



Heather
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More Than Marriage

LOVE AS GOD INTENDED

Introduction

Everyone's greatest desire in life is to love and be loved. You don't have to think about it to know this is true. It's a natural and universal longing. But *knowing* what you want, by itself, is not enough to *accomplish* your goals when it comes to love.

All kinds of love exist in the world today but that doesn't mean they are all good or true. We know this because some love relationships can end up hurting, degrading or limiting you. These and other negative outcomes are not part of the original love that your mind and heart desire. Instead, people find themselves in relationships that don't bring out the best in themselves or their partner. However, we intuitively know we deserve a deeper, richer love.

Defining love

Our highest ideals originate in God; the author of love. It is interesting that the love that we all long for, regardless of our cultural background or up-bringing, reflects God's nature and heart, which is unchanging, absolute, eternal and unique.



Our greatest desire is for love that is:

- **Unchanging** – Every human being longs to find a love that lasts forever. We want a relationship that offers unconditional love – a love that doesn't change with the seasons or dry up when it meets difficulty. Love as God intended was created to last by developing an unchanging commitment.
- **Absolute** – Each one of us seeks to love and be loved with our whole heart, mind, spirit and body. There is no holding back in the love that God intended. We long to find the one to whom we can promise fidelity, and be honored in return. True love involves a physical, emotional and spiritual commitment to one another.

- **Eternal** – Traditional marriage binds two people together, “until death do us part.” It doesn’t make sense that the love between a man and a woman ceases because of death. Once you taste love, you have no desire for it to end. If we are created as spiritual beings to live for eternity, then shouldn’t our love have the capacity to last forever as well?

- **Unique** – Why do people marry? It is because we unconsciously long to experience the fullness of real love and reflect God’s heart of love, which incorporates both masculine and feminine qualities. A man or woman individually has the potential to reflect one of these aspects of divinity, either masculinity or femininity, in their own unique way. As we grow through the teen years and into our twenties, we are irresistibly drawn to a complementary partner because when we come together as one, our unique self, bonds with the other’s unique self, and together we can experience the fullness of God’s image and love. A marriage between a man and a woman is the unique and irreplaceable starting point for the limitless expression of God’s ideal of love. Every couple is unique and infinitely valuable. Your couple matters to God!

The goal of love

Being able to define the love between a man and a woman as unchanging, absolute, eternal and unique allows us to reflect on



our experiences of love and know when it was, or is, true. This definition or blueprint also establishes a goal for love. We may not be experiencing love in all of these aspects completely right now, but this gives us a plan on which to build real love because we understand its four essential component parts.

Is real love even possible?

Living in a society surrounded by broken relationships and divorce, people often ask themselves if it is even possible for love to last forever. Rev. Sun Myung Moon responded to this question by saying,

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If your heart never gets old, your love will never grow old either. Your life will never be boring and your lineage will endure forever. True love never grows old.”

It really is possible for love



to last forever. It's knowing how to grow our hearts that makes the difference.

The problem with broken love is not a new one. History is full of tragic stories of corrupted love. If you decide to pursue the ideal of love, it helps to understand why love can go wrong and, more importantly, how to help it go right. To fully comprehend difficulty, you have to get to the root or origin of a particular problem. When you trace problems in families you inevitably go back in time and uncover lineal threads that hold secrets and unhealthy patterns of behavior.

Tracing our roots

The concept of lineage is important because it allows us to trace our relational origins. It's not a topic that is talked about a lot, and it may seem irrelevant or even outdated. Nevertheless, it's a crucial concept because it enables us to recognize that all lineages lead back to a singular beginning point. Origins matter. Rev. Sun Myung Moon once asked an interesting question:

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Which do you think has most value: love, life or lineage?
Many people think the answer is love. However, no matter



how valuable love and life are, they are horizontal in nature. They appear and conclude within one generation. On the other hand, lineage is vertical in nature and continues forever, generation after generation.”

Lineage has special importance because it connects life and love from the past, to the present and into the future. If you trace your lineage back in time you will eventually encounter the first man and the first woman. Scientists now dub the first female ancestor as Mitochondrial Eve, after the biblical image of Eve in the Garden of Eden. Science has revealed that all human beings have common ancestors.

