

The Power of the Spirit -- Part I

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February 1983



In your prayer from now on you can command the spirit world in the name of True Parents, and in the name of the Day of the Victory of Heaven. You can insist that your ancestors in the spirit world must come down to cooperate with their descendants and bring them into salvation. They are supposed to obey, and if they do not you can warn them that they are in trouble. You can give a command like this because you are the direct heirs of the True Adam. Spirit world, including the angels, is in the servant position; the sons of Adam have the authority to command those in the spirit world and they must obey you. Even though they lived 1,000 years ago and are your elders many times over, those in the spirit world will listen to you." -- Father

Are you interested in the spirit world? Don't you think sometimes that if you could go there once and see it that an immense new universe would open up to you and completely change your perspective? Do you sometimes desire to know about the spirit world so intensely that you wish you could die briefly to see it, and then come back? Do you have this kind of curiosity? If you have this curiosity then when I say something about this, seek out what is behind it. Try to see what is behind my power. Don't you really want to penetrate through the wall of this physical plane and see the world beyond with your own eyes? Once you see for yourself you would be in a position to know if what I say is true or not. Do you think you already know about spirit world? Actually, you do not yet know for sure. You do not completely understand what you have been hearing." -- Father

I'd like to talk about active spirituality: directing, using, challenging, and offering ourselves. Many times, we think of the spiritual life as one of yielding: praying and surrendering, waiting for the spirit to move us and show us where to go and what to do. This is, of course, a very real part of the spiritual life. However, knowing the Divine Principle in this era, we're being challenged beyond passivity to actually direct the spiritual world ourselves. Father has been saying this all along. But I think that we westerners have tended to pass his words off because we have not understood them.

Last time we talked about getting rid of all the junk. Now, we're filled with powerful creative energy. How do we use it? How do we direct it; how do we multiply goodness through it? First, as a foundation, I'd like to share some of my own life because I feel that things have happened throughout my life in the church to lead me to be able to consider this.

Becoming a Charismatic Christian

I was raised a Mennonite which is very fundamentalist. Our lifestyle had a lot of goodness in it. You couldn't be too bad as long as you remained within the structure where you had to live a pretty strict life. I was happy as a child and as a Christian. I felt I was always a Christian. I didn't have a conversion experience at a specific time. Sometimes I felt that as a lack. But how do you have a conversion if you felt you were Christian all your life?

When I went to college, I did have an experience which was very much a conversion, not to Christianity, but to a more powerful Christianity. I became involved in a charismatic movement. At a specific point I began to manifest certain charismatic gifts: speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy and that kind of spiritual experience. I was part of a group which was carefully taught. We weren't opened up to just anything, but to a whole new world of spiritual power. It was extremely exciting and energy-producing, positive and powerful. I realized, "God has so much to give us that we don't even tap!" At that time, I would spend much time in prayer meetings and other activities and yet I got the best grades ever. Everything was effortless because there was so much spiritual help. That occurred about four years before I joined the Church.

Toward the end of the time, I was a charismatic, however, I reached a plateau. A spurt of exciting spiritual growth is often followed by a plateau, a point at which things settle down. Often, it's frustrating when you reach a plateau because you want to keep on going and going, but you don't know where to get more energy. At that time, I didn't feel that I had gone down, but flattened out. But still I wanted more. However, that's the point at which I met the sisters who taught me the Principle. And then I joined the Unification Church.

From God's Child to God's Co-worker

When I heard the Principle, it impressed me as a powerful truth. But when it came to the lifestyle, I felt "What is this?" It was hard for me to unite with the concept of indemnity, especially indemnity conditions. It seemed like all the focus was on the negative and the suffering. I felt like shouting: "We've got to be victorious people! Let's get out of this suffering!" because it wasn't in my previous experience, and I had a hard time to identify with it. I had to find an answer to that conflict. Why did people in the Unification Church struggle so much? Why was there suffering? Why did we have to pay indemnity? Why couldn't we have a "spirit-controlled" life where God's spirit would guide us? Instead, we seemed to be bogged down by Satan. I felt that I used to live free of Satan, and all of a sudden, I had to consistently guard against him. I wondered, "Is this really a higher life?" It was a real question. Most of the members weren't too sympathetic. I think they felt like: "She has to learn."

