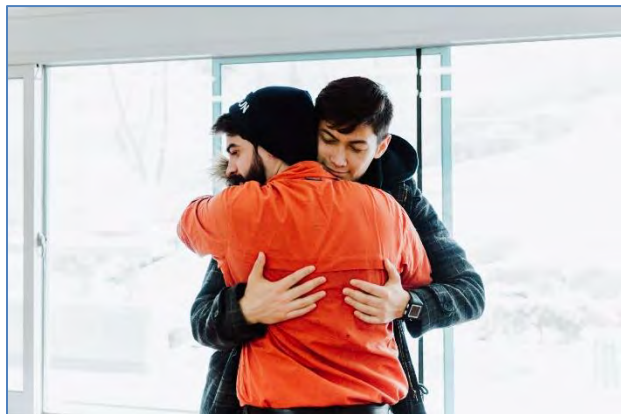


FFWPU USA: Winning the Heart of Cain

Elijah Maddox
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One of my favorite stories in the Bible is that of Cain and Abel, brothers at odds. I believe it clearly lays out for us just how wrong our interactions and relationships can go with ourselves, with each other, and with God. It's a seemingly bleak lesson, but by learning it we can come to understand how to do things right.

Do you really know the story of Cain and Abel?

Most of us know the story from Sunday school. God asked Cain and Abel each to make a burnt offering, and while Abel's was accepted by God,

Cain's was not. In psychologist [Jordan Peterson's interpretation of the story](#), he notes that, "If someone fails and is rejected because he refused to make any sacrifices at all - well, that's at least understandable. He may still feel resentful and vengeful, but he knows in his heart that he is personally to blame... It's much worse, however, if he had actually forgone the pleasures of the moment - if he had strived and toiled and things still didn't work out - if he was rejected despite his efforts. Then his work - his sacrifice - has been pointless. Under such conditions, the world darkens, and the soul rebels."

Their Portion of Responsibility

I think this part of the story is key. It's not that Cain was evil and simply refused to work toward God's will. He made his dedicated effort, but at that moment, it could not be accepted by God. His bitterness, in a way, is understandable.

This is a central story in our faith community because we look at Abel's responsibility as well as Cain's. Cain had many shortcomings: impatience, jealousy, and an unwillingness to listen to the voice of God, who spoke reason and warning to him when he most needed to listen to it. But what was Abel's shortcoming? He left Cain in the dust. He made his acceptable offering to God and simply went about business as usual. When Cain was at his darkest place, Abel did nothing to help him.

Abel Needed to Help Cain

In the Divine Principle (p.197), it says, "God could not instruct Cain and Abel on how to properly make their sacrifices because it was [their portion of responsibility](#) that Cain make his sacrifice with Abel's help."

"God could not instruct Cain and Abel on how to properly make their sacrifices because it was their portion of responsibility that Cain make his sacrifice with Abel's help."
- Exposition of the Divine Principle, p. 197

One does not decide to kill one's brother on a whim; something truly must have been [lacking in the relationship](#), a crucial piece that led to the doom of them both. At times in our lives, we all may find ourselves in the position of Cain in relation to others, and we also may find ourselves in the position of Abel. It's therefore worth knowing how to learn from their mistakes.

A Lesson in Abel-ing

Teaching middle school has introduced me to a lot of little Cains. Children are sweet, generally, but they also can be arrogant, disrespectful, complaining, and entirely unaware of themselves and others. Day after day, I deal with kids who have problems and complaints. They feel school is too hard, they think homework is too long, a teacher made a mistake in their punishment, somebody called them a mean name and got away with it, the room is too cold, the lights are too bright, class is moving too fast, the content is too boring. The list never ends.

Many students are able to manage things relatively well, [overcoming little disagreements](#) and scuffles here and there, and ultimately getting back on track for a good day of learning. For some students, however, that's just not the case. They don't have just a chip on their shoulder - it's a brick. We can safely consider them to be a super-Cain.

How to Win the Heart of Cain

These kids often have the hardest time in school, and we can't ignore the fact that much of it is self-inflicted, but my heart does go out to them. I've had to ask myself every day, for each one of these students, "How can I win their hearts today?" I start by reminding myself that their complaints and their resentments are often not wrong. They really did get treated unfairly that one time in class, and maybe the homework was more confusing than it needed to be. Loving them means acknowledging their perspective and letting them know that I see them.