Every culture offers different names for these first ancestors we all share but we are talking about the same two people. Humankind has a starting point and this first set of parents, whatever their names, initiated a way of relating and a tradition of love that has trickled down through history.

Today, you hear psychologists say that we can't love fully because we were not given adequate or real love by our parents. Our parents can say the same thing, all the way back to that first man and woman. Our first parents did not leave a tradition of love for their descendants that expressed love as God intended.

Whether we recognize it or not, how we live and love is impacted by our family of origin. Our definition of love, as well as the limitations and constraints we experience when it comes to love are rooted in our family tree. This is why every generation struggles with love.

More than a memory

All cultures have myths about alienation from God or the ideal: an original fall from grace. The pioneering psychologist Carl Jung pointed out common symbols that arise from humankind's "collective unconscious." He believed there is a deep knowledge that is common to all cultures and peoples.



Jung thought we could learn about the collective unconscious by studying the religious and spiritual practices of the world. Through these we can discover what has become a latent memory and uncover the origins of our relational problems.

In his book, *Memories and Visions*, anthropologist Richard Heinberg



said the same:

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People in every culture and age have insisted that evil has a specific cause... that human nature is not natural at all, because it has been distorted by some fundamental mistake or failure that has been perpetuated from generation to generation.”

The field of epigenetics, and particularly behavioral epigenetics, supports the idea that experiences, not just DNA, are handed down generation to generation. Research clearly identifies how the experiences of our ancestors leave their mark on us, even after the experiences themselves have been forgotten.

Dan Hurley, in *Trait vs. Fate*, published by Discover Magazine explains:

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Like silt deposited on the cogs of a finely tuned machine after the seawater of a tsunami receded, our experiences and those of our forebears are never gone, even if they have been forgotten. They become part of us, a molecular residue, holding fast to our genetic scaffolding. The DNA remains the same, but psychological and behavioral tendencies are inherited. You might have inherited not just your grandmother’s knobby knees, but also her predisposition to depression caused by the neglect she suffered as a newborn.”

Fortunately, Hurley goes on to reassure us,

Or not. If your grandmother was adopted by nurturing parents, you might enjoy the boost she received thanks to their love and support.”

For good or bad, our bodies remember. Uncovering the origin of our suffering and healing the wounds epigenetically, and on an even deeper level, spiritually, makes sense.

Secrets within symbols

The question remains: what is that primal corruption of love that religions and myths point to? If love has gone wrong, then how did it go wrong? Every civilization has an origin story, whether it be the Biblical Garden of Eden with the forbidden fruit or Pandora’s Box. They point to the loss of an ideal or struggle within. The name Pandora means “all-giving”. According to the legend, she was the first woman on earth. Her curiosity caused her to open a forbidden box out of which escaped all the evils we experience in the world today. In addition, a Native American myth speaks to how Tepeu and Gucumatz created beings that were of a higher dimension than animals because they could praise their creator but these beings proved unsatisfactory and instead caused trouble on the earth. In a





way, all of these stories remind us of the inner struggle we experience in our own lives.

The conflict within

World religions describe specific events that disconnected humankind from God. All their stories speak of separation. A lineal thread was broken, setting people adrift from their origin, God.

Consequently, humankind lost true parental love and couldn't experience love as God intended.

This is the heritage of all civilizations; it is our collective reality.

Love is the source of our greatest ideals,
hope and joy. Yet when it is misdirected and
selfish, love becomes the cause of our
greatest unhappiness and pain.

If everyone wants a love that is unchanging, absolute eternal and unique, then why is it so difficult to achieve? If you think about it, the root of individual and societal problems always boils down to the confusion and breakdown of love within the family. It's an "always been there" problem, which is why it is so difficult to resolve. The story of Adam and Eve tells us that our first parents lost their original nature and became wounded through selfish and misdirected love. Knowing this, we can start to connect the dots and better understand our inheritance and situation.

The vast array of social, economic and political problems that plague humanity can be traced back to the contradiction inherent within the human psyche and spirit. Our original nature has no contradiction, but we are burdened by a nature that is not original; a nature that creates mind-body disunity and pulls us away from spiritual and emotional health.

