

FFWPU USA: Our Portion of Responsibility

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Perhaps one of the easiest concepts to understand at the beginning of the [Divine Principle](#) might be one of the hardest to enact in day-to-day life.

This concept requires that we walk the fine line between disparate aspects of ourselves - between logic and faith, interpretation and fact, sensical and improbable.

That is the burden and the joy of grappling with the concept of "Our Portion of Responsibility".

"By fulfilling their given portion of responsibility, with which even God does not interfere, human beings are meant to inherit the creative nature of God and participate in God's great work of creation.""

- Exposition of the Divine Principle (p. 20)

What is truly beautiful and liberating about this revelation is that it appeases our rational minds as well as our spiritual palette. The entire debate about [whether we have free will](#) as humans or not is also resolved within this brief section of the Divine Principle.

To know that we have responsibility gives humanity a sense of ownership in our personal and collective destinies. The state of our present circumstances on the planet is the result of our decisions...clearly. But are we doomed to repeat our self-destructive ways as a species? No, not at all.

Conversely, knowing that the weight of the cosmos doesn't rest on our limited mortal abilities is incredibly reassuring. Although we are responsible for making the mess, we can find cosmic assistance in

the clean-up process.

Albert Einstein famously said, "You cannot solve a problem with the same mind that created it." If you can understand this statement through the lens of the Portion of Responsibility concept, then it takes on an entirely new dimension.

"You cannot solve a problem with the same mind that created it."
- Albert Einstein

When we take advantage of the fact that our cosmic creator, our [Heavenly Parent, wants to collaborate with us](#) in creating solutions, then we are never limited in any way shape, or form.

Practically, this means that any problems we experience on a personal or societal level have solutions, but we can't access them by our thoughts alone.

It is only when we reach beyond the personal, selfish "survival thoughts" and get into the frequency of the divine solutions that we will tap into the limitless trove of wisdom that constantly surrounds us.

And then there's the matter of making your ideas substance, for a plan without action is merely theory. A tricky aspect of the Portion of Responsibility concept is understanding how much action to take.

There is a fine line between participating too much vs not enough. You may overwork yourself and trip up the providence on the one side, or sit around waiting for something to happen and [miss your chance](#) on the other.

If you're not careful, you could be stepping on God's toes and getting into His business. How many people throughout the ages were convicted by divine purpose, only to realize they were actually appeasing their own ego?

Whereas, how many people have you observed who use their faith in God to reassure themselves that someone other than themselves will make this world or even their own lives better?

It would seem that achieving a balanced relationship with "Our Portion of Responsibility" lies in us utilizing two key elements:

1. Prayer
2. Community

With [prayer](#), it will never be our front lobe that connects us to the divine. We need to move beyond what we know in order to find solutions to problems. That is the purpose of prayer, to understand our creator, the world around, and even ourselves more deeply. So, naturally understanding if we are doing too little or too much will require us to connect with the highest thoughts we can access.

[Community](#) is a vital component as well because it is there where ideas are worked out, where faith and substance collide. Perhaps we think our portion of responsibility is somewhat limited, but then we are asked to stretch ourselves beyond our comfort zone out of a communal need.

Such situations will allow for growth and we will see just how small we were thinking. In other situations we might be running ourselves into the ground, overexerting ourselves, and it will only become apparent when someone lets us know that we aren't helping the way we thought.

There are many ways that this can play out, but ultimately the truth of your portion will be unveiled only through conversing with God and collaborating with other people.

Changes, Choices, and Challenges



Photo courtesy of Caleb Jones

By Lloyd Pumphrey

We experience change every day of our lives. These changes can be wonderful, like the birth of your child, or painful, such as the loss of a loved one. Change is a natural part of life, and it helps us grow—by facing these changes and learning to handle them. Three concepts that are involved in dealing with the natural shifting of life are the three “CH” words: Changes, Choices, and Challenges.

It’s human nature to not like change. We crave comfort and security in our lives. We tend to create routines, and we follow them as closely as possible. There are two different kinds of changes. The first is changes that we create on our own, such as dieting to lose weight. The second is changes that are brought upon us, like a car accident. The difficulty is in accepting that there will be a necessary struggle as we face the changes that inevitably come in and out of our lives, whether we like it or not. The question is, how do we deal with it? When we experience change, we come to the next “CH” word that we are faced with: Choices.

Choices are an integral part of God’s creation. This is based on the principle of free will which is a major factor of [true freedom](#). While God gave us the three blessings to “be fruitful, multiply and have dominion over the Earth” (Genesis 1:28), he also gave Adam and Eve the commandment “not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil” (Genesis 2:17). This is where “choice” comes in. Choice is the basis of free will. If we do not have the option to make a choice, then it is not free will and therefore not true freedom, which is what free choice is all about.

“What is the meaning of true freedom? In light of the Principle,

three characteristics of freedom stand out. First, there is no freedom outside the Principle. Freedom requires both free will and the free actions pursuant to that will. The former and the latter have the relationship of internal nature and external form, and perfect freedom is achieved when they are in harmony. Therefore, there cannot be any free action without free will, nor can free will be complete without free actions to accompany it. Free actions are generated by free will, and free will is an expression of the mind. Since the mind of an original, sinless person cannot operate outside of God's Word, that is, the Principle, it will never express free will or generate free action apart from the Principle."