Cain needs to be seen and understood. But Cain also needs to do the right thing, and it's Abel's job to insist on that. Loving isn't just validating with no guidance. Tough love is required, especially for tough children with big attitudes. Tough love, however, only works based on care and respect.

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Golden Rules of Abel

In my missionary days, I learned a simple set of Golden Rules of Abel. It was a tried-and-true set of attitudes for whenever you found yourself in the position of Abel. The first two are:

- 1) receive punishment without having committed any kind of sin, and
- 2) refrain from complaint or resentment while receiving punishment. Because Abel was the one accepted by God, Abel is in the position of goodness and authority. As a teacher, I have the authority of the school vested in me. I have a right to stand before the kids and tell them to listen to what I teach and do as I say. My super-Cain students, however, often have other ideas. The disrespect I receive from them is painful to take, and it does feel like a daily punishment. It seems unfair. But when I put myself in the mindset of taking that punishment willingly, I find that I can keep a brighter spirit and a warmer heart for much longer than I otherwise could. It allows me to practice the final two rules:
 - 3) love Cain and
 - 4) give all things to Cain. No matter what they throw at me, I still have to wake up in the morning ready to teach them something, ready to make a difference in their lives, whether they recognize me for it or not.

It's a Daily Choice

When I greet the 35 kids at the classroom door as they arrive in the morning, only a handful will mumble a response or make eye contact. Every morning, I have to remember my role and my responsibility toward the kids. Whether I like it or not, this is the situation I find myself in. Other teachers I talk to express the same kinds of experiences, just in different terms. [It can be so easy to complain about it](#), to become bitter and jaded, as some of my colleagues have. But when I start to feel that temptation, I remind myself of what potential I have here.

"It is a love that gives and then forgets that it has given - that is, a love that gives unconditionally. It is sacrificial love. In the same way that parents attach no conditions to the love by which they give birth to, raise, and provide for a child, so also true love is a love that gives unconditionally. This was the kind of love that God bestowed on human beings at the time He created us. That is why the origin of true love lies in God."

- Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon

Mother Moon reveals a beautiful perspective on true love by explaining: "It is a love that gives and then forgets that it has given - that is, a love that gives unconditionally. It is sacrificial love. In the same way that parents attach no conditions to the love by which they give birth to, raise, and provide for a child, so also true love is a love that gives unconditionally. This was the kind of love that God bestowed on human beings at the time He created us. That is why the origin of true love lies in God." This, to me, is a beautiful explanation of how the Cain-Abel dynamic can function ideally. By embodying this kind of sacrificial love toward Cain, Abel opens the floodgates for God's love to reach Cain.

Loving Cain Takes Time

All of this conceptualization of Cain-Abel dynamics can seem a little esoteric, but when I see it play out in the classroom, it really feels like a worthwhile way to view things. I've made a difference with kids whom I refused to stop loving, even when other teachers had written them off as psychos. Over months, I've been able to form relationships with a few of these Cain-type children, and the difference in class is remarkable. With other kids, even if I can't see immediate results, I remind myself that there is no telling how I will be remembered by a child whose other teachers have given up on them.

Striving to give all of myself in loving these kids every day makes all the difference in my own mind and heart. And just maybe, it can make a difference in theirs as well.

Trust in God's Timing



By Celine Stoco

In life, we often wonder about when things will happen and how they'll unfold. The idea of God's timing has fascinated people for a long time. It's about when God chooses to make things happen in our lives. But here's some important information: God's timing operates on a plane far beyond our human comprehension.

"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day."

— 2 Peter 3:8

God's Timing is Different

If we understand that God's timing is different from our own, things such as how the Israelites walked for 40 years in the desert until they found the Promised Land or how God created the world in only six days, make more sense.

"All phenomena occurring in the universe bear fruit only after the lapse of a certain interval of time. All things are designed to reach completion only after passing through a set growing period."

— Divine Principle 5.2

With this understanding, the only thing we need to do is live as we want, and things will happen right?

things are happening, right.

The answer is no.

Portion of Responsibility

It is essential to understand that while God has a different perception of time, we also have our portion of responsibility to fulfill. I can use the example of how preparing to find a spouse has made me think more deeply about the subject. I remember being 14 and thinking about the [Marriage Blessing](#). The only thing I thought I needed was to meet my partner, which shows how I did not consider the importance of commitment. As I grew older, I realized I was ahead of God's timing for me. If I wanted to be ready when time arrived, I had to first work on myself.

"Human beings, however, are created in such a way that their growth requires the fulfillment of their own portion of responsibility, in addition to the guidance provided by the Principle."