To compensate, we seek love from this wounded place in whatever





way we can get it, even when we know deep down that what we are doing is unhealthy and even damaging. With our highest ideals, we seek to be loving and giving, but we cannot control the self-destructive part of ourselves that undermines our intentions and relationships.

Trying to make love work without being connected to the origin of love, God, is like trying to turn on a light bulb without plugging it into the socket. If we want to discover the power to build a love that is unchanging, absolute, eternal and unique, we need a vertical connection to God, the source of true love. Seeking that vertical connection and healing the human soul or psyche has been the quest of all world religions, great thinkers and social innovators. Since we only have one life-time, it is urgent that we find the solution now.

Restoring love as God intended

Rev and Mrs. Moon have spent their lives in search of God's heart and a way to bridge the gap between God and humanity. They have striven to reconnect that lineal thread with God, not just for one religion or people but for everyone. For this purpose they founded the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification.



Recognizing that the family is the school of love, and that true parental or unconditional love is what will heal this world, Rev. and Mrs. Moon instituted the Holy Marriage Blessing as an instrument of healing and a means to establish a healthy and even sacred model for love. The Blessing ceremony invokes God's Blessing on our relationships so that we can be rooted in our original nature – the part of us that is pure and good and true, and from that place create a love that reflects our highest values.



The Holy Marriage Blessing is a framework to purify the corrupted love that steals people's lives, and re-establish the foundation to receive God's original love, life and lineage. Rev. and Mrs. Moon believe that the ultimate purpose of spirituality, religion and faith traditions, as well as the motivation of people of conscience, is to restore truly loving men and women, emotionally and spiritually healthy families and, by extension, a peaceful world.

Why does it make a difference to include God in your relationship?

Bringing God into your relationship is essential. Of course, there are many ways to form a family, so why does it matter if you include God in your relationship as husband and wife? That is a good question.

Many people leave God out of the equation, or invite him in, as an add-on. This arrangement may seem to work in the moment, but it does not function well in the long run. Our love will only be fully realized when it is eternal, absolute and unchanging. And that means that God has to be in the center.

Perhaps you have been in a relationship where one party is always

the center; their needs come first; their desires always seem to win the day. That never feels good! In contrast, when the center of the marriage is God and God's ideal for love rather than either individual, there is greater possibility for love to flow.

Changing your default to connecting to God's heart in any situation

Take for example a common scenario where one spouse comes back from work exhausted. He or she enters the home with the expectation of being taken care of, having worked hard all day. Not an unreasonable desire in and of itself.

But when that doesn't happen because the other spouse is equally exhausted, both parties are suddenly at odds, waiting for the other to give first. When the giving slows to a trickle, both withdraw into resentful silence. We've all been there!

Our own perspective and ability to give unconditionally is limited. This is why we need God in our most important relationship.



Liam's story

"I have often said that I love my wife because she gives me a safe place to be vulnerable and receive the kind of love that I didn't experience growing up. It is non-judgmental, safe, and sincerely unconditional. I came to appreciate, cherish and, eventually, to expect that kind of love—all the time. I started to take our relationship for granted.

Inevitably, I was challenged from time to time when that kind of love didn't come from her:

"Hey, work was crazy. Can I tell you about it? I need to talk it out."

"Not right now. I'm exhausted."

"Oh. Sorry I asked."

"What do you mean you're sorry you asked?"

"Nothing. Don't worry about it."

Our relationship was still quite young, but I had come to expect unconditional love and wasn't even thinking about what I was giving. When I didn't get what I thought I deserved, I reacted by withholding my love from her. Naturally, she would respond in kind to my unwillingness to love and we spiraled into arguments and frustration that left a chill in the air.

It wasn't until I reflected on why we came together in the first place that things began to shift. I remembered that while we loved each other individually, it was God that brought us together in marriage.



The truth is my marriage doesn't work without God because my marriage doesn't work without love. God is love. Real love: unique, unchanging, eternal, and absolute love. I cannot and do not love unconditionally, 24/7, on my own. I don't have that capacity. However, when I am plugged into God, I am plugged into unconditional love, I am enabled to give the love my wife deserves.

