
Overcoming Personal Problems

You can be spiritually attacked only if you create a base or condition for it. If you have an evil thought, you must have laid a base. Any number of things can trigger our memory. Many things—the good and the not so good—can suddenly fill our mind. If we could completely dispose of the bad memories, the basis for Satan's attack would disappear.

Although we are forgiven by God, it is often hard to forgive ourselves and we continue to wallow in the thick of our personal problems. We must take strides to restore our past by dealing with our personal problems and deflecting Satan's attack. If you think only of good things, no assault is possible because you reject Satan's invasion.

You have to activate the forces which can expel that evil still lingering within you. One way to do this is to fill your storehouse with prayer power. During a moment you feel as though you might falter, draw upon that capacity and use it to fend off Satan, giving God the chance to intervene. If you are too weak and have no prayer reserve, Satan may find you to be a real pushover. But without spiritual sensitivity which can be gained through prayer, you either may not recognize the face of Satan, or might fail to see him encroaching. That in itself is a problem, but you can't put up a shield you don't have.

The Bible explains that as the Kingdom of Heaven is being built, a new gospel will be revealed and those who stand with God will be called by a new name. Yet if you are so connected with the past, Satan can gain power and he may claim ground within you that now rightfully belongs to God. Are you intent on coming closer to God and inviting His presence in your life? If so, you have to be serious and do everything possible to purify yourself and discard your spiritual "junk."

You are faced with many of your negative points every day. Recognizing them is one thing, but then what should be your next move? Why not make a list of them and then work on overcoming them step-by-step? Be careful not to fall into a trap, trying to become perfect overnight. It just won't happen. If you try overcoming every one of them simultaneously, you will be unable to accomplish much of anything, and perhaps will even give up altogether.

Take the worst point first and for three or four months, dedicate yourself to conquering it. Do a check on yourself every so often. But make sure that after those three or four months, you *have* overcome it. Put all your effort into sincerely making a condition to eliminate that bad habit or character trait, and once you have become successful, tackle the next one.

The easiest way to see your more desirable qualities is to acquaint yourself with holy people. They become like a mirror and you are able to see yourself in their reflection. Measure against, but don't compare yourself with them and their standard. See the positive characteristics they exhibit and then discover your own, and realize that they are uniquely yours. God did not make even two of us with the same characteristics. If you try to equate your spiritual growth or personal development with another person's, you run the risk of being disappointed and disheartened. Each one of us has a different course to walk and even a different cross to bear. Yours may not resemble your neighbor's. Don't try to correlate every similarity or difference. Just take your own growth one step at a time, and even if you have to do it slowly, become triumphant over your personal problems.

It is a waste of time to worry about yourself. Although your problems are real, compared to the problems existing in the world, they are small. Think of what God and True Parents must contend with in restoring this world. If you allow your problems to completely dominate you, you will not be totally free. Think bigger—expand that vision of yours. Believe that you have greater things to do. We all have problems or stumbling blocks. But unless you guard against yours from becoming insurmountable, you will lose precious time.

Many people hide a great deal of themselves and consequently never feel free enough to display their true sentiments to anyone. Become free enough to reveal even your pent-up emotions and talk honestly with another person about how you really feel. Why let indignation or vindictiveness accumulate inside? If you feel like crying, cry. If you feel like laughing, laugh. If you want to communicate what you feel in your heart, do that. When you exercise that right, you will experience a great liberation. But to come to that point is a tremendous challenge; it is part of the process of mastering self honesty and conquering personal problems. But through a victory, we can better fulfill our potential of becoming a true man or woman. Developing a strong prayer life and a longing to come close to God will be of greatest help in reaching that goal.

But the further you go away from God, the less spiritual you become, and the less likely you are to express yourself. You may tend to become more coarse and endeavor to cover your emotions with gruffness and rough words. But sometimes to say what you really feel brings tremendous relief and liberation. To develop and evolve into a free personality is a process

which takes both time and patience. Such a free-spirited individual does not really care what people think about him. Rather, he is concerned about what *God* thinks, and focuses on what he can do for God and humanity. And such a person can have great impact upon society.

Personal problems can only be solved by leaving your own realm and thinking on a higher level. When you concern yourself with the rest of the world, the seriousness of your personal problems will fade. Don't worry about yourself, even when you make mistakes. Although we may resist admitting it, *all* of us make mistakes. The point is learning from them and not allowing them to consume you. Try to see through the eyes of God and surrender your heart for the universal purpose.

