

## Family Ethics and Order in Real Life

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July 8, 2016



### The Divine Principle from a Unification Thought perspective. The Second Blessing, part 5

We continue our examination of the Second Blessing as mentioned in Gen. 1:28:

*“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and **multiply**; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over ... every*

*living thing that moves on the earth.”*

Of this second blessing — “multiply” — the Divine Principle explains:

*“God’s second blessing was to be fulfilled by Adam and Eve after they had achieved individual perfection as object partners to God.... In order to construct the four position foundation in their family, Adam and Eve should have joined in loving oneness as husband and wife and raised children.... When God’s second blessing is fulfilled, this family or community also become a good object partner giving joy to God.”*

• *Exposition of the Divine Principle (EDP), p. 34*



Though the Divine Principle gives a single paragraph to the Second Blessing, there is a universe of understanding in that paragraph, as Father and Mother Moon have made clear in successive decades of speaking extensively about it. To wrap my head around all of that, I’ve found a great starting place in the Unification Thought chapters of Axiology and Ethics— they’re the ones which have helped me understand the 2nd Great Blessing more deeply. The following passage in the Theory of Ethics explains this direct connection:

*“Ethics is the norm of human behavior to be observed in the family by its members.... the norm for the family four position foundation. ...the norm for the perfection of the family, which is the second blessing.”*

• *New Essentials of Unification Thought, p. 283*

So let’s continue from where we left off last time, when we examined two of the three foundation points from the Divine Principle which are the basis of the Unification Thought Theory of Ethics.

Ethics hinges upon order within family

After the opening section, the Theory of Ethics explains the relationship between *Ethics and Order*. It clarifies the importance of *order* in the family. I have to admit that my first response to this notion of order wasn’t enthusiastic because, for me, “order” was associated with imposed restrictions and limitations. But Unification Thought explains that orderliness in family relationships is what allows true expressions of love to flow between family members.

Which is where the third foundation point from DP figures in: *three object purpose*. By seeing that each person in the four positions has three “object partners” it becomes clear: it means that — in the four-positions in a family — each one relates *in love* to (at least) three persons. And depending on their positions to each other — who is older, who is a peer, who is a junior — there are ethical ways of experiencing love between them. Specifically, the four positions and their three objects are:

- a grandparent and 1) his/her son or daughter, 2) their spouses, and 3) his/her grandchildren
- a husband and 1) his parents, 2) his wife, and 3) his sons/daughters

- a wife and 1) her parents, 2) her husband, and 3) her sons/daughters
- children and 1) their grandfather/grandmother, 2) their father, and 3) their mother

Recognizing this order is what guides the kind of love we experience and express to each person in our family. Though breaking it down conceptually like this makes it all seem a bit mechanical, when I reflect on the relationships I've experienced between myself and my extended family, the beauty of order becomes apparent emotionally, not just intellectually.

Here's the experience that really brought it home to me: The second time I visited my family in the Philippines, I had graduated from high school in New York City. There, I had learned to respect only those I chose to, those who had in some way *earned* my respect. Anyone else, I had no need to respect.

Practically then, it was if I had no need for them *at all*. But when I arrived in the Philippines, it happened that of 5 families of cousins, I was the 2nd eldest, and so my name was automatically fitted with the prefix "kuya" which is Filipino for "older brother". It didn't matter that I had long hair and had some non-traditional ideas from New York City: bottom line was that I was an "elder" in the family and so I *had* to be addressed respectfully.

They could disagree, disapprove, and even distrust me, but they still had to recognize and show respect to my position as their elder. So, while my initial intention was to be casually friendly to all my cousins, I found myself being respected and looked up to by all of them. This had the odd impact on me of making me more thoughtful, considerate and deliberate about the example I set for them.

I was nudged by their love into being more responsible for the position I occupied in our clan! They moved my heart, and as I responded, the give and take of respect and affection increased on both sides! So this "order" wasn't an inconvenient imposition, but rather an important framework for the proper (and safe) expression of genuine affection!

**Towards my elders** — my uncles, my aunts, and especially my grandmother — I tried practicing the charming custom of "*pagmamano*". It's a gesture of affection and respect that youngsters give to their elders.

My cousins did it when they entered any space where elders — their parents, uncles/aunts, or grandparents — were present, even if they were just passing by on their way to some other place. They would stop in front of the elder and say "*mano po*" (literally "your hand, please"), take the elder's outstretched hand in their own right hand, then bend down and touch their forehead to the back of their elder's hand.



In my two decades of life in New York City, I hardly remember seeing such a respectful gesture to an elder person. And yet there, it was all around me, part of the fabric of normal behavior in the clan. I was moved by something I didn't then understand. And so I tried it.

Little by little, it had a similar effect on me as being addressed respectfully (as "kuya") did: I gained a subtle but wondrous sense of my position in the clan, its underlying order. And I could thus begin experiencing strong affection in new and different ways.

I think that until that time, "love" meant mainly one thing to me: *romantic* relationship between a man and woman. But here, because of the structure of positions and the inherent observance of order, I was having more impactful experiences of other, different and strong kinds of love that can exist within a family. So it became clear that order and position — when based on true family love — were not at all restricting, but in fact opened the floodgates to a multi-dimensional world of emotional experience and *joy*.

The Divine Principle description of the second blessing mentions God's joy. But it doesn't mention that there's more to it: the joy of our loved ones and indeed even one's own joy... Though it's not mentioned, it's there too, and it can be deeply rewarding and delightful.

When I returned to America after that summer vacation in 1974, I was introduced to the Divine Principle. And six years later, when I studied martial arts (in the Unification Theological Seminary), all the gestures, words, and traditions of respect between teacher and student, and between elder and younger students, took me into an even wider space of experience. The importance of order, position, and their effect on

genuine affection were impressed even more firmly upon me.



*Grandmaster Seuk, Master Takahashi – 1984*

There's a certain subtle attitude of respectful affection that a student develops toward a benevolent teacher. And a subtle attitude of benevolent affection that a teacher develops towards their loyal students.

Once, when I was at a large student convention in Korea, my martial arts grandmaster was speaking with the president of the Korean student association. I was standing at my teacher's left side when his conversation partner commented "I don't think Gerry is your member. I think he's your disciple." My teacher and I glanced wordlessly at each other, but we smiled with uplifted hearts. Apparently, the order and position we silently observed in our relationship was nevertheless noticeable and recognized as genuinely more than

formal etiquette.



*My own students, Philippines – 1987*

On the opposite side of the experience, as a teacher myself, I have tried to observe order by emulating the benevolent heart of my teachers. And the reward is the respectful *loyalty* of not only my direct students, but of their students, even down through a few generations. It's a remarkable experience, and all of it serves to reinforce the importance of *order* within Ethics. Whereas I'd initially thought it rigid, formal and restrictive, when it has a basis in true heart, I've discovered it as instead fluid, vital and elevating.

It's true that in this discussion, I've focused mainly on the order between elders and younger ("vertical" relationships, as Unification Thought calls them). In the family, there is of course the relationship between siblings and spouses ("horizontal" relationships). But I felt that this realm of relationship between elder and younger needs more attention and appreciation nowadays. Besides, we will be getting into the other relationships as we continue looking into the Second Blessing.

For now, I very much look forward to more and more families understanding their positions in their own four-position, three-generation family, and emotionally honoring — with wise and deliberate intent — the inherent order in it. Through this, everyone can experience the joy of the different kinds of love that can flow between family members, guided by each one's true heart for the others.