Through many ups and downs I came to discover that God is the source of love in my marriage. I receive love from God and that is what fills me. I can't expect my wife to always fill that place in my heart. When I am filled from an unchanging source of unconditional love, I am free to love my wife from a very deep well. I see the same in her. When she is going to God for unconditional love, she is a wellspring of grace and support towards me. Her divinity shows up in her willingness to channel God's love to me through her life instead of trying to generate that love on her own all the time. Love just flows passionately through her and it leaves me speechless and grateful. That's when our relationship gets supercharged and I have confidence that nothing can destroy it. I really believe we have the power to love



limitlessly.

So for us, marriage is where we go to give, not to get. Ironically, we end up getting more than we give! It probably has something to do with string theory!

Like most marriages, ours is a work in progress. However, connecting with God in our marriage has changed the game forever, for the better. The presence of God brings the presence of an absolute love--and that is what makes my marriage worthwhile."

When the center of the marriage is God's ideal for love rather than either individual, there is greater possibility for:

- love to flow without barriers,
- a deeper understanding of intention and heart,
- a shared relationship goal and connection to a bigger vision for the relationship.

It is an ironclad principle of the universe that unity happens when both partners recognize the value of the other. You have to go to God to fully comprehend your partner's value. A relationship between husband and wife becomes more stable and has greater life when the couple invites God in.

God is always seeking and promoting the best interests of everyone. God never supports one person over another. God seeks a solution of shared benefit. We have to find that kind of heart in our marriage to make it a relationship that can last forever. Forever love, like God, is

unchanging, absolute, eternal and unique. That is why we need God in our most important relationship.

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Through true love we can be together eternally, see each other eternally, converse with and feel each other eternally and have nothing but affection for each other. It is one love and yet all people can enjoy it. If we consider its detail, it is extremely small; if we consider its grandeur, it is extremely huge. Immersed in true love, the mere wink of an eye can be sufficient to bring forth a joy so great as to shake heaven and earth; a single smile can make one feel superhuman power. That power is strong enough to change one's life.”

– Sun Myung Moon

The Holy Marriage Blessing— more than marriage

In celebrating the Holy Marriage Blessing, Rev. and Mrs. Moon confer God's Blessing on couples so they may become owners of God's love, life and lineage and commit themselves to practicing love as God intended.





The family is God's first and only institution.
The family is infinitely precious because
it is a little world created by love.

Stepping forward

The Marriage Blessing offers several concrete steps you can take to link your couple to God in spirit and substance. To really take advantage of a step forward you first need to let go, so that you are not dragged back into the place where you came from. Nelson Mandela clearly understood this:



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As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison.”



Separating from the past

A part of the Marriage Blessing Ceremony includes an opportunity to separate from the painful history of resentment that has developed between men and women over the generations, and that manifests in conflict and abuse between the sexes today. We all want to say goodbye to that. Acknowledging the past mistakes of our ancestors and missteps in our own lives opens the door to grace and forgiveness. Most importantly, it sets us on a firmer path to love as God intended.

For this purpose, couples are invited to receive the Holy Wine Ceremony. Through this ceremony we claim our rightful position as an “original man” or “original woman” connected to God, and capable of loving as God intended. Taking the holy wine or grape juice represents a rejection of selfish love, and an eternal commitment to God, to one’s spouse, and to building a world of true love.

Being revived

God’s original ideal is that we grow in our relationships. The following ancient biblical words speak to an important nutrient essential to all growth:

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There is hope for the tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots won't stop growing. Even if its roots have grown ancient in the earth, and its stump begins to rot in the ground, the presence of water will make it to bud, so that it sprouts new branches like a young plant.”

– Job 14:7-9

This beautiful imagery speaks volumes. God is our ancient, unchanging root. As we look around the world today and observe the horrors of physical and sexual violence and other forms of corruption, we can see the stump has indeed rotted in the ground. The sprinkling of Holy Water in the Marriage Blessing Ceremony allows us to sprout



a new branch that is connected to God's lineage. Thus we become capable of producing a new healthy bud through love that is absolute, unchanging, eternal and unique.

The couple then commits through their vows to fulfill love as God intended and establish a loving family that can contribute to God's ideal for a peaceful world. This all takes place within the Blessing Ceremony.

