developed and implemented as we go; we are working on Small Group curriculum and we already have anchor classes in the Vision Class (Membership) and 101 and, soon, 201 classes. In addition to that, people need to study Divine Principle at a deeper level. Therefore we want to develop a new expression of Divine Principle on DVD. This is in planning phase and we just announced a competition by which we seek to discover the best presenters from around the country. We are working on releasing material to make it easy for every brother and sister across America to not only share the breaking news, but also the richness of True Parents' teaching in their local community.

We are working as a team, wanting to receive input from educators across America to help us fully build and launch this curriculum. It's not just about people signing membership; every one of us, regardless of how long we've been in the church, should be a lifelong learner though Lovin' Life's education system.

We also see this educational track as incredibly important for our 2nd and 3rd generation. Even though they have the blessing of a pure foundation through being born into God's lineage, each person still needs to learn how to inherit the true love of God. Therefore we need to provide a faith community where all of us can learn how to inspire, empower, connect, and contribute, building on the foundation that each person already has.

In our educational model, based on the 4 Great Realms of Heart, the 300 Series is about the Blessing, but the substantial parent's heart comes after that, through the 400 Series. We receive the Blessing at the top of the growth stage, but then our challenge is to grow together with True Parents to reach the Direct Dominion of God's love. So we need to follow True Parents, work together with them, become Tribal Messiahs, practicing the love that they've shown us. This is why the 400 Series is incredibly important; our spiritual growth is not finished when we receive the Blessing. This education is not only for the sake of assimilating new members into our family, which is incredibly important in itself, but is also to enrich all of us as we seek to realize our full potential as God's eternal sons and daughters, and fulfill our life vision.

In all the educational content we are creating, we make sure that second generation is part of our team, because we want it to be relevant to them and to their generation. I want the language to be a young and fresh expression of the depth and content of our True Parent's teaching. In that way we can make sure this teaching is accessible to America.

The Vision Class (membership) and Class 101 are now posted and scripted with a video of how to give it. If anyone has any questions or needs assistance they can contact us at [ministrysupport@unification.com](mailto:ministrysupport@unification.com) . 201 will be posted in March and 301 in April.

### **Training the Trainers**



We see the need to offer a train-the-trainer model because every local church community needs to have an education ministry. HQ is here to support those who are conveying this education to members and guests in their community. With the new Divine Principle DVDs being made, even if you are a family alone in your community, you will have the tools you need to be able to educate yourself and others. We are also creating a guidance document to go along with that DVD series, to help you nurture the listener, sense how much



they understand, the pace they want to go, and help them articulate their own questions and gain a sense of understanding.

I feel that we have neglected to build our church. Many of our second generation, who are now young adults, haven't grown up in a strong church community. The hometown providence in the early '90s spread families out across America without a lot of training on how to develop a healthy local church. In addition, the emphasis of our education has been to pull people together for big workshops, and for our second generation the focus has been on purity and preparing for the Blessing. Because that was our educational focus for 2nd generation, to a great extent we accomplished that. Our church includes thousands of wonderful young people who really value and cherish their purity, are preparing to receive the Blessing and live happily as young Blessed couples. This is wonderful and it is impressive to the larger society. But what we didn't teach them by and large was how to be part of a strong, vibrant church community, and that is in large part because we were not practicing it.

### **Developing Pride in Our Faith**

I'm so excited about Lovin' Life Ministries and In Jin Nim's emphasis on being proud of our Unification faith and growing a faith community that is attractive to all people, young and old. I feel a new pride in who we are.

I was talking to a young adult recently at a Leadership Conference. One of the questions posed at the conference was: "Who is the leader, either historical or contemporary, that you most admire?" and he responded, "I most admire In Jin Nim." The second part of the question was, "Why do you admire this person?" And he said, "In Jin Nim has made our church stylish. I feel proud of our church." It was such a beautiful answer. It made me excited because he has pride in his church! He has pride in Lovin' Life Ministries. I feel that True Children are helping us rediscover our pride in who we are. In Jin Nim recognizes one of the core principles of church growth: the church needs to be culturally relevant. If a church is not "stylish," that is, if it doesn't have a cultural connection with the broader society, it has already lost its audience. Being stylish actually opens the door to True Parents and the Divine Principle. Style is the gateway to substance.



One person cannot create a nation-wide church. It's up to each of us, working together as a team, under the leadership of In Jin Nim. That's how we can create Lovin' Life Ministries, a faith community where we can be

happy and love life. This is what is going to be attractive to other people. The vehicle that will save America is a simple one, ultimately, a *living* ministry that builds on five core purposes or practices, and that is exactly what Lovin' Life is. We have identified five practices that act as a simple guide to navigate the elusive goal of spiritual growth. These important practices help you identify what's missing whenever you're out of sync with God or others. Through consistent practice you can create a life you love.

**Celebrate on Sunday** with excellent music, challenging messages, and real people doing amazing things for God. The first step is to love God, and Lovin Life's Sunday services help you do just that.

**Inspire your spirit** and join the celebration!

**Empower your life** and relationships by always making a point to learn something new. Start with a deeper understanding of the **Divine Principle as your foundation** in order to develop into the person God intended you to be. Building on this foundation you are able to create a lifestyle that allows for personal maturity, healthy relationships, and an opportunity to make an impact. Empower yourself and allow **God into your life!**

**Connect through a small group** that meets up for either growth or affinity. It's a great way to **meet people and give and receive support**, learn something that makes a difference to the quality of your life and **go deeper in your faith**. Connect today and be a part of something big!

**Contribute your talents** and passions; God is waiting for you to **become an owner** of Lovin' Life and bring it to a new level. By sharing gifts as a volunteer, you give God the chance to work through you and touch the lives of others and build community. Contribute to

**Show you care!**

**Inherit the true love of God** in the important moments of your life. Make time for **God in your daily ritual** by participating in our True Parents' traditions and learning about their significance and history. **Inherit a deep and real relationship** with God!

**Welcome to Lovin Life!**