

FFWPU Int'l: Living in the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth - Love as a Way of Life

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Dear beloved members and blessed families around the world,

I pray that this week will be one in which you come to know Heavenly Parent's love and practice it in your lives so that it may bear fruit as joy and happiness within your family and community.

1. Summary of Last Week's Message

Last week, we observed that the answer Heaven has prepared to the question of the happiness that everyone has long sought, is "life in the kingdom of heaven on earth." We reflected on how its essence lies in perfecting, through true love, our relationships with Heavenly Parent, with other people, and with all things of creation. We affirmed together that happiness is the fruit of relationships, that love is what forms those relationships, and that the Three Great Blessings are Heavenly Parent's blueprint for creation to bring those relationships to perfection.



This brings us to an important issue: "How can we make true love a part of our lives?" In this third message on this theme, I would like us to explore together the specific path by which we can learn,

practice, and experience in our hearts the true love that brings us to life in God's kingdom on earth.

2. True Love: Love Perfected in Relationships

According to the Principle, love is the force that the subject partner gives to the object partner, while beauty is the force that the object partner returns to the subject partner in response. Love does not end simply when one person gives it. It is perfected through the relationship of give and take between subject and object partners. When I give love and the other person responds with joy, that joy returns to me and gives rise to even greater love and happiness. True love, therefore, is not just an emotion that remains within the heart. Love is to be expressed through our lives and relationships. Only when love is conveyed to another person and returns to us as joy does it bear fruit.

In his book *The Art of Loving*, Erich Fromm presents love not simply as an emotion, but as an art that must be learned and practiced. Just as we must learn to read music and practice repeatedly in order to sing well, love too must be learned and practiced. We need to learn how to love and attend Heavenly Parent, and how to love our spouse, our children, our neighbors.

Yet love is not perfected simply by knowing about it. As we live day by day, we must repeatedly practice the love that we have learned. Even when we do not do it well, we try again. Even when we make mistakes, we do not give up. Through this process, we gradually learn how to love. Love grows through practice.

Ultimately, true love begins with "learning," grows through "practice," and is perfected within our relationships through "heartfelt experience." Then how can we cultivate that love in our own lives? Let's look more closely at the real process of learning, practicing, and experiencing true love.

3. Learning Love, Practicing Love, and Experiencing Love in Our Hearts

The first step is learning love. Learning Heavenly Parent's Will and the principle of true love - through Hoon Dok Hae and worship - is the first step toward living in the heavenly kingdom on earth.

To sing well, we need sheet music. To learn a foreign language, we need a textbook. To cook delicious food, we need a recipe. In the same way, before we can practice true love, we first need to learn what true love is and how we should give love. Therefore, coming to know and learn about love through the Word is the first stage of our life in the kingdom of heaven.



The second step is practicing the love we have learned. The second stage of living in God's kingdom on earth is to repeatedly practice, in our daily lives, the true love we have learned, so that this love can take substantial form through our lifestyle.

A song is not perfected by sheet music alone. We must learn how to breathe properly, produce the notes, and practice repeatedly before the song truly becomes our own. In the same way, learning a foreign language does not end with memorizing vocabulary and grammar. We must actually listen, speak, and use the language consistently before it becomes our own. Nor is knowing a recipe enough to become a good

cook. We need to make the dish ourselves, sometimes even failing, and gradually build up experience before it truly becomes our own home cooking.

True love is the same. Once we have learned about love through the Word, we must begin practicing it in our actual relationships, starting with small things. Even when things do not go well, we must try again. Even when we make mistakes, we must not give up, but continue practicing. When we create an environment in which we practice love and continue patiently training ourselves, the true love we have learned through the Word will gradually take substantial form. Ultimately, love is not perfected merely by knowing about it. Repeated practice becomes a habit, and when that habit becomes part of our character and takes root in our lives, love finally becomes substantial.

The third step is to convey the love we have learned through practice to another person and experience in our hearts how that love bears fruit as joy and affection within the relationship.