It is important to analyze ourselves and discover the obstacles in our path. What is it that prevents us from feeling God? We have to make a real effort to break through and not allow our feelings to solidify into resentment. We should not admit defeat but rather exhaust every possibility to defeat the enemy "self." We cannot simply resign ourselves by saying, "Oh, I tried so many times. I just don't know how to do it. I, for one, *cannot* do it. Why try anymore?" Giving up is not the answer. God lives for *all* of humanity. And even though we have personal problems, He can work through each of us—when and if we let Him.

One challenge is how to live our lives for the billions of people that constitute humanity. We should do our best to connect our work with the worldwide mission, and our personal or group perspective with the viewpoint of God as He surveys the history of this world. He tries to create a beautiful future for all of us, but if we become so encumbered by our personal plight and cannot successfully extricate ourselves from those thoughts, how can we help the nation or the world?

If you look at your peers with the eyes of God, you will accept and love each one—their beautiful qualities and even those which are not so beautiful. But doing so presents a big problem: how to take out our own self-oriented eyes and replace them with God's. We are imperfect human beings, consumed with many problems and surrounded by our own spiritual barricades. By our thoughts and feelings and by the way we have lived

our lives thus far, we created certain walls which seem quite thick and impenetrable. Perhaps we may try to lay the blame on others, but such allegations are unfounded, and just accusing others will not make our problems vanish.

You have to make a conscious step forward. Get out of your mousehole! Forgive yourself totally—for your past mistakes, problems, and insensitivities. Bring them to God through True Parents. Lay down those heavy burdens and then forget them. Once you no longer feel quite so insecure you *can* go forward, then gently but surely, you can dismantle the walls that block you from spiritual freedom.

Things from your past may sneak up on you and continue to taunt you. Create a distance between yourself and such experiences. They are over and are best forgotten. The greater the distance you put between yourself and them, the less they will bother you.

We have many obstacles inside ourselves such as shame and guilt. It is difficult for many of us to pray openly and freely in front of others. Our many complexes discourage us from revealing our hearts totally. And therefore we hide our true feelings. There are so many spiritual frailties that have become serious problems for us; they were introduced by Satan. We have inherited the base of sin and learned far too well from the one who acts as our surrogate parent. We have done little about freeing ourselves from the torture, and from the prison in which we live mentally and spiritually. We have to make efforts to break out of that prison and be ourselves, and to win our emancipation from spiritual slavery. We have to understand God and His volition, and do everything possible to unite with Him and accomplish that will. We can be unshackled from Satan's chains by doing the will of God. And once we deal with our personal problems and begin to accept ourselves, we will finally be candid with ourselves and ultimately with one another. We will then feel free enough to express what we feel and think about God, the world, and even each other. And that is when we will be more complete and fulfilled human beings.

If you are deluged with so many personal problems that you find you must use all your energy to overcome them, how can you find the time to work for God? The best way to overcome personal problems is to work

for the whole. Become public-minded. If you have personal problems and keep dwelling on them, you will attract more and more self-centered spirits and those which are narrow-minded. Eventually you may become so accustomed to that kind of life, you will revel in listening to those spiritual beings who always encourage you to feel sorry for yourself. But they may succeed in getting you to feel depressed. The standard and the ideal will then begin to seem too far away, and you may stop believing that you can ever reach your goal of perfection.

If your struggles become visible to yourself and others, rather than be annoyed or try to cover them up, be happy and assured that you are on the right road! If someone really struggles, don't feel he is just negative and then ignore him because he is no longer pleasant to be around. While at the moment, his actions or words may be negative, realize that he fights a tremendous battle. He is trying to gain freedom from Satan and come closer to God. There is a fierce struggle between these two Superpowers, and they often war in the battleground of our hearts and minds. Two forces—one pulls one way, and the other tugs from the opposite way. Something definitely goes on within us and this is bound to erupt and come to the surface sometimes. Yet it too is a part of the process in overcoming and changing ourselves. Be concerned if nothing moves within you or you seem to stagnate. If Satan no longer bothers you and yet you still don't feel God, take caution. Satan may think he already has too tight a grip on you for you to escape.

We each have to cope with our own reality—both spiritually and physically. And that reality is different for each one of us, depending upon the progress of our spiritual growth. Spiritual reality is not something that merely exists in the lofty realms of heaven, but what we confront right here on earth. Yet running away from confrontation will only postpone our salvation. My philosophy is to plunge in and get wet all at once.