Beginning a new tradition

A good start is essential to a new future, but it needs immediate follow-up or it might fade and be forgotten. Any life coach will tell you that! This is why it's recommended that after the Blessing Ceremony you give yourselves 40 days of space and time to adjust your relationship to include God in a more profound way.

During this 40-day period, instead of focusing on the sexual relationship, invest in building emotional and spiritual intimacy and gaining fresh insights. By doing this you can shape your relationship in a new way. After the Blessing you deserve time to pray and receive unconditional love from God so that you can start fresh.

It is also a time to experience and gain insight into the love God has

for your spouse. You can ask yourself how it is the same or different from the love you have had in the past. You can begin the journey of developing love that is absolute, eternal, unchanging and unique and discover each other anew through God's eyes.

All of this lays the foundation for real transformation in your relationship. After offering the 40 days, the act of love itself becomes your avenue to discover love as God intended. It is your path to the Garden of Eden, together. This gives sexual love an unbelievably wonderful dimension of emotional intimacy and fosters a deep spiritual connection between you.

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The purpose of marriage is to synchronize the man's heart and the woman's heart to perfect their love. The wedding ceremony is a proclamation of the couple's commitment and determination toward that goal. If you start with the goal to perfect your love and heart through your married life, you are on the way to fulfilling the ideal of family. If you actually fulfill it, upon your death you will certainly go to heaven, because your lives will be heaven.”

– Sun Myung Moon



Building a God-centered global community through the Marriage Blessing

In recognizing not just individual families, but humanity as a whole, Rev. and Mrs. Moon created a new tradition so that we can live as one family under God. This tradition is now being practiced around the world.

While many couples choose a private ceremony for the Blessing, some choose a larger, inspiring, international and inter-religious



public ceremony. This allows people to come together to honor the centrality of family in society, and naturally foster a broader community of families with shared values and aspirations.



Through participating in one of these uniquely beautiful ceremonies, couples demonstrate that true love in marriage is the key to a peaceful world. Each family is an irreplaceable building block to a future world that is separated from the thousands of years of corrupted relationships, spawned by the enemy of love. In addition to engaged couples, already married couples participate to rededicate their love to God and each other, renewing their marriage vows to become a part of this historical revolution of heart. Rev. and Mrs. Moon firmly believe that the Blessing has the power to transform not only individuals but the entire world.



Make true love your own

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What color is true love? The central colors of true love are harmony and unity; surrounding them are peace and happiness. An atomic weapon has no power other than to destroy life. It is not a symbol of creation but of judgment and ruin. True love, by contrast, has the power of resurrection that can bring one who has died back to life. So the power to bind the world together and bring unity does not reside in the military mindset that lies behind nuclear weapons, but in true love. Each nation has its cultural background and political boundary, and true love is the only power capable of transcending these. The difficult problems humanity faces can be solved only through the perfection of true love.

You must seek after true love. You must make true love your own. You must witness the perfection of true love within your own life. Please never forget that you are to spend the remainder of your life on earth nurturing this seed so that it will blossom and bear fruit.”

– Sun Myung Moon

Love that becomes greater forever

Whatever your experience with love, there is a greater love yet to come. That is the amazing thing about love. It is limitless. I can testify to this. I was Blessed in marriage with my husband, Phil, in 1982. I speak from experience that is both personal and shared with hundreds of couples whom I know, and hundreds of thousands more from all nations, races and religions around the world. Wherever we go, we are one family.

Love, like God, is invisible, which means it can reach into any heart, anywhere, at any time. God doesn't want you to settle for second best. He wants you to reach for the greatest love: love that is unchanging, absolute, eternal and unique.



To learn more

If you are ready for a new start or simply want to learn more, please visit loveasgodintended.org or contact Heather Thalheimer at info@loveasgodintended.org – We'd love to hear from you!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Phil & Heather Thalheimer were Blessed in marriage in 1982. They live and work in New Hampshire and have three adult children, and a growing extended family. Phil enjoys the outdoors and is a mountain guide. Heather works in the field of non-profit development. In all their endeavors they are committed to building a more peaceful world.

