
The Basic Needs of Life

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Our Needs

God. Our Parent. Our Protector. Our Eternal. How important He is to us! How well He knows us. —What we need. What would truly make us happy. What to do for us when we feel down. Our God. What an unlimited reservoir He is! So filled with love and goodness, yet so full of anticipation at the same time. He wonders—will we accept His gift of tenderness? Will we allow Him to fulfill our basic needs of life, or insist on doing the job ourselves? God is so willing to serve and minister to us; unfortunately, most people have no idea about that side of God's nature and think they have to do everything by themselves.

God has endowed certain values to all people; these have been embedded within the human heart, but smothered by the deluge of propaganda from Satan. One of God's main frustrations has been how to share with us the answers to our questions about life. He has heard people ask the same questions for thousands of years, and He has tried to help mankind solve these riddles. The more a person strengthened his personal relationship to God, the more of these secrets God could uncover. We could regard these clues as His ethics or code of life. It is God who "breathed" a conscience into each human being. Each human spirit is undeniably tied to the spirit of God; billions of people are connected to God through the "wire" of their original mind. Whenever we so much as beckon God through a thought or by whispering His name, He arrives at our side. God has a deep desire to attend to our needs, but most people simply cannot understand how very attentive He really is.

Some people ignore His voice, yet those who do listen to their conscience will hear God's universal message: assist Me by helping the ones who are suffering. God desires that we become sensitive to the needs of others and minister to them on His behalf. The idea of being created in the "image of God" is not limited to our physical and spiritual appearance, but pertains to our very essence. We should discover what He is like, and be conscious that the lifeblood of God is able to flow through us. We need to understand what God does, what He feels and thinks, and what His purpose is. Unearthing the complexities of His nature will give us clues as to how we can become the semblance of God.

Seeing the vast variety of people in this world, we may question whether or not all people reflect God. It has become quite common to see bums, drunks, and bag people walk the main streets of some large cities in the Western world. Many are despondent and hopelessly lost inside themselves, in so much need. Some of these people have blank stares, some

have hollow expressions, while still others have faces contorted by fear. Although it is hard to view them as such, each of them *is* part of God. If a man underwent a physical transformation by having his skin and hair scrubbed, his beard shaved, and his body dressed in good clothes, he would look more "normal" and acceptable to society's standards of how a man *should* look. There would still be the matter of an *inner* transformation. He would need to be scrubbed, shaved, and clothed on the inside, too. Although a person's physical appearance bespeaks something about him and gives some idea of the unique qualities of God which he portrays, even more important is his internal make-up. But that is the very part a person is especially afraid and reluctant to show; most people do their best to shield themselves from receiving any ridicule or being laughed at by others.

Humanity should not be short-sighted; we must realize that for life to have any meaning it must be lived *with* God, not apart from Him. If all people could understand that eventually God will be sovereign head of this world, human society would be quite different from the way it is today. People would feel more purpose in working, in communicating, especially in living, but even in dying. If we were assured of the real meaning of life and convinced that our soul will continue to live after our body is put beneath the earth, the true needs of life would become more evident to us. I believe people would focus more on fulfilling those needs for others, than simply try to get power and prestige and the greatest possible number of material possessions for themselves.

We Unificationists are now setting up a new tradition for future generations. The Principle clarifies so many of life's mysteries. True Parents teach us about our God and have instilled within us the desire to begin the new world. They have encouraged us to attempt to live totally for God, and at the same time try to fulfill our human responsibility. Putting this kind of conviction into action is challenging, but is certainly a part of walking the road to perfection. We should not worry about how many more miles we individually have to walk; that simply does not matter. As we attune our spiritual senses, we receive confirmation that we are coming closer to God because we often meet Him in everyday situations.

Let us consider a fundamental fact of life: every human being has certain necessities. According to the American psychologist Abraham H. Maslow there are five basic needs common to all people. Viewed in terms of a pyramid, the first need would form the foundation as it is most fundamental. Every human being has certain (1) physiological needs—air, food, water, shelter, and clothing. After fulfilling those needs, people try to fulfill their need for (2) safety. The three top levels are: the need for (3) love, the need for (4) self-esteem, and at the top of the pyramid, the need for (5) self-realization.

Physiological Needs

The physiological and safety needs concern requirements of the physical body, while love, self-esteem, and self-realization are vital to the spirit. If each need was taken care of, we would feel like full-functioning human beings. Let us face another fact: the desire to be a good human being is inherent to all of us.