The purpose of learning and practicing a song is to touch someone's heart and bring them joy. When someone hears my singing and experiences joy, I too feel even greater joy and happiness. Likewise, we do not learn a foreign language simply to acquire linguistic ability. When we understand another person's language and culture, communicate with them, and share our hearts with one another, we experience the joy of relationship, and our own world becomes deeper and broader. The same is true when we cook. The purpose of learning a recipe and practicing it repeatedly is not merely to eat delicious food by ourselves. When we share food that we have lovingly prepared with our family or neighbors and see their happiness, we too share in their joy.

In this way, the purpose of learning and practicing is not merely to perfect our own ability. When what I have learned flows outward to another person, when that love bears fruit as joy in the other, and when I in turn share and experience that joy in my own heart, greater happiness results.

4. From the Word to Substance, and from Substance to Heart



When speaking about happiness, True Parents have often used the example of "the singer on a deserted island." They asked, in essence, "Even if someone had spent an entire lifetime as a professional singer, could that person be happy if he or she were left alone on a deserted island singing at the top of their voice with no one there to listen?" True Parents taught that happiness can be realized only when there is a relationship with an object partner. (Collected Works of Sun Myung Moon, Vol. 522, p. 263)

No matter how outstanding a singer may be, he or she cannot experience complete joy if there is no one to hear the song. On the other hand, when the song brings inspiration and joy to another person, and that person's joy returns to the singer, a relationship of happiness is created in which love and joy flow back and forth.

True love is the same. Love cannot be perfected by oneself alone. When I give love and the other person responds with beauty, that relationship gives rise to still greater love and joy. This is the process by which love and beauty take substantial form within relationships. Living in the kingdom of heaven on earth means creating this virtuous cycle of true love in our everyday lives.

True Parents have taught, "The purpose of the Word is for everyone to embody it, and the purpose of that

embodiment is to realize a heart of love (shimjeong)." These words show us concisely how living in the kingdom of heaven on earth unfolds in our lives. Through the Word, we learn love. Through practice, we make that love substantial. And when we share that love within our relationships, we experience joy and heart. Thus, "Word, substance, and a heart of love" are expressed in our lives as "learning, practice, and heartfelt experience." In other words, the Word becomes substantialized and embodied in our hearts (shimjeong); in the same way, what we learn is brought into reality through practice and ultimately becomes something we experience deeply, spiritually, in our hearts. This is the way we actualize in our lives the blueprint of creation as expressed through the Three Great Blessings. This is the path by which we create life in the kingdom of heaven on earth through the virtuous cycle of true love.

5. This Week's Practice: Experiencing the Virtuous Cycle of True Love

Learning love, practicing love, and through that love experiencing each other's joy and heart - this is the path to making life in the heavenly kingdom a reality in our daily lives.

Dear brothers and sisters,

During this week, I invite you to personally experience the "virtuous cycle of true love," which is the practical way of living in the kingdom of heaven on earth. First, through a scripture reading or worship, learn and inscribe in your heart one expression of love that you will practice that day. Then put that love into practice in your life. It does not need to be anything grand. Begin with something small: offering a warm word, listening attentively to another person until they have finished speaking, or being the first to say, "I'm sorry." A small act of love that you can practice right now is enough.



Then, at the end of the day, quietly reflect on what changed in the other person's expression and in your relationship when you took the initiative to give love, and what kind of joy and heart arose within you. Finally, before going to sleep, report the result to Heavenly Parent in a prayer of gratitude. In this way, please create each day a small cycle of "learning, practicing, and experiencing love in your own heart."

Love is not perfected simply by thinking about it, nor does it end when you take action. When we learn love through the Word, practice that love, and experience in our hearts the joy and heart that it creates within our relationships, our lives will gradually be transported to the kingdom of heaven.

This week, there is no need to begin with anything grand. Begin by expressing love first to the one person whom you most need to love. That one small expression of love can change our family. Change within our families can transform our communities. And that, ultimately, can become the beginning of the kingdom of heaven on earth that we dream of. I pray that this week each of you will experience in your own life what it means to become a subject partner of love.