

FFWPU USA: Filial Piety Is To Inherit Our Parents' Hopes And Dreams

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Respect for your parents is not a particularly Western concept. But anyone who comes from a Japanese or Korean family was taught from birth to cultivate an attitude of respect for their parents. Unificationist teachings are a blend of Christian and Confucian philosophies. Filial piety is a core belief that Unificationists have adopted and taken even further. We extend filial piety to God, our Heavenly Parent.

Filial piety is such an important concept that God made sure to include it in the Ten Commandments, which said "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12). What does it mean to honor your parents?

The essence of filial piety is to inherit our parents' hopes and dreams, centered on God, and pass them down to our own children. To continue our parents' lineage, and ultimately God's lineage is the ideal expression of filial piety a child can offer.

"When children see their parents' unchanging hearts and minds, they should think, "We must emulate our parents' love and unite with each other." When they can say that, the ideal family is right there."
- Cheon Seong Gyeong p. 544 (2.20)

Filial piety can seem like an impossible goal so let's break it down into more bite-sized steps starting with our own family. Do we truly know our parents? Do we know their dreams, hopes, and values? For many of us, our parents seem like they have everything figured out, but in the end, we need to remember that they are not just our parents, but unique expressions of God.

Parents spend countless hours nursing us to sleep as babies, listening to our questions as inquisitive toddlers, and taking our punches when we're teenagers. It is our responsibility as children to respect what our parents have given us with gratitude by being there when they need help even when they don't ask, trying to understand their hearts, and endeavoring to bring them joy. One way of doing this is by asking them questions to show a genuine interest in their thoughts, hopes, and desires.

"The reason a child of filial piety is precious is that he respects and serves his parents with unchanging love, whether in childhood, as an adult, or in old age."
- Cheon Seong Gyong p. 371 (4.2)

In the Roman story of Aeneas, the Trojan hero, he carried his elderly father Anchises on his back while fleeing the burning city of Troy. He thought about the well-being of his father first, even if that meant sacrificing himself.

As we reach the mind of a filial child to our parents, we can extend this mindset to God, our Heavenly Parent. Living a life that would bring honor and joy to God is a life lived for the sake of others.

Remember all of the sacrifices your parents have made so you can be where you are today. Take those small steps to learn more about your parents and express gratitude towards them.