We may not all breathe clean and healthy air, drink the purest water, eat meals fit for royalty, dress in silks and brocades, or live in palaces, but the need for air, water, food, clothing, and shelter is typical to every human being. These are the needs easiest to control, relatively speaking. There are numerous rags-to-riches stories dotting the history of every country. Sometimes hard work is a factor, sometimes perseverance, and sometimes even good fortune helps to change a person's status and move upward on the social ladder. Many people are satisfied with life as it is, either because they don't know any other life, or have no desire to create one. If they can fulfill these most essential needs, they go on living—or at least existing—in the same rut. Many people, however, are *not* satisfied with their present lifestyle, and instead want to climb a corporate or other type of "ladder" that currently separates them from a higher standard of living. People who want to breathe better air move to a place in the country. People who want to drink healthy water buy bottled water. Those who want to live a cut above others eat gourmet foods and wear designer clothing. Many people desire a beautiful house with all the trimmings, several cars, and enough money to go on vacation to the place of their choice.

However mundane or spectacular our goals, each of us must make effort to fulfill these basic physiological needs. God gives us the gifts necessary, but it is our responsibility to "do." We have been endowed with the brains to learn how to plant crops, the muscles to cultivate and dig them out, and the inspiration to eat them. If it so happens that we have too much produce for our own use, we have the ability to reason and find a solution—to sell them and receive money for our labor. With the money we earn, we can buy both the necessities and niceties of life. God and man work together in this venture, and one is very dependent upon the other.

The cycle of what we demand and then supply for ourselves is perpetual. When there is a breakdown for whatever reason, we may suffer physically, but by expending some effort, we will find ourselves back on the right track. Sometimes people mix up these needs with the internal needs, which are not supplanted quite so easily. Once their bank role becomes a bit bigger and the luxuries become a bit more affordable, they still hunger for something—something that *will* fill the void that exists in their hearts.

The Need for Safety

Safety, or security, is also important to people. There is a broad spectrum of safety needs—from a seat belt, job security, to life and health insurance, etc. People are increasingly aware of how unsafe and fearful this world is, therefore the need for personal safety has become quite fixed in their minds as a must to attain.

Crime is rampant in societies throughout the globe. No nation, no society is immune. Assassinations of heads of state and diplomats happen at random. People in every strata of society are vulnerable. Terrorism is on the increase and the brutal tactics of airport and even *airplane* bombings make front page headlines. Hostage-taking, crimes of passion, and crimes of violence are becoming more frequent. People who live in unsafe neighborhoods and cities triple lock their doors and in some cases, even their windows. Europe and the Middle East are considered unsafe vacation spots. Airline safety is suspect, and thousands die each year on the highways. Crime prevention measures such as neighborhood watch and block-parent associations are set up by people in the hope that this will also afford them some sense of security. People are on the lookout for signs that indicate a potential for world peace. They long for a calming influence to blanket this world. While people have always been scared to die, nowadays many are just as afraid to *live!*

Job security is a major aspect of this second need. A person first seeks a job that affords him an adequate salary, but once employed and given a raise, he naturally feels more secure. The employee can buy more and has more "insurance" in a number of ways. If the employee is given benefits such as health and life insurance, a dental policy, or even a company car, he has an even bigger "safety net" and greater incentive. Overtime pay and financial bonuses every few months are also great stimuli.' All of these things serve to motivate the worker to do more and better work, and to ease any potential for tension associated with his job security.

Parents should provide safety for their children. For example, when driving somewhere with a child, they should make it safe for him by strapping him in an infant seat, and when he is older, teaching him to use a seat belt. When a parent knows his child is safe, he will also feel more secure and hence drive with greater peace of mind.

Although family security is not the easiest need to ensure, many people have stopped working at their marriages and simply obtained a divorce. Nevertheless, this need is a crucial one. Each family member suffers certain anxieties and fears due to family breakups. Single parents do not feel secure

raising a child alone, and the estranged parent feels uncertain about how to treat the child and often defensive about the method he uses during his visitation rights. The shelter of home life is shattered through such upheaval, which also puts stress upon one's personal security.

We are responsible to do everything possible to fulfill our safety requirements and not take unnecessary chances. We do that by living according to the laws of God—both the physical and the spiritual. If it is twenty degrees below zero, we know enough to put on warm clothing before going outside. It is an instinctive feeling to protect our life and not intentionally inflict harm.