You have to do things differently from the way you did them in the past, compensating for any deficiencies. Work on your problems, learning from others how they handled any that you are now struggling with. God definitely works on the horizontal level. Your primary connection to Him through prayer allows Him to reveal many things to you. But God also directs you through others. When you receive some instruction from Him, implement it. He is also very concerned that you overcome your problems, and tries to do everything possible to assist you.

Work on becoming stable in your relationship to God. You will not get far unless you overcome those things which block you from Him. Nothing comes by itself. And if you ignore your problems or just wish they would disappear, you won't successfully overcome anything. We have to put forth effort to restore past problems and mistakes. Father has found the key and shares it with us: restoration can be accomplished through indemnity. And by willingly paying indemnity, you can certainly overcome your personal problems.

If you do not succeed on a personal, family, or national level, jump into the universal level. How many times have we heard that we are our own worst enemy. It is so true! Far too many times our body overpowers our spirit. We tend to allow negativity to get the best of us, stay within our small world, and then find we have to expend tremendous amounts of energy to climb out. It takes guts to get away from yourself and go to a higher level, but it is the only way to ultimately find God. Involve yourself in more public-oriented work, and you will find that your personal problems dissolve.

Perhaps we reach the most serious impasse when we think about our problems and churn them over and over in our mind. We are afraid to take risks. If you stood on a ten-meter-high diving board and looked down, you could think—even believe—that were you to dive, you might drown. But if before you climb the ladder you gathered courage and confidence and believed—even knew—that you would not die but accomplish and even learn something, you would be the victor. Climb the ladder and stand on the board for a second, then jump—in faith. What can happen?—for one thing, you undoubtedly will hit the water. But rather than feel as if you will sink to the bottom, believe that the water will cushion and protect you. Attitude makes the difference. Don't be so overly cautious. If you make a leap and take a risk, spiritual beings will be watching and ready to catch you.

We can't be intimidated by life. To be really alive involves dealing with our personal problems and getting rid of our phobias. Even though they still exist, they *can* be mastered. The quickest way is by forgetting yourself and jumping headfirst into accepting more responsibility. For instance, make a higher goal in your work or offer to do more. Try it out even once. That may just be enough to convince you. Many times we become too cautious and self-centered. We just worry about ourselves and what other people think of us. But the best thing is to "drown" yourself and swim in unison with others. When you think highly of yourself, others cannot help but feel the same way.

Stabilize yourself physically and spiritually, and live your life of faith step-by-step. Some people have never had a real rebirth experience, a spiritual "spring cleaning." But that is exactly what happens once you break through and unload your personal problems before God. You open up all the veins and arteries so that your lifeblood can flow freely again. Now you are faced with obstructions and suffer one thrombosis after another. Many times you probably feel as though you need to walk on eggshells because you are afraid you may break at any minute. Flush out all that is satanic and ask God to perform a spiritual transfusion!

The world is as it is and no amount of prayer will change it overnight. You are as you are and no amount of prayer will change *you* overnight. This is not yet the ideal world. You are not yet the ideal "you." Yet humanity has to work to overcome the problems existing on the worldwide level. And you and I have to overcome our personal inadequacies. No matter how many inner casualties we may bear, we just *have* to be successful eventually.

Time and again we are confronted with problems and we must work on conquering situations over which we must be victorious. Yet each of us has inherited and learned habits and behaviors which are totally opposite from God's ideals. Perhaps we had a bad childhood or adolescence and therefore developed a certain disposition—resentment against men or women in general, or certain prejudices toward other races or nationalities. But in the eyes of God, *all* people are His children. Therefore, these personal sentiments we developed cannot be excused in front of God and His law. And they certainly do not help us in perfecting our hearts. Now, as in the past, Satan works with such fervor to destroy people, especially those whom he knows God has chosen.

So many things are invisible to us. We feel besieged by our own problems, yet when we look at the lives of others, it may seem that they breeze through life with relatively few problems. But that is just what it looks like on the surface; actually we don't know their inner agony and suffering. One way to help us combat our difficulties is to help others with theirs.

In my experience, the best way to overcome our personal problems is through confronting them head on. Forget about covering them up with jokes or diplomacy. Face reality, but ultimately prevail over it. There is only one Principle. We have only one God and one Messiah. They cannot adjust for us. Rather, we have to adapt to their standards. If we have accumulated bad manners and habits, we must work on changing them. If we have a wrong understanding of love or if our behavior is different from what God

expects, then we must transform those concepts. If it hurts, then it hurts. That too is part of the reality of coming home to God and becoming the child of the One True Parent.

