

The Fruits of Perseverance - Part 1

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Father meets with junior high and senior high school students in a Seoul church center. It was before his Blessing in 1960.

I was born on December 17, 1922, in a little village not far from the boundary of Manchuria, in what is now North Korea. My father was, at that time, the owner of a great deal of land. The many fields and forests around our house stretched as far as I could see. My mother came from a prominent cultural family of Seoul. She had wanted to study in Tokyo after her marriage, but she became sick. So she followed my father to this faraway land. It was very hard for her.

When I was six years old my father built a beautiful school near our house, and so I can say I had a most lucky childhood. Many famous people liked to come to our house, and I was eager to learn and do all the things that older people do. But also I could see that having a lot of money does not bring real happiness - thieves often stole our nicest possessions.

In our area Christianity was well established, and not far from our village there was a large church. However, under the Japanese occupation it was very difficult to be a Christian. The ministers and many believers of our local Protestant church therefore came together in our house, and often it was like a little church. My mother also counseled bright and intelligent young Koreans about how to pursue their studies. One of these students later became my spiritual father: Mr. Hyo-won Eu. I think that our region must have been a special holy place for God, because our beloved True Father was born just 10 kilometers from our home.

Although my family did not suffer directly from the Japanese occupation, it was a tragic time for my family, because within a short period many of my relatives caught an unknown illness and died. But my immediate family was not affected, and we could live in comfort because my father was wealthy.

Spiritually searching but not always finding

Two of my aunts had been very pious and prayed every day. One of them shared my room with me for a long time. One day when I was about seven years old, I heard her speaking about God and heaven, and I asked her, "What is God and heaven?"

She told me then that heaven was a most beautiful place, where flowers bloom all the time and people sing beautiful hymns and are very happy. Then I asked her who can go there and she answered me, "Only those who go often to church, pray deeply to God, and read the Bible every day." That made me very happy, and at that moment I promised myself to go this way with all my heart.

I went to church very eagerly, and when I was alone I prayed to find God and heaven. Before I graduated from primary school I had twice read the New Testament from beginning to end; and I continued this way until I finished high school. The high school I attended in Pyongyang was a very famous school and most girls in Korea wanted to study there. But the principal of this school didn't like Christians and allowed us to have only one hour-long worship service per week, on Sundays. At this time nearly all teachers were Japanese and so we had to learn the Japanese language first, and only in a few spare hours could we study Korean. Because of the many difficulties Christian students had in Pyongyang, I decided to go to Ehwa University in Seoul to study music, for there I would be able to meet more freely with other Christian students. This university had been founded by American Methodist missionaries and was famous throughout Korea.

After some time at the university, however, I lost interest in religious life and began to criticize many orthodox Christian explanations, until finally I could no longer understand or really believe in the existence of God or Jesus at all. As a student of the music department, I was also a member of the choir, and so I had to attend church every Sunday. However, I had no interest in the sermons; I preferred to read worldly and nonreligious books.

After finishing school I lived a fashionable life in Seoul and never went to church or read the Bible. But after World War II ended on August 15, 1945, I heard that all the property of my family was lost to the communist army, and I became very depressed. Many people at this time fled to the southern part of Korea and hoped that the communists would not come down there, but then the Korean War began on June 25, 1950. During this terrible war I lost my parents and brother and sister. Only one brother survived, and even he died a short time later.

After this I felt helpless and had no more hope for the future. I understood that human life is sorrowful and lonely. I therefore visited many Protestant churches and also the Catholic Church, trying to find out what happened to God and His original love. But I couldn't find the old warm, spiritual atmosphere which I remembered in my heart. Also I couldn't believe the teachings or the sermons given in these churches.

So I looked around further and one day a good friend invited me to a special group that had made its own church on a famous hill outside of Seoul. I went there the following Sunday, and one of my early university classmates welcomed me. At first I was happy with these serious people. All of them were university graduates. We studied the Bible, and our discussions were always elevated. But when intellectual people are alone together they cannot easily be moved by the Holy Spirit or the spirit world. Even though they were interesting, many of the group were arrogant. At that time I wanted to come closer to God and feel more love and faith, and I suffered over that.



Joo Hwa Kim-Waldner teaches piano to Ye Jin Nim, right, and Won Sook Kim, (Rev. Won Pil Kim's daughter), left

Meeting our movement

Around that time I was working in the social department of the [South Korean] government which helped women in their social affairs. One of our department members was going to a recently-founded church, called the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity. One day she asked me, "Do you know Mr. Hyo-won Eu?" When I answered that he was my best friend from early childhood and the time I had studied music at the university, she said to me, "Mr. Eu is giving the lectures about the Principle and he would be happy to see you again." Mr. Eu had studied in the medical department at Kyung Sung University in Seoul, which was the most difficult in Korea. But throughout his whole life his health had not been good, and he suffered a great deal of pain from spinal tuberculosis.

I was very surprised to hear about Mrs. Eu and decided to listen to the Principle lectures. On the first day I listened for more than ten hours, and the next day I talked all day with my old friend Mr. Eu about the new revelation. At first

I was not greatly impressed. I couldn't understand the human Fall, and I couldn't believe in the Second Coming of the Messiah. But Mr. Eu told me, "If you oppose the Principle you may deeply regret it later. Please study a little longer and try to understand it."

I tried to overcome my preconceptions, but I was very doubtful. Many bad things happened to me during that time; my former church expelled me from its membership, but I could overcome this and in fact, it made me go to the Unification Church even more often. Still, my doubts were getting deeper and I ran into great difficulties.

Faith challenged yet strengthened

At this time, as my spiritual mind was searching for the right way, a very shocking event happened. Because of a big campaign against our church by the Korean government, on July 4, 1955, our True Father and several members - including Mr. Won-pil Kim, Mr. Hyo-won Eu, and his brother and cousin - were put in prison. During that time I felt such great loneliness. It was as if I were alone on a small island. I also felt great anger against people who had no concern for God's grief, and anguish that the most important man in all of history - the one who could save the whole world - was in jail.

Because of that experience, I determined never to leave or to deny the Unification Church. From this time on I began to study the Principle as hard as possible, and went many nights without sleep. In these circumstances I received some wonderful revelations and inspirations when I prayed. I attained a state of letting go of myself and of spiritual experience.

Yet I also suffered strong attacks from Satan. One evening as I was going to our lecture hall I felt as if somebody were trying to kill me, and I suddenly fell nearly three meters off a bridge - though I was uninjured. Another day, when I was alone in our lecture room, a terrible woman in a red dress came in and tried to attack me, but after three attempts I overcame her, and she ran away.

I went through many tests. I prayed very strongly during that time and gave lectures on the streets and in the parks. Through all this I could understand the Principle more deeply and build a solid faith in our Heavenly Father and His True Son.