

Doing True Love

1 Corinthians 13 (read with renewed vigor and spirit)

1. Introduction

In Unification Church and Christianity we talk not only of love, parents, family, etc., but rather True love, True parents, True family, etc.

Even more, however, we are taught not only to talk of love or to think of love as something we merely feel, but rather something we do.

2. The Nature of True Love

Love is for the sake of others, not for the self (Way of Tradition, p. 91).

Love is relational by its very nature; if we violate this relationality, we oppose its very nature and hence we kill ourselves (Way, p. 90). We may feel happy and alive temporarily, but in the long run we die.

The rule of love is that we may love ourselves but not at the expense of others. More importantly, we must love others even at the expense of ourselves.

Love is food for the spirit. It is intangible and everlasting. The body decays due to the very nature of its food. The spirit exists forever due to the very nature of its food.

There are two dimensions of True Love:

1) VERTICAL: this is the backbone of True Love – loyalty, fidelity, filial piety, trust, obedience, respect, duty. This tends to orient itself to truth and justice.

2) HORIZONTAL: this is the warmth of True Love – compassion, embrace. This tends to orient itself to mercy and embrace.

Both are needed in order to fulfill True Love and cannot be forced upon the giver by fear or coercion; instead the giver must be able to give freely and willfully. (Way of Tradition, p. 137)

These dimensions of love have been abused often and thus there is a great distrust and disillusionment in leaders, spouse, parents, etc.

1) Abuse of the Vertical: this is usually steeped in self-centeredness.

e.g. parents often give what they want to give with little concern about what the person may really need. Also, they may often

expect certain things in return for their giving such as security in old age or taking on a career of the parents' choice. It can hardly be inspiring, then, to love others as one would their own parents.

e.g. similar attitudes on other social levels create distrust in any authority figure.

2) Abuse of the Horizontal: this is usually not caring enough for someone.

e.g. accepting a person for who they are and not bothering to suggest ways to encourage growth. "I accept him as a homosexual" or "she has a right to be a prostitute."

3. Implications for Life

We all have to face these issues as parents, friends, teachers, leaders, etc.

The question is how to balance the horizontal and the vertical. How to nurture and yet not dominate; how to give what a person needs and not what we think that person needs; how to accept a person for who he/she is as a starting point but then help the person become their full potential; how to nurture a person spiritually, mentally, and physically.

The answer is not simple; there is no easy formula. It is imperative that we constantly pray and reflect on our motivation before acting.

True Love is not natural; it must be learned. The potential is in every person, but it must be disciplined and developed over time. It is like a person who has a talent for music, math, or art: it must be developed in order for it to be perfected.

HOW can this development take place?

It requires more than mere words or lectures about love. Developing True Love takes place by doing it. It takes effort. Often we want to give up, but we know that if we continued we will experience joy and beauty. This is the same with developing a talent for music, art, etc. Hence, we learn by doing.

WHERE can we develop True Love?

It does not take place in sex shops or through sex education. It takes place in the family directed by religion.

Much of what is lost in religion today is the doing of True Love. All true religions have True Love as their central teaching, but the doing of it is left to a few priests and ministers and monks.

Unification Church is unique in that it offers programs for all members, not just a few, on a daily basis to discipline and perfect True Love. (I.e., witnessing, fundraising, home church, etc., is for everyone.)

“Unification Church is the school to learn True Love.” (Rev. Moon). It is by living this lifestyle that we learn to become True Parents.

Nevertheless, Unification Church could eventually become complacent and lose its vigor and essence just like other religions if we are not serious enough.

4. Conclusion

Think about I: What inspires you to be here listening to this sermon and coming to Church?

It is not that True Love is being talked about here but because you have witnessed the doing of True Love by God and Jesus and perhaps occasionally some of the members of the congregation.

Why are the stories of Jesus, St. Francis, certain classic films of valor, etc. so inspiring? It is because their essence is the doing of True Love.

For the same reason, we too can inspire others by doing True Love in our daily life. This is also a continuing part of our training.

Many people do not believe that True Love is possible. Some did, and this is why we call them saints. We must believe it too, and get out there and start doing it!