Some people have such rigid concepts of life, of themselves, and of other people and they won't budge no matter what. That is already a limitation. Perhaps they think they need special handling—with silk gloves and a lighter touch. But all of us are treated by the same physician—God. The wounds of those people who feel they need special privileges may be different, but every other person is in need of healing just as much. Yet no matter what the circumstance, our loving general practitioner, God, will take care of prescribing the right medicine.

If you think you need a special God and a special Principle, or a different place to meet Him, you have to face the fact that God's law is the same for all humanity. Examine yourself. Are you too set in your ways? Shouldn't you try changing your concepts and your disposition? Capitulate! Declare total bankruptcy before God. In this matter, your intellect will not be of much help to you. To make a total surrender, relinquish all those concepts to which you have been clutching. Let them go even if you think that by yielding them you will lose everything. If you can do that, God will fill your soul with His love and you will even gain more self-confidence. But I don't think you can expect too much of a response if you insist on commanding God, stipulate the way He can talk to you, and further inform Him of the conditions under which you will be able to perceive His answer.

If you take responsibility for the good of humanity and pray that God solves the problems of the world first, or praise God and pray for your brothers and sisters, then you will find the liberation you yearn for, and your problems will begin to fade.

Many people have strong characters which can be used for God to great advantage. Yet when people use such a quality more as a self-protective device, then it will become an obstacle for them. It then ceases to be just a defense mechanism, but becomes a hindrance for personal spiritual growth. One thing I discovered very early is that triumph over problems takes total commitment and total involvement. But it brings about an absolute result. Anything done or offered halfway brings you nothing but a headache. You haven't met God. Nor have you met your goals. Furthermore, you probably feel guilty, depressed, and isolated. Yet I have found that these problems can be dissolved by declaring that total bankruptcy before God.

If your prayer life is stagnated in any way, bring even *that* problem before God. A partial confession is not effective. Either you lay your life on the line, or you keep it for yourself. Jesus said we should be hot or cold but

never lukewarm. Is either your commitment to God or your commitment to overcoming your personal problems suspended between God and Satan? Even though in the eyes of the world you may be somebody, your inability to totally surrender yourself or your problems, spiritually shoves you in a corner and neither God nor Satan can touch you.

You break through once you offer up everything to God. And He has a much easier time to work if He does not have to work in *spite* of you, but instead is invited to work *with* you. Once you afford Him that kind of freedom, you can become internally reformed, refurbished, and restored. But the old patterns and concepts—and in fact *all* the shelves in the storage compartments of both your mind and heart—must be reorganized. If the thoughts and feelings and problems from the past are allowed to stay within you and collect more dust, you will continue to keep your problems. There will be no room for the blessings God is trying to bestow upon you. Why become a spiritual packrat? Throw out those old concepts, beliefs, and limitations. Restock your shelves with God's ideas. Try it out, at least on a trial basis. You'll make a great discovery—it works!

Whether or not you evolve into a person of strong faith and commitment is up to you. God asks you to do certain things just as He asks everybody to fulfill certain responsibilities. Accept that which God asks of you. If past influence from your parents and peers, or even the kind of education you received contributes to the fact that you are spiritually and emotionally weaker than others, realize it but don't accept defeat. Get strong! God is definitely a loving Parent, but He is also strict and cannot bend His own rules and laws. The situation is black or white: you are either up or down. You either live for God or yourself.

If you had to fight in a war but were emotionally weak in your commitment to defend your nation, you would most likely get shot. But if you are strong, defend yourself, and learn how to survive, you will come out alive. It is the same thing in the war we have with our personal problems. And we all have to fight that war, but why should anyone be granted special privileges or be acknowledged as being weaker. Yes, we are all different and have our own talents and abilities, but if your capacity is not so large and if you are saturated with personal problems, why not do something about it? Make something of yourself—for God, for True Parents, for your mate, for your children, and the others you love. And love yourself enough that you also do it for yourself. Your problems are real and you cannot ignore them, but if you begin to act as though they are under control, you will begin to *believe* it and it will be true.

Everybody has to stand up and fight the enemy. If all of us were on the frontline in a battle to protect our town, each one would have to pitch in and help. If one of us became reluctant, the enemy probably would detect the weak link and could easily penetrate our line of defense. It is a matter of survival. In wartime, everybody has to put his life on the line to defend his land.

The question is not *if* you want to overcome, but *when*. There are many benefits we receive from the Blessing. We are filled with grace through working for God and being a disciple of the Messiah. It is up to each one of us when we will reap them.