

How to Live at High Noon

Cheryl Roth
October 3, 2017



No one can deny we are living in strange times! It's natural to ask, "What's going on?" "Is this real?" Having been born during a time of unprecedented peace, it's disturbing to look at what can only be considered a swift ride into darkness. It's kind of scary.

They say it's darkest before the dawn, so is dawn approaching or has darkness won the day? It would be easy, and perhaps on a certain level even rational to feel hopeless. But, nothing that is

happening in the world right now is a new problem. It already existed – it was just hidden or glossed over. I read last week that today there are at least 45 million slaves around the world and in America. In my protected small space, I had forgotten or wasn't paying attention to the fact that slavery is still a problem. And then there is the nuclear arms race driven by a thirst for power and position. Unlike me, God doesn't have the luxury of ignoring a problem. God is right there in the midst of every suffering.

I concluded the turmoil we are seeing in America and the world is not because God is absent. Rather, it's a cosmic push to confront reality. It's an opportunity to build something better, unless of course we waste it.

Where's the hope in all this mess?

One thing is for sure – when problems spill out there is no denying them! We are far from the ideal world we all dream of. Rev. Moon, in the course of his ministry, talked a lot about "high noon living." At high noon, you don't cast any visible shadow because the sun is directly above you. The shadows we are seeing right now are requiring us, whether we like it or not, to fix something in our own lives and society. So maybe the chaos around us is a call to action rather than a reason to lose hope.

Rev. Moon shared:

"I have already mentioned that a life of vertical "noon-time" alignment casts no shadow. If we can all shine as we live such glowing lives, there will be no chance for the shadow of sin to be cast.

High noon is the time of the brightest sunlight. There is no darkness anywhere, only brightness pervades the atmosphere. It is the condition of fullness, where there is nothing lacking."

This isn't the first time God has tried to call us to live at high noon, I have been listening to Eric Metaxas' "If You Can Keep It. – the Forgotten Promise of American Liberty."

In one chapter he talks about a famous sermon given on the deck of the Arbela by Governor John Winthrop in 1630. Governor Winthrop was trying to give them a vision of how they might build unity as a community once they disembark in the new world. He encouraged this small group of "pilgrims" to build a shining city on a hill. In other words, their example of Christian living would be a beacon of hope and draw new people in because the example of their Christian community was so compelling. He was calling them to live at high noon and cast no shadow.

Is it possible to live a life without shadows?

If you watch the news or look around, you will see plenty of shadows, so the question is – how do you live at high noon? If you want a hack for high noon living it will have to be so simple that you can remember it in a second and be practical enough that you can readjust your situation. So, what's the secret? People already want to be good but how can you actually be good?

Jesus was a master communicator. He told people that you could condense all the laws and teachings of the prophets down to a simple maxim, "Love the Lord your God with all your might, and love your neighbor as yourself." If you further simplified this, you could say that to live at high noon means to have a vertical connection to God's heart and a bigger vision for the world and humanity, and a horizontal connection to others. All goes well in the world when you have both of these connections. Have too much of one and too little of the other and it simply doesn't work. This is one of the reasons why people are so

fed up with religion. They see the imbalance in supposedly loving God and ignoring the suffering of others.

Governor Winthrop warned his community that their faith in God would mean nothing if it wasn't expressed in Christian charity. In other words, their vertical connection had to be balanced by horizontal outreach to others.



How to live at high noon

High noon living begins with a vertical connection. You have to know where the sun is and make sure it's right above you. Today, a lot of people may say, "I like this idea but I don't think God exists or is even necessary." However, without a connection to a bigger vision and heart for the world, you have no way to guide your relationships with the people around you. It's hard to love the "unloveable" or people who are very different from ourselves. Like attracts like, and those who are not like us are easily rejected. That's where racism and every other "ism" comes from. A practical way to build

bonds of heart with those you are not inclined to love is through your common connection to God. The person you don't like is also a son or daughter of God. You can try to see them through God's eyes. It takes a shift in perspective to stay at high noon. It means becoming aware of where you deviate from noon and bringing yourself in alignment with God. Rev. Moon said:

"There must be a moment or place when Heaven and earth can stand together in high noon, without any shadow. There must be a position where God is in man and woman and man and woman are in God."

It's about being transformed from the inside out by the light of the sun. A friend of mine put it another way.

