

What the Blessing has meant to me: Shock, challenge, struggle, joy, growth, love

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1977

Blessing Quarterly



The birth of Hyung Jin Moon, September 26, 1979

Shock, challenge, struggle, joy, growth, love. The blessing has brought all these to me.

What better way to hasten the demise of my "old self" than to have God ask me to unite with that which I would have rejected? I wanted to reject the wife whom Father selected for me. But fortunately my faith and desire to be obedient to God's will were great enough to override my feeling.

My life of faith in the Unification Church until that time had generally been one of slow, gradual change punctuated by a few events bringing major change. Usually I would first recognize something by reason, only later accepting it in my heart. I had been an agnostic, but through the Divine Principle and through reason I was forced to admit intellectually the reality of God. But not until two years later did God become substantial to me. While in Korea because of my mission, I attended a prayer meeting.

For the first time I focused my entire being in prayer, desiring to free my ancestors. I knew only by my prayers could they be liberated. As I prayed deeply I felt the effect even physically and knew that the depth of my prayer could be visible to others as well. Subsequently I found that at last I believed in God in my heart!

A few months later I became ill. In a high fever I felt an openness to a sinister spirit world that forced me to admit that I needed a savior. Immobilized in a hospital bed, I could repent and feel God so close to me. Yet the illness passed and so, too, the deep personal connection with God.

Still I couldn't see or admit my fallen nature. I felt composed, calm, stable and reliable -- but God could not reach my heart. The True Parents were leaders and role models for me, but not parents whom I loved. I couldn't feel that. I couldn't feel love. I could think love but not feel it.

Then the blessing came. I was jolted to the core, as never before. If I could have picked three women whom I would have preferred not to marry, the very woman whom Father suggested would have been one of them. God in His great wisdom was giving me such a wife. When Father put us together, I couldn't think or reason. I prayed, but my prayer was not very instructive.

Louise was willing to receive me, but not I her. Yet my character was also to follow Father obediently. When we came out of the consultation room, instead of bowing and accepting the proposed match, I asked Father if there might not have been some mistake. He firmly said to us, "It is a good match."

That was it. For eternity I would have a wife whom I didn't like, I thought. Why did I not like my wife? She had a limp, and at times she had a sharpness to her personality which made me feel uncomfortable. The limp bothered me because of my own limitations. I had always had difficulty with certain bodily movements and functioning in sporting activities because of a congenital absence of muscles in several parts of my body. But since my limitations were not outwardly obvious, they could be masked in most circumstances, whereas Louise's way of walking could not. I had wanted a physically normal wife to help hide my own limitation.

The graspingness and grilling intensity her personality sometimes exhibited had always made me want to leave her presence. Plus I thought that she was intellectually oriented like myself, so she would not complement my rational character.

Gradually I began to realize how limited my perspective had been of this woman. I had focused only upon aspects I took to be bad or undesirable. Thus I came to recognize now that I had been holding other people at arms' length -- being nice and friendly but not really accepting and loving anyone completely. With a wife, however, I could hold no pretense in this regard.

For me, that beginning: was the worst and things have been steadily getting better ever since. I thank God that I never pretended with my wife. It was not easy for her that I was so honest about my feelings, but she persevered and now our foundation of love seems quite solid.

God had found the precise instrument to penetrate to the core of my being -- my wife. When no one else could disrupt my composure, she could not by conscious intent, but rather simply by being herself. And thus God had started to work his will in the liberation of my heart.

For example, sometimes my wife asked me if I loved her. Well, at first I didn't. I didn't really love anyone and didn't know what love was. When Father said that we must love even the dirty, smelly feet of our spouses, my first thought was, "Not me -- I'd tell my wife to wash her dirty, smelly feet." Having allowed myself to think this, I realized the following: Father wasn't talking about all those other aspects of my wife's character and physique that I had been wanting to change. Oh, I wasn't always nagging my wife about these things. I felt I was too smart for that. I didn't say anything, but I knew in my mind and heart what was wrong with Louise, and I planned to subtly help her realize her defects. Certainly this way of thinking needed to be changed.

My wife is my channel to attain freedom and joy. Without her, the graft to the True Parents would never take hold. God was able to make me see myself clearly through my wife. The Messiah had been there before as a standard, but I couldn't use that standard to illuminate myself -- there were too many barriers. Through Louise I realized that the "transcendence" I had previously achieved in my personality was false and illusory. My own character and identity was seldom bothered by what others said and did because I kept people at a distance and clung to my own narrow perspective of myself and others.

It was for this reason that I couldn't love. I couldn't recognize Father substantially. I could not emulate him because I didn't perceive his essential qualities of love. As I learned to love my wife, I could begin to recognize Father's heartistic attributes. I could see the instability beneath my composed exterior and know that it arose from a deviation from God's standard. Father began to look whole to me. A bridge was built so that he is now becoming an ideal that I can emulate.

As I have come to know my wife, my reluctant acceptance and tolerance have grown -- first to an occasional impulse of love and later to a solid abiding love which makes me enjoy her presence. As this growth occurred, the presence of God also began to penetrate my being. In our brief married life, we have already shared the grief of a miscarriage and the struggle of trying to establish a home life with insufficient time or money. But we have also shared the joy of a wonderful love growing within our embrace. We are striving to find the balance point of mutual love between us and sacrificial love for our missions and for mankind.

External accomplishment may still elude me. My daily struggles in my mission may show slow progress, and I can see Father's restoration timetable still not being reached. But hope wells up strong within me. Clearly God is altering my character. And I thank God for allowing me to share in his restoration providence.