

## Listening and Reconciliation

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It is said we have two ears and one mouth for a wise reason -- "so that we can listen twice as much as we speak." Thus, the question I should ask myself daily is, "How good of a listener am I?" I would like to believe that I use my ears all the time -- and not just to hear myself speak! But my family, which is my "school of love," helps me see myself more clearly.

From understanding my wife's life story, I have realized the importance of caring for her heart. I may be listening to her, but not always thoughtfully enough. Recently, she asked me to pick up groceries on the way home. But I forgot. I observed that a simple lack of attentiveness on my part hurt her dearly, and for good reason.

She must sometimes remind me of my promise when we were first blessed in marriage. My wife had a painful childhood: Her mother abandoned her, her father passed away, and she grew up in an orphanage. On our wedding day, she said, "Don't leave me," and I promised I never would. Understanding that context, I now know that when I thoughtfully listen to her, when she feels understood, she can be comforted and feel happy.

### Making amends to a daughter

Our family has a meeting once or twice a week -- the five kids and us parents. During a recent meeting, Sarah, my daughter, complained of me not listening to her. The next morning, I went to her room and apologized. She was grateful for my having the courage and humility to seek to understand her and apologize to her, which helped greatly in healing her heart. When we seek to attentively listen to and understand another, we create an opportunity to reconnect or empathize, heart to heart.



*Photo by August de Richelieu from Pexels*

Attentive listening in the face of judgment and accusation can be extremely difficult. I have learned, in such situations, to stop and take an extra moment, to seek out God's love, understand His heart and purpose, and then act accordingly. Through attentively listening with a loving perspective, we can bring healing and reconciliation. This will lead to a broader understanding and allows the circumstances around us to naturally change for the better.

## **Agape love**

In our country today, true dialogue with the intent of building reconciliation and new unity seems rare. We are shouting back and forth and not listening to one another. Rev. Sun Myung Moon taught me the key is to center everything on God's "true love" or unselfish love. The term that Dr. Martin Luther King used was "[agape love](#)." A heart of true love or agape love is essential to the challenging equation of thoughtful listening and reconciliation.

True love contains the intention of advancing unity and good will. It seeks nothing in return. When we rise to listen with love to this level, it is not because people are particularly lovable, but because we are choosing to see them from God's viewpoint. They are God's precious and unique son or daughter. If I do something to hurt my brother or sister, I am hurting God. True dialogue can proceed between opponents on this basis.

## **Praying for your persecutors**

Jesus taught that you must not only have a heart of love for your family, friend, or neighbor. You must "love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you... If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?" (Matthew 5: 43,44,46)

Nelson Mandela [said](#), "No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

## **"Crown of Glory"**

Rev. Moon wrote these lines in his [poem](#), "Crown of Glory," at age 15:

When I doubt people, I feel pain.  
When I judge people, it is unbearable.  
When I hate people, there is no value to my existence.

Yet, if I believe, I am deceived.  
If I love, I am betrayed.  
Suffering and grieving tonight, my head in my hands.  
Am I wrong?

Yes, I am wrong.  
Even though we are deceived, still believe.  
Though we are betrayed, still forgive.  
Love completely, even those who hate you.

This is "listening" to the ultimate degree, where we seek to understand, even in the face of hatred, betrayal, and conflict. Whether it is with a wife or daughter, or those who may oppose us because they feel mistreated, misunderstood, or abandoned, our ears are given to us to listen and understand, opening a path for natural reconciliation.

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