Our safety needs are quite broad in scope. For instance, we safeguard good health by eating well, sleeping well, and exercising. We should pay attention to any warning signs given by our body, and visit a physician or dentist when it becomes necessary. Doing these things provides our body with a defense network to shield itself against disease or breakdown. A sound physical body also promotes a better chance for mind-body unity, thus giving our spirit a much better foundation to function well.

We have responsibility to create a substantial safety network for ourselves and for others whose lives we touch. For example, driving defensively and even refraining from driving while intoxicated could be included in the "safety" and precautionary measures we take. All of us have some chance to defend our fatherland and take seriously our responsibility for the land in which we live. By keeping laws and respecting law enforcement officers, we lend a natural support to strengthening the moral fiber of our society. Furthermore, we can be active in supporting school administrators through parent-teacher groups, as well as participate in neighborhood and community services. Even by cooperating and assisting these agencies, we are afforded certain protection.

The safety factor is more difficult to control than our physiological requirements. We have to deal much more with what other people will do. We cannot predict whether a drunk driver will be out on the same stretch of road we are, or whether a mental patient might escape, decide to go on a shooting spree, and we just happen to get caught in the cross fire. We are never sure of life *or* death, but some safety measures we take can lessen certain anxieties that might otherwise consume us.

Human beings *can* find refuge in God, but there are many who do not realize that or find it hard to believe in Him, and go through life hounded by the fear of danger and constantly feel that their life is in jeopardy.

The Need for Love

Love. It is a vital and irreplaceable need, but invisible and as elusive as the butterfly. We chase after it with good intention, but don't know how to catch it.

What is real love? And what do you *think* is real? Do you know for sure that you are loved, or do you feel unloved and rejected? You *are* loved by God and no doubt many others, but your very "human" heart might have a hard time believing that. You don't always perceive the affection other people feel for you. Perhaps they are clumsy about expressing it. Then again, perhaps you misread the signals they send. You may tend to feel insecure about love—about both the quantity and the quality you receive. You may have plenty to eat, get enough sleep, have the right clothes for the climate you live in, feel secure in your house, have enough insurance, and even a sizable bank account, but is there any way to ensure how much you are loved? Love is a quantity that cannot be measured. It is not something that can be purchased. Nor can it be traded-in after it is worn out. Most people don't dispute the fact that we all *need* love. The problem is, who really knows how to get it.

The person who loves you may not be able to vocalize it in so many words, but may *be* loving, and just hope that you read between the lines of the words he or she does speak. He or she probably wants you to notice the glow of love from his or her eyes. Do you take the time to see the signals of love given by another person? If love is sent to us but we don't perceive it and then ignore, or worse yet *reject* it, that love is lost. If love is not used for its original purpose, in essence it is wasted. This is true with God's love. Unless we accept the love He bestows upon us, what good will that love do us?

Love is essential to human existence. Hermits who live on mountain tops and declare they no longer need the world still hunger for love, but perhaps they have hardened their hearts so much, they simply cannot express their desire, or even think about filling another person's wants. We need to be cradled in love; we need someone to adore us. There are no exceptions. Without love, any man, woman, or child becomes far too lonely. But just the same, any of us might feel ashamed of this need for love. We may feel as if we are a weak person because we have such a longing to be loved, and that makes us so vulnerable. We may feel self-pity and see no way to cope with our desolation and isolation. This in turn promotes fear that we might end up alone in five or ten years. The solitude of life in society creates tremendous malaise. Can we reach out and touch another,

or do we usually recoil because love makes us uneasy? Will the other person shrug off our touch of love? Will the other person like us or hate us? Can we actually become endearing to others? What will friends do if we really love them? What about our spouse? Will they supplant our own requirement for love? Is it possible to forget the fear and suspicion we may have felt for others, and simply allow love to come into our life? We wonder if someone will have compassion for us and love us by tolerating us even for our more difficult and unlovable qualities. We wonder whether *somebody* loves us in spite of our faults. Most people want to portray an attractive body *and* spirit to others, hoping that someone will take notice. We become loving people by giving, not by always being "on the take." A loving person is not so conscious of what he can get out of the deal, as how much he can give to it.

Love. It is a *big* little four letter word. It is one with a price tag, but it is also a necessity. You say the world is far too unloving—such a cold place? Yes, that's true. This people detests that people. And that tribe attacks the neighboring tribe. Where is love, you ask? If we all need it so badly, then where can we find it? It is in your heart, and in my heart, and in the heart of each person. Humanity lives in a real "paradise lost" because we don't know how to give out love, that precious commodity we all require. God's reservoir of love is by far the greatest in the universe. What we need to do is tap it and then accept the love He gives us, hoping we too can dispense enough so that the hearts of other people will also be filled.

