

The Value and Practice of Hoon Dok Hwe

by Adonia Hentrich

Hoon Dok Hwe (HDH) translates to "Gathering for Reading and Learning"

First I am going to share some perspective on what is the Word, and the value of it, and the value of the practice of it.

Then we will actually do some HDH.

At the end, I will wrap up with bringing together what the whole purpose of iHDH is, and tie it in to the purpose of our life.

From the Bible – "In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" Meaning the ideal and purpose of God for the Creation.

HDH is the practice that shows us the way.

I believe everyone desires to do good, to experience happiness, to find God in their life (whether or not they recognize God.) We all have an original mind that nudges us in that direction.

Unfortunately, this world is not the world of God's ideal, and none of us have ever experienced the fullness of what life SHOULD be like. We may have had a taste, glimpses, but as our daily reality? No.

So how can we work toward something that we don't even really know what it is?

We have to go to the source. We have to go to God and we have to go to the people that God embodied himself in. Jesus and True Parents.

"All that is true is necessarily centered on God. All things become true if and when we human beings lay the fundamental foundation upon which to bring forth order and good governance. Absent such a foundation, nothing is really true. God is the source of what is true; trueness is possible because God exists. When God departs, so does trueness. In that void, the origin of evil emerges. True results can only come from truth. In other words, the fulfillment of God's desire comes from the existence of the true God. Please understand that concepts such as truth and goodness are established in relation not to human beings, but to God." -Sun Myung Moon

Coming from this world, our thought patterns, our behavioral patterns, our concepts, they are all relative to the fallen world. Even what we know to be "good" or "right" is in relation to the world as we know it, not necessarily according to God.

So how do we adopt a new way of thinking and a new way of being? Simply WANTING to doesn't mean that we'll be able to.

Understanding is the first step. Then believing, then practicing, then experiencing the rewards and the confirmation of your belief. All of this comes with the support of the word.

I was planning this out, and then I realized that Alice had previously sent me the exact same thing in the words of Rick Warren:

“There is a logical order to building knowledge, perspective, conviction, skills, and character. You must start with a foundation of knowledge . . . On top of knowledge of the Word, you add perspective. The better you know God’s Word, the more you’ll begin to see life from God’s viewpoint. Conviction naturally grows out of perspective . . . An understanding of God’s purpose and plan changes your motivations. Conviction then gives you the motivation to maintain spiritual habits. Eventually, through repetition, these habits become skills. . . . When you put knowledge of the Word, perspective, conviction, and the corresponding skills together, the resulting product is character! First you know it; then you understand it; then you believe it with your whole heart; then you do it. The result of these four is character” (Warren, 1995:361—362).

Five Factors: “ I mentioned earlier that I believe there are five measurements of spiritual growth: knowledge, perspective, conviction, skills, and character. These five levels of learning are the building blocks of spiritual maturity” (Warren, 1995:350). “Knowledge is learning what God has said and done. Perspective is understanding why God said it or did it. It answers the “why” question of life” (Warren, 1995:352). Knowing what to do (knowledge), why to do it (perspective), and how to do it (skill) is all worthless if you don’t have the conviction to motivate you to do it” (Warren, 1995:355)!

True Father also said this in a beautiful way:

“God values life, because He is its root. God values the Word. Also, God values action and love. When a person recognizes Him as the root of his or her existence and speaks His Word, God loves seeing that Word bear fruit as He has spoken it. Once that Word is spoken, it bears fruit. Then God does not leave the fruit of that Word alone, but continues to love it. In this way, God speaks the Word, a person puts it into action, and through action that person emerges as the embodiment of the Word. Then it is for God to develop that person into the embodiment of love.”

This starts with just doing it. Exposure to HDH, hearing it. Every day. Because the world is exposing us to all sorts of stuff every day, from all different directions. It’s really hard to maintain a heart that’s centered on God, and a lifestyle centered on God, when our habits are built on our experiences in a fallen world.

