

Living for the Sake of Others

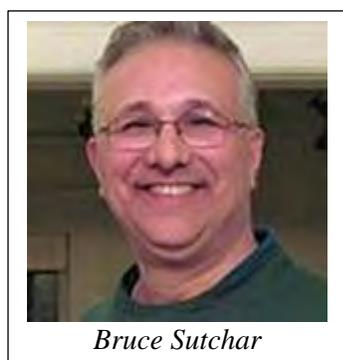
Bruce Sutchar

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to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labor and not to ask for reward,
save that of knowing that I do your will.
St. Ignatius Loyola

(Sounds like the lyrics of “The Impossible Dream”)

Throughout the bible Jesus implores us to “live for the sake of others—to not only love our neighbor as we love our self, but to even love our enemies.” (Matthew 22:37-39 & 5: 43-38) Just in case we missed it, Rev. Moon has re-iterated this theology through most of his 5,000 speeches and sermons—but what does this really mean?



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My Father was married on a Sunday in July, 1942. On the following Tuesday, he enlisted in the Army Air-Corps and promptly left for what was to be 3 years fighting to make Italy free from German oppression. He rarely talked about the war, but when we saw the movie, “Catch 22” by Joseph Heller, he admitted to witnessing most every scene in the film.

My Father came home after the war and spent the remainder of his life working as an accountant for Motorola and then for the Internal Revenue Service. When he finally retired he spent the remaining years of his life working as a docent for the Lincoln Park Zoo and teaching inner-city kids about the classical masters of music. This of course, in addition to loving

his five precious grandchildren—beginning by taking each one for a subway ride as soon as they turned four years old.

My Mother spent her ninety three years on earth raising two wild boys, being an aunt to seven more and teaching fifth grade for about twenty five years. Maybe because they lived through the depression in the nineteen thirties, they developed a deep appreciation for the value of life itself.

Tonight, as I was walking past one of my son’s boyhood friend’s house I began to think about this subject. This young man and his brother were my boys’ best friends. While my son went to college and medical school for 7 years to become a Physical Therapist, his friends did not. Today, one is a successful car salesman while the other is working some job. I began to think about this in respect to Jesus’ words about living for the sake of the world.

My sons’ two friends are good boys. Their parents have four children and have a good marriage... But in my best estimation, the two boys are basically living to support themselves and little else that I know of. I am not putting them down, but I began to realize that this is the direction of many, if not most of our present day population. Today, my daughter drove a hundred miles back from college in order to participate in a 5K race to support a charitable group that finds homeless veterans proper housing. Thousands of people showed up at 7am on a Sunday morning and ran, walked, pushed strollers and whatever else, besides paying the \$40 entry free to support this noble cause.

The microcosm of our second generation children would put an incredible percentile score on the graph. In my own family the eldest son is thinking about finding cures for physical ailments, rather than just healing one person at a time. In fact he quit a six figure job because all they wanted him to do was to see as many patients as he possibly could so they could bill Medicare night and day. My second son as an entrepreneur is teaching coaches how to strength train. In the midst of this he recently sent a check for \$62,500 to a charity trying to solve the problems of autism. My third son is a banker, so who knows where that will lead. He is in a department that only cares for clients with at least \$250,000 in the bank—this is course leaves my wife and I out on the street. My daughters are teaching school right now. The older one is working for “Teach for America” in a school of first generation Hispanics about a mile from where I got my first haircut in 1952. Her future desire is to apply her kinesiology degree and work with cardiac re-hab patients. My younger daughter wants to teach elementary education, preferably second grade.

My point here is not to toot my own horn, but to reflect on Father's words about "living for the sake of others." Father taught us that if we only live for our family and the nation collapses, we will collapse as well.

Rev Moon preaches that "Human beings cannot live without creating relationships with other people. An individual exists because his mind and body are in a relationship and are in the position to live for the sake of the other. This altruism must develop further to care for the family, people, society and the nation. Furthermore, even the universe is to lead a life of altruism. In religious terms, this kind of altruistic life is a life lived for the sake of God.

His son Hyun Jin Moon also preached, "The reason why I am working for you (and the Unification Church) is because of "True Love" that means the impulse to want to live for the sake of others — not justice, or sense of getting self-righteousness, self-vindication; in other words, the willingness to live for the larger good or whole. If one works under that paradigm, one's viewpoint is outlined from that paradigm, one's actions are outlined from that paradigm. You have the substance to overcome whatever personal crisis you might have, with an individual or even a group in this matter.

There is even a scientific explanation for giving as espoused by Wharton School of Business Professor Dr Adam Grant. According to Grant, "neuroscience evidence shows that giving activates the reward and meaning centers in our brains. These benefits are not limited to giving money: they also show up for giving time. One study of more than 2,800 Americans over age 24 showed that volunteering predicted increases in happiness, life satisfaction, and self-esteem—and decreases in depression—a year later. Other studies show that elderly adults who volunteer or give support to others actually live longer.

The winners of legislative college scholarships were awarded based, not on their SAT scores or academic G.P.A. s, but rather on what they were giving back to their society.

No question that the world is in chaos—whether it's in the Middle East, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Africa, or downtown in our largest cities. Recently, this author and his wife decided to turn off the nightly news as soon as the first murder, rape or arson was reported. They have yet to make it to the five minute mark. In addition in the city of Chicago, even the weather and sports reports are depressing.

As children, when he hear that it better to give than to receive, we usually just laugh at how ridiculous that statement must be. Then as parents we realize the truth of that statement, for it gives us far greater joy to see the smile on our children's faces when they receive their Christmas or birthday gifts than when we receive our own gifts. Recent studies confirm this when they state that gratitude is probably the single most important ingredient to achieving happiness. So the verdict is out—whether it comes from Jesus, Rev. Moon or a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, those who live for the sake of others are (as Barbra Streisand should have sung) "the happiest people in the world."