My answer came in the realization that we were no longer children or in a child's position to God, but that we were coworkers with Him. Therefore, we had to grow up and put aside blissful existence as God's child and share the struggles with Him as well as the responsibilities. We had reached a new era -- a time to cultivate new soil, not just continue to work the smooth, old soil. The indemnity that Jesus and the early Christians had paid throughout 2,000 years of Christianity was no longer valid. We had moved to a new stage where there wasn't much indemnity foundation. We had to make it.

"One floor up"

Let me use an illustration. Think of an apartment house; you are on the first floor, and you grow until you hit the ceiling. There on the ceiling looking down at those beneath, you feel like you've grown, developed and matured. In order to get to the next stage, you have to go out the door and climb upstairs to get to the next floor. What happens on the next level is that you start on the floor again. You have to make that new foundation, starting at the bottom but on a higher level. I felt here was my answer to the life in the Unification Church: we were starting on the floor of the next level and although we were higher, it didn't necessarily feel higher because we were starting at the bottom. During these years God taught me many things that helped me deal with this difficult life of faith.

Recently, I was studying Martin Luther as a part of preparing for the children's Sunday School. As I reviewed Martin Luther's ideas, his theology and the Protestant Reformation, I thought, "Truly, I'm a product of Protestantism." As a Mennonite and as a charismatic, I was part of the Radical Reformation, characterized by the elimination of rituals. The Reformation represented individual responsibility to God, the importance of faith before works, and freedom in the spirit. Protestantism was the reform of Catholicism and the evolution of Christianity into the Abel kind of thinking. I realized how much

Protestantism has affected the thinking and spirituality of the west, particularly in America.

Now that we are climbing to the next level to start at the floor again, we must discard this desire to have a relationship with God without working for it. We must earn it. I want to mention a couple of things about spiritual discipline.

Praying for the Messiah

When Hugh and I were in Korea for the Blessing, Father had a number of people give us testimonies. One was a spiritualist lady named Miss Yoon. I don't know where she is now, she might still be working with us. She was certainly a person who recognized Father, his work and the Divine Principle. I don't think she was a member at that point, but she definitely testified to the church.

She came and gave us her testimony. She told us how she had received a lot of the Divine Principle from the spirit world, and she knew that the messiah was on earth. She was praying to find him. She prayed for 3,000 days to find the messiah. She went to the mountains and prayed for 3,000 days. Are you figuring out how long that is? That's nine years, to pray on a mountain. If anybody in America went to the mountains to pray for nine years to discover the whereabouts of the messiah, we all know he'd end up in some mental hospital! In Korea, she gained 20,000 followers during that time.

You can see the difference in the kind of spiritual discipline, the kind of heart the Koreans and Orientals in general have. We westerners don't think like that, and it was hard to me to imagine how anybody could sit in the mountains and pray for nine years. It would be the most difficult thing in the world for me to do.

Disciplined Spirituality

I feel one of the things we have to learn in the Church and one of the things the Orientals have to offer us is this disciplined spirituality. It's creative, obedient and very disciplined. During the first 21 year course, certain restoration took place which represented the Old Testament Age. Our first experiences in the Church have been legalistic, hierarchical, very much the master-servant kind of obedience. I know it's hard for all of us, especially here in the western world. But the second 21-year course is the restoration of the New Testament, a new level which we will live differently.

Directing the Spirit World

Recently I heard that we have to teach the saints in the spirit world. I was surprised because I thought the saints already knew the Principle and should lead us. However, they are in the position of becoming the spiritual children to those who know Principle. There are specific methods of claiming saints as our spiritual children, teaching them, and doing conditions for them so that they can ultimately help on the earth plane. I had always wondered why these people didn't help us. Then I realized that actually they can't; they aren't free to. They don't yet understand. They may have some awareness, but only when they are taught specifically and adopted as spiritual children, then they can be followers.

Also, Father teaches that we have dominion over the angelic world, and this is something that is coming into our awareness, especially since we are many more •Jessed couples. We actually have dominion over the angelic world and thus, after the Blessing, we can direct the angelic kingdom and not just wait for it to use us. Actually, the angelic kingdom is often frustrated because angels want to serve us, but can't unless we command them. These are new thoughts for me. I realized that my attitude and understanding of the spirit world was limited and still is. I often waited to be guided or led rather than taking a subject position over the angelic world.

Father has taught us these things all along, but sometimes we have to hear them spelled out several times because they do not naturally resonate within our western hearts. I really believe we can live extremely powerful lives and can multiply the goodness within us hundreds of times over if only we can learn how.