— Divine Principle 5.2.2

I started asking profound questions. "What is the meaning of the Blessing to me? What are my values?" In the end, I had to figure out who I am, so that when the right time and the right person comes along, I will be ready to receive them.

Preparation is Everything

The parable in Matthew 25:1-13 can be applied in this context. Jesus tells about the ten virgins who were awaiting the arrival of a bridegroom for a wedding feast. The virgins are divided into two groups: five are wise and five are foolish. While the wise brought extra oil the foolish did not. When the virgins heard the cry that the bridegroom was coming, the wise virgins had the extra oil to keep their flames alight, the foolish ones on the other hand did not. As the foolish ones left to buy oil, the bridegroom came and welcomed all of the wise one's who had been prepared. He closed the door to the ones who were late for his arrival.

To me, this parable shows the importance of being prepared for the right timing.

God Needs an Invite

Now that we understand that God's timing is different than our own, and that it is also dependent on how much we are prepared to recognize it, another key aspect that should be taken into account is that we need to ask.

“Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

– Matthew 7:7-8

God is always with us, and He sees what you are going through. However, it is difficult for Him to act if you don't tell Him that you're ready and open to His involvement.

How will He know what you need if you don't ask?

It is the same as when I was a kid. I had a soar throat and was feeling under the weather. I cried to my mom and she came running to examine me. She asked what was wrong and the only thing I did was continue to cry. How was she supposed to know that I had a soar throat if I did not tell her? It is the same for God. Sometimes He sees people suffering and He wants to help but we need to take the first step to ask for His support and guidance.

Leave Space for God to Work

[How we ask things from God is important.](#) For example, my parents have always told me that having preferences for a spouse is not a problem, but that I must keep in mind that if I have too many criteria, I close the space where God can work. We must seek God out but trust that God's vision for our life is much bigger than our own.

In essence, a partnership with God is necessary if we seek to achieve our and God's goals. We must prepare and strive to become the best version of ourselves and be aware of the opportunities that come in our path. By cultivating patience, faith, and resilience, we open ourselves to the blessings of His timing.

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Why Family Is the School of Love



By Lena Iwasaki

There are many kinds of institutions in this world. Schools are man-made institutions to obtain knowledge. Hospitals are institutions for physical healing, while churches are institutions for spiritual exploration. However, there is one that often gets overlooked because it is an institution we're all born into—a family.

What is there to gain from the God-made institution of a family? According to the teachings of Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the family is where we learn the valuable skills needed to build meaningful and healthy relationships.

To put it in simple terms, family is the school of love.

“You need to build bonds within your family that will empower you to broaden your love for one another inside and outside the family. Your love within your family is the encapsulation of your love for your nation and the world.”

— Cheon Seong Gyeong p.484 (5.3)

Just as we benefit from learning the difference between addition and subtraction, society at large can benefit from someone learning the importance of healthy communication, the virtue of listening, and even the art of a simple apology. The *I Ching* an ancient Chinese book of wisdom, reminds us that the person we are within our family is reflected in other interpersonal relationships. In this way, the family provides deep insight.

Family Is a Microcosm of Society

How a child treats her mother, father, and siblings is reflected in the ways she

will treat her future spouse, friends, and community members. The *I Ching* describes the family as being the "microcosm of society." You may argue that your roommate of two years is not as annoying as your brother of twenty years. While that may be true, probably the longer that relationship continues, eventually even that dynamic with your roommate will be tested.

The Four Great Realms of Heart

The Four Great Realms of Heart, according to Unificationist teachings, encompasses four major categories of relationships encountered in life that teach you to love all types of people unconditionally as God would, [especially when it's hard](#).

Children's Love

The first is children's love, and not the kind of love children have for anyone who gives them candy. This is the kind of pure love a child has for their parents and the filial piety they practice towards them. You might remember being a kid fighting about what is right and wrong because "my mom said so." It is in the relationship with their parents that children begin to experience and understand the heart of God.

Siblings' Love

Siblings' love is the next level of expanding our hearts. It is the love that siblings experience growing up with and challenging one another. Love becomes more reciprocal, as children learn to give as well as receive with their brothers and sisters. If there is anyone that can win a competition for listing all of your weaknesses, it's your siblings. They are the ones that remember the time you were too scared to go to the basement even as a senior in high school. They know exactly what to say to get a reaction out of you with surgical precision. However, it is in these fights with your siblings that you can also learn to love someone outside your family with all the complexity they may bring.