– Exposition of the Divine Principle, Chapter 2 Section 5.1

Choice was a pivotal part of what caused the fall of humankind. Adam and Eve had the choice to follow God's commandment or not. They made the wrong decision. Many times, we may think we're making the right choice according to our own perspective and experience, but it turns out to be wrong. A good example from the Bible is the curse of Ham, when Ham felt ashamed of his father, Noah, and his nakedness and covered him with a blanket (Genesis 22-25). Ham thought that he was doing the right thing, but in that moment he let shame guide his choices. A more loving choice, for example, would have been to understand his father's hard work and sacrifice in building the arc and to choose to have compassion for him instead. We see another example in the story of Adam and Eve, as explained in the *Divine Principle*. Eve tempted Adam because she was trying to fix her mistake of not following the commandment on her own, without consulting God.

If we look back over biblical and modern history, we can see many examples of figures who were faced with difficult choices. Even the most vile figures in history had to make choices that could have been for the betterment of mankind instead of its destruction. This quandary can be seen in almost every political leader who had to make a choice that cost the lives of thousands, or even one key figure. The history of humankind is made every moment by the choices of those living it.

In making a choice, we are faced with the third "CH" word: Challenge. Making the right choice is often not easy. When we are faced with a challenge, it can be a singular challenge or one of dozens, such as time, difficulty, the probability of succeeding. God has had to deal with this throughout history, just trying to reconnect to humanity


just trying to reconnect to humanity.

A perfect example is Abraham, who after making the choice of not completing his offerings to God, was asked to give a more serious sacrifice of offering his son Isaac to God. Although the sacrifice was great, it was through their unity and determination to complete the Challenge given to them that Abraham and Isaac were able to make the right choice. God saw their sincerity and honored their choice by rescinding the offering of Isaac.

What does this mean for our daily lives? Changes, Choices, and Challenges are all natural parts of life. What's important is to consult God prayerfully and allow God to guide you through the inevitable challenges of life by making God-centered choices.

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Who Is God to You?



By Celine Stoco

The concept of God varies across different religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions. There isn't a universally agreed-upon definition. However, when most people describe this entity, they use words like powerful, ruler, creator, divine, transcendent, or eternal. These words have gravitas, but also create a feeling that God is far away, distant.

While there is a general concept of God, every person has a personal understanding of who He is, too. For some, it is love, for others God is the only way, the beginning and the end, or even the alpha and omega. Unificationists believe that He is [a personal God](#).

So how can you find your personal God?

“God is without form. If we should conceive of Him as large, He is infinitely large, and if we should conceive of Him as small, He is infinitely small.”

— Cheon Seong Gyeong 1.1[a].1

As we can see from this quote, creating a personal relationship with God can be difficult since [God can take any shape but no shape at all](#). So if we truly aim to achieve a relationship with God, we need to use more than just logical thinking since who/what God is cannot be placed in a box.

“We should not perceive the existence of God only vaguely and conceptually. It is impossible to understand the existence of God through logic alone.”

— Cheon Seong Gyeong 1.1[b].4

Even though it can be hard to connect with God, it is not impossible. The best way to start is to find a way that you can feel God or talk to God, through prayer, songs, reading, or [nature](#).

“You should know how to love nature and love people. Because all things of creation are symbols for God and because people are substantial beings, those who know how to love all things of creation and people will come to love God.”

– Cheon Seong Gyong 2.5.5

Unificationists, for example, believe that “God, the Creator of all things, is the absolute reality, eternal, self-existent, and transcendent of time and space. The fundamental energy of God’s being is also eternal, self-existent, and absolute. It is the origin of all energies and forces that allow created beings to exist.”
(Divine Principle 2.1)

Thus, God is not a bearded guy on a throne in the sky. We believe that God wants to be with us, His children, all the time, and even though He is not able to directly communicate with us due to [the fall](#), He is still closer than we imagine.

“God’s home is in the middle of our heart.”

– Cheon Seong Gyong 1.1.2

If you are feeling lost about where God is, don’t feel bad. It’s like that for a lot of people. For me, it has always been hard to build a personal relationship with God, since He has always seemed so far away. But as I thought about it more, I saw that God is with me all the time. He is with my family when we are having lunch together, within my niece when we are playing, in nature. He is in every little thing we do. If we start to pay attention, we will see that He’s there.

God is with us in the happy and sad times. He is in the small and big things. That is what God is all about. Meeting God is something personal, and as we work on it, and acquire experiences, this is going to be the most precious thing in our life of faith.

There is no right or wrong answer. You need to build your unique relationship with God. This relationship will change over time. It’s about putting in the effort. So who is God to you?

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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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A World Where We See God in Each Other



Imagine a world where we recognize God in each other.

Many of us have had an experience where we notice God working through someone in our lives, often unexpectedly. We may choose to call it something else, like synchronicity; but either way, most of us have experienced it in some form. The funny thing is, that many of us are so busy chasing our ideas of what we want, that we carelessly miss many of the opportunities to recognize what already exists. Is it possible to fine-tune our ability to recognize the way God is working in our lives? Wouldn't it make life a lot more simple?

Reverend Sun Myung Moon inspires us to seek a direct relationship with God, "Once our spiritual body can receive the vibration of God's love, our whole self will resound with it. Our entire physical body will respond to God's stimuli. That would be the total satisfaction of love. Nothing could be more desired by anyone."

So why has it been so hard for many of us to find and maintain this type of spiritual vibration? Well, the [Divine Principle](#) does go into the root causes of human conflict; but even when we understand these topics, we still need each other's support. Imagine then, being part of a community where we are able to support each other's spiritual development by seeing God in each other!

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