The Need for Self-Esteem

Each of us requires self-esteem, yet cultivating respect for ourselves is one of life's biggest challenges. It is tough to discover just who you really are—and become convinced that you are a child of God, recognizing your capabilities and talents. But it is the bottom line of faith.

Someone who is depressed and thinks no one loves him, sees himself more as a sinner than a saint, and has a hard time nurturing proper self-esteem. Self-accusation takes center stage and self-respect gets pushed out of the ring. Sometimes we meet people who cannot stand themselves. They have no self-esteem, no self-love. Something must have started them on a downward spiral, and no one offered them the net of love to stop their fall before they reached hell. They think they are nothing, a nobody. At least that is what they have heard all their lives—from parents, teachers, peers,

and employers. They begin to believe it, and through their words and actions now go so far as to try convincing other people of this "fact." They have become afraid to take risks, because they are not sure how the consequences will affect the image that others have of them, or even the one they have of themselves.

Build up your self-respect! Capitalize on those unique qualities and talents that make you, *you*. No matter what your job, do your best by creatively using the knowledge you have acquired, yet be humble enough to listen to advice offered by others. Remember that your creativity can lead to a feeling of self-accomplishment; the need to be a co-creator with God is a strong one.

We tend to lose a certain amount of self-esteem when we make mistakes. We look down on ourselves based on our words and deeds. Conversely, if we perform acts of goodness which we know also please God, our self-respect soars. That is the moment we realize our potential as a child of God, and that in itself further motivates us. The grace of God is one of the most intangible but beautiful stimulators of the human spirit.

If you fail to supply your need for self-esteem, you will no doubt suffer problems. You need recognition; so do I. If people do not regard your talents and efforts very highly, you will feel little worth, and consequently, your performance on the job will also suffer. What problems do you contend with? What do you feel like every day? Depressed? Tired? Hopeless? Do you walk around aimlessly, not sure of your purpose or your goal? Feelings of hopelessness counteract self-esteem. In order to generate self-esteem, we have to overcome those points which presently hinder us from feeling self-worth. We need to look up to and see ourselves in the eyes of God. If this is something you have not yet been able to do, why not make up your mind to work on it. For instance, you might want to do something about improving your level of education. Perhaps you will want to go to night school, take correspondence courses, or enroll in a course to help you refresh certain skills or attain new ones. If doing this will boost your self-esteem and you are in the position to do something about it, then work to that end.

If you don't like your appearance, change it! If you don't feel you are a very loving person and you are tired of your personality, research how to love and then practice it. You have the power and the resources—but only *you* can set the wheels in motion. Regard yourself as someone valuable. Become proud of yourself and also start to love yourself. You will be surprised how others catch on and start to love and respect you, too!

The Need for Self-Realization

God created each of us with the potential to become His true child. To "realize" this is by far the greatest task any of us will undertake. It actually means perfecting our heart. Many people don't understand the need for self-actualization because they are unable to realize their need to acknowledge themselves and live as a child of God. Our present day world is in such a predicament. With the ever present threat of nuclear war, people are not sure whether they will still be alive tomorrow, or even if the world will survive the night. As children of God we need to work on self-expression, despite the peril we face at this time in history. Life in the physical world prepares us for life in the spirit world. We have a lot of work to do to get ready to breathe that new "oxygen" of love. We have to fight against numerous barriers of hatred and mistrust that are nearly impenetrable.

We may regard self-realization in a certain way, feeling that we can actualize our potential *only* if we do what we want to do. That is because society's norm dictates such "laws." People feel that their need for self-expression can only be consummated through the arts or by following the trail of personal desire. Yet God looks for every human being to embody a much different "realization." God knows your dreams; you don't even need to remind Him what they are. And I feel certain that He is waiting for the time when you can actualize them. We all have personal aspirations. If you feel blessed by artistic talent but don't paint, sculpt, or draw, etc. you produce nothing of yourself. Likewise, a musician will feel his full worth when he creates or plays music. You need to "realize" yourself, whatever your abilities or talents. But in the meantime, what God needs more than the gifts that stem from our creativity, is our offering of obedience. Therefore at least during this crucial time in history, it is best for us to view self-realization as working toward perfecting our heart. Whatever our mission at this time, we should challenge ourselves to do the best possible job. If we are creative within the confines of our work rather than simply a robot, then not only can our skills and our approach to work improve, but we as people will also blossom. That will bring satisfaction to God, and also to us.