So doing HDH daily is creating an environment, an atmosphere in our hearts. As it becomes a part of our life, we will find that we will start to act and react from that place. It’s one thing to pray for God’s perspective on a big decision you have to make. And that is good. But the reality is that as we are living our life, every moment we are making decisions and taking actions – often unconsciously. And Dr. Hentrich gave a message about spiritual posturing last year about how everything we do, every single thing we do or say, either relates more with evil (or self-centeredness) or more with good.

So it’s one thing to try to go to God when we have a decision to make, but what about all the other small moments in our life? The ones we don’t even realize coming and going?

It’s the daily practice of HDH that creates the environment that makes it possible. By being immersed in God’s word.

Whatever we have give and take with has a huge impact on our spirit. When Mike bought some Tesla stock a long time ago, I started to notice any Teslas on the road. When I got an expensive haircut at a nice salon and was thinking about my hair a lot, and how it looked, I started to notice other people’s hairstyles, and if there were highlights, and how long had it been since it was cut.

I love gardening, so when it's warm out and things are growing, when we are driving around, I'm always looking at people's lawns and gardens and landscaping. Mike is much more into home improvements and design, so that's what he's noticing when we are driving around – the materials houses are built with, the colors, if the foundations are good or not. There's been a few times when we're driving together, and I will love a house, and Mike hates it. Because we are each looking through our own lens (I'm loving the garden, and Mike thinks the design of the house is ugly.) When I am reading a lot of political articles online, I start to see people through a political lens – definitely not a God-centered lens.

But what we are having give and take with, and what we are surrounding ourselves with, affects how we see others and the world, and how we respond and interact with it. So daily HDH helps us to see not through our own viewpoint, but through God's lens.

From Nowen (Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit):

"As long as our hearts and minds are filled with words of our own making, there is no space for the Word to enter deeply into our hearts and bear fruit. In and through silence the Word of God descends from the mind into the heart, where we can ruminate on it, masticate it, digest it, and let it become flesh and blood in us. This is the meaning of meditation. Without silence the Word cannot become our inner guide; without meditation it cannot build its home in our hearts and speak from there. (P. xxv)

Focusing on sacred texts is also a way to help us deal with distractions, allowing us to sink into prayer and contemplation.

Nowen continued:

"The words spoken with your lips or silently in your heart will become increasingly attractive to you, and soon you will find them much more important than the many "oughts, musts, and have to's" that try to slip into your consciousness and create havoc there. Words that come from God have the power to transform your inner life and create there a home where God gladly dwells." (Pp 27-28).

From Sun Myung Moon: "The critical issue is to establish the tradition that brings us into oneness with the Word. You should not be separate from the Word. You should be people who cultivate yourselves based on the Word and move forward based on the Word. You have to establish a tradition based on the Word by taking it as the absolute standard. For this, you need to be tuned to my mind and heart as it was when I introduced the Word. You study the Word so that you can believe in the Word, yet your standard of understanding is not yet perfect. There is a time-honored standard in background to the Word, and you have to meet that standard. For this, you need to establish a tradition of deeply penetrating the Word." (21-327, 1969.01.01) (Cheon Seong Gyeong. Book 2, Chapter 5: #19, pg 255)

Words from Sun Myung Moon on daily reading:

"You eat everyday and the food still tastes good. Likewise, you can eat spiritual food that connects you to the truth every day, and it will still taste good. I am saying that words of life are satisfying, even if you hear them every day. People who enjoy listening to the words of the Divine Principle until the day they will die will certainly not go to hell. You may think, 'I already know all these things!' but you know them only in your head, which has nothing to do with the realm of heart. The more you listen to these words,

the more Heaven's realm of life will come and help you.”