Conjugal Love

The third realm of heart is conjugal love. This is the love you share with your spouse and the only kind of love that can not be shared with anyone else. Hopefully, by now, your siblings have taught you the necessary patience to endure any challenges with your spouse. This realm of love teaches us what it means to love someone new wholeheartedly. Not as a friend, a sibling, a parent, or a co-worker, but as a life partner. It is the commitment of both individuals to something more significant than their own happiness that is the most important lesson this realm of heart teaches us.

Parental Love

The fourth realm of heart, parental love, is the love that is most similar to God's love for humanity; the love parents have for their children. It is hard to explain what makes a mother trust and embrace her foolish son again and again regardless of past betrayals. It is just as hard to comprehend a parent's heart when they lose a child. Without a care for anyone in the room, they may scream and cry for what seems like hours because that is the intensity they feel in their hearts. This is the kind of love you can never come close to understanding without being a parent themselves.

Love All People as Family

All these types of relationships seem daunting and tedious at first, like a never-ending checklist. However, they are what allow us to grow our hearts in order to [see all people as family](#). Every person is worthy of being treated with the same respect and curiosity to work out our differences and challenges, just as we would with our nuclear family.

The Platinum Rule

Jesus Christ teaches humanity to love and give unconditionally, which is the whole point of true love. He urges us to love others as we would like to be loved; the golden rule. But there is actually a platinum rule. Love others as they would like to be loved. Wars, political corruption, famines, diseases, racism, and countless other problems our world faces have taught humanity otherwise. That is why without first practicing unconditional love within the nuclear unit of society, the family, this ideal is far from attainable. How do we love our neighbors as family if we do not know how to love our own brothers and sisters?

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Why Conflict is Good for You



A Process of Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis

We live in a world abounding with differences in culture, language, philosophy, and lifestyle. For the most part, we celebrate those differences. Other times, they challenge our way of life. From our long history of world wars down to our one-on-one relationships and even the conflicts within ourselves, lifestyle clashes are present everywhere, and choosing the right response is incredibly tough.

They say you dwell in what you dwell on, so rather than getting stuck whenever we feel pulled in two directions, let's ask ourselves, what is the purpose of conflict? Could God have designed a world with so much contrast, as a way to help us? Do our inner and outer conflicts serve a purpose toward our happiness?

Built to Rebuild

Father Moon teaches that God's creation involves a process called "origin-division-union action." He explains that God is a being of dualities—masculine and feminine, silence and sound, youth and maturity, and so on. To fully explore the vastness of these types of contrasting yet harmonious aspects of God's essence, God chose to manifest them outwardly into different individual creations, especially into our unique entities as people. Just like an artist channeling a specific emotion into a piece of art as a means of introspection or catharsis, God sought to find personal meaning through creation.

Where do we fit in?

If that is the case, where do we fit in? Consider this: do we experience deeper satisfaction when we breeze easily through a task, or when we work hard, struggle, fail a couple of times, and then succeed? Perhaps God's infinitely parental heart knew that we would have a richer and more fulfilling experience here on earth if we came into it incomplete, with something still to learn and gain. If so, then maybe our lives were intended all along by God to be spent in search of what makes us whole: each other. Hence, God (the Origin) would purposefully create us into divergent dualities (Division) in hopes that we learn from each other and become harmonized (Union), thus returning to full resemblance with God. Origin-division-union action is a way to take contrasting aspects of our nature to build and rebuild ourselves, over and over again, in order to keep growing, keep learning, keep pursuing our full potential, and out of that process, become co-creators with God.

Father Moon isn't alone in his fascination; this dynamic of intentional division with an end goal of union has been explored by other big thinkers too. Most notably by philosopher [Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel](#). His Dialectic, expressed in components called Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis, has been used as an essential framework for critical reasoning, art, and storytelling, and underscores how conflict and resolution are notions that capture the attention of many.

With this fresh spin in mind, think about some of the things you tend to struggle with. Perhaps you have a friend whose faith or life philosophy clashes with yours, or perhaps you believe strongly in two ideas that seem completely incongruous. In viewing them more as two parts of a whole instead of two opposing forces battling for superiority, do they still seem as incompatible as before? Or might their presence in your life be an opportunity to grow closer in mutual respect and love? The harder the conflict is to surmount, the greater the reward for surmounting it.