Each one of us must accomplish our human potential as well as our divine potential. Each of us is given the commission to become a true child of God. Why push away this inevitable responsibility? Don't postpone it because you think you are too weak at this time. Get strong with the help of God; He is the one who should direct us, not vice versa.

Our Obligation

The key to bringing people to God or simply serving our spouse and children is to be instrumental in fulfilling these basic needs of life for them. A woman can create a beautiful home for her family so that each member feels happy, secure, and really "at home." Every man needs to be looked up to, no matter what job he performs. If his wife adores *him* not because of his looks or his job, but because of his noble character and because he is God's son, he will have greater self-esteem. That will give him more impetus to fulfill his mission, thereby allowing him to discover a certain aspect of self-realization. But a man must not forget that every woman needs to be loved, too. And both must turn their attention to their children. A child must not be coddled as much as respected and encouraged. Loved, yes, yet each child must also be encouraged to develop his own sense of self-worth. He needs to learn to adjust and cope with life so that when he becomes an adult, he will be much more productive and happy. To a great extent, a child's self-image depends upon his parents and what kind of reinforcement he is given. Parents would do well to urge their child to dabble in projects or hobbies that will help him actualize his talents, perhaps by helping with certain projects or chores, from cooking to carpentry. Parents should set an example. If a child has acquired distasteful behavior, his parents should examine their own attitudes and behavior. A parent who has self-esteem should show his child how to acquire the same. Children learn by example. If their parents mask their own low self-respect through a veil of conceit or arrogance, they will mimic their language, tone of voice, and actions. "True parenting" is surely a major obligation.

Each of us should work to satisfy all five of these basic needs of life for ourselves. Even if they seem difficult confront, rather than shy away from, them. This is the time to overcome, to fulfill the necessities required of a true son or daughter of God. Once you recognize yourself in that position, you can stand anywhere in human society as a more fulfilled human being. You will be able to do virtually anything, and you will be able to overcome your personal problems with much more ease.

My question is, what should our focus be now? Should we worry about creating beautiful music and art at this time in history? Although they are wonderful and uplifting, the first priority is survival. The same is true in starting a business. The desire for a high profit margin has to be shelved initially. It is the same in the "business" of living a life of faith. We have to worry about survival before we concentrate on gaining certain benefits from God that we feel will profit us.

In the figurative sense, the foundation of this world is cracking in

many places. We Unificationists are concerned with preventing a total destruction. This is not the moment when each and every one of us should seek artistic pursuits. Of course the arts *will* have to be restored, and even now some people must be involved in laying the groundwork, but if we are successful in saving the world and bringing it back to God, the time for creative expression will surely come for each of us. Now we need to survive, not just as individuals and families, but also as societies, nations, and as a world.

Behavior considered "normal" by society may be a little different from ours in the Unification movement. Yet if we would behave "normally," it would take thousands of years to restore the world. Satan is determined to break this world into pieces. God has called us to work with our True Parents and prevent that from happening. This is a time not necessarily to totally put away our need for self-realization, but rather a time to be unselfish and willing to make a sacrifice, an offering to God—even of our spouse, our children, our home, our dreams. Otherwise, what hope can God have that mankind will be restored?

In order to make ourselves good weapons in this war against Satan, we Unificationists still need to work on fulfilling our basic needs, just as people in society do. The difference is, that at least for the time being, we should forgo trying to acquire many of the luxuries of life. It is not that God does not want us to enjoy certain comforts; I firmly believe that He does want to see His children happy and fulfilled, but for the moment He needs us to work on reaching far greater goals.

Taking an "inventory" of your life can put things in a much better perspective for you. Make two columns on a piece of paper. In one column, write down which of your needs are fulfilled, and in the other column those which you still need to fulfill. Do the same for your spiritual needs, and then work on doing something about it. Remember that needs are not fulfilled solely by human responsibility. It is through the winning combination of man's responsibility coupled with the tremendous share God takes upon Himself to fulfill. For any real progress to be made, God and man *must* work together.

As we recognize the basic needs of life and something about how to fulfill them by tapping the reservoir of our God, let us also realize that He too has needs. Let us be the ones who reach out with our hands through time and space, and minister to Him. We have the same spiritual needs as God. The prescription can be dispensed at any time: Love Him. Praise Him. And help Him realize the perfect world He has longed for.