HDK Should be inspiring, interesting, and "fun" - not a drudgery or dull. Different people relate to different approaches - You can participate in HDH through audio (Godible), the written word, or watching a video. There are also so many resources that can be utilized, such as can be found on www.tparents.org

BREAK for snack

As part of practice, I would like us to go around, each read a paragraph, and then paraphrase it, or share something that you feel relates to what you read. – read from Twelve Talks, The *Three Stages of Judgement*.

Share at the end:

Why read True Parents’ words specifically? They have an understanding of God’s *heart* that you just can’t find anywhere else. No one else talks about God’s heart.

“No one has known how God has suffered in His heart. Now, through God’s appearances in history through the revelations I received in my profound mission – and which I have shared with you – you do know. Without this, you would never have known. This is a remarkable fact. Even Jesus did not fully know this, and even if he had, he could not have spoken about what was in his heart. No religious leader has known the hidden secrets of the universe. I have come so that the secrets of the universe could be revealed in the course of human history, before the world, for the first time.”

CSG. 1st Ed. p.141 (1991.2.17)

But when we start to delve into the heart of God, we start to see others, and ourselves, and the value of our life and what we do with our life, in an entirely different way.

When we can have the experience of getting to God’s heart, we have experiences that go beyond just understanding. We get to the point of transformation/being reborn/made new. These experiences can change the trajectory of our life.

“Until now we have called upon God based only on a concept. We have referred to God as our subject partner only in a religious sense. Yet God is the subject partner of our very existence. Furthermore, He is the subject partner of our daily life and the subject partner of our philosophy of life. However, no matter how deep and wide our philosophy and view of Him as our subject partner may be, if we cannot explain and experience God in daily life, emotionally and practically, what good is it? If there are people whose philosophy of life enables them to experience the value of God as their subject partner in daily life and to be so united with God that they would not exchange Him for the world, they must be the people for whom God is seeking.” Sun Myung Moon

From True Father’s prayer:

“We earnestly hope and desire that you will not let us become people who know heaven by having received the word;
rather, please let us become people who know heaven through our hearts.
Please guide us to not become people
Who seek to be saved through the word,
But rather people who are saved in the presence of our Father through our hearts and can sing songs of life.
Then, we earnestly hope and desire, Father, that you will allow us to become people who are able to first see
How much you have worked and suffered, and who are able to bow down our heads and comfort you.
If we have a goal in life, please let us pursue that goal of life through our hearts;
And if we must have content in our daily lives,
We earnestly hope and desire, father,
That you will let the content of our daily lives be your heart alone.
Since many people have come before you, Father,
Please let them find on their own,
for whom they are staying here,
For what they are working,
And to what place they are heading.
If there were a person who could be recognized by your saying,
‘You are a person who will stay with my heart forever,’
We know that there could be no one happier than that person.”

Good food for thought for how to go past just “The Word”:

“The basic point is that awareness precedes knowledge, not the other way around. If we are cold, we feel cold before we know we are cold. Likewise, since God exists, we should be able to feel His existence in our very cells. Achieving that awareness is what matters. The issue is how we achieve that awareness, the ability to experience these things.

We should not perceive the existence of God only vaguely and conceptually. It is impossible to understand the existence of God through logic alone. This is because God’s existence, while within the realm of logic, also reaches beyond logic. Can a religious belief in which we know God only through logic guide our lives? Can such a belief perfect us as substantial beings of eternal life? There are many problems with that idea. With only that foundation, how can we expect to stand before God, our true Lord? Our coming to God has been the hope of humankind and also God’s providential objective throughout history.” Sun Myung Moon

To summarize,

HDH, done consistently, gives us Understanding, Perspective, and Conviction. This leads to Practice and Experience and more Conviction. This is a cycle that leads us deeper and deeper to the heart of God.

When the heart of God becomes a reality to us, we become a different person. The purpose of reading is not just for reading, not just for practice, not just for tradition. It’s actually to take us past all of that, to lead us into a relationship of love with God and people and ourselves.