Are there any seemingly conflicting beliefs, thoughts, or ideas that you think might actually harmonize? Here are some of ours:

- Planning our own dreams versus trusting in God's plan
- Supporting our families versus investing in personal growth
- Keeping things simple versus living a bold, epic life
- Self-care versus service
- Perfectionism versus loving our flaws
- Being assertive versus being embracing

• Being assertive versus being embracing

• Competition versus collaboration

• Being strong versus being sensitive

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An Original Mind at Work



By Elijah Maddox

Everyone has had a bad day at work. First, you fumble your way through your tedious morning routine. You wish you hadn't stayed up so late watching that disappointing movie, but here you are, tired and irritable. The early morning commute traffic does nothing to improve your mood. Then you find yourself facing yet another grueling day at your job. Amid your burning frustration and foul mood, do you ever wonder, "Is there any point in trying to be kind or decent today at all? Why don't I just embrace the negativity?"

Our Original Mind is Good

In times like these, each one of us has to remember that we, like all people, are more than our meanest instincts. We are created to be full of the potential to do good as well as the desire to follow through with it. This potential and desire is what Unificationism refers to as our Original Mind. When we study the book of Genesis in the Bible, we can see clearly how humanity fell into temptation and sin, and history has shown us a prolonged continuation of that sad state of affairs. And yet, as far as we may have fallen from God's ideal for us, we cannot totally lose our connection to the true, good nature that our Creator has endowed us with. As the [Principle of Creation](#) explains it, "the original mind always inclines toward goodness, even in an evil person. However, unless a [person] leads a good life, the [Original Mind] cannot provide anything for the betterment of the physical [person]."

"The original mind always inclines toward goodness, even in an evil person. However, unless a [person] leads a good life, the [Original Mind] cannot provide anything for the betterment of the physical [person]."

As difficult as it often can be, we have to become people that always strive in our lives to follow our Original Mind. But how can we do that? Making an effort to practice it in the mundane and ever present aspects of our day to day routines. What better place to start than at work? With all the stresses and temptations to give in to negativity, choosing to follow your Original Mind, while challenging, can be extremely rewarding.

Practice at Work

Take that blue Monday morning we started off with. When you enter the breakroom for your first cup of coffee, gathered around the counter are your equally tired and cranky co-workers, many of them eager to engage you in a group whining and complaining session. It's what everybody does, and it's what you often catch yourself doing. But if we turn to the Bible, we are told, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)

The Bible says we should avoid following the ways of the world because they are governed by selfish desire and negativity. In order to orient our minds towards God and goodness, we need to try our best to act out of positivity, love, and kindness. That means when others complain, we should not. When others give up and put in minimal work, we should continue to give our best efforts. Our tendency is to shy away from hardship and pain, but if we listen to our Original Mind, it will tell us that [hardship is just an opportunity for growth](#).

"A newborn baby cannot carry out the work of God's providence. Heaven waits until the baby grows up, is able to judge things for him- or herself, understands God's will, makes his or her determination, and advances toward perfecting his or her character."

— Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon

God Knows It Takes Time

In a recent speech, [Mother Moon](#), co-founder of Unificationism, explained that God intended for people to grow naturally in their ability to follow their Original Mind. "A newborn baby cannot carry out the work of God's providence. Heaven waits until the baby grows up, is able to judge things for him- or herself, understands God's will, makes his or her determination, and advances toward perfecting his or her character." That means that instead of expecting

ourselves to be perfect at dealing with hardship and automatically following our Original Mind, we should have the courage and grit to train ourselves to tap into it a little more every day.

Coworkers are a Training Ground

The most challenging part of any workplace will often be those pesky interpersonal relationships. When diverse people come together to work, conflict, misunderstanding, and personal differences can make things much harder than the job itself would indicate. Once again, a common temptation for many of us is to resort to complaint and negativity, or else treat the relationship with indifference or contempt. In our goal of always following our Original Mind the challenge then is to [face these difficult relationships with an attitude of kindness and love](#).

Again, hardship can be our friend.

When we work to overcome our difficulties with even the most challenging coworkers, the resulting transformation within the relationship can be incredibly rewarding. Maybe you'll resolve your conflict in a way you never thought feasible. Maybe you'll [turn a rivalry into a close friendship](#). Or maybe you'll simply strengthen your patience. Any outcome will surely be better than choosing the path of negativity, resentment, and unhappiness.

Whether it's a stressful project, an uncooperative coworker, or just a bad day at work, we will always be faced with hardship within our workplaces, and ultimately throughout our lives. The key is to remember that each one of those challenges can be taken as a miserable burden or as a wonderful opportunity to put our Original Mind in the driver's seat and grow in our capacity for goodness.

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