She said, "Think of a wheel. It can only function when all the spokes are connected to the hub and all the spokes are connected to each other at the rim."

What are you missing?

It's not enough to just be connected to each other. That's a good thing but the wheel without a hub doesn't have the strength or integrity to travel far. It will fall in on itself. Points around the hub not only have to be connected to each other but to the center as well. If you are having difficulty in any of your relationships (I'm sure you can think of at least one relationship off the top of your head) then think about the health of your relationship to the hub, God, and how that might give you a larger perspective.

Instead of presuming there must be something wrong with the other person, think about what you are missing. You're probably missing something! Maybe there is room for more compassion or patience in your heart. Maybe you need to be more flexible – there is usually more than one way of doing things and we tend to get trapped by "my way or the highway" thinking. This week, when you confront a relationship challenge, reflect on your state of heart. Is there room in your heart for God? Can you see the other person through God's eyes? This is a simple question but a revealing one.

It's not about being bad

The Divine Principle offers new insight into how humankind lost their vertical connection with God. Religions typically teach that the problem with people is sin or selfishness. It's true we have a problem with selfishness but it didn't start there. Remember, before the "fall" Adam and Eve were pure and beautiful. If they were pure how did evil come from them? How did everything go so wrong?

The Divine Principle gives a very realistic explanation. Humankind's problems didn't start with murder and sin but with something so subtle it might go unattended to: they lost touch with God – they stopped talking to God. They lost God's point of view or input in their lives.

What's the first thing we do when we have a problem? We withdraw, isolate ourselves and stop talking to God. This takes us out of high noon and shadows plague our lives.

Talk to God no matter what you are going through

Last week a group of us went to see *The Heart of Man*. It's a really interesting movie. It weaves a version of the Prodigal Son story with interviews of people. One such interview was with a pastor in his late twenties or early thirties. He talked about his struggles with pornography. He would preach a strong sermon but then go home and watch porn. He was so disgusted with himself but couldn't stop. He felt ashamed and far from God. After an evening with porn he fell asleep and dreamed he was in prison – striped suit – the whole nine yards. In his dream, Jesus walked in, also wearing a prisoner's suit. A conversation ensued – man to man, heart to heart. What this pastor understood was that we can't afford to shut God out when we are in trouble. That's the time we need Him most. He wants to be with us when we are in trouble because He wants to comfort us and He can only show us the way out if we allow Him to be with us in our mess.

This pastor was not an evil person. He was confused. He had lost God's point of view about himself and about love. To live at high noon means to be able to have God's perspective about ourselves and others – from that goodness flows.

This same struggle manifests in our lives in a million little ways, which while less dramatic than the pastor's story, still eat away at our relationship with God. This week, I had an appointment to visit with a friend and she spaced out on our commitment. When she realized I had visited and left a little gift on her door step she immediately started accusing herself. She felt terrible and all these negative thoughts began to float around her head. Everyone's been there!

I knew she was unnecessarily accusing herself and so I sent her a text – don't worry, we have all missed something or other, you are more beautiful than any mistake! The following day, she stopped by with some apples and a note. That morning while praying she heard God speak to her and wrote it down. The message read ".....I gave you your friend, Heather, to show you what true friendship and forgiveness look like. Heather is my beautiful flower that envelops me and what I stand for: love, forgiveness, beauty and the ability to stand through adversity. Her name, Heather, is a beautiful representation of who she is – a flower that is beautiful and yet has the ability to weather the storms in life. That is Heather. That is who she is and how I see her. I love her."

That note brought tears to my eyes. Somehow, God worked through me to help my friend see herself through God's eyes when she had lost perspective on herself, and then God spoke through her to me. That's what we need to do for each other. When we really get in touch with how good and beautiful we are, we find that place of high noon where we cast no shadows. When you know your value you simply don't want to be destructive, evil and mean. You naturally want to multiply goodness.

Like the spokes of a wheel, when each of us is connected to the hub we are strong – we support each other and together we create a world of goodness. Maybe America as the shining city on a hill seems a little far off, but your decision to live a life at high noon can transform your life and change others around you. God wants to look at us all and say, "Here is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased," and "Here is my beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased." This week look for ways to connect vertically to God, and allow that connection to give you strength to embrace others